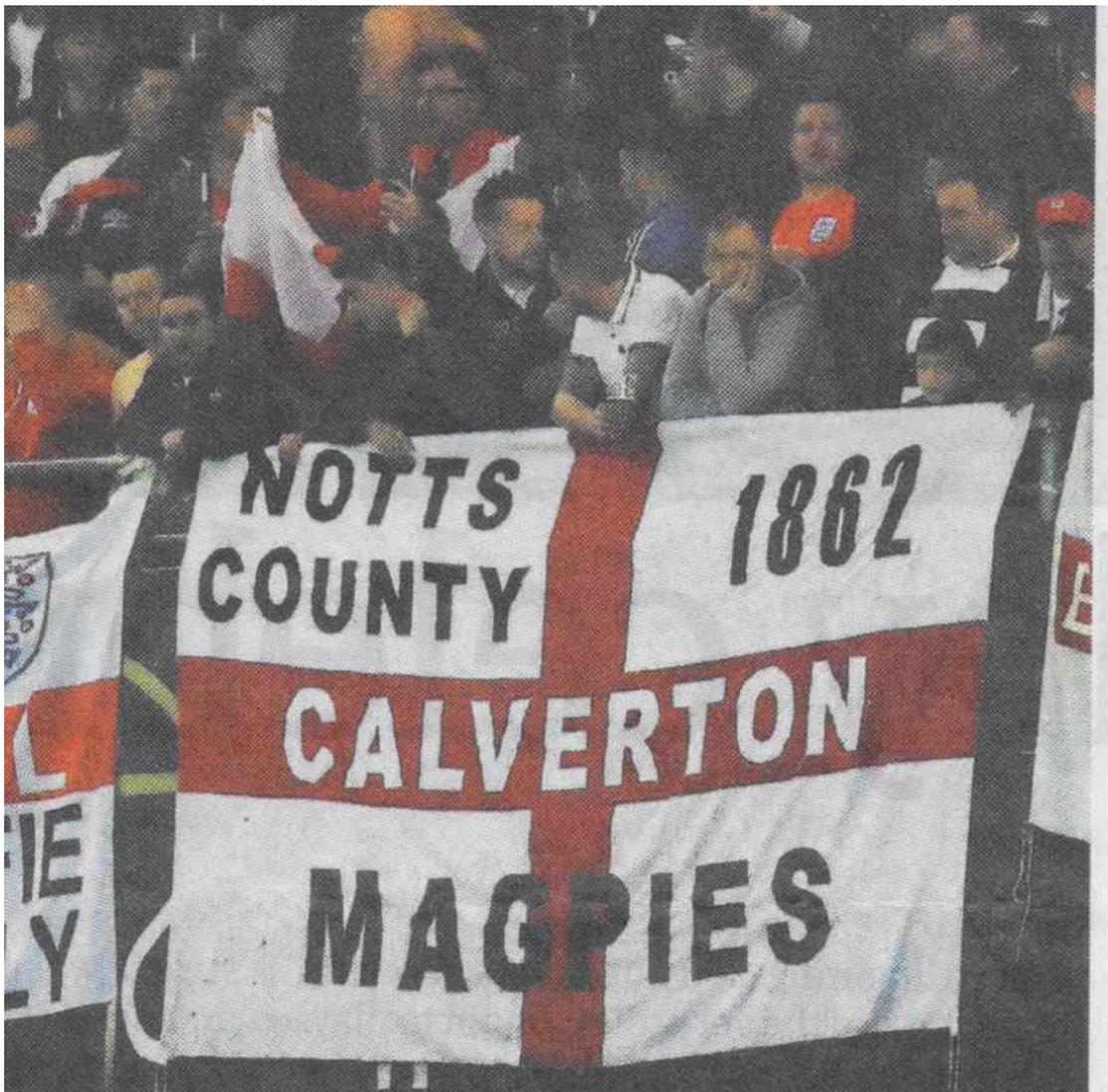


# What Would Calverton Do?

*Only twenty four essays from  
Tynemouth*



**Peter Taylor**

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**FOR  
ENID  
WITH LOVE**

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# INTRODUCTION

Looking at her screen and not at the man in his mid-sixties standing before her, the nurse asks nonchalantly “Are you pregnant?” I was that man and before I could say “No, I’m too old”, she looks up, clicks on to a new screen and gives a quick “Sorry”. Wonderfully absurd – I’m certain none of my male friends have ever had to field this question. What’s going on?

Back story: It’s about ten years ago and I’m in a temporary clinic across from Central Station in Newcastle that has been set up by the NHS as part of nationwide survey of persons between 40 and 70. I had received a letter asking me to volunteer for a detailed medical assessment as part of a research project to inform preventative health policies. As someone who conducts research projects in another field of study, I am predisposed to help fellow researchers and, in any case, why wouldn’t you want to contribute to evidence-based health policy. Their Newcastle clinic is open for a couple of weeks and is easy to get there on the Metro from Tynemouth so I attend early on. The clinic is divided into different areas, which have to be visited in sequence.

The first zone consists of rows of desk computers, one click and you are into a very large questionnaire taking about twenty minutes to complete as you provide details of health and illnesses of yourself and close relatives, alive and deceased. I am impressed, this is good data; I can envisage how it can be useful. Second zone is for physical measurements, not just weight and height but about a dozen different things. When finished with the measuring, it is this nurse who sits down at her screen without giving me a second look. Her first question is whether my pacemaker is working OK for me. I am confused, and initially a little worried. I reply that I have not been fitted with one but in my mind I’m thinking that my data she has on her screen indicates I need a pacemaker. “Sorry”, she says, clicks onto a new screen from whence she asks the question that does not worry me; I’m not in the family way, and this should likely be clear from the girth measurement she’s just taken!

At the final zone you have a feedback discussion with a sensible person who provides advice. In my case it is serious. All closely related males I know of have never lived long enough to take a pension, all died from heart attacks. I’m told I have a 48% chance of suffering a ‘major event’ by the age of 71. A major event is a severe stroke or serious heart attack. Consequently, and up to the present, I have been taking a brisk walk of about half an hour every day supplemented by four pills a day prescribed by my GP. This mix of physics and chemistry has kept me going ever since. On leaving I’m given a print out of some of the results from the whole exercise. I read this on the way back to Tynemouth on the Metro. Page one has the physical measures; I read I’m six foot, four inches tall. I’ve been five foot, ten inches since about the age of 18 and have not knowingly had an adult growth spurt since – they are as rare as male pregnancy. So in this totally messed up research exercise the NHS has got nothing or worse than nothing. In fact bad

data is worse than no data: supposed evidence-based policy without the evidence.

Two years later I got further letter from the NHS asking for me to attend another clinic for their survey, a follow up to provide on-going data, to measure changes in my health. I did not bother: perhaps I would be identified as a new medical freak – the incredible shrinking man, losing three inches a year, how small will he get?

Funny story? Yes, the first thing I said to my wife when I got home was to jokingly assure her I was not pregnant and thus hadn't played away from home. Weird anecdote? Yes, clearly bemusing as well as amusing, but there was certain to be many retellings. Waste of time? Not for me, I got a personal health regime out of it, but the poor bored nurse in zone two would have been better off in a pub with her friends. Waste of money? Yes, of course, for the NHS putting together an important project in theory and then fouling up in practice. I wondered about how people were recruited on to the project. Were there interviews? Who did the interviewing? Was anyone with actual research experience involved at ground level? From my own work I know that the starting point for doing any meaningful research is to employ people who are curious. It is not just about getting numbers on screen, curiosity leads to interested and interesting people who want the research to provide credible findings and will ensure that it does.

Oh dear, I can't help myself – I've managed to turn a funny story into a lesson, suggesting how to do better. You know – “Must do better” – written on the margins of essays and reports time after time by all manner of teachers seemingly forever. Who's boring now? My turn to say “Sorry”. Excuse? Well, over forty years working in universities, much of which involved helping students with their research projects and recruiting people for my own research projects. But no more of that; I promise there will be no description or discussion of my many research projects in the pages that follow. The research above – not mine – is mentioned not as a research story but as an episode of extreme absurdity, and therefore possibly entertaining. Given my gender and age it is, I think, a unique experience. And that is what my essays below are all about. By ‘essays’ I mean targeted postings, both constructive and critical, that highlight things that are just not right. Drawn from episodes in my life, with associated reactions and interpretations, I have endeavoured to portray these in an entertaining way. Ranging from personal to protest, they reveal some largely forgotten oddities and some continuing quirks that have defined being English from ‘after the war’ through to ‘globalization’.

Before I start there are two things that I should mention. First, partly because of my work, I have had an unusually rich mix of places in which I have lived. Here is the list, those emboldened are main residences with some degree of permanency, those inset are transient, meaning without roots but still where I parked my head at night for at least a few months.

**East Dulwich** (London) – 1944-48

Wollaton (Nottingham) – 1948-9  
 Mapperley (Nottingham) – 1949  
 Sherwood (Nottingham) – 1949-52  
**Calverton** (Notts) – 1952 – 63  
 West Bridgford (Nottingham) – 1963-4  
 Crosby (Lancs) – 1963-4  
**Warrington** (Lancs) – 1964-8  
 West Bridgford (Nottingham) part time 1964 - 6  
 North Shields (Tyneside) – 1968-70  
 Iowa City (Iowa) – 1970-1  
 Jesmond (Newcastle) – 1971-3  
**Killingworth** (Newcastle) – 1973-82  
 Edmonton (Alberta) – 1976  
 Worcester (Massachusetts) – 1978-9  
 Hannover (New Hampshire) – 1979  
**Forest Hall** (Newcastle) – 1982-94  
 Urbana (Illinois) – 1984  
 Binghamton (New York) – 1990  
 Blacksburg (Virginia) – 1991-2  
 Newark (Delaware) – 1992  
**Tynemouth** (Tyneside) – 1994-present  
 Paris (France) – 1994  
 Calverton - part time 1995-2002  
 Loughborough – part time 2002-2010  
 Amsterdam (The Netherlands) – 1997  
 Washington DC – 2002  
 Arlington (Virginia) - 2003  
 Ghent (Belgium) – 2004-5

This variety of places is the geographical backcloth to the essays. The two most important ones are in the book title: my formative years were spent in Calverton, a pit village in Nottinghamshire, and which has stayed etched in my mind. Nowadays not a frequent visitor, nevertheless, the place left an indelible mark on me. Of course the Calverton where I grew up no longer exists, the pit is long gone but the council estates are still there even though work now involves commuting to Nottingham. My later years have been spent in Tynemouth on the coast just outside Newcastle. Yes I do like to be beside the seaside – the one-mile walk on Tynemouth Long Sands constitutes part of my health regime – it is an idyllic locale in which to live and write.

Second, I should mention something I find hard to express without appearing smug. I have been very lucky in so many ways. The essays are not about fighting against adversity such as illness or an injustice or personal problems or family tragedy. There has never been a time in my life when I would not gladly have stopped the world and stayed living as is. Stopping the world is now becoming more urgent as I get older but you get the point: I have just been happy. There is a family basis to this: starting with loving parents, followed by a successful marriage, resulting in children and grandchildren, now even one great grandchild. Of course, some bumps along the way but all trivial in the wider

scheme of things. In addition I have had a successful career: I never planned to be an academic, I was fortunate to have become one. I stumbled into directions that turned out to be fruitful, enabling me to find a niche that I could be successful in: my particular bundle of individual skills matched the needs for a satisfying academic career. I got well paid for talking about (called lecturing) and investigating (called research) things that interested me sometimes to the level of fascination (notably cities). Hence, lucky again.

And now I have enjoyed immensely writing these essays. They are bite-sized; all short postings so that hopefully the reader never gets bogged down. I have divided them into two sets: Journey and Multiple Me. The first follows a time line – I didn't want to write a narrative life story but by sequencing these initial essays a sense of unfolding is provided. The second set consists of episodic musings about different aspects of my life, different roles, often involving very strongly held opinions. This is a *pot-pourri* of events and ideas, a pick n'mix offering of arguments that can be read in any order; I actually wrote the penultimate essay – on Brexit – first, to see if this approach had legs. There are some straightforward links between the journey and the opinions but undoubtedly there will be some much more subtle links that are only discernable from the outside, uniquely by different readers. Thus, all being well, this is where you might find out who I am. If you do find out, please let me know!

So, all sweetness and light? A nice life in nice places shared with nice people, what could be more uninteresting? No, there is a catch. And it comes in the form of a confession. Somehow amongst all my good fortune I have a very big chip on my shoulder. Unlike potato chips and computer chips you cannot simply discard this one if not wanted, shoulder chips are part of what you are. You don't plan to have one; the chip appears in reaction to a changing social environment. Perhaps you could get rid of it through some sort of therapy by why should you? It's not an illness, doesn't hurt others and can be useful in sizing up new situations. My chip came into existence on leaving Calverton. I cherish him; he has a name. I like to think of my chip as being essentially creative. He derives from Colliery Calverton (i.e. not Commuter Calverton) and is so useful for identifying activities that wouldn't pass mustard from where I came from. For instance, supposed academic work that is sometimes simply lazy, other times truly shocking, often decipherable as bullshit, rarely malicious but frequently absurd. And people get away with it because they are not from Calverton and the hundreds of places like Calverton. So, added to the sweetness and light is an acerbic sharpness in a self-satisfied academic world where my true specialism has been remaining me - five foot ten inches, chip and all.

**Part One**  
**JOURNEY**

# 1. Being and belonging

***“It intrigued me that one family would have a whole train to themselves. But the really weird thing was that staff at the station covered all the signs for the Gents toilets”***

It's sometime in the 1980s and I'm on a train speeding south to London Euston. I'm focussed on the book I'm reading when my concentration is shattered. We are passing through some little local station whose name catches my eye: TRING. Flashing through in just a few seconds, this is the only time I have been consciously, knowingly in Tring, a small town in Hertfordshire. I know this place, it is on my passport and I have written "Tring, Herts" on numerous forms over many years. This is my birthplace, which Mum and I left when I was ten days old.

I was a wartime baby, which meant Mum was evacuated from London for the birth. The safer place was some miles to the north. Lord Rothschild's mansion in Hertfordshire had been requisitioned for this wartime purposes and the Lord, not knowing my family, was the absentee host for my appearance into this world. My birth was registered in the nearest town, Tring. A bizarrely grand beginning, for the rest of my life I have been mildly irritated by being frequently asked, when filling in all manner of documents, for my unacquainted birthplace. Many years later there was a student in one of my classes who came from Tring. I had been teaching about the meaning of place, where birthplace usually features prominently, and used my birthplace as a counter argument, as being of no consequence to me. The young man followed this up when he went home in the holidays and came back to inform me that it was the second floor of the mansion converted to a maternity suite during the war. This is the only additional thing I know about my birthplace.

But I do know something more about my birth. After my widowed mother died in 2003 I inherited a metal box in which she kept her most precious items. It included long letters from my Dad serving in the navy during the war. This was a surprise because my mum was the letter-writer in the family; I had never thought of Dad as writer. I noticed one letter dated late November 1944 and couldn't resist reading it. It was the most beautiful piece of loving prose I have ever read – beyond the effusive congratulations for my birth, it was about building a post-war future for us as a family. But oddly, this contact was by post despite the fact that Dad was not far away, his ship was docked in Portsmouth. Quite simply his superior would not allow one day's shore leave to see his new son. Arbitrary authority meant he might never have seen me if his next sailing ended badly. This act showed that though his job was important – saving the nation - as a person he remained unimportant – just another hand. Still he did make it to the end of the war and was able to vote against such authority in the

Labour landslide of 1945. We were always to be a 'Labour family'. And a radical one to boot.

As a brief aside, what did this actually mean? It was entry into an 'Us and Them' world. A very early recollection was to do with clothing. 'We' admired Nye Bevan, not just because he founded the National Health Service, but because of his choice of clothes! Here is the story I was told. When invited by the King to become a government minister after the 1945 election, he turned up in what was described a 'lounge suit', deemed totally inappropriate for an audience with a monarch. Of course he did not own a 'top hat and tails', the upper class uniform of the times. Therefore he attended in what all ordinary men called their 'Sunday best', the sole suit they owned. This showed proper respect, wearing what you would for an important family event like a wedding or christening. Not good enough for 'Them' it showed Bevan was one of 'Us'. Of course, after the 1960s, such class distinctions by clothing largely disappeared.

So, back to me originally being a Londoner, from south London, Lordship Lane in East Dulwich to be precise. We lived with my maternal grandparents in a large flat above a bank, a 'tied cottage' linked to my Granddad's job as a bank's runner in the City. (Such was commercial communication at that time!) This meant that amongst cousins, I was Nan's favourite – she was of a generation where such favouritism seemed acceptable. From an early age it was noted that I preferred fruit to sweets; it seems relatives were willing to give up food coupons so I could have a supply of bananas. I still recall the late forties popular song "Yes, we have no bananas" as being especially relevant to me. (For the rest of my childhood my parents never bought me a chocolate Easter egg, instead I had a pineapple.) As the youngest of the cousins I was aware that this favouritism gave me some leverage in child disputes – it is the earliest conscious understanding I remember. And it had two sides. Although I used my favouritism I also understood it was not really right and this had a bearing on my relations with my parents. Mum was at home, Dad was at work so I was closer to the former than the latter but I consciously behaved equally to them; it was only fair on Dad

There are only two memories of events in south London that stay with me. First, for some reason I was always considered to be 'clever' – perhaps I had been good at doing things from a young age. Certainly Nan, as would be expected, was very proud of me for being clever. Behind the bank on a residential street lived Mr Henderson and Nan cleaned house for him. She often took me along. He lived on his own and was assumed to be very learned and rich. Nan shared her assessment of me with her employer and one day he turned up while the cleaning was going on to give me a volume of the complete works of Shakespeare. I was four. He explained I would need it when I got older. A unique present for one so young; my Mum treasured it for me. I felt like the chosen one, great things were expected of me.

Second, also when about four, I remember going shopping with my mum down Rye Lane, a large shopping centre in Peckham and within walking distance from East Dulwich. The big departmental store was called Jones and Higgins and I vividly recall being in there with Mum and deciding to hide in a rack of women's

coats. Missing! All hell let loose but I did not appreciate the seriousness of it. As shop assistants searched through the rack of coats I was hanging on, I can remember carefully swaying with the sweep of clothes so as not to be detected. When attention shifted to other parts of the store I got down and went into the staff canteen where seemingly relieved staff gave me a glass of orange juice before my Mum rushed in and hugged me. I was confused, Mum had tears on her cheeks; she was very upset but so pleased to see me. I was firmly told never to hide away again but I didn't need to be told, I never wanted to make Mum so unhappy ever again.

But then it was all change. We were to leave London and move to Nottingham. My parents made a very unusual decision, which I have never fully understood. Dad left for a few weeks to go to Doncaster to train as a coalminer. The pits had just been nationalised, a key Labour election promise, and Dad saw opportunity in working for the National Coal Board, including further education possibilities. After training Dad had to find a pit to work in; the main criteria was that it had to have pithead baths – he didn't like the idea of the stereotypical miner walking home after work covered in coal dust from head to foot. Calverton Colliery just north of Nottingham – a relatively new pit – fitted the bill. Housing was not yet in place for miners in Calverton so, with the early post war housing shortage, we had to live 'in rooms' in nearby Nottingham.

Living in rooms is a recipe for stress. It consists of living with another family in a single, usually quite small, house. The way of living was a time and space separation. As a child I learned the times when I could go to the kitchen, or eat in the dining room, or have a bath; only the toilet was always available to all, and the bedroom was our only exclusively private space. This situation was not conducive to residential stability and we moved a couple of times before we stayed longer in Sherwood, on the bus route to Calverton for Dad. All this moving did not help my education but at Sherwood I went to Hayden Road Junior School, now aged seven, and was able to begin to fulfil my parent's expectations. The school separated pupils into three groups by ability; as an unknown newcomer I was placed in the bottom group. But that all changed when they held a maths test for all three classes. There were three sections in the test, twenty questions in each. The first section was very easy, the second a little bit harder, but the third was odd – it asked about things that we had not covered in class. However I was able to work out how to do the last twenty questions. When the marks were announced the highest mark bar one, all from the pupils in the top group, was 40 (i.e. correct answers from the first two sections only), but the highest mark was mine at 57 (I had got three easy questions wrong because they were too simple to bother much with). Mum was summoned to school to be congratulated for my performance, she was so proud and it confirmed to her what she always thought she knew about me.

There are two discussions with Dad at this time that I remember vividly. The first led me towards tolerance of others' feelings. The main road through Sherwood, Mansfield Road, was changing its street lighting. New brighter lights were being installed that were much yellower than their predecessors. This led to a local newspaper story concerning young women complaining about the new

lights because it changed the shade of their lipstick in unpredictable ways. I thought this was incredibly trivial; the new lights were much better, so what about the lipstick. But Dad explained that for many young women their appearance was all important; lipstick was a key finishing touch to their desired look: the effect of the new lights mattered greatly to them and they had a right to be heard. Second, there was a visit to Nottingham by the Queen; she arrived at Nottingham Victoria Station (long gone, now the Victoria Shopping Centre) in the Royal Train. It intrigued me that one family would have a whole train to themselves. But the really weird thing was that staff at the station covered all the signs for the Gents toilets. The assumption presumably was that any reference to this natural male function would be offensive to the royal personage. What an utter load of rubbish, I thought. Dad agreed. I have been a committed republican ever since, not so much against the Queen herself – after all I don't know her – but against the pathetic deference of royalists.

Moving to Nottingham made us migrants, not as the 1951 census would have recorded me moving from Tring to Nottingham, but as Londoners in the 'provinces', as London imperiously viewed the rest of the country. This affected Mum much more than Dad; he went off to work each day, Mum was left 'in rooms'. I quickly sensed her unhappiness, a severe case of homesickness. It was alleviated a little by holidays spent in London. Money was short but we took the train back to London (Marylebone or St Pancras stations) for every Christmas, and every summer holiday was a 'London' one, the extended family all going off to one or other of the many holiday camps on the South East coast. Madisons ('Maddies') was our favourite, Butlins being well out of our price range.

A short diversion: I would like to correct a point Bill Bryson makes about the English on holiday in his wonderful book *Notes from a Small Island*. He describes as particularly quirky, the fact that when on the beach the English use, in addition to deck chairs, windbreaks. He asks, why would any one want to sit on a beach if they required windbreaks? The simple fact was that for working people this was the one week of the year they broke away from their everyday lives. And people were determined to make the best of it! In the days approaching our seaside holidays I can remember hoping so much that it would not rain in the coming week; if you were lucky, it was sunny. People from Nottingham lived far from the sea. The nearest resort was Skegness, affectionately known as Skeggy', which was explicitly promoted as being 'Bracing' – the wind coming in from the North Sea was its prime selling point! 'Blowing the cobwebs away' was part of the joy of the seaside, whether Skeggy or Maddies. Misfortune was rain. Windbreaks were simply comfortable accessories for the limited time available to be on the beach.

But I didn't go to Skeggy until my teenage years. For me, good times equalled London times. This did not change when we finally got our own house in Calverton on the new estate built for miners. There were two types of houses, pit houses (owned by the Coal Board) and council houses (owned by the local government). We waited for the latter to become available, Dad being wary of the innate insecurity of 'tied cottages' from his early years living in rural Kent:

lose your job, lose your home. This move turned out to be important because Dad did later leave the mining industry.

In Calverton I grew even closer to my Mum. Dad remained a more distant figure, working shifts in the weekly sequence: 'days' from 6am to 2pm, 'afters' from 2pm to 10pm, and 'nights' from 10pm to 6am. Hence I lived in a woman's world. And it was at this time that I began to develop a wider social awareness, derived directly from my Mum's negotiating living on the new housing estate. In the prime task of providing for husbands and children there were two clear categories of 'wife': respectable and those not so. I soon learned that they were distinguished by two basic criteria. The first was the obvious one of properly looking after man and family: good cooking and a clean house. The latter was specifically revealed by nappies hanging out to dry on the close line: nappies coloured yellow signalled an inadequate homemaker. Years later this was used to sell Persil washing powder with the simple claim that "Persil washes whiter". Secondly there was a key husband-wife relation that really mattered: did the wife know how much her husband brought home each week? For some women money for housekeeping was provided with an unknown remainder being for the man's personal use. But in other cases there was a partnership, wages were known and constituted the household budget that husband and wife jointly managed. Mum was proud to be in the latter category, and this confirmed my love of Dad.

So here I am, a Londoner in Calverton. There are no other families from London; our migration trajectory is pretty well unique. But I have a strong cockney accent that makes me stand out. Furthermore in the classic father-son football bonding, Dad is an Arsenal fan and I sign up to be a 'Junior Gunner' and receive their magazine by post. However I only get to see Arsenal play at Christmas when we are in London – each year Dad takes me to local derby games on Christmas Day and Boxing Day. At the same time Notts County, Nottingham's best team in the early 1950s, have Tommy Lawton, England's centre forward playing for them, so we also make a trip to Meadow Lane to see Nottingham's football superstar. This is the beginning of a slow transition of belonging typical of any migrant child. Family links to London continue but there is no everyday reinforcement. Memory of life in London becomes sketchy and distant. Gradually I become more Nottingham than London and eventually little different from my friends except for London holidays. This is also happening to my family. Homesickness declines with Mum and Dad joining in village life, amateur theatre and cricket club respectively. In 1955 my brother Ian is born; he grows up with minimal London links. We become a Calverton family; for me becoming has led to Calverton as my 'home town'.

## 2. Calverton delights

***“The mining industry was nationalized, had strong unions linked to the Labour Party, and therefore on the new estate un-reflexive subservience of the village was met with bemusement”***

Calverton in the 1950s was not a traditional pit village, meaning not an isolated cluster of miner’s terraced housing around the pithead. It was a large agricultural village with modern colliery housing grafted on to the north side where the pit was located. Thus I was very much an urban child in a rural setting. This provided a backdrop for an idyllic childhood: growing up alongside nature whilst being separate from the traditional social class deference of village life. It provided me with both an intense appreciation of the countryside and deep antipathy towards unearned social entitlement.

However I did benefit from one aspect of such entitlement. I attended the Jonathan Labray Endowed School for Boys. This was a small school of two classrooms run by a dedicated headmaster, Mr Rees, and another teacher. Unbelievably from today’s perspective, in Calverton at this time when pupils at the infant school (5-7 year olds) moved up to junior level (7-11 year olds), the boys progressed to Jonathan Labray but the girls stayed on; their junior school was attached to the infant school. What a message to send to them! But I was able to take full advantage of the privilege I was oblivious to: as well as close attention to required education needs, the curriculum included additional rural pursuits. I learnt how to make a wattle fence; I cut my own willow stems to make a wicker basket; we had our own beehive (although only Mr Rees worked with the bees!); we had gardening classes – groups of us were responsible for different sections/gardens around the school building. The highpoint for me was becoming captain of the Pond Club. This was because I caught a *Dytiscus marginalis* (great diving beetle) – my parents were fascinated by the bubble of air it carried underwater. I scooped it up in a jam jar in the pond at the end of Little Lane: I can still remember the excitement of seeing it in the water swimming towards me. I kept it long enough to earn my captaincy – as a beetle, it could and did soon fly off.

Always playing outdoors, my friends and I explored all the country around the village from Bonner Hill and Lamp Wood to the west and, to the east, Oxton Wood and the Dover Beck, a small stream that historically formed the boundary of Sherwood Forest. As an aside, I can mention that in the medieval period Calverton housed one of four Forest Courts, where the outlaw Robin Hood might have been tried before being moved to Nottingham for execution. But for us the Dover Beck was where we caught sticklebacks. We devised a system in which we set a row of jam jars together down stream then splashed the water a little distance up stream; the fish darted away from the disturbance and into our jars. Caddis fly larvae, fresh water shrimps, water boatmen, pond skaters, dragonflies

and many other species became familiar. We also caught newts – both common and great crested – that were abundant in ponds.

But our main activity was bird nesting. We learned the knack of looking from below into the sky through bushes and trees to locate nests. I finished up with quite a large collection, something like twenty plus different species. We knew to be responsible, always leaving more eggs behind than were taken. We checked the state of the egg so that we only blew new eggs – the process involved using a hawthorn to make a hole at each end of an egg and blowing out the contents so that only the shell was deposited in the cotton wool lined egg collection box. At this time tree sparrows and blackbirds were the most common species, but I had eggs of most other small birds – robins, blue tits, skylarks, various finches – plus song thrushes, starlings, and even partridges.

And all this nature hunting was backed up by *The Observer* book series – I was given as Christmas or birthday presents books covering insects, flowers, trees, birds, bird eggs and pond life. In my early teens I also got a microscope for my birthday to extend my knowledge of pond life – I remember particularly a little creature that swam around with two egg sacks attached to its side. It can be said that I took full advantage of growing up in a rural location.

There was one additional feature of Calverton that provides idyllic memories: Calverton had an open-air lido at the far end of the village. Filled by very cold water from a local spring – I still shiver thinking about it - Calverton Lido was the centre of my life for a few summer months each year. It had one very good effect, most Calverton children learnt to swim at an early age making later school swimming lessons in Arnold's town baths unnecessary. The son of the owners of the lido was a pupil at Jonathon Labray School, which meant we had the privilege of using the steps down from their house to the pool as our personal sunbathing place. On recalling this I realize how independent my friends and I were when growing up in Calverton. For instance, as far as I know my parents never once visited Calverton Lido. I had built a life outside my family at a relatively early age.

Also about the age of twelve, my friends and I all had bicycles – a standard Christmas present at this time – and with very few cars on the road we could safely explore far beyond our village. I had an Esso road map that included symbols for settlements that showed their populations, presumably from the 1951 census. It indicated that Calverton was larger than surrounding villages (between one and two thousand). This was because the village had had an early industrial period – William Lee of Calverton was the inventor of the stocking frame – and this was represented by rows of cottages with large windows (for light to extend working hours) at the top and bottom of Main Street. Unimaginatively named Top Buildings and Bottom Buildings, the former is now long gone but the latter has been gentrified. For some reason, however, the name has been changed from Bottom Buildings to Spindle Square; the name sign always brings a smile to my face.

Noting the population differences on the Esso map (representing Calverton prior to the new miners' estate), I decided to explore further. I formed Calverton

Geography Club and we visited a dozen or so villages north-south from Blidworth to East Bridgford, and from west-east from Lambley to Southwell. We rode down every street and counted the houses. I transposed the results on to a map entitled "Calvertonshire". No such map survives but I remember devising different symbols for different numbers of houses. There was one thing I learned from this exercise that I have never subsequently come across (despite later becoming a Professor of Geography). It relates to Ordnance Survey (OS) maps. As the name suggests they have a military origin, which makes them sort of official state documents. England has an established church and this is directly reflected on the maps by elevating settlements with Anglican churches (and therefore parishes) above other settlements, even when the latter are much larger. This is indicated in the style and size of lettering. For instance, on my Nottingham OS map Halloughton, at the northeast frontier of Calvertonshire, has its name in a large font size but I knew that behind its church there were only just a few houses. On official maps it seems that the status of a settlement is determined by its church rather than the number of people living there.

Calverton had an Anglican parish church, St Wilfred's, and it had a 'high church' vicar, the Reverend Hoyle. A nice and friendly person with a very hierarchical view of society, I got to know him because he was the gatekeeper to Calverton's Youth Club on a Sunday evening. His entrance requirement was church attendance, any denomination, but he drew the line at non-believers. And he wouldn't budge. Most of my friends and I fell into the latter category and therein lay a problem because the Youth Club was the social centre for growing up in Calverton. It meant we had to shuffle into the back of the church right at the end of Evensong service so we could walk out straight into the Youth Club. Of course he knew what we were doing but let it go; he had made his point and no doubt had weightier things on his mind. It was always a reminder that, even though most in the Youth Club came from the estate, the village still called the shots.

Living in Calverton's dual social world was particularly instructive for negotiating through England's famed obsession with social class. In my family our politics was very positive. The post-war Labour government had produced a 'third way' between American business and Russian communism, a 'mixed economy' that took the best of those opposing worlds: democracy with planning. Still much to do but we were on our way to a better world. But in the old village, antiquated social deference seemed to be ingrained. Long-term Calverton residents would talk about "Master Tim" of the Seeley family who lived in a large mansion away from, and above, the village. I never met or even saw Tim. To the newcomers like us, this was treated as a joke from a bygone age. The mining industry was nationalized, had strong unions linked to the Labour Party, and therefore on the new estate un-reflexive subservience of the village was met with bemusement. However when the number of newcomers reached the level that required a new secondary school, it was named after 'Colonel Seeley', presumably Tim's dad. This particular social continuity could not halt the general political disruption of the village; instead of returning local independent councilors (Conservatives with a small 'c'), Calverton became a 'Labour stronghold'. I heard via the village grapevine that Tim went off to Eton, England's

elite school, and therefore did not attend the school named after his dad. But then neither did I.

For my parents, education was very important. They wanted me to have the opportunities they never had. Therefore they were hugely supportive. This included my father taking me down the pit, presumably to show me a future I would not want. The latter was certainly correct; I remember being at the coalface where I could only see the hewers through the coal dust. They used snuff to help with their breathing and, as a joke, always offered it to visitors like me. I accepted not really knowing what it was, snorted too much so my eyes watered for the rest of the visit. However because we weren't a typical mining family the idea of son following father in our case was never in my mind. More influential was the tenacity of my Dad studying at night school while working fulltime at the pit. After several years of hard work he finally got his manager's ticket, meaning he was qualified to manage a colliery, but at a time when pits were closing and, therefore, promotion possibilities largely disappeared. And so he moved sideways into a new career, teaching mining engineering at the local Further Education College to, amongst others, some of my friends from Calverton. So, in the end, I did follow my father, into teaching, but my route was so much easier than his.

I guess I should mention I was not the only visitor to Calverton Colliery at this time. We had one day off at school because Princess Margaret, the Queen's sister no less, visited Calverton to go down the pit. There was bunting and we had little flags as we lined the streets when she passed by in a big car. Instead of sniffing snuff, she actually chopped off a piece of coal that she took back home with her as a memento. A big event. I wonder what happened to that piece of coal – where is it now? But what I particularly remember was my Mum pointing out the story in the *Daily Mirror*: Calverton was mentioned and their reporter marveled at the sea of TV aerials indicating post-war prosperity in working class Britain.

In England at this time there was the notorious "11+ exam" as a means of selecting a limited number of pupils for an 'academic' education in what were called grammar schools. This divisive tool was associated with horrible analogies such as separating sheep and goats or the wheat from the chaff. Six of us passed from Jonathan Labray, the highest ever; the remaining children went to the local secondary modern school and, possibly later, a technical further education college. Parents of children who passed received a form from the county council asking them to choose which school in Nottingham they would like their child to attend. Mum and Dad sought advice from Mr Rees and chose Nottingham High School first – a very posh school – and Henry Mellish Grammar School second. There was space on the form to make a case for your choice and I thought all my Dad's hard work that I had witnessed first hand should be mentioned in support of the choices. I was dumbstruck when my parents said that in this context the sort of study Dad was doing just did not count for anything. This was the first indication I would be moving into a different world.

In the event, four of us were successful in getting into Henry Mellish and the other two went to a new school in Bramcote on the other side of Nottingham. In

my whole time at secondary school (11-18 years) there was never a pupil from Calverton who was accepted into Nottingham High School. But also I remember there was only ever one girl who passed the 11+ in these years. So make no mistake, going to Henry Mellish, an all-boys school, was a massive education privilege that I only really understood through my parent's joy.

### 3. A privileged education

***“I had obvious problems with language courses. The best one for me was Latin, ideal for dyslectics: spelling was all very logical and because it was a dead language you could not mispronounce”***

1C. Meaning first year/bottom group, this class was not the sort of pupils grammar school teachers wanted to teach. At Henry Mellish every year up to year five was streamed into three classes by ability - A, B and C. Applying this frame to beginning students was difficult because there were no school examination results for year one. Thus first year classes were not supposed to be divided by ability, for instance, pupils were said to be, in part, sorted alphabetically. Nevertheless 1C somehow had a reputation as the lowest of the low, both academically and behaviourally. I now know from later education research that such allocation can lead to a self-fulfilling prophesy by lowering expectations of both pupils and teachers. But no matter, here I was in a “grammar school” and having a name beginning with T my allocation to 1C was to be expected. But hold on, I was joined in 1C by the other three beginners from Calverton named Barratt, Hill, and Snoden. In fact the school took in pupils from around the northern edge of Nottingham, a mixture of suburbs and pit villages, and let’s just say that there was a strong social element in the class allocation process. I guess it was natural for teachers doing the first year class assignments to favour pupils from places similar to where they themselves originated. Classes were about thirty pupils each and at the end of the first year, in the reshuffling using examination results, only seven from 1C moved to 2A. But that included all four of us from Calverton! I can still remember the incredulous expression on the face of the music teacher, who had never hid his aversion to teaching 1C, on finding us four in one of his favourite classes, 2A.

Music was not an important subject in my grammar school; there was just one teacher, a classical pianist with BBC radio experience. I cannot remember his full name but we disrespectfully referred to his radio programme as “Rock with Brock”. Teaching was not his forte; he seemed to be between gigs. On finding me in class 2A, I was chosen for an early personal assignment: I had to write a short piece about famous composers. I used break-times in the library and quickly found what I needed in *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Unfortunately for me, and uniquely amongst others’ writing assignments, I was required to read out my essay in class. Big problem. Having never heard of any of the composers, I pronounced their names phonetically. So you can tell how Bach, Beethoven and Chopin sounded; how I dealt with Tchaikovsky I cannot remember. Of course, this created much hilarity, presumably as intended. It is not nice being set up for ridicule, especially when young. I did not tell my parents about it, even after I left the school. Just writing this now brings back a shudder. I have never forgotten that vulnerable schoolboy, so much so that still today I cannot listen to classical

music despite knowing many people who love it. There's plenty of other good music out there to enjoy; Chuck Berry's "Roll over Beethoven" will always be one of my all-time pop favourites.

This horrible experience was completely at odds with my overall schooling at Henry Mellish. However there is another event that remains particularly memorable for me. Moving from village school to urban grammar school meant that Nature Studies changed its name to Biology and in the process became an indoor subject. Although made less exciting, I very much enjoyed the new subject – as a former captain of the Pond Club how could it have been otherwise? Until that is we came to the teaching involving vivisection in the third year. A batch of young frogs were brought into the classroom, put in a container and gassed to death. We watched them originally jumping around, full of life, and then going limp through their death throes. Now dead, and after a teacher demonstration on how to cut them open, they were passed around the class for us to lay them belly up and do the same. But what had they ever done to us to deserve this fate? I simply refused a scalpel and left the class. I remain very proud of that principled schoolboy; this time I did tell my parents. Nature Study treasured life; Biology was a cold, unfeeling endeavor. It was not for me; I dropped the subject as soon as I could.

Getting to Henry Mellish from Calverton was not straightforward. It involved three steps, catching a bus to Nottingham at 7.30am, getting off at The Forest and catching a trolley bus to Basford and then another trolley towards Bulwell alighting at Highbury Vale. In addition, following other boys in Calverton, I did a paper round when I was thirteen; this meant picking papers up at 6am, delivering them, back home for breakfast and then, usually, running for the bus. The school discouraged pupils working, presumably on the grounds of distraction from academic work. Mr Houston, the headmaster, was clear on this although he appeared oblivious to it occurring only in some parts of his school's large catchment area. And he got it terribly wrong when an awful tragedy happened. A pupil I did not know from Beeston was killed in a road accident while doing his paper round. The headmaster used this event as a warning to all those who flouted his authority by having paper rounds. I could see immediately that it was wrong to use the death of one of his pupils to reinforce a relatively petty argument of his own.

Mentioning death reminds me of another feature of catching the 7.30 bus. The death penalty still operated as a punishment in 1950s Britain. When there was a major murder case that made the morning radio news, the newscaster would remind listeners that a named prisoner was to be hanged that morning. This meant that when I got on the bus this person was alive but when I got off he was dead. This affected me. In fact the only nightmares I think I experienced as a child was to be innocent and yet found guilty of murder and thereby waiting to be hanged. Getting rid of this heinous penalty was one of the many achievements of the wonderful 1960s.

Back to school: clearly Henry Mellish was much further from Calverton than three bus trips; it was in a different social world. In fact this became very clear to

me from early experiences at the school. Obviously there was a massive change in context from a small village school of only two classrooms to a large grammar school with its daunting edifice encompassing multiple corridors on two floors. But it was more than just that; there was a culture shift. In the first week the French teacher gave us a small vocabulary to learn for homework. The next day I asked for the French word for 'it', so as to make up more sentences. Instead of explaining why my eagerness was not the right way to learn a new language, the teacher simply did a put down: "who is teaching this class, me or you?" I was taken aback. This was not the education through interaction I was used to; teachers were there to teach and pupils to learn, nothing more. Confirmation came on the last day of the first term: I took in the Shakespeare book Nan's Mr Henderson had given me. The English teacher was most unimpressed; his only comment was that he thought the book looked quite tatty. Lesson learned: Henry Mellish was a place where you just kept your head down. It was, first and foremost, a middle class training school. This was most clearly illustrated in the school's hatred of football. Not only did the school not field a football team, heaven forbid, but you were not allowed to play the game in your break time on school premises. Punishable by detention, the game was simply considered unbecoming; rugby union was the game designated for us. Forced to play a game that operated as a practice session for bullies, this elitist rugby joined classical music on my future not-to-do list.

On a slightly more positive note there was one episode where I did intervene constructively. Some background: by the fourth year I was relatively well versed in broader issues than school work. I got the bug of reading non-fiction book reviews in the Sunday papers, something I still do to this day. This provided me with a wide range of ideas and opinions. In fact on the trolley bus back to Nottingham from school I often sat with the mining trainees returning from their college in Hucknall. We got on very well; they called me 'professor'! I never actually bought any of the books reviewed with just one exception, a biography of Bertram Russell the philosopher and peace campaigner, which Mum bought for my birthday. I particularly liked his atheist arguments. Now Henry Mellish had to provide Religious Education classes by law but they were very low priority. There were no specialist teachers. Teachers of other subjects filled in. On one occasion our Latin Teacher decided to use the lesson to prove God existed. The argument was that whatever scientists found out about the origins of the universe, there was always the question of what went before. One step before, it was God who started the ball rolling. Now I had read this argument in the Russell book where the philosopher completely demolished it. Quite simply, once you get into going back one step, there is no reason to stop there. Who got the ball rolling for God? Another god, meaning a second step backwards? This argument can be continued, literally, ad infinitum! The beautiful irony is that a monotheistic argument for God finishes up generating an infinite number of gods. After I made this argument the teacher took it in his stride – that's another opinion, now let's go on. As I said Religious Knowledge was a low priority.

