

(People who have most influenced my life, by Alan Macfarlane)

Andrew Morgan, M.B.E. D.S.C. (1924-)

It is often the case that our future careers are deeply influenced by someone who inspires excitement and confidence during our earlier education. This is often an outstanding teacher. Although I had many first-rate teachers, Andrew Morgan stands out in my memory.

During my last two years at Sedbergh School it was not certain whether I would pursue English (which I loved, particularly the Romantic poets) or history. Somehow I ended up in history and I was in 'Clio' (the muse of history) during my last year.

My first essay at this level was on 'What caused the Renaissance' and I still remember my thrill when Andrew Morgan wrote in his characteristic red ink on the bottom of the page something to the effect: 'alpha minus – this is the sort of essay that wins a scholarship to Oxford'. This boosted my confidence enormously and I tried (without success I think) to earn such high praise again.

My love of history was kindled by Andrew's superb teaching. He brought the current debates at the forefront of the profession into our remote Yorkshire classroom, for instance the famous squabble over the supposed 'Rise of the Gentry'. We felt we were only a breath away from R.H.Tawney, Trevor-Roper, Lawrence Stone and other giants who, later, I would encounter more closely.

In particular, with a combination of humour, gentleness and firmness, he challenged our often deeply conservative and complacent assumptions. He made us read the *New Statesman*, almost a treasonable activity in a Boy's Public School. And in the summer, having assessed our personalities, he assigned each of us a book which he thought would correct the defects in our world view. That he chose the sensual, sybaritic *South Wind* by Norman Douglas (which I adored) for me, full of the warm south and anti-Puritanism, tells me a lot about the little, Calvinist, repressed, boy I must have been.

When Andrew celebrated his 70th birthday at a special dinner in the House of Commons, it became clear that the deep influence had reached many others, a small section of whom were present. They included the Lord Chief Justice (Tom Bingham), the Chairman of the B.B.C. (Sir Christopher Bland), the founder of the Jorvik Museum in York (Peter Addyman), two M.Ps (Sir Giