

IN MEMORIAM BARRY LEWIS JOHN GORDON

Barry Gordon (1934-1994) died unexpectedly of a heart attack at his home in Merewether near Newcastle on 17 March 1994. The following In Memoriam has been compiled by some colleagues and friends to record some of his services to Australia's academic community and in particular, to the History of Economic Thought community of Australia. The editor, on behalf of all members of HETSA, takes this opportunity to express sincere condolences to his widow, Moira, and his children and grandchildren. A full bibliography of Barry's works will be published in the next issue of History of Economics Review.

Warren Hogan*

Barry Gordon was born in the opening months of 1934 and died in those same months of 1994. In his sixty years he fostered a distinguished academic career within the University of Newcastle and was the father to a large and adoring family. When his wife, Moira, was able to lessen the claims on her time from eight children they joined their research interests to begin the longitudinal study of the impact of redundancy among workers in the steel industry. He was a university man and a family man in the best senses of those descriptions. Practical he had to be with a large family. Collegial he was in his quest for academic betterment in his university.

Barry Gordon spent his entire academic career in the University of Newcastle having gone there on completion of his initial studies in the Faculty of Economics of the University of Sydney. He was one of the "originals" in Economics at Newcastle. When he went there at the beginning of 1956 it was to join the Department of Arts of Newcastle University College. This was a very strange academic construction. Newcastle was then a college of the New South Wales University of Technology with the latter only just having been reconstituted from the NSW Institute of Technology. However, the Act establishing the New South Wales University of Technology did not allow for the granting of degrees in the Arts and Humanities. Thus the Department of Arts at Newcastle provided lectures and tutorials according to the requirements of the Faculty of Arts in the University of New England!

Should this circumstance have not been confusing enough, the New South Wales University of Technology authorised the offering of a Bachelor of Commerce degree. Thus by early 1958, when I joined Newcastle University College, Economics was transferred from what had become the Division of Arts to the Division of Commerce. (These Divisions were the college equivalent of faculties.)

In his formative academic years Barry Gordon was challenged by these revolutionary academic experiences. Along with his senior colleagues, such as Cyril Renwick and Ron Peters, and his contemporaneous teaching fellow, Miloslav Bernasek, came an additional three staff to flesh out the meagre establishment, Paul Sherwood, Bryan Johns and myself.

The initial location at Tighe's Hill on the Technical College site was cramped. The close proximity of staff offices to the student common room in the partitioned wings of a building designed for engineering workshops was a revealing experience, most of all for the young ladies newly released from the convent school at Lochinvar up the Hunter Valley. So it seemed to all of us at a time when *in loco parentis* still had meaning!

These perspectives are offered to give some hint of the testing conditions in which academic work was pursued. All this must be stated in order to appreciate the physical strains handicapping research quite apart from availability of books in the small library.

This is said because Barry Gordon's first publication was in the *Quarterly Journal of Economics* in 1961! And he did it again with another article in that journal in 1964. In the 'sixties he also had papers in *Economica*, *Oxford Economic Papers* and *Revue d'Economie Politique* as well as the *Economic Record* and *Australian Economic Papers*. In the 'nineties we hear much about international recognition and research quality. Barry Gordon faced all that three decades before.

There were two dominant interests in his intellectual pursuit. The first, for which he is best known, is *History of Economic Thought and Analysis*. His reputation was built upon his articles published in the 'sixties. His standing was secured by the five books published from 1975 to 1992. For me his most rewarding contribution was on *Economic Doctrine and Tory Liberalism*. The most exotic activities were those bearing upon the economic themes of the Talmud.

The second major interest was with labour economics and industrial relations. His first article on such a topic was in a 1963 issue of the *Journal of Industrial Relations*. An explanation for this

interest is to be found in the Newcastle experience; this was the heartland of industrial expansion in postwar Australia.

While there would be no question about the primacy of economic thought and history of analysis in Barry Gordon's intellectual reach, his contribution in industrial relations and labour market matters must not be diminished. Any discussions with Barry around this topic during the past decade tended to remind one just how much more he had not committed in formal papers. He had continuing interests, most of all in the major longitudinal study of the impact of redundancy pursued jointly with his wife, Dr Moira Gordon.

The influences stemming from Barry Gordon's academic endeavours will be with us for years to come. A book on pre-mercantilist economic thought has been completed to the point where the joint author should not be in difficulties with the topic. Two papers, again fortunately with joint authors, were firmly in hand and should see the light of day.