However military training was treated very seriously. At this time grammar schools typically had Combined Cadet Forces (CCFs) and Henry Mellish was no exception. It was only a decade or so after World War II and there was still

compulsory, two-year National Service in place. Most of the teachers had war experience and ran the three services – army, navy, air force – in a real professional manner. CCF started in the third year and after one year pupils chose which service to part of; I chose navy following my Dad's wartime efforts. Thus I donned an able seaman's uniform – fortunately no photo exists of this – and took advantage to travel at school expense. This included going from Grimsby to Rosyth on a Fisheries Protection Vessel (it caught fire), a Destroyer on the English Channel to and from Portsmouth (I was violently sick), and one week at Britannia Royal Naval College at Dartmouth in Devon. For the latter I was in the fifth year and the idea was to sample the college as a possible future applicant: A-stream grammar school boys were considered potential officer material. What an opportunity, but not for me: it remains the worse week of my life.

We arrived during the college holiday, about 50 or so schoolboys from all over Britain. The regime was austere, which I didn't like but could just about manage. We were divided into 'houses' for competitive purposes each with our own midshipman to keep us in order. They were clearly ordinary sailors from working class backgrounds who relished hitting posh kids. I realized the paradox of the situation for myself; I kept clear of them best I could. We slept in house dormitories and, at 6 am, the midshipman would enter with a long stick hitting beds to get us up. It worked; I was always out of bed before he got to me. The day's regime then consisted of getting dressed, physical exercise in lines on the parade ground, breakfast, which included an indigestible hardcore biscuit, morning lessons on topics such as gunnery, lunch, exercises on boats on the River Dart in the afternoon, dinner, followed by different evening events. In the first evening this consisted of being dumped off in the Devon countryside and having to make our way back to college in the dark. Midshipmen drove around in cars to catch anyone they could in order to deposit them back where they started. It involved navigating country roads with a map (no problem) and diving into the undergrowth every time a car approached (big problem): fun in a way, but tedious after the twentieth dive. Afternoon boat rides were the better part of the day but I was short on instructor's expectations: most of the boys were so much more experienced than me, with many having parents who actually owned boats.

The two other days were the big parade day and a day off to see Dartmouth town. My house got the job of ceremonial lead for parade day. One of us was picked out to lead the parade holding a large sword pointing upwards, which required some training. Another group of six of us were seconded to fly a message with flags for the Admiral who was to review the march past. The rest of the house, me included, was to follow our man with the sword leading the other three houses all saluting the admiral as we marched by. But on the day there was a cruel switch - at the last minute the flag message group were set aside and the midshipmen commandeered six of us to replace them. The former had spent much time learning the message of the flags, and how to hoist them; we knew nothing. So here we are on this impressive parade ground, the Admiral on a platform on one side of the parade with us six on a platform on the other side underneath an array of flagpoles. The flags are laid out and we make a line

between them and where they were to be hooked and raised. I make sure I am in the middle so as not to make any decision, which flag to fly when and how to hoist it. The first flag came along the line, I'm not sure if it was the correct one but, in any case, it seems it was hoisted upside down. Proceedings stopped, much shouting ensued and the parade finished with the Admiral not getting his message whatever that was. The six of us were marched off and reprimanded as if we had personally insulted the esteemed guest. The penalty was to forego our free day in Dartmouth the following day and to do unpleasant cleaning (hard scrubbing) jobs throughout the college building.

The whole episode was ludicrous, but the arbitrary authority – no answering back – knowingly doing an injustice for no apparent purpose was starkly unacceptable. I have never understood how and why this happened.

Unchallengeable, it represented everything I never wanted in my world; it was an invasion of my person-hood that I have never got over. About every decade or so Dartmouth College appears on a TV news story with the impressive building, parade ground and flagpoles in full sight and I still get a gut-churning feeling in my stomach. Definitely not officer material!

Back to school. At the end of the third year we had to choose subjects to study at 'O' (ordinary) level for our General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) examinations to be taken at the end of the fifth year. We needed to select eight subjects for two years of intensive study. English Grammar, English Literature, Maths and French were compulsory leaving another four to choose: mine were History, Geography, Chemistry and Physics (instead of Biology). In addition I was allowed to take Art because I was very good at copying subjects in drawing and painting and this subject required no revision that would get in the way of work on the other eight properly important subjects. Thus unlike other pupils I took 9 O-levels. However I was not at all 'arty', my favourite subject was History, with Maths a close second, but I had found Geography very disappointing. For instance, in one project we had to produce a local map specifically centred on our home address. It had to include all roads within half a mile. However my house was right on the edge of Calverton estate with farmers' fields (i.e. no roads) across the street. Thus the map with my house in the middle was 50% empty but no flexibility was allowed. Given my ex-curricular local knowledge my 'half' map was precisely accurate but the teacher would not have known that. In the event I got one of the lowest marks in class because the double lines I used to depict roads were deemed to be too thick. No matter my real problem for O-levels involved two compulsory subjects English Grammar and French.

Although not diagnosed at the time, I am mildly dyslectic. I have particular problems with 'i' and 'e', and with 'c' and 's', which is a lifelong thing – before emails I always signed written letters 'Yours faithfully' in case I got 'Yours sincerely' wrong. At school it was manifested in my being very bad at spelling and also poor at pronunciation. This meant I had obvious problems with language courses. The best one for me was Latin, ideal for dyslectics: spelling was all very logical and because it was a dead language you could not mispronounce. But that was the problem; it was dead so why study it? Apart from the spelling I wrote good essays across other subjects. It seemed I was

considered bad at English but good with words! In a quick fire question session in Geography, on being asked to define 'relief' I thought of an answer without hesitation: 'altitude relative to adjacent areas'. The teacher was quiet while he thought it through. I can remember feeling quite pleased with myself.

GCE examination results were sent by the school in the post and I returned from a family summer holiday with the letter waiting for me on the front door mat. Ripping it open I found I had passed all nine subjects. Individual subject assessments were by percentages at 5% intervals; my best two marks were 85% for History and 75% for Maths. I was dissatisfied with the latter, in my class we had done the "Further Maths" curriculum but then took the ordinary Maths exam. The main difference was that the former included calculus, something I got straightaway, and delighted in; but it was back to old more boring stuff for the exam. Results were published in the Nottingham local paper and I stood out with my nine passes despite many others from class 5A generally getting higher marks than me, but only in eight subjects! The results qualified me to go forward to the sixth form to study for Advanced (A) level GCSEs.

## 4. Calverton Colts

***“... this was the only time people, to be fair not many people, had to pay to see me play football! A far cry from my dream of leading Notts County out at the Olympic Stadium in Rome and holding the European Cup aloft after beating Real Madrid”***

I have always loved sports, both watching and playing. The highlight of my time at Henry Mellish was between fifth and six forms: a school trip to Rome to see the 1960s Olympics. This was an opportunity my parents thought I could not miss; they saved up, including foregoing the family holiday that year, to send me on this adventure. And that is what it truly was, I remember the route well: bus from Nottingham to Dover, ferry to Calais, train to Basel, and through Switzerland to Italy and Rome; and back by train up the Italian coast past Pisa, to Monte Carlo and on to Paris before the Calais ferry and bus back to Nottingham. In Rome we stayed in a temporally vacated Nunnery, so very basic it was the first time I had come across toilets as holes in the floor. We attended Athletics and Swimming. At the former we were lucky enough to see the 100 metres final in which two of the favourites were Peter Radford of the UK and Hary of Germany. Remember this was just a decade and a half since the end of World War II. I found it very intimidating when the whole stadium, filled largely by Italians, were continually chanting Har-ray, Har- ray, ... . To their joy Hary won, Radford got the bronze.

But at this age participation in sport was more important to me. I was quite sporty and was generally above average for any sport I tried. For instance, in my first year at Henry Mellish I represented the school at both cricket and, for me, a new game, rugby union. But that was to be the total sum of my Henry Mellish sporting career. The bugbear was rugby, specifically the way it was taught. In fact the Physical Education (PE) teacher used part of rugby as a punishment tool. If he thought a pupil was not trying hard enough he would be moved to the front row of the scrum in order for bullies, who tended to be concentrated here, to perform a free head butt on the miscreant. I happened to me once; it was painful; it wasn't sport. In the second year three of us who were keen footballers decided we would not give up the game we enjoyed and we organised a tournament: teams from Calverton, Kimberley and Mapperley Plains played each other home and away. I put together a team from old school friends from Jonathan Labray and we played at Calverton Colliery's ground. This was possible because I knew the colliery team; I went to their away games on the team bus! We made our own way to our two away games on public transport. I can't remember who won the tournament, which presumably means it wasn't us.

The other two teams did not continue but the next year we decided to join the Nottingham and District Church Youth League. This required adult organization;

George Carter owned a large van, he became our manager and we had access to other cars. But after the door fell off George's van he withdrew and my father took over; the pair of us ran the new football club. But what to call it? I knew the Reverend Hoyle from Youth Club attendance, and also, since we were joining a 'church league', we first thought of "Calverton St Wilfred's". But the Reverend wasn't too keen on this; I suspected football was not something he wanted his church to be associated with. Next we thought of "Calverton Colliery Colts" because we were using the Colliery Welfare ground. We even devised a badge focusing on the three C's in the name: it involved one large C used to head all three words. A pronunciation joke stopped this: it could be read "C, Alverton, Olliery, Olts. We removed colliery and settled for Calverton Colts. We then had to decide on team colours. Shirts could not be black and white stripes (Notts County) or plain Red (Nottingham Forest) because of different loyalties within the team so we settled for copying the most successful team at the time, Wolverhampton Wanderers. So you could not say we were not ambitious! In fact they played in 'Old Gold', the closest we could be was Amber. But this cost money. We funded the team by organizing our own weekly lottery, selling cloakroom tickets. After canvassing for support we each had our own weekly round - I collected from Park Road and Flatts Lane every Sunday morning. Finally, football kit requires regular laundry. Step forward mum; without a washing machine and just a boiling tub she made sure the team ran out every Saturday looking good.

After one year in the church league we moved to a higher level, the Nottingham Youth League that had different divisions we could climb. As Calverton was growing rapidly our recruitment pool for players increased and we also attracted players from nearby, Woodborough, Arnold and even Hucknall, the latter a friend of mine from Henry Mellish. There was always a potential problem for about half our team who went to rugby playing schools. School sport matches on Saturday afternoons were to have priority over playing for any private club; we were always vulnerable to this because we were, by definition, good at sport. Selections for school teams were based on how well you played during Wednesday afternoon sports periods - for instance, a good performance might get you into a school rugby team. The latter would be a disaster for me. My solution was to play wing; in scratch teams put together for an afternoon, playing levels were so poor that the ball rarely reached as far as the winger. And if it did, you could drop the ball anyway (this is what once got me placed in the scrum front row). However there was a real threat in the six-form: the school decided to form a senior Third team for rugby. With 15 players in a side, this meant that on any Saturday afternoon there would be 45 six-formers playing rugby for Henry Mellish. Given inevitable injuries, we're talking 50 players, a large majority of six-formers having to be available. No matter how many times I dropped the rugby ball, just by standing on two feet I would qualify to play for the dreadful 'thirds'. Fortunately the Maths teacher given the task of forming this new team was sympathetic to our dilemma and never picked us.

Cross-country running was the other problem sport. The school team consisted of twelve plus three reserves. I couldn't see the point of running in a large circle. The danger of selection for the school team arose because, as regular footballers,

we were very fit. To be safe we always ensured there were at least twenty runners ahead when we reached the finishing line. I was always careful at counting in this respect.

We were a decent team and got promoted to the second division but we never actually won anything. The best team was a Nottingham outfit called Victoria Embankment and they had by far the best two players at our level. They had a domineering centre half who was on Sheffield Wednesday's books. However he was very unfortunate in the timing of his move towards professional ranks. This was the moment when floodlighting was being added to football grounds. At the Sheffield ground he found that the contact lenses he used for playing football did not work properly and his putative career stopped abruptly. The other Victoria Embankment 'star' did make it; David Pleat was on Nottingham Forest's books and was doing so well he soon left his old side behind; I think he only played against us once. He went on to play in the First Division for Forest, became a manager including at Tottenham Hotspur, and was a TV football pundit for many years. And I played against him! Seeing him on TV I know he is in exactly the same year school cohort (born 1944-45) as me.

Actually Calverton Colts had their own much more direct link to Nottingham Forest. By the early 1960s my dad had begun his move from miner to engineering lecturer in further education. With his new education links he came up with a great idea. He would get the Frank Seely School in Calverton, where we now played our home matches, to offer a class in Football Coaching as part of their night school programme paid for by Nottinghamshire County Council. This was a time when professional footballers still earned wages not unlike other mortals and we attracted Len Julians to be the teacher to supplement his wages playing for Forest. He was a big name, formerly playing for Arsenal and an England B international (a sort of national reserve side). The class was held weekly in the school gym and was limited to just 14 pupils for capacity reasons. We knew the day when the course was announced and therefore were able to get every position filled by a Calverton Colts player. In effect, for one year, Calverton Colts were coached by one of the country's leading professional footballers. What a coup! As County fans we now sometimes went to Forest matches, but only to cheer on Len of course. He took an interest; each session started with him asking how we got on the previous Saturday. A really nice man, and he could see we had some talent worth coaching. We had players who were briefly on the books of professional clubs, our prolific centre forward with Forest, another with Doncaster Rovers and a further one with Bradford Park Avenue before they imploded as a League club. But none made it, and this included the best footballer to play for us, who had been on Glasgow Rangers' books.

With the Colliery workforce expanding rapidly migrants were attracted from other coalfields, mainly from North East England but also south Wales and Scotland. We finished up with a bi-lingual team, Nottingham English (Ey up me duck) and Geordie (Wye ay man). (This was wider than our football club – there were two working men's clubs in Calverton, with the Geordies setting up their own almost as soon as they arrived.) We were also multi-national with one Welsh and one Scottish player. The latter provided the real culture shock for us;

he was every bit as good as Victoria Embankment's centre half. He only played a few games for us and he brought a Glaswegian way of intimidation with him. At this time Glasgow had the reputation of being the 'toughest' city in the UK if not Europe. Razors were said to be the weapon of choice but with our new player, and his two close, non-footballing, friends, it was sharply studded belts. When we first met them they showed us their belts with pride; we had nothing equivalent to show in return. On the playing field he was exceptional in two ways, in football and through violence. As a centre half, and when the referee's attention was at the other end of the field, he periodically attacked opposing players off the ball. We were mesmerized playing alongside as he kicked, punched and elbowed his way through the game. Opposing players soon learned to give him a wide berth, resulting in them making little contribution to their team's efforts.

But not all opposing players were thus intimidated. We played a Nottinghamshire County Youth Cup game against a top team from the Mansfield and District Youth League, and who were a far better team than us. Despite our violent centre half's best efforts, we were deservedly 2-0 down at half time. At the beginning of the second half one of their players had had enough and retaliated. Two of his teammates joined in at which point our Glaswegian's two friends came on to the field from the touchline. With six scrapping it out the referee finally got control sending off four players, three of their team plus our prime instigator who left with his friends never to be seen again. So the rest of the game pitted our ten remaining players against their eight. We won. We finished up in the cup semi-final, which was played on Players Athletic Ground (the cigarette factory's team). Enclosed ground, an all-ticket affair, this was the only time people, to be fair not many people, had to pay to see me play football! A far cry from my dream of leading Notts County out at the Olympic Stadium in Rome and holding the European Cup aloft after beating Real Madrid in the final. Still, better than nothing.

There was an initial core of half a dozen players who were in the team throughout this period, the Notts County supporters and later plus one Geordie. We were close friends so that the rest of our social life was meshed together including holidays. In both 1962 and 1963 we all went off for a week at Prestatyn Holiday Camp in North Wales. In the second year I met Enid Earlam in what became a holiday romance gone wrong – we are past our half-century together. Little did she know that the future would include submarine dives in Hawaii, helicopter rides in Rio, walking on the Great Wall of China, watching the sun go down over Victoria Falls in Zambia and much else besides. All thanks to Calverton Colts doing Prestatyn.

Fast-forward to the 2010s and I'm sitting with Enid next to a swimming pool in our Majorca hotel. We notice the family next to us are from Nottingham. I ask which part and they answer Arnold. When I tell them I originally came from just over the hill in Calverton, the teenage son volunteers that he plays for Calverton Colts. I relayed my story about "C, Alverton, Olliery, Olts" but he wasn't impressed. However I was impressed; here was an unexpected legacy. I was so very pleased I had a smile on my face for the rest of the holiday.

## 5. A very privileged education

***“... embedded in a steamy sea of yellow was an eye coldly looking back at me. I shuddered but before I could act (to do what?) the pupil had raised his hand and a dinner nanny came over to see what he wanted. She screamed”***

Sixth Form. Oddly, unlike the first five years of grammar school this did not cover one year but two years, Lower 6<sup>th</sup> and Upper 6<sup>th</sup>: for some unknown reason there was no ‘Seventh Form’ in the seventh year. But make no mistake it was a big privilege to be there. The purpose of Six Form was to teach A-level subjects at a very specialised level; each pupil did only three subjects. Much criticized for its restrictive scope compared to other countries, this advanced teaching was a delight to experience. For the teachers it enabled them to focus their personal expertise at a high level thereby revealing what really turned them on as academics. For us pupils, we were able to concentrate on just a few subjects, enabling us to see beyond mere content and find the nuances and hidden meanings; in short, to be academic. Thus I was the proverbial duck to water. But I understood the problem of specialization as soon as I was required to select my three subjects. There was not a free choice. Grammar schools subscribed to the notion of two academic cultures, arts and science: so, no combination including both History and Maths allowed. Initially I decided on Maths (pure), Maths (applied), Physics, but within a day I changed to History, Geography, English Literature. This meant goodbye calculus forever, and hello poems, plays and novels for two years. The latter were a problem and solving it was something I would have to sort out. In effect I had two subjects to enjoy, History and Geography, and one subject to survive, English Literature.

On the first day back at school I was joking with class mates who had better marks than me for their only passing a mere eight O-levels compared to my esteemed nine. Formal teaching commenced with a celebratory meeting of the new six formers addressed by one of the senior masters. It seems the school was very pleased with us; we were a particularly good year, our results showing the school in a good light. But then there was an unfortunate twist with the master highlighting one A-stream pupil who had managed to pass only one O-level, previously unprecedented at the school. It was me; I was being singled out! (The master confused me with an older pupil named Taylor who had taken a single extra O-level alongside his A-levels.) I did not have to say anything, classmates howled down the mistake, and the session continued. It told me how little senior staff knew about individual pupils: simply put, there had never been the remotest possibility that I would fail across the board at the O-level exam. I was a little miffed but not put off.

However this lack of personal knowledge was manifest in a more significant way that was to directly affect my future. Why was I continuing into the Six Form? Basically, it was because of my parents’ faith in education. They wanted me to

have what had not been possible for them. Both left school at the then statutory minimal age of fourteen; I was to stay in education as long as I could. Also, without knowing anything about what might come next, there was no planning for applying to university, which is what most six form pupils were expected to do. Thus only when the topic came up in discussion with other pupils did I conceive of the idea of applying to read History at university. But no, it was not possible: an O-level in Latin was an entrance requirement to do History in all English universities. Now, belatedly, I found out that studying the Romans' dead language did have a purpose after all. Not absolutely too late: I did start work on the Latin O-level course briefly alongside my A-level subjects but my heart was not in it. Goodbye university History; Geography will have to do.

While I really loved the History course on medieval European history – a different world, a different way of thinking – I found that Geography at A-level was much better than heretofore. Fieldtrips actually opened up new ways of studying history! In one report on a fieldtrip to Dorset I asked how can you tell whether a small medieval settlement is a village or a town? I noted that the little market town of Wareham had three churches, the same as medieval Nottingham: one for the rulers (aristocracy and hangers on), one for the merchants, and one for the hoi polloi. But villages have just the one church (with social segregation within the building). And in the main course work I was fascinated by America, in particular, the 1930s Dust Bowl (unfortunately there was no Steinbeck *Grapes of Wrath* in our very 'English' Literature course).

Being a six-former meant having a minor supervisory role at lunchtimes – I had charge of a dining table for ten. There is not much to say about school dinners; not being able to go home for lunch you just got used to putting up with whatever was dished up. Meals can be best represented by the gravy and custard: different in colour, one a little sweeter than the other, they both had the same thick skin and heavy constituency so they poured out of a jug at a slow glacial rate. Mundane in the extreme, nevertheless on one occasion lunch did lead to a startling, unforgettable image. Although the school catchment area was largely a mixture of suburbs and pit villages, there were rural interstices providing a few pupils from farms. One such pupil was on my table; no trouble, very quiet, he kept himself to himself. Except for one day when he told me that he had found a sheep's eye in his custard. And sure enough, embedded in a steamy sea of yellow was an eye coldly looking back at me. I shuddered but before I could act (to do what?) the pupil had raised his hand and a dinner nanny came over to see what he wanted. She screamed. All hell let loose; we hadn't even had lamb stew that day. He soon admitted bringing it in from home; he had been carrying it around in his pocket all morning! It seemed this meek little boy simply wanted to be a centre of attention – he succeeded. Too much so: clearly he did not appreciate the very different sensibilities to animal parts between rural and non-rural people. I do not know what happened to him except he never sat at my table again. Incongruously, this episode provided the most memorable moment of my school life.

More broadly, and to set us thinking about future careers, the school organised talks by exceptionally successful ex-pupils, people we might strive to emulate. I

remember two talks in particular and for very different reasons. One was by a senior executive of an international company (quite rare at this time); the headmaster provided a gushing introduction. But the message was not what was expected. He warned us never to be loyal to the company you worked for. Always be on the look out to move to a better position in a new company. This was a much quicker way to the top than waiting for a company to reward loyalty, if it ever did. It was obvious that this made the headmaster uneasy, which only made the message that more compelling! In complete contrast an ex-pupil training to become a vicar provided an awful self-satisfying talk. Particularly noteworthy was the fact that although he was not yet entitled to wear a vicar's 'dog collar', he had arranged a black pullover over a white shirt in such a way that it looked like he already was wearing such a collar. The essence of inauthenticity, nevertheless the headmaster felt more comfortable in this case. Whatever, the point was made that the first step to a top job was getting into a university.

For me the key matter was a simply practical one: all my university aspirations would come to nought without a reasonable pass in English Literature. I found it very difficult to provide personal evaluations of the set materials in the course. There were parts I liked such as Byron taking the mickey out of the poet laureate at the time (Southey became 'Mouthey'), I thought Sheridan's *The Rivals* to be funny, and who could not be awestruck by Milton's *Paradise Lost*? But I just could not get into the world of the romantic poets, and the classic choices of Shakespeare (*Julius Caesar*), Dickens (*Bleak House*) and Hardy (*Under the Greenwood Tree*) left me cold. I simply did not have the skills to write critically about any of them. My solution: to treat the English Literature syllabus exactly the same way as I approached my History and Geography work. English Literature was a 'foreign country' or 'different period' to me so that I used the school library to find out about it through what experts wrote. Thus, with a perfunctory attention to any actual text, my knowledge about *Under the Greenwood Tree* was of the same order as my knowledge of the Dust Bowl or Holy Roman Empire, all three completely outside my experience but easy enough to write on, if you put the work in. For the two complicated texts, *Bleak House* and *Under the Greenwood Tree*, I devised large charts with names linked by arrows denoting relationships; easy to devise, they helped avoid making silly errors. No doubt there was no authoritative fluidity in my A-level exam answers in English Literature but I provided enough stilted knowledge to get what I needed, an acceptable pass.

While on the subject of English, there was a new examination devised by GSE that led to a certificate in 'Use of English' to be taken between O-level and A-level. Henry Mellish entered all of my six-form class into the examination. One part of the test involved correcting a given text. It included reference to a newly built road that was called a 'jewel carriageway'. I changed it to dual carriageway and was pleased to get it right. But it was a close call. Dad had only bought our first car a few months earlier and I had come across signs for dual carriageways on a journey down to London. Otherwise I might have thought the new road was the 'jewel in the crown' of the road builder; I would not have thought of 'dual' since all the old roads around Calverton were 'dual' in the sense that the traffic went two ways. I remember thinking at the time that here was an unintentional

casual class bias: the examination setters could not image people different from themselves, people who did not make journeys in cars. In the event I passed and got my certificate but this was treated as a surprise – remember I was considered to be bad at English. In fact one of the school's top pupils had failed, his name began with T and there was talk of some mix-up between us; the school appealed to no avail. Not that it mattered, the certificate seemed to have no purpose, certainly it was not used to supplement A-level results in applying for university.

But which universities should I apply to? This was a difficult question, I did not know anybody who went to university and I cannot remember any help being given by the school. University prospectuses were available in the school library and we were expected to use them. I applied to four universities chosen fairly randomly as places I would like to visit: Birmingham, Exeter, Liverpool and Southampton. I made a mistake in two cases; replies from Exeter and Southampton indicated that Latin O-level was required to read any Arts subject, including Geography, so my application was ignored. Liverpool invited me to interview and I was well impressed. In the event I got offers, conditional on exam results, from Birmingham and Liverpool and chose the latter. However my decision was not even partially about the agreeable interview; this was 1963, I was a teenager and Liverpool was the place to be. In short, the Beatles were my personal guides to higher education, or at least where to do it.

Of course, I still had to get the A-level grades stipulated in Liverpool's offer. Here I had a stroke of luck. About six months before sitting the exams Dad won on the pools. These were weekly football pools that most families indulged in to win a possible £75,000 jackpot. The game was to predict eight results as draws, selecting any matches from a list of about 50. Scoring 3 for a draw, 2 for an away win, and only 1 for a home win, the maximum was 24 points for all 8 of your selections being draws. This was called a 'first dividend' – if you were the only one with this score you got the jackpot. Players usually used 'perms' (permutations) enabling them to make more than eight selections. This particular week Dad used a perm allowing 12 selections. As the results came in on the TV, Dad reached seven draws with two results to come. Deep breathe, eyes glued to the screen. WOW - both were draws. With this particular perm this meant Dad had 56 first dividends! However it was a week with a large number of draws so pay out on first dividends was low. But 56 winning lines added up to over £3,000 (about £45,000 today). We bought a new house in West Bridgford (posh end of Nottingham). Separated from my friends, except for Saturday afternoons still playing for Calverton Colts, I had no distractions from revising, over and over.

My A-level results came in – I made the grades that Liverpool required. A couple of days later a letter arrived confirming my place at Liverpool University – it is hard to relay the sheer delight of my parents. Like so many of my generation I was the first to go to university (actually the first to even think about going to university). A momentous family event, and, as chance would have it, the same day the letter arrived we had a visit from some of Dad's relatives from faraway Kent. As soon as they arrived Mum was working out how to insert our good news

into the conversations; Dad had not seen them for years and there was a lot of catching up to do. Eventually she proudly announced that: "Peter is going to university". An elderly aunt leaned forward and enquired softly: "Tell me Margaret, is that a good thing?" Mum wasn't deflated; she understood immediately how this query confirmed my movement into a new world beyond the ken of an older generation. "Yes" she answered.

Postscript. The school no longer exists. In local government reorganization it finished up as a Nottingham city school. Educational reforms resulted in it changing from a grammar school to a comprehensive school (no 11+ selection) and it was eventually deemed surplus to the city's needs. Demolished in the early years of this century there is a new housing estate covering where the school and its sports grounds once were. My feelings are very ambivalent. I did return once to get some advice from Mr Revell my old History teacher on my Geography undergraduate dissertation, which was, of course, on a historical geography topic. But that is all, no nostalgia. So a very big "Thank You" Henry Mellish for my privileged education, but which really should not have been. Of course, there are trivial things from school that stay with you for life. For instance, I know what a Centaur is because it was depicted on the Henry Mellish school badge. Some decades after leaving school I was driving on a motorway listening to the radio. The programme had a quiz format inserted between the music. In this pre-Google era, the presenter phoned an unsuspected listener with a question, the correct answer resulting in a prize. A question came up: "Name the Greek mythical creature that was half man and half beast?" As a Henry Mellish old boy I knew the answer: Centaur. The listener hesitated, she seemed to want to answer but was clearly unsure. Finally she spoke: "Buffalo Bill". I found this so very funny I nearly crashed the car! I'm afraid that's what a grammar school education can do to you – only when my superior smugness faded did I think lucky me, unlucky listener.

## 6. Everyday teenager

***“... their repertoire was pure American rock n’roll heavily featuring Chuck Berry songs. If Beethoven had been buried in Mansfield’s town cemetery, he would definitely have rolled over that night”***

I am not very musical. I learned this at an early stage when I was part of a Christmas concert my primary school arranged at a local church in Sherwood. Rehearsals did not go well. My teacher’s solution was that two pupils would have to mime to the carols in church; I was one of the chosen. At first it was a shock to my mum when I told of my demotion to silence. She was a natural pianist – self-taught, she could pick up any tune and just play it – and she might have thought I would have inherited her innate skill. Not so, but she hid her disappointment. Always strongly supportive, after the show she told me I had mimed wonderfully. However, this experience helped me understand that people are a mixture of talents: good at some things, bad at others. In my case music was something I was bad at.

I tell this story to indicate skill is not everything. Being unable to adequately practice music does not mean I grew up with little or no appreciation of music. Quite the opposite in fact: within less than ten years of the Christmas concert I was a teenager and this meant that music was central to my emerging identity. The idea of teenager was invented in America in the mid-1950s. It described a new young consumer cohort identified by their very own music, rock n’roll. A new culture of rebellious behaviour was built around this music core and which my friends and I inherited in late 1950s Calverton. Geographically far away from its origins, we were not pioneers but we were the first generation of everyday teenagers: we understood teenage-hood as perfectly natural, learned from slightly older peers. This meant we could easily flush out the inauthentic. In the early 1960s the BBC presented a pop charts show – “Top of the Pops” – that featured the latest hits presented by the artists backed up by only dancers, not musicians. I guess this was for cost reasons. Anyway it meant that the pop stars did not sing on this hugely popular programme, they mimed to their records! I remember that Dusty Springfield, in particular, could not hide her disdain for being forced into this unprofessional position – ‘forced’ because no artist could turn down the opportunity to promote their latest offering to a national TV audience of many millions. Unfortunately for these non-singing singers, at this time it became fashionable for records to finish by slowing fading out, something that is virtually impossible to mime convincingly. Thus part of the fun of tuning into the programme was to watch how singers coped. Indisputably I had been a better mimer than the great Dusty Springfield could manage!

What did it mean to be a Calverton teenager at Henry Mellish? Let’s start with generational defiance in relation to school rules. An example came with the craze for luminous socks, the must-have fashion item for the young teenage boy. After

a few weeks, and although not specifically mentioned in the school rules, these were banned as unbecoming for a grammar school boy. Also banned, any fashionable hairstyle; for instance, replacing 'short, back and sides' with longer hair tapering into a 'DA' (i.e. like a duck's arse). In an odd way, getting something banned counted as a sort of victory; we were noticed. But even better was something that indicated teenage identity temporarily, which we could get away with. Imagine if you will a group of about 30 pupils in an orderly half-mile march in twos back to school from swimming lessons at the local baths. All smartly dressed in school uniform but with one curious twist, literally. Wet hair meant fashion possibilities, and one in particular: most sported a Bill Haley 'kiss curl' on our foreheads. We had all seen the film "Rock Around the Clock". Alas there is no photographic record of the horrendous march of the mini-Haleys but it must have made any bystander look around as it announced us as true teenagers, just like in America.

So what about the music? It was centred upon being aged sixteen as featured in many of the songs, most famously "Only Sixteen" and "Happy Birthday, Sweet Sixteen". However there was one particular record that seemed to summarize teenage-hood for me, not because of its quality but simply for its basic meaning. Frankie Lymon and the Teenagers' "I'm Not A Juvenile Delinquent" provided an insight into how rock n'roll fitted into American society. The term 'juvenile delinquent' was previously unknown in Britain but it was easily translated: it indicated how adults saw teenagers as a threat. Adults were revealed as both judgmental and wrong. The song begins with, from memory by singing it in my mind, Frankie saying 'No' nineteen times. Nineteen! 'No' is the most important word in the rebel vocabulary, and little Frankie was asking us 'now' to listen to the teenage message wherever we were. There was another important message from bringing delinquency into the music: it was defined as overtly urban, so very different from cowboy movies with Roy Rogers singing "Home on the Range". This was an alternative America, an America of big cities. Overtly expressed by Chuck Berry in "Sweet Little Sixteen" who is sought to dance in Boston, Pittsburgh, San Francisco, St Louis, New Orleans and Philadelphia. This was a new world of exotic urban places: we sang along to Freddie Cannon's "Tallahassee Lassie", and Gene Pitney's "Twenty Four Hours from Tulsa". Way beyond our experience, in England it was hard to be 'only' twenty-four hours from anywhere!

Teenage identity linked to music could be very sensitive. Birthdays were an excuse to clear out parents and convene a house party with loud defining music. For one friend's birthday some of us decided to buy him a surprise present, a record he would not want. As well as rock n'roll records in the charts there was a stream of silly novelty records. We never understood who bought them but it was most certainly not us. The present was the record "Winchester Cathedral" with extremely silly words presented in an old-fashioned jazz format. It represented everything that was not us. A fun present if the recipient had a sense of humour. Our friend lacked the latter, the record was immediately disposed of, and we found we had a friend no more. Anyway it did not matter too much because he wasn't very good at football; Calverton Colts did not need him.

Henry Mellish school was so very English, which is a very middle class form of nationalism and which provided a sharp dissonance with my music: American teenage music encompassed 'school', so frequently found in lyrics, in a way my school experience did not equate with. But that did not matter since post-war Americanization of British society from the bottom-up in popular culture was well established and, in fact, could be traced back to pre-war Hollywood movies, which were so much better than all those invariably 'posh' English films up until the late 1950s. For instance, growing up I attended the Calverton Colliery Welfare's Christmas party for miners' children with a screen menu of Abbot and Costello, Laurel and Hardy, and Amos and Andy (I always thought Kingfish the funniest) and at the Saturday morning ABC Minors shows in Sherwood cowboys were the popular heroes – this continued with US 'Westerns' dominating popularity charts in early BBC TV. All these forms of entertainment were considered second rate by English establishment figures (i.e. 'posh people'), to be looked down on in the way that the people who enjoyed this fare were innately looked down upon. Because this particular English arrogance had long been applied to American popular culture, by the time I was a teenager this attitude accentuated the appeal of rock n'roll in the villages, towns and cities of Britain.

The BBC had an important popular entertainment remit but it did not initially include teenagers' preferences. I had a cousin Jill, about four years older than me, who lived in London so I only met her in the school holidays. But this was frequent enough to transmit her considerable experience on teenage tastes beyond "Rock around the Clock" – Bill Haley was never a credible teenage icon! The BBC put on a TV show 'for' teenagers on Saturdays called "Six-five Special" with an unheard band called the "Don Lang and his Frantic Five" – it was the BBC that was frantic – the band appeared to be the opposite to what was now happening in America. A pioneer teenager, Jill taught me to appreciate "Oh Boy" on ITV, Britain's new 'independent' meaning commercial TV station, and I took it from there. The BBC then had a show called "Juke Box Jury" where celebrity adults judged the latest record releases to teenage frustration; on hearing "It's Now or Never" exclaiming surprise that Elvis Presley could actually sing or purporting not to understand the words in Neil Sedaka's very uncomplicated "Calendar Girl"!! It took independent TV's "Ready, Steady Go", initially fronted by Dusty Springfield, to put pop music firmly on the British TV screen, just as the first teenagers were leaving their teenage years behind! Back to the BBC where the Light Programme, a radio station for light entertainment ('light' meant for the masses with their shallow tastes), continued to ban selected records from the airwaves. These included B. Bumble and the Stingers' "Nut Rocker" for the singular reason that it was based upon a piece of classical music! Mustn't mix genres, the good might become contaminated by the bad. Such BBC interventions in the music wars were amusing – a BBC ban was a sure fire way for a record to become a hit (Nut Rocker went to No. 1) - and irrelevant to me and my friends because we listened to Radio Luxembourg.

We had a weekend ritual. We would listen to the new releases on Thursday night on Radio Luxembourg. Not individually having the resources to buy all the records we liked, we worked out an informal scheme to spread the costs. Each of us had favoured singers and it was expected that if they released a record, that

person would buy it straightaway. I bought Neil Sedaka and Brenda Lee records, as well as some others (including B. Bumble). This meant me alighting from the bus coming home from school on a Friday at Nottingham's big Co-op store, listening again to the week's new releases with big head phones in a sound proof cubicle, and then buying as appropriate. These records were then brought to whoever's house we were using for playing cards on Friday evening/Saturday morning, which featured the latest recordings in the background. In the Saturday afternoon it was playing for Calverton Colts, that evening to Nottingham city centre for drinks to celebrate or commiserate on our result. Because the last bus did not go as far as Calverton, we had to walk the last four miles home over the hill to our village; we sang all the way, not the latest songs but the hardy perennials like "Only Make Believe", "Things" and "Peggy Sue". Now at last I was singing in tune because I have the skill to imitate. Sundays: more playing cards and in the evening the church youth club where the new releases were brought to enhance the wider get together (including girls!). And then back to school Monday, with more playing cards, unfortunately without music, taking place through break-times, obviously against school rules.

I should add here that none of us were expected to buy records by Elvis Presley or Cliff Richards. This was a sort of mini-rebellion within our rebellious context. These two singers were immensely popular in teenage land and that made them a bit suspect. Ours was a very male response; Elvis and Cliff's overt attraction to girls was via a horrible snarl-cum-sneer expression – invented by Elvis and copied by Cliff – which was a real put-off for us. We preferred Buddy Holly, so less macho, he even wore glasses, just like me. In Britain, Cliff's main rival was Billy Fury who also was a bit snarly and therefore suspect, only to be inadvertently redeemed by ITV. They had a big TV variety programme "Sunday Night at the London Palladium" which Cliff had had starred on but not Billy. We supported the petition to get Billy on the programme to no avail – teenage opinion was discounted, putting Cliff on had been just a sop, ITV could be as patronizing as the BBC. This antagonism was illustrated a couple of years later when the Rolling Stones were the headliners. At the end of each show all artists appeared on a circular revolving stage from which they waved to the audience, a bit like performing seals. The Stones refused to complete their appearance in such an 'uncool' manner. On the next week's show the show's host dosed the stage with deodorant spray to get rid of the smell of these teenage idols to the adult audience's raucous approval. For teenagers it said it all, and it didn't hurt the Stones' subsequent career!

Being the first everyday teenagers buying just the latest releases would have meant missing all the great earlier records of rock n'roll. This did not happen because there was a second source of records we bought. On coming home from school we changed buses next to Nottingham's large covered market that had a stall selling second hand records. These were left over disks from jukeboxes; they were cheap but came with their middle missing. The latter could be bought for a few pennies and hey presto you had a disk that could be played on an ordinary record player. Thus we sourced earlier records from the likes of Chuck Berry, Little Richard, Jerry Lee Lewis and, yes, Elvis Presley, two each of white and black, two each of guitar and piano player, but most importantly all

Americans. Also we could buy old records of the two greats who died, Buddy Holly and Eddie Cochrane, also Americans. The latter produced the ideal song for us, "Cut Across Shorty", where the 'underdog' got the girl. But the greatest of this very narrow genre was Roy Orbison's "Running Scared" – the arrogant guy who returned expecting to get the girl failed (I equated him with a Nottingham High School pupil). We were not that much into British acts, certainly with cover versions of songs we would prefer the original American version. And we found the means to see some of our trans-Atlantic favourite singers.

By the early sixties, American acts were touring Britain and one of their venues was the Granada in Mansfield. Nottingham was not on their itinerary but Mansfield, the main town of the Notts coalfield, was only about 15 miles away and there was a bus service linking it to Calverton. So we were able to see a range of stars including Little Richard, Gene Vincent, Sam Cooke, Bruce Channel, Tommy Roe and Chris Montez. Little Richard was the worse – we saw a black guy in a white suit jumping up and down mouthing words that could not be heard. This was before music arrangements in concerts were properly organized – his 'backing group', Sounds Incorporated, simply drowned him out. Gene Vincent had gone past his annual limit for concerts by a foreign artist in Britain by the time his show reached Mansfield so he could not appear on stage! "Be Bop a LuLa" sounded great sung from the aisle. By a very large margin, the best singer we ever heard was Sam Cooke; we came away mesmerized by a wonderful performance. However the Tommy Roe and Chris Montez show was a completely different matter to all that went before.

Here I reach my 'peak teen moment'. Imagine if you will, five or six of us alighting from the bus, walking across Mansfield market-square and turning into the street, as we had done several times before, but this time to be met by hoards of screaming teenage girls surrounding the Granada. I did not mention above that when we booked early for the Roe/Montez concert, there was a little known English group at the bottom of the bill called The Beatles. We knew they were appearing but had no real notion of their popularity. Their first record "Love me Do", an unexciting, unexceptional song, had had little impact (reaching 17 in the chart) although I had friends at school who liked it. But their second record "Please, Please Me" was a massive hit. However neither record had been in our collective buying list. Thus our discovery of what was to be called Beatle-mania took us completely by surprise. Our tickets were like gold dust but we were not going to sell them because we wanted to see Roe and Montez. We pushed our way through the crowd, found our seats in the packed stalls, and then there was an announcement. The concert was reorganized: Roe and Montez were to appear in the first half, all other acts were ditched, and the whole of the second half was given over to The Beatles. Our disappointment must have been as nothing compared to the two America headliners – becoming lead-up acts with girls screaming for Paul and mates, they looked like they were glad to get off the stage. We felt sorry for them. But it all changed when the Beatles appeared; the atmosphere was fantastic, and the performance exciting. Without all the familiar songs John and Paul were yet to write, their repertoire was pure American rock n'roll heavily featuring Chuck Berry songs. I don't know where Beethoven is

buried but in the unlikely event that it was in Mansfield's town cemetery, he would definitely have rolled over that night.

For us, The Beatles had produced the most American experience we had ever felt and yet they were English! But not 'real English' (i.e. posh middle class) – they were from Liverpool. It's 1963 and I'm off the Liverpool University.

