TRIBUTES TO SIR WILLIAM DEAKIN


Sir William Deakin, the College’s Founding Warden, died on 22 January 2005. We are reproducing here some of the tributes paid to him during the service to celebrate his life which took place in College at 3 pm on Saturday 23 April.

‘Churchill, Deakin and the Making of History’ – by Professor David Dilks

‘A man of great spirit and courage’. Those were the terms in which Keith Feiling wrote from Christ Church to recommend F.W. Deakin to Winston Churchill 70 years ago. All those present today, and a far greater number beyond these shores, will recognise the acuity of a devoted tutor’s judgment. Though he felt shy and nervous in this company, and swiftly discovered that Churchill expected his research assistant to be as tough in constitution and concentrated in thought as himself, Bill fitted from the start at Chartwell. Soon we find Churchill writing ‘I like Mr Deakin very much’ and a little later ‘Deakin has been here four days and has helped me a lot. He shows more quality and serviceableness than any of the others.’

Hitherto, Churchill had sought danger and political excitements and had then written about his experience; placing it in the context of larger themes, to be sure, but with his own figure prominent in the foreground. Hence a delicious remark of the former Prime Minister Arthur Balfour, when yet a further volume of The World Crisis appeared, ‘I am immersed in Winston’s brilliant Autobiography, disguised as a history of the Universe.’

The Life of the Duke of Marlborough, by contrast, represented an enterprise different in its nature and it was for this that Mr Deakin had been recruited. The events of more than two centuries earlier must be re-created in the imagination and reconstructed; vast archives, at The Hague and Vienna no less than Blenheim, must be trawled. Churchill was bent upon the rescue of his great ancestor’s reputation from the ravages inflicted upon it by Macaulay. For his literary assistant, an academic historian accustomed to appraise sceptically, this situation held an imminent conflict. But as Bill once put the point soon after Churchill’s death, he had ‘surrendered without terms long ago to the magic of the man.’ To be close to Churchill was a privilege for which it was worth paying; the price, which Bill observed for the rest of his life, was one of strict loyalty and discretion, the dividend beyond calculation. Possessing the accomplishments of a scholar, he soon
acquired something still rarer; for in the study at Chartwell, starting late at night and not ending until 3 or 4 in the morning - after which he would drive across country to Oxford and teach at Wadham from 9 – Bill learned ‘vastly more of the sense of history than my formal education as a student, and later as a teacher, ever taught me.’ The point was no doubt apparent to Bill’s academic colleagues from an early date; we must doubt whether it brought them much joy.

When wishing to be boisterous or intimidating in conversation, no infrequent event, Churchill would address his young assistant as ‘you goddamned don.’ However, Bill realized at an early stage – indeed, he could scarcely have worked for Churchill on any other terms – that such turbulence passed in the twinkling of an eye. He won his master’s confidence swiftly and completely; immediately after the Anschluss of 1938, Churchill sent him to Prague to discuss with President Benes the state of Czechoslovakia’s defences. In research and discussion at Chartwell Deakin saw, and helped Churchill to appreciate, the conduct of coalition warfare in the hands of a master. Soon both of them were to witness the process in its modern guise. Mrs Churchill told the Prime Minister of Canada during the war that the writing of those volumes about Marlborough had produced a profound effect upon her husband’s character, for he discovered that the Duke had possessed immense patience, without which allies could not be coaxed along and grand designs executed. Insofar as his tempestuous nature allowed, Churchill had absorbed the lesson.

One day early in 1939, Bill said to Mr Churchill (for in those formal days, they invariably addressed each other as ‘Mr Churchill’ and ‘Mr Deakin’), ‘You know I have never asked you for anything on my own behalf, but now I want to make a request. I’m anxious to join the Territorials. Would you send a letter of recommendation to the Oxfordshire Hussars? After all,’ he added brightly, ‘I’m only asking for a chance get killed.’ Churchill wrote at once to the Commanding Officer, ‘I can say from my own intimate knowledge of him for several years that he is in every way fitted to make an excellent officer.’

Once the last volume of Marlborough was published, Churchill had embarked upon A History of the English-Speaking Peoples, with Deakin as his indispensable coadjutor. In the intervals of training with the army, Bill discussed lustily with him the question whether King Alfred ever burnt the cakes and emerged chastened when his master explained that at times of crisis, myths have their historical importance. At the height of the Norwegian campaign in the spring of 1940, the two of them debate the reign of Edward the Confessor; and a few months later, with the Battle of Britain raging, Captain Deakin lunches alone with the Prime Minister. Even Churchill had by now abandoned the idea of early publication and the book did not appear for the better part of two decades.

Bill realised in the army, as young men from Cumberland mingled with those from Devon, each group speaking a language more or less incomprehensible to the
other, that there was all the same something called England which meant everything to them. After Northern Ireland, he was posted to highly secret duties in the United States and then on his own insistence came back in 1942 because he did not wish to serve out the war behind a desk.

When it was decided that Captain Deakin should be parachuted into Yugoslavia to discover the whereabouts and activities — indeed, the identity — of Tito, he can scarcely have expected to return. He wrote to Churchill from Cairo in May 1943 on the eve of his departure, ‘I am glad to go and hope to be able to establish a useful liaison and in any case send back information of value.’ With what we must think a conscious echo of Captain Oates, and with a nice display of English understatement, he added, ‘It will be some time before I can extricate myself from the Balkans again …’

And then, moving from the plane of public business to that of the special relationship which had grown up between the two of them: ‘I need not tell you now how much I have appreciated all your kindness and generosity. You may not realize how much the many personal touches have been valued …’

Evelyn Waugh, who saw something of Bill in Yugoslavia, believed him ‘a very loveable and complicated man’, a ‘very clever, heroic man’. We have no need to quarrel with those words. We may notice in passing that after their first meeting, Waugh described Bill’s ‘Hindu legs, ascetic face’, which I mention because this provides the sole recorded instance in which anybody ever applied the word ‘ascetic’ to him.

It is sometimes thought that Churchill wrote about the second world war only when it was clear that he could make advantageous financial arrangements. In reality, he was resolved that if health lasted he would follow the habit of a lifetime; having lived in the eye of the storm for six years, he would do what he was uniquely qualified to do, speak for himself. Thus Mr Deakin who insisted on leaving the Embassy in Belgrade to return to his Fellowship at Wadham had scarcely reached London before he found himself intercepted by Churchill and asked to deal with all the political and diplomatic side of the memoirs. To this enormous task Bill devoted himself. By his mastery of languages, wide intellectual interests, coiled energy, cordial relations with colleagues in Whitehall, orderliness in dealing with many millions of words, harmony with Churchill, he made the enterprise possible. The tension inherent in the position of any research assistant was eased by Churchill’s insistence that the work did not pretend to provide some impartial survey of affairs. Rather, it was a presentation and defence, sometimes aggressively mounted, of his own role; he would say, half in jest, ‘I think it will be found best to leave these contentious matters to history, especially as I propose to write that history myself.’ He did not expect that gratitude or admiration would, or should, shield him from the scrutiny of later generations.

Thus a volume a year for six years; and in the later stages, that had to be
combined with St Antony’s. How Bill managed remains a mystery. When M. Besse wrote in the spring of 1950 of the new Warden ‘Bill Deakin is altogether a superior man’ he meant, and justly, a man of wholly exceptional talent, possessed of the courage which refuses to allow defeat and which, Churchill used to say, guarantees the possession of all the other desirable qualities. This same letter also says of Bill ‘He has in him a spark of adventurous spirit which endears him to me and he has a wife who collaborates closely with him.’ Those are perceptions shared, I believe, by all who were fortunate enough to be members of this College in Bill’s time.

When the last volume of *The Second World War* had appeared, work resumed upon *A History of the English-Speaking Peoples*. A few weeks after his retirement as Prime Minister, we find Churchill writing to his wife ‘In a quarter of an hour I expect Bill Deakin. I must bring him along if I can’; which meant that he must seek Bill’s renewed help. There was no doubt of his capacity to do that; the Warden had a thousand duties here and elsewhere, but it would not have lain in his nature to refuse anything that Churchill asked. To the end, he and Pussy remained amongst the closest friends of the Churchills. When Sir Winston dined for the last time with the Other Club in his 91st year, he asked the Warden of St Antony’s to accompany him. I once heard Bill admit - though only under the most direct questioning - what he would never have said unsolicited, that he was proud of that fact.

An integral part of Churchill’s purpose in writing *The Second World War* had been to make clear the scale and nature of the British and Commonwealth effort. In his different style, Bill determined that justice should be done, in a quiet, scholarly but effective way to that heroic enterprise. The process began under the direct impetus of the Warden, who convened at St Antony’s in 1962 a pioneering conference which discussed Britain and European Resistance during the war. It was an event notable on many grounds, not least of which was that there gathered in this College those who had taken a leading part in the resistance in their own countries in Europe, together with academic commentators; in some instances the two categories overlapped. All this developed later into the British National Committee for the History of the Second World War, over which Bill presided for some 35 years. His genius for friendship and respect for the culture, civilization and languages of other countries – which did not in the least mean that he was disdainful or unappreciative of his own – the universal respect for his talents as historian and record as man of action, gave him a unique place in the work of the International Committee for the History of the Second World War, of which he was the long-serving Vice-President. As Chairman of the British Committee he contributed numerous scholarly papers and presided over many a conference. He understood, both by instinct and from knowledge, the delicate and sometimes dangerous position of historian colleagues behind the Iron Curtain, and through the two Committees sustained with them friendly contacts at a time when such were not easily established.
Bill’s own writings, about Mussolini and the collapse of fascism, the activities of Richard Sorge, and other subjects, were based upon a mastery of documents in many archives, and an understanding of politics and character deepened by his long association with Churchill. Bill too had experienced his time of violent excitement and wrote about it, though with reluctance and – because he could say nothing about Enigma – under many inhibitions. In later years, he would express disappointment with *The Embattled Mountain*. There he did not do himself justice. To take part in great events and describe them at first without hindsight, and then to look at the same events with the aid of documents and facts unknown or even unsuspected at the time of action, is by its nature an enterprise reserved for very few. Bill’s archive of material about Yugoslavia, including many drafts which he wrote in recent years, will provide a treasure house for research.

He always ‘saw the skull beneath the skin’, sensed subtleties and layers of meaning hidden from others. In these last years, it was not possible to be with him without recalling Churchill’s valediction of Balfour: ‘As I observed him regarding with calm, firm and cheerful gaze the approach of Death, I felt how foolish the Stoics were to make such a fuss about an event so natural and so indispensable to mankind. But I felt also the tragedy which robs the world of all the wisdom and treasure gathered in a great man’s life and experience and hands the lamp to some impetuous and untutored stripling or lets it fall shivered into fragments upon the ground.’

Bill’s modesty, carried to the point of a fault; his charming habit of treating the young on level terms; his wholly unfeigned interest in others and anxiety to help them; the natural dignity which enabled him to disdain the frailties of old age – all provide an example to be treasured until our own time is come. The courage and spirit which Professor Feiling discerned 70 years ago remained undimmed. Asked what the doctors thought about his condition, he replied, ‘They’re very vague about everything. Only one thing is certain; that I don’t give a damn.’ When Bill arrived at the convalescent hospital at Le Beausset just before Christmas, after a major operation which he had been thought unlikely to survive, he was asked ‘Is there anything we can do for you, Monsieur Deakin?’ ‘Certainly’ he replied. ‘Champagne for everyone.’

Churchill once remarked mischievously of a Prime Minister who left office early, ‘For myself, I always believed in staying in the pub until closing time.’ In this College we knew that the last man to leave any good party would always be the Warden. His interests were legion, his friends to be found the world over. His hospitality, not least of the mind, was boundless and his company an enduring delight:

‘They told me, Heraclitus, they told me you were dead;
They brought me bitter news to hear, and bitter tears to shed;
I wept as I remembered how often you and I
Had tired the sun with talking, and sent him down the sky.’
Bill Deakin was an historian who made history. As the first British liaison officer sent to Tito, he was caught up in May 1943 in the second phase of the Partisans’ epic battle for survival against Yugoslavia’s Axis occupiers. In their war, survival was victory. But Bill Deakin’s reports on the Partisans’ fighting prowess, on the collaboration of their principal domestic rivals with the enemy and on Tito personally initiated a change in British policy that would ultimately help seal and legitimise the National Liberation Movement’s military and political ascendancy throughout a multinational state the British government was keen to see restored.