What is remarkable is the way in which Barry Gordon pursued a very successful academic career while remaining in Newcastle. It is true that in the latter part of the 'sixties and through the 'seventies Newcastle flourished not least by reason of the priority given to the University Library by the founding Vice-Chancellor, James Auchmuty, and its most efficient management by Ted Flowers. But Barry Gordon fostered that library development and could claim to have been an important influence for an excellent economics collection.

Locating in an Australian provincial university did not hamper Barry Gordon. He made his own ground. His success may be measured by his many visiting appointments at Oxford, MIT, and Cambridge as well as London. His reputation rested rock solid on academic contributions.

Barry Gordon brought to his research the tough standards of integrity and thorough purpose. His lectures and, in his early years, his tutoring were always informed and displayed with clarity as well as skill. With students he was generous, often too much so. He was always a man of honesty and good manners.

To me he was a colleague and friend over thirty-six years.

* University of Sydney

Bruce McFarlane *

My first academic appointment at the age of 21 years, was to the Newcastle University College as lecturer in economics. Upon arrival I had a weird experience. On the first day there were two encounters with staff members - Dean of Arts, J.J. Auchmuty, followed by Barry Gordon. The former said, "I will have you know, young man, that I prefer not to have Catholics or Communists on my staff!" Dismayed, I then bumped into Barry, a loyal and warm Catholic who commented: "that means he won't take the two of us!"

Barry Gordon's name was already known to me back in 1957. He was an older contemporary at the University of Sydney and one read each year with dazed admiration, the extraordinary exam results he turned in consistently.

At Newcastle University Economics Department, I found on my arrival that Barry's enthusiasms were his family, Rugby Union and History of Economic Thought. He was already embarking on that long journey of research effort which put him in touch with the Schoolmen, the teaching of the Church in previous centuries and the links between economic history and the history of economic thought. On the latter topic, Barry was a very profound thinker and well aware of the debate about treating history of thought teleologically versus interpreting it as a reflection of definite social conditions.

An enthusiast for the teaching of the history of economic thought, Barry was also concerned to defend its position on the curriculum against those who preferred the technical and mathematical

kind of economics, and wanted to impose only the vision of neoclassicism in the classroom. He hit on the idea of calling the subject "Economic Doctrines and Methods" and taught *three* courses under this rubric, maintaining relatively large classes throughout his teaching career.

Barry Gordon will be remembered as a kind and efficient chairman at seminars, and a sharp discussion opener, who always seemed able to find something worthwhile in what the seminar presenter was trying to say. This was his style, whether the person involved was a fledgling postgraduate student or a world figure like Luigi Pasinetti. During the latter's visit to Newcastle in 1993, it was Barry Gordon who made the visit worthwhile - not only useful for students and staff, but for Pasinetti himself. Moira Gordon and Barry had an unrivalled knowledge of the economic geography and economic history of the Hunter Region of New South Wales which they put at the service of the distinguished visitor.

I know that Pasinetti thoroughly enjoyed his trip and his talk won the Gordons. That is only one of many examples of how Barry Gordon assisted in the development in a spirit of international cooperation among enthusiasts for the history of economic thought. I will leave it to others in this roundup of tributes to supply some more from their fund of knowledge and experiences about Professor Gordon's activities. When I say he will be sorely missed, I say it not only from the position as a Professor in his Department, but from the viewpoint of one who will no longer have his friendly advice and assistance on matters of economic thought readily on tap and unsparingly given.

* University of Newcastle

S. Todd Lowry *

The untimely death of Barry Gordon on March 17, 1994, has left an empty space in the lives of many friends and a gap in the realm of dynamic scholarship that will not soon be filled. Barry brought his own unique brand of Australian ebullience to his scholarly commitments. Despite an acute consciousness of his geographic isolation in the far-off provinces, he responded to the challenge with an energetic pursuit of original topics. He read things as they were and was apparently never at a loss for projects to explore. He responded both to the unreasonably ignored subject and the authoritative blunder. In one of his earliest pieces, he challenged the prestige of J.A. Schumpeter for his careless assessment of Aristotle as a "bullionist" when the literature of Aristotle's times was replete with references to fiat money and the problem was clearly Schumpeter's historically tinted spectacles. He brought interest in ancient Greek economic thought into the leading journals and then moved on into Biblical and Patristic thought, areas that had been inexplicably ignored for generations.

When Barry first visited me here in Virginia, I expected an energetic Australian interested in the Greek Classics, but found a feisty enthusiast preparing research projects on the history of jazz, a little known American figure of the early 19th century, parliamentary debates and problems of Christian ethics. He gave my students a stimulating lecture on Ricardian economics salted with discussions of "surfing" in Australia.

