

Peter Earl

I was sad to hear that Geoff's current health position is now very fragile: one tends to take for granted how vibrant he has always been in one's memory. I have dug out and attached a photo I took 25 years ago of Geoff, with Joan and John Smithin and his wife at the 1996 Malvern Political Economy Conference. I hope this may be useful for the GCH website. Also attached is the Word version of the review I wrote (for the Economic Record) of two of Geoff's most recent books. I hope my thoughts below may be of some use too.

Geoff's impact within heterodox economics is much greater than is signalled by his strong citation scores on Google Scholar. He plays a major role in seeking to ensure that due credit is given to other heterodox contributors – especially to fellow Australians such as Duncan Ironmonger and Wilfred Salter – and that we try to build on their work. I can speak from recent experience of this, as these two innovators figure in my forthcoming behavioural economics magnum opus and as I've been weaving their contributions into my book I've found myself thinking 'I hope Geoff wouldn't think I've missed any opportunities with what I've done with their work here'. I was delighted to hear that a 50th anniversary edition of *Some Cambridge Controversies in the Theory of Capital* is being produced. My copy of the original version (that I purchased on 2 March 1976) was a vital source for me in my Cambridge prelims year and I've repeatedly pulled it off the shelves over the years to show to students as a sign of what their orthodox lecturers have not told them (and probably didn't know themselves) about capital and growth.

Geoff has been a great source of support, encouragement and inspiration throughout my academic career. Indeed, I think it is likely that, without support from Geoff, I might never have had my PhD candidature confirmed in Cambridge. A few years after the PhD had at last been awarded, Geoff provided me with a one-liner assessment of my *modus operandi*, telling me that I completely ignored usual the usual rules of economics as a discipline but was very self-disciplined. As well as hitting the mark completely, it was a comment that gave me a sense of self that I'd not articulated before, and it was something I then became determined to live up to. Another sign of his enduring enthusiasm for my work came years later, when my application for promotion to a chair at UQ was knocked back: Geoff was appalled and wrote to the then VC to let his feelings be known. This sort of support has been great for helping heterodox economist keep up their spirits and keep going in the face of the challenges that we face.

Geoff's sense of humour – evident in the Cambridge Controversies book with gems such as "Excuse me Professor Kaldor, but your slip is showing" – was evident when I set out to escape the gloom of Thatcherism by applying for a lectureship at the University of Tasmania. Geoff served as one of my interviewers, on behalf of the Association of Commonwealth Universities, and the interview was held in his room in Jesus College. I arrived a little late after getting caught out by changes to Cambridge's traffic system and as I neared his room the familiar voice called out across the quad 'Hurry up Earl, you'll miss seeing the prince!' He must have known that the chance to see Prince Edward, at that time in residence as a student there, was the last thing on my mind, and it was certainly a great sign to relax for the interview. Some months later, before heading off to Hobart, I visited Cambridge again

and popped into the Faculty to thank Geoff for the role he had played in me getting to that stage. When I knocked on his office door, he was in the middle of a supervision, and he said to his students, 'Peter Earl's off to work in Tasmania. When he arrives, he'll find he's the only person there without two heads!' This was a good-natured prompt regarding the interstate rivalries that I would soon see. But it was very clear he was absolutely delighted that I had opted to move to Australia rather than anywhere else.

Thanks so much, Geoff, for the impact you've had on me over the past four and a half decades and on economics in general. Best wish for your 90th birthday.

With best regards, Peter

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