The timing of Bill’s descent by parachute on Mt Durmitor could not have been more crucial. Tito’s forces had just defeated the principal Cetnik units outside Serbia after escaping from the pursuing Germans across the river Neretva and fighting their way into eastern Hercegovina and Montenegro. They had also escaped from ceasefire talks with the Germans designed – ironically – to produce just this result without either compromising themselves or being found out by the British.

When Operation ‘Weiss’ (the Battle of the Neretva) was succeeded by ‘Schwarz’ (the Battle of the Sutjeska) – and the Germans threw everything they had into destroying the Partisan supreme command – Bill was left in no doubt about who it was that merited British support. His identification with his new comrades was forged as they sought to break out of the rugged ring of mountains and canyons within which the Germans aimed to annihilate them. It is this searing experience that constitutes the prologue and leitmotiv to both Bill’s great memoir and historical reconstruction, The Embattled Mountain, and to his life-long engagement in Yugoslav affairs.

Bill was 29 years old when he dropped into Tito’s headquarters. He had already established the foundation for a glittering if unorthodox academic career, thanks in large part his pre-war work for and with Winston Churchill. There is no doubt that Bill’s superior officers in the Special Operations Executive were mindful of his connection with Churchill in assigning him, first, to SOE’s wayward base in Cairo as a would-be specialist on Slovenia and, then, to the improvised mission to Tito known as ‘Typical’. The Prime Minister’s interest in the progress of his young friend would do SOE no harm in securing the resources it needed if were to support both Mihailovic’s Cetnik loyalists in the so-called Serb lands and the communist-led Partisans elsewhere. Bill’s reports, reinforced from September 1943 by those of Fitzroy Maclean, put paid to this notion of backing one movement for political reasons and the other for military gain. Churchill famously chose the side that was ‘killing the most Germans’.

The resulting repudiation of Mihailovic and “loss” of Yugoslavia to communism made Bill and Fitzroy many enemies: both before the Tito-Stalin split in 1948 and again after Tito’s death in 1980, when Serbs and their foreign sympathisers
sought to rehabilitate Mihailovic and to remake Yugoslavia as a Greater Serbia.

Bill had always been more prone to introspection and self-doubt about what he saw and did during the war – and what SOE did to him – than had Maclean. He suffered from the revisionists’ attacks not just because he was emotionally engaged, but also because he was well aware of the contingencies, complexities, conspiracies and cock-ups that surrounded his own portion of responsibility for what had happened. He was neither able nor interested in letting go of the past. He continued to mull over both the events in which he had taken part and their sometimes-remote origins. Unfortunately – both for him and for us – he could never completely transfer this burden to the printed page.

Yugoslavia and the war were, of course, only a part of Bill’s long, full and varied life. But they were what he and I had in common and what I was asked to talk about. I first met Bill in a London pub in 1972. (It was also the last time I ever met him in a pub.) My supervisor at Cambridge, Harry Hinsley, had arranged the meeting. Unlike other academics who had written about Yugoslavia in the Second World War or many participants in the events themselves, Bill and, later, Elisabeth Barker were tolerant of my presumption in venturing onto their turf and generous in their support: answering questions, sharing documents and reading drafts. This was the beginning of a beautiful friendship.

Many of you here today will know, of course, how much fun it was to spend time, to share a passion and to consume a bottle of champagne with Bill. Even as he grew old and frail, he never lost his gaiety, his curiosity and his sense of noblesse oblige. His loyalty was as formidable as his generosity. He was largely responsible for getting me appointed to write the official history of SOE in Yugoslavia. This is a debt I have failed to discharge. Instead, I went off to my own wholly un-heroic Yugoslav wars.

From the perspective of a friendship, however, the effect was somehow appropriate. I was now in a position to speak with some authority about an appalling war and a precarious peace, to send him the stuff I was writing for the International Crisis Group and, along with other friends here today, to try occasionally to help him sort out his files, library and myriad drafts for articles and books that would never appear. Visits to Le Castellet for this latter purpose were both trying and rewarding. Short bouts of supposed ‘work’ in the late mornings and late afternoons were interrupted by far longer periods over drinks and meals that he and Pussy touched less and less, but during which he talked with undiminished relish – at least when Pussy was not present to keep him from focussing exclusively on Yugoslav matters.

I can still hear him now, expressing regrets, waxing indignant, asking penetrating questions and speculating conspiratorially, but often also concluding ‘It doesn’t matter; it’s not important’. Well, it was important – both to him and those of us who loved him.

I will speak on Bill Deakin in the early days of the College and my later relations to him. When I came to the College in 1952, two years after its foundation we were a small group of less than thirty students and a few fellows. Most of us, if we were not married were living in the Victorian building of an Anglican nunnery, the first site of the College and still its centre. It also housed the library, the hall, the buttery, the kitchen, the senior and junior common room and the seminar room. We were a very heterogeneous group. Young English students, having just finished their BA, a strong group of French students preparing for the aggregation, students from various other countries with a doctorate and a group of Americans having served in the army in the war as officers, being married and having one or two children. Most studied history or political science, some literature but at least five were physicists, being engaged with Hans Halban, a senior scientist and one of the first fellows of the College, on research in nuclear physics.

It was Bill, who translated the wish of the founder Monsieur Besse to establish an international institution of higher education into the reality of the College. He persuaded Monsieur Besse to set up St Antony’s as a graduate college and he shaped the profile of the College. He made it into a truly international institution, doing research and graduate teaching in areas outside the English speaking world. He also made us a small international community, integrating the victors and the losers of the war, former majors and young students, Israelis and Arabs, into a close group, many of us becoming friends for life. Bill and his wife Pussy, whom we all loved for her lively temperament, her charm and her warmth, took a keen interest in every student, his life, his interest, his views of the world and not only his academic work. The same was true of Madame Besse, the wife of the Founder, who came regularly to the College and spoke to each of us.

Bill was to us, not only because of his great achievements in the war in Yugoslavia, his close relations to Tito, Churchill and Macmillan, a very impressive figure. He was the centre of College life. He was an authority but never authoritarian and open to all of us. I remember, when after High Table with plenty of Yugoslav wine we were dancing kraskovik in the buttery, he asked Fred in the Senior Common Room what was going on. Fred, an institution in the College in those days, answered with a stony face: “The gentlemen are celebrating Friday night”. I am sure Bill would have loved to have joined us.

Bill had a strong sense of the role of the College in the world. I remember that when I entered his study at the first reunion in the autumn of 1956, on the wall of his room there was a large map of the world, with a needle stuck into each place where one of the former students living.

I remained in close contact with Bill and Pussy after I had left the College, not only because I returned several times for research, as a Visiting Professor or just for meetings and conferences. He stayed with my wife and I in Münster and
Munich, speaking to my students and greatly impressing them with his experience, his sharp intellect and his international frame of mind. I shared his vivid memories of his year of teaching in the middle of the thirties in a boarding school in a small place in southern Bavaria which we visited.

My wife and I also stayed for a week in his house in Le Castellet, from where we were driving to the famous sights in the Provence and visiting Madame Besse in her beautiful residence not far away. I then could bring him an unusual gift. He had written to me that burglars who had broken into his house had stolen among other things, the Große Verdienstkreuz, a high order of merit from the German Federal Government, which he had received, as he told me, as only the second Englishman. I was astonished that without any kind of certificate, I could buy such a decoration in a shop.

I often wondered, whether it was a good decision that he went from the hectic activities as founding Warden of St Antony’s, having famous visitors from all over the world and travelling himself to numerous places to acquire financial support for the extension of the College, to the seclusion of a small French village to write books, far away from any public library and intellectual life.

He loved to be back in the College or in London and to meet former students. The College remained in his bones and he surely loved it when his bust was unveiled in this hall with an unforgettable speech of Harold Macmillan. We as former students then thought and still think that he is looking much too stern in this bust and that his sense of humour, his humanity and his curiosity about men did not find expression in it.

Bill will remain forever part of the spirit of this College and whoever, like me, who had the privilege of having been here in the time of his wardenship has I think the feeling that she or he had entered into the inheritance of a place which will remain a part of her or him for their whole life.

Professor Chushichi Tsuzuki (student 1955-8, Research Fellow 1963-4, Visiting Fellow 1981-2)

Dear Bill, perhaps I should say Deakin-san, I came to Oxford to say good-bye to you for the last time.

It was exactly fifty years ago that I came for an interview for a college scholarship. It was a kindly interview that took place in the College Hall with you sitting in the middle flanked by James Joll, Geoffrey Hudson, David Footman and several other august members of the College Governing Body. The atmosphere could be described as generous and charitable. So I was to have the honour of being the first Japanese student of this college. St Antony’s was a small college; we knew each other like in a family with you acting as our kind papa and Pussy as our stern mother complaining merrily that Antonians were producing more babies than these. Perhaps you remember some of the lively Antonians in my time, such as Major
Jeroham Cohen, who looked more like an Arab than an Israeli and who treasured his memories of the by-gone days when along with Nasser of Egypt he fought against British Imperialism in the Middle East, and Wolfgang Leonhard, who appeared more interested in College balls than the socialist revolution whose child he claimed he was.

I was a student of British labour history. So your connections with Japan and Japanese studies were mainly through Richard Storry, and through your joint work with him, the *Life of Richard Sorge*. When I and my family visited you and Pussy at Le Castellet during the Easter holiday of 1982, the year of the Falkland War, you took me to your study overlooking the valley and the mountain of Var and showed me your recent study of a Comintern agent in China in the 1930s, Noulens by name, and his arrest by the Shanghai police, known as the Noulens Affair, a precursor of the Sorge affair. I shall never forget our visit to Toulon and our stroll near the harbour on this occasion and your casual reference to the French naval ships that were scuttled there when France fell in the last European war.

When I (again with my family) visited you at Le Castellet in the summer 1998; Pussy, though bed-ridden, was able to tell us bits of local history during the second world war. I seemed to keep coming back to Le Castellet. Four years later when I and my wife were with you, you were already not very mobile; we had dinner outside in the garden attached to the house. Upon my telling you our Japanese project of translating *The Embattled Mountain* and what hard-going it was, you said, ‘That is a bad book’. But the people described in that book, including yourself the author, embodied the spirit of the twentieth century, tremendous courage and tremendous humanity. Then a year later, in July 2003, when I saw you in London quite by accident, you looked very well and even cheerful, telling me that you would move to Rome. I expected to hear from you in Rome or hear about you settling in Rome. Then I heard from Polly Friedhoff that you had a fall in your house at Le Castellet but seemed all right. That was December last year, a month before I received the sad news.

I learned from you what history is and what the twentieth century, that heroic century, was and is. This century lives on in yourself and you will be remembered with gratitude by all who study the history of humanity. I am one such student of yours, and I thank you with all my heart.

Kind remembrance to Pussy. Sayonara, Deakin-san.

Professor Jean-Claude Vatin (student 1957-60, Associate Fellow 1994-2000, SCR Member 2000-) read the following tribute from French Antonians - Serge Cottereau, Pierre Fontaney, Jean-Marie Le Breton, André Raymond.

La mort de Sir William Deakin, le 22 janvier 2005 au Castellet dans le Var où il venait depuis près de cinquante ans, n’a pas reçu en France l’écho que l’on pouvait attendre. Bill Deakin n’a pas seulement été proche de la France: il a été un inlassable
artisan de l’amitié entre le peuple anglais et le peuple français. Il a toujours conçu l’avenir de l’Angleterre en relation étroite avec la France.

Lorsque nous avons rencontré Bill Deakin en 1950 et qu’il nous a ouvert la porte du St Antony’s College qui venait d’être créé à Oxford, il était encore tout auréolé du succès de ses missions en Yougoslavie. Ce n’est pas pour rien que le gouvernement britannique en avait fait, à trente cinq ans, un colonel des services spéciaux qui, parachuté dans les Balkans, sut prendre la mesure des forces en présence et confirma les choix du Royaume-Uni en faveur de Tito. Bill Deakin restait toujours discret sur cette période et sur ses missions audacieuses. Farouche opposant au marxisme-léninisme, ses choix étaient militaires et politiques et non idéologiques.


Mais la grande affaire de cette période fut le College. Antonin Besse, homme d’affaires français d’Aden, contemporain et parfois rival d’Henri de Monfreid, qui avait eu souvent à travailler avec des Oxfordmen, avait voulu que des jeunes français puissent bénéficier d’études à Oxford. Il avait fondé le College par des dons très généreux. C’est Bill Deakin qui en a fait ce qu’il est devenu, un des colleges les plus éminents pour les études supérieures et la recherche avec une spécialité alors audacieuse pour les affaires européennes. À noter que le College est celui de Saint Antony’s (et non Anthony), référence étant faite ainsi au saint patron de Besse, Antonin.