Currently, Barry had promoted a project to publish a compendium of ancient and medieval economic thought and social justice with a major publisher. This type of effort contradicts the trend toward exploiting the market with a proliferation of light short books with very high prices. Barry's commitment was to thorough and systematic scholarship. He was looking forward to developing a similar project for the mercantilist literature. I was most gratified to have been involved in this work with Barry and its continuation and ultimate completion will be a fitting memorial to his scholarly commitment.

Despite his untimely departure, Barry has left us many monuments to his unique capacity to recognise the ignored and passed-over areas for research. During a time when many scholars resort to refining obscure distinctions to keep busy, Barry had more original projects afoot than he could get to. It was this intellectual independence and self-reliance that I want to remember - possibly an Australian characteristic. In my home country - Texas - we would just say that "Barry was something else".

* Washington and Lee University

John Pullen and Bill Driscoll *

Barry Gordon's contributions to the history of economic thought are remarkable for both the breadth and depth of their scholarship. In breadth, his interests ranged from the Judaeo-Christian beginnings of economics to modern environmentalist controversies. In depth, the two most outstanding examples are probably his *Political Economy in Parliament 1819-1823* and his *Economic Doctrine and Tory Liberalism 1824-1830*, both of which required endless hours of painstaking and meticulous research into Hansard and the contemporary literature. These and his other publications reflect his deep respect for the empirical evidence of the texts and an awareness of the significance of historical context, as well as providing testimony to his enormous capacity for scholarly research and writing.

His prodigious output would not have been possible without a lifelong instinct for system and order (not to mention a loving family prepared to accommodate themselves to his work habits). Whether cataloguing his record collection, recording details from record magazines for future purchases, detailing his wine purchases (preferably Hunters), or extending his HET card system, Barry Gordon was precise, systematic and organised. But order in his mind was not an end in itself. His essential purpose was to unearth the truth of things, to turn private into public knowledge (his unpublished materials, for example, include a manuscript on music - the Be Bop era in Jazz). To this end his systematic record keeping was designed to help him follow a project through, and to bring each stage of his research to its published fruition (his wine notes, probably, excepted).

Barry's academic work was influenced by an underlying concern for social justice and a prevailing interest in the philosophical and theological foundations of economics. This is particularly evident in his *Economic Analysis before Adam Smith*, with its chapters on biblical, patristic and scholastic economic thought, and in his *Economic Analysis in Talmud Literature* (with R.A. Ohrenstein). Colleagues had been looking forward to his contribution to the forthcoming workshop (at the Centre for the Study of the History of Economic Thought) on "Economics and Ethics", which he was helping to organise.

His philosophical-theological orientation arose from a life-long commitment to the Catholic religion, a commitment based on reason as well as faith and one that did not exclude a reasoned critique of certain aspects of Catholic belief or practice. While a student at Sydney University, he participated actively in the Newman Society. Later, in Newcastle (where, from 1956, he was a member of the University of Newcastle's staff), he maintained a practical and scholarly interest in his religion, whether through membership of Parish and Diocesan Councils and Education Councils or through less formal discussion groups where the somewhat avant-garde speculations of contemporary theologians such as Schillebeeckx and Kung were dissected and assessed.

The breadth and fullness which characterised Barry Gordon's economic and theological studies were also features of his personal life. Nobody could have been further removed from the popular image of the ivory-tower academic. Father of eight and loving husband - his wife, Moira, is also an academic economist - music lover and jazz drummer, wine enthusiast (Barry would probably have rejected the word "connoisseur" except in moments of weakness), rugby player (and, later,

selector), cricket lover, body surfer, movie buff - all bear witness to his energetic involvement in life. Whatever he did, he did with enthusiasm. Enthusiasm characterised his lecturing; it was, in his opinion, the principal requirement (after scholarship) for good teaching. As a supervisor of graduate students, his infectious enthusiasm for their projects became, for some, the reason why they persisted. His influence extended beyond his discipline and it is significant that both of the authors, though from different academic areas, have cause to be grateful for his concern and interest. On a variety of topics he was an intense and good-humoured controversialist, though in this respect it must be acknowledged that he enjoyed an unfair advantage. As a night worker (rarely rising before 11 a.m. unless coerced and routinely working until the small hours of the morning) his persuasive powers invariably seemed to redouble at precisely the hour when his fellow disputants, weakened by fatigue, alcohol or a more statistically normal regard for the clock, were more than willing to cede the point.