## 7. University: escaping naiveties

***“... everybody else was working in universities for geographers so they could make sense of it all? Did the myriad non-geographers see it that way? Being a very unsure sceptic of a basic tenet was potentially worrying”***

Wow! Going to university. Leaving home: this is my crucial transition in the sense of discarding naiveties about an academic world previously beyond my ken. I describe three important new understandings.

First naivety: *being at the apex of the education system, universities would be staffed by brilliant scholars and, as such, we were extremely lucky to attend their lectures.* BUT, lecturers are only human.

I am standing in the corridor outside the lecture room along with all the other students taking this course. Why are we waiting? Why not go into the lecture room and sit down? Because we are unsure whether the lecturer will turn up. I'm in my second year reading Geography at Liverpool University and this situation has become normalised: we stand around chatting for twenty minutes and then disperse. Sometimes the lecturer does appear, always late, and gives a short lecture – as little as thirty minutes of the fifty minutes timetabled – and we flick quickly through a basic text to see who is the first to find out which pages are being parroted today. This is truly the low point of my whole educational experience. I had never come across a teacher who just did not care. And perhaps worst of all, did not try and hide the fact. We did complain – I was part of a delegation – and were disappointed that nothing immediately happened, but the lecturer did leave the university at the end of that academic year.

I was one of the few who were not surprised by this lecturer's behaviour; in my first year I was truly unfortunate to have this person as my academic tutor. Tutorials were weekly discussion groups of five or six; essays were regularly set with the idea of feedback to give the student an idea of how he or she was progressing. This is especially important in the first year when you are entering a new world of learning. We were set a few essays but my tutor did not mark any of mine; I went into the exams at the end of the first year never having had any academic feedback on my work. In a tutorial late in the year one set essay was returned marked for a couple of students but it was explained that this was done on a train up from London after Crewe and the essays couldn't all be finished by arrival at Liverpool Lime Street. Let me say categorically that this was not at all typical of my undergraduate experience, but it was my initial experience. It did alert me to the licence professional people were sometimes able to exploit, at least short term, for selfish ends.

But it was all change in the second year: my tutor was Brian Harley, intellectually challenging and great fun. And the latter could get out of hand. He invited us out as a group one evening for Christmas drinks. We finished up in the Philharmonic, a pub on Myrtle Street near the university but with a rough reputation. Definitely not a student bar, our esteemed tutor decided to mimic a popular radio programme called "Down Your Way". This consisted of a well-known BBC radio reporter going to a different place each week and finding interesting people to interview. Late in the evening Dr Harley took on this role in the Philharmonic using a bottle as fake microphone while we looked on aghast. Instead of interesting people he found disgruntled people who did not like being disturbed by this strange man. Rather than being funny we readily read the situation as potentially dangerous; this was tough, inner city Liverpool. We steered him out of the pub and put him in a taxi for home – he cared so we cared. But this was immediately pencilled in as a one-off experience: never again! Once more I learned that clearly university lecturers encompassed a wide spectrum of human traits whatever their shared intelligence.

*Second naivety: learning is about accumulating information to enhance your knowledge of a subject - simple, just get on with it. BUT, knowledge is complex; it is contested.*

As an undergraduate I was a voracious reader beyond set readings. I started my own little library, mainly cheap blue Pelican (Penguin) books, on all manner of subjects. For instance I was able to re-engage with Biology through a new fascination with evolution theory: I was particularly intrigued with the late nineteenth century anti-Darwin alliance of Christians and Scientists before discovery of radioactivity provided enough physical time for evolution to have occurred. Strange bedfellows are always intriguing. By chance, I came across and bought a Geography book that was very different from the Geography I was being taught. Originally published in 1945, *Mainsprings of Civilization* by Ellsworth Huntington was a summary of his life's work and featured a sweeping narrative of how the environment influenced human history. A leading American geographer of the first half of the twentieth century - a Professor at Yale University - he harnessed reams of empirical evidence to support his arguments. This included relating American student's examination results to the prevailing weather at the time of the sitting. The idea was that a weather front brought a succession of fresh polar air followed by muggy tropical air: results for examinations taken in polar air were found to be higher on average than those taken during tropical air. As a student I found this happenstance input into what exam mark you might get to be worrisome. Hence late in my second year when it came to discussing with my tutor what research I should do for my undergraduate Dissertation – a personal research exercise - my first suggestion was to test Huntington's findings using GCSE O-level results and Met Office data. Brian Harley was incredulous. 'Environmental determinism', as he called it, was a big NO, NO in 1960s Geography. This was bad, old Geography, written off the syllabus except for being resoundingly refuted in History of Geography courses (to be taken in the third year).

In complete contrast, I was sensibly persuaded to do my Dissertation on nineteenth century Nottingham using 1851 census returns. This turned out to be my favourite part of the undergraduate course; I really enjoyed getting my own data, analysing it and writing up the findings. Fortuitously, as it happened this connected with the best third year course I took on Population Geography (by Dick Lawton and Mansell Prothero), which I could use in writing up my research to produce a very good Dissertation.

But what struck me immediately about this episode was that empirical results of themselves are not conclusive. In fact they can be irrelevant. Nobody disputed Huntington's actual results; the basic critique was that the research should not have been done; historically it would have been best if it had not been done. In other words, all knowledge is not equal, and some is downright embarrassing. But how is this decided? In choosing to go to university you chose a 'discipline' and these do 'what it says on the can'. Every discipline aligns its students using a knowledge story of how it fits into the world of learning and research thereby justifying its existence. The only bit of the first year tutorials I remember was Geography being presented as a very special discipline. Whereas all the other disciplines were beavering away at their specialist subjects, Geography provided the synthesis by bringing specialist work together to provide the full picture.

Even as a first year student with little or no knowledge of these other disciplines this sounded like a tall order: so everybody else was working in universities for geographers so they could make sense of it all? Did the myriad non-geographers see it that way? Being a very unsure sceptic of a basic tenet was potentially worrying. But it did not turn out that way; for the most part the lecture courses seemed not to relate to any notion of synthesis at all. Overall the degree course was largely systematic geography, which means lecture courses on specialist knowledge – economic geography, population geography, etc. There was a nod to the synthesis story in that regional geography was reserved for the final year; only after two years study would you be ready to synthesize. The regional course I took was on Europe, taught by Edwin Brooks. Really no synthesis at all but very political – he was just about to become a Labour MP in the 1966 election landslide – the content was based on a committed open-mindedness that has always stayed with me. For instance, he presented a slide of a photo taken from his Warsaw hotel window early one morning of the workers practicing for their spontaneous demonstration in favour of the Polish communist government later that day.

And for me, there was a fortuitous bonus. Purely by chance given how I chose which university to attend, Liverpool University's Geography course was very historical: I did a lecture course on prehistoric geography with Bill Rolleston, and medieval English and nineteenth century studies were taught by Brian Harley and Dick Lawton respectively. In addition I chose to do a modern European political history course as first year subsidiary subject (i.e. it had to be from outside the Geography Department) given by James Bond, no less. (Actually I have just Google-ed him to check and his name is Brian James Bond but somehow students dropped the 'Brian' bit). Ironically it was the latter History Department course that fed most directly into my third year regional geography,

the supposed Geography synthesis exercise. In short, my studies at Liverpool really suited my particular interests, irrespective of Geography's odd 'superiority complex'.

Third naivety: *Geography provides knowledge to help build a better Britain, destroying a jumbled bad old world and replacing it with a better planned world.* BUT, planning for whom?

This naivety came to the fore in my third year when it was time to think about future employment. Getting a job was never a concern; graduates were rare, only about 5% of young people, and in demand. With this privileged position came a duty to do something that would make a difference. And, unlike History, Geography had a strong applied dimension. This was related to the still relatively recent experience of the 1930s depression followed by world war; the post-war Labour government initiatives in regional planning for full employment and town and country planning for urban reconstruction to ensure decent housing strongly featured in economic geography and population geography lecture courses. In fact town planning was seen as the application of Geography to making a better world; something like one third of Geography graduates went into town and country planning, and I was nearly one of them. So, when thinking of what career to pursue, town and country planning seemed a natural progression for me. My parents, who grew up in the thirties and came of age in the war, were delighted as they saw me putting my academic work to good use in helping to produce the new decent world they had voted for in 1945.

But I was not so sure. Outside my courses I had read Jane Jacobs' *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, an incredible critique of city planning in the USA that showed planning and progress were not necessarily the same. And in Britain this appeared to be confirmed by the Buchanan Report that prioritised traffic flow over everything else in planning cities. I applied for one of many planning jobs that came with the creation of the new Greater London Council and got an interview. One of the case studies in the Buchanan Report was Oxford Street in London where a multi-lane highway was suggested to cope with future traffic. At the end of the interview when the customary opportunity for a candidate to ask a question came, I suggested that such a highway would actually destroy Oxford Street as a shopping locale and therefore there would likely be no traffic going to Oxford Street negating the need for the new road in the future. This was considered amusing: no job. But I was successful with Staffs County Council following an equally dissatisfying interview. I was given a schematic diagram of a town and its surrounds including a by-pass, the only road labelled. I was told the fire station was currently in the busy town centre and was to be replaced by a new facility. In order to serve the whole urban region, I was asked where it should be located. It seemed like a trick question; any ten-year old would say the by-pass; fire engines have to get to fires as quickly as possible. I said by-pass. The County Councillors interviewing me were impressed: a job offer. But I was not impressed.

Returning to university I gate crashed a lecture given to post-graduate trainee planners in the Civic Design department by a leading Liverpool planner. He was

talking tactics: to ensure you got your own way in any controversial matter, always steer the elected councillors to trivial items – he mentioned lamp posts – where you could concede points while getting the core of the proposal through. What brand new world? This was terribly top-down arrogance with no concern for people. Newspapers at this time were awash with stories of housing destroyed for planners to start city building anew, including in Liverpool. This was all so reminiscent of what Jacobs had described in American cities. I wasn't sure I would make a good planner.

I was pondering the situation when I went on the Third Year Geography field trip to Avignon. At dinner half way into the trip, a telegram was delivered to me. Not bad news, quite the opposite in fact. It was from Dick Lawton. He had read and marked my undergraduate Dissertation – my ten thousand-word, research report on Nottingham in 1851 – and was so impressed he wanted to supervise me as a PhD student. This meant staying on in university as a postgraduate student doing research full time. This chimed with what my parents had long proffered, the ultimate of staying in education for as long as possible. Too late to get government agency support, Dick Lawton would find funds for my first year through Liverpool University. Wow! I was taken aback: I had moved from educational nadir to zenith in my three-year undergraduate career. A no brainer: the answer was YES.

## 8. Finding a revolution

***“All this really did feel like a revolution; it was most certainly a generational revolt. It meant, for instance, that PhD supervision became problematic, a more detached relation had to be negotiated”***

My father was curious. He briefly took me aside at Nottingham bus station as I was about to catch the bus to start my PhD in Liverpool. “Are you sure you know what you are doing” he asked given that I was in my early 20s and still without a first job. It must have belatedly occurred to him that perhaps education could, after all, last too long. Yes, I assured him, I had found something I was very good at and immensely enjoyed doing. My undergraduate Dissertation had been a real eye-opener for me. I did not realise it immediately but I had found my thing: research. Now I was to be funded for up to three years to study in depth a topic of my choice that I found personally interesting. The educational privileges I had been lucky enough to enjoy previously were as nothing compared to this opportunity.

First however, there was a little bit of a problem to deal with. Here I am back at Liverpool University to do a PhD in Geography. It is the latter that is the difficulty: I was immensely dissatisfied with the discipline within which I was expected to research. After the final exams I took all my undergraduate notes out into the back garden and burned them; this was to ensure that in a future moment of weakness I would not take the easy path and use this material. I needed a completely new start. But in British universities at this time you had to stay in the same discipline from undergraduate to doctoral studies. Although I had enjoyed many bits of my undergraduate course in the subject, I could not see Geography as a coherent body of knowledge. In fact I had treated parts of the undergraduate course in a similar way to how I coped with having to take English Literature at GCSE A-level.

Being strictly pragmatic, I worked out what was needed to pass and then provided the examiners with what I thought they wanted. For instance, in a physical geography course taught by E. M. Driscoll and which I found relatively uninteresting, I discovered a published paper by him in a 1958 issue of a leading Geography journal; this gave me a clear indication of his thinking in order for me to give this lecturer what he wanted in the exam. But crude pragmatism would not do at doctorate level. Thus initially I decided to do my research on local migration and draw extensively from Sociology literature, in effect doing a Sociology PhD in Geography. Early on I gate crashed a Sociology Department research seminar to get a feel of the subject and, fortunately, it was by a German professor on Talcott Parson’s ‘functional structuralism’. This worked on me as a sort of inoculation against Sociology through its apparent mission to eliminate actual people from social research! But help was at hand from an unexpected

source. Geography was undergoing an academic revolution, one that I would enthusiastically join.

There was a cohort of six who started their PhDs in Geography at Liverpool in 1966. One in particular very quickly became a close friend, Ron Bordessa. He brought tidings of Geography from beyond Liverpool. He had graduated in Geography from Swansea where he had experienced a 'New Geography', something that created a coherent discipline without pretending an improbable synthesis. This was subsequently referred to as the 'quantitative revolution' in Geography but it was much more than adding statistical analysis to the subject. In fact, Stan Gregory, a renowned climatologist, was teaching statistics to undergraduates at Liverpool, and Dick Lawton sat in on the course to show these techniques were relevant to human geography as well as physical geography. But this New Geography was a re-imagining of the subject to make it more 'scientific'. Ditching synthesis, this required Geography to have its own specialization: a new identity was being forged around spatial formations, both social and environmental. The younger lecturers at Liverpool seemed to have missed this exciting transformation, but I now took to it like a duck to water. It was not long before Ron and I would be writing a paper on "Scientific Method in Geography", which we presented at a London School of Economics Geography seminar, invited by Nigel Spence, a friend of Ron's from his Swansea degree course. And I would subsequently publish a paper with Nigel on quantitative taxonomy. The point is that this opened up a new world of scholarship within which I could comfortably locate my own research.

To be fair, at postgraduate level Liverpool contributed to this widening of my horizons in two important practical ways. First, our research cohort was given some initial research training, an innovation, which included instruction in using a computer. This was incredibly foresighted in 1966 and with practices quite remarkable from today's perspective. The university owned an English Electric KDF9 computer and you needed to be able to programme in ALGOL. There was, of course, no software available for using the computer, all users had to write their own computer programmes in ALGOL. Thus the final section of my PhD Dissertation was an appendix listing the programmes I had written for my analyses. It was all a very manual task. Programming involved typing instructions that appeared as arrangements of holes on to a ticker tape. It was important to have several carriage returns between each line – these appeared as smooth areas with no holes on the tape – so that you could easily correct inevitable errors. This was done by splicing the tape - cutting it apart with scissors to remove errors and replacing with a corrected bit of tape and carefully putting the tape back together using sticky tape. Final tapes were rolled up, held together by an elastic band and submitted to the computing department, to be returned as results on paper output the next day.

You never saw the actual KDF9 machine but you knew it was very big because it was housed in its own special building, specifically designed to keep it cool. However on hot summer days the cooling mechanism would not be able to cope so computing stopped and, with the resulting backlog when the temperature fell, there was much irritation often waiting days to get results. But wow, this was so

advanced – telling anyone outside the university that you were using a computer brought a mixture of admiration and disbelief. However I had an even greater source of irritation that showed further how far this was from today's connected world. I moved to Newcastle University before my research was finished and, although Newcastle also had a KDF9 computer, the programming language was slightly different: Newcastle University ALGOL was not the same as Liverpool University ALGOL. Only minor differences but it meant a lot of spicing had to be done before my computer programmes would work at Newcastle!

Second, a key support was that Liverpool University paid for postgraduates to go to conferences. I went to my first Institute of British Geographers conference in January 1967 at Sheffield University. I found this fascinating; initially because you could see and listen to the people you had only previously known as names in books and journals. As would be expected some impressed others disappointed. But the real worth of the conference was meeting other new researchers grappling with similar issues largely revolving around the on-going revolution that was eclipsing the old guard. The New Geography was being developed largely in the USA and the key book for me was Bill Bunge's *Theoretical Geography*, first written in 1962, I bought the 1966 second edition. It was exciting because it laid out a credible programme for Geography as the discipline of 'spatial science'. It was a direct challenge to a 1939 book by the leading geographer of the time, Richard Harshorne's *The Nature of Geography*.

This was contested knowledge *in extremis*. As a young geographer choosing sides was not a problem but it was fun because the academic careers of most older geographers were enmeshed in Hartshorne's framework. The new ideas were brought into British Geography largely by Richard Chorley and Peter Haggett, a physical geographer and human geographer respectively. The latter's *Locational Analysis in Human Geography* became an instant classic, a must-have for every young geographer's bookshelf. All this really did feel like a revolution; it was most certainly a generational revolt. It meant, for instance, that PhD supervision became problematic, a more detached relation had to be negotiated. My supervisor Dick Lawton largely left me alone, providing encouragement and getting me slots on specialist conferences in population geography (at Salford University) and urban geography (at LSE) to provide experience and exposure. The generation divide extended right through to the final examination viva of my PhD Dissertation. It required two examiners, an internal, Mansell Prothero from Liverpool University, and an external, Peter Haggett from Bristol University. My viva – an oral examination - took place at Oxford and Mansell started proceedings by saying he did not understand any of it and simply passed matters over to the external: thus the viva consisted of a long conversation with Peter Haggett, which was so enjoyable it didn't seem like an exam at all.

We also took initiatives ourselves to attend relevant conferences. Ron Bordessa and I went to London to attend a Regional Studies Association conference that offered an applied take on many of the models and concepts we were studying. We caught the late night train out of Liverpool and although it took its time it still deposited us in Euston station at 4.30 am. We went to the station waiting room to rest until we were ready to find somewhere for breakfast. But at 5 o'clock

railway staff came and cleared everybody out; we were ushered away with the homeless people who used this room as a safe place to sleep. Anyway we eventually got to the conference, which included two memorable keynote addresses. First, an unknown Alan Wilson (who was to become one of the leading urban modellers in the world) was introduced by a chairman, who had already read his paper; he was totally bowled over by its innovative content. Thus he gave the most flattering complimentary introduction you could imagine. As Alan got up he pulled a hankie out of his pocket and in doing so unleashed a coin that hit the ground and conspicuously rolled over towards the chairman. Clearly it was payment for the positive introduction! After the laughter died down the paper truly revolutionised how to research 'spatial interaction', the subject of my research which made the conference incredibly worthwhile for me.

Second, on came Richard Chorley who was co-editor with Peter Haggett of the influential book *Models in Geography*. On the screen behind him was a slide full of boxes and arrows showing relations between many different types of models. A very complex diagram, we were squinting at the slide to try and get its gist ready for when the speaker discussed it. However Chorley continued without any reference to the diagram. Then just before he finished he turned towards the slide and said "Some days I understand this diagram, other days I do not. This is one of those other days". And that was it; the lecture was over. Panache! There is no other word to describe it. I learned as much from Chorley as Wilson but this time about presentation and lecturing: when at a podium you own the event, always be on top of the subject, and add just a dash of humour.

And being a PhD student was certainly not all work and no fun. Two things come to mind. First, an advert for a lecturing position in a South African university required a photograph of the candidate to accompany the application. This was because South African universities were no longer allowed to place adverts that invited just white people to apply. So we got a Nigerian colleague to send in an application with a photo negative of himself. We under-estimated their intelligence: he didn't get the job.

A more direct problem concerned the Chancellor of Liverpool University. In English universities this is a ceremonial role taken on by experts in ceremony such as aristocrats and other famous people. Liverpool's Chancellor at this time was Lord Salisbury, staunch imperialist supporting the white government in Southern Rhodesia and apartheid in South Africa. One of his jobs was to preside over degrees ceremonies. When receiving an undergraduate degree you just had to bow as you walked past him to pick up your degree scroll. Resistance easy: just don't bend a sinew of your body as you pass him. But for a PhD you had the honour of shaking his hand before getting your scroll. Oops: what to do? We devised a plan to use a false hand (from a dummy), which would be left in his aristocratic palm after a false handshake. The idea was that he would collect quite a few hands during the ceremony. In the event when the awarding of my PhD occurred I was a long way away in Iowa. I received my PhD *in absentia* as they say. I have no doubt none of us would have gone ahead with the plan but it was fun thinking about it.

During my time as a PhD student Enid and I were always short of money; the grant award did not cover the costs of being married with a child. For a time Enid worked at Crosfields in Warrington, the large Unilever factory that made Persil soap powder, on the floor where the powder was boxed ready to be transported away. For some intermittent periods, mainly in summer, I joined her at the factory. Thus without really affecting my research, I worked as a 'bagger' at Crosfields. The soap powder was manufactured 24 hours a day but the product was only boxed during the day on the lower floor. This meant that the night shift had to download the powder into sacks, which were stacked up in rows all night on the floor above. The day shift then deposited this bagged powder down shoots to be boxed below alongside the powder made during the day. As you can imagine the manufacture of powder creates a very 'dusty' atmosphere so that a mask of gauze and cotton wool covering the mouth had to be worn all the time. This was very anti-social since speaking was at a minimum; any talking deposited moisture to the inside of the mask to leave a wet, cold cotton wool lining for the rest of the shift. But there was one recompense. At shift's end you could take a shower; there were no bars of soap, not needed, you just stood under the jet of water and you frothed all over as the night's powder just washed away. A great feeling!

But this combination of manual work and research was not sustainable, certainly my supervisor Dick Lawton did not know about it and would not have approved. Hence I decided not to take up the third year of my postgraduate award. So in 1968 I entered the labour market. This was not without its challenges. The generation split was clearly present between those applying for a first academic job and those doing the interviewing and then deciding whom to appoint. Inevitably I encountered some misunderstandings but finally landed a position at Newcastle University. The job title was "Demonstrator", meaning contributing to the most practical parts of the Geography course, in my case teaching quantitative methods. This was 1968, year of revolution, and I was able to tell non-university acquaintances that I was employed by the university as a 'professional demonstrator'. They were aghast. I got the job because at the Newcastle interview I was able to show that I was genuinely interested in how to teach quantitative methods to students with little aptitude for statistics: I played my Kolmogorov-Smirnoff card – a statistical test very simple to calculate but one that does the business. Yes, probably just like you reader, the interviewers did not know Kolmogorov-Smirnoff from ... other vodkas?

## 9. A perturbing academic life

***“And then it becomes surreal. The Dean’s office is in a converted block of terrace houses. I am told not to enter by the front door; there is a side entrance up some ladder that also acts as a fire escape ...”***

A new job, a first job, reasons to be anxious. Although appointed in the summer I don’t start work until October and have never met any of the lecturers, my future colleagues. So here I am in the Geography Department at Newcastle University on my first day. I’ve chatted with people in the department office and they tell me where and when the academic staff have their morning coffee. I get to the room five minutes early. A little later the door opens and one of the lecturers enters. Approaching him I announce myself as the new member of staff. He says “No, sorry we haven’t been introduced”, turns around, and leaves the room. Oh dear, what a no starter. Apart from Dr No, other lecturers are OK and friendly but the first encounter leaves an indelible mark: I really have entered a new world.

This is a very formal world and I am a child of the sixties, a time of cultural rebellion. Not uncommon generally, but definitely so in this working environment in 1968, I have long hair down to my shoulders and certainly don’t own a tie. So I don’t look the part. Also, teaching my first class I don’t wear an academic gown, in fact I don’t even own such a gown. It seems I’m the first person to teach a class in the department thus undressed. I take a trade union position, if the employer requires you to dress up for work, say like a greeter in Chinese garb outside a restaurant, then the employer should supply said clothes. An opinion proffered tongue in cheek; this comment does not go down well. I really am a fish out of water.

No matter I’ve made it; after all the education I’m in a prestigious professional job. And I just get on with it; doing limited teaching, allowing plenty of time for researching and writing. From the start the Head of Department, John House, is extremely generous by allowing me the time to finish my PhD research, including provision of extensive cartographic services - the department’s second cartographer, Eric, is assigned to draw diagrams from my many analyses. I get on with well with Professor House. On one occasion finishing our morning coffee there are just the two of us discussing a TV programme the previous evening on similarities and differences between early humans and Neanderthals. The first lecturer I met, Dr No, now able to talk to me, was also there but was not able to join in the discussion because he had not seen the programme; TV sets were not allowed in his house. But he intervened anyway dismissing the Neanderthals for having no culture. I said jokingly, referring to their most known facial feature, “But surely, they were high brow”. John House gave a little laughed whereupon Dr No interjected “He didn’t mean that”. The ‘he’ being me, a person who could

not possibly know about such erudite things, John House now roared with laughter.

But I also had a much nicer episode with Dr No. When our daughter Clare was born there were two parcelled presents in my post box, one not unexpected from Margaret Gilpin, the only female lecturer and a lovely person, and the other from Dr No. I took them home to Enid who instructed me to say thank you to both givers. I explained to her that I could not in the latter case because I was not able to enter his room since he required all visitors to wear a gown. No matter, I had to catch him outside his room and thank him for the kind thought. This I managed and was doubly flabbergasted by his response. He said that as a lecturer you worked in a university anywhere across the country and thereby away from your wider family when big events like the birth of a child happened. In this situation it was up to colleagues to come forth and help take the place of far away family. I thought what an absolutely nice sentiment. But continuing he spoilt it: the health of the nation required intellectuals to have more children than the very fertile lower classes. In short he was encouraging Enid and I to breed. The positive side of this was now being accepted in my professional status; the downside is not worth pursuing. However I should not have been surprised because the Geography Departmental Library kept, alongside all the standard Geography journals, one non-Geography journal: *Eugenics Review* (back issues up to 1968, its final year of publication).

There is an episode in my first year at Newcastle that illustrates how traditional routine can create irrational decisions. Their undergraduate Dissertation exercise is very different from the one I experienced at Liverpool University. They require students to carry out a small regional study, typically of their home area. Although with no synthesis pretensions, they are expected to use a standard format that starts with geology and ends in describing economic activities. The assessment process begins with an examiners meeting where a list of candidates and their region with allocations to markers is tabled. Among dissertations allocated to me is one on the Carlisle region; I notice one on the Nottingham region allocated to someone else. I ask if I could swop Carlisle for Nottingham on the grounds that I have never been to the former and know nothing about it but I am very familiar with Nottingham. This is quickly dismissed on the grounds that it would be unfair on the student who wrote on Nottingham because his work would be marked by someone who knew about Nottingham! The ridiculousness of this thinking was simply not realized because of the regional geography mind set. The dissertation was not a research exercise in the sense of producing new knowledge; rather it was a rigid compilation exercise, putting together layers of information on specified given topics. Ironically this meant that the region being studied did not itself matter. Thus any examiner could evaluate the neatness of presentation in compiling various bits of local knowledge.

This theory of regional geography was further integrated into undergraduate teaching through a compulsory final year course called 'Special Region'. Originally all the academic staff contributed: every lecturer had to make his or her contribution, first the physical geographers, then the human geographers.

Furthermore they all had to attend all lectures, sitting at the back as each colleague lectured in turn. I know this from a story Hal Lister told me. He was a cold environment scientist who had worked in both the Arctic and Antarctica. He started at Newcastle a few years before me when Professor Daysh was Head of Department. Daysh's practice was to call a staff meeting before teaching started and announce the 'special region' to be taught that year. In Hal's first year Daysh chose the Ganges Basin, and Hal, as a physical geographer, was allocated to be first up. He had to get his skids on, over to the library to find out about northern India, so he could provide a sound physical geography background for understanding this chosen region. However by the time I arrived, Daysh had retired and John House had taken over the Special Region course himself: he was a renowned expert on regional planning in North East England and taught this every year, a excellent experience for third year students.

There was a second professor in the department, originally a German refugee from Hitler, Professor Conzen. As part of my light teaching duties I was assigned to monitor his urban geography course from which I learned much. Specifically I appreciated how he projected his personality and way of thinking into his teaching. I was not much involved in the actual teaching but at one point he seemed to be testing me; in a class linking transport and cities this master of detail appeared to have forgotten the mid-nineteenth century 'railway king', who made his home town York into a major railway centre. In front of the students he throws out the question straight at me – George Hudson, I reply. I have passed. And, it seems someone at work actually likes me; he suggests my long hair makes me look like a German classical composer!

I am also writing academic papers; I publish in several major journals and become noticed: I get an invitation from the University of Iowa to be a visiting assistant professor for the 1970-1 academic year. I go off to visit the land of the New Geography. When I return John House has largely arranged for me to take the lectureship that Conzen held and I succeed him. He was appointed to this lecture track (later promoted to professor) in 1945; I continued in it (later promoted to professor) until 1995 – just the two of us for half a century, and I like the symmetry. Now a lecturer I have a full teaching load, in fact I teach two of the department's three courses all students have to take: Introduction to Human Geography in the first year and Quantitative Methods in the second year. I am now more central to the workings of the department but I remain even less integrated into the department mainstream of mid-career lecturers. There are a few new faces, notably Graham Gudgin who becomes a good friend, but they are on temporary contracts.

At this time there was a bizarre episode, an Examination Board crisis, which undermined the traditional ethos of the department. Examination marks are not numerical; they are indicated by lower case Greek letters:  $\alpha$  (alpha = first class),  $\beta$  (beta = second class),  $\gamma$  (gamma = third class),  $\delta$  (delta = non-honours),  $\epsilon$  (epsilon = fail). The problem came with the handwriting of examiners where  $\alpha$  and  $\gamma$  could be confused. Both are loops and they differ by alpha being horizontal and gamma being upright. But this geometry can be compromised in the thick of exam marking. At an Examiners Board meeting in the early 1970s one such

discrepancy was found: a first class piece of work on the script ( $\alpha$ ) had been recorded as third class ( $\gamma$ ) on the examination results sheet. This rang alarm bells. Professor House ordered that all transfers of marks from scripts to mark sheets be checked by the office staff. Never before had the angle of  $45^\circ$  been so crucial as in this assessment of sloping loops. A few more errors were found, some also going the other way ( $\gamma$  to  $\alpha$ ). All corrections were made and the Board certified that year's results. It was agreed that for all future years we would move to the new fangled idea of numerical marking, specifically percentages.

But what of past years? The practice of reporting marks was that the overall results (degree level) were posted for all to see and then individual students would meet with their tutors who would tell them where they did well and where they did poorly. In all such conversations students would often say that they were surprised they did that well in course X, or be upset about a low mark when they thought they had done really well in course Y. Such statements had been interpreted as simply students not properly understanding their own performances. The Greek letter revelation provided a whole new context and explanation for at least some of these past surprises. Let me be clear here, this problem was revealed as affecting a very small proportion of marks. But the difference between first and third class marks is large and on borderlines between class degree levels every difference can be vital. There is no doubt a few injustices would have happened in past degree assignments. However this was never discussed, not simply due to it being embarrassing, but because there was no practical way to check and correct previous degree awards. Still, it is a salutary story on one belated progression into modern practice.

Following the Greek letters tragedy, there are two other embarrassing events, both of which I instigated and thereby further soiled my relationship with mainstream colleagues. Both derived from the Head of Department allocating an important administrative task to me to provide the necessary experience for progression in my career. In the first case Professor House appoints me Secretary of the Examination Board. This is a fairly straightforward role to make sure the examinations run smoothly, from setting the papers to reporting the results. However, I find a problem with the Dissertation marking. Each Dissertation is independently marked by two examiners, from which a final mark is derived. Given that the actual range of marks was only about 20% (i.e. between 50% and 70%), I was shocked that the average difference between examiners for the same Dissertation was over 10%. I decided to investigate and found that Geography's debate on the quantitative revolution was being played out in the awarding of marks. All the largest discrepancies involved different interpretations of what constituted good research; new Geography versus old. I was taken aback. It meant that students using techniques I had taught them in my Quantitative Methods course were being penalised for using them in their Dissertation research. I decided to write this up as a Memo to the Board, meticulously making my case by using quotes from examiners' reports each justifying a given mark. The method I used was to present a ream of contrary statements by pairs of examiners each on the same Dissertation. I handed it into the office for typing and the secretary got to it on a Friday; it was circulated to Board members late that afternoon.

Monday morning I arrive at work and there is a message from Enid. She has received a phone call from the university about something very urgent; she passes on an extension number I am to ring straightaway. I recognise it's not a Geography extension number; I dial and it is answered by the secretary to the Dean of the Faculty of Arts (of which Geography is part). I am summoned to see the Dean immediately. And then it becomes surreal. The Dean's office is in a converted block of terrace houses. I am told not to enter by the front door; there is a side entrance up some ladder that also acts as a fire escape. At the top there is a small door, which I am told leads straight into the Dean's office. I don't actually know who the Dean is; I'm beginning to think it might be James Bond, not the one who was my old History lecturer from Liverpool! I knock on the door and enter into a splendid room with a large desk at one end behind which is the Dean. He is a Professor of Law and it is his job to dress me down for writing and distributing such a disturbing document. He is a very quiet man, not really up for this sort of job; we are both embarrassed – I cannot remember what is said. I am asked to leave the same way I came in and return to the Department. An emergency Board meeting has been called for that afternoon and I am asked to withdraw the memo. This I do. I have made my point; the next year I will have to inform my Quantitative Methods class that they should use what I teach them to understand parts of the literature they have to read but on no account should they use any of the techniques in their Dissertation research, it's simply too risky. In the meantime I am removed from my position as Secretary of the Examination Board.

Moving on a few years and an old friend from the London School of Economics, John Goddard, is appointed as a new Professor and becomes Head of Department. He appoints me to be Admissions Secretary, a key role in organizing the selection of each year's intake of students, from interview days for six-formers to making decisions after A-level results are known. Previous workings of this process had created two biases. First, preference seems to have been given to children of teachers as a sort of act of educational solidarity. Second, we had an unusually large intake from public schools, so much so that our student body subsequently divided into roughly equal groups from public and state schools. In the selection process this meant that pupils from public schools tended to get lower offers, that is they needed lower A-level marks to be accepted for entry into the department. In stark contrast, pupils from comprehensive schools, if not rejected after interview, were often discouraged by very high offers that they were unlikely to achieve. I argued that we should reverse the process. Somebody from a comprehensive school who obtained 3 Bs at A-level where such a performance was rare, was likely a much better prospect than a pupil from a public school also with 3 Bs but where this performance was commonplace. Move on a couple of decades and my thinking here has become widely accepted; there is now a name for it: making contextual offers. But this was then; I really was upsetting a very cosy situation, indeed a tradition, which would be defended to the hilt. The Departmental Meeting discussion on this was more than heated; one opponent even said he would inform *The Daily Mail* about my insidious attack on proper standards if I were to prevail. Not necessary, I was in a minority. I am removed from my position as Admissions Secretary.

So here is my record: two appointments to important positions in the department and I have not lasted a year in either. Furthermore, I seem to have purposively manoeuvred into positions to ensure I am sacked. There is an obvious interpretation: it is not only that I cannot be trusted with important administrative tasks; also I avoid the not inconsiderable work that these involve. Hence I am very selfish, doing my own thing while others have to take up the reins that I have brazenly relinquished. I particularly did not like this interpretation given that my teaching load was always relatively high – teaching Introduction to Human Geography with between 100 and 150 students meant that I spent a large part of June every year reading between 400 and 600 exam essays (the end of year exam required them to write four essays). To say I was detached from the mainstream of the department would be an immense understatement. But these two episodes did not create the situation; they simply consolidated what was already there. For instance, before either, there was a farewell party for a visiting professor, Geoff Ironside from the University of Alberta. I got on with him well. However I knew nothing about the department party to say goodbye at the end of his year with us. I was the only member of staff not invited. Geoff was furious. He responded in exactly the right way: I was invited to teach summer school at Alberta. We got on because he was interested in research, including my research. And this was what was at the root of my troubles with my professional colleagues.

One job I did keep for a while was as Chair of the department's Library Committee. In this role I received a wonderful education on how to operate in wider university power politics. With financial cutbacks, the message came through that if a department wanted to order a new journal it had to stop taking an existing one. But my committee noticed that although Geography was a larger department than Politics – more staff, more students – the latter had more than three times the number of journals we had. A clear injustice. The obvious reason appeared to be that the Head of the Politics Department was also the Chair of the University Library Committee. I went off to have a meeting with him to discuss the matter. Very well prepared with relevant library statistics, I thought I could persuade him of our underfunding using facts. But no, he had an alternative set of numbers, many more than I had, that conclusively showed that Politics had no more journals than other departments. Clearly I didn't understand. I went away to study his realms of numbers. I finally worked it out. Most journals were costed against one department – thus "The Geographical Review" was set against the Geography library budget. But some journals were deemed 'multidisciplinary' and costed accordingly, for instance "Regional Studies" to Geography and Planning. I found that all Politics journals were classed as 'multidisciplinary'. Thus a standard politics science journal was recorded as, say 25% Politics, 25% Sociology, 25% Economics and 25% Geography. The result was obvious. I had more than met my match, a true master of university politics. I decided never again to try and operate in this political realm. It required huge amounts of effort to be accumulated over the long term. I made better use of my time. My political activity was to be outside the university

Within the university my problem was that I was producing numerous research articles in leading journals when the departmental mainstream was producing little or nothing of this kind. I also started writing books, three in the late '70s, two more in 1981. So I was quite prolific. I got it into my head that this was turning out to be quite a disadvantage. The more I published, the more I was estranged from professional colleagues. This was not a good place to be. I even thought up a scheme where I would continue to publish at the same rate but hive off some pieces and publish under a pseudonym. This new 'author' would be an independent scholar, who could be communicated by post, C/O (care of) Peter Taylor at Newcastle University. And I thought of a name. I would use my middle name James, and then an acronym CROGFAM as surname.

The acronym stands for Colloquial Rendition Of Go Forth And Multiply. I have since understood that as a rude riposte, the two words making up this offensive phrase are the most borrowed part of the English language infiltrating other languages across the world. So crogfam is truly multilingual. I never did publish as James Crogfam but he came to have a jokey life of his own. For instance, with the family in the US on Friday evenings waiting in a restaurant for a table, it was always a race between Enid and I to be first to provide our name for the restaurant's waiting list. When I won the announcement signalling us to go to our table would be "Crogfam, table for four". I also used it in pub quizzes in England. On one occasion I won a bonus prize and had to go up and collect a bottle of wine. On handing it over the quizmaster mentioned my unusual name and asked where I was originally from. What to say? From nowhere came the answer; crogfam is Albanian. (I guess my thinking was that I could be pretty sure there would nobody from that country in the pub.) But the main way I have invoked my supposed Albanian ancestry more recently has been electronically. With the coming of emails all lecturers were given addresses by their universities. A decade or so ago contact through my University account failed for some days resulting in me missing the funeral of my PhD supervisor Dick Lawton. I was very angry, nothing I could do, except ... I changed over to a non-university account under the name of crogfam. People with gmail accounts typically have numbers after their name to distinguish them from other people with the same name. I have no number in my gmail address. There's only one crogfam!

## 10. Promotion? Promotion!

***“I could tell all my friends, mostly left wing, that Margaret Thatcher, or at least Oxford academic voters, saved my career!”***

When you begin a new job promotion is not really on your mind, not least because it is something for a fairly distant future. In my case it was somewhat different in that I had developed a professional ethos that precluded promotion. Working in a professional job meant you used specialised knowledge alongside colleagues with different but related knowledge. Thus a department in a university should run as an integrated knowledge collective in which everybody was considered equal. No need for professors, there would have to be a departmental administrator but this was a separate task from the knowledge workers. Now Professor House held completely different view on this; he was the convenor of the university professoriate, a body to ensure the voices of professors were prominently heard in the university. He was very hierarchical in a traditional way: “The” professor of a department was more than just its head; he set the tone, the standard and the reputation of the department. Thus mid-career mainstream lecturers would refer to John House as ‘my professor’. I didn’t. We had conversations on this – I seemed to have intrigued him – and I agreed to write a short note on the matter for him. The note was not about changing his views, just clarifying where I was coming from. I lost this pure idealism when I had been at Newcastle just less than a decade. Being practical, promotion meant a rise in salary!

At this time promotion to Senior Lecturer was nominally based on research output. However in Geography it appeared to be more age-related, lecturers waiting their turn. Although nominated by the Head of Department, promotion had to be confirmed by a university committee. Hence there were potential problems for Geography candidates since research was not an active feature of the mainstream lecturers. In one case a candidate with literally no publications was put forward. In the months before, he wrote a short piece on a topic unrelated to anything going on in the department; this was produced as a ‘department paper’ with no outside peer review (as, for instance, for a journal article). He got promoted. After House left for Oxford there was a change in university rules: Heads could still nominate for promotion but lecturers could now nominate themselves. House’s replacement, Professor Simpson, nominated the next in turn; I nominated myself citing my many research publications. The result was very interesting: the university committee rejected both of us. My reading of it was that my research record was so much better than the other candidate that they could not appoint him above me, but at the same time overruling a new Head of Department would be undiplomatic and embarrassing. Thus we both lost.

In other years I continued to put myself forward but seemed to be unpromotable. I assumed this related to my troubles in the department. Ironically the effect was that I had a sort of veto on promotions from Geography, nobody was getting promoted, leaving more senior positions for other departments (There was a fixed quota of promotions across the university for each year.) In the early 1980s it reached the stage where I was potentially holding back younger Geography colleagues who did good research and deserved promotion, notably Tony Champion. Even when a new Head, John Goddard, nominated me for promotion, the committee was not moved the first time. But John was successful the second time, halleluiah: I'm a Senior Lecturer! This was to have been my last try; I had decided that if I was turned down again it was time to give up.

But the times were changing in my direction; the quality and quantity of university research entered the national political agenda. This resulted from reaction to Oxford University foolishly voting not to give the Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, an honorary degree. This was the first time the university had refused such an honour to one of its graduates on becoming the nation's leader. At Newcastle the university leadership now asked every department to provide a review of their research strengths. John Goddard produced a draft statement for Geography; it highlighted two particular strengths: my research on Political Geography and that of a new colleague, Mark Overton, on Historical Geography. John went off to Australia for a short research visit leaving the department to discuss his draft and submit by a deadline that was before his return. In the event this was the mainstream cohort of the department's last hurrah. The document was revised so that reference to the research of Mark and me was removed and replaced by the long term interests of the revisers despite there being no publications in these supposed research strengths of the department.