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une vie à la fois passionnante et discrete, anglaise mais aussi française. Tout cela est l’oeuvre de Deakin qui a orienté le College vers les pistes sur lesquelles ses membres actuels travaillent avec ardeur aujourd’hui.

Deakin avait eu la main heureuse. À Paris, il rencontrait nombre de personnalités comme Pierre Renouvin, Chapsal, François Bédarida …. C’est cependant avec Charles-André Julien que le lien a été le plus fort. Le grand historien, auquel les signataires de cette note doivent beaucoup, fut fait Docteur Honoris Causa de l’Université d’Oxford grâce au parrainage de Deakin.


Oui, cher Bill, beaucoup de ce que nous avons fait par la suite, nous l’avons réussi grâce à vous. Grâce à vous se sont noués des liens entre nos deux pays, des liens indissolubles.

Mr George Gomori (student 1957-63)

After the Soviet suppression of the Hungarian revolution in November 1956 I found myself in Vienna. It was then that I first met Sir William Deakin, for me always just Bill Deakin. He was in the delegation of Oxford dons who arrived in the Austrian capital to handpick some of the Hungarian refugee students for further studies in Oxford. I don’t know whether the initial idea to meet us had been his, or the excellent linguist Max Hayward’s (as Fellow of St Antony’s, he was also one of the official or unofficial delegates there) but it was my privilege to be included in the very first group of Hungarian students to reach Oxford in the last days of November. There were 35 of us in the first group some people leaving after the compulsory language course and other ones arriving; in all about twenty-five Hungarians were able to start their studies in Oxford colleges in the academic year 1957-8. Max Hayward chose me for St Antony’s probably because I was the only one who spoke both passable English and three other East European languages (my native Hungarian, and also Polish and Russian) and because I specialized in literature rather than history or economics. It was in May 1957 that I moved into the College staying there until the end of 1959, returning in 1961 and completing my thesis in 1962. In other words, I had quite a few years to get to know and appreciate our Warden.

Bill Deakin was a charming, informal person, in his mid-forties in 1956, but looking younger than his age- it took me some time to realize that it was he and not Dr Footman, then the most senior member, who was ‘the boss’ in St Antony’s. Bill was full of goodwill towards the young Hungarian arrivals and to me, the first
Hungarian member of the College, he extended special hospitality, together with his lovely wife, the Romanian-born Pussy regularly inviting me to drinks to the Master’s Lodge. Some of their parties were quite memorable with the best Oxford raconteurs taking part - I particularly remember Sir Isaiah Berlin and Sir Maurice Bowra who between the two could talk all evening without interruption. Pussy Deakin sympathised with my fate: being in a strange country without any family, and tried to act as a Loving Auntie or Fairy Godmother. As for the Warden, I was impressed by his wartime exploits and was quite excited when some years later he published *The Embattled Mountain*, a fascinating account even for people not particularly interested in modern history or politics.

As for me, I also had a keen interest in politics (having been involved in the Hungarian revolution in more ways than one) and truly enjoyed the wealth of printed information on Fascism and Communism stored in the College library. Speaking of politics, those who knew our first Warden, will remember his great sense of humour and his predilection to make caustic remarks at the expense of well-known politicians. I myself witnessed once such a scene. Hugh Gaitskell visited the College one day in 1957 or 58 and in the room behind the old Dining Hall gave a reasonable enough account of Labour policies. Unfortunately before he could finish, Bill Deakin and James Joll arrived on the scene, having imbibed a few drinks, no doubt, and started to heckle poor Gaitskell mercilessly. At the same time, while conservative in matters British, Deakin was much more of a broad-minded cosmopolitan liberal in European politics; while the Soviets and their allies knew perfectly well that St Antony’s was a kind of think-tank of the British Foreign Office they still wanted to maintain contacts and I remember many a Marxist visitor in the College - cheerful ex-Leninist scholars like Wolfgang Leonhard, flexible post-Stalinists like the Polish philosopher Adam Schaff and ex-Titoists such as Vlado Dedijer. Those were the heydays of the Cold War and I must say, I enjoyed being in a college which could make mincemeat of Communist propaganda and analyse Soviet claims which usually turned out to be spurious.

This is a little laudatio for Sir William Deakin, the Warden and scholar, but I would like to end with an anecdote which goes back to 1962. In that year I was still a Research Student of the College and an intrepid traveller. In spite of possessing only a blue (Stateless) passport issued by the Home Office, I wanted to visit Yugoslavia. Though I had received a letter of official invitation from the Secretary of the Yugoslav Writers Association, Ivan Lalic, my application for a visa was permanently delayed - it was not refused, just forgotten. I could not understand the situation but four years later in 1966 when I *did* make it to Yugoslavia, the first person (a Hungarian writer) whom I met in Novi Sad explained what had transpired in 1962. No one was able to make a decision as to whether to let me into Yugoslavia or not, the authorities were helpless, my application went higher and higher in the end reaching Rankovic, the Minister of Interior. According to my informant when old partisan Rankovic looked at it and read out my address: “St Antony’s College,
Oxford?” he exclaimed: “That’s Bill Deakin! This student must also be a spy - visa not granted”. It seems that my Warden had a great reputation is some parts of the world.

A Tribute from the Israeli Antonians - **Baruch Knei-Paz**

St Antony’s College remembers today its founding Warden, the person who more than any other determined both the unique international character and the very special intellectual atmosphere that have prevailed at the College since its inception. Those of us who had the good fortune to spend time at the College during its early days can hardly distinguish our memories of those days from our memories of Bill Deakin himself: he seemed to be the embodiment of the temperament that characterized St Antony’s, one of intellectual intensity, esprit de corps and sheer good fun. It was a formative experience to be there at the time.

For Israeli Antonians the death of Bill also brings to mind the intimate social and academic connection that he personally was instrumental in establishing, almost from the very beginning, between the College and Israeli scholars. One of the very first Israelis to be associated with St Antony’s, in the 1950’s, was Yigal Allon, later to become an important political figure in Israel and the country’s Foreign Minister. Deakin and Allon were to become close personal friends, partly because both were non-professional soldiers who had nevertheless made distinguished military contributions to their respective countries, and partly because both were so similar in outlook and moral sensibility. Throughout his tenure as Warden, Bill encouraged and cultivated academic ties with Israeli scholars whose interests paralleled those that he had fostered at the regional centres around which the College came to be academically organized. Little wonder that in the course of time St Antony’s became widely known and respected in Israel and much in demand amongst Israeli scholars seeking the intellectual stimulation that Britain, and Oxford in particular, could so famously provide. The later inauguration of annual St Antony’s Visiting Fellowships for both senior and junior Israeli visitors further consolidated the relationship that Bill had been so eager to perpetuate. Nearly thirty years ago Bill and his wife Pussy paid a visit to Israel and Yigal Allon, then Foreign Minister, held a reception for them in his official residence. There was a huge turnout and a tremendous outpouring of friendship and admiration and we still remember how vividly moving it was for both Bill and Pussy and for us as well.

Bill Deakin was a distinguished historian, a courageous soldier in the service of his country during World War II, and a visionary academic administrator to which the flourishing fortune of St Antony’s so amply attests. But he was also endowed with great personal charm and affinity; he cared deeply about others and was intensely loyal to friends and colleagues. Like everywhere else, we in Israel remember him with great respect and admiration and above all with deep affection.
The proximity of the deaths of Bill Deakin and Harry Willetts, only three months apart, has triggered the memory of an episode involving the three of us. Whatever the similarities and differences in their personalities, for Oxford dons they were both uncharacteristically discreet, even tight-lipped. The Governing Body, which for most of the 1960s comprised only a dozen or so Fellows, was much more watertight than it became, and Junior Research Fellows, such as myself, were unlikely to learn much about how Bill ran the College, or his relations with the University. I vaguely recall a moment of excitement, involving Isaiah Berlin and the Ford Foundation, but neither Harry Willetts, who was then the Director of the Russian Centre jointly with Max Hayward, nor Bill considered it necessary to enlighten those of us who were ‘beyond the pale’. Bill’s management style would not be described today as transparent: the ‘privileged’ conversation was his method of choice, and the few occasions on which I had been so privileged tended to be rather formal. I once shared a table with Bill in the refreshment car of the 10.15 to Paddington. Over his two double brandies and my cup of coffee the time passed quickly as he regaled me with anecdotes about the war in the Balkans, or we discussed the latest news from the Kremlin. But I learned nothing about College business, certainly no gossip, and I wouldn’t claim that this brief encounter produced anything more than a warm feeling of collegial congeniality.

Then, in 1968, to my surprise and pleasure, I was invited to become the third member of an authorial trio, with Bill and Harry Willetts, to put together a big illustrated history of World Communism. The idea was that Harry and I would write most of the text, with a long chapter from Bill; a generous budget would enable me to collect the photographs – as many as 250 – and I would also perform as managing editor to keep us all on track, though Bill of course would be the presiding genius. But then almost immediately, the ink on our contracts barely dry (but our generous advances safely banked), Bill retired as Warden and moved to France. I started collecting the photographs – first in Paris, then in Holland and finally in the USA – and Harry and I sketched out some chapters, sending copies of everything to Bill in Le Castellet. He made encouraging noises, but reported nothing of his own progress. Clearly, the project was losing momentum. Then in late summer 1969 he appeared in Oxford and suggested Harry and I come to Le Castellet, where ‘in a few days we’ll crack the whole thing’.

Harry had to delay a day, and I went on alone. Bill met me at Marseilles airport and drove us up to Le Castellet at high speed, tut-tutting as we passed the smoking fragments of a car that had just catapulted itself over the metal divider into the oncoming traffic. Pussy and Bill at home were wonderful hosts and good company. A TV set loomed too large for their small sitting room, but anyway they expressed distaste for French TV, and the first evening was spent in deep conversation about our private lives, and also about her work during the war in Cairo. I
had not thought such a conversation possible.

Next morning, Pussy took me for a walk and explained that she was leaving to stay with Hilda Besse in Le Lavandou for a couple of days to let us get on with the book uninterrupted. As tactfully as that straight-talking lady knew how, she told me, among other things, that our book meant a lot to Bill, that we must avoid distractions and make the most of the little time we would have together. After she had left, and with her strictures in mind, I imagined we would get straight down to work, but Bill had another idea. It was already noon and he was keen to take me to a restaurant on the coast where ‘you’ve got to try the bouillabaisse’. It was October and out of season and the enormous glassed-in restaurant was completely empty. The bouillabaisse ordered, a bottle of Muscadet was brought to keep us busy till the food was ready. Then, a violinist and a pretty girl singer in Balkan costume came over to our table – still the only one in use – and began playing Gypsy songs. Bill was ecstatic and as the first song ended he asked the girl where they were from. Côte d’Ivoire had been their last gig, but they were originally from Romania. At this news, Bill uttered something evidently amusing in their language, pulled out his wallet and pushed a very large tip into the girl’s hand. I had heard of his generosity and this was a small sample of it. The food was excellent and the wine a good choice, except that as soon as the first bottle was finished Bill ordered another. My own limit, especially at lunch, had long been passed by the third, if not the second, glass, and I ought to have discouraged him, as Pussy had strongly urged me to. But discourage Bill? It was about 5 p.m. when we got back to Le Castellet and crashed for a nap in our rooms.

I was woken up by a persistent ringing noise which I groggily realised was the phone. It was about 7 p.m. as I stumbled downstairs and knocked on Bill’s door. When he didn’t respond I poked my head in, just in time to see him sit bolt upright, wide awake – ever the soldier. Harry Willetts was calling to say he’d arrived and was taking a taxi from the airport. He arrived shortly after. Warm greetings over, Bill suggested we leave any talk about the book until next morning, as he very much wanted to take us for dinner in a ‘simple, but excellent’ pizzeria that had just opened in the village. With bouillabaisse and Muscadet still reminding me of lunch, pizza eaten right in front of a very hot open oven seemed like a particularly tough test in what looked like becoming a culinary obstacle course. Especially as the meal couldn’t possibly be eaten without the ‘honest little local red’ that Bill favoured, two bottles again being the required minimum. We didn’t exactly sing drunken songs on the way home, but the three of us tottered down the village street, Bill supported between the two Harrys, into the house and half-way up the stairs, before Bill insisted he was fine and could get to bed without our help. ‘Meet downstairs for breakfast at 9!’ How on earth would we manage to get up, let alone do any work in the morning? *Forgive me, Pussy*, I thought.

