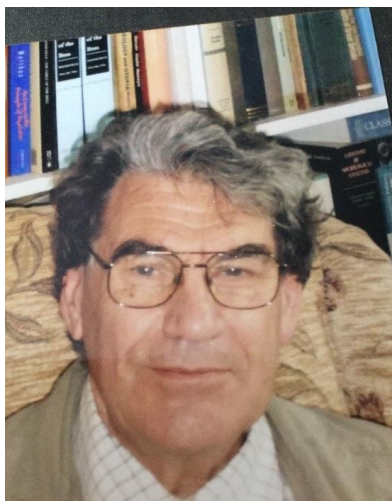


DR OWEN ARTHUR HARTLEY



Colleagues will be sorry to learn of the death, on Tuesday 1 June 2021, of Dr Owen Hartley, formerly of the School of History. The following tribute has been contributed by Emeritus Professor Geoffrey K Fry.

Though the university system was never quite the same after the professionalization of academic life that the Government of Margaret Thatcher brought about in the first half of the 1980s, there were still plenty of characters around who would have graced campus novels such as *Lucky Jim*. Despite the competition in that respect that he faced during his career, Owen Hartley, who died on 1 June 2021, had not the slightest difficulty in making his mark. By any standards, he was memorable.

Owen was born in Scunthorpe in 1943 to working class parents. He went to Brigg Grammar School, and he won an Exhibition to St Peter's College, Oxford, where he studied for a B.A. degree in Philosophy, Politics, and Economics. After securing a First in 1965, he then went to Nuffield College, Oxford to complete his D.Phil thesis on 'Housing Policy in Four Lincolnshire Towns 1919-1959,' which was awarded in 1969.

Armed with this Doctorate, Owen was promoted to the status of Lecturer in Politics in what was then called the Department of Social Studies and later the Department of Politics. He was a member of staff in the Institute for International Studies from 1994, transferring to the School of History in 1999. He retired in 2009 after 41 years' service to the University.

In the University to supervise undergraduate admissions, I first met Owen in early August 1968. Though he was not actually due to begin work as an Assistant Lecturer in Politics until the beginning of October, he was plainly eager to get started. He told me that he had just got married to the splendidly named Sheila Lamont McJannett, and he stood there in the corridor outside what was to be his room surrounded by books telling me that he wanted to talk to me about the teaching. Over lunch, his command of this literature and his judgements on it reflected a range of knowledge remarkable in somebody in his mid-twenties. It was obvious to me from the outset that Owen was a polymath. That August day a friendship was formed between Owen and myself that very importantly also came to include the wives and families that proved to be both lasting and invaluable. The reader may well conclude that this great friendship has unduly influenced this account, but Owen, predictably, wrote his own obituary, and I have drawn much from that.

For most of his time in the Department of Politics, Owen was something of an outlier on account of his commitment to the Conservative Party, and, being in love with the world of ideas, he was also a devotee of economic liberalism. He was also interestingly Eurosceptic from the outset. In his

opinion, that he was a Calvinist by religion influenced his style of teaching, combining both hope and scepticism. His models, though, were his father and his paternal grandfather both of whom had been apprentice masters, giving him a view of university teaching which was that 'it was about apprentice training, not a general education or the gathering of disciples: if the teaching task was performed well, the apprentice became a master without further reference to the master who had done the teaching.' It followed that 'he got the most satisfaction [from] those areas of university teaching closest to the master/apprentice model - B.A. dissertations and postgraduate research – and least in the showmanship of lecturing.'

It seemed to me that Owen never left Oxford emotionally and conducted himself as if he was an old style Oxford don, committed to the teaching and the related administration. Down to his retirement in 2009, in the various departments that employed him both as a Lecturer and latterly as a Teaching Fellow, he taught over 8,000 students, including over 60 postgraduates. He was the best postgraduate tutor I have ever known, and former colleagues of Owen's from the School of History have also praised the care and attention that he gave to his students. In many ways he was not just my friend and colleague, but a postgraduate tutor to me as was our friend, the late James Macdonald. The pair of them gave me an Oxford style education to go with my L.S.E. one. In so many respects Owen was a matchless university don.

Owen is survived by Sheila, their children Helen and Matthew and grandson Levi.