It did not matter; very shortly the university was asking departments to prepare 'mock' research exercise statements where research programmes and outputs were the order of the day. I can remember Mark saying to me something along the lines that 'overnight, Peter, you have become valuable'. The next year the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) was rolled out across the country and I figured prominently in the Newcastle Geography return. Over the next few years the mainstream old guard retired and were mainly replaced by real researchers in John Goddard's Centre for Urban and Regional Development (CURDs) propelling it on its way to becoming a world class research facility. And I got another promotion, to a Readership in 1986. I could tell all my friends, mostly left wing, that Margaret Thatcher, or at least Oxford academic voters, saved my career!

It might have been thought the next step on the promotion ladder, the last one, to Professor, would have been reasonably straightforward, certainly compared to past experience. Not so. My research was going from strength to strength and I had developed a worldwide recognition as a leading Political Geographer. This was a time when research output was being measured. The chief means of

evaluation was citations - how many times other researchers cited a particular piece of writing - was deemed to measure academic influence, and therefore research importance. Citations could also be summed for the publications of individual researchers to the same end. In late 1980s, the Journal *Area* published a paper listing the top fifty geographers in terms of number of citations. I was ranked 14<sup>th</sup> in the world. Furthermore the Newcastle department had three people in the list, Stan Openshaw and John Goddard were also there. No other department, even in the USA, had that number of people in the top fifty. The argument could be made that Geography with CURDS was the best department in the world! But it wasn't made; nobody at Newcastle University seemed to notice this success. It might have been because everybody in the list was a full professor, except for just two - Stan and me.

The new Head of Department, Malcolm Newsome, proposed me for a Personal Chair, which is to be given the title 'Professor'. Very supportive, he wrote his recommendation including my citation ranking plus much else besides. He thought it would be a formality. The process involved submission to a university committee whose job was to vet the applications. No promotion to professor could be made without selected neutral referees from other universities agreeing that the candidate was worthy of a professorship. The committee had the responsibility of making sure weak applications did not go to outside scrutiny and thereby blemish the reputation of the university. In my case this was deemed to be the situation; there was to be no outside assessment, my name was removed from the list of that year's candidates. Thus, not only did Malcolm's recommendation fail, it did so ignominiously. Furthermore the university rules specified that failed candidates could not reapply for three years.

Malcolm and I had a meeting to consider what to do. We realized that actually the committee had deemed me not to be a candidate, and therefore the three-year rule did not apply. Using this loophole in the rules Malcolm made it known that he would routinely nominate me every year until I became a candidate subject to outside scrutiny. The following year I was accepted as a candidate by the committee, and the external referees gave the thumbs up. In 1990 I became the Professor of Political Geography at Newcastle University. I had just published my 13<sup>th</sup> book, *Britain and the Cold War*, so for me, 13 was a lucky number! More than a decade of blackballing was over; time to celebrate albeit after missing out on thousands of pounds in lost salary.

I have a fairly thick skin; my years of difficulties in the department did not affect me personally, and apart from the promotion saga it did not really affect my work. But there is one episode that was symptomatic of a mind set antagonistic to academic initiative. My area of research, Political Geography, had been in the doldrums since World War II - it had been associated with Nazi Germany - but was beginning to recover in the 1970s. In the early 1980s a series of international conferences were held, the first convened by John House, now of Oxford, in which I was also involved. At the second conference I was invited to give a keynote address - I was still just a lecturer addressing an audience of international professors! How come? Well the British law publisher Butterworths was looking to expand beyond its legal speciality into the social

sciences. One venture was to launch a new academic journal in Political Geography and I was to be the editor. *Political Geography Quarterly* first appeared in 1982 and did so well that the 'Quarterly' bit had to be removed from the title because more than four editions were required to cope with the burgeoning publishing load. *Political Geography* remains the flagship journal of the sub-discipline. In the 1980s this journal spread to university libraries across the world and, being edited by me at Newcastle University, my university was seen as at the forefront of Political Geography's resurgence. It might be thought that this would be welcomed and, furthermore, it would enhance my promotion prospects. Obviously not: here comes another crogfam moment.

Butterworths provided me with a small stipend as editor plus a little money for secretarial support; one of the secretaries in the department office agreed to help with typing letters in her lunchtime for which she was remunerated. Running the journal precipitated a lot of mail. I arranged for the total postage for everything I sent involving the journal to be counted so I could reimburse the university every month. But this was abruptly stopped. It was pointed out that I was working for a private company and the university mail service should therefore not be involved. It meant I had to buy sheets of stamps from the nearby post office, weigh all packages and apply the required stamps, and then take them off campus to post. Since my secretarial help was using a university typewriter during her lunchtime, I thought it only a matter of time before this was queried, so I ended the practice. I moved everything, literally, in-house. Enid took over as my general helper and was paid directly by Butterworths. Thus despite what it said on the cover, this successful journal was not edited by me at Newcastle University but at a house in Forest Hall. This whole episode was all a bit unpleasant but I had come to treat such things as normal.

Being a Professor in the early 1990s actually made very little difference to my work. Although the department had changed immensely there had never been any investment in my area, for instance a new lecturer in political geography; I was referred to as a 'lone scholar'. This was a ludicrous description of me, I had myriad research contacts across the world, but it represented again the myopic way of thinking at Newcastle University. However it was true I had no other researcher with me in my everyday work. But this was also beginning to change. After a decade or so of editing *Political Geography* I decided to withdraw and hand over to the capable hands of my co-editor John O'Loughlin. At about the same time two colleagues from the Newcastle's Politics Department, Barry Gills and Ronen Palan, contacted myself and Ash Amin to take forward their idea of a new journal on globalization. Thus *Review of International Political Economy (RIPE)* was born with Routledge as publisher.

But again there was no support from the university, this time for an inter-departmental initiative. A chair in Politics became available but the chance of appointing a Professor of International Political Economy – and there were really good candidates – was missed. Someone told me that the Vice-Chancellor, not himself a social scientist, had been advised and accepted the view that globalization was just a 'passing fad' – this is the exact phrase used. In 1995 I got a phone call from David Slater asking whether I would be interested in applying for

the Human Geography Chair at Loughborough University. Yes I would and the application was successful. The other three *RIPE* editors also left Newcastle. Bizarrely a little afterwards, Newcastle University set up a Centre for Globalization but nothing much seemed to come of it. In contrast *RIPE* has been a phenomenal success and of the many users today, hardly any will be aware of its Newcastle University origins.

My decision to move to Loughborough University was not as easy as might be thought. The choice was between staying in a university that left me alone to get on with my research and teaching: I had finally found a comfortable niche at Newcastle, after all the travails, why leave now? On the other hand, Loughborough offered an opportunity to be in a department with several people who worked on topics similar to my interests; I would be in a department collaborating with colleagues everyday. The latter promised a new experience I could not resist. I considered it a further promotion: from 'lone scholar' to 'engaged professor'. But lurking in the background was the thought that I wanted to prove that I actually could be a good colleague within a department. Clearly the majority view for most of my time at Newcastle was that I was an awful colleague, never to be trusted. Therefore searching for mutual respect was another important criterion in the decision mix.

This point was reinforced after my leaving do (farewell gathering) at Newcastle – I asked not to have one but got persuaded against my will. However well meaning by more recent colleagues I still thought it would be a tad embarrassing. And so it proved to be. At the end as I'm leaving the building one of the support staff shouts up the stairwell to remind me that the globes in my office are not mine. These are 1930s globes, they had been kept hidden away in the old geography library before I found them and rescued them for use to decorate my room. This reminder was presumably to ensure I did not take them with me when I left. Simply put I could not be trusted not to steal these valuable globes! I had thought sour relations in the department were long gone. Not easily shaken, I was this time. This final sad event was the true nadir of my 27 croffam years at Newcastle Geography Department.

## 11. American interludes

***“I liked American universities better than British universities but this was trumped by my liking living in British society more than in American society”***

Vermont, July 4th 1979. My two children, Carl and Clare, are racing across a field to try to be first to tell me their news. We are living in Hanover, New Hampshire while I teach a summer school at Dartmouth College. It's Independence Day and we have decided to have the day out by simply driving into Vermont to find some celebrations. We cross the Connecticut River and stop at a town that has a large fair with numerous stalls selling all manner of things. They stammer out their message together: “Dad, that man over there is selling your book”. They take me to the stall and there, sure enough, is *Quantitative Analysis in Geography*. The man is sceptical at the claims of my children that it's their dad who wrote it. But he hears my English accent, sees that the author is from Newcastle University in England and concludes it's true. He explains he has just graduated from the University of Vermont and is selling off all his textbooks. He becomes a little apologetic. He is selling the books at two prices, \$1 and \$2, and my book is in the cheaper category. It seems the title makes it not an easy sell in this market. But I buy - I need to get second-hand copies away from customers to protect my royalties!

Some years earlier a commissioning agent from the Boston publisher Houghton Mifflin was visiting the University of Iowa where I was teaching quantitative methods and he offered me a contract to turn my course into a book. My teaching strategy was to make the subject more broadly geographical than specifically statistical and this formula was transferred to the book. This opportunity epitomised American universities as my academic lifeline; the University of Iowa was my first port of call. I found it all to be a truly exhilarating experience. The basic premise that I was appreciated for what I did – my work – and not for my social background was unbelievably wonderful. The Department of Geography chairman, Clyde Kohn, met us at Cedar Rapids Airport and drove us to Iowa City where we were booked into the University Campus Hotel. Clyde and his wife Doris were superb hosts. Everybody was friendly. Doris helped us find an apartment and open a bank account. The latter was an eye opener. I was a one-year replacement for an experienced professor and simply took over his salary - \$16,000. This was about ten times more than I was paid in the UK; I had started at Newcastle in 1968 at £1105, this had increased a little by 1970 but not by that much! The idea of being so well off took some time to get used to! We could buy a car; in fact, we had no choice - you had to drive a car to live in Iowa City.

After purchasing our dark blue Pontiac LeMans, the first problem was that I had never driven a car in my life. Easily solved. The first Saturday morning there's a knock on the door and very posh English lady introduces herself as Janet Shipley, chairwomen of the university's International Wives Club. She tells us her

husband is an engineering professor; she was a GI bride. A no-nonsense person, she has come to teach me to drive and we are straight into the car making for a car park to practice. Two or three sessions and I'm put in for a driver's test. It is taken by the Johnston County Sheriff, with gun in holster; two spins round the block, a parking manoeuvre, and I have passed – everybody is simply expected to drive in America. Janet becomes more than driving instructor; she takes us under her wing. We are her family's guests at Thanksgiving. I find her husband intriguing. He owns a small aircraft with a couple of friends; they find this to be the best way to get to conferences. But I don't realize that Janet is actually even more interesting than her husband.

I have been avoiding talking politics with her because I assumed we would be on different sides. And then someone tells me something that everyone thinks I already knew: she is Clement Attlee's daughter. You can imagine my next letter home – by the way mum and dad, it was Clement Attlee's daughter who taught me how to drive! She knows all the great figures of mid-twentieth century Labour, some of whom she refers to as 'uncle'. The one thing I remember is her saying how distraught she was at the untimely death of Hugh Gaitskell, Labour leader before Harold Wilson. She tells me that his death was partly due to medical negligence, which is not how it is officially recorded (i.e. as a severe reaction to dose of flu).

But the key thing for me is that I was in a Geography department at the forefront of the New Geography. I am amongst work colleagues who all shared the same idea of research in Geography applied across a variety of subjects: as well as Clyde Kohn (pioneering new urban geography) and Jim Lindberg (pioneering new economic geography), there is Frank Horton (urban geography), Dave Reynolds (political geography), Gerry Rushton (retail geography), John Mercer (social geography), plus two PhD students I remain friends with to this day - Clark Archer and Tom Bell. This is geographical paradise to me, epitomised by being included in an on-going departmental project entitled "Theory of Quantitative Geography". It was in fact a strange undertaking: writing a report on the impact of the quantitative revolution in geographical research. It was commissioned by ... wait for it ... the US Army. And this was during the Vietnam War!

I rationalised my participation in two ways. First, it was better to spend their resources on academic activities rather than the pursuit of war; and second, the subject matter would in no way be helpful in that pursuit. The result was a 500-page treatise *Quantitative Geography: Achievements and Prospects* written by a collective of seven scholars – I joined Gerry Rushton, Frank Horton, James Lindberg, Mike McNulty, Dave Reynolds, and Neil Salisbury. It was an honour to be included in this list. But there was a snag. The readership has been very close to zero! Not a top secret document, nevertheless the instruction on the inside cover was "Destroy this report when no longer needed". However copies surviving this cull can be found on Google. And, on rereading my two chapters – chapter 1 on mathematics in Geography (written with Dave Reynolds) and chapter 4 on regional taxonomy - I am proud of my contribution, especially the latter. But given the circumstances it could not be a career changer!

Much more relevant, I joined in Dave Reynolds' political ecology course and this set me on my way to political geography; I even got involved – producing a working bibliography for another report - in the political redistricting of Iowa's congressional districts. One of the highlights of the year was a group of us driving from Iowa City to Boston for the annual American geographers conference. It is impossible to under-estimate the importance of this period on my subsequent career. And, the big bonus, it was so socially inclusive: we knew all these people as families in their homes. For instance, the Kohns had the biggest fridge we had ever seen, Dave Reynolds had the first gun collection we had ever seen, and Jim Lindberg had a bust of his famous relative Charles Lindbergh by his front door. When we revisited Iowa a decade and a half later 'Uncle Charles' was in his usual place but therein lies a tale. Shortly after we left in 1971, the bust had been taken by students and disappeared; shortly before we returned the bust had been found when dredging the Iowa River, so we saw continuity where there was none! The year concluded with the department holding a farewell barbeque for us next to the Iowa River, wherein corn cobs were dipped before grilling. Yummy.

As well as the work trip to Boston, with the family I also drove in the other direction, to the Rockies, Denver, and then back via Kansas City. This gave us a broader view of the USA. For instance, near Pike's Peak we found an all-year 'Christmas shop', why not? In the Kansas Badlands we found another side of America. In the bar attached to our motel in a small town, it was Enid and the children who proved to be my shield – for the locals, the family's presence turned me from a dangerous long-haired radical to just another human being. This was 1971, the height of Vietnam conflict, and I had seen this divided America previously in Iowa City. In a packed stadium for a College football game, the student marching band concluded their pre-game performance by forming themselves into the peace sign. Boos rang out around the stadium showing that this college town was only a small liberal oasis within a more conservative hinterland.

Why didn't I stay and continue my career in the USA? There was some discussion of me staying on at Iowa but Enid and I had a long chat on this and agreed to put personal feelings above work opportunities. Put crudely, we did not want our children to grow up as little Americans. And so, after an incredible year it was back to England.

My position was quite straightforward: I liked American universities better than British universities but this was trumped by my liking living in British society more than in American society. Thus, career-wise I compensated for leaving behind a supportive academic environment through regular returns to US universities. In 1978 I was a visiting professor at Clark University, a small university in Worcester, Massachusetts but with a famous Geography Department. It was different from Iowa in that it had pioneered a radical geography agenda that included launching the journal *Antipode*. For radical geographers like myself working in mainstream departments this journal provided a steady stream of articles that kept us abreast of latest ideas and research. Hence Clark University provided a very different experience than Iowa.

Importantly, one thing was the same, our social inclusion: the family received the same friendly welcome as in Iowa, very much helped by Phil O'Keefe, a friend from North Shields and former Newcastle student who arranged the visit and found us an apartment in a Worcester triple-decker. I taught quantitative methods again, but also took over Saul Cohen's political geography graduate class. Saul was a leading political geographer and on sabbatical. It was a small class of just five graduate students and so I made the goal of the course to do a joint research project and publish the results in a leading Geography journal; it worked, the paper is in the 1980 volume of *Professional Geographer*.

Being a visiting professor provides full membership of the department meeting but without having to bear any long-term consequences of its decisions. So my approach was to engage but tread warily. However this led to a strange stressful episode at Clark. There was an important decision to be made about the department's graduate programme. A leading professor, Robert Kates, who brought a lot of money into the department through his pioneering natural hazards research, proposed dividing the graduate programme into two. His part involved research beyond normal geographical subjects and therefore he suggested a "Geography and Associated Studies" PhD programme to run separately from the on-going Geography PhD programme. This was widely opposed being seen as a means of diverting money, and therefore students, away from the core Geography programme. Thus it was just the sort of topic that, as a visitor, I would not normally get involved in. However, after some heated discussion that was getting nowhere, the departmental chairman, Len Berry, turned to me and said something along the lines that a neutral outsider's view would be helpful. Oh dear! What to say? Thinking quickly I conjured up a joke as a way of getting out of seriously contributing to the decision-making. With my liking for playing with acronyms, I suggested that the choice was between Geography and GAS. The department meeting erupted with laughter, far more than the comment warranted. As a newcomer I had no idea that Professor Kates, although very well respected, did have a reputation for going on a bit, you might say he liked the sound of his own voice. So GAS meant much more than I had intended it to mean. The atmosphere of the meeting changed and eventually Kates' proposal failed, of course not just because of my ill-judged joke although it may have contributed.

But there was a price for me to pay. At the end of the next meeting Len Berry again turned to me to have the last word so as to end on a humorous note. I had become the meeting's jester, most certainly a role I did not want. This was repeated over the next few weeks. At every meeting I knew the request was coming and the stress built up, as I had to find something funny to say about the day's proceedings. Eventually I found a way out of my self-made predicament. I had been reading that whimsical critique of hierarchical organization *The Peter Principle*, which argued that people get promoted to their own level of incompetence. Simply put, a person gets promoted when he or she does a job well and promotion continues until he or she does badly, when the promotion stops. Thus people are left stranded in jobs they cannot do. There is a chapter on how to identify someone who has reach their level of incompetence: they avoid being serious about their job and cover up their inadequacy by telling jokes. So

when Len turned to me for my funny contribution, I relayed the above: the self-deprecation worked. I was off the hook; I could sit, relax and engage otherwise in departmental meetings.

But beyond this self-inflicted trauma the visit to Clark University was a watershed in my academic work and how it related to my politics. Previously my Labour politics was transferred into my work in terms of the topics I researched: health provision, council housing and, of course, elections. Even my quantitative methods involved using techniques to better service welfare ends. But the two, politics and academic work, remained in separate boxes in my head. All change in the late '70s. I wrote a chapter for a book edited by Kevin Cox that described different approaches to studying council housing. Subsequently, in a review of the book David Harvey singled out this chapter for criticism with that most withering question "So what?". I couldn't think of an answer; clearly my politics and research could not be credibly kept apart. Clark University was an ideal place to sort this out.

Simply put, I bought a copy of Immanuel Wallerstein's first volume of his historical series on *The Modern World-System*; his ideas were just what I was looking for. I became a world-systems analyst. This meant seeing social change through 'big time' – over half a millennia since the 'long sixteenth century' – and across 'big space' - occurring beyond the scale of individual nation-states. Moreover, I had found a historical framework for reorganizing political geography, rekindling my interest in history. But the key point, through the world-systems approach I now merged my politics, beyond British Labour, with my academic work, in both teaching and research. Here was a radical political understanding of our world that facilitated teaching a pervasive narrative and stimulated a profound research agenda, both premised on the need for deep-rooted social change. This basic transition was consolidated on reading Gunder Frank's wonderful defence of his radical dependency argument in *Critique and Anti-Critique*. This was crucial because it was an academic tussle with Latin American Marxist analysts espousing their ludicrous state politics based upon moving through supposed historical stages. They were waiting for the bourgeois to complete their 'revolution' before they started their own! Overall it put together my politics and academic work in a fresh world context.

My next major visit to the US was to Virginia Tech in 1992-3. Living in the Blue Ridge Mountains with its mix of deer and copperhead snakes in our garden, we really were out in the sticks. The college town was Blacksburg, or "Bleaksburg" as Carl and Clare learned from the local students when they came to visit: the joke was that the town was 'only forty minutes from Roanoke'. Living a remote rural life did not suit Enid but she coped well in the circumstances. In contrast here was another wonderful experience for me. With Paul Knox I began my work on world/global cities: we organized a key international conference on the subject that generated the influential edited volume *World Cities in a World-System*. With Paul, Gerrard Toal and Tim Luke I enjoyed a book-reading club. In short, I had the best year of my life while Enid had the worse. Obviously unsustainable, but we could and did get through the year. Unfortunately my abiding memory of Blacksburg came with the Virginia Tech shooting massacre

more than a decade later: I'm sitting at home in England and on the TV screen are images of the building where I did my teaching being broadcast as a killing field.

I am back at Virginia Tech for a two periods in 2002 and 2003 but this time in Washington DC, much more to Enid's liking. Paul Knox has persuaded the university to set up its Metropolitan Institute in Alexandria and I am its Associate Director. I work with Rob Lang, the Director, who challenges me to explain what all my world city network stuff is actually for. This was necessary; I'd become absorbed into the development of research technique at the expense of broader meaning and purpose. Rob taught me what 'above the fold' meant - having a story on the top half of the title page of a newspaper - but I have never made it. But the key effect of this encounter was to set me on a search for better understanding of cities, one that led me back to Jane Jacobs' writings, later to dominate my research agenda. This US episode epitomises in many ways the attraction of US universities for me; typically working with people who think differently from me but from whom I can form new understandings. In all I have worked for a total exceeding four years in American universities and such interactions have been unceasingly rewarding.

## 12. Abysmal interviewee to grateful honouree

*“... the actual nadir of my professional life. A little way into the interview one of the panel asked me if I would be able to cope with their first year students”*

Could the journey I have described be considered a progression? In a very general sense the answer is yes. Growing up was inevitably a progression of sorts and professionally I started as a mere ‘demonstrator’ and finished as a professor. Of course there have been ups and downs but there is an overall upward trajectory. Perhaps. But in my working journey the progression has definitely not been that straightforward. There appears to be a perennial ‘fish out of water’ situation: I can reasonably claim to do my job well whilst simultaneously appearing not to be a suitable person for the job. This is what I illustrate here.

I contrast two sets of experiences: job interviews and being honoured for my work. The former is a necessary hurdle to employment and is seen as a way for prospective employers to find the right candidate for them. The problem lies with the meaning of the final phrase – is the right candidate the best candidate or do interviewing panels actually tend to favour people who are like themselves? Honours are totally different: you don’t apply – soliciting would be very much frowned upon. Once again there is a group of people who evaluate selected candidates. But here merit should trump all, and in any case you don’t know when you fail because you never know when you are under consideration.

My first job interview was in 1968 at Strathclyde University. I was unsuccessful but was not concerned: five candidates, one job so only a 20% chance anyway. But this was just the first of eight interviews that year. This shows I was well supported by my referees – they got me on to short lists – but then it seemed I was not good at interviews. Sheffield University, Leeds University, Hull University, Birkbeck College, London School of Economics, and University College Dublin turned me down before Newcastle University offered me a job. And some of the odds were quite good: Hull three candidates for two jobs and at Sheffield I was the only candidate. The latter was particularly embarrassing; the retiring professor disliked quantification in Geography and took out her annoyance on me. I was deemed to be such a poor candidate they preferred not to appoint at all!

On returning from the USA in 1971, I was again an only candidate for interview, this time for a lectureship at Newcastle and was successful: the interview panel included Professor House as Head of Department plus one other person from the Geography Department, a newly appointed lecturer who did not know me. Never well integrated into the department, I made three failed attempts to leave in the

1970s. I applied for a lectureship at Lancaster University; three were interviewed, the two losers were me and Nigel Thrift - later a leading world geographer and Vice-Chancellor of Warwick University – so at least I was in good company! I also applied at Reading where I seem to have been confused with another candidate. The candidate interviewed before me, whose research was on agricultural geography, said to me that he thought the job was mine, all his questions were on political geography of which he knew little. But I got quizzed on agricultural geography, of which I know little. Something a bit different: I applied to be Head of Geography at Lanchester Polytechnic (now called Coventry University). Again three candidates but with a difference: there was an internal candidate who had been doing the job for two years. The whole department was rooting for him, everybody seemed genuinely anxious on his behalf. Who would want to beat him in these circumstances? He got the job.

In the 1980s I moved up a notch, I started not being appointed to Chairs. Again I had good support from referees – Ron Johnston requires special mention here – and even though I could not be promoted from lecturer at Newcastle, Head of Department John Goddard encouraged me to apply to become a professor elsewhere! Combined with a fast growing and impressive CV and supportive referees, once again I invariably got shortlisted for interview. My first interview for a Chair was at the Open University; I was beaten by Doreen Massey, later phenomenally influential, no issues there! Subsequently I had unsuccessful interviews at Leicester University, Edinburgh University, Aberystwyth College Wales, Liverpool University, and Sheffield University. At Leicester I was placed on the shortlist only at the external assessors insistence, at Edinburgh my world-systems analysis was immensely disliked, at Liverpool my pre-interview presentation was mocked and John Goddard had to persuade me not to withdraw from the interview, at Aberystwyth I was told on the grapevine afterwards that they had to appoint internally because there was not the money to bring an extra person on to the payroll; and at Sheffield my presentation went exceptionally well but an aggressive Vice Chancellor in interview made clear he did not want me. Notice that I have an excuse for every failure, but surely the scale of failure is now beginning to suggest a more general reason.

The worse two experiences within interview were at Aberystwyth and Liverpool. At Aberystwyth, the very large interviewing panel included three members who did not ask any questions, but did talk among themselves in Welsh. At one point I was considering walking out, but the Vice Chancellor belatedly intervened and told them to shut up. The oddest event came at Liverpool where an interviewer quoted something I had written and then asked when I had changed my mind. I did not recognise the quote and said I had never held that view and so had not changed my mind. He seemed to have done his homework: reading from his notes he cited my book and the page number, whereupon I was stumped – I repeated that I had never held that view. Returning home I went straight to the book to find the quote. It was there: I was summarising a view held by other geographers before criticising them!

After delicate discussion with Enid - she was sorry for me after so many rejections - we decided I would try applying to US universities. I applied to four:

Rutgers University, where I misjudged my presentation, University of Colorado where I did not seem to fit, Penn State where I unintentionally caused some confusion, and Boston University where I was finally successful: I was to be Director of a new interdisciplinary International Studies Center. The appointment was delayed by a year so Clare could complete her schooling but in the meantime we chose a house and was looking forward to moving to Boston. I informed Malcolm Newsome, Head of Department at Newcastle giving him a year's notice so that he could ask for my replacement at the best time to avoid the post being frozen. And then I was asked back to Boston on the grounds that to confirm my tenure required an interview with the university President. I was ushered into his grand office and then grilled about the Philippine Republic. I have never claimed any expertise on this country; I had some 'Sunday Newspaper' knowledge because the country had been in the news for scandals surrounding President Marcos, his downfall and replacement by the wife of Aquino, his assassinated opponent, who was now the elected President. The meeting did not last long and when I asked the Chair of the Geography Department what was this was all about his face went ashen on mention of the Philippines. It was over.

My appointment was subject to 'Approval by the Regents' of the university; I had been told this was routine but now it seemed the President would advise them to withdraw the offer of appointment. The story I was told was that Boston University had set up a Research Center for Democracy to cover CIA operations including those in the Philippines where Aquino's Presidential election campaign was funded by Wendy's Hamburgers. Sure enough a couple of weeks later I got the letter from Boston University cancelling their offer; the President deemed the level of my scholarship to fall below the standards at Boston University. Fortunately I was able to inform Malcolm at Newcastle before he began to operate on my early notice of resignation.

I was now resigned to finish my career at Newcastle when the Sir Halford Mackinder Chair of Geography became available at Oxford University – Mackinder is commonly seen as the 'father' of Political Geography, my particular specialism. I was mindful not to go for it but encouraged by friends, mainly from abroad, I did apply and, as per usual, got called for interview. I should have trusted my initial instincts. This turned out to be the actual nadir of my professional life. A little way into the interview one of the panel asked me if I would be able to cope with their first year students. In an instant a previous encounter came to mind. It was a conversation in the USA with one of Enid's uncles (Enid's dad's sister was a post-war GI bride). He was from Alabama and worked for the government in Washington. We visited for Thanksgiving in 1978 driving down from Worcester, Massachusetts. He was wary of meeting me because I was British. In the event he was relieved since I was not like the Brits he met in his job. As he told it, these were young men who thought they knew everything but actually knew very little, a position sustained by immense self-esteem and an arrogant manner. In his department and at his level to get an assignment involving any contact with a British representative in Washington was to draw the short straw, to both the relief and sympathy of colleagues. Personally he found it very difficult to cope with them. I empathized, and informed him of our

unique 'public school' system as feeder service to the UK Foreign Office. Thus I sensed this surprising question as introducing social class into the frame. Here I was, applying for possibly the most prestigious chair in British Geography and I have to argue that new Oxford students, fresh from their public schools, won't get the better of me. Perhaps they would.

I cannot remember my answer; from this point on I am just waiting for the interview to be over so I can check out Blackwell's bookshop. Luckily within a year David Slater is ringing me up to see if I'm interested in a Chair at Loughborough University. I go for an interview – I'm the only candidate – and am successful. The next fifteen years are the most productive of my career: going to Loughborough more than made up for missing out on all those previous opportunities that did not materialise.

OK, let's tot it up. Twenty-three interviews, three successes. In fact I have only ever beaten one other candidate at a competitive interview. Successes to become a Lecturer at Newcastle in 1971 and a Professor at Loughborough in 1995 both followed being the only candidate shortlisted; success at becoming a Demonstrator at Newcastle in 1968 involved a shortlist two. Waiting for the interview for the job of teaching Statistics to geographers, the other candidate told me he didn't use statistical methods and was surprised to be interviewed. So I beat somebody with no knowledge of Statistics for a job to teach Statistics. That's my record. If *The Guinness Book of Records* had a category for the most abysmal interviewee I would definitely be in with a chance.

In fact I do have one more interview. I retire from Loughborough and then allow Enid and Phil O'Keefe to persuade to apply for a new Chair at his university, Northumbria in Newcastle. It's to oversee research administration. I get called for interview; there is one other candidate. I promote my view that managing research is like herding cats, not what interview panel want to hear for a job administrating research! On leaving the interview I phone Enid to say no chance. Six hours later – what a lot of discussion the panel must have had – my phone rings and I am offered the job! After accepting I say that I thought I did not suit the job; the person I'm talking to just laughs and says: "We thought that too". Getting jobs at interview is a piece of cake after all, and really worthwhile – I have had a productive five-year extension to my university career.

Moving on to the various honours that have come my way, I don't want to dwell on them, but a quick introduction of my research interests will help make some sense of it. There are three phases. I started off as a 'quantitative geographer' through the 1970s. I was competent up to a certain level but an education limitation to only O-level Mathematics curtailed my development. In the 1980s and 1990s I reorganised Political Geography using 'world-systems analysis', a radical global approach. In the twenty first century, I have stayed global but focussed on cities, devising a way of measuring the world city network. Honours have come for my work in the latter two phases, but with one belated exception: in 2012, my book with Graham Gudgin, *Seats, Votes and the Spatial Organization of Elections*, first published in 1979, was selected by the *European Consortium on*

*Political Research* for reprinting in their *Classics* series. Although on a political subject, its distinction is in its specific statistical modelling.

The first award came in 1988 when the Italian translation of *World in Crisis* (with Ron Johnston) won the *25th Premio Inglesias* prize (Rome); my blurred memory is of a 10-course banquet in Sardinia, with a different wine for every course. The next year the Royal Geographical Society conferred their *Gill Medal* on me for contributions to Political Geography. In 1996, my key paper for reorganizing Political Geography was selected as a *Citation Classic* in the journal *Progress in Human Geography* and in 2001 there was a *Special Edition* of the journal *Political Geography* on my contributions to the sub-discipline. In 2010, I was awarded *Lifetime Achievement Award* by the *Political Geography Speciality Group* of the *Association of American Geographers*.

For my work on world cities I was selected as one of William Coleman's *Fifty Key Globalization Thinkers* in his 2013 book, there was a *Special Edition* of the journal *Tijdschifte voor Economische en Sociale Geografie* on my World City Network Model in 2014, and in the same year the *American Library Association* included my book *Extraordinary Cities* as one of its "*Outstanding Academic Titles, 2013*". But in this area the honours have largely been in delivering prestigious lectures: for instance in 2010 I did the *Keynote Opening Address* to the *International Chinese Planning Association Annual Conference* in Shanghai, and gave the *Invited Lecture* in the context of the *Belgium EU Presidency* jointly organized by the *Flemish Department of Spatial Planning* and the *Club of Rome (EU Chapter)* in Brussels.

In addition I have held four prestigious named visiting chairs – because visiting positions, no interview needed - *George A Miller Chair* (University of Illinois, 1984); *C C Garvin Endowed Visiting Professor* (Virginia Tech, 2002-3); *Wibaud Chair for Distinguished International Visitors* (University of Amsterdam, 1999); and *International Inter-university Francqui Chair* (Universities of Antwerp, Brussels, Ghent, Liege and Louvan, 2004-5). I was also appointed an *Advisor* to the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (Beijing, 2009-14).

But there are six special events or awards of a more general nature that represent the pinnacle of my career:

1. Appointed a member of the *Gulbenkian Commission on the Restructuring of the Social Sciences* (1994-6), chaired by Immanuel Wallerstein. The Report has been translated into 23 languages.
2. Elected an *Academician* by the *Academy of Learned Societies of the Social Sciences* (UK) in 2001
3. Designated by the *Association of American Geographers* for *2003 Distinguished Scholarship Honors*
4. Elected a *Fellow of the British Academy* in 2004
5. Conferred an *Honorary Doctorate* by the University of Oulu (Finland) in 2006
6. Conferred an *Honorary Doctorate* by Ghent University (Belgium) in 2008

I am always extremely grateful when receiving such honours but I do feel a little uncomfortable. Some shyness deep in my personality comes the fore, especially when a ceremony is involved. Fortunately for the three foreign awards, Enid has been with me for support: always looking splendid in a new dress and smiling throughout she makes up for my reticence. And at Oulu she was fully involved given the task of turning the stone grinder for me to dip my sword in. You get to keep the ceremonial sword; but special arrangements have to be made with the airline when you fly home! And on reaching home it certainly impresses the grandchildren.

I have experienced just a single downside to these honours. For most of my time at Loughborough University the eminent physicist David Wallace was Vice-Chancellor. I got on well with him and, when he left the post to take up the prestigious post of Director of the Isaac Newton Institute at Cambridge University, the university organized a large meeting of Council or Senate as a farewell celebration. The problem was that I was asked to give the key speech at this meeting. This is the ultimate fish out of water situation for me. Long ago I had decided not to get involved in university politics in any form – my politics lay outside my workplace. So I had never attended any university Senate or Council or any other forum where policy is made. This meant I had never heard any speech at such an event. Thus I had no idea what was expected of me. The first question I asked was - why me?. I got two answers. One was vaguely about David being very active in the Royal Society (for 'hard' (physical) scientists) and therefore it would be neat for the speaker to be from the British Academy (for 'soft' (social) scientists). Perhaps it indicated the spread of the university across academia. The second reason appeared to be a bit more mischievous: it seemed within the university administration I was viewed as a 'maverick'. I took my cue from the latter. On the top table I was very, very nervous in front of the large audience. I had prepared a speech – a sort of after dinner speech, which again was something I had no experience of.

I was able to start with the maverick appellation describing its cowboy origins. In the herding of cattle from Texas to the new railheads in Kansas cowboys were fed by culling a few animals each evening. They chose the ones that were hardest to herd during the day, always running outside and away from the rest of the herd. These difficult animals were mavericks. OK, fair enough. Guilty. But I'm not sure I got the rest of the speech right. I did produce a stifled gasp from part of the audience for the bit I was most please with. The Vice-Chancellor was following in the footsteps of Isaac Newton. But this great figure was a man of his times. We know him through his Physics but he was also into Alchemy – turning base metals into gold. I wondered what would have happened if his historical achievement had actually come in the latter pursuit. I surmised that, with gold on tap, England we would not have needed the industrial revolution to become wealthy. And therefore the discipline of Economics would have become part of Inorganic Chemistry instead of being the Inorganic Social Science it was today. It was good to get a dig at Economics' superiority complex ...

It is appropriate that I conclude with mention of my last university, Northumbria. Like most British universities in recent time there has been much

administrative reorganization wherein Geography departments are eminently moveable. In this case my appointment was to a chair in the School of Applied Sciences. Soon after I started Geography formed part of a new Built Environment School, and when I finished Geography was in a new Faculty of Engineering and Environment. Three changes in five years! I liked the last one. Being a professor in a faculty with Engineering in its title meant numerous email invitations to Engineering conferences across the world. It's a pity I was not qualified to contribute to any of them! But what I liked about this was that, at least in a roundabout way, I had followed in my father's footsteps. He would have seen the funny side of it.

**Part Two**

# **MULTIPLE ME**

## 13. Carl Jung's view (The measure of me)

***“I was asked to undertake leadership training in my final year, just before I retired. I'm sure the university was not grooming me to lead a pensioner's revolt ...”***

Who am I? First and foremost there is my family: I have enjoyed or do enjoy being grandson, son, brother, husband, father, grandfather and now great grandfather and this has been and is reciprocated in spades. The metaphor that the family is my rock fits the situation perfectly, with Enid at the centre. She knows me best, and she understood very early in our relationship what she was letting herself in for. It was during our first Christmas together to be precise. As Christmas Day approached Enid kept mentioning she has bought me two presents. But I had bought her just one – a pair of slippers (how romantic!). Solution: I wrapped each slipper separately before placing them with all the family presents under the tree. So Enid appreciated early on that she had hooked up with someone mildly weird. But can such weirdness actually be measured? This essay shows the answer to be yes!

Of course these essays generally are about me in the wider world. Thus from my inherently biased perspective I like to think of myself as “working class lad done well”. Given this description, it is now widely reported that I am on the way to being a historical curiosity: social mobility in England is almost coming to a halt. I had the luck of being born at the right time. It is interesting that when I was growing up I can remember no reference to ‘social mobility’; the term used was ‘social climbing’. With its emphasis on the individual and its negative connotation – a ‘social climber’ was someone getting above his or her station - this language was clearly a reactionary response to building a fairer world. Now it seems that the latter is being closed off again.

The great expansion of universities in recent decades – more kids getting the chance of higher education - might be seen as refuting my social pessimism. I have spent all of my working life in universities so this is a good place to start. Clearly universities have changed through the half-century I have experienced them. As previously emphasized I was highly privileged to go to a very elite institution and this has changed as society has changed, in many ways for the better but also with outcomes that are potentially destructive of universities. Society today is global and dominated by corporations, their products and ideas – I call this corporate globalization. The adaptation of universities to this change is for them themselves to become corporate structures – I call them ULCs (Unpleasant Little Corporations). This is most overtly shown in business schools becoming the most successful and fastest growing sector in universities: the world is awash with MBAs (Masters of Business Administration). But everything in today's universities is caught up with them being ULCs.

Leadership and hierarchy are extolled at the expense of collegiality and professional integrity. Simply by having line managers throughout a university indicates a lack of trust in people to do their job. At the top Vice Chancellors are lauded as chief executives and demand appropriately large remuneration for their corporate leadership. And everybody is expected to aspire to leadership as line managers. This includes me! I first became a line manager at Loughborough University; I was expected to interview my research colleagues to ensure they were up to the job. But we were a very successful research unit where every one pulled his or her weight, which I knew from daily interactions. So the exercise was pointless and I treated it as such. All my colleagues got an email from me: Subject – “Congratulations”; Message – “This is an interview, you have passed”. Halcyon early days before corporatization fully took hold. By the time I got to Northumbria University in 2010 such frivolity was a distant memory: I finished up being sent for Leadership Training.

I had taught myself how to adapt to ULC practices with their innumerable meetings: I take on the role of a social anthropologist, observing the strange behaviours from a different world not unlike, say, Margaret Mead observing the inhabitants of New Guinea a hundred or so years ago. The Leadership Training started with a sort of pep-talk session bought in by the university from a firm specializing in teaching leadership. The session was run by an enthusiastic young man, spouting some dubious social science I did not fully understand. He acted like a tribal elder but with authority not based upon age and heredity but on his MBA, now the most prestigious of all academic qualifications, the font of knowledge for contemporary universities. From this meeting I was allocated a leadership coach for one-to-one tuition. I thought this would be embarrassing remedial work but it turned out to be quite interesting chats about life and work. However, by far the most fascinating part of the training came in the psychological analysis the university arranged for me.

In 1923 Carl Jung, Sigmund Freud’s colleague and rival in psycho analysis circles, came up with the idea that there were sixteen personality types amongst us humans. I had to fill in a long questionnaire based upon this insight that resulted in a personality assessment. I was excited to get the results; this would be a kind of ‘official’ statement of who I was, properly measured and all that. I began as a sceptic but was immensely impressed by the description of me that emerged. I showed the results to Enid, the person who knows me best, and her reaction was “spot on”; they know me like my wife! The person conducting this part of the programme emphasized that every personality type can be a good leader; the results were about style of behaviour not specific skills. Therefore their usefulness was to point out the particular travails for leadership by people with different personalities. However I was simply gripped by the basic description. Of the 20 pairs of opposite preferences used there were seven where I was exceptional even within my personality type: **emergent** over methodological; **spontaneous** over scheduled; **tender** over tough; **original** over traditional; **conceptual** over practical; **imaginative** over realistic; and **receiving** over initiating. On the other hand there were five examples of me being untypical for my type: **systematic** on a par with the expected casual; **critical** a par with the expected accepting; **active** a par with the expected reflective; **questioning** over

expected accommodating; and **logical** over expected empathetic. And, in terms of Jung's personality groups I present a picture of mixing two groups: thus not so neatly measured. I remain a man of contradictions.

I guess the reason I got converted to this exercise is because I liked the results: all of the above in bold I find flattering except two, receiving and logical in relation to initiating and empathy – more on these below. In fact my using the results above as a simple description rather than applying them to my work immediately verifies one result, my favouring conceptual over practical! But beyond these pleasantries there are insights that are derived from these findings such as: liking a work environment that allows flexibility; open minded but strong convictions that are sometimes surprising to others; having warmth but not always displaying it. There is even a hint about my treasured chip: little need to impress sometimes resulting in inattention and overlooked and so feeling underappreciated and perhaps inadequate.