Green of gill and feeling fragile, next morning Harry and I tiptoed downstairs, trying not to wake Bill, only to find him already down there, dressed, shaved,
‘sober on parade’, and eager for us to take our coffee into the study where ‘we must get on’. I had my briefcase with all the material so far collected, and was beginning to dig it out when Bill said, ‘Before we start, I should phone this marvelous little restaurant I want take you for lunch. They do fantastic wild boar. It’s only about 7 miles from here, in the woods.’ With lunch secured, it was at last time for work. It actually took very little time to finalise the contents, especially as Bill insisted he would cover the whole of European Communism during the war, a fine piece of analysis, as it turned out, given his intimate knowledge and personal experience of the Balkans. Since Harry and I had more or less already sketched out our own areas of interest, covering the rest of the Communist world, only the pictures were left to be discussed. By the end of the morning, it looked as though there was nothing more we could do, not before lunch, at least.

Before setting off for the wild boar, however, Bill wanted to take us on a short tour of the charming little village that was Le Castellet in 1969. This entailed dropping into his favourite bar – possibly the only one – for un petit verre and introducing us to the locals, red-faced philosophers to a man. The drive through the woods was as exhilarating as expected, and the little stone-built restaurant was virtually empty. The wild boar was well worth the detour, as were the tiny purple artichokes, violets de Provence, eaten raw with vinaigrette. Wherever and whatever else we ate – and drank – during the next day and a half before Pussy returned, I cannot retrieve from my memory. What I clearly recall is that we three authors – three authors, how could we not have foreseen the difficulties? – felt we had done a good job and that the whole project would henceforth move effortlessly forward to a successful conclusion.

Then, during the first lunch with Pussy back in charge, Bill had a ‘turn’, acute indigestion, I think, and had to lie down. We were reminded that he had taken early retirement only a year earlier for health reasons. Had he overdone it, entertaining us, eating and above all drinking rather to excess? The fact that he lived, and lived well, for another 36 years suggests a firm ‘No!’ Still, I wince at the memory of Pussy’s glare.

Harry and I left for home eventually and resumed our busy Oxford lives. More chapters were drafted, copies sent off to Bill, but nothing came back from him. Time passed, or rather time flew. 1974 came, and with it, out of the blue a letter from the publisher. Up to then, our relationship with George Weidenfeld, beginning in 1968 with lunch at the Ritz – that book is forever associated in my mind with lavish entertainment – had been most cordial, Bill being a personal friend of his, and all. Now it was a faceless executive who tersely pointed out that the book was long overdue – only three years, as I recall. They were terminating the contract, and would we return all monies forthwith. As unofficial anchor-man, I remonstrated that the book was practically written, admittedly only in draft, the photographs were collected, and we were expecting Sir William’s chapter to arrive at any moment. We notified Bill and a few days later another letter came from the publisher,
asking us to send all our notes and drafts, along with the photographs. We thought this odd, but assumed it was their way of testing our good faith, and sent them everything we had done. Imagine our shock when, having heard nothing from them, a few months later we received copies of the finished book. It had a decent jacket and a perfectly accurate blurb, but no introduction, index or bibliography, and to my dismay only 22 instead of 250 photographs. We had seen no proofs, nor been given any say in the choice of illustrations, but at least it was no longer titled an *Illustrated* History. One puzzled reviewer commented that there seemed to have been a ‘bizarre editorial lapse’. (On a trip to Helsinki the following year, I was cheered to note that the book was doing very well in Finland.)

We had no idea how Bill felt about the outcome, as the subject of the book was never raised again. Harry and I frequently reminisced about our visit to Le Castellet. For us, it had been hilarious, fascinating, productive, and we had seen what it was that had drawn Bill away from Oxford on the last day of each term, not returning until the beginning of the next. Some of his friends had remarked that in retiring at the age of only 55 to the South of France he would lose the dynamism that was his key feature and that was energised by the College and his London contacts. But when I recall the colour and vitality of his domestic life in Le Castellet, the scented garden, the elegant house built into the village wall, the view from his study down into the valley far below, the hospitality, the climate, and, not least, the good health he enjoyed for most of the remaining thirty-seven years of his life, it looks like a pretty good choice. And, anyway, he did inspire and contribute to the only worthwhile *History of World Communism* I am aware of.

**Professor Anthony Nicholls** (student 1959-60, Research Fellow 1961-8, Governing Body Fellow 1968-2001, Emeritus Fellow 2001-)

I joined St Antony’s as a graduate student in January 1959 having migrated from an undergraduate College. I had not then met the Warden, nor did I expect to, since in those days the social gap between a student and a Head of House was rather a large one. But shortly after arriving in St Antony’s I became aware of a relatively young and friendly-looking man, who sometimes held a door open for me as I traversed the old Convent building in search of the library. It was with some concern that I then learned from colleagues that this gentleman was indeed Warden Deakin. Shortly thereafter I was invited to his lodgings in 70 Woodstock Road, and enjoyed a thoroughly relaxed and helpful discussion with him about my academic interests and future prospects. Bill had the gift of making those with whom he was talking not only feel that he was genuinely interested in their views, but that they should raise their own expectations in line with his infectious optimism. From then on, although I did not trouble the Warden very often, I didn’t hesitate to consult him about matters relating to my own future, and I always received constructive advice. My experience was shared by most of my contemporaries. In that respect Bill’s personal influence on us was powerful, and it contributed to our
sense of community, which was one of the College’s most attractive features.

In 1961, I had the good fortune to be elected a to Research Fellowship and thereafter remained as a member of the College community until my retirement some three years ago. I was therefore a very junior colleague of Bill’s during the last eight years of his period as Warden. My chief recollection of him is one of concentrated determination to overcome the financial difficulties that the College faced in the 1960s. The generous and far-sighted endowment by M. Besse had launched the College in fine style. However, it had soon become clear that to develop and sustain an international college devoted to studying the problems of peace and security in the Twentieth Century would require a continuous financial effort. In those days the university was not effectively geared to the problems of fund-raising. Bill had to strike out on his own into what was for him uncharted and not very friendly territory. He approached that enterprise with typical courage. I witnessed some of his efforts at first hand. Bill had always been interested in creating a link with Germany, especially since the Rhodes Scholarships for Germans had not been restored after the war. After some false starts, his attention was drawn to the establishment in Hanover of a new academic foundation resulting from the privatisation of the Volkswagen concern. I was later told a story that when, at the first meeting of the Volkswagen Foundation’s governing body, the officials were considering to what purpose they should put their considerable endowment, they received a message that there was an Oxford historian waiting in their ante-room with a proposal to help them out of their difficulties. It was of course Bill Deakin. Whether or not this anecdote was entirely accurate, it was certainly true that Bill was able to persuade the Foundation to grant St Antony’s what in today’s values would have been a seven figure sum to establish a programme of visiting professorships, post-doctoral research fellowships for British scholars working on German topics and scholarships for German students. In order to organise the selection procedure for this programme Bill set up a very grand Committee. It included Hermann Abs, a director of the Deutsche Bank and a legendary figure in recent German history, two former British Ambassadors, one of whom later became a Duke, and the senior Professor of Politics at the University of Bonn who allowed us to use his seminar as a meeting place. I travelled with Bill to the first selection meeting, and was somewhat staggered to be lodged in the splendid Hotel Königshof with the Rhine lapping under its windows. This was an example of Bill’s negotiating methods; he never wanted to appear other than affluent when meeting potential donors. He was indeed able to reassure foreign foundations that St Antony’s, of which few of them had then heard, was a fully integrated College in Oxford University and a lively new institution that that was going places. The Volkswagen scheme was, of course, only one of the many projects for which Bill obtained funding, and for which he scoured North and South America as well as Europe. When my wife was writing the College history in the 1990s I had the privilege of assisting her research in the archives of the Ford Foundation in
New York. We were both immensely impressed by the determination with which Bill had stuck to his task of obtaining a major endowment from Ford which would put the college on a sound footing for the next few decades. He did this despite feeling that he was thereby neglecting his scholarly work as an historian, and when the Ford financing was finally agreed he felt he should relinquish his administrative burdens and devote himself to writing. Yet during his Wardenship he had already researched and written his *magnum opus*, *The Brutal Friendship*, an analysis of the relationship between Hitler and Mussolini, which has stood the test of time as an outstanding work of scholarship. He also co-authored, with Richard Storry, a fascinating account of the life of the German Soviet spy, Richard Sorge, based on German and Japanese documents.

Bill was a man who never fudged or prevaricated about difficult issues. We always knew where we stood with him. His dedication to the College was quite simply heroic, and St Antony’s could not have grown and developed in the way it has done without his pioneering work. I feel privileged to have known him.

**Lord Dahrendorf** (Supernumerary Fellow 1975-7, Warden 1987-97, Honorary Fellow 1997- )

Setting up St Antony’s College was not easy. The generosity of the donor, Antonin Besse, was easily matched by the greed of the University. (Some things never change!) The wishes of the donor ended up in a maze of ideas concerning the purposes and character of the new college. St Antony’s was fortunate that the great Maurice Bowra coaxed one of the most brilliant Fellows of his College, Wadham, the historian William Deakin, into the position of first Warden. Bill Deakin had just the right mixture of local knowledge, global interests and personal authority as well as adventurousness and persistence for the job.

Deakin was of course already much more than a history tutor. He had helped Winston Churchill – the author and the political leader – first in one then in the other capacity. Providing the link to the multiple rebel Tito in Yugoslavia was perhaps Deakin’s most important achievement in matters of state.

After the war, like others of his ilk the 35-year-old did not find the return to being a mere don easy. Indeed to some extent he recreated the experience of the war at St Antony’s. The stories I heard have led me to see the early years of St Antony’s as the “campfire years”. Fellows and students spent long nights talking and drinking slibowitz (or other kinds of firewater) and talking yet more. Deakin surrounded himself with old friends, or at any rate pals. For those with a sense of history the names of early College members make several bells ring: Serge Cottereau, Jean-Marie Le Breton, Carl Rosberg, Hans Halban, David Footman and others.

Two things occur to one as one ponders the early College which Bill Deakin assembled. One is the great taboo (which I never found shocking at all because it is so patently absurd). I thought it exceedingly funny when Oxford sightseeing
coaches slowed down along the College wall on the Woodstock Road and pointed to the mysterious ex-convent beyond as a “spy college”. Yes, that is exactly how one imagines – imagines what? A place to educate spies? Insofar as there is any truth to the myth at all it is of course that Deakin and his early “club” shared experience in wartime “special operations”; some work involved in Intelligence as it is appropriately called in English.

Such wartime Intelligence faded away over the years, and with it, unfortunately, another feature of the early College, the French connection. Bill Deakin liked France, and it was not only the country’s at the time more benevolent tax laws which made him spend much of his later life there. The French founder and his family left an indelible mark on St Antony’s. If there has been some decline in a French presence in recent decades, I hope this is not due to the fact that Bill’s successor as Warden was more closely linked to the Spanish-speaking world, and his successor came from Germany. In any case the world-wide interests of my successor mitigated such limitations. And all three of us, I am sure, tried to keep the French connection strong.

In due course, Bill Deakin’s attitude to the College came to be somewhat ambivalent. He was not made for normal times. He was fortunate to be able to rely on a committed and quietly effective sub-warden, James Joll, to whom St. Antony’s is deeply indebted. In Le Castellet, Bill Deakin had built for himself a strikingly beautiful if not excessively used private library. It represented his sense of history, indeed of nostalgia. Meeting him there, or indeed at Brooks’s in London, and occasionally here at St Antony’s was invariably a journey down memory lane, to the memory of an England which possibly no longer is. Perhaps remembering Bill Deakin can help us not to forget its values of rooted openness, of good-humoured compassion, of loyalty, of self-deprecating achievement, and of a pervasive sense of decency.

Closing remarks by Professor Nicholas Deakin

The Deakin family said their farewells to Bill at his graveside at Le Castellet, in France – a ceremony vividly described by the Warden in his April College Newsletter. Nevertheless, we are all – brother, sister-in-law, sons, daughter-in-law, nephews and nieces and partners, grandson and granddaughter-in-law and the wider family – delighted to be here today as the College’s guests to join the celebration.