In Barry Gordon's untimely passing, the History of Economic Thought Society of Australia loses one of its founding members, one of its strongest supporters, and one of its leading authorities. He presented a paper - "The Scarcity Problem in Biblical Literature" - at the inaugural meeting of the HETSA at the University of New England in 1981, and with the exception of 1983 when he was abroad on study leave, attended all subsequent HETSA conferences and gave papers at most of them.

The loss that is being experienced at a personal level by his family and many close friends will also be experienced at a professional level by historians of economic thought throughout the world. Barry was always willing to share his knowledge and insights with students and colleagues; there were no jealously guarded sources of information, no attempts to establish exclusionary zones of research, only generosity and a disinterested concern for the pursuit of truth. His recent early retirement from the University of Newcastle gave rise to the hopes that he was about to embark on the most productive period of an already productive scholarly life. We can only hope that the history of economic thought in Australia will continue to see his like again.

* University of New England

Peter Groenewegen *

I first had the pleasure of meeting Barry Gordon at the Inaugural HETSA Conference in 1981, a lack of personal contact which is difficult to explain given our long-standing mutual interests in the history of economics and our shared *alma mater* at Sydney University, from which he graduated with honours in economics a good half decade before I did. There is a photo extant of that conference with Barry Gordon meditatively sucking his pipe, in the company of Geoffrey Harcourt, Dave Clark and myself, during one of these nocturnal discussions over beer which characterised that inaugural congress. Since then, more frequent encounters have enabled me to know him much better, well beyond my early acquaintance with him as a name on articles published in the *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, *Economica*, *Australian Economic Papers*, *Revue d'économie publique*, and *Oxford Economic Papers* in which he published some of his research.

These encounters occurred at HETSA conferences which like him, I diligently attended unless absent overseas; at Newcastle University, on occasions such as when I acted as external examiner for its honours program, gave the annual Political Economy Lecture, presented the occasional seminars or even, most recently, launched a book by one of his colleagues, Roy Green. Roy's appointment (and that of some others) made Newcastle University a haven for history of economics research, even though in all these cases this was the second or even third string on substantial bows of other specialisations. In both Barry's and Roy's case, these were Labour

Economics and Regional Industry Development. Barry, as most other distinguished historians of economics, always argued that despite the importance of his favourite subject, performance and research in it could only be enhanced if it was supplemented by other activity. This was also the only way in which a smallish department could afford more than one resident historian of the subject. On all these occasions at Newcastle, I remember Barry's presence vividly from the pertinent discussion and comment he offered, from his generosity in presenting me with his history of economics output in book and offprint form (now proudly gracing my bookshelves as I write) and from the enjoyable discussions after these occasions in the University of Newcastle Staff Club over fine Hunter wines selected by him with great care, and made all the more appealing by the equally fine conversation which accompanied them. This last quality of a visit to Newcastle was praised by all visitors. Bob Coats and I reminisced about this amongst other aspects of the tragic loss of Barry Gordon to the scholarly community when we met at Wake Forest last April; in happier circumstances Luigi Pasinetti sang the praises of both his hosts (Maira was invariably present on these occasions) and the wine after his visit to Newcastle in 1993.

Strangely, I learned to appreciate Barry Gordon's finer qualities best when during a very hot summer in 1990, we resided both at Jesus College, Cambridge, for a month, a summer during which we also attended the Festival of Nobel Laureates at Edinburgh to commemorate the Bicentenary of Smith's death. Of this occasion, there is also an extant photo taken by Seiji Furuta (how indebted we are to the Japanese for pictorial momentoes) at the Mayoral Reception showing Barry in the company of Marjorie Grice-Hutchinson and myself, enjoying yet another example of Scottish hospitality so evident during this meeting. We likewise attended the Marshall *Principles* Centenary conference at Cambridge, at which he commented on John Maloney's paper on Marshall and business, quoting in his remarks some stanzas on bankruptcy, drawn from one of Alfred Marshall's father's religious epics. However, my most pleasant memories over this month are about evening discussions over a couple of pints in one of the many Cambridge 'locals', in which Barry showed his knowledge and appreciation of real ale, and we reminisced over Sydney student days (University Revue, jazz, teachers) and ruminated over mutual problems arising from the day's research and issues bedevilling discipline and sub-discipline. It was from that year that I really learned to appreciate Barry Gordon for the superb scholar and human being he was.