Well there it is. One of the most famous people of the twentieth century has spoken, as it were, and got the measure of me. This can be seen as a benchmark for Part Two. Readers who know me can make their own minds up about this description; for others this is a framing that may help make sense of the ensuing essays. But one final aspect of this should be mentioned. I was asked to undertake leadership training in my final year, just before I retired. I'm sure the university was not grooming me to lead a pensioner's revolt but beyond that I have no notion of what this was really all about. Clearly a waste of money for them while being fascinating for me, initially as social anthropologist and subsequently as Jung subject. Probably there was a leadership failure somewhere in the university's bureaucracy.

It is a fact that in my university career I never became a Head of Department. Obviously there was a trust issue at Newcastle University that made this all but impossible. By the time I was interviewed for the Chair at Loughborough University this role omission in my CV was seen as odd and I was asked about it: would I accept an offer to be Head of Geography if the chance arose in the future. My answer was 'yes, of course – this was an important necessary role' but it might be better to deploy me for my research skills rather than administrative skills. As it happened I had become Associate Dean for Research in the Faculty of Social Science and Humanities when the headship was next available.

Initially the Associate Dean role was perfect for me as I had an overview of the research in ten departments; I learned so much, as well as social science departments I was dealing with the Business School, Art and Design and Fine Art. I found out that Business Schools were not just 'practical economics' but covered the whole remit of the social sciences, a new commercial framing of social science ideas. But most of all I experienced a completely fresh concept of research in the arts, for instance curating an exhibition as research. But did I provide any leadership?

The university had a Research Committee consisting of the Associate Deans for each of the three Faculties plus the Vice Chancellor; we devised university-wide

research strategy but this was about enabling rather than directing – you cannot ‘force’ research. However targets were introduced into the discussion, to be enthusiastically endorsed by the University Chancellor when he chose to attend our meetings. He was a very well known retired industrialist who explained that targets were essential for getting control of an institution. Always set them beyond possible attainment so that you have the power to sack anyone in the institution for failure to meet his or her target. A wonderful control strategy; it left me speechless. On an August evening when my three years as Associate Dean officially came to an end Enid and I had a celebration dinner in a restaurant overlooking the Mediterranean.

However it is also a fact that throughout my life I have initiated institutions to meet specific ends. The first, when I was about 10, was an Indoor Sports Club in Calverton amongst my group of friends during dark winter evening; it was centred on *Subbuteo* football but included other games. A little later I organised the “Calvertonshire” data collection team so as to understand my village in relation to its surroundings. And then there was Calverton Colts, the youth football club that still exists. Settling into work, in the 1970s I became Secretary/Treasurer of the Quantitative Methods Study Group of the Institute of British Geographers and used this position to launch a series of booklets called CATMOG (*Concepts and Techniques in Modern Geography*). The idea was that the new Geography’s toolkit was much more than what was found in Statistics texts and teachers needed short precise statements on a range of topics from which they could select for their particular courses. In the 1980s I was the founding editor of *Political Geography Quarterly* and made sure it was more than just an outlet for articles; special features focussing on political geography beyond Anglo-America, on contemporary affairs, plus debates and numerous editorials that were all intended to make the journal more relevant. In the early 1990s I created a new radical book series, *Geography of the World-Economy* published by Cambridge University Press that attempted to bring back regional geography by treating regions as dynamic components of an unfolding world economy. Four excellent books were published, but the publisher had its own crisis and withdrew: I decided not to continue when they subsequently changed their mind.

At the end of the 1990s I had the idea of a research network organised through a central website and so GaWC (Globalization and World Cities research network) was born. The research topic was so large no single research group in a university could reasonably cover it and therefore collaboration across the world was needed. Currently the number of papers on the website is approaching 500 and the site gets about 40,000 hits a year. And finally at Northumbria I put together a team of researchers under the rubric “Don’t Fry the Grandchildren” that attempted to find new ways of purposively researching human-induced climate change. We nearly got a £1 million grant, but it was not to be – shortlisted, interviewed, but failed at this last hurdle. So, this is my record of institution building over many decades. Never a target in sight just collaborating with friends and colleagues to meet some useful needs at the time.

Back to those unpleasant little corporations (ULCs) that are today's universities: I do fear for their future. Senior people in bullshit jobs interviewing to appoint or promote clever people like themselves who, in the future, will smoothly slot into the latest bullshit needs of their ULC. The ultimate logic of recent trends is a worse case scenario in which universities stop hiring anyone with a Ph.D. (Doctor of Philosophy, the highest research qualification) and just appoint candidates with MBAs (Master of Business Administration). These are people who feel comfortable with line managers, targets, aims and objectives and are experts in avoiding surprises. For specific teaching needs, essay mill businesses – they write essays for students for a fee - could be contracted as experts on 'model essays' to prevent unhelpful curiosity entering the university. But let's hope that academic leaders of the future do not preside over elimination of curiosity and surprises in institutions where both should be treasured.

Finally an episode that will help the reader steer between my Jung personality measures and actual behaviour. It's early this century and I'm in a very posh hotel in Abu Dhabi. GaWC has been asked to provide a two-day workshop on world cities and I have assembled a group of twelve scholars plus a workshop design expert. We are well prepared, everybody has an array of tasks; I'm doing the opening address and will delivery the final summing up. It's just after 8.30 and we start at nine; not late, my room is just one floor from the conference area we are using. I've brought my business suit, which is in its grey Marks and Spencer long bag. I begin to unzip it and first notice a bright blue 'tie', but I don't have one that colour. Opening it up further it is not a tie but a slash, part of my wife's ball gown. It seems she keeps it in a grey long bag and I have mistakenly brought this with me – I can now remember being surprised about how heavy I thought my suit was on packing it! No reason to panic – nothing can be done: I have no suit. My only clothes are my travel clothes featuring a khaki jacket with lots of pockets. I go downstairs to the conference floor and announce my situation to my team. Everybody thinks it is hilarious; they ask if I have checked to see whether the dress fits me. No, but anyway ... I will open the workshop in casual khaki. We surmise that the one thing going for me is that of all professions only an academic could get away with this clothing at an important meeting. So this stereotypical laid back, casual professor goes to the rostrum and begins the workshop. I certainly did stand out; I appeared to be playing by my own rules as only a really confident leader can do. However I decided to tell my hosts at lunch what had happened resulting in exactly the same reaction as my colleagues; the dress still didn't fit. At least this cross-cultural harmony about my distinctive appearance was positive. There must be a lesson in this somewhere but I can't fathom it, perhaps referral back to Dr Jung is required.

## 14. A different journey? (Other me)

***“... he pretends to be a good person but remember the awful lies he has told – and hah, cheer as he falls through the air. Thud, good riddance!”***

Warrington, 1971. I'm in my first English car, an Austin 1100, and am taking my driving test. Everything's going well; after all I have driven many thousands of miles previously in America. On returning to England I take a few driving lessons just to make sure I do the right things but the test is surely a foregone conclusion. During the test the examiner asks me to turn right where the road is clear but I turn left where the way is not clear and have to make an unscheduled stop. He appears bemused, I am sweating – how could I do such a stupid thing, and in a test! Easy, I'm dyslexic and one symptom is not being able to tell left from right immediately. (I have to imagine I'm bowling a cricket ball to indicate right, the problem being that I am a medium-fast bowler with a long run up.) However a driving test involves the examiner directing your route through a series of turning right and left. A mistake is never far away. My error this day was potentially dangerous. We continue through to the end of the test and an inevitable outcome - Fail. This leaves me with a car in Warrington I cannot drive on my own, and a job up in Newcastle where I need my car to be. Dad chaperons me to Newcastle and, once there, friends help out so I can prepare for a second test.

But what to do about the dyslexia? Solution: I wear a single black glove always on my right hand – black hand equals turn right. We begin to think up stories in case the examiner queries the oddity of a single glove - perhaps, an injury that needs to be tightly covered - although in the event I take off the glove at the last minute and can continue to see where the black hand was throughout the right and left manoeuvres of the test. This time I pass. Fortunately this is the only time being dyslexic had a direct practical effect on my life. But that needn't have been the case.

Much of all the previous material, including the last essay, may give the impression of an inexorable progression resulting from a mixture of good luck and hard work. But nothing could be further from the truth. There is nothing predestined here. For instance key developments were completely unplanned, notably going to university and going on to do research. Of course initially there was plenty of encouragement from my parents and not a little steering: some worked - Dad taking me down the pit - and some didn't - suggesting I go into accountancy because at school I was good at Maths. The latter proposal is understandable since the basic purpose of going to grammar school was to end up in a white-collar job. However working in an office required writing and this is where I could have come unstuck. Dyslexic misspellings are likely interpreted

as shoddy work. I might have spent my working life drifting from job to job, going nowhere. This is a different journey, an other me.

I grew up in rooms, flats and houses on council estates, none involving tough neighbourhoods. But I did learn how to look after myself not by strength but guile. In Sherwood I experienced the rudiments of gang rivalry. It happened for just a month or so a year, in the period running up to Bonfire Night. On the council estate there were two rival bonfires, one on Collin Green and the other on the green of Danethorpe Vale. Building the bonfires was a task delegated to boys on the estate so stealing each others' fire materials was rampant. Much was hidden, to be brought to the fire on the day, November 5<sup>th</sup>. I was a Danethorpe Valer and hid my contribution behind Mrs Merry's house. The problem was that to get to Hadyn Road school involved going through Collin Green territory. Vulnerable to the Collin Greeners, walking home from school was a little scary – it was relatively easy to make someone talk by raising their arm behind their back. Head down; walk quick: I survived.

But I did experience petty criminality in Calverton. One spring, a friend's dad offered four of us his allotment while he recovered from an injury. He helped us plan what to plant and we had a list of seeds to buy from the local grocers. We spend some time in the shop pondering what to buy, reading the instructions on the seed packets, but before a purchase could be made, one of the would-be young growers announced none of seeds were suitable and got us to leave the shop. I was confused; but it all became clear half way down the street when he opened his inside jacket pockets to reveal packets of all the seeds we were intending to buy. While we were pondering he was plundering! He had used us as a front for his nefarious activity. He was certainly very good at stealing, a skill we never knew he possessed. I was angry because our allotment endeavour had been turned into something it was not meant to be. And I was shocked to be used as someone else's pawn. Game over, no allotment but also no return of goods to the shopkeeper – the other three of us did no how to explain ourselves. Of course, we could have been caught ...

Raw material of that other me was clearly present. I remember, just after I had first met Enid, we are walking along a road in Warrington and I spit into gutter. With my friends in Calverton, when phlegm is in your mouth you don't swallow it, you spit it out. This is a male thing. Of course, it is not acceptable for women to clear their throat this way. Thus for me normal, Enid is horrified. She makes it clear that it is the last time I behave this way. It is. But other aspects of my growing up cannot be so easily disposed. Within groups of young males we tell jokes; I am good at it. Looking back at those jokes now I am horrified. The mildest were "Englishman, Scotsman and Irishman" where the latter is ridiculed; mentally ill people were a common butt of jokes; much worse are racist jokes even though I never knew any non-white people; and, of course, there were jokes about women that are extremely unpleasant. Most jokes were not intentionally vindictive; they were genuinely funny in their play on words but clearly exhibit a complete lack of empathy for people different from ourselves. The sexist jokes are hard to understand given the real respect I had for all the women I actually knew – obviously starting with Nan, Mum, and Enid, but going much wider than

those I was very close to. And there was never any sense that I was 'talking behind their back'; it was just something young males did amongst themselves. The point is that they remain with me today; it is not possible to simply erase them from my memory. So in a way they can be seen as being a continuous part of me, my other me.

There are also traces of this other me as a long-term follower of two 'soap operas', Coronation Street and Eastenders. The term 'soaps' comes from their daytime purpose many decades ago on US TV to sell washing powders to bored middle class suburban housewives. I encountered and ignored these soaps when living in Iowa. But British soaps are nothing like them; they are about inner city working class families. I devoured them from the start. This is a distinct art form that respects time. It consists of regular and continuous storytelling that unfolds at the same rate as the living experiences of its audience. When someone gets pregnant on the programme she gives birth nine months later. When someone is arrested for a crime it will take months to get through the judicial system. Of course, it is much more dramatic than most real lives because it has to entertain to keep its audience. The need for a limited roster of main players means multiple love affairs; within age cohorts most men and women are paired off at some time. All this means that viewers frequently have to hold back their incredulity but that is part of the deal to be entertained.

There are two things that result. First, all the characters are known to be liars and many plots involve the slow unravelling of lies. Thus these soaps are morality plays, liars always get caught out in the end. Second, all characters are ultimately dispensable; the death rate amongst the 'not-old' is alarmingly high. This allows viewers to ditch their usual empathy. In real life, seeing someone on a roof ready to jump I would be concerned for that person, hoping they don't jump and can sort out their lives. On the soaps you can urge them to jump - I didn't like him anyway, I was getting bored with her, he pretends to be a good person but remember the awful lies he has told - and hah, cheer as he or she falls through the air. Thud, good riddance! Wow, that's my other me.

Unlike American soaps I do like American music. As a teenager it was rock n'roll but living in Iowa in the early '70s I got attracted to country music. Loretta Lynn's big hit "Coalminer's daughter" made an impression; the girls I grew up with were coalminer's daughters but they were invisible in English music. Later I can remember discussing class with an English radical academic and pointing out that those at the bottom of the heap in Britain had the Labour Party representing the 'working class', in America they had country music representing the 'working man'. He didn't like the comparison but it still makes some sense to me. Country music is about ordinary people and their travails; it tells stories more like English soaps than American ones. Country songs can be compared to the soaps because they are so personal; they are both about flawed people yet celebrate those self-same people. When I was in Edmonton in 1976 I was able to see The Carter Family in concert. They were three generations of singers centred on Johnny Cash, the epitome of a good flawed person, and his wife June Carter. Not a 'family show' in the usual sense but an experience of a family like any other, some of whom also happened to be great at making music.

I attended this show on my own; I taught summer school at the University of Alberta while Enid stayed home with the kids. Although my hosts were very nice I really did not like it; this arrangement was never repeated. But there was one humorous event I won't forget. Although I got through the time by working very hard in the library – much of the material subsequently published in *Geography of Elections* with Ron Johnston comes from this time – I decided to have a day off and visit a local tourist attraction, Edmonton Fort. I had no car while in Edmonton and used public transport but there were no buses to the fort, which was on the edge of town. So I walked there. Of course, this is North America where you are not supposed to walk; I was lucky not to be picked up for jay walking. When I arrived there was a small building with cars queuing to pay for entrance at the window. There was no pedestrian entrance. So I queued with the cars. When the car ahead went into the fort I moved forward to the window. I expected the man selling tickets to ask where my car was. He didn't, he was silent. I asked for a ticket; on the price board there was no mention of pedestrians. At first he did not know what to do but then he said I could go in for free, as he put it, sounding a little bit like Clint Eastwood, "You've made my day". Obviously bored, I had provided him with a story he could tell about a very strange person with a weird accent. I can't remember much about the attraction I didn't pay to see, but queuing alone between big American cars remains with me.

One reason I did not like being in Edmonton was because I had never had to look after myself – I was a traditional man of the times, looked after by the women in my life. The summer school was for six weeks and I just about got through it without mishaps until the last day. My flight home was that evening and I had saved the last couple of week's clothes washing as a morning job. I would use the student's laundry room on campus, which was empty because all the students were gone. I filled a couple of machines and then transferred the washing to one of two dryers. It did not work. OK, over to the other dryer - "Notice: Out of Order". Oops I have all this wet washing and flight in just a few hours. I struggled back to my flat with the wet washing. Hand wringing the items and hanging them up all over the flat was minimally effective. Friends picked me up to go to the airport; checking in, my luggage was hugely over the weight limit. I was potentially embarking on a very expensive way of transferring water between continents. So I had to repack what I could and my friends took the wet stuff off me, later drying it and sending it as three parcels surface mail to Newcastle. Enid uses this episode as conclusive proof of my ineptitude as an independent human being. But perhaps it was just a glimpse of the travails other me could expect.

In Edmonton I was getting more out of country music than expected. New friends introduced me to a different country music; a male genre about living through a tough life, sometimes involving prison, always featuring hard drinking. Starting with Jerry Jeff Walker and Jimmy Buffett, re-finding country Jerry Lee Lewis and Johnny Cash, and especially Kris Kristofferson and Merle Haggard beyond "Okie from Muskogee". Merle provided the backstory of American life if you are poor, often finishing up in prison, even Death Row, and Kris set out a wider politics including the very sensible song, "Don't Let the Bastards Get You Down". But the

enduring image is of Cash singing “San Quentin I Hate Every Inch of You” to the prisoners incarcerated there.

Some years later when Enid and I are staying in Washington DC we find that Kris Kristofferson is appearing at a club in Georgetown. We phone up straightaway but it's the day before the concert; the club tell us we are very lucky as two tickets had just been returned. When we turn up we find we have the best seats in the house at a table just by the stage under the microphone – sometimes the luck keeps on rolling. We are sharing the table with three naval officers from the Pentagon, very friendly to us as visitors from England, until Kristofferson's left wing political songs when I join in! However they got their turn with a finale featuring “Why Me Lord?” about God loving flawed hard men. Of course, country music being authentically American does contain religious themes although interestingly the Devil is particularly prevalent: the demon drink and all that. Kris actually meets him sitting in a bar and steals his song! Although I have never had to view my life through the bottom of a glass all this gritty hardship did resonate, with my other me.

And there is a complimentary sequel. Working at Loughborough University (from 1995) did involve evening road trips from and to Tynemouth. Music tapes were essential week after week and I specialised in female county singers, bringing tapes by them back to the UK on every US visit. From Mary Chapin Carpenter to Mindy Macaulay I had my very own girlfriends to see me through the evening drives. And Enid didn't mind. Lucky (other) me. Mary's brilliant rendition of “I am a Town” describes another world that actually relates to my research interests by evoking a ‘town-ness’ as the very opposite of the excitement of cities. But I still think Deana Carter's “Did I Shave My Legs For This?” to be so, so sad. But best of all was Lucinda Williams, she revealed where the other me would have lived: small town Louisiana. No escape, I would always have had to go back to Greenville.

So what's this all about? One of the good things about leaving Henry Mellish school was that I lost my nickname: Spud Taylor. Nothing personal, it was generic: Taylor – Tatoes - Spud, there was even an international footballer at the same time with this nickname. But I didn't like it; potatoes are dirty, I'd have preferred to be named after any other vegetable. In the different journey the other me would never have lost being Spud, easy to spell even for a dyslexic, and would have deserved being called it. This chapter may be considered my version of Kris Kristofferson's evocative “The Silver Tongued Devil and I”, but in a much milder, more jokey way.

## 15. Eureka! (Researcher)

***“The poshing down of meritocracy in the arts, popular culture and academia has curtailed participation. Disastrous for research, it promotes clever obfuscating over trying to find out”***

This essay is about the joy of research. Yes, that’s right, all the hard work that goes into research should end in bliss. These are called Eureka moments from the Ancient Greek ‘I have got it’ that Archimedes is supposed to have exclaimed in the bath on seeing how his body was displacing the water. His bliss was manifest by jumping out of the bath and running naked through the streets of Syracuse. Despite his public display these moments are actually very personal, a sort of intellectual orgasm, often with unexpected consequences. In Archimedes case it solved a difficult measurement problem: how to find the volume of any object whatever its shape – just dunk it in water and see how far the water rises. Now, so easy! I have had my Eureka moments but have yet to express them as he did. Of course, not all shouts of Eureka cerebrally make the earth move; they do not have to be so momentous to make research so satisfying.

The first time I came across ‘Eureka!’ in discussing research was during a conversation with Professor Conzen in my early days at Newcastle University. I knew of his town-plan analysis of Alnwick - this initiated the urban morphology research school – and he explained how it took him sixteen years of hard work to complete that research. But it was worth it: it all came together when he conceived the concept of ‘burgage cycle’. It provided a new clarity to his work; he relayed this to me as a Eureka moment. Such conceptual breakthroughs are just one of several ways in which Eureka moments occur. For instance, a new approach to measuring a well-known phenomenon can produce such a moment. I can remember being in the computer room at Liverpool University when doing my PhD research and feeling incredibly excited. I was studying local migrations including the distances people had moved. But these distances were contained within my study area, the size and shape of which would therefore influence the data I had collected on migration distances. I wrote a computer programme to create all possible distances within the study area (to compare with actual migration distances). As I waited for the computer results to become available I knew that I would find a distribution of distances that had never before been created. I had thought about what shape this ‘finite distribution’ might take but did not really know what it would look like. And then came the output as sheets of paper, quickly ruffled through, I saw for the first time the ‘arch’ pattern of the distribution. Not fully expected, I was looking at something not previously known. Pleased with myself, so delighted, oh the joy of research!

I have chosen this example from my research to indicate that Eureka moments do not have to be incredibly relevant or important. This research resulted in a new way to measure shapes on maps (how compact?) that satisfied a limited

purpose and no more, but for me, still bliss. Eureka moments need to incorporate the unexpected, to be surprising, the more unlikely the better. About a decade later I am working with Graham Gudgin on electoral districting, how to draw the boundaries defining constituencies for elections. I had got interested in this when at the University of Iowa; after the 1970 US census the state of Iowa had its Congressional delegation to the House of Representative in Washington reduced from seven to six. Thus the existing seven congressional districts had to be replaced by six new districts. Who draws the new boundaries? In the USA it is the job of the local politicians: the party controlling the state legislature draws the boundaries to benefit their own candidates. This is called gerrymandering. There are calls for the task to be given over to independent commissions as in the UK (Parliamentary Boundary Commissioners). But we were able to show that the latter are very likely to produce districts favouring the largest party for purely statistical reasons. What a surprise! Eureka! And this is certainly an important result. Long-term collaborator Ron Johnston has pursued this situation in England both in research and politically.

These two Eureka examples are drawn from the first of three phases in my research career. My researches in the 1960s and 70s were set in the 'Geography as spatial science' framework, generally referred to as spatial analysis. The chief inspiration was William Bunge who devised a new theoretical geography that I devoured on becoming a PhD research student in 1966. Very radical both professionally and politically, he was never able to hold down a university position but nevertheless he was hugely influential in the discipline. I had built upon his ideas in Iowa and when I returned to England in 1971 I presented several conference papers that got me noticed nationally. This resulted in being elected first as Secretary and then as Chair of the Quantitative Methods Study Group of the Institute of British Geographers (IBG). From this base I then got elected to the Institute's Council as its youngest member. Unfortunately some years later I fell away from the IBG due to its merger with the Royal Geographical Society. As I saw it the former represented professional geographers in universities while the latter, much older, reflected a Victorian view of Geography as exploration. Its members included military figures, including colonels, and rural landowners. To me it seemed much like who ruled old Calverton village writ large. I voted against the merger but was part of a relatively small minority. A pity, but I have not been very active in British geography since.

In the meantime research involving spatial analysis was developing beyond my 'O-level' mathematical skills. This became explicit in researching for the book with Graham Gudgin mentioned above. There was a key point in the argument where we had to relate two maps in a specific way and it became clear the solution was beyond our combined abilities. We brought in a colleague from the Statistics Department at Newcastle University and he solved our puzzle relatively quickly; to him it was simple and perhaps trivial. Unless undertaking some seriously retaining and retooling it seemed to me that my research could not contribute to developing spatial analysis, but I would still be a user of spatial analysis as developed by those who could.

In the 1980s and '90s my research focused upon political geography. This sub-discipline was in severe need of a radical overhaul; it had become commonplace to refer to it as 'moribund'. With the odd exception, political geography had become a collection of bits of knowledge – territory, boundaries, capital cities, etc. – with little or no coherence. I did an overhaul using Immanuel Wallerstein's world-systems analysis. Wallerstein was a sociologist who left New York's Columbia University in the academic turmoils of 1968 and spent most of his career at the State University of New York at Binghamton where he created the Fernand Braudel Center in 1976. This became the renowned research centre for world-systems analysis that I visited as a researcher in 1990.

The fundamental ethos of the Center was built upon a strategic attack on conventional social science views of 'development'. The standard argument viewed economic development as a matter of countries all on a common path to prosperity, differing only on how far along this path they had come. This story of multiple national paths was a simple one: rich countries had been on the path to development longer than poor countries hence their respective current differences in wealth. NO. According to Wallerstein there was single process of economic development encompassing the whole world-economy. Thus while rich countries appeared to be 'developing', poor countries were experiencing the very opposite, in Gunder Frank's memorable phrase, 'the development of underdevelopment'. In other words in the world-economy development was an exploitative process; rich countries prospered as the expense of poor countries. And to make this argument Wallerstein brought history to centre stage: the world-economy was designated the modern world-system, half a millennium old, starting in Europe and encompassing the whole world since the nineteenth century. It was within this system that the 'West' prospered as the expense of the 'Rest'. Thus my world-systems political geography had a powerful theoretical coherence, it was set into a dynamic radical framework that was simultaneously historical and global.

A key Eureka moment in this research phase occurred when incorporating the very empirical study of electoral geography into the theoretical framework of world-systems political geography. This thrill emanated from a conceptual insight: electoral geography's subject was actually liberal democracy in the West and as such was largely a creature of the twentieth century. But in the politics of the West in the nineteenth century liberalism and democracy were opposed politics; the former fearing the masses destroying civilization; the latter using the masses to build a new civilization. It is the conversion of 'liberalism versus democracy' into the occlusion that is liberal democracy in the West that predicates electoral geography. Interestingly this integration appears to be breaking down in the twentieth first century with liberals abhorring the rise of populist politics, something previously associated with politics in the Rest. We live in interesting times: more on this later in the essay on Brexit.

In the twenty-first century my research has been in urban geography, specifically cities in globalization. Unlike most urban researchers who focus almost solely on what happens within cities, I am especially interested in relations between cities, which is particularly relevant in today's globalised society. Starting in 1998 with

a grant to research London's relations with other leading cities across the world, this led to forming the Globalization and World Cities (GaWC) research network. I devised a way of measuring network relations between cities and had a Eureka moment, not unlike my PhD distances in shapes example above, the first time I saw a matrix of inter-city relations, something never previously computed. And the matrix analysis produced a surprise. The literature was very clear on the three leading cities in contemporary globalization: New York, London and Tokyo, spread across time zones to facilitate global business. Our results replaced Tokyo with Hong Kong in the top trio. GaWC research was the first to show this: at the time most observers thought Hong Kong's economic future was in doubt because of the return of the city to Chinese political control. However, our early results were replicated; the incredible rise of the Chinese economy was accompanied by the resurgence of Hong Kong as key external business link.

There is one urban theorist that combines understanding the internal relations within cities with external relations between cities: Jane Jacobs. Hugely famous for her 1961 book *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (never out of print) through which she totally transformed urban planning, I have become fascinated by her work on cities and economics. These later books are equally groundbreaking and I have incorporated her theory of urban economic development into the cities in globalization research, and further, have experimented with applying her cities first thesis – that is treating cities rather than states as the prime spatial units of economic activity – more widely over several millennia from the rise of the earliest cities. This led me into ancient history and archaeology: I spent a six month study leave reading up how these disciplines treated cities and states, subjects I had long studied in their modern forms. The result is described later in the chapter on my writing.

These three phases of research are distinctive but not separate. The common thread is a simple dissent: refusal to accept the areal framing that comes with using official data, so-called statistics. Good research should at least query whether data derived from official sources is suitable for their needs – is it in a form they would have chosen if they had collected the data themselves? Official data is produced by the state, for the state, to be used for state ends. Such statistics are better called 'state-istics'. But how people live – making a living, their way of life, etc. – does not necessarily fit into the way that statistics are collected. William Bunge in his abstract spatial thinking, Immanuel Wallerstein with his world-systems thinking, and Jane Jacobs with her city development thinking are each my collaborators to avoid being deceived into thinking through state-centred lenses. Simple example: a recent report has shown Nottingham to be the UK's poorest city as measured by official statistics on average income. But this measure is for the local government area of Nottingham not Nottingham as an economic entity. In fact Nottingham as a local government area is 'under-bounded', meaning large parts of the actual economic entity are excluded; these are largely middle class suburbs. This results in Nottingham appearing to have an average income less than other cities, where suburbs are typically included in the local government area. In other words, Nottingham as a functioning city is not specifically poor, but Nottingham in official statistics is specifically bereft of suburbs. Thus the finding that 'Nottingham is very poor' is a state-istics fallacy.

This is not Fake News; it is Lazy News. In my research I collect my own data, tailor-made (no pun intended) for the purposes of the research I am conducting at any one time.

But research has changed over the last couple of decades and Eureka moments are under threat. The poshing down of meritocracy in the arts, popular culture and academia has curtailed participation. Disastrous for research, it promotes clever obfuscating over trying to find out. Along with poshification and its concomitant feelings of personal entitlement there are a range of certainties that have infiltrated research work. The problem is that certainty is the key enemy of curiosity, which is necessary to experience a Eureka moment. If you start out being very sure, you are unlikely to have the inconvenience of finding surprises. This is closely linked to numerous social and cultural 'turns' where research derives from the researcher's personal identity in a process of excessive self-reflexivity. The result is what I call 'identity scholarship', very useful in bringing new voices into research but susceptible to turning legitimate grievances into authoritarian certainty. The obvious problem is that making any criticism of such research can be interpreted as an attack on the researcher's personal identity. Not a good place to be. Recently discussing this with a colleague, he was of the opinion that if I instigated a discussion on identity scholarship I would be removed from contemporary debate. Such is today's world of silo knowledges. But I'm writing this in a memoir so I'll take my chances that those who would object to my concerns on this subject will never read them.

Without curiosity research can become quite mechanical and this is becoming more commonplace. But the main threat to the integrity of research does not come from social scientists working in universities. Today most social science research is undertaken in think tanks funded by corporations and the research arms of service corporations notable in financial services, accountancy and management consultancy. The purpose of this 'corporate social science' is to keep clients informed and thereby satisfied, part of selling the corporate brand. As a function of corporate strategy, this research should be as straightforward as possible. Surprises are not what are wanted; they represent a loss of control of a research agenda and may therefore not be suitable for clients' needs. In other words in corporate social science the research arrow has been turned around: instead of starting with a question and then doing research to find the answer, in much research today the answer is the starting point and the research sets out to prove that it correct. Such back-to-front research is sure to meet the needs of the client. Research becomes just a mundane job, Eureka is bad for business and therefore is to be avoided; the joy is lost.

Personally, I have only once actually cried out Eureka! I will conclude with this exclamation that occurred while driving home from university in 1990. Our twenty-fifth wedding anniversary is coming up and, like her friend, Enid has her mind set on our spending it in Paris – it seems this is where you go for such events if you live in Europe. I have had a phone call from Immanuel Wallerstein inviting me over to the Fernand Braudel Center for a couple of months as a Senior Research Associate. Wow, chance of a lifetime. But, it clashes with our wedding anniversary. The Center is in the State University of New York but not

in a New York City campus, rather it is far upstate in Binghamton. Enid will never agree ..... But, Eureka! I shout it to myself. What about Niagara Falls? Anybody can nip down to Paris to celebrate, let's do it like the Americans and go to the famous big waterfall. Enid is not fooled. You've been asked to go the USA she surmises. However it is a great idea. So Binghamton plus Niagara here we come.

## 16. Obviously, ... , considering (Teacher)

***“My learned best practice: 1. Don’t flee. 2. Be honest. 3. Have a sense of humour. 4. Save the hysterical scream until out of hearing range”***

It used to be a truism that university teachers were bad teachers because they had never been themselves taught how to teach! And the latter was largely true when I started my university career. Things were just beginning to change; when I arrived at Newcastle University in 1968, all new academics had to attend an afternoon session on teaching. It was not a mini-course of instruction; rather it consisted of demonstrations of teaching by experienced teachers, presumably deemed to be good at it by the university. There was one really memorable incident (for the wrong reason). A senior academic came to the front and began to lecture based on a series of slides. We were in a big auditorium so the slides were operated by someone, out of sight, at the back. But the slides kept going wrong – out of order, even upside down – to the growing frustration of the lecturer. Eventually he lost his cool, shouted at the slide projectionist and stormed off. Silence. We all just sat there wondering what came next. Nothing came next; the lecturer was simply gone! I had thought that this was a demonstration of not what to do when things went wrong; teaching us best practice in difficult circumstances. But no, we were simply abandoned. After a few minutes we all just drifted away.

I had experienced very bad practice, which actually stood me in good stead when I came to give my first lecture in my own course two years later at the University of Iowa. It was an introductory course on human geography for freshers, literally hundreds of freshers. For a class this size I had many teaching assistants, postgraduate students earning their fees and subsistence. I had decided that the first lecture, when students were still deciding which courses to take, would be a review using some topics I thought would be particularly appealing to the students. I selected a dozen or so overhead transparency sheets with particularly striking images. The idea was that I would adlib with enthusiasm about these images and their meanings. At this time overhead projectors were not that common so an hour before the lecture I checked the lecture room to confirm such a projector was there. It was. What I did not notice was that all projectors were on trollies for ease of movement. When I got to the podium to give the lecture, the projector was gone. Panic.

I sent out all teaching assistants to scour the building for a projector while I started my lecture without its essential feature - the images! Do not abandon an audience, I had learned in Newcastle. After about five minutes some of the assistants struggled in with a huge projecting machine, an episcopes, something I had never seen before or knew how it worked. However it is easy to use, you just put an object into the machine, usually an opened book, and the selected pages are projected onto the screen. What could be simpler for a first time user? One

thing someone who has used an episcopes before would know is that the bulbs used for projecting get very hot. But I didn't know this. So I put my first plastic transparency sheet under light and starting talking about the image on the screen behind me. I soon smelt a slight whiff of burning; the students could see a small black patch on the screen slowly getting larger. I was in the process of potentially burning down the building when I quickly retrieved the stricken transparency and up-plugged the projector. What to do now? My learned best practice: 1. Don't flee. 2. Be honest. 3. Have a sense of humour. 4. Save the hysterical scream until out of hearing range. There was no way you could disguise this event as other than a misfortune verging on disaster. However the slowly growing black patch actually illustrated one of my topics – spatial diffusion across a landscape. I somehow picked up that point and got to the end without a mass exodus. I don't know if the students felt sorry for me or were simply looking forward to further humorous mishaps but most turned up for the next lecture; the course was a success, I really enjoyed teaching it and introductory human geography became my stock teaching course for many decades to come.

As a university lecturer I liked research and teaching in equal measure. Fortunately my predilections were in accord with the nineteenth century German invention of the modern university, largely promoted in the twentieth century through American universities. This model integrated research with teaching: the idea was that the people creating knowledge would also be those disseminating that knowledge to following generations. Thus recipients, the students, would be exceptionally privileged; they had direct access to those instrumental in producing what was being taught to them. This is the context that created the situation where university teachers had no need for training in teaching; they just relayed their researches. Whatever its limitations, this idea of a university really suited me. Lecturing to students is wonderful; you can organise and project your ideas to a captive audience who have to take note because they are to be examined! With this power comes a key responsibility: to make their experience as enjoyable as possible by ensuring ideas are interesting and relevant, irrespective of any examination.

This ideal is always a difficult challenge; an evangelical zeal helps! For instance, as a proponent of the new theoretical geography I had to package some rather abstract concepts and theories into both particular presentations that also had to be part of a continuing story of a new unfolding Geography. I was a believer and the students understood that. Note the reference to 'unfolding', being research-based teaching things were always liable to change. I would modify up to a quarter of the content of my courses each summer to capture new examples and on-going research developments. Fast forward to the early 1990s and I'm teaching a very different introductory geography course at Newcastle with Mark Overton: "The Making of the Modern World", very historical he took to the story of changing geographies to 1750/1800 where I took over. I enjoyed this 'big picture' course, culminating in contemporary globalization, even more than purveying the new Geography of the 1970s.

As may be surmised from the above I was personally interested in the history of Geography as a discipline and taught this for some years in the 1970s and 80s. Early twentieth century Geography was overtly imperial with a strong racial underpinning and I tackled this head on in two ways. First I linked Geography into a mainstream of science that that was fundamentally racist epitomised by Eugenics. The prestigious science journal *Nature* led the way in scientific racism before the rise of Hitler. So Geography was not unique in this respect but secondly I wanted for the students to see this directly in the body of geographical scholarship. So there was an exercise where students had to read any issue of the leading journal *Geographical Journal* between 1900 and 1910 as input into class discussion. It worked wonderfully; students were shocked by the odious disdain for non-white people alongside heroic explorations. I had opened up a new world of scholarship for them in a journal that was still used for its current, much different, articles. But my self-satisfied evaluation of the course changed in the early 1980s when I had for first time a black student in my class. Never thinking of it this way, but I had been teaching this stuff to an all-white student group. Having a black student changed everything. It did not seem right to scrutinise ridiculing 'natives' in discussing early Geography. Perhaps with a reasonably large number of black students something could be worked out, but with one poor guy alone exposed to this geographical thinking was unthinkable. Simple solution: I dropped this part of the course. Not long after I stopped teaching this course completely so I never had to decide whether to bring back this exercise as numbers of black students increased. Sometimes you have to be a coward.

The second major side of my research – methods, how to produce new knowledge – was my second staple teaching over decades. Courses on quantitative techniques were an immense challenge. At Newcastle in the 1970s this was a compulsory course for all second year students, usually about 150. They came with a vast range of numerical skills; most had chosen to do Geography at university without expecting to be taught statistical analyses. Overwhelmingly they did not want to do the course, they found it quite difficult, while a minority, with prior stats knowledge, found it rather easy. Phew, a captive audience that hated what was being taught! I tackled this problem in two ways. First, I took out any difficult arithmetic by focusing first on simple comparisons and rankings. Second, I illustrated everything in Geography using example after example, on and on. The course was, first and foremost, a Geography course about statistical techniques; I was a Geography teacher not a Statistician. It worked to a degree but I got the reputation of teaching hard stuff, which affected recruitment on to my third year political geography course.

In the early 1980s a new colleague was appointed to teach quantitative methods, I dropped out, and my political geography teaching thrived. I did come back to quantitative methods teaching briefly at Northumbria University in 2011/12 with Jon Swords where we tried to take advantage of having every student in the class in front of an interactive screen. This enabled us to teach the students simultaneously as subjects (a sample answering questions) and learners (evidence-based statistics about themselves). We piloted this idea and then applied for funding from the Economic and Social Research Council who have

been perennially concerned about the numerical illiteracy of social science graduates. We progressed to a second round in a competition but failed to proceed further – this was my last foray into this so difficult area of geography teaching.

My political geography teaching threw up an interesting conundrum arising from two intersecting actualities: my style of teaching is to overtly express myself and I am a person with strong political views. I don't want to hide my politics but at the same time it is not my purpose to propagate it through my teaching. Certainly I do not want to put off students just because they hold different political views. (There are limits of course; I was pleased and relieved when a far-right National Front student organizer doing Geography at Newcastle chose not to take my political geography course.) I solved the conundrum largely through two means. The first was simply in my use of language. For instance, usually when arguing something most of the class would not agree with I started provocatively with "Obviously ...". They soon got used to this. In contrast when putting over a position I found unconvincing I would end with a short pause followed by "... , considering.". These put ups and put downs created a wider ambience for open discussion.

The second method was to allow students to self identify, left, right, or neither. This was then used in role playing; for a Cold War event right-inclined students would be allocated to investigate and present the Soviet view and the left-inclined the American view. More generally the course was very evidence-based for student participation: for understanding imperialism I had students use Hansard to reproduce both a 1866 Parliamentary debate where the Liberals argued to get rid of (give independence to) colonies not paying their way (Caribbean sugar islands) and the 1932 imperial preferences debate, the highpoint of British imperial policy. Current affairs were never neglected; the best debate was over Northern Ireland during the negotiations between unionists and republicans. I thought my students to be more sensible, certainly more innovative, than the real politicians. Our proposal was an independent Ulster with each resident allowed dual citizenship, either Ulster and Great Britain or Ulster and Irish Republic. The student who took the part of the Reverend Ian Paisley, growled brilliantly. It is noteworthy that there were no Northern Irish students in this class. With identity politics coming more to fore it is unlikely that my approach is still possible. This began to dawn on me at Loughborough at the end of the 1990s when I taught a political geography course called "The English and their British State". Trying to explore the public reaction to the death of Princess Diana was difficult for a sizeable minority of students; certainly my view that 'she did some good things between holidays' did not help discussion.

One way in which teaching in British universities differed from American universities was the tutorial system, deriving from traditional Oxford and Cambridge University practices. Small group teaching with the same students through their three-year degree course, as at Newcastle, meant that you got to know them; their individual intellectual strengths and weaknesses could be nurtured and addressed. In the third year when they were beginning to think

about their Geography in the context of the wider world I let Neal Ascherson, the brilliant columnist in *The Observer*, set our agenda: we would discuss his Sunday column as a means of widening students' horizons.

In several decades of tutorial teaching I only had two problems with particular students, both in their first year. The first case related to weekly tutorial essays; these were set so as to bring all students up to an acceptable standard by the end of their first year. I had an undisclosed policy of never giving a fail mark in the first term; my emphasis was on encouragement. On one occasion a student wrote a very short first essay and clearly had done very little work on it. I gave the essay the lowest 'pass' mark, C-, and told him I expected much more. But this was not forthcoming. More totally inadequate essays followed, which I still, incorrectly, marked at C-. Second term, and the next essay is just a single paragraph of about ten lines. I mark it at E-; I explained to the student this is the lowest possible fail grade and that this cannot go on. A week or so later I am called into a meeting with the Head of Department; the student's parents have complained about my harsh treatment of their child. A short meeting, we simply agreed that the essay should be re-marked. But this never happened; the student somehow lost the essay before re-marking could be arranged. The outcome was simply, the student moved to another tutorial group.

The second case was a little later when student assessment of teaching became commonplace. At the end of their first term all students were required to fill in a questionnaire that included a question of what they most and least liked about their overall course. One of my tutees answered the 'dislike' question by simply writing "Reading". This was serious (I had to avoid joking about why she disliked the town of that name); I explained that reading was an absolute necessity for an undergraduate course – traditionally you came to university 'to read' a subject. On hearing this, the student left the university. This is an extreme example but over the years there has been an increasing reluctance amongst a sizeable proportion of students to read more than the minimum necessary. So if you suggest they follow something up by reading a key book on their reading list they might ask which bit of the book they should read. I always answered "Chapter Three"; first on the pragmatic grounds that all books include a chapter three, and second, for educational reasons, chapter three will likely require a quick look at the two earlier chapters and may stimulate peeking at later chapters. The hope was that that they might actually read a whole book!