My role is simply to act as factotum and if you catch a faint operatic echo in the term, that’s as it should be. In the style of a Radio Three announcer at their celebrated lunchtime concerts, I have to comment briefly on the choice of music (used for this celebration) and justify it by reference to Bill’s own tastes.

But that’s not an entirely straightforward task, because taken by and large the truth is that Bill didn’t really much care for music, as such. He liked it as an accompaniment to other activities: at parties, for example, or best of all for dancing – a
taste formed in his youth and honed during his Sorbonne year, 1931, in the bal-
musettes of interwar Paris. [The Italian interlude that followed at Perugia had no
equivalent musical consequences. Rather, that stay was memorable for the epi-
sode, well known in the family, when a misreading by the fascist police during an
encounter in the small hours of the place of residence recorded in his driving
licence led to Bill being ceremonially escorted back to his digs with the full para-
military honours due to a distinguished milord - “Il Conte di Middlesex” (excellent
title for an operetta!)]

Pussy, on the other hand did enjoy music for its own sake. In youth, she had
been a fair amateur pianist and in later life a devoted fans of Dinu Lipatti. Above all,
she adored opera and had a very well developed critical sense. I will never forget
her reaction one evening to a performance of Carmen at the Opera de Nice, then
under the control of the Mayor’s brother-in-law (that being his sole qualifications
for the job). At the first interval, she stormed the box office and demanded our
money back – and after a certain amount of vigorous shouting on both sides she
got it (and if you want to know what I was doing while this was going on, I had
found a particularly interesting pot plant in the foyer and was inspecting it closely
for any signs of insect life).

Now opera, as it happened – and opera of a very high standard – was available
to us in France in the early 1950s. Just as Pussy and Bill first bought their house at
Le Castellet, the Aix Festival began its distinguished post-war run, specialising in
the operas of Mozart. So on summer evenings Pussy, Michael and I used to set off
along the old N7 to Aix and the Archbishop’s Palace – the courtyard, to be exact –
a sublime spot to hear sublime music. [It was there that my brother and I heard
Teresa Berganza for the first time and instantly (and correctly) recognised in her
the Cherubino of a lifetime].

But of all Mozart’s operas Bill really only liked Don Giovanni – when that was
on the bill at Aix, he was always of the party. What appealed to him, I think, was not
so much the music as such as the Don’s personality – that easy, insinuating
manner, the unashamed sensuality, and the rakish defiance, even to the end, with
his outright refusal to express regret or repentance.

So the source of closing music for today was not after all very difficult to
establish. As to the choice of number, passing lightly over the catalogue aria there
could really only be one candidate.

It is said of Maynard Keynes that he expressed only one regret on his deathbed
– that he had not drunk enough champagne. That was not a reproach that Bill
Deakin ever needed to level against himself. [Even in the last month of his life in
the convalescent home that he loathed and vowed to leave alive (he did) he had a
bottle handy for visitors, keeping cool on the balcony outside his room.]

So here, in fond memory of Bill and two of his life long favourites, to sing the
champagne aria from Don Giovanni, is Christopher Hodges, accompanied by Derek
Hopwood at the piano. This will be followed by a glass of champagne.

**Postscript on the Deakin Legacy by Professor Anthony Nicholls**

Having read with great admiration the comments of colleagues and friends about Bill Deakin, there is one aspect of his career as Warden of St Antony’s that I feel should be highlighted. The College opened its doors in 1950, at a time when historical and political studies at Oxford were strongly Anglo-centric. The Second World War, in which Bill had served with such gallantry and success, cast a long shadow. To take a case in point, the granting of Rhodes Scholarships to German students was suspended for many years. Yet, from the beginning, St Antony’s was a College in which no barriers of nationality, race or religion were allowed to obstruct the creation of a genuinely international community of scholars. Israelis and Arabs, French and Germans, Japanese and Chinese were rapidly integrated into the College with fellow-students from Britain, the USA and the British Commonwealth. That this should be so was not as self-evident in the 1950s as it may seem now. The fact that it was possible and worked so successfully was in large measure due to Bill’s own personal commitment, backed up by Pussy Deakin and James Joll. The atmosphere of tolerance and pragmatic scholarship which characterises the College today is a debt which all of us owe to him.
The College regrets to record the deaths of the following members notified during the period covered by this Record.

Mr Abdul Azia Abdullah Al-Sarawi, Student 1963-4; Professor François Bédarida, Senior Associate Member 1967-72; Dr Milcha Dadirep, Senior Associate Member 1993; Earl Miner, Senior Associate Member 1966-67; Maria Repec, Student 1989-97 and Maureen Tayal, Student 1975-81, Senior Associate Member 1981. An obituary for Karl Rohe, former student and Visiting Fellow, who died in June will appear in the Record for 2006.

Vladimir Velebit (1907-2004) Non-stipendiary Fellow 1972-3

Vlatko Velebit was born on 19 August 1907 in Zadar, Dalmatia, and died on 29 August 2004 in Zagreb, Croatia, ten days after his 97th birthday. He was one of the great European statesmen, ambassadors, administrators and survivors of the last century, and embodied the very concept of ‘Yugoslavia’ in his Croatian birth of a Serb father and a Slovene mother, and as leader of the National Liberation delegation gaining Allied recognition for a restored Yugoslavia at the Jajce Conference of November 1943. A partisan general, he was the son of Ljubomir Velebit, General of the Royal Yugoslav Army between the Wars, and grandson of Dušan Velebit, General of the Austro-Hungarian Army, and attended school wherever his father’s duties dictated (Vienna, Trieste, Budapest, Zagreb and Niš); he used to say he was ‘born in a suitcase’. He studied law at Zagreb University and social science in Paris, where he met Tito (Josip Broz), Secretary-General of the then-illegal Communist Party of Yugoslavia. Under cover of a Zagreb practice in commercial law, he established wireless communication with the Comintern in Moscow, in danger from Croatian fascist police and later Nazi occupation. In March 1942 Tito summoned him to his headquarters at Foca in Bosnia to establish a military legal section of the Supreme Staff and subsequently to be Yugoslav Liaison Officer with the British Military Mission, headed first by Fitzroy Maclean and then by Bill Deakin. The three men formed a most effective team of profound mutual trust. Deakin has recounted the ebb and flow of events as they fought the Italian and German occupiers and their collaborators in *The Embattled Mountain* (1971), as did Velebit himself in the Inaugural Sir Fitzroy Maclean Lecture which he delivered at Glasgow University in 1996. As Deputy Foreign Minister of postwar Yugoslavia, he orchestrated the diplomatic rapprochement with the Western Powers in 1948, at the time of Tito’s rift with Stalin, in the course of which Velebit was accused of being an ‘English spy’. This calumny did not prevent him being appointed Ambassador to the key posts of Rome, London and the World Bank in
Washington and, from 1960 to 1967, Executive Secretary of the UN Economic Commission for Europe in Geneva. Under his inspired leadership, which preserved the great traditions of his predecessor, Nobel Laureate Gunnar Myrdal, those were years of renewal for the Commission in conditions of Cold War tension: it played a part in the maintenance of peace among nuclear-armed Powers through promoting multilateral trade in Europe and helping to modify absurd autarkic and totalitarian methods of management. Three years as a Director in the International Labour Office then preceded Velebit’s formal retirement from UN agencies in 1970, whereupon he was engaged by the Carnegie Foundation to work on plans for a Middle Eastern settlement. In 1971 Warden Deakin wrote to his successor, Warden Carr, suggesting that Velebit undertake some of his research in that field in St Antony’s. He duly resided for Michaelmas Term 1972, saying that it gave him special pleasure to be allotted a flat in 70 Woodstock Road, Bill Deakin’s Warden’s Lodging, where he had often previously been a guest. He published an autobiographical Secanja (Memories) in 1983, two histories, Yugoslavia in the Second World War (trans.1987) and Tajne i zamke II Svetskog Rata (Secrets and Puzzles of the Second World War) in 2001, and a study of Kosovo in East European Quarterly (1999); he bequeathed a rich mine for historians in his systematic diaries. He is the subject of Professor Jean-François Berger’s Dans l’ombre de Tito: Entretiens avec le Général Vladimir Velebit (2000).

Velebit was aristos, kalos and agathos in classical Greek, physically, morally and intellectually of the best: tall in stature, athletic, of great stamina, fearless and self-disciplined, but also a man of letters, fluent in several languages, modest and sociable.

Active almost to the end, he died peacefully surrounded by his beloved wife, Vera, and his sons, Dušan, an architect, and Vladimir, a cardiovascular surgeon. The headline of an obituary in Danas (Zagreb) encapsulates his public persona: ‘Revolutionary and diplomat’.


Sir Denis Wright, G.C.M.G. died at his home in Haddenham, Buckinghamshire, last May at the age of 94. Amongst many accolades and honours accumulated in a long diplomatic career, and an even longer second career as a scholar and writer on Iranian history, he had the distinction of being probably the most successful, longest serving and best loved British ambassador to Iran ever, and the author of two excellent studies of the relations between Persians and the English in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. He held the highest honour that the
Foreign Office had in its gift, he was the President of the British Institute of Persian Studies, the Chairman and later President of the Iran Society, and elected to honorary fellowships at two Oxford colleges. By any standards it was a life of extraordinary achievement, blessed with robust good health, remarkable energy, a quick and clear mind, and an exceptional capacity for friendship.

Brought up in Hong Kong where his father was a surveyor in the Public Works Department, he was sent home to boarding school at Brentwood at the age of ten. From there he won a place at St Edmund Hall, Oxford, and studied Modern History, graduating with a good degree in 1932. After seven years in advertising in London, a chance holiday found him in Romania at the outbreak of the Second World War. He was at once employed in the British consulate at Constanta, the busy strategically - important Black Sea port, where within a few weeks he started married life with Iona Craig, a friend from Oxford days and the constant companion of his subsequent travels and missions. Subsequent postings in Belgrade, Trabzon and Mersin had developed his interest in diplomatic work, and after the war he decided to make a career in the diplomatic service. His early jobs were all commercial, in Belgrade, Chicago, and as head of the economic relations department in the Foreign Office. It was then that he had his first important break. After the fall of Dr Mossadeq in August 1953, he was chosen for the highly sensitive task of exploring the possibilities for a rapid resumption of full diplomatic relations and a settlement of the oil crisis. His success on both counts brought him considerable credit, and introduced him to the country where he was to make his greatest contribution to British diplomacy and which in turn would dominate the later part of his professional life and all his scholarly interests. After another home posting as assistant under-secretary in charge of the three economic departments in the Foreign Office, and two and a half years as ambassador in Addis Ababa, he returned to Iran as head of mission in April 1963.

It was a propitious moment to be appointed to this increasingly important post. The White Revolution had recently been initiated, the opposition to these reforms apparently crushed in the riots of June 1963, and the prospects for economic, social and industrial development seemed promising. Apart from the annual negotiations over the price of oil and the increasingly important role of OPEC, the main problems in Anglo-Iranian relations concerned Bahrain and the Persian Gulf islands. A successful solution was found to the first by 1970, and the second was resolved a few months after his retirement in 1971. His tenure had been extended for an unprecedented eight years, recognition of the great personal respect in which he was held across the political spectrum in Tehran, as well as his shrewd political reporting. He was one of the few diplomats of this decade who been able to see beneath the persuasive Pahlavi propaganda, though quick also to recognize the positive achievements of the Land Reform and ten years of ‘remarkable advances in modernization and industrialization’.

Throughout these years he had travelled extensively throughout Iran, aban-
doning the ambassadorial Rolls Royce for his own Land Rover, reaching the highest valleys on foot, horseback or by mule, and acquiring a love of the landscape and the people that inspired the main occupation of the long years of his retirement. He wanted to understand the genesis of the ‘love-hate’ feelings of Iranians towards the British, the myth of British cleverness, and the distrust felt by so many Iranians towards his fellow-countrymen. In two very well-researched, highly acclaimed books, *The English amongst the Persians* (London, 1977) and *The Persians amongst the English* (London, 1985), he explored aspects of this relationship, first by studying the lives of the British in Persia in the Qajar period, defined as 1787-1921, and then by examining those Persian travellers, students, political refugees, diplomats, and reigning shahs who came to Britain in the same period. Both studies drew upon a wide range of unpublished material, especially private papers, and expressed complicated episodes in this relationship with admirable clarity and economy.