That appreciation was further strengthened through my official association with some of the recent honours and awards academe bestowed on Barry over the last decade of his life. I read, and re-read much of his substantial oeuvre in the history of economics as his internal examiner for the Doctor of Science in Economics, which he received in 1991, the first (and only) DSc (Econ) since that awarded to Ray Chambers a decade before. This success made me confident to sponsor him also for election to the Academy of Social Sciences in Australia, of which he became a Fellow in 1993. I recall with particular enjoyment his presence at the first (and only) annual Academy meeting he was to attend, a further loss to the Australian social science community implied by his death given his intention of active interest and participation in that body.

Last, but not least, my fondest memories of Barry Gordon were as co-worker with me in the *Centre of the Study for the History of Economic Thought*, established at Sydney University in 1989. He served on its Advisory Council, loyally attending workshops, giving papers and contributing advice and suggestions. His cooperation is evident by the enthusiasm with which he agreed to co-convene a Workshop on Economics and Ethics for late 1994, promising to contribute a paper on the Greek and Scholastic Foundations of these related subjects. The impossibility of easily replacing his contribution, now that he is unable to make it, illustrates the extent of the loss the Australian History of Economics community has suffered. This loss, great though it is, is overshadowed by that imposed through the departure of his friendship, his advice, his wisdom and his enormous zest for life and for things new, of which now only the grateful memory remains.

* University of Sydney

Jeffery T. Young *

Barry Gordon was always a source of encouragement for me. I remember, for example, our first meeting. This was at the History of Economics Society annual meetings which were held at the University of Pittsburgh that year. I was presenting a paper on Adam Smith in which I was trying to say something new about the relation between Smith's two books, the *Theory of Moral Sentiments* and the *Wealth of Nations*. Barry was in the audience and introduced himself to me after the session. I had already heard of him, although I had not yet read any of his writings. I do not remember exactly what he said, except that he was impressed with my paper and encouraged me to keep going with it. Subsequently I sent revised versions to him for comment, and the paper eventually saw the light of day in the *History of Political Economy*.

In brief, I was trying to show that TMS provides the normative underpinning for Smith's theory of natural price, and Barry saw in this a link with Scholastic conceptions of economic justice. He had long thought that the success of Smith's economics had something to do with Smith achieving a higher level of consistency between the categories of justice than had the Schoolmen. Commutative, distributive, and general justice are simultaneously realised in the system of natural liberty. Thus, Barry saw in my work the basis for his quite speculative thesis. When I originally proposed that we work together on a paper, Barry, then, was quite agreeable, even though we barely knew each other.

The original proposal for a joint paper eventually turned into a plan for three papers, and our partnership spread over several years. In the course of working on the first paper, which dealt with the concept of commutative justice in Smith and his predecessors, we renewed our acquaintance at meetings in Toronto and in Newcastle. I came to know Barry as a warm and very knowledgeable individual. I found him eagerly receptive of my ideas and slow to criticise. I'm sure he would have been much loved by his students.

Subsequently, I came to Newcastle in July of 1993, thanks to Barry's invitation and influence in procuring research money, to spend a sabbatical year. Our plan was to complete the last two papers in our proposed trilogy on economic justice in Smith. Before he died we completed a paper on distributive justice in Smith, and had outlined in broad form our third paper on general justice. This last we did the day before he died. I hope to be able to write this paper on my own so that our work will be complete. The paper on distributive justice will be his last published article when it appears in 1996.

Barry and his wife, Moira, were very kind and helpful in welcoming my family and me to Australia and helping us settle down. Barry made sure I was welcomed in the Economics Department, and he would frequently come by my office to ask me to lunch with him. Meetings to discuss the progress of our work were always stimulating and enjoyable. I will miss him as a friend and as a colleague.

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Phillip O'Hara*

My first interaction with Barry Gordon was in 1982 when I visited the University of Newcastle to discuss long waves with him and Allen Oakley. I was impressed with Barry's wide interests and his integrity and morality. It was only when I spent three years at the University as a PhD scholar during 1984-86 that I more fully recognised the great humanity and intelligence of the man. I came

to appreciate this Renaissance scholar as a humble yet eloquent man; a very dedicated family man, with a loving wife, and a love of scholarship and people. I was shocked by the extraordinary scope of his bibliographical records, for instance, when he helped me with references to John Commons. But, more than anything, I came to see Barry as one of the few great holistic economists, with a vision of the total process, and the ability to see himself and those around him interaction together in that total process. I shall miss him, but I hope that his influence stays with our Society for as long as possible.

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