More positively, what do I consider to be my best ever teaching? Strangely it was not in the Geography Department at Newcastle but in the Politics Department in the early 1990s. Gunder Frank, the brilliant radical economist, was visiting for the year and I taught a course on 'World-Systems Analysis' jointly with him. This was part of an International Political Economy Masters degree. We were teaching excellent students with undergraduate Politics degrees and therefore well versed in things like policymaking, political ideologies and political parties. Thus their knowledge was all about doing things through political actions. In contrast, Gunder and me were 'structuralists', meaning we argued politicians are hugely constrained by the wider global contexts in which find themselves.

An exciting clash of ideas meant a teaching challenge, not necessarily to make the students change their views but to get them to see arguments outside their comfort zone. At the time, the right wing political legacy of Reagan and Thatcher dominated politics worldwide focussing on shrinking the state and attacking trade unions. From my perspective the debate clincher came in the form of two questions. First, in which country was the cutting back of the state most advanced? Answer: New Zealand by its Labour government. Second, in which country were trade unions being attacked most fervently? Answer: Spain by its Socialist government. Both answers were subject to debate but the fact remained that left wing governments were at the forefront of anti-left policies. Yet another case of left political betrayal? Well Gunder and me thought there was more to it than this: parties as different as New Zealand Labour and Spanish Socialist suggest a broader political conclusion: our 'structuralism'....

Over the years there was one simple story that I told in class that always resonated well with students and became a hardy perennial in my political geography teaching. The latter inevitably involved discussion of the USA for both its domestic and foreign policies. To understand these, students have to confront both Americans' sense of their own exceptionalism and the severe contradictions this brings forth. The story I told was sourced from two visits I made as a tourist to Mount Vernon in Virginia, George Washington's home. You are taken around in groups of about a dozen and both times I was impressed by the honest treatment of this most important American icon's ownership of slaves. Of course, it cannot be hidden, you visit the slave quarters and, of course, all the farm labour and housework was by slaves. Washington was not a reluctant slave owner; he was increasing his ownership over time as part of his business model. So how to deal with this when there are likely to be black Americans in the tourist groups, as there was for both my visits.

At the end of the tour the guide tells a story about an important house slave, who accompanied Washington in his travels beyond Mount Vernon. The essence of the tale is as follows. When Washington became President the government was in Philadelphia, which is in Pennsylvania, a non-slave state. The house slave accompanied the President to the temporary capital but when the time came to return to Virginia, he refused to leave. He claimed his freedom and stayed. The President chided him for abandoning his wife and daughter. On arriving back at Mount Vernon, Washington summoned said wife and daughter with the sad news that their father had deserted them. But their reaction was not as he expected. They jumped for joy, clapping and shouting: "Daddy is free! Daddy is free!" Total silence in class: I'm still not sure why, but relating this story to non-American students has a huge impact: they are universally enthralled, some might even be enchanted. I doubt the authenticity of the story but that doesn't matter; it is its later propagation at Mount Vernon that fascinates. Every time I used it in class I experienced that rare feeling of having an audience in the palm of my hand. So simple but it works on many levels to provide a perfect way of beginning to make sense of the USA.

Finally, teaching inevitably changes as you get older and therefore grow increasing different from your students. This is a generational thing, which I will

treat in reverse order. In my last five years of teaching at Northumbria University it was agreed that I would not take tutorials. I was still very much enjoying my teaching but felt I had much less to offer at the small group and individual student level, mutual understanding had become problematic. I was at best a grandfather figure far removed from their current way of life. More generally, due to the recent pressures of increasing student numbers without a concomitant increase in teachers, tutorials have declined, commonly reduced to just first year students. This was the case in Loughborough, and it had sowed the seed of my unease at detachment from students.

In Loughborough, around about 2000, there was much concern about student drunken behaviour in the town, many pools of vomit being ubiquitous at weekends. Discussing this with my tutees they volunteered information with a little too much detail. It seems that first year students were subject to initiation ceremonies for joining certain clubs (usually sports clubs), involving heavy drinking with the object of vomiting to gain peer acceptance. For the inductee the secret was to get the event over as quickly as possible and this involved drinking the cheapest lager in conjunction with scoops of dog food, specially bought for the occasion. At one level this was clearly a sensible solution to a necessary rite, but in the real world, by which I mean my world, it was simply disgusting. Here was a chasm of difference I could not get my mind round.

Go back further a couple of decades and I'm about the same age as the parents of my students. Obviously a generational difference but then I had insight into how my students behaved because I had children roughly their age. For instance, whilst not a connoisseur of their music, I was relatively familiar with much of it because it was played in my house. On one occasion during a political geography debate on the Middle East, some students were unsure who Yasser Arafat was. As well as identifying him as the Palestinian leader, I added that they would have seen him on the TV news with a stubble chin just like George Michael of Wham! I think I garnered some quiet, inter-generational, respect for that observation.

But when I first started teaching at university I was not much older than the students, in fact closer to them than all the other lecturers at Newcastle. This generational gap with fellow teachers was very obvious in my first year on an Easter field trip to Alnwick, where we stayed in the castle (which then housed a teacher training college). At the end of the first day, others teaching on the course stayed in our digs whereas I went out with the students. There were musicians and singers in this group of students and we took over a room in a local hostelry. I was sitting at a table in one corner listening to the impromptu group playing in the opposite corner. Very soon I realised that the students were set on getting me drunk. But I don't do drunk. As the pints of beer were lined up for me, I dispensed much of the liquid into the beer glasses of others sitting round the table. They were unaware of this since they were looking towards the entertainment. So at the end of the evening I had drunk less than half of the beer that had been bought for me. I easily stood up to looks of surprise and admiration but it was wrongly assumed I could not possibly walk. Against my protest, the decision was made to carry me, horizontally, back to our castle digs. Nothing I could do but I sobered up immediately because I knew, but my carriers

didn't, that because of my actions at the table they had drunk much more than they realised. I stayed calm but was ever ready to cushion a fall if unfortunately dropped. Coming into the castle we met Margaret Gilpin, the lead teacher on the field trip. She didn't approve of the noisy students, especially the horizontal one who couldn't even walk back to digs. Whew! I got away with it.

## 17. Out of my depth (Politician)

***“How would you like to eat your breakfast every morning looking at a hippopotamus’s arse?’ I took this to be a rhetorical question”***

It’s 1976 and I’m at a bus stop outside Wallsend Town Hall waiting to go home to Killingworth after my first council meeting as a newly elected North Tyneside councillor. A chauffeur-driven limousine draws up and offers me lift. It is the Labour Leader of the Council who lives beyond Killingworth in the far corner of North Tyneside. He does not know me; with election for his Council position as leader coming up, this is his ten-minute chance to check me out. He tells me his big achievement is the redevelopment of North Shields town centre with its new shopping mall. And then he looks me straight in the eye and says “To get this Peter, I had to lie, lie, and lie again”. This is a baptism into local politics I had not expected. But I am quickly on a very fast learning curve. Naively, in the following days I asked Labour friends what it was all about. This is what I am told: development financing involved a national union pension fund; the building work was done by a firm from outside Tyne and Wear that is a subsidiary of a foreign company; the leader of union subsequently got paid by the foreign company as an ‘industrial relations advisor’ on his retirement. A scandal. Surely a Tory Sunday newspaper will pick this up? ‘No’, I am told. Our Leader and this union boss have been right wing Labour bulwarks against dangerous left wing radicals in both party and union, meaning they can basically get away with anything!

I found out very quickly that I was involved in a politics based on patronage. Soon after my election some pensioners from a lovely row of new council bungalows came to see me. What sort of complaint could they possibly have? The Housing Department had thoughtfully placed a couple of wooden seats in front of the houses for the pensioners to sit and chat with each other. What could go wrong? The unplanned consequence of this thoughtfulness occurred after sundown. Teenagers found the seats ideal for courting, just yards from resident’s bedroom windows. You can imagine the curtain twitching that followed and the anxiety that finally resulted in a visit to see if their new councillor could do anything about it. I dutifully phoned up the Housing Department to no avail – their attitude was ‘aren’t these people ever satisfied?’ Was that it? Well no, I was told by fellow councillors that in a simple impasse such as this you simply phone up the Leader of the Council to sort it. I did and, almost immediately he did indeed sort it. Seats gone; problem solved. He gets my gratitude; I get the gratitude of my voters. What could be more elementary? This was a politics of personal relations for personal gain but which could also work for tenants. Thus to be a good Councillor solving people’s problems with the Council you should play the patronage game. But I found it quite distasteful, not least because of the episode in the limousine. It began to dawn on me that I was not cut out for local politics.

I have never had political ambitions. I come from a Labour family but we were not party members. My earliest political action was actually illegal. I'm about 12 or 13 and it's a local election in Calverton; the polling station near us is the new primary school. I write several times in chalk on the path into the building "Remember Suez" (the Conservative government had recently invaded Egypt with the French and then ignominiously withdrawn). Of course no political messaging is allowed in the grounds of a polling station; when I tell my parents they think it funny. At an undergraduate at university I did not join the Labour Club because it was too posh. It is not until the 1966 General Election that I have more formal involvement with the party. By now we are living in West Bridgford and I join with my Dad to do some canvassing.

Dad is a rational idealist; he thinks that he can persuade others of his political views if only they will carefully listen. We are told to avoid a road of very large houses as simply being a waste of time for Labour canvassing. But for Dad they represented a challenge. The first house has a long drive, we finally knock on the large front door; the man who answers is very helpful. When we say we are from the Labour Party he says, "Ah, you will want to speak to my cleaner" and calls her to the door while he disappears back into the house. At least this proved that you can teach an old dog new tricks: Dad decided that, after all, it was not worth canvassing on this road any further.

On moving to Newcastle I still did not join the Labour Party until my friend Graham Gudgin, shocked I wasn't a member, sort of pushed me towards joining the party in Killingworth. I went to a few meetings and was well received, members being impressed that I was from the university. They assumed I was politically ambitious and in just a couple of years I am persuaded to stand in a bye-election. It's a safe Labour seat; I win. But it didn't take long to discover I had got into something I was not very good at.

My political limitations were laid bare by the nature of the ward I represented: a very mixed housing area consisting of a pit village, two old council estates and Killingworth Township, a new planning development of council and private housing. The central feature of the latter was a large housing unit consisting of multi-level connected blocks of flats built in the brutal concrete style of the 1960s with supposed 'streets in the sky' linked to a shopping centre and bus stops so residents did not have to walk at ground level. But they did; preferring the muddy paths they produced on the open ground below to the narrow paths up in the buildings. Incredulously the architect styled this grey edifice as historical Northumberland with each block of flats called a 'tower' and named after a medieval castle; a lake featured as the moat. In keeping with this fantasy, every tower stairwell had narrow slits for windows so that arrows could be shot out at attackers whilst the medieval bowmen would remain relatively safe inside. Ideal for non-existent archers but for the actual residents the effect was a lack of light producing dark unpleasant public places. Bizarre concrete Gothic, soon after it was built "Killingworth Towers" became a problem housing estate. It is not a good thing to be a Councillor who lives near a 'problem estate'.

There was a stigma to living in the 'Towers'; tenants wanted out. But the council's housing department wanted tenants to stay because they would have difficulty in finding new tenants. Empty flats were bad for the council moneywise and left remaining tenants feeling abandoned. Nationally such estates were termed "difficult-to-let housing" but for the tenants, and the councillor representing them, they were more accurately termed "difficult-to-leave housing". In Killingworth I was that councillor. Within a few months I had a 'case load' of about a hundred families; in effect I had become a social worker without any training. This is a complex systemic problem, not something that could be dealt with by simple patronage politics. Most evenings I would receive telephone calls from upset residents seeking my help. It was difficult to ever sit and relax after work, the calls just kept coming and, of course it affected the family. One of my children's birthday party was effectively ruined by multiple calls; Enid was livid. In addition, living within walking distance of the Towers meant I would have stressed tenants come to see me at least weekly; about once a month a tenant would break down completely at my kitchen table. Were the tears fake or might they finish up committing suicide? I had no way of knowing.

After a while I did come up with a partial solution of sorts. If I simply passed a case on to the housing officers it would be filed and nothing would happen, but if the tenant's doctor confirmed their stress was caused by their housing situation, they would have to be moved. It was a matter of professional hierarchy, doctors above housing officials. So I became helpful by directing tenants to the local clinic and coaching them on what to say to make sure symptoms were linked to their housing experience: it was good to mention children and the effect it was having on their schooling. But this 'solution' did little to lessen the inevitable toll on me, one that threatened to have real family implications, Enid hated the whole situation; sympathetic to resident's problems, nevertheless she didn't like her kitchen becoming an office of distress. I needed time off and I went to Edmonton to teach summer school at the University of Alberta. Normally the intensive teaching that summer school entails is considered very taxing but for me it was relaxing; I was free for six weeks. The apartment I rented had a phone in the corner. I kept looking at it, it seemed so odd; oh yes - it wasn't ringing.

Given my housing case load I hardly did any other council work like policy making; in fact since I was also working full-time as a university lecturer I hardly ever had time to prepare for council or committee meetings. I joined the informal grouping of left-leaning members of the Council but had no time to engage. So not much use as a councillor effecting policy but I did learn some things about myself. First I was not good at debating; I need time to analyse and think through problems – I usually worked out how I should have responded in a debate about three hours after a meeting finished. Second, I easily got too involved; I got upset very easily, incensed by so much insensitivity. I was not emotionally cut out to be a politician. But I can record one tremendous success. I visited a resident of a house away from the Towers who marched me through to her kitchen saying "How would you like to eat your breakfast every morning looking at a hippopotamus's arse?" I took this to be a rhetorical question. Through her kitchen window I could see an open area in which two large concrete hippopotami did indeed reside, the near one facing away from her house. It

seemed other councillors had failed to do anything; she felt badly let down, could I do better? A challenge: I agreed to help her get rid of what had become an eyesore.

Further investigation reveals that they had been bought from a Scottish New Town that had a whole menagerie of concrete beasts; they had two surplus hippos and Killingworth Township planners got them cheap. For the planners this was something of a coup and they would not agree to any request to have them removed. Determined to avoid patronage politics I asked advise of a woman councillor friend who was experienced in dealing with planners; on seeing the two beasts she immediately knew what to do. Kids had been climbing over them and sliding down them for a couple of years and the hippos' backs had become very shiny. This was not a visual design issue (eyesore), which planner's had authority over; rather the beasts were a safety hazard. Surely it was only a matter of time before a child had a horrible accident and where would the council stand then, having been previously warned? Sometimes council work can be so easy – the planners capitulated. However it took some time as they dragged their heels. How to do it – dig up or slice at the feet? But it happened. Political triumph! Sometimes you really can make a difference.

The end of my elected term as a councillor coincided with an invitation to be a visiting professor at Clark University in Worcester, Massachusetts. No contest. On returning home I did stand once more in a council election in 1980 but only to fly the flag in what was then a solidly Tory ward, Tynemouth. This was 15 years before we moved there but the losing campaign still pleases me for one particular vote. On election day we were knocking up in Knott's Flats, our core support area - a large council house development overlooking the River Tyne – when we came across an elderly man with a broad Glaswegian accent who insisted on us helping him to the polling station. The problem was he looked and was very, very ill, hardly able to breathe. We tried to persuade him to stay put but he said he had never missed a vote and he wasn't going to start now. On the way to the polling station I got talking to him; he was proud that his first ever vote was in the 1922 general election when he voted for John Wheatley! Wow! Wheatley was the leader of the Red Clydesiders; he became Minister of Health in the first Labour Government and set the firm legislative foundation for quality council housing for workers and their families. As we were literally carrying our Scottish friend back to his flat it occurred to me that I would likely be the last Labour politician he would vote for. So here I was, paired with one of my heroes John Wheatley, he at the beginning and me at the end of this Labour supporter's voting trajectory. I was just so pleased to have met him; he was simply pleased to meet someone who knew of John Wheatley. Two happy people, a different type of election result, and a good one.

Postscript: OH! JEREMY CORBYN! At last, today there is a Labour Party I can to support for its deep radicalism and mass mobilization – we are the largest political party in Europe – rather than simply because I'm Labour through and through. In a surprise to myself - I actually feel quite emotional about it!

## 18. Winning and losing (Party worker)

***“... anything goes and it could get nasty; gloves off, my only red lines were racism and misogyny plus staying within the law. The slogan on our posters was ‘Kick the Tories out of Tynemouth’”***

We'll keep the red flag flying high. Where? North Shields. Its 1983 and in the General Election I am the Labour agent for Tynemouth parliamentary constituency in which North Shields is the largest town. As soon as the election is called I get a temporary lease for a few weeks on an empty shop in Saville Street, one the town's two main shopping streets. The Labour Party is going through one of its left wing phases – in reaction to Mrs Thatcher's far right wing agenda – and have elected Michael Foot leader, for years the standard bearer of the left, now near the end of his political career. We have been lucky to find a lovely shop vacant with a large front window. I have to get the ambience right for the campaigning ahead so I buy a huge length of bright red curtain material, which is converted into a large flag to hang out from an upstairs window. It can be seen all along Saville Street.

One person who spots it during the last day of campaigning is a Norwegian journalist on his way home via a ferry from North Shields. His final visit is to our town centre and he makes a beeline for our HQ with its flag. He appears excited; I think he had found the British campaign relatively dull. I got interviewed and although I never saw the outcome I guess I was on Norwegian TV News the next day! It occurred to me that the left is universal in its political signals whereas the right is always nationally particular – if he'd gone to a blue local Tory HQ his news snippet would have required more explanation.

By the early 1980s I had written three books on political parties and elections. Thus I possessed expert knowledge that I could make available to the Labour Party. I might not have been a very good elected politician but I did have skills to be much better as a political worker for the party: I became the secretary of North Tyneside Labour Party - covering the local government area - where I contributed, at last, to deliberating on local policy. I led the party's response to proposals to redraw ward boundaries. Using census data to predict likely voting at a small area level (census enumeration districts), I created a map of North Tyneside so as to evaluate the effects of the proposed boundary changes on future elections. All very practical, I enjoyed being politically useful without any distress.

But the basic organizational unit of the Labour Party is the Parliamentary constituency party, where national elections are won and lost. Killingworth is in the Wallsend constituency and I soon transferred to become secretary of the Wallsend Labour Party. I made it my goal to create the best-organized party in the country. For instance, in an election for the Deputy Leadership of the national

party I used my writing skills to paraphrase all the manifestos of the candidates and distributed this as a pamphlet to every member of the Wallsend party before they cast their vote. There was no evidence of bias towards my own choice, Tony Benn. Ted Garratt our MP took it to Westminster and I received a congratulatory note from one of the candidates, Peter Shore! Ted, who was close to retirement, thought I was aiming to succeed him, and at times inferred he would be supportive. But no, that was not the case at all.

In my task to make a better local party I arranged for Ted and me to attend ward meetings to answer questions from members on national and local Labour Party matters. The first one was in Howdon ward and set for a 7 o'clock start. I stayed on at work as it was more convenient to get to Howden from the university rather than from home. Hence I missed the 6 o'clock TV news and at this time there were no other means of keeping up with political events. Thus I did not know that the National Union of Miners (NUM) had that day called a national strike. I got to the Howden venue about ten minutes early but the meeting had already started. There was a panel at the front of the meeting with four men I did not know plus Ted. I was ushered to the front to sit on the end of the panel next to Ted. I'm thinking 'What is this'?

The four men are senior officials of the Northumberland NUM who had searched out an already convened event to begin their strike campaign: they had found our Howdon meeting. I'm sitting there as this whole new political situation was being revealed to me, wondering what to say when it comes to my turn to speak! I'm not good doing adlib political speeches at the best of times but now I have no information except what I am hearing. I'm hoping that Ted, speaking before me, can make a good speech that I can simply endorse. But time runs out before either of us speaks. The meeting ends with the Northumberland NUM President apologising to Ted and me for hijacking our meeting. In recompense, we are both presented with a NUM tie commemorating 150 years of the Northumberland miners' organization. I still cherish this tie, earned by not saying anything! With my Dad in mind – he had died a few years earlier - I made up for my silence by personally helping, with my family, and through the constituency party, during the next year of struggle and hardship for miners.

But my constituency work was all to end in a mess. Constituency parties are run through monthly meetings of its general committee consisting of delegates from wards and unions. This is the period of Militant Tendency, Trotskyist infiltration into the Labour Party. They targeted constituencies with elderly Labour MPs; we qualified and experienced an influx of enthusiastic young members. Soon they took over all positions in the local party except mine; I remained secretary. Being of the left we got on OK, they liked that my son was called Carl! The unions now marshalled their forces to oust the 'Millies'. As constituency secretary I received several lists of new delegates from local union branches, most from workplaces not in the constituency but claiming members living in Wallsend. These claims were almost certainly false: for the full quota of five delegates a union branch had to have 250 members living in Wallsend; one workplace sending five delegates was in Darlington, implying 250 workers doing an hour's commute from Wallsend to Darlington every day! This was obviously a means of packing

our annual meeting with union delegates to oust the Millies. Inevitably it worked and the next year it was union delegates who took over all positions; in this case including mine; I was no longer secretary.

Sadly the new secretary was a young man with no organization experience; as far as I know he had never attended a previous constituency meeting. But as far as the unions were concerned it was job done and they provided him with no help or support. In the first meeting of the constituency party under the new regime there was a motion to set up an investigation into past mismanagement of the party with a view to expelling me! There was even a suggestion that I was the North East organizer of Militant Tendency! A party within a party is certainly not my politics and neither is permanent revolution. However, in this political atmosphere where guilt by association often prevails I did hide the fact that my brother's cat was called Trotsky. Fortunately, at the second meeting there were no minutes presented for the earlier meeting – the new secretary did not know this was expected of him. So, the minutes were constructed on the spot simply by people suggesting items from the floor. The putative investigation of me was not mentioned. The chaotic minutes were agreed and nothing more was ever heard of the investigation. But I had had enough, no more constituency work for me.

In the meantime I had found something I was really good at: campaign strategy. As well as the emergence of the 'Millies', this was also when a few right wing Labour MPs left the party to form a new Social Democratic Party. In their first local election they concentrated on one ward and won an impressive victory over Labour giving them three Councillors. These three worked hard over the next year to consolidate their political success. In the following election, Mary McHugh the Labour candidate, a doctor working in Sunderland, thought she was just flying the flag for Labour with no chance of winning. I was brought in as her election agent and thought otherwise. I used my writing skills to great effect. As would be expected the new Social Democrat councillors were putting out leaflets trumpeting their achievements. But they went too far, claiming credit for a major item that was actually the result of work by the previous Labour councillors. I pounced on this, and produced a leaflet laying out the time line and saying this was 'just not right' – here were councillors who claimed to provide a new honest politics but were caught out doing the worst old dishonest politics. I still consider this to be my best ever leaflet. It worked; we turned the vote upside down in a local Labour landslide.

Mary was ambivalent about her unexpected success but it did not go unnoticed by her cousin Paddy Cosgrove, the national Labour parliamentary candidate for Tynemouth constituency (including Tynemouth ward but much more of the coast and riverside), next door to my Wallsend constituency. Here was to be found the only Conservative MP in Tyne and Wear. This is how I became the Labour agent in Tynemouth, working to get Paddy elected, at the General Election in 1983, and also in 1987. These were elections where the Conservatives did extremely well nationally and therefore there was little chance of ousting the sitting Tory MP. But we did relatively well countering the national trend whilst still losing. I really enjoyed the month before election day, a period of intensive campaigning, harnessing scores of volunteers in a clear, targeted

strategy. This requires real leadership skills because you have no power over volunteers except exhibiting a competence and vision that energizes them to work the best they can; they each know they have a role that is worth doing for a collective goal. And with such a strict time scale you had to be ruthless when necessary.

For instance, in the 1983 campaign I brought with me a friend from Killingworth who was a computer expert, quite rare for the times. The idea was to streamline our contact with the electorate using the latest tools. Thus we intended to print addresses on envelopes for all voters in Tynemouth to be used for the free postal distribution available to all candidates. The Royal Mail gave a deadline for delivery to them; our job was to provide addressed envelopes with our election leaflet inside. However there were some hic-ups with the computing and with a week to go to deadline I asked my friend if he could guarantee getting the printed addressed envelopes in time. Yes, almost certainly, he said. Not good enough, the free post is essential to the campaign and cannot be missed – if voters got the Conservative leaflet but not one from Labour, what would they think? Stop computing, all hands on deck we have to write out addresses on envelopes as traditionally done. My friend is devastated but so be it. An emergency message goes out; the campaign office has numerous volunteers around the clock writing out addresses, literally many thousands, and we get the job done. Beyond my friend, others in the campaign did not like eschewing the modern and reverting to old-fashioned ways of working, but that's their problem. Letters from Labour reach the Royal Mail on time and that is what matters.

Although our candidate was centre-left, in 1983 he agreed that I run a very left wing campaign, red flag and all. I called a meeting of volunteers and explained that anything goes and it could get nasty; gloves off, my only red lines were racism and misogyny plus staying within the law. The slogan on our posters was "Kick the Tories out of Tynemouth". Campaign leaflets were named "Labour North" (mimicking the local BBC news programme "Look North"); I wrote them very carefully and very boldly: the Conservative MP, who was also involved in restructuring companies, was always referred to in the same way "Tory MP and Industrial Liquidator". I brought in Millie helpers one of whom was a brilliant cartoonist. I used his stuff but did draw a line at a manic image of the Conservative MP eating worms, each of which was labelled as a local industry. It was pinned on our office notice board to provide comradely amusement but never appeared on a leaflet for obvious legal reasons. Beyond my writing skills I used my electoral research knowledge with specific reference to voter turnout. Traditionally Conservative wards had the highest turnout, typically about 10% more than Labour wards. Specific focus on very local issues plus swamping these wards with volunteers on election day resulted in a turnout turnaround: the four wards with the highest turnout in 1983 were all Labour wards!

In 1987 Paddy was much more comfortable with a new centre-left national leader (Neil Kinnock) and I ran what might be called a more 'professional' campaign – doing the usual things efficiently but still with a few innovations. For instance, we used the free mail provision in a new way. Instead of mailing

another Labour North leaflet - these had already been delivered by volunteers in numerous editions - we sent a simple letter from Paddy to each voter thus making it personal from the candidate and not just another political leaflet. There was good feedback from voters for this innovation and again our turnout increased but, as previously, the national campaign failed us badly. Despite the two losses these were among the most enjoyable bits of work I ever did for the Labour Party.

But like my constituency work, my campaigning came to an abrupt halt for reasons outside my control. I got my one and only ever threatening phone call during a local election campaign. The person on the other end of the phone told me not to distribute a leaflet - ready for delivery next day, which attacked the Social Democrats - or else he would out a gay Labour Councillor with evidence from a recent holiday he had taken. To say I was shocked would be an understatement. I phoned around political colleagues and we quickly decided we had no option but to go ahead with the leaflet - we couldn't have an opponent controlling our campaign. In the meantime I contacted an acquaintance in the university who was a Social Democrat parliamentary candidate and told him about the disgraceful behaviour of one of his party's supporters. I don't know what he did with the information I gave him but nothing like that happened again. However soon after I was targeted in a rather different way.

A complaint was made to the police that I had broken electoral law by not declaring all the expenses in another local campaign. This was serious; I was interviewed in my office at the university by a very senior police officer. He asked about a particular evening's campaigning when a group of us canvassed an estate. As per usual we had an initial meeting place and then spread out knocking on doors and recording responses. Two parts of this process were queried. First, how did the campaigners get to the meeting place: by bus but no ticket prices declared; by car but no petrol receipts declared. Second, what did they use to record responses: pens, pencils - the costs of neither declared. In every campaign I have ever known volunteers come and do the work without any thought of recompense for the items above. But now these were being interpreted as gifts to the campaign and therefore required to be included in the budget. However 'everybody does it' is not a good defence. The police officer interviewing me indicated he had enough evidence to charge me for violating electoral law but allowed me instead to take a caution; this entailed admitting my guilt, which would be kept on record and reactivated if I repeated the offence in the future. So I got a police record; I was risking my job! I informed the Regional Labour Party about this bizarre event and indicated to colleagues in the party that I would no longer be able to be a party campaigner. A sad end to campaigning but it was great while it lasted.

But let's conclude on a high note. Some years after the limousine conversation I had with the Leader of the Council, he was finally voted out as Labour leader by his fellow Labour councillors. His reaction was simply: with a few of his Labour supporters on the Council, he formed a coalition with the Conservative councillors enabling him to continue as Leader of the Council! Thus Labour lost control of North Tyneside. However, standing as "Labour against Militants" (but

widely referred to as “Labour against Martians”) at the next Council election, the Council Leader and his colleagues all lost their seats and Labour regained control of North Tyneside. By this time I was the secretary of the constituency Labour Party and it gave me immense satisfaction to write the letter expelling the erstwhile Council Leader from the party. Politics can be so very sweet.

## 19. Fast and loose (Writer)

***“... writing is a wonderful activity; I’m projecting myself into the text. During a period of intense writing, I wake up every morning so looking forward to the day ahead”***

Mentioning one of the essays in this book, I recently wrote an email in which I described myself as a ‘failed pelican’. I might be many things, and have failed at quite a few, but never as a water bird. I had meant to type politician but had typed in ‘e’ where ‘o’ should have been. My email software helpfully suggested a correction. Given a choice between original and correction, the presumption is that software is right and I am wrong: if I do not choose to discard its suggestion this automatically joins the text. Since I did not notice the correction this is how pelican appeared. It was just as well that I did a quick check on my email before sending it or else the recipient will have surmised that, finally, I’d gone mad. To be fair, I should add that I do love fish; it is my favourite food.

When people are helpful they are considered caring, even when their efforts have not been requested. Comments, including corrections, on your writing are welcome. This does not apply to algorithms; first and foremost because their help is not for you as an individual, you are just represented as text. Unrequested, algorithms are embedded in the software used for writing and are undoubtedly useful. It would be churlish not to recognise this as someone who is mildly dyslexic: red underlining indicates misspellings some of which I would not have identified by myself. But I still feel uneasy; writing is so personal that this really does feel like intrusion. For me, writing is a wonderful activity; I’m projecting myself into the text. During a period of intense writing, I wake up every morning so looking forward to the day ahead, hoping to be creative in putting together an argument.

My method of writing is straightforward. First I clear the decks; I have to concentrate on just my writing and therefore it has been undertaken mainly during summer vacations when other university work is dormant. Also sabbatical leaves from university to focus on writing have latterly been important. When ready I collect everything I need - texts I am using, results from analyses, key data, lists of ideas that might be incorporated, an initial plan, and anything else I might require – so that I have direct access to them. And then I plunge into it all, getting them into my head to convert into a meaningful text. This results in two key features. I have to write very quickly – strike while the iron is hot, as it were. And I have a simple style, I write as I talk so it is sometimes quite ‘chatty’ in nature. Let me give examples of both.

When I was nearing the end of my PhD researches in 1970 I got an invitation to be a visiting assistant professor at the University of Iowa. But for this position I needed to have been awarded my PhD. The problem was that while I had finished the research I had not started the writing; at least fifty thousand words

were required. The solution: Enid and children went to visit with her mum for a fortnight while I stayed in our North Shields flat. I had one neighbour providing dinners every day while another typed up my scribbled writings day by day. I finished writing the Dissertation in ten days, travelled with typed paper and copy to Enid in Warrington, got the two copies bound in Liverpool and submitted to Liverpool University in time for successful examination before we were off to Iowa. For some reason, my own PhD students consistently, through many decades, have never liked this story.

The talking style of writing that goes with this rapid production of text has to be carefully crafted. I have to curtail it to some extent when writing scientific papers for academic journals where it can be interpreted as being too informal, even at worse 'loose'. But this is less of a problem when writing books. With the former there is a particular way of writing up research findings that assumes a very rigid form of scientific method. Instead of the messy reality of research, results are supposed to be presented as part of a linear process: hypothesis – data collection – analysis – results. In one of our research projects on cities in globalization we were sifting through some different ways of looking at the data and by chance we came across a very interesting pattern. It suggested that instead of a single globalization there were two quite different forms of globalization. They were very clearly present and easily interpreted; we termed them intensive globalization and extensive globalization. Nobody had previously described such a division of globalization and so I wrote this up and submitted the paper for publication in a leading journal. The introduction to the paper mentioned the serendipity involved in finding the results. The paper was accepted for publication but on condition that all reference to serendipity be removed. Effectively, we had to pretend we had a hypothesis that there were two globalizations; we collected data to test this; and our analysis confirmed the hypothesis with the results as reported. After all we are supposed to be proper scientists. This is an extreme case, I usually write to avoid such reaction but when comments on my language in papers do occur they typically require only a little tweaking to tighten up the argument. But I have far less inhibitions in writing books.

I am most conspicuous in my books; they directly represent me at different stages on my career. It is here that I appear overtly, often in quite chatty mode. Even my first book with a daunting subject matter, *Quantitative Methods in Geography* (1977), the opening words are "Let's begin with ..." to start a discussion of the nature of mathematics! I think this textbook was a success partly because of my language helped make difficult ideas more accessible. It was widely adopted including by Bill Warntz, one of my geography heroes, at the University of Western Ontario. He invited me to give a lecture to his quantitative geography class in 1979; I did not know he was using my book. When I was introduced the slide on the screen behind me showed the cover of my book. It has a big slash of red across the middle. For some reason I started by saying I had no notion of what the red splotch was. There was a hush of surprise and slowly rising hum of whispers in the audience. Bill interceded telling me that the red shape was actually the outline of peninsular Ontario, that is to say, the place where I am now lecturing! Much hilarity throughout the room, I learned

something about my own book before (if) they learned something from me. I have no idea why the publisher put this on my cover, no harm done, but I did not learn the lesson to ensure publisher's design for a book cover is appropriate – more on this below.

*Quantitative Methods* was the first of five books that represent markers, stepping-stones if you will, in my academic career and which feature in the remainder of this essay. But before describing the other four I want to recount my experiences as a co-author of three books on elections published between 1979 and 1981. In each case the book would not have been possible without the co-authors: Graham Gudgin and *Seats, Votes and the Spatial Organization of Elections*, Ron Johnston and *Geography of Elections*, and Clark Archer and *Section and Party*. All three books got very good reviews. They were each produced in different ways. The most integrated writing was with Graham because we were both located in the Geography Department at Newcastle allowing us to develop the book in numerous discussions. There were some disagreements about content; we each argued our position and the winner had his point included in the text; the loser's point was relegated to a footnote. Flipping through the book today I can still recognise where I won and lost! This was a strong face-to-face iterative process, very enjoyable and very productive. Working this way was not possible with the other two books, Ron being in Sheffield and Clark in Dartmouth College, New Hampshire.

With Ron there was a simple division of labour reflecting our different knowledges of the subject: we wrote four chapters each, as agreed at a conference we both attended in January 1978. Ron was very prolific, he wrote his chapters before I started mine in the Easter vacation. Thus I could dip into his text and move some stuff to my chapters and vice versa. The process involved sending typed manuscripts by post plus phone calls. At one point I phoned Ron's secretary with a query about his chapter four and she answered with "which chapter 4 is that then". As I said Ron was a prolific writer, and as such a great co-author.

With Clark it was different again. The book was planned when I taught summer school at Dartmouth College and Clark spent some time visiting Newcastle but most of the writing was via trans-Atlantic post, with no trans-Atlantic telephone calls (they were just not done at this time). No overt division of labour like with Ron but we managed to produce an integrated text thousands of miles apart. Not an arrangement for writing you would ever expect to work but it did. Put simply with all co-authors the bottom line was trust and respect, and the next to bottom line was complementary inputs evenly distributed. I was lucky, both conditions occurred three times in spades.

When you write a book alone it is a very different matter; at its most basic it is an extended ego-trip with huge helpings of adrenalin. In my case I have combined my delight in teaching with book writing. My method involves teaching a class over a few years to get two important inputs for the writing. First, standing up and talking about a subject to an audience forces you to think through a presentation, then experience how it goes at presentation, and then iron out

discrepancies, unintended non sequiturs and other awkward passages. Second, that my audience consists of students is important; their reactions in class discussion and their comprehension as expressed in exams also indicate the need for changes. After a few years when I think I've got it about right I convert teaching material into a text, the latter inevitably inducing further changes in the evolution of a set of ideas that becomes a book. For instance, with the initial stepping stone book, *Quantitative Geography*, the course was first taught in Iowa in 1970/1, and then in Newcastle from 1971 to 1976 when the book was written; it was ready for use by the class of 1977/8. The other four stepping stone books represent changes in direction and with these there has been an additional phase in the preparation. A few years before writing the book I compose a research paper that captures the core ideas of the book-to-be. This is to test the waters; submitting it to a journal elicits three anonymous referee reports, plus comments from the editor, each judging whether the paper is publishable. In all cases the answer was 'yes', which is obviously reassuring, but the chief gain has been the critical assessments identifying strengths and weaknesses.

The four books indicating changes in direction have come at decadal intervals.

After a precursor article in 1982, in 1985 I published *Political Geography: World-Economy, Nation-state and Locality* that introduced a new approach (world-systems analysis) to understanding political geography. The book was written in six weeks in the summer of 1984, a chapter a week. This was the occasion when I finally realised that I had to take book covers seriously. World-systems analysis is seen by its critics as too mechanical; my book's cover pandered to this by having an engine-style design complete with turning cogs. Belatedly I learned my lesson and have insisted on having a say in all future cover designs. Nevertheless the book was very well received with excellent reviews and very good sales. It became the Taylor family Cyprus holiday fund book: royalties arriving in June paid for two weeks vacation. Still going, now with co-author Colin Flint, its 7<sup>th</sup> edition appeared in 2018, making it a third of a century old!

The sales reflect that it has been used as a successful textbook for its subject but originally I wrote with two purposes: a research statement and well as a teaching tool. A hint of the former was given by the book's dedication to Karl Liebknecht, a German socialist politician of the early twentieth century. In 1914 he alone voted against funding for the First World War in the German parliament, following his father, Wilhelm, who had voted against funding for war in the Prussian parliament in the 1860s. They both represent the losing socialist side in the crucial populist contest between nationalism and international socialism. The political outcome was that the twentieth century witnessed both democratic governments and democratic wars. My world-systems political geography sought to revisit this ideological conflict.

With precursor article and book 1993 and 1996 respectively, *The Way the Modern World Works: World Hegemony to World Impasse* was a very different experience. Initially accepted on to a publisher's (Wiley) programme to promote the book in bookstores, the commissioning editor left and everything went wrong. Being in a Geography Department means having physical geography

colleagues who read Earth Science book catalogues. Thus I found out that my book was listed under Geology in Wiley's catalogue at the high science price of \$60 for a paperback. The error came about because in Geology, 'modern world' is used to describe the Holocene. I wrote to Wiley in the UK who passed my complaint on to the USA but I was unable to have a dialogue about the error. Sales were poor. A couple of years later at a conference in Riverside, California I was sitting next to a young women on field trip bus who had just 'found' my book in her university's library. I immediately asked whether it was in the Geology or Social Science sections. Good news: the librarian had located in the latter. Some good reviews in Geography did not fully counter the publisher's error.

With its precursor article in 2001, *World City Network: A Global Urban Analysis* appeared in 2004. This was the result of much research collaboration with colleagues in the Globalization and World Cities (GaWC) Research Network; foundation researchers are Jon Beaverstock, Ben Derudder, Michael Hoyler, Kathy Pain, Frank Witlox and David Walker. I tried to put together our findings in a single text; it provided a wider context for our research endeavours. Again good reviews, and this time reasonable sales, but now I'm in a new position within Geography: a cultural turn in research has occurred in which I am part of the old guard being overturned. As a product of Geography's quantitative revolution I find that change has come full circle: this latest generation particularly dislike the use of quantitative methods, which are seen as backward. For instance, a referee of one of our scientific papers advises a journal editor not to publish by a 'bonehead' author. I withdrew the paper and it was subsequently published in a more appropriate journal. Despite such strident criticism the book does aid GaWC in opening a new vista for urban studies in Geography. A second edition came out in 2016 with co-author Ben Derudder and this area of research continues to develop in new vibrant ways.

With two precursor articles in 2007 and 2010, my most ambitious book *Extraordinary Cities: Millennia of Moral Syndromes, World-Systems and City/State Relations* appeared in 2013. The main title is a counterpoint to critics who claim GaWC ignores 'ordinary cities'. Put simply, I don't think there are any ordinary cities: all cities are extraordinary. The book is an experiment in viewing world history through cities and their commercial networks rather than the ubiquitous stories of empires and states and their wars. My favourite of all the books I have written, sadly it has been largely ignored. A few years earlier I had edited a book with David Slater called *The American Century* with a set of the very best contributors and David was surprised and upset that it was not reviewed in Geography journals. I had to explain that for the age cohort of academics now editing journals we were not really viewed as part of Geography, at best we might be given a place in their teaching the history of Geography. *Extraordinary Cities* has confirmed this.

There was one review of the book, strangely within a cultural-orientated journal, in which I am referred to as 'notorious', you know like mass murderers; Hitler and Stalin also come to mind. Not to worry, in this context I take notorious to simply mean using quantitative methods. In a different context there is reference to one of my papers as 'ideological rantings'; again not to worry, this simply

means the writer cannot fit my ideas into his own theoretical mind-set: this phrase is just a statist Marxian description of world-systems analysis as I apply it to cities. But I try and be positive by using such catastrophic criticism to good effect. I have succumbed to a crogfam urge; I employ as the subtitle for some conference presentations: "IDEOLOGICAL RANTINGS OF A BONEHEAD". As such it appears on the first power point yet strangely no one has ever asked a question about this slide. I suppose it's obvious.

Before concluding, I feel I should mention a normally unreported happenstance: two books that I did begin to prepare for, but then never wrote. 'Missing books' from an author's oeuvre are an uncommon subject. With precursor articles in 1983 and 1989 I was going to write a book on the use of elections in liberal democracies and beyond. After a research project on European party systems I did some work on African, Indian and Latin American elections in preparation. And then came a rush of new elections with new parties in Eastern Europe consequent upon the end of the Cold War. This meant a huge new area to cover and one where it would be at least a decade before anything general could be intelligently said about this new use of elections. I lacked the stamina: end of book plans. A decade later I was teaching a very successful course called "The English and their British State" with a view of turning this into a book. There were a couple of precursor papers in 1991 and 2001 that were well received but I was put off writing on a mixed political and cultural subject simply because the latter half would likely create too much academic hassle for me to be bothered with. This strategic decision led to my second quantitative turn, which proved to be highly successful as GaWC.