These academic interests and the proximity of his home at Haddenham to the Bodleian renewed his close contact with Oxford. He had been made an honorary fellow of his old college, St Edmund Hall, shortly after his retirement, and this was followed by a similar honour at St Antony’s. It was a distinction that he deeply valued; he always said there were few pleasures that Iona and he enjoyed so much as dining in College with the fellows and their guests. Through a long friendship with Elizabeth Munro, he had always taken an interest in the activities of the College and the Middle East Centre. In one of his last interviews with the Shah he had successfully supported the case for a visiting Iranian fellowship to be endowed at the College; he was a generous donor to the Centre’s library and archives, and he had given some of the gelims that adorn the dining hall. Into his early-nineties he still wrote and published on Persian history and regularly attended seminars, where he always ready with a revealing anecdote, an interesting idea, expressed with a modesty and humour that charmed all those who were privileged to know him. A mentor to several generations of students of Persian history, his home at Haddenham was a place of pilgrimage for all who loved Iran and for the many friends made in the different phases of a long and fulfilled life.

*John Gurney (SCR Member)*

**Mary Michelson Haselton** (1920-2004) Senior Associate Member 1971-2

Mary, a retired Foreign Service Officer and accomplished artist, died on 27 August 2004, at her home in Hanover, New Hampshire.

She was born in Kansas City, Missouri, on 15 May 1920, the daughter of Michael and Jeannette (MacFarlane) Michelson. In 1941, she began a career in Washington DC with the War Department. From 1953 to 1960, she was a legislative assistant to Senator Lyndon B. Johnson of Texas. Her government service culminated...
in her appointment to the Foreign Service in 1960. She served as Vice Consul in Zurich and Munich, until she married George Haselton, also a Foreign Service Officer, and under the rules then obtaining was obliged to retire, in 1964. She began a long, arduous, but ultimately successful campaign to put an end to the archaism. Rejoining the Foreign Service in 1974, she served in several State Department positions before being appointed Deputy Principal Officer and Chargé d’Affaires in Fiji.

She and George taught international relations at Simon’s Rock College in Great Barrington, Massachusetts. She spent the academic year 1971-2 at St Antony’s as a SAM, having produced glowing references from Lyndon B. Johnson, by then an ex-President of the United States, and Geoffrey Lewis, who had met her and George in America. George too was a SAM, and here they jointly taught American Studies. They were immensely popular, and Mary came back to us whenever possible. George died in Virginia Beach, Virginia, in 1995.

She had grown up in Topeka and graduated from high school there. After studying at Washburn University; the University of Texas at Austin; and the American University in Washington DC at the age of 81 she earned her ALB (Bachelor of Liberal Arts) degree cum laude from Harvard’s Extension School.

Her avocation was paining, and her award-winning works of art were shown in numerous exhibitions, including an exhibition of Texas artists in New York City. She was a finalist in the 1950 national competition “American Painting Today” of the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art.

She is survived by one brother, Calvin Michelson, of San Antonio, Texas; two sisters, Mrs Rosalie Brooks and Mrs Rosella Hupp, both of Topeka, Kansas; and a stepdaughter, Roxanne Summers, of Mattoon, Illinois.

Geoffrey Lewis (Emeritus Fellow)


A large cartoon version of Rembrandt’s ‘Anatomy Lesson’ used to hang in the Bursar’s office. Prominent among the spectators of the ‘dissection’ is a black-bearded, bespectacled young man, easily mistaken for one of the nuclear scientists who were among the earliest Junior Members. It is in fact Sergei Utechin, who died on 12 July 2004 at Menlo Park, California.

Soon after the end of the Second World War, an Oxford D.P. Student Committee was formed by Peter Wiles of New College for the purpose of bringing two promising ‘Displaced Persons’ to this country and giving them scholarships to enable them to acquire a British higher education. In 1950 the Committee spotted Sergei Utechin, a Soviet D.P. who had just completed a degree at Kiel University. The ‘sehr gut’ mark, a rare distinction for that institution, plus strong recommendations from his tutors, and negligible prospects of employment in Germany, combined to
win him a place at New College under the supervision of Professor Hugh Seton-Watson. He was able to bring his aged, blind father with him.

In his new environment, his English still very shaky, Sergei made friends with Max Hayward, in whom he found a sympathetic listener to his ideas, and Michael Glenny, who acted as a city guide in Sergei’s first weeks. With such mentors, in less than two years Sergei was fluent in English. In 1951, Max acted as his best man when he married Pat Rathbone, and in 1954 a baby son, Nicholas, (the BBC Radio producer-to-be), was born.

Sergei Vasilyevich Utechin was born in Kazan on 18 December 1921, the son of a schools inspector. He was a high-school student during the worst years of the Great Terror when his father was warned to leave Kazan before he was arrested as a ‘bourgeois deviationist’. Paradoxically, at a time when Soviet citizens were being spied on and monitored at every step, the terror actually created sufficient chaos for an alert family, like the Utechins, to find an escape hatch to less troubled waters. The family made their way to Karaganda in the Far East, a place known better for penal servitude than safe haven. By 1939 it was safe to go back to European Russia, and Sergei entered Moscow University to study history. A childhood injury to his left arm exempted him from military service and in 1941 the family was evacuated to Anapa on the Black Sea, where Sergei worked as a schoolteacher, until the Germans arrived in the summer of 1942 and he was put to work dismantling a shipyard for shipment to Germany. Transported along with the shipyard as forced labour, the family (his mother had died shortly before this) survived in concentration camp conditions until they were liberated in 1945 by the British Army. Sergei gained entry to Kiel University, where four years later he completed a degree, including a thesis on the treatment of Bolshevik revolutionaries by the tsarist authorities, which compared favourably with that which would be meted out by the Bolsheviks to their ideological enemies.

During his time in Germany, surrounded as he was by large communities of Soviet defectors, deserters and refugees, Sergei had joined the so-called ‘Solidarists’, or the National Labour Union (Natsional’nyi Trudovoy Soyuz), an actively anti-Soviet subversive organisation. Soon after arriving in Oxford, he became friendly with Zbyszek Pelczynski, and together they formed an undergraduate study group, called ‘The Free Russia Society’. When his scholarship at New College came to an end in 1952, he was encouraged by Seton-Watson and Peter Wiles to apply to St Antony’s, a different kind of ‘new’ college, and their glowing references earned him a Senior Scholarship. As a graduate student and entirely on his own initiative, and even before his arrival at the College, he had established a seminar on the study of Bolshevism and related topics to which only senior members of the University were invited. In October 1952, in his first term at the College, Sergei was granted permission to transfer this seminar to St Antony’s, and it thus became the precursor of the Russian Seminar, held every Monday in term-time and arguably the first of its kind in a British university. Admitted to
Oxford as an Advanced Student, he completed his D.Phil. dissertation at St Antony’s in 1955. It was on ‘The Rise of the Soviet Governing Class’, pioneering research on a topic that would attract growing interest, especially in the USA, during the later 1950s.

The successful run that began with his extraction from the camp in Germany hit a serious bump in March 1955. He had completed his dissertation, very much to Seton-Watson’s satisfaction, but the Social Studies Board, in its wisdom, appointed E.H. Carr and David Footman as his examiners. It could not have found two men more opposed in their views of the Soviet Union had it tried, which perhaps it did. In any event, they could not agree. A mediator was appointed and not unexpectedly proposed the compromise of a B.Litt. For Sergei this was a blow which may have made it difficult to obtain a permanent position, though he was continuously employed, either at the BBC Russian Service, or OUP, or as a Research Fellow at the College.

During that time, with Pat’s active help, Sergei produced a number of valuable studies, including Everyman’s *Concise Encyclopedia of Russia* (1961); an analysis of Lenin’s *What is to be done?*, which he and Pat translated (1963); and *Russian Political Thought* (1963).

In 1965 the family moved to Glasgow, where Sergei took up a Senior Lectureship, though his chief responsibility was as editor of *Soviet Studies*. There he remained until 1970, when he went to the USA, first to the University of Kansas and then, in 1972 to a tenured position at Pennsylvania State University. The marriage having been dissolved, Pat returned to Oxford and resumed her job as Isaiah Berlin’s personal secretary. Sergei re-married, this time to a Russian émigré who also taught at Penn State, and together they moved to California in 1982.

I first met Sergei in 1957 on the front steps of the British Museum, the introduction having been made by Leonard Schapiro, and I found him to be an extraordinarily lucid exponent of what was then still an obscure and little researched subject. He was also patient and kind. We had a leisurely lunch at the Spaghetti House in Great Russell Street and then, before he went back to work at the BBC Russian Service in Bush House, we walked around Soho for at least two hours, with Sergei doing most of the talking. Our conversation was more like a tutorial which we would continue whenever we met over the next several years. He once told me that as a young man he had vowed to shave off his beard when Russia became a free country. After his second trip to Russia in the early 1990s, when the country was at its ‘freest’, he was returning home to California through Oxford and we had lunch in College. The hair on his head had all but gone, but the beard, now snowy white, was as much in evidence as ever. Was this absent-mindedness or pre-science?

Harry Shukman (Emeritus Fellow)
Ulrich Frank Josef Eyck (1921-2004) Research Fellow 1956-58, Senior Associate Member 1972-73

Members of the College will have been saddened to learn of the death of Professor Frank Eyck, a Research Fellow at St Antony’s from 1956 to 1958 and Senior Associate Member Member from 1972-3. Ulrich Franz Josef (Frank) Eyck was born in Berlin in 1921. In 1936 he migrated to Britain, where he was educated at St Paul’s School in London. He served in the British army from 1940 to 1946 and was a member of a British control unit charged with establishing a democratic press in Germany. He read Modern History at Worcester College, Oxford, and then joined the BBC, compiling news bulletins for transmission abroad. At St Antony’s he worked on a major study of the Frankfurt Parliament in Germany, 1848-9, which was published in 1968. Meanwhile, in 1958, he had become a Lecturer in Modern European History at the University of Exeter. In 1968 he was elected to a professorship at the University of Calgary. Having already written a political biography of the Prince Consort, in 1982 he published a biography of the British diplomatic historian G. P. Gooch. Towards the end of his career he produced a study of Religion and Politics in Germany: From the Beginnings to the French Revolution. He died in 28 December 2004 at the age of eighty-three.

A. J. Nicholls (Emeritus Fellow)


Text of the Eulogy given at the funeral by Harry’s son, Sam Willetts.

Thank you for coming here today. Dad was a great believer in brevity, and I aim to be brief. In any case, if I were to try to do justice to Harry’s astonishing breadth of knowledge and experience, to his insight and his wit, we’d all be here for rather a long time.

It’s been easy for me to think of good things to say about Dad. But he didn’t expect praise, and he certainly didn’t seek praise. When acclamation did come his way, as of course it did, he was naturally pleased, but he kept very quiet about it.

Dad was strikingly modest, one might say stubbornly modest, for a man of his gifts and his attainments. The messages that Cathy, Isobel and I have received contain many superlatives. One that I think it right to share with you here comes from Alexander Solzhenitsyn’s touching message in which he calls Dad’s translations ‘incomparable’.

I don’t think it’s surprising that Dad chose to apply his creative gift to translating. The translator’s art doesn’t generally attract much glory; it could be said that the better, or the more faithful a translation, the less conspicuous the translator. That suited Dad, whose nature it was to hide his light, sometimes to the consternation of those who knew its brightness.
I think conventional ambition or careerism were simply alien to Dad. He was uneasy with formality, and much more comfortable talking to friends and colleagues over a pint than he could ever be at High Table. As it turned out, his academic career was devoted much more to teaching than to publication. If he sometimes regretted this imbalance or felt that he might have contributed more in print, he was consoled by the words of one of his favourite authors, the ‘teacher’ of the book of Ecclesiastes, who assures us that “of making many books there is no end”.

Dad was a very tender man. By that I mean not only that he was tender-hearted but also that in some ways he was vulnerable or thin-skinned. He was very easily moved, especially by other people’s courage and kindness.

He was a very funny man; perhaps the funniest man I have ever met. He tried to be funny about his own ill health, and was still doing so to the end of his conscious life. Earlier, after he’d become housebound and was finding it terribly difficult to move around, we might call up to him, “Do you want anything Dad”, and he’d often cheerfully reply, “only the horse pistol”.

Dad’s childhood was very difficult and dislocated, but instead of embittering him this seemed just to bring him closer to his beloved sister Dorothy, as well as accidentally giving rise to his lifelong passion for Wales and the Welsh language, which of all the languages he knew was probably the closest to his heart.