As an aside I can add a lost text to the missing texts above; 'lost' indicating that the text was written but I have no tangible evidence for it except in my head. This was for "A Love Supreme", a fanzine of Sunderland football club, as a contribution to a discussion of the Subbuteo table football game sometime in the 1980s. It had been pointed out that the makers had not extended their product into other sports. I wrote a piece suggesting Subbuteo synchronised swimming for playing in the bath. The plastic figures with permanent smiles would be manoeuvred together until one or more ignominiously sank. For some reason this very innovative idea never caught on, a total failure of modern entrepreneurship.

So finally, what about this book? It might be of interest to readers as how this one has been written. In May this year (2018) I had a conversation with a colleague in one of my previous universities who was dumbfounded that I had voted Leave in the 2016 EU referendum. This stimulated me to write an statement laying out my position in political detail – it appears below. I had previously thought of writing a memoir mixing biography and politics but it was on the way to being another 'missing book'. However I decided this statement would fit nicely into this yet to be started project. So planning began and I was ready to write other essays by early summer. The process is that, when ready to start, I write each essay in two days, pass it on the Enid as my first reader, and amend accordingly. With a draft of the whole set of essays finished these have been sent to friends and colleagues who have been hugely complimentary.

Revisions and additions have resulted from some of their comments. Wow, all finished in November.

Postscript: I have added a few minor additions since that original 'finish'.

## 20. Here and there (World traveller)

***“... we walked the length of the beach to the famous restaurant “Cheeseburger in Paradise”. Intriguingly they had Newcastle Brown on their drinks menu”***

There have been two TV adaptations of novels about academic life that I found particularly interesting because they resonated with my own experiences, albeit in very different ways. Malcolm Bradbury's *The History Man* on TV in the early 1980s was about a radical lecturer who is utterly despicable. He spouts about making a better world in the future while going about making a worse world in the present. Therefore I was a little shaken when I realised my departmental colleagues at Newcastle thought I was just such a history man. This could happen because at the time I had hardly any social contact, or indeed simple discussion, with the people I worked with. This was soon after I discovered crogfam and I reacted in what I now think was a rather odd way: I cultivated this unanticipated image in many little ways so as to confirm their view of me. Put bluntly, I was in full throttle crogfam mode. It didn't help matters, but at this time these were beyond help in any case. It had its funny side. A few years later Hal Lister, a senior academic from the department, visited our house when I held a reception for a visitor to the department. Hal couldn't hide the genuine sympathy he felt for Enid, that poor woman who was married to me. Enid was bemused by the obvious pity she received from this stranger!

The second TV book adaptation, of David Lodge's *Small World*, satirising conference hopping by academics, appeared in the late 1980s just as I was entering into this world. This really started for me one Saturday morning in 1982 when, out of the blue, I received a phone call from Austin, Texas. I was invited to speak at the University of Texas and then move on to the annual conference of the Association of American Geographers (AAG) in San Antonio, all expenses paid. I did not know the person at the other end of the phone but immediately said 'yes'. A few months later on a day off between the Austin and San Antonio legs of my trip I am walking on the bridge over the Rio Grande between Laredo and Nuevo Laredo into Mexico (my first time in the "Third World") with a co-presenter from the university gig. Strangely, all oncoming cars are sounding their horns at us as they pass by. They can't possibly know us, is something wrong? I checked my flies. And then the person a few yards in front of us turns his head sideways and a famous dimple in his chin appears. We are walking just behind Kirk Douglas. Wow, I have joined a new club, I'm a world traveller, I'm Spartacus!

Of course, I had previously attended AAG conferences in the 1970s but only when residing in the USA; the idea of flying across the Atlantic just to attend a conference was not on my radar. However by the 1980s air travel was becoming more commonplace; regular flight schedules across the Atlantic to numerous US cities had made travel so much more convenient. Yet it was so very different not much more than a decade earlier. My first ever flight was in 1968. I applied for a

job in University College Dublin and took a Liverpool-Dublin flight for the interview. Flying above the North Wales coast I was oddly assured that from this bird's eye view the coastline really did look the same as depicted on maps and in atlases!

Two years later our family are flying out from London on our Iowa adventure. And the travel was an adventure. The only way to get to America at affordable prices was to join a charter flight. Ours was arranged through a travel group at the university in a legally dubious manner. To get a charter flight you had to be a member of the club who did the chartering. I was given a membership card for a gardening club from Kent. Then train to London, Dad drove us to Stansted Airport where we joined other 'Kentish gardeners' from all over the country. The flight itself could not get to New York without refuelling. Thus we landed in Gander, Newfoundland and disembarked so we could buy things in a "Welcome to Canada" gift shop before re-boarding for New York. However a year later our return to the UK had a hitch, we had to change made-up clubs – no idea why but new membership cards were handed out at New York for the Caledonian Dancing Society. All this ludicrous arrangement was to get around major airline companies' business model of transporting only rich people across the Atlantic. Where there's a will, there's a way and all this silly deception worked for us, we were able to have a wonderful year in Iowa, before I became a world traveller.

Let me explain how Lodge's small world of academics has worked in my experience. Research is a collective effort, not just including the colleagues you work with directly, but also all who are working in your research field. You get access to the latter through reading the latest articles and books but there is no better way of knowing someone's research than listening to him or her and, better still, discussing research with the person doing it. This is how ideas are communicated, honed, improved, dropped or whatever: conferences, by bringing large numbers of people together, are central to enabling this process to operate efficiently. Thus universities usually have a conference fund for staff to cover some, at least, of the consequent expenses. However if you are in receipt of research grants from a public body you are required to have a plan for disseminating your results – why do the research if you don't tell anyone about it! Therefore funders of research usually expect conference presentations to be budgeted for. And as an on going process this means that you see many of the same people every year resulting in friendships developing; conference going has an enjoyable social side. Hence many academics are in receipt of what might be called a 'necessary perk' – being a world traveller. At first and for a couple of decades afterwards this involves travelling the world alone but sometime in middle age it becomes common to bring your better half. Initially this means I pay for an extra ticket for Enid but most of the rest is taken care of. Later when I'm more in demand, an organization might pay for both Enid and me. Either way we have been to some great places together and here I present just the highlights.

Honolulu is number one on the list of experiences Enid and I have shared. The American geographers conference was held there in 1999 and I was invited to give a special lecture. For some reason Enid decided she would accompany me

on this particular trip. The conference hotel was on one end of Waikiki beach and every morning we walked past a lake full of flamingos to have a breakfast of fruits next to the beach. One evening we walked the length of the beach to the famous restaurant “Cheeseburger in Paradise”. Intriguingly they had Newcastle Brown on their drinks menu. A Boston company owned world rights to the brand outside the UK and they promoted it as a classy English beer. But I come from Newcastle; I know Newkey Brune is the poor man’s tippie. At home it is served in a pint bottle with a half-pint glass for the explicit purpose of lasting a long time: the glass is topped up sip by sip. It is not my drink in Newcastle but I feel I have to drink it in Honolulu! At the end of the conference I manage to persuade Enid that we should go on a submarine trip to see fishes under the Pacific. This is actually a bit disappointing if you’ve seen fishes and corals on TV. Hawaii is made up of volcanic islands; we are taken to an old ship that has been sunk to attract fish but it’s not the Barrier Reef. A second week is added to the work trip as a holiday on the Big Island; we hire an open top car, buy a Roy Orbison tape, and drive around the island. It’s like Iowa with palm trees plus, of course, lots of volcano lava. One drawback getting home: it has five legs: Big Island – Honolulu - San Francisco - Detroit – Amsterdam – Newcastle. Plane delay in Detroit results in a 36-hour trip, so tired but it was all worth it.

I have been lucky enough to visit Rio de Janeiro twice, first on my own and second time with Enid. I had a good friend from the city, Bertha Becker, who I first met at a conference in Oxford in 1982. She made two research visits to work with me - one each at Newcastle and Loughborough universities. My trips to Rio were organized in part by her in return. It was during Bertha’s conference in 1998 that I conceived the idea of an internet-based research network for studying world cities that became GaWC. Much more resonant at the time: the vendors on Copacabana Beach throwing green coconuts in the air, slicing off the tops with a machete, sticking a straw in them, and selling you the cool coconut juice inside. Bertha was a great host and after the conference took me inland where I was shown a replica of the Crystal Palace – we sometimes forget the cultural influence of Britain on Latin America in the nineteenth century. With Enid in 2007 we were hosted by one of my PhD students, Eliana Rossi, partly to celebrate her obtaining her doctorate. We stayed in a lovely hotel on Ipanema Beach with just one downside. First day walking out a cyclist pulled Enid’s necklace from her neck and rode off examining his loot. Lesson learned and soon compensated by introducing Enid to drinking coconuts. At one point we were taken on a surprise trip by Eliana’s boyfriend who worked for a Brazilian airline: he stopped the car at a heliport, with helicopter ready to whisk us around Sugar Loaf Mountain and the rest. Phew! Nothing much can beat an experience like that.

New Orleans is a popular US city for conferences; being so very different from other US cities it attracts more delegates for an event. I have attended three conferences there, the first on my own, and then twice with Enid. On the second trip after settling into our hotel near the New Orleans Arena in 2004, we went for stroll and, hearing noisy celebrations at the end of the street, we came across Mardi Gras. We must have been the only people in the city who did not know it was parade day! A local Louisiana family took us under its wing, explained what

was going on, and we collected beads and necklaces thrown from the carriages just like old timers at the festival. Unexpectedly we had a great day. The memory of this trip was transformed and put into perspective the following year by Hurricane Katrina. Watching at home on TV we were horrified to see our hotel; the place where we queued for taxis was now occupied by a row of shopping trolleys each carrying a dead body. It represented America at its very worst, something we were cushioned from in our academic bubble.

We returned in 2018, colleagues had arranged a celebration of my career, and we rediscovered our love for Bourbon Street and surrounds (for Enid this largely meant Beignets). Again we were unwittingly lucky, our trip coincided with the annual New Orleans Jazz Festival. Friday afternoon sitting in Jackson Square as a band plays Fats Domino's classic "Walking to New Orleans" is closer to paradise than even a cheeseburger on Waikiki Beach. We were looking forward to the conclusion of the festival next day, our last day in the city. But no, it was not to be. A tropical storm was forecast for the Saturday initially expected to last two hours. The forecasters got it wrong by ten hours – it simply bucketed down from noon to midnight, the festival was abandoned. It was even worse for us; we were stuck in a hotel with no restaurant; we couldn't go out and so were sustained by food and drink from a vending machine. At ten in the evening we rushed across the main road to a Starbucks at the bottom of an office block and had a coffee and cake each – not what we had expected as our final celebration meal of this wonderful city!

One of my long-term travel aims had been to get Enid on the Great Wall of China and this was achieved in 2007. A trip was arranged for us by one of my PhD students Wei Shen and took in a conference in Shanghai, a train trip onto Hangzhou, and then a research meeting at the Academy of Social Sciences in Beijing. At Shanghai we enjoyed exploring the shopping in Nanjing Street and the Bund. In the latter I bought some toy skates from a street vendor and when I got back to the hotel what was in my box bore no relation to the demonstration goods I thought I had bought! It confirmed to Enid that I am a bad shopper. In Beijing to see Tiananmen Square and the Forbidden City was amazing just like the trip out to the wall. But in some ways Hangzhou was most interesting. A beautiful city of lakes, we were hosted not by a university but civil groups. I did not know I was scheduled to give a talk until just before we went into a room above a library – as I was being introduced I just had time to write down some headings! I talked generally about cities in globalization and Chinese cities in this process all pivoting on the concept of connectivity between cities. I got some interesting questions from the floor and all seemed to be going well until somebody broached the matter of connectivity within cities. At this point a member of the audience at the back disappeared only to reappear ten minutes later with someone who was obviously important. The chairman of the session had just closed the meeting when the new man entered; the meeting was quickly opened again. He walked straight to the front and gave a five-minute speech (translated for me in my ear by the chairman) on the question of who could run taxis in the city and how the authorities were being fair to everyone. He finished, the audience clapped, and it was over. I never found out what this was all about. This apart, visiting a very different society with a fascinating past combined with

incredibly rapid contemporary change is an experience to ponder long after you leave.

Of course, every well-seasoned, international traveller has horror stories to tell and I am no exception. These include a last-second aborted take-off at Shanghai Airport, two aborted landings in a snow storm at Binghamton, escorted off a plane before take-off at Amsterdam's Schiphol Airport, plus too many delays and missing luggage to mention. But my worse experience happened at Chicago's O'Hare Airport just a few years ago. I had attended a conference in the city and took a taxi to the airport. As usual I set off the alarms at security (my titanium hips) and was taken aside. The official explained they had a new high sensitive device that he used to scan me. I buzzed. Surprised, they scanned me again. I buzzed again. He brought a colleague over. Scan and buzz repeated. The person dealing with me then said: "I'm sorry sir, you are above my grade". Now I really am worried. I'm shunted aside to wait for a more senior person. He comes and takes me into a little office. I have to take my cloths off down to underwear. My clothes are individually tested and the problem is my trousers; they simply will not stop buzzing when scanned. I become curious: what have they found, traces of drugs or explosives? Don't ask! Bad thought! I am not interrogated but begin to think of an explanation. I'm guessing that I have picked up some illicit particles from the backseat of the taxi. The inspector comes and goes several times. It looks like I'll miss my plane. And then he comes in and just says: "Thank you sir. Please get dressed. You can go." So relieved, I thought I would be returning back into the city in a police van! I do catch my plane. So relieved to be home, the first thing I do is bin the trousers. I do not want to be above anyone's grade ever again!

Beyond these highlights and lowlights I have been to many other cities, mainly in the US and across Europe but I will conclude with my odd interactions with Poland. Sometime in the mid 1980s, I was asked by the Foreign Office to host a Polish geographer who was visiting several people in the UK. It was some sort of Cold War academic friendship initiative. He arrives; we have dinner, and then retreat for discussion. One of the reasons I agreed to do this was because I hoped to get first hand knowledge of Solidarity, the workers movement challenging the communist government. Silly me. He begins by telling me that that Solidarity is a Jewish conspiracy! I take a deep breath; all hope of any sensible discussion over but it is worse than this: this racist man is staying in my house overnight. I don't tell Enid about this until after he's left; I can't remember at all how I got through the rest of the evening. I was so pleased to pack him off on the train to Edinburgh next day. The Foreign Office had supplied me with a form to fill in about the visit. I threw it away. Six months later I got a phone call from a man at the Foreign Office saying my assessment of the visit was overdue; when I explained he just said yes, that's what everybody else experienced. What a waste of taxpayer's money!

A few years later and I am going in the other direction: after the Cold War is over I'm invited to a planning conference in Warsaw; I'm first up at nine on the second day. On the first day I see the audience are planners largely in their fifties, certainly they would have come into the profession during the communist era.

This gives me an idea, as it transpired a very bad idea, of how to start my presentation the next day. I usually sprinkle my lectures with the odd joke just to keep an audience awake but I do not usually start with one – if it goes wrong the rest of the talk becomes an uphill struggle. But this day I did – making a play on Vladimir Lenin and John Lennon having surnames with effectively the same pronunciations. So after I'm introduced I stand up and say: "I'm going to take a Leninist approach to urban planning. {PAUSE} As John Lennon famously said 'Planning is what you do as life passes you by'". Stony silence in the room. I think it's the stupidest thing I've ever said standing at a podium. More croffam than world traveller, but I still like the joke.

## 21. Bubble gum versus heroin (Ageless rock n'roller)

***“... these are people who are trying to erase my rock n'roll and thereby undermine my identity! This is seriously personal”***

My grandchildren have always liked travelling in the car with me because of the music I play. They find it exciting even though the songs are many decades older than them. I play the records of my teenage years as chronicled earlier; to them I am 'a child of the sixties'. I have also used this phrase to explain to students where I am coming from in certain discussions, the sixties being a period of cultural awaking with young people finding their voice, reflected in their music. So imagine my dismay when some aged rock star, looking very much the worse for wear, trots out the fatuous statement: "If you can remember the sixties you weren't there". But this is beyond logic – if you can't remember how do you even know you were there? Of course, what he means is that he was constantly stoned, having a great time - 'don't you know man'. Well actually I do know. I do remember the sixties, a very different sixties. A university student between 1963 and 1968 and politically engaged from 1966 onwards, I never once came across anybody taking drugs during said decade.

The first time I was ever offered drugs was in 1970. After working all election day in Jesmond, the first predictions on TV show a clear defeat for the incumbent Labour government. Downhearted, a group of us decide to go into Newcastle city centre to drown our sorrows. By chance, walking down St Mary's Place we came across the local Conservative Party HQ, celebrations in full swing. We gate crashed their party; why not sup with the devil when the beer is free? However in addition to the beer, drugs were being liberally dispensed. I don't know what they were, but they were certainly popular in this alien world. I like beer, I didn't need anything else; we soon left the party, Tories celebrating was eventually too hard to stomach. The point is that from my experience the rise of drugs began outside my world; it was a pastime of richer people. People from backgrounds like mine only entered this world when they became rich through rock n'roll success; thus I just knew about drugs through press stories on the behaviour of the leading pop groups of the time. So I remember the sixties very clearly: they were a great time to be young and alive.

Of course there is one definitive reason why many old rocker druggies cannot remember the sixties; they are long dead. We can be sad, many young lives flowering and then quickly snuffed out. But we should remember that as role models these people are responsible for many others dying young after rather less glamorous lives. But by far the greatest tragedy from this behaviour is the devastation of communities and countries in poorer parts of the world to satisfy the demand for drugs in richer parts of the world. Don't these people have a

conscience? Presumably not: they enjoy their personal indulgence while simultaneously being party to destroying millions of other lives. This is not a problem limited to any one country but is a global mechanism of supply and demand. However 'wars on drugs' in poorer countries contrasts with an undertone of acceptance of drugs in richer countries, especially for the richer people in those countries. As always it is demand that leads the process. Hence given the global international dimension of the problem perhaps the most effective way of curtailing the snorting would be for those guilty of possession in rich countries to be extradited to serve their prison sentences in the countries from whence their supply came, that is to say, where they have done damage through their purchase of the drugs. All very logical and it fits my politics - I have always been an internationalist.

Unfortunately in rich countries death from drug taking has been actually glorified, notably in the music industry. Instead of this fatal behaviour being seen for the tragedy it is, we find formation of the "27 Club". Early 'membership' included Brian Jones of the Rolling Stones, Janice Joplin and Jimmy Hendrix who each coincidentally died aged 27. You might have thought these tragedies would act as warnings rather than be later used to build a myth about a special age when it was cool to die. These are not racing drivers where calculated risk is part of the job; they are ultimately flawed individuals who didn't get the necessary help when it was sorely needed. Of course, there have been far more people in poor countries who died aged 27 in communities broken by drug gangs. However these are not eligible for membership of the 27 Club.

One thing you can be sure of is that being in the 27 Club is not a hindrance to getting inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. This Hall of Fame is a private business located in Cleveland, Ohio that is widely criticized for its lack of transparency resulting inevitably in both surprise inductees and many odd omissions. A mixture of personal whim of the ownership and business acumen to maintain interest and wider music business collaboration combine to create this controversy. It is sustained by the selected living artists being delighted at the recognition and thereby legitimating the process. Of course, dead artists have no say in the matter: Elvis remains 'king' as ultimate authenticator.

I have my own grouse: the period of the first everyday teenager, my times 1958-66, are seriously underrepresented. This includes omission of internationally famous acts that are not American such as Cliff Richard, Billy Fury, Gerry and the Pacemakers, the Searchers, Manfred Mann as well as American icons of the period Chubby Checker, Bobby Vee, Conway Twitty, Johnny Tillotson, Bobby Darren, Bryan Hyland, Skeeter Davis, Tommy Roe, Chris Montez and The Monkeys. But the most curious omission is one of the biggest names of the period, and who also had much later success, Neil Sedaka. He happens to be my personal favourite; I realize this alone is not enough for this recognition, but the point is that I am not alone. Between 1958 through 1962 he sold more records than any other artist except Elvis. How can this be, the Hall of Fame simply ignoring many millions of record buyers that were amongst the earliest rock n'rollers? Sedaka seems to be guilty of playing 'bubble gum music', a phrase used to explain his omission by owners of the Hall of Fame. Anybody of my generation

will be incredulous that Nat King Cole and Louis Armstrong, musicians liked by our parents, have been inducted into the Hall of Fame but not Neil Sedaka. These two artists were simply not part of the rock n'roll we experienced; their records were definitely never played at this time in Calverton's Sunday evening youth club. And I'm sure they themselves would not have thought of their music as contributing to rock n'roll when they were alive. But, now being dead, they cannot refuse their surprising induction. In the same spirit let me make a new suggestion for nomination: Beethoven. As well as being dead so he cannot refuse membership, he would help increase the multinational profile of membership, and he certainly influenced Chuck Berry! As will be obvious by now I have a real problem with this: Nat King Cole in, Neil Sedaka out makes Cleveland's Rock n'Roll Hall of Fame totally and utterly ridiculous. Let me explain using my skills as a social researcher.

I have always been intrigued by the trivia from the past that we all remember and can often readily recall. I recollect being in a pub quiz in the 1980s when I was the only member of my team to provide the answer to "What was Tommy Steel's first big hit?" - "Rock with the Caveman" of course, I can hear it in my head now, straight from the late '50s. As well as feeling good for adding a point to my group's score, I had amazed at myself for remembering such an inconsequential fact: I didn't even like Tommy Steel! So a few years ago convalescing for three months after a hip replacement operation, I remembered this episode and decided to list records that have refused to leave my mind despite many decades of filling it up with myriad adult concerns relating to family and work. I hoped I could recall enough to produce my 'top 50' as a fun way to spend a day. However, with very little thought, I found I soon created a list of 153 records, songs that meant something to me. This number started bells ringing in my head.

For good or ill I am a social scientist, someone who tries to understand how people relate to one another in different circumstances. In this context the number 150 has a particular resonance. Hunter-gatherer bands consist typically of about 150 people - this is the size of group humans have lived in for the vast majority of our existence. Seemingly unrelated, it seems that people today have Christmas card lists that typically number about 150. From such evidence it has been surmised that humans' brains have developed to be able to accommodate social contacts with about this number of people. Obviously these social contacts fill up our memories in order for us to have a viable social life. I decided to apply this 150 capacity idea beyond contacts with people to my memories of songs, musical acquaintances I carry around in my brain. But why these particular songs from my youth?

Here I link to another simple finding on people's lives. It has been found that when elderly people are asked to recall their lives by listing the events that appear important to them, these are not evenly spread over time as might be expected. Nor is there a fading of memory as events early in life become more distant. Quite the opposite in fact: there is typically a concentration of recalled events from late childhood into early adulthood, perhaps 14 to 21 years of age. This is called the memory bump. It reflects the key period of our lives that is vital to forming identities, becoming our own person. It is a time when we develop

relative independence in the world beyond birth family and childhood. Thus the pop songs I listed can be thought of as my musical memory bump, with its human capacity of about 150 songs.

How did this work for me? Growing into adulthood the pop songs of early rock n'roll were pivotal. There are about 150 of them, music 'companions' ushering me away from childhood. They were much more than a musical backdrop to my growing up; they were instrumental in forming my identity as a teenager. The new invention 'teenager' came to England as part of our 'Americanization', an encroachment on traditional English ways of behaving and especially consuming. America entered our persona through our consumption of records, through songs that focused on teenage concerns and thereby defined us. The key point about teenage ownership of its own art form was that adults, our parents, clearly could not understand it, music that was so important to us but meaningless to them. Thus the musical memory bump I discovered during that period of convalescence was that of a first everyday teenager. It covers records largely between 1958 and 1966. To put this into some sort of perspective, all such memory bumps will vary in content as different generations mark their coming of age. Thus I have a brother ten years younger than me who remembers my records but has his own musical tastes in opposition to mine (early Beatles versus later Beatles), and then comes my son in the punk rock generation, which obviously I could not understand. I guess that both have about 150 relished songs ingrained into their memories.

Back to my songs: each means something to me to such a degree that I have both chorus and at least one verse fixed in my memory. These bits of trivia, my teenage transition material, have resided affectionately in my mind for more than half a century. Of course, I have changed a lot over that time and I cannot pretend that I am returning precisely to the teenage experience of the late fifties and sixties. In fact there seem to be two types of songs in my list. There are the songs that I really loved at the time, my personal favourites. But there are also songs that were less liked by me then but now resonate for evoking that time; records I would never have bought but today arouse in me what it was to be a teenager. Overall the songs portray a first innocence in pop music. This was most certainly not music for adults with all their sexual hang-ups; it was about first love, being sixteen, teenage angst in exploring relationships. The words were simple, picturing a world of high school hops and surfing, of blue jeans and pony-tails, and everything idyllically American, including bubble gum. I have heard people find innuendoes in the words – in "Tell Laura I Love Her" he wanted to give her everything, in "Happy Birthday Sweet Sixteen" this was the night he'd been waiting for – but they were not seen this way at the time. Neil Sedaka and his ilk perfected the art of distilling the joy of being a teenager in two and a bit minute songs as radio disc jockeys required, and we avidly consumed. It is only when my generation start consuming rock n'roll as adults that the innocence is lost, starting with the Rolling Stones and Dr Hook (Sylvia's mother was definitely right!). And this is when bubble gum gives way to heroin as rock n'roll marker; the former creates little air-filled globes, the latter corpses in hotel rooms.

There is no doubt where the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame stands in the bubble gum versus heroin musical contest. The owners come from a later generation of rock n'roll fans; they understand this genre of music as rebellion but are unable to see the earliest rebellion, teenagers against adults (notable parents), as the foundation insurgence of rock n'roll. Even worse than that, these are people who are trying to erase my rock n'roll and thereby undermine my identity! This is seriously personal; a Cleveland money-making machine claiming private ownership of rock and roll and stealing rock n'roll from me and my generation. Crogfam won't stand for it.

## 22. Beauty and the beast (Football fan)

***“This is perfect raw material for tragedy, at least as wretched as anything thought up by the ancient Greeks”***

With my material needs satisfied, my family find me a difficult person when it comes to buying presents. Their solution a couple of decades ago was that I regularly received Gore Vidal books for birthday or Christmas. An interesting witty writer, he presented American political history as personal stories. I guess he was good at this because he was from an elite political family; he was writing from the inside. Subsequently I have found we have a link: Princess Margaret. While I was happy to get a day off school when she visited Calverton, I have since found that he was one of her sycophantic hangers-on in the tradition of the America elite’s jealous fascination with British royalty. Even before this disturbing revelation I suspected he was not a person you would want to know. But he was still amusing. My favourite quip of his is funnily nasty: ‘it is not enough to succeed, others have to fail’. From his lofty perch he would not have realized this but he was describing impeccably how football fans follow their game.

When the football results are announced in the media every genuine fan immediately looks for the scores in two games: one featuring the team they love and the other their team’s nemesis, an archenemy that provokes real hatred. In my case these are Notts County and Nottingham Forest respectively. Here is my ranking of how I feel on a Saturday afternoon after results are in.

1. County win, Forest lose – perfect
2. County win, Forest draw – good-ish
3. County win, Forest win – could be better
4. County draw, Forest lose – not bad
5. County draw, Forest draw – just about OK
6. County draw, Forest win - bad
7. County lose, Forest lose – not too bad
8. County lose, Forest draw – disappointing
9. County lose, Forest win - terrible

This 9-point scale applies to all fans; there are similar antagonistic pairings occurring all over Britain and other football-loving nations. Football might be the beautiful game but the term ‘fan’ really does mean fanatic, with all the withdrawal of reason that this implies.

A fan’s adoration and hostility are lifelong and therefore transportable; they continue to matter wherever you are. But when living elsewhere football is experienced in a different way. Hence when leaving the Nottingham area and going to university in Liverpool I still went to football games but with a completely changed mind set. I did not have to make a definitive choice on

whether to watch either Everton or Liverpool, I can go to either. In fact I pick which team to watch using, from a fan's perspective, a very odd criterion: I watch the team that is playing the better football! Thus I have a bizarre sense of football freedom as I go to both Goodison Park and Anfield. At the former I actually see the great Stanley Matthews still playing at the highest level aged over 50; he's with Stoke City and doesn't impress, he does seem to be a bit too old! When getting a job at Newcastle University initially I use a similar strategy in choosing between Newcastle United and Sunderland, another classic antagonistic pair of clubs. Now I use the football quality method quite strictly, favouring visits to St James in Newcastle's European Fairs Cup season (69-70) where I especially appreciate the footballing skills of Tony Green and Jimmy Smith; later (72-3) I'm far more often at Roker Park in their FA Cup winning season appreciating the skills of Dennis Tueart and the goalkeeping heroics of Jim Montgomery. However since the late 1970s I have been a Sunderland supporter, currently a season ticket holder at their impressive Stadium of Light. How come?

This was a quite straightforward removal of my football freedom engineered by my children, Carl and Clare. One Saturday I suggested taking them to a match and on that day Sunderland happened to be playing at home. They enjoyed it very much. So the following Saturday I offered to take them to a football match again, this time Newcastle United was playing at home. They were horrified by the very suggestion. In the preceding week at school they had both been confirmed in their tribal alliance: they were Sunderland Mackems and totally against Newcastle Geordies. Thus from now on if I wanted to go to matches with my kids it could only be Sunderland. However I am a very unusual Sunderland supporter: I don't hate Newcastle United. Certainly I want my team to do better but, being rational about it, I feel it is preferable for the area to have two top teams, playing derbies. Of course I still hate Nottingham Forest. And Carl's solution to what to buy me for birthday is a County away match somewhere in the north of England. Over the years our excursions have included Accrington Stanley, Blackpool, Bury, Carlisle United, Crewe Alexandra, Darlington, Hartlepool United, Huddersfield Town, Lincoln City, Mansfield Town, Morecombe, Oldham Athletic, Rochdale, and Scunthorpe United. Happy days!

Football clubs have real community depth; in Britain they are largely products of late Victorian urbanization, providing solidarity through cheap mass entertainment. Notts County is the oldest league club in the world: 1862! (Upstarts Forest only formed in 1866.) In 1962 I went to County's centenary game versus England, just before the latter flew off to the World Cup in Chile. In 2012 for the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary they played the great Italian side Juventus. The link is that it was a Nottingham businessman who introduced football into Turin and provided the first club shirts: black and white stripes from Notts County. At about the same time Notts played a second time against Juventus, in Turin for the opening game in their brand new stadium. These are highlights but supporting a football club should not be easy. In fact it cannot be otherwise with over 100 professional clubs in England, all planning their future success, but with only a limited number of trophies to win. This is perfect raw material for tragedy, at least as wretched as anything thought up by the ancient Greeks. In my case I have endured two heartrending sporting calamities.

1957-9. I am part of the last cohort from the Nottingham area to grow up expected to support County rather than Forest. In the early 1950s County had Tommy Lawton, and after he left they had England's international B side's captain, Leon Leuty. Although only in the second division, they were always going for promotion and one year got as far as the quarter-finals in the FA Cup. Sadly, their club captain Leuty died of leukaemia in 1955. Things began to unravel with County going into reverse fighting a relegation battle. 1956, bottom of the Second Division by a mile with just about a third of the season to go they promote Frank Broome from their backroom staff as temporary manager. The understanding is that if he keeps them up he will get the job permanently. This is considered unfair; County is so far behind that no manager could be expected to save them.

We go to his first match against Stoke City, a promotion rival of Leicester City and Nottingham Forest. 0-0 at half time, we are doing well. Then shell-shock: we score five goals to finish 5-0 winners. Next match Forest away, easy we are 4-2 winners. Then come Leicester – County are back, fans locked out with over 43,000 inside Meadow Lane! We are all over them but they hang in this game, 0-0, and go on to get promotion ... with Forest. No matter we finish well clear of relegation and are looking forward to next season with our great new young side and manager. Then Tommy Lawton retires after a long distinguished playing career including, of course, at County. This means he is available to be a manager: we sack Broome and bring the great man home. Oh dear, top players do not necessarily become top managers; in fact it is quite rare. It certainly wasn't the case for County: we suffer two consecutive relegations and find ourselves in Division Four with Lawton long sacked and running a pub at Lowdham near Calverton. In the meantime Forest consolidate their First Division status and win the FA Cup in 1959. Bringing the cup back to Nottingham with crowds lining the streets, Forest is confirmed as the city's leading club and that is how it has been ever since. Thus today if you live in the Nottingham area you are only likely to become a Notts fan if you are from a Notts football family. So, so tragic, but we're still in the game.

2016-8. Shift forward six decades and there is another pair of back-to-back relegations: after 2016 Sunderland fall from the Premier League to League One (third tier) and are effectively bankrupt. This seems inexplicable given their huge support (they were known as the "Bank of England team" in the 1950s): in their last season in the Premier League, despite finishing bottom, they still had the sixth highest average attendance, over 40,000, in England (topped only by Manchester United, Manchester City, Arsenal, Liverpool, West Ham and Newcastle). So what's happening? Bournemouth, who cannot sell out their little 12,000-seat stadium for home matches, are now a much bigger football club than Sunderland. Clearly the fan base is no longer the core attribute of English football clubs; supporters are just there to provide an atmosphere for TV viewers worldwide. Rather than paying to attend, logic suggests that in the future TV and other media companies should pay people to attend to provide the appropriate ambiance, not unlike professional mourners at funerals in many past cultures. Of course this interpretation is pure sour grapes on my part.

The fact that 'little' Bournemouth can join the elite is testament to the competitive openness of football unlike the closed shop franchise model in US sports. But it is no longer as simple as that: Bournemouth doesn't depend on money through the turnstiles because it has Russian investment, just like their bigger peers, Chelsea and Arsenal. This is corporate globalization; nearly all major English clubs have foreign owners. This included Sunderland, a Texan. Unlike other US ownership by canny American sports capitalists (Manchester United, Liverpool) a dearth of football knowledge left our Texan open to exploitation, conned by player agents: our very poor relegated team as well as being so well supported was also very well remunerated, one of the highest paid teams in the league! Interestingly Newcastle has a wealthy English owner but he has admitted that he cannot compete with 'countries'; for instance, the very successful Manchester City is owned by Qatar. For me the outcome at Sunderland is a mess. But all fans are inherently optimistic: the only way is up.

It must be mentioned that between these déjà vu sequences English football took a serious turn for the worse. In the seventies and eighties the game became an arena for anti-social behaviour on a large scale. Football games became synonymous with hooliganism. Involving only a small minority of fans, nevertheless it scarred football for many years. All fans became seen as threatening, especially in the eyes of the police. And this created a much more severe danger. In the late eighties I travelled to Leeds to see Sunderland play. One of Clare's friends was at Leeds University and we formed a group of five entering through the away supporters turnstiles at Elland Road Stadium. We got in about a half hour before kick off. With fifteen minutes to go the enclosed area in which we were standing had become very full. But still more fans were coming in. Before kick off we lost touch with each other. I found keeping my feet consistently on the ground impossible as the crowd swayed with events on the field. I had lost control of my movements; I adjusted into survival mode, avoiding the crush barriers at all costs. I made it safely to the end of game, but without knowing the fates of my companions.

It was commonplace at this time to refer to away fans as animals. On this afternoon I was wishing that the police had actually treated us as animals. Yes, you read that right – we needed to be valued as living, breathing animals. At cattle markets and their ilk, animals are kept safely in pens with someone counting them in so that the enclosure is never dangerously full. If only Sunderland fans were treated as well as cattle all would have been OK. It is not rocket science: in an enclosed area you control intake to avoid a crush. But for West Yorkshire Police this basic safety requirement appeared to be too difficult to comprehend. If there had been just a few hundred extra fans travelling down to Leeds that day there would have been a terrible disaster. As it was the latter occurred about a year later at Hillsborough where 96 Liverpool fans were crushed to death. On this occasion South Yorkshire Police failed to count fans into an enclosed pen; if only they had treated the fans the same as market animals this tragedy would never have happened. Maybe I'm wrong, perhaps counting is the new rocket science for police forces – it took a quarter of a century to 'officially' understand what happened at Hillsborough. In the event

nobody was hurt at Elland Road Stadium – my group met up safe and sound where we had parked the car - but I did not attend a game as an away fan again for many years. Fortunately English football was forced to reform after Hillsborough with all-seater stadiums making fans actually better treated than cattle!

And so football came to be called ‘the beautiful game’. This phrase conjures up images of past football geniuses, first used, I think, in the context of World Cup football. Of course football, like any other human activity, cannot escape from corporate globalization. It is the worldwide TV consumption of Premier League football that today makes English football clubs attractive to foreign investment thereby eclipsing the fans. Football geniuses are still being produced but now they are concentrated in just a few clubs. In true corporate globalization style, there is a harsh hierarchy of football winners and losers with very few at the top. Currently there are not many teams that can be reasonably assured of keeping their best players: perhaps just Paris St Germain (Qatari ownership), Manchester City (Qatari), Real Madrid (effectively a Spanish state institution) and Bayern Munich (surprisingly German!). Other leading clubs such as Manchester United, Tottenham Hotspur and Liverpool from the Premier League, and even Barcelona, have not been able to keep their top players. But the latter group are able to take the best players from other clubs, in a hierarchy where every club is a ‘nursery club’ for those above. For instance, two of the current successful England world cup team came through the Sunderland youth system, played well for our first team, attracted outside interest and were sold. Of course, there has always been some movement upwards by good players but not to the degree that now occurs.

This is largely due to the activities of player’s agents; they make their money through instability. Agents only get their high fees if their client moves or gets a new contract with his club after agitating for a move. Thus every club team is in constant flux; the more so the lower down the divisions. Even worse, there is the loan system whereby higher clubs send out temporarily unwanted players to play for lower clubs: when the loan period (commonly a whole season) comes to an end if the player plays well for the lower club he returns to the higher club; only if he does less well does the lower club have the chance to buy him! This is a classic case of ‘you couldn’t make it up’: its logical conclusion is fans required to watch their team full of players they have previously seen play badly! This is totally absurd and if it had been in place at the beginnings of league football it would have resulted in England becoming a bastion of baseball or some other late Victorian team sport. However the reality for fans is that in the first game of every season you spend the match trying to identify all the new recruits, many of them other club’s players, who have replaced those you supported last year but have moved on. With continuity totally compromised, links with fans become strained but never really questioned; after all they are fanatics. Fanatics are the easiest people in the world to exploit.

But the truly great football tragedy is international football where corporate globalization has appeared in its criminal guise. US law enforcement agencies have a long history of fighting racketeering; they know it when they see it. And so it was with FIFA. Without going into all its travails, FIFA is the beast that

threatens football's beauty. World football has been run like a mafia organization with bosses or capos across much of the world owing allegiance to the head capo in Zurich, until recently Sepp Blatter. Key influential lesser capos have come from such football hotspots as Tahiti and Trinidad. My favourite example of the required adoration of the capo came in Blatter's campaign for his re-election as FIFA president in 2015: the boss of the Dominican Republic football association likened Blatter to, in historical sequence, Moses, Jesus, Abraham Lincoln, Winston Churchill, Martin Luther King, and Nelson Mandela. What a combination! Enough to make even Donald Trump jealous. In any event, unlike the above Blatter-like six, this contemporary hero had to step down as result of a corruption scandal; nowadays he dare not set foot in the USA. But just before his downfall, Blatter had his greatest achievement: awarding the 2022 World Cup to Qatar. (Incidentally, beating the USA to the prize.) From FIFA's perspective this very small Arab country had impeccable credentials: it is the richest state in the world. However it experiences blistering summers (50<sup>o</sup>) and thus for the safety of the players the tournament has been moved to November and December, resulting in all European football leagues being disrupted for two months. Of course, construction of stadiums has already resulted in the reported deaths of thousands of foreign workers, but they are apparently expendable. Basically, all the matches will be played in Qatar's one city-region, Doha, with unimaginable logistic challenges. Probably, just like in Russia in 2018, relatively few European fans will be there. Wow, at least some international fans are becoming a little less fanatical!

Finally, back to my love, Notts County. We have had our own experience of corporate globalization criminality. In 2009, we were taken over by an outfit that promised Middle East investment with a plan to buy our way into the Premier League. Sven Erickson, former England manager, was brought in to oversee the process, which included partnering football in North Korea! Former England stalwart Sol Campbell was signed to lead the revolution on the field. Carl and I went to Morecambe to see his first game for County. The stadium was the worse in the football league (they were in the process of moving to a new one) and Sol looked so much in shock he was the worse player on the pitch. His first game turned out to be his only game: what a County career! A little later someone noticed that the milk bill could not be paid. It turned out the group that took over the club were not what they seemed; the promise of money was all a huge con. Somehow County survived, without Sven, without Sol, not least because of the fans. Beauty beat the beast. Sadly, survival has now become the club's prevailing goal for hard-pressed supporters

## 23. Dumb and dumbfounded (Left Brexiteer)

***“The political problem with liberals is that they can imagine themselves as a progressive elite but never as an establishment”***

I am a Brexiteer. At least that is a derogatory label given to someone like me who voted ‘Leave’ in the EU referendum in 2016. I know that many Leave voters take this label with pride but in the circles I move, ‘derogatory’ is the least damning adjective I could think of. But I won’t recant. However I have to start clearing the political decks on this situation. For me, the simplest way to do this is to say that I utterly deplore the election of Donald Trump as President of the USA; his gross ignorance complemented by a taunting arrogance is a global nightmare. However his surprise victory in the USA following soon after the surprise outcome of the referendum in the UK has led to the two results becoming indelibly linked, examples of stupid populism. I am a Brexiteer yet I’m not stupid; how can this be?

“I feel like a Mackem in The Strawberry” I jokingly tell Rita Stringfellow, the local Fabian Society organizer. To translate: a Mackem is a Sunderland football supporter and The Strawberry is the pub just across the road from St James Park, the home of Newcastle United. It’s about a year after the referendum and I’m in the Park Hotel, Tynemouth at a local Fabian Society gathering where the main discussion has been about Brexit. My comment comes at the end of the meeting in which I have stayed silent, as per the Mackem above if he had any sense.