Dad couldn’t help laughing at pomposity and pretentiousness, and was intolerant of bullies, big or small. In some ways he was very courageous, and there were a number of times when he had to call on that courage. He volunteered for the army more or less as soon as war was declared, interrupting his undergraduate studies. His hopes of doing his bit were frustrated by a motorbike crash which nearly cost him his life and forced him to spend more than a year in hospital. The same crash damaged his left hand so badly that, as in one of the fine Hollywood clichés of the time, he feared that he’d never play the piano again. But he did, and he played it beautifully.

A little later he defied not only the Foreign Office but also (which was much more difficult) his formidable mother, in choosing to marry Halina, our mother, who was of course a Jewish Polish refugee. Those of you who knew Halina understand only too well why her early death was the single outstanding calamity in Dad’s long life.

In his last years, our Dad became less and less mobile, and physically his horizon shrank quite drastically. But that couldn’t diminish his intellectual vigour, and couldn’t stop him learning and questioning and exploring. Among the books still lying on his bedside table, as I speak, is his copy of ‘Teach Yourself Arabic’.

My sisters and I are very grateful to have had the luxury of being able to talk and laugh with Dad about practically anything, from the most important things to the most trivial. One of my last conversations with him was about the relationship
between Marge and Homer Simpson.

As a very young man, like many of his generation, Dad was powerfully attracted to the promise of socialism. In his later years he liked to describe himself as an anarchist. He also had a youthful brush with Catholicism. His oldest friend, Professor Frank Bealey, who sadly can’t be here today, tells me that dad said to him that giving up smoking had been surprisingly easy, and that giving up religion proved to be much the same. But he still admired the poetry of the Psalms.

I remember, when I was a young boy, asking Dad whether he believed in God. Of course he knew that I would be very much influenced by his reply, which came very quickly: he said “Sam, whether I believe in God or not has no bearing on whether God exists.”

I mention this because there is so much of our Dad in it: it was a bit mischievous, but at the same time considerate and completely intellectually honest; and it was true.

I could, as I said, go on. Instead I would just like to thank you all once more, on behalf of my sisters, and for myself, for being here with us today.

The more I think about it, the more I think how lucky and how privileged we are to have known this remarkable man.

He was a good friend.

Sam Willetts

Harry Willetts lectured in 18th and 19th century Russian history and was Director (with Max Hayward until Max’s death) of the then Russian and East European Centre until 1980. Raymond Carr, as Warden, thought him the cleverest man in the College. His graduate students found him wise, original and subtle, never didactic. He gave them sound academic advice, “never taught to the examination” and remained a valued friend for those he taught. They wrote to him long after. He had a sound understanding of university politics. He was most comfortable, both in London where Dylan Thomas was once a drinking companion, and in Oxford, in a pub discussing music and ideas and even, in his later years, being a member of a quiz team; the landlady came to his funeral.

It is difficult to do justice to this complex character – a Renaissance man, a polymath, gifted teacher, a wonderful boon companion and a remarkable translator and commentator (Solzhenitsyn paid tribute to him on his death as an incomparable translator of his works). By his bed when he died was a copy of Teach Yourself Arabic. He put all his remarkable talents into teaching, translating and promoting Russian and East European studies at a time when the intellectual life of the Soviet Union and its satellites was sealed off from the rest of the world. His last work on retirement was a translation of the last volume of Solzhenitsyn’s The Red
At the same time he was working with Patricia Blake on a translation, with critical introduction and commentary, of the complete works of Isaak Babel, and working on a study of France and Russia, 1756-1856.

St Antony's gave him much. When Director of the Centre, he brought distinguished Russians and many from Eastern Europe to Oxford and the wider world. Though he never published a book, he lectured abroad, contributed chapters to a number of books and was joint editor of and contributor to *The Cambridge Encyclopaedia of Russia and the Soviet Union*, as well as work on the history of Poland. These essays and lectures, and his peerless work as a translator, were typical of Harry's combination of authority and the power to illuminate a text. While Director of the Centre he lectured in the US and in Hungary.

In 1963, at the instance of Max Hayward, Harry began to translate for Manya Harari's Harvill Press, and thus make some of the great contemporary Russian writers accessible to the world. He also translated, with equal success, books and articles in Hungarian, Georgian, Armenian, Italian and Dutch, as well as a version in Welsh of one of Solzhenitsyn's books. Sent a book in Danish to translate, and pressed to deliver, he mildly remarked that it was taking him longer to learn Danish than he had expected. The Harvill Press described him as "godlike" for his impeccable taste, his high standards and his range of scholarship and wit. This was a man who knew and understood contemporary political thinking in Russia. He once described Molotov as the most boring man he had ever met. (He was a devotee of crime novels he collected from the Press).

Violet Connolly, the distinguished Sovietologist under whom he worked in the Foreign Office (where he served from 1947-51 and, after a spell at Manchester University, again until he came to St Antony's in 1960), once praised his wisdom and qualities and regretted that he was such a perfectionist that he never published a book.

What came before his entry into first, the Foreign Service and then the academic life, and what made him both a polymath and a much beloved man? His roots, of which he was very proud, were in the Black Country and in Wales. He had a complicated childhood, much of which, however, he valued. A grammar school boy, he came to the Queen's College, Oxford in 1940 on a scholarship to read Classics. He then joined up. After a year in the Forces when he suffered a collapsed lung and months in hospital, he was invalided out. On his return to Oxford he changed to Russian and Modern Greek, gained a First and entered the Foreign Office. He moved to Manchester University in 1951 and there met his future wife Halina. In the mid-1950s he returned to the Foreign Office until he came to Oxford in 1960.

I was fortunate enough to serve with him in Moscow (1954-56). Travelling with Harry and with Alec Nove illuminated the Russian character for me. Harry could talk about bee-keeping, Pushkin, 19th century Georgian history, Marxist philoso-
phy, Party policy and icons. He lit up all conversations we had with our fellow travellers on long train journeys. Like Isaiah Berlin, he could instinctively relate to Russians and liberate them.

An intensely reserved and private man, he loved his family and especially Halina, his wife, a Polish Jewess who, with her redoubtable mother, survived the war after a long walk across the Soviet Union to Siberia, and whom he taught at Manchester. She gave his life colour and warmth. One of his graduates said “he lit up when she came into a room”. They enjoyed a close and rich intellectual and family life with their three children. Halina’s early death was a bitter blow.

In those years of family life in Church Walk (where Max also lived) and academic success, he enjoyed a special relationship with children, perhaps enhanced by his own early experience. He treated children with respect. A lover of whales, whom he saw, as like himself, large, gentle and isolated, he would gravely tell children that he had been a whale at Oxford, watered regularly in the Quad. He was at ease with children. Deeply reserved and sometimes austere, he had great integrity and, as his son has said, tenderness, though he could be a fierce critic of intellectual dishonesty. He respected confidences, whether from a College Scout or one of his pupils. He was splendid company right to the last.

He will be remembered as a wise, gentle, funny, unpractical and scholarly man of scrupulous integrity who gave a voice to Solzhenitsyn and many others, and illuminated much by his learning.

_Daphne Park (Baroness Park of Monmouth, CMG, OBE)_

**Norman Samuel Wooding** (1927-2005) Senior Associate Member 1987-2005

Norman Wooding, who died on 27 June 2005, at the age of seventy-eight, was a remarkable person and a good friend of St Antony’s College, of which he was a Senior Associate Member from 1987 until the time of his death.

During both his successful business career and in the course of a very active retirement, Norman Wooding took a special interest in Russia. It was that which led to his connection with St Antony’s. I first met Norman in 10 Downing Street on 14 December 1984 as part of a small group convened by the Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, on the eve of the first visit to Britain of Mikhail Gorbachev (who was not yet the Soviet leader). We were two of five people who had been invited to brief the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary, Sir Geoffrey Howe – Michael Kaser was another member of the group. Dr Norman Wooding, as he was then, was invited to speak about British-Soviet trade relations. I was there to speak about Gorbachev.

A native of Rugby, Norman had a distinguished career in the chemical industry. After a B.Sc. from London University, he took a Ph.D. in chemistry at Leeds and joined Courtaulds in 1944. He was Deputy Chairman of that major company from
1976 to 1987. Among his other business posts, he was a Director of Earlys of Witney from 1971 to 1984 and Chairman, 1978-83. He was non-executive Deputy Chairman of the Royal London Mutual Insurance Group, 1991-94, and a non-executive Director of British Nuclear Fuels from 1987 to 1998.

Notwithstanding these and many other business commitments, Norman Wooding – who was appointed CBE in 1986 and was knighted in 1992 – made time for an enormous amount of unpaid good works in the public interest. His first-rate intellect was combined with down-to-earth common sense and he was in great demand to serve on boards and committees. He visited Russia more than a hundred times (most of those visits were in the Soviet period when his principal interlocutor was usually the Soviet Minister for the Chemical Industry) and he had a keen interest in the former USSR and the promotion of study of it.

The Wooding Report of 1989 on Soviet and East European Studies – Norman chaired the government-sponsored committee set up to inquire into the subject – played a constructive part in helping to stem the decline in funding for research and teaching on Russia and Eastern Europe. For the remarkably long period of fifteen years – from 1988 to 2003 – Norman was Chairman of the Russo-British (formerly British-Soviet) Chamber of Commerce. He had a wide range of Russian friends who held him in high regard. His sympathy for Russia was reflected also in his role as a Patron of the BEARR Trust, a British charity which provides help, especially in the field of health and social welfare, for post-Soviet Russia and other parts of the former Soviet Union. From 1992 to 1999 Sir Norman Wooding was Chairman of the Council of the School of Slavonic and East European Studies of the University of London. He also served for ten years as a member of the Advisory Board of the British Know How Fund, set up to help promote democracy and civilised market economies in the post-Communist states.

Members of the Russian Centre at St Antony’s have special reason to remember Norman with gratitude, affection and great respect. Throughout the 1990s the Centre held Business Seminars which produced a modest income for the Centre and offered useful background insights for those in the business community venturing into the new Russia. At first these seminars were held three times a year, latterly only annually. Norman Wooding was invariably invited to provide the summing-up and on all but rare occasions when other commitments intervened, he came. His summaries were a model of conciseness and serious reflection. He was also a founder member of the fund-raising Campaign Committee of the Russian Centre and a constant source of wise counsel (as well as being a donor). Norman was a perfect bridge between the business and academic communities, for he was an insider in both and fully understood the distinctive needs, as well as the importance, of each.

Above all, Norman Wooding was a marvellous human being – a man of great warmth, personal kindness and public-spiritedness. He was a regular attender at Senior Members’ Dinners in St Antony’s and was always excellent company. Even
when he knew that he was suffering from cancer and that there was no hope of recovery, he showed immense fortitude and carried on as normal for longer than would have seemed possible. I remember a student, who had hugely enjoyed a long conversation with Norman, being shocked when I told him the sad news about Norman’s prognosis. Knowing how serious his illness was, but not knowing how short a time he had left, I was touched to receive a warm, congratulatory letter from Norman on an award I received this June. It was written just two weeks before his death. That was entirely characteristic of Norman Wooding whom we shall greatly miss and long remember.

Norman is survived by his widow, two daughters and one son. His funeral, at which the College was represented, took place on 8 July at the Church of St Mary Magdalen, Great Hampden.

Archie Brown

Anthony Verrier (1928-2005) Senior Associate Member 1968-74
Anthony Verrier worked as a journalist for numerous publications, including *The Economist, Observer, New Statesman* and the *Financial Times*: reporting events in most parts of the world, particularly the Middle East and Sudan.


This led to a number of lecturing appointments, including that of visiting Professor of Modern History at the Universities of Calgary and British Columbia. He was Killam Fellow at Calgary in 1990.

Anthony Verrier worked as a lecturer at the University of Essex for almost ten years from 1994 to 2003 running a unique MA degree course in International Peacekeeping - in close cooperation with the Colchester Garrison.

He continued to write after his retirement and described his varied career as “The study of conflict”.

Charles Verrier

Wolfgang Justin Mommsen (1930-2004) Visiting Fellow 1971-2, Senior Common Room Member 1977-85
Many of us were particularly shocked to learn of the death of Wolfgang Mommsen, who died whilst swimming in the Baltic in August 2004, at the age of 73. His death was untimely, since he was still a very powerful figure in the German historical
firmament. He was a staunch defender of the political culture created in the liberal, socially responsible society of the Federal Republic. His end was also completely unexpected, a fact which was shocking for his family and friends, but not for himself. In answering a well-known questionnaire put every week to members of the intelligentsia in the now defunct Saturday Magazine of the Frankfurter Allgemeiner Zeitung, he stated that he wanted to die suddenly, and with as little warning as possible, a wish that was indeed granted.

Fortunately, this was not the only ambition that Wolfgang achieved. His career was indeed one of colossal achievement. I am not going to list Wolfgang’s voluminous publications; they are documented in Professor John Breuilly’s admirable obituary in the December 2004 edition of the journal German History. Wolfgang Mommsen was a leading historian of the Wilhelmine Empire, of the First World War and its origins, and of global imperialism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. He was the foremost expert of his generation on Max Weber and the editor of his collected works.

He came to the College in the academic year 1971-2 and co-organised a number of fascinating seminars on German liberalism. At that time he was a Professor at the University of Düsseldorf, but he was soon to be seconded to become the Director of the German Historical Institute in London, where he remained from 1977 to 1985. Whilst there he remained in close touch with the College. He was an outstandingly successful Director. It was thanks to his initiative and dynamism that the Institute was not banished into London’s suburbia, but obtained as its Headquarters a marvellous - if initially dilapidated - building in Bloomsbury Square, within easy walking distance of the British Museum (and later the British Library) and London University. He established a very high reputation amongst British scholars working on German history, and the Institute became the focal point for historical studies of the German-speaking world in Britain.

After he returned to his chair at University of Düsseldorf his eminence as a historian was recognised by his election as chairman of the German Historians’ Association for four crucial years, from 1988 to 1992. It was important that a man of his forthright views held that position during the period of German unification. Wolfgang had always stoutly resisted attempts to draw a line under the historical investigation of the Third Reich in order supposedly to regenerate national pride. In 1990, at the Historikertag in Bochum, he took the opportunity publicly to reject the accusations being made by some on the right wing of the political spectrum that the historical profession in the Federal Republic had betrayed the national cause by neglecting to nurture national consciousness among young people. These critics saw the impending unification as an opportunity to create a mythical line of continuity between the Wilhelmine Empire, the Weimar Republic and the new, united Germany. Wolfgang sturdily rejected any such continuity. On the contrary, had it not been for the critical fashion in which West German historians had approached their immediate past, he argued, there would have been little
chance of attaining unification at all.

Wolfgang was a lively companion who communicated his enthusiasm for life and for the practice of history to those around him. He is a great loss to his profession and to his many friends.

A. J. Nicholls (Emeritus Fellow)

Klaus-Peter Hoepke (1932-2004) Volkswagen Visiting Fellow 1982

The death of Klaus-Peter Hoepke on 19 October 2004 came as a shock to those of us who knew him and appreciated his period as Visiting German Fellow in St Antony’s. Dr Hoepke spent the summer term 1982 in Oxford and was an enthusiastic participant in seminars and other College activities. A colleague of Professor Walter Bussmann, Visiting Fellow in 1975, Klaus-Peter was a widely talented man. He co-published selections from the political correspondence of Herbert von Bismarck, and his doctorate on the subject of the ‘German Right and Italian Fascism’ was translated into Italian. In St Antony’s he was researching the political career of Alfred Hugenberg, the leader of the right-wing nationalist German National People’s Party in the later stages of the Weimar Republic, about whom he had already published some articles. He had qualified himself for promotion to professorial status at the University of Karlsruhe, but before he could put his magnum opus into publishable form, he switched careers and became the Director of the University Archives. In this task he proved outstandingly successful. The University had not given high priority to its archives before he took over in 1985. By the time he retired twelve years later, he had created a collection of over two hundred metres of documentary material. This included not only the records of the University, but also private papers belonging to distinguished scholars on the University staff. He inaugurated a large photographic archive, which documented, amongst much else, the architectural history of the University.

Klaus-Peter was born in 1932 in the Berlin suburb of Oranienburg. He was educated in what became the German Democratic Republic, but during the 1950s he moved to the West and pursued postgraduate studies at the Free University of Berlin. He was fortunate in his family life. He married a fellow student from the Free University of Berlin, and they adopted two children. Apart from his family, his other private passion was cycling. I remember the care that he lavished on his impressive racing bicycle, which he kept in his room in Oxford to ensure its safety. It was all the more tragic that he should suffer a fatal heart attack whilst cycling in the Black Forest. He was a modest, cheerful man, and we shall remember him with affection. Our sympathy goes to his family.

A. J. Nicholls (Emeritus Fellow)
Masumi Ishikawa (1933-2004) Senior Associate Member 1993

Professor Ishikawa, who died on 16 July 2004, was one of Japan’s most independent-minded and respected political journalists. He was Senior Associate Member at St Antony’s in Hilary and Trinity terms 1993, being one of the pioneer occupants of the present Nissan Institute building.

He was born on 26 March 1933, and in 1957 graduated in mechanical engineering from Kyûshû Engineering University. In a sharp change of direction he became a journalist on the *Asahi Shinbun* shortly after graduating. By the 1980s he had his own regular column that was compulsory reading for the political class. On retirement from the *Asahi* in 1996 he taught successively at two universities (one in Niigata, one in Tokyo), retiring once more in 2002.

A turning point in his outlook was brought about at a press conference with Prime Minister Hayato Ikeda (once haughtily dismissed by President De Gaulle as “ce petit marchand de transisteurs”) in the early 1960s. Ikeda had recently proclaimed his plan to “double the income in ten years”. At the press conference Ishikawa forcefully suggested that any increase in income would be eaten up by inflation and tax increases. The Prime Minister responded by asking him in detail what precisely were his salary and benefits, and then going into great detail about the tax deductions and other allowances he could expect. Ishikawa, who embarrassingly couldn’t quite remember what his salary was, thereupon determined to immerse himself in detailed empirical political analysis, in particular the analysis of elections. After the lower house electoral system was changed in 1994 to a system primarily based on single-member districts, he devoted himself to the cause of proportional representation, on the grounds that first-past-the-post gave too much power to big parties and deprived electors of choice.

He conducted much penetrating research on Japan’s largest left wing party, the Japan Socialist Party (now the Social Democratic Party, a shadow of its former self), and long castigated its failure to change from a party of Marxist ideologues to a genuine proponent of social democracy. He became a leading informal adviser to Miss Takako Doi, the party’s reforming woman leader, in the late 1980s and early 1990s.


While he was at St Antony’s he became fascinated by the concept of ‘Essex Man’, and was determined to find out precisely what this implied for the conduct of British politics. I remember accompanying him when he interviewed Warden Dahrendorf on his views of contemporary politics, and ‘Essex Man’ was one of the
subjects for discussion.

Professor Ishikawa, like our present Warden, was a keen birdwatcher. Indeed, he was intrigued by animal behaviour in general, convinced that one could learn much about human behaviour from the way animals comport themselves.

J.A.A. Stockwin (Emeritus Fellow)

Gailan Mahmoud Ramiz (1934-2004) Student 1960-69

Few people spoke so eloquently of the dilemmas faced by thoughtful, patriotic Iraqis as the political scientist Gailan Ramiz, who has been killed in Baghdad, aged 71. The day after the statue of Saddam Hussein fell last year, he described his emotions on Channel 4 News. “I was in the cellar of my house when I heard the rumble of American tanks,” he said, his voice hoarse from cheering the demise of the dictator. “I screamed to my family, ‘Why didn’t the Iraqi army do it before? This should have been done by the Iraqi army.’”

Later, he became a regular commentator in the international media, explaining how Iraqis felt liberated and humiliated in equal measure, and predicting many of the mistakes their western occupiers would make.

Ramiz came from an illustrious family. His father, once an Ottoman army officer, took part in the 1920 revolt against the British, and was never favoured by the colonial authorities. None the less, he was elected to the Baghdad parliament, and inculcated in his son a sense of democracy and national pride. The young Gailan was sent to school in Egypt, becoming part of the first generation of Iraqis to be educated abroad. In 1958, he took a law degree at Princeton, before studying for an MA at Harvard and gaining his D.Phil. at Oxford in 1973.

Back in Iraq, Ramiz rose rapidly in the foreign ministry. But he refused to join the Baath party, and, despite being given the rank of ambassador, he was never posted abroad, being transferred instead to a teaching post at Baghdad University.

In 1990, when corrupt senior officials tried to steal some of his family’s land, Ramiz went to Saddam’s office to complain. He was subsequently imprisoned for six months - an experience that affected him profoundly, though he rarely mentioned it. Released after the 1990 invasion of Kuwait, he went to teach at universities in Jordan and Malaysia, where his book, Political Pressure And The Future Of The Muslim World, was published. He returned to Baghdad in 2000.

The fall of Saddam gave Ramiz the public exposure he had previously been denied. Last May, he wrote in the International Herald Tribune: “There is no greater curse for the human soul than the loss of personal freedom.” In those optimistic early days, he observed: “All Iraqis are looking forward to a free, independent and sovereign Iraq, whose democratic values and institutions would be a shining light to the Middle East.”
Visitors to the elegant, ramshackle 1930s house he shared with his young wife Nadia, and their small daughter Sarah, would find an eclectic gathering of former generals, academics and businessmen eating cakes and sweets and arguing about politics. Tall, thin and angular, a committed anglophile who favoured tweed jackets, Ramiz believed the British should understand Iraq better than the Americans because of the historical ties between the two countries.

But he grew increasingly frustrated that no one from the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) would meet him. He felt that the authority, and its American leader Paul Bremer, failed to reach out to Iraqis beyond the exiled community they brought to Baghdad with them.

Journalists, however, came to value Ramiz as an energetic, powerful and intelligent analyst. “If the Americans are true liberators, they should not mind if people tell them to go after liberation is done,” he said. He constantly stressed that Iraq’s problems were not technical but political, and that the CPA needed to open a space for greater political debate. He believed that Saddam had “demonised the Iraqi soul”, so strong leadership - on the lines of a constitutional monarachy - was necessary alongside democracy.

Ramiz watched Iraq’s descent into chaos this year with gathering despair and bitterness. “If hope is lost because of the Americans’ poor management, they will face total revolution, and Iraqis can be sophisticated revolutionaries,” he said.

In the end, Ramiz fell victim to the turmoil he had hoped his country could avoid. When a suspected chemical weapons factory was destroyed in an accidental explosion during an American raid, half his house - which happened to be next door - was also blown up. He and his family were inside. His wife and daughter, who were slightly injured in the incident, survive him.

(We are grateful for permission to use this obituary by Lindsey Hilsum which appeared in the Guardian newspaper on 10 May 2004)


(Hugh) Rorie Mackenzie was born in Australia: his father, a farmer, died when Rorie was young, but he won a scholarship to Eton. His gift for languages was very much in evidence there. He impressed his contemporaries as effortlessly brilliant, but his appearance, tall, thin and bespectacled, belied a willingness to stand up for himself and others when necessary. Physically Rorie was tougher than he looked. At King’s College, Cambridge, where again he won a Scholarship, Rorie wanted to do Persian and Russian. Rorie was something of a romantic, delighting in Russian and existentialist literature, and favouring Chopin and Rachmaninov, whom he would play with considerable skill and passion, sometimes at ear-splitting volume. His quixotic streak brought his first career, as a Russian specialist with the FCO, to an early end. Posted to Moscow Rorie fell in love with a Russian girl. This was at the height of the cold war, when workmen would arrive unannounced at Rorie’s flat
to ‘lengthen’ the legs of his dining table or to install new lighting in the ceiling. Unsurprisingly the FCO decided to send him home on the next plane. Back in England, Rorie chose to resign from the service in order to return to Moscow, marry Nellie, and bring her out. Although the marriage did not last, Rorie continued to look after her son from a previous relationship.

Rorie was never much interested in being what the world would call successful. After an interesting year working as a staff writer on an Arab journal, he began a D.Phil. at St Antony’s, Oxford in modern Iranian history. Once more external factors intervened – the revolution of 1978 meant that he was not able to consult the archives in Tehran, and the project was given up. Rorie spent the next four years as an international operator in British Telecom, working mostly at nights, which allowed him to pursue his own interests in books and music, fortified by whisky and water, by day. Then he became a translator from French, Russian and German, concentrating mainly on a large series of German guidebooks. Rorie put himself through courses in computer programming, and gained employment as a writer of financial software packages. He discovered a real aptitude once he had decided the languages of programming were just like human languages. He also pursued an interest in alternative medicine, particularly homeopathy, which he hoped to practise as a means of helping others.

Some of Rorie’s friends from school and university days rather lost touch with him later. His death on 11 February 1996 came as a surprise and shock to many. His unworldly personality was as memorable and unique as his appearance.