Amongst the Fabians that night there is, unusually, no political debate, just a consensus that Brexit is stupid. I have known many of the people in the room for decades and we agree on most things, but they understand that my politics is a little different; this is not the first time I’m in a minority of one. My political reason for attending these meetings is to learn: the participants know much more than me about local affairs and the immediate consequences of government policies plus they have practical experiences very different from my cossetted university life. I like the variety of opinions, but this time there is none. Everybody is very passionate but not necessarily in a good way: they are scathing about Leavers. Above all they are convinced of their position; any reflection of why they are so sure is conspicuous by its absence. I am facing a wall of certainty. And I’m not going to bang my head against it. I know the Remainers campaign has been called ‘Project Fear’ using hyperbolic predictions of the consequences of Brexit – I accept this as typical political practice – but what I don’t like is the much more insidious ‘Project Sneer’; a superiority complex where one group of people look down on another group who have the temerity to disagree with them.

Of course, this air of assured rightness is not just a Fabian thing. Remarkably, the newspaper I read, *The Guardian*, had the most skewed statistic of all UK papers regarding the 2016 Referendum with a whopping 91% of its readers being Remain voters. And, not unnaturally, this has been directly transposed onto the paper's subsequent uncompromising coverage of post-referendum politics. So my membership of that rare 'Guardian 9% group' is not unlike my minority of one in the local Fabians. Perhaps more interesting is the reaction of my academic colleagues and friends. Initially assuming I voted Remain, they are universally incredulous when I admit my vote, but then are quite intrigued. However it is I who should be intrigued. These are people who in the past have strongly argued against, often in their writings, the International Monetary Fund and its neo-liberal policies to make poor countries poorer. Famously precipitating its very own riots – the 'IMF riots' - now that the IMF is recommending the British electorate to vote Remain it's all changed. I can't resist teasing them for voting – standing to shoulder-to-shoulder as it were - with the IMF! Again reflection seems to be in short supply since their voting decision would appear to confirm their old 'truism': the IMF is bad for poor countries but good for rich countries where, not coincidentally, my critics happen to live. A very strange political debate: they are dumbfounded and I am dumb.

Stupid me. This is a completely new personal identity finally achieved in my 70s. Of course, in political debate I have often been told I am wrong, but never has it been implied that I am wrong because I am dumb. This surprise makes me think what I could possibly have said at that Fabian meeting? I might have started by confirming that I think of myself as European: I voted Leave because I consider the EU to be bad for Europe (I have since revised this position – I now think it is disastrous for Europe: the EU is presiding over relegation of Europe in world affairs). I would then affirm, as a Professor of Geography (albeit emeritus, but this fact has not changed since I retired), that THE EUROPEAN UNION IS NOT EUROPE, shorthand referencing it this way is geographically incorrect, and politically toxic in the power it upholds and promotes. The EU is a political institution and the emphasis is on the political.

This is clear in the timetable it laid out as a condition for negotiating the UK's departure: insistence on starting with UK payment to the institution itself, while leaving the key economic matters relating to ordinary people's jobs and livelihoods squeezed in at the end, almost as an afterthought! EU priorities are clear but I fear that this argument would not have been enough for me to get a hearing. As I see it the problem appears to be that dedicated Remainers really BELIEVE in 'Europe, alias EU': this is politically dangerous, as an institution it is just a tool and to believe in it is to give yourself up to its handlers. To parody Marx, the EU is the opium of the European liberal middle class.

All institutions are created to address a perceived problem. To the degree that an institution succeeds in this task it prospers. But as the world around it changes new challenges arise and the institution has to adapt and evolve to stay relevant. In the case of the EU, the initial rationale for its creation in the 1950s is quite straightforward: to prevent another catastrophic war on the European continent by bringing Germany and France together in a Common Market. In the 1980s and

90s the EU took on a different role as a sort of guarantor of democracy: new states joined the EU, first following the demise of right-wing authoritarian regimes in southern Europe and then after the overthrow of communist regimes of eastern Europe. And in response to globalization, recent decades has seen political enlargement complemented by economic integration - notably the Eurozone covering most of the EU - to provide a new global player: the EU as a safe haven, strength in size, within a turbulent world of very large political units - the USA, China, Russia, India, Brazil, and now 'Europe'. This sequence of roles can be reasonably interpreted as a story of success, adaption and relevance. But, as always, real politics is never as neat as it seems.

It is, of course, true that the threat of Germany and France militarily competing to dominate Europe has gone but nevertheless this traditional state rivalry undermined the EU from its origins. In the 1950s West Germany was trying to return to the international fold and the Common Market was its prime means. At the same time a declining imperial France with an over-sized agricultural sector also used the Common Market as a solution to its problem. The resulting deal was that the thriving cities of Germany, leading the post-war economic boom, effectively subsidized the stagnant French farming sector to keep the politically active peasantry quiet. From Common Market through to today's EU the largest part of the budget has been for agriculture, broadly interpreted. Commonly, as much as two-thirds of the budget has gone to agricultural protection, often at the expense of farmers in poor countries outside Europe. And this is in the world region that pioneered modern industrialization and continues to be proportionally more urban than most of the rest of the world. Does nobody think this is economically and politically odd? Its general acceptance shows that agricultural primacy is embedded in the DNA of the EU, nothing can be done about it. It is the reason I voted in the 1975 Referendum for the UK not to stay in the European Economic Community, as it was called then: why should an industrial country join a farmer's club? Today EU farm subsidies make our region of the world a paradise for large rural landowners, a sort of millionaires' welfare state.

Beyond this bad start leading to a rural DNA base, in the eyes of its supporters the 'European project' has been a success, its ambition reflected in regularly changes to its name: Common Market to European Economic Community to European Communities to today's Economic Union. This real institutional continuity shows success in adapting to a rapidly changing world. But the key question then arises, what exactly is it that this adaptation has embraced? The second half of the twentieth century witnessed a profound reversal in the unfolding of modern political economy. For about a century from the late nineteenth century there was a general reduction in the differences between rich and poor, a better world being created in the aftermath of world wars and decolonisation. In the late twentieth century this trend was reversed as the rich have gotten richer and richer. Cutting through the fog of the simultaneous rise of identity politics, we should call this exactly what it is: a great CLASS victory of global proportions overturning past social democratic gains and threatening liberal democratic politics. This outcome of 'Reaganomics' and 'Thatcherism' is

corporate globalization, the world that the EU has adapted to and thereby facilitates.

As a mix of different countries of different sizes, corporate giants can play the EU as a sort of board game. The board is divided into large countries that are big markets with many consumers making for large profits, and small countries where corporations choose to locate so that those self same profits are attracting minimal taxes, for instance, Google in Ireland, Amazon in Luxembourg *ad infinitum*. In these cases it lessens the overall tax intake in Europe, so that the capital benefits accrue largely to the USA. With the election of Jean-Claude Juncker as President of the EU Commission in 2014 I think we can say that this anti-Europe practice has also become part of the EU's DNA. Yes, that's right: the EU is ANTI-EUROPE. Juncker was the most successful political architect of tax stripping; as the former prime minister of Luxembourg he produced this post-industrial economic policy that resulted in his very small country becoming the richest in the EU. But what's good for Luxembourg is not good for Europe. In fact it would be instructive if someone with auditing skills totalled up the lost tax revenues in EU countries due to the deals Juncker made with corporations during his tenure as prime minister. I don't possess such skills, but I hazard to predict it would total many billions of euros. And his reward: an agreement between the EU's Christian Democrats and Social Democrats that he is the right man to lead the EU!

Can it get worse? Certainly yes in a rather more nauseating direction: another way some small countries use their EU membership is the sale of passports. While millions of poor immigrants are trying to settle in Europe and are often treated appallingly, billionaires can use a small part of their ill-gotten gains to purchase citizenship enabling their free movement across all of Europe. Cyprus and Malta lead the way in this practice thereby facilitating the criminal side of corporate globalization.

But it is not all one way. Germany as the largest EU country benefits most from the euro as a multinational currency. The market movement of the euro is a feedback from how the Eurozone is doing. Because Germany is by far the biggest economy the feedback most closely aligns to its economic needs. In other words the euro moves more like the old German mark than old francs, lire, peseta, drachma, etc. Perhaps the euro is Germany's EU revenge on France! But the biggest losers are the poorer countries, especially Greece. Mrs Merkel may be, for historical reasons, the only major right wing leader not to be able to campaign on a slogan of making her country 'great again', but she has been instrumental in making Greece poor again. EU policy in Greece exposes the true face of the institution. By loading debt on to Greece to pay back loans to German and French banks, the latter have been saved at the expense of the people of Greece. This will last for many decades to come since the size of the debt makes it beyond repayment. Result: perpetual Greek austerity. Working in conjunction with the IMF, the EU's actions have been utterly indefensible. What a way to negate the vestiges of the old social democratic EU regional development policy: its simply mind blowing!

My indictment above is not revelatory. It is all well-known stuff that is swept aside by Remainers simply admitting that the EU is 'not perfect'. It certainly isn't, that's the nature of all institutions. But that does not make critical problems go away. Presumably they want to remain in the institution in order to reform it, although this does not feature much in Remainers' rhetoric. My interpretation is that the EU is beyond saving. It has a real democratic deficit that just gets worse. When referenda produce the wrong result they are either ignored (e.g. Greece) or a second one is held to overturn the first (e.g. Ireland, Denmark). The latter sequence is: people vote incorrectly, they need to be 'educated' (in practice bribed), and then they vote correctly. This is not a sustainable approach. But the Remainers in the UK are now advocating this. The EU bribe in this case will presumably be that punishment of the UK will be withdrawn if it falls into line.

It is a few weeks before the Referendum. "We need a disruption, so no I will not distribute these leaflets", I say to my Labour Party colleague who organises leaflet drops. The Labour Party, like the other main Parliamentary parties, is campaigning for 'Remain'. I have my agreed distribution area but I'm not delivering this time. However I am in a quandary. All my adult life I have campaigned but not on this occasion. The Leave campaign is totally dominated by different degrees of very right wing politicians, none of whom I would ever want to be associated with. What sort of political reaction is this? It's worse than saying the EU is not perfect – at least they are campaigning. So I'm stuck doing nothing, except for casting my vote.

After the result the Leave negotiations predictably have become a jungle of right-wing politics on both sides. It's all very horrible. Extreme Leavers have a 'global Britain' vision that seems to comprise of converting the country into a low-income territory for global corporations to exploit. But the rhetoric on the European side of negotiations is also worrying but in a different, perhaps more sinister way. Leo Varadkar, the Irish prime minister, has threatened to close Irish air space for flights to Britain. Emmanuel Macron, the French President, has threatened to close the port of Calais, thereby cutting off Britain's main route to Europe. Note that these dangers are not anticipated economic consequences; they are specific political policies. Putting my political geography hat on, these proposals are classic geopolitical manoeuvres. Yet both politicians are widely regarded as liberal heroes, but here they are behaving like belligerent demagogues harking back to past attempted blockades of Britain by Napoleonic France and Nazi Germany! I don't like to evoke such historical comparisons but what is being suggested really is a blockade. It might be dismissed as merely a negotiating ploy, but it is unnecessarily hostile to say the very least! But the actual EU-wide negotiating position is equally imperious. Their suggestion is to change the United Kingdom (UK) into the Partially United Kingdom (PUK) by imposing a EU border in the Irish Sea. This economically hives off Northern Ireland from Britain. For an outside power to suggest the division of another country is the height of political arrogance. Just step back and think about it; it's unbelievable behaviour – divide and rule, in this case historical precedents are best not even contemplated.

This essay is being written before negotiations have been concluded. I was on the winning side in the Referendum; the question that now arises is: was it worth it? To be honest I'm not that certain. But I hope the answer is 'yes' because, whatever the outcome, there comes a time when you have to put a spanner in the works of the runaway engine that is corporate globalization. Ironically, given the capture of Britain's negotiations by the right wing, Brexit actually has very strong green credentials through conversion of overlong supply chains into more local, shorter flows.

On the night the Referendum results were coming in, Sunderland was one of the earliest cities showing a strong vote to Leave. The BBC reported a Tweet from a disillusioned Remain voter in London that simply said. "Where is Sunderland?" I consider this to have been extremely dumb, and not just geographically. The subsequent narrative of 'what went wrong' suggested that voting 'Leave' indicated places that had been 'left behind'. This view was buttressed by Trump's victory a few months later – I still feel queasy when my vote is linked in this way. I'd rather my vote be seen as a vote against a liberal establishment and equated with the Irish referendum allowing abortions in 2018; this vote was also against an establishment, on this occasion a conservative, religious one. The political problem with liberals is that they can imagine themselves as a progressive elite but never as an establishment. Their geographical anti-populist rhetoric is insulting: all voters are here and now, some left out and ignored, not 'left behind'. This is political posh-ness gone mad.

Populist political reaction is disruptive and can operate two ways, nativist or inclusive. The EU project is alienating millions of Europeans and facilitating the nativist turn. It threatens a return to nineteenth century politics of 'liberalism versus democracy' (middle class fear of the mob) and thereby undermines contemporary liberal democracy. As an institution I do not think that the EU can nourish a progressive populism for making liberal democracy more resilient in Europe. People in big cities like Sunderland, and small towns like Calverton, are not fooled by badges declaring this or that building development is funded by the EU. From my perspective the EU is no longer fit for purpose. I ratified this position by contemplating what would Calverton do in the Referendum. Sunderland and Calverton are just as European as London, just smaller and less diverse. The challenge is to forge a post-EU path of European cooperation and mutual respect, culturally, politically and economically.

*Postscript.* As a matter of courtesy, on completion of the first draft of this collection of essays I contacted people I have mentioned by name. I want to be sure they are OK with how they are portrayed. In the case of Graham Gudgin I found out that he was heading the web site "Briefings for Brexit". This provides a platform for Leave supporters in academia and the professions who are invisible in most mainstream debates. The site's contributors are certainly not dumb; this important initiative mirrors my humble contribution above. For me it is so heartening that Graham and I continue to think in similar ways despite our careers diverging in quite different directions. I worked with Graham long ago (the 1970s) but still remember it as extremely satisfying; his sharpness of thought and logical reasoning have never been equalled throughout all my later

research collaborations. Hence it is very reassuring that we are on the same Brexit side. It is rather less reassuring that intolerance of Brexiteers has spread to the Labour Party with a columnist in *The Guardian* now calling for our expulsion from the Party. Sad days indeed.

## 24. Tynemouth delights (Resident)

***“This is all very civilised; I have a pint and Enid has an agenda”***

It's just before Christmas and the North Shields postal depot where you pick up parcels is very busy. There is a long queue outside. When you finally get inside, the room is packed. Despite it being winter, it is hot and stuffy; nobody is smiling. The harassed postal workers behind the desk are taking in collection cards, checking photo IDs, and scurrying into the back to find and retrieve each parcel. On return they shout out a name and the relieved person comes forward, gets the parcel and leaves. On this occasion a name is shouted out and nobody responds. The postal worker shouts out again, a little louder. Everybody is brownd off with this needless delay. Still no response, so he bawls out a third time. Two middle aged ladies, looking and behaving strangely human by talking to one another in a friendly manner, are jolted from their chat and one of them goes forward to collect her parcel. Making her way through universal distain and anger she quietly and quickly leaves the building.

A couple of minutes later the same postal worker returns with another parcel. “Mr Park” he barks. No response. “Why is this happening to me?” he must be thinking as he barks out again “Mr Park”. No response. He looks down to check the parcel and roars “Mr Percy Park!”. It might be hot in here but my blood immediately goes cold. The parcel I am waiting for is addressed to me at 33 Percy Park. I thought of remaining quiet and leaving but the parcel is needed before Christmas. I go forward to collect my parcel in what can only be described as a hostile atmosphere. I want to explain that I am Mr Peter Taylor and not Mr Percy Park. He does not exist; it's all a misunderstanding. But this is no time or place for explanations requiring more than one word. Thanks I say to the hot and bothered postal worker as he thrusts the parcel into my hands. Head down, I leave the depot and take a great gasp of air on escape to the outside, my car and home. I tell this story because it is both a very minor incident and yet the worse thing that has happened to me in the nearly quarter of a century of living in Tynemouth. Proof of sorts, of it being a great place to live.

The starting university salary for new academics in 1968 was only £1105 for the year. Therefore finding a place to live was nearly as difficult as getting my job at Newcastle University. Most staff lived in Jesmond/Gosforth (posh Newcastle), expensive Darras Hall ('little Surrey') or in the rural villages up the Tyne Valley, all way out of my price range. But I found a decent upper flat in Linskill Terrace, North Shields. It had its problems; the next-door neighbours were a well-known criminal family (members rotating in and out of prison) and the first time we left our pram outside it got smashed up. But otherwise we learned just to avoid them. After signing up for the flat and on the train back to Warrington I was

perusing the pages of the Tyneside A-Z when I notice the flat was actually only a short distance from the sea, from a beach called Tynemouth Long Sands. As soon as we moved in Enid, baby Carl and me walked to this beach and realised we had struck lucky. We had found a great place to live. After two super summers (my parents had their summer holidays with us) we left for Iowa but always had a sense that that one day we would return and live in Tynemouth. We finally fulfilled this ambition in 1994 and live here still: Long Sands is about one mile long and is central to my daily exercise walk.

I also have a rather esoteric reason for liking Tynemouth: it matches my historical sensibilities. Although a republican I particularly appreciate that there are three kings buried in Tynemouth priory headland. It is not their kingship I admire but the political geography they represent: two of the kings are Northumbrian and the other Scottish. Northumbria was a kingdom 'north of the Humber' that stretched between today's cities of Hull and Edinburgh. Thus Tynemouth's emblem, incorporating three crowns, declares it to be prior to either England or Scotland; the third crown indicates that when the latter two did emerge Tyneside was initially Scottish. I don't like nationalisms, not my own English nor the Scottish next door. So Tynemouth representing a past pre-nationalist political geography nicely reflects my distaste for nationalist politics.

OK, let's get a bit more practical! When Carl and Clare left home Enid and I were left in a three storey Edwardian semi in Forest Hall. We had originally moved there so as to 'banish' our live-in teenagers to the third floor; now this was empty, time to downsize. We wanted to move to the coast; in 1994 all the relevant estate agents were in North Shields and Whitley Bay. We quite liked two houses in the north part of Whitley Bay that had views not just of the sea but also of the iconic St Mary's Lighthouse. However Whitley Bay houses near the sea were about 25% more expensive than their equivalent in Tynemouth. In addition the houses we liked were quite a way from the town centre and not near the Metro. So back to Tynemouth. On our second attempt we managed to buy where we still live: four hundred metres from Long Sands in one direction, the same distance to Tynemouth Metro station in another direction, and about the same to a vibrant village centre. This is our "Location, Location, Location" solution! In fact since we have moved to Tynemouth the housing situation compared to Whitley Bay has reversed: Tynemouth is the place to live. Silly prices: we might not be able to afford a house near the sea in Tynemouth if we had to buy today!

The village centre has completely changed. It was a typical small suburban shopping centre providing local retail services such as butcher, greengrocer, two newsagents, post office, fish and chip shop, two banks and several pubs. All have gone except the pubs, transformed by adding entertainment plus pub food, and a combined newsagent with post office. The location of the old post office is now an estate agent, one of five in the village. But the main change has been the proliferation of bars and restaurants catering for the multiple tastes of thousands of visitors. We live within a few hundred yards of all this but are beyond noise and disturbances that inevitably come with lots of people enjoying themselves. In effect all these 'new services' are easily accessible to us on weekdays but it all gets a little crowded at weekends especially in summer. We

now live in a resort, with a few downs but mostly ups. For instance, my favourite tippie, originally learned in Calverton, is 'best bitter', now in danger of disappearing as my generation disappears. It now appears in Tynemouth pubs infrequently as a 'guest beer'. However, in the one of the new bars they serve Belgium fruit beers on draft, a drink I learned to enjoy when living in Ghent. And we now have award-winning places to eat on Front Street and King Edwards Bay. In addition we can take a walk along coast or river to quality restaurants at Spanish City in Whitley Bay and North Shields fish quay, respectively. We buy our fresh fish from the latter. Tynemouth now gets accolades in national newspapers such as 'the best place to live in the north'.

But more important to Enid and me living at '33 by the sea' is that it is a real magnet for grandchildren. Here is a litany of why our kids love to visit or stay with Nan and Grandad in Tynemouth. Within a few hundred yards are Long Sands, a beautiful seaside with beach cafes at each end (ice creams, chips and more) and two surfing schools; Tynemouth Park with lake, dinosaur putting green, pirate's maze, and many bouncy castles, play ground and another café; the Sea Life Centre with sharks, smelly otters, performing seals, rays and many other fishes, yet another café; and for when a little older the English Heritage headland with Priory and Castle; the long North Pier of the Tyne, or walking in the other direction, past the Collingwood Monument to the Fish Quay for fish and chips. In addition there is a lovely walk along the coast past Cullercoats Harbour to Whitley Bay to end up at an award winning Italian ice cream parlour. We hope our grandchildren have always wanted to visit us for who we are, but living in Tynemouth helps!

We live in a pleasant seaside resort but equally important is that it is an urban resort; beyond Tynemouth there is a city hinterland that is there to be enjoyed. Newcastle as a city is just the right size. It is not too big to be a pain getting around – the city centre is just a few stops on the Metro. But it is big enough to provide most advantages you expect from living in a city. Two things make this possible. First the relative isolation of Newcastle – there is no other large city between Edinburgh and Leeds – means that it serves a large region with exceptional retail shopping. Second we are part of a larger conurbation, which adds to the entertainment venues – as well as Newcastle's Theatre Royal and City Hall, there are the Sunderland Empire and Sage Gateshead. We regularly use all four plus our local Whitley Bay Playhouse. In addition there are two top football clubs – Newcastle United and Sunderland - I can go to Sunderland matches on the Metro, about 50 stops but relaxing, which is more than can be said for the football! And on top of all this we are surrounded by the wonderful North East region in which we can visit lots of imposing castles, unspoilt beaches, little harbours (kippers) and islands (seals and puffins), plus a most notable Norman cathedral and, of course, a Roman Wall (Emperor Hadrian's not President Trump's). Who wouldn't want to live here?

So I live in such a lovely place but ... this is where I contemplate what has gone wrong in the bigger world. Things have not turned out how I, and many of my generation, expected and hoped for. For instance, I never had a conversation with my parents about the possibility of the return of slavery and public

executions. These two social horrors of the nineteenth century were dispatched to history, nothing to concern us anymore. And yet the former now occurs as 'modern slavery', essential for bringing the World Cup to Qatar. In the UK there are numerous court cases relating to people trafficking – slave auctions even held illicitly at Heathrow. But slave markets returned openly in the Middle East with the political upheavals there and this also resulted in public beheadings available for viewing on the Internet carried out, it seems, by British citizens. Simply unimaginable for most of my life. I still find it hard to believe these dreadful behaviours are back.

But then again I never thought the long trend of decreasing economic inequalities since late Victorian times would go into reverse in my times. Progressive taxation used to be a weapon for ensuring the rich paid their fair share. But where do we find the most important economic innovations in today's world economy? In tax evasion: corporations typically now make more money by avoiding tax than from what they produce. For the very rich taxes are negotiable and merely voluntary. This is a cold reptilian world populated by wealth managers and accountants. 'Personnel Departments' – dealing with people – have been replaced by 'Human Resources Departments' where employees have the same status as any other resources, say a bag of coal. Dehumanising human beings is such a dangerous process and yet 'HR' is now normal, the accepted way to treat people in organizations worldwide.

Growing up in Calverton the version of progress that I inherited was 'the forward march of labour'. It was still being fought in the docks and building sites where men turned up for work in the morning and waited while some were selected for the day and the others left workless. This was terrible: no dignity for the men, no financial stability for families. I actually experienced this second hand from my mother-in-law. She cleaned a Scottish bank in Warrington twice a day, early morning and after the day's trading. In order to have a holiday she had to find someone to cover for her, oddly there seemed to be no security concerns. One year Enid and I did the work (ten trips to the bank) so her mum could have a week off in the summer. Such activities were despatched to the bad old days largely through the work of unions.

But no more. After decades of union decline, this labour insecurity returns with a new jolly name: gig economy. Zero hours contracts are a boss's dream – we now have labour shortages without expected rising wages. Economists think this cannot happen but it is not just a matter of economics; it is largely about power, boss's power. How did it come to this? There have been two steps: the attack on unions by the Thatcher governments in the 1980s and then the attack on poor people by the Cameron governments in the 2010s. The first created the conditions for the second. Enid and I have reacted similarly to each. The critical battle in step one was the miner's strike. For a year Enid and I did a double shop each week, our usual household goods in one shopping trolley, plus goods for miners' families in a second shopping trolley. In the last year or so we have begun to replicate this shopping behaviour: alongside household goods in one trolley we provide goods for a local food bank in a second trolley. The food bank is in Meadow Well, North Shields: the logistic skills of the local volunteers are so

impressive; good and necessary but like the efforts of Enid and me, ultimately enabling a low income economy for the benefit of those on high incomes. However needs must be met. The existence of hundreds of food banks across the country should be a scandal but instead it has become another normal feature of contemporary life. Again, this great boom in local charity helping families with the basics to live is something I had never expected to happen.

So, as well as being happy and contented in Tynemouth I am disappointed and angry outside Tynemouth. These material inequities have grown as radical politics has centred on identity issues. The importance of this became clear to me through a genuine misunderstanding at a Tynemouth Fabians meeting. In a discussion of the Blair/Brown New Labour government I argued that they had focused on alleviating poverty rather than tackling the wider theme of inequality in British society (i.e. don't just focus on the poor, bring the rich into the argument). I was sharply rebutted by the guest speaker, a well-known politician. She asserted that I was totally wrong – New Labour had set up the Equalities Commission. In fact the latter is about economic discrimination by gender and ethnicity and has done important work in this area but, of course, it does not deal with overall material inequalities in society, which was my topic. In other words the concept of equality in New Labour had been 'captured' by identity politics. From my perspective we need to align all identity politics with socialist goals – towards material equalities for everyone whatever their race, religious identity, nationality, sexuality, generation or gender. There are encouraging signs that socialism is no longer a politically toxic label, even in the USA.

Enough of the moaning in paradise: this is not what Enid and I talk about in our regular strolls to one of the local pubs or bars. This is all very civilised; I have a pint and Enid has an agenda. Any regrets? Just the one; I wish I had learned how to tap dance. But I will conclude by mentioning something quite weird. It began some time after moving into Tynemouth and is still happening. Every morning when I stare into the bathroom mirror there is this strange old man looking back at me. I don't know who he is but he doesn't always look in a good way – his hair is awful. I have chosen to ignore him and go about my business: walking and thinking, writing and dissenting, and living life to the full with Enid and family. Lucky me.

## Tynemouth Long Sands – the best city beach in England?



## **EPILOGUE: Mass entitlement**

***We developed the project with a working title “Don’t Fry the Grandchildren”. We were not sure whose grandchildren were at risk of frying but down the line there might be distraught grandparents contemplating a very bleak future for their progeny.***

I had a cousin, Percy, who died in the 1950s when he was only 33. He had suffered from asthma all his life and this is what killed him. An awful family tragedy, amplified by fact that the disease was rare: Percy was unlucky. For instance, in the whole time I attended various schools I never came across a single pupil suffering with asthma. Today it is all change; inhalers are required equipment for large numbers of children in schools all over Britain. Having inhalers to treat this disease and prevent deaths can be interpreted as a sign of progress. But it is a very peculiar kind of progress. The very fact of a rare disease becoming commonplace is surely a sign of worsening: inhalers represent failure of progress. How can this be? Nobody wants to inflict this disease on children. But it happens. It is what is called ‘an unintended consequence’ of the everyday behaviour of millions of ordinary people. I indict a sense of modern entitlement for this situation, and very much else besides.

Entitlement can be a very positive political force when linked to citizenship. Thus many important reforms are built upon the idea that every citizen has specific rights as a member of a national society; for instance, the idea that everybody is entitled to a living wage. This is what distinguishes being a citizen from being a subject, the traditional term for residents in a kingdom. There were entitlements in the latter but they were very unevenly distributed. Vestiges of such traditional entitlement can be found in modern societies - the “Royal Train” comes to mind – and they are abetted by deferential behaviour such as I observed as a boy in Calverton village. The UK has a particularly resilient expression of traditional entitlement in its ‘public schools’ (actually private schools) from which the vast majority of the public are excluded. The 7% who attend these schools go on to dominate all echelons of British society: very recently four leading positions - Prime Minister, Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mayor of London and Archbishop of Canterbury – were all held by ex-pupils of just one school, Eton College, the top public school.

It is hardly surprising that the country’s decision makers protect this educational entitlement for their progeny: there are about 1,000 of these private schools whose surprising resilience is helped by an estimated half a billion pounds in tax rebates. How come? They are registered as charities! Historically charity is what is given by rich people to poor people in lieu of paying taxes to the state to provide comprehensive help. So irony upon irony, returning to Eton, the most notable of these fake charities – where Master Tim attended instead of going to

the school in Calverton named after his dad – has set up its own charity run by the pupils to help the poor. I am still waiting for a celebrity on a TV quiz show to nominate Eton College itself as the charity they will give their winnings to, arguing that the school has stalled at producing just 19 prime ministers and any money they win would help them reach twenty.

An iconic image of traditional entitlement is of the man on horseback galloping down a road and thereby forcing peasants to step aside and make way. In this scenario, pedestrians know their place or else risk losing their life. It seems to me that modern car drivers have inherited this entitlement of the road. Isolated in their metal cocoons, they travel around in their own personal space bubbles and woe betides anybody who gets in their way. In this case we have progressed from elite entitlement to mass entitlement; today, we can all be ‘lords of the road’. But this is not a good entitlement. Most obviously it results in many deaths. Worldwide, traffic fatalities are in the top ten causes of death, and the most common victims are pedestrians. Certainly cars kill many more people than wars.

Reaction to such facts varies by country but is generally quite muted. Governments are reluctant to challenge drivers. As someone from Britain I have always found it incredible that in the USA – the land of the car – there is a criminal offence of ‘jaywalking’: pedestrians, who don’t kill anyone, are deemed the offenders. In Britain, we favour drivers in a more subtle way: drivers are given a warning when they are breaking the law so that they don’t get caught. This has to do with speeding. Easy to catch using cameras, but in Britain cameras can only be used with a prior notice indicating their presence. This allows speeding drivers to slow down for the cameras before returning to speeding as they go on their way. Such routine enabling of law breaking is, I think, unique. It isn’t corruption, it’s political; drivers are many, and vote.

Back to Tynemouth. I live in a designated ‘Conservation Area’, which means there are minor planning restrictions on changes I can make to my property. On the positive side it also means my street has a 20mph speed limit. But there are no cameras. Car drivers seem to treat the 20mph sign as indicating a minimum speed, most zoom downhill to save a few seconds in getting to Longs Sands at the bottom. This behaviour is near universal. The right to speed without any consideration to residents is what it is: a presumed right. And the presumption is a sound one. If you do as I do, and drive at 20 mph, other cars drive up to your rear and, sometimes, even blow their horn in frustration at, as they see it, the hold up you are causing. In our many years living here we have been lucky with just the one car crash outside our house, with only one child affected (not killed). But throughout the summer as families walk from the Metro station to the beach past my house, I fear the worse. There are excited little children, often bouncing their beach balls, just a yard or so from cars speeding 40 mph. This is madness. We are one bad bounce from tragedy.

My local council is considering putting in road bumps to slow the traffic down. The argument is that this is the only way to reduce the speed of traffic: car drivers care more about their cars than peasants - oops, sorry pedestrians.

However the car lobby is conducting a national campaign against such restriction on speeding based upon - would you believe it - health grounds. They point out that slowing down and then pulling away from speed bumps increases the amount of pollution the car spews out. Wow! What are pampered car drivers offering us? They are basically saying it is better to kill a small number of children quickly by accident than kill many more children slowly by pollution. What sort of choice is this? Our society seems to have created a mass entitlement to kill. And the great irony is that this practice is epitomised by parents – the prime protectors of children – who drive their little ones to school. By dropping them off at the school gates they make children’s places of education pollution hot spots. Concerned parents will, of course, have ensured their children have their inhalers with them before they leave the car.

I use this diatribe against the car, induced by a local grouse about them speeding by my house, as a prelude to discussion of a far-reaching and alarming effect of mass entitlement. Modern society is many things but it has become increasingly obvious that its most crucial characteristic is that it is warming our planet. Put simply, we consume too much. In western countries democratic politics and economic growth go hand in hand to create and inflate this unsustainable situation. Election campaigns are largely about persuading voters who can best achieve economic growth: more jobs, more wages, more consumption. And why not? This is ordinary people building better lives for themselves and their families. Surely we are entitled, after all our forebears had fought for this over many generations.

Termed ‘economic development’, this goal has been sold to the rest of the world in the form of copying American styles of living, the desired outcome explicitly referred to as achieving ‘high mass consumption’. The ideal of a comfortable and convenient way of living with the car at its centre has gone global. Why shouldn’t ordinary Chinese people have this same ‘standard of living’? Why not Latin Americans? Why not Africans? We can go on, but the key question is ‘are they entitled to consume as we do?’ Without advocating pernicious discrimination, it is impossible not to admit their entitlement alongside our own. Thus the world development path is set for more and more consumption, with everyone trying to move towards some sort of American-style lives. One estimate is for there to be two billion cars by 2040, plus 20 trillion kilometres of air travel! There is just one rather enormous snag: the Earth is not big enough for this global human entitlement.

What does this mean? We are living our lives in an Earth-warming society that presents an existential threat to all humanity. Stop! Think! My God, EXISTENTIAL! I don’t usually invoke the Almighty but it seems appropriate here. At some point in the medium-term future the Earth’s environment might cease to succour human beings, our natural support system lost. We will be just another species to disappear in a great cull of myriad species. Well that’s a bit stark ... but it really is time to be blunt about this situation. I came to this conclusion on moving to Northumbria University in 2010 where I found like thinking people. We developed the project with a working title “Don’t Fry the Grandchildren”. We were not sure whose grandchildren were at risk of frying

but down the line there might be distraught grandparents contemplating a very bleak future for their progeny. Nonetheless this is not a simple generational matter, as an existential threat it is genealogical.

Defining identity by ancestors has recently become more common because of electronic availability of historical archives. In the UK this has spawned the popular TV programme *Who do you think you are?* With multiple series, it has become a global phenomenon (in the western sense) and many other countries have copied the programme (such as the USA and Germany). The standard format is for a well-known celebrity to find little known or unknown dead relatives, often resulting in crying over their misfortune. It is the mixing of the personal with history that makes the programme so compelling. However this is a distress for which there is no politics – sad for a particular dead individual; it happened and there is nothing we can do about it.

However, lineage does not stop at the present with us; we are all in line to become descendants as our family trees are continually updated via births and deaths. Concern for future relatives is completely different from concern for ancestors; although we cannot know the future there is a politics because the future is continually being made. For such ‘reverse genealogy’ (looking forward not backward) the question changes to ‘Who do you think you’ll be?’ How will our descendants, discovering us, consider our current lifestyles? There is no reason to think that genealogical curiosity will have declined but the attitude to the recent past might well be totally changed to that exhibited on *Who do you think you are?* When a future well-known celebrity cries it is likely because they’ve freaked out over our consumption patterns revealed by Big Data sources to be found in electronic historical archives. Hence any of us might feature in a hugely successful future media macro-communication with a title such as *Who did they think they were?* about greedy ancestors who selfishly destroyed the Earth as the home of humanity? Food for thought?

The politics of this turn in my work is straightforward. GRANDCHILDREN OF THE WORLD UNITE, YOU HAVE EVERYTHING TO LOSE: YOUR EARTH.

It is time I come clean and declare my consumption. I have been driving since 1970, including a Chevrolet Impala that did under seven miles to the gallon, and I commuted weekly many hundreds of miles between Tynemouth and Loughborough for 15 years. I have never live a particularly frugal life. My weekly schedule still includes driving to the supermarket as part of a high consumption lifestyle; my annual schedule includes flying to the sunshine, usually to a Mediterranean resort, plus work trips further afield. Perhaps I should be an ascetic but no, that’s not me. You may call me a hypocrite if you like but the environmental dilemmas we face is not going to be countered through individual gestures. I don’t think of my lifestyle as entitlement but rather I feel I am locked into a way of life. The irony is that we live in a world providing us with ever more individual consumption choices but which appears to preclude viable social alternatives. How else am I going to get my weekly shop home, or take groceries from multiple sources to the food bank, except by car?

So what to do? Let's begin by putting human-made climate change into perspective. My concerns can be dismissed as being that of a 'catastrophist', someone who is calling doom when there is so much that can be done. Such is the power of traditional modern optimism for the future, a faith in 'progress', that a septic environmental finale to the human story is simply unimaginable, from both right and left political positions. I look at it this way. There is climate change and it will affect human beings in the future. What are the chances of it being existential? We cannot know the future so let's agree it cannot be certain – i.e. not 100%. Is it 50%? 10%? 1%? What level of risk are we willing to accept before we make climate change the overriding politics of our times? I think it should be rapidly ascending the ladder of our concerns with all the percentages just listed. Our very existence is not something to gamble with.

I repeat, what to do? Don't be fooled by my use of the term 'locked' into a pattern of living consuming beyond Earth's means: there will not be a single magic 'key' to enable our escape. This is an immensely complex problem requiring myriad contributions to change things. This is my current research passion. It seems to me that my profession, academia, should be able to provide some fundamental rethinking of our global social web, but this does appear to be in short supply, and in any case is difficult to harness. Leaders in academia, as well as politics and business, just do not seem to be up to the job, sadly endorsing my initial gut instincts about them in the Introduction.

Thus far the main research contribution of academia – many impressive reports - has been on the physical side of the problem, chronicling, monitoring and modelling climate changes to provide the scientific grounding for our concerns. "The Science" we are now told is clear. But the 'social science' – what to do politically, economically, socially and culturally – is the other side of necessary research on climate change and there is nothing so clear here. Unfortunately, the huge bias towards the 'hard science' in academia's contribution is ultimately irrelevant if no means to change actual human behaviour is found. One way of beginning this social science task is to focus on the work of scholars who have challenged notions of progress, irrespective of whether they emanate from traditional right or left positions. One such person is Jane Jacobs, a severe critic of city planning, economics, archaeology, sociology and philosophy – not a bad quintet for starters. With Geoff O'Brien and Phil O'Keefe, like me both retired from Northumbria University, I am writing perhaps my last book trying to hitch her ideas to the human challenges of climate change.

I can best illustrate this work by a recent Eureka moment in my research investigation on our stock of knowledge of climate change, that is to say, the evidence base for policy. There is a UN intergovernmental organization that mobilises scientific research on climate change. It has produced six major reviews of our knowledge on the subject since 1990 consisting, literally, of many millions of words. Using a simple search engine I counted the number of times words associated with the supply or production of goods occurred, compared to the number of times words associated with the demand or consumption of goods. You cannot have demand without supply and vice versa so you might think the two counts would be approximately the same. But no ... a surprise.

Eureka! There were overwhelmingly more words on supply/production than demand/consumption. So in this foremost input to political reaction to climate change there is a total under-reporting of matters to do with actual consumption of stuff by human beings.

Think what this means to political decision-making on climate change. The major focus has been on reduction of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, the supply of energy into the production of goods. But the REASON there is need to have this ever-increasing supply is not similarly addressed. Rather obviously, it is our incessant demand for more and more stuff that drives energy needs and yet this is precisely what is side lined in reports for key 'climate negotiations' between national delegates at UN conferences. I am not saying that reducing carbon production is not a good thing, but that it is only part of one half the supply/demand equation. And since it is demand that stimulates supply, it is not the side that should be prioritised. But politicians like this supply bias in policy making because they can be seen to be acting on climate change without having to inform their voters that they should consume much, much less. The lesson is that politicians, even well meaning ones on this area of policy, are also locked into positions that maintain and grow high levels of consumption.

I ask again, what to do? It should be clear by now that I really don't know. I do think that politics as we currently experience it – top-down: the UN, presidents, prime ministers, mayors, political parties, etc. – to be an unlikely avenue for adequate action to combat climate change. They deal with the expected; but human-made climate change is the greatest ever unexpected consequence in history. The mass entitlement that has precipitated this potential catastrophe has to be directly confronted. It is WE who have to change. And this will involve completely new ways of doing politics. Perhaps some sort of bottom-up surge of conspicuous asceticism is needed: certainly an alternative mass entitlement is required that places our progeny centre stage. But the point is that such a new mass politics has yet to be invented; it is the urgent task. I guess its first target must be the consumption-creation complex centred on the advertising industry, ranging from myriad celebrity endorsements through to mega lobbying activities. Corporate globalization is now reliant on Big Data so that the sheer pervasiveness of advertising is joining finance as a main mechanism for ensuring human extinction. Their joint complicity in generation of ever more debt allows for contemporary mass entitlement to continue happily along. Hopefully kernels of necessary 'un-modern' political alternatives are already emerging, scattered across the globe beyond my own narrow world.

I'm trying as hard as possible to conclude on an optimistic note. Let me end with an analogy that lends a little support for a hopeful stance on climate change. A couple of centuries ago coal mining was a dangerous occupation that took place in a very uncertain, changeable environment. To help keep the miners safe, a canary in a cage would accompany the workers down the pit. The first sign of the bird's demise signalled deadly gases - it was all out, quick. I am writing this essay in 2018, a year of multiple environmental signals. Figuratively, we have experienced a huge flock of canaries – floods and fires of biblical proportions on every continent. Increase in extreme weather events is a key prediction of the

climate change scientists and this is now coming about. This is the first existential step; it will only get worse. As human-made climate change becomes ever more tangible modern mass entitlement will begin to be seen as ever less credible. I hope.

Postscript. Since writing this memoir I have completed another book with Northumbria University emeritus colleagues Geoff O'Brien and Phil O'Keefe entitled *Cities Demanding the Earth: a New Understanding of the Climate Emergency* (University of Bristol Press) that expands on the second part of the Epilogue. Our conclusion is that we have to reinvent the modern city. I can link this to my earlier diatribe against cars by finishing with a thought experiment. What if all built-up areas in cities reversed the priority given to flows of cars. The purpose of traffic engineers is to keep the traffic flowing – they appear to be the only users of public money not curtailed by recent austerity. But note the assumption: traffic equals road traffic, cars, etc. Let us deem pedestrians to be the traffic that we need to keep flowing and safely. This would require changing the relationship between road and pavement/sidewalk. Kerbstones or their equivalent would be placed to check motor traffic instead of pedestrians. The result would be that pathways exist at the same level throughout every built-up area. Hence cars would have to stop and rise up to pathway level in order to cross. In contrast, pedestrians would no longer have to stop and step down to cross roads. That's reinvention. Just a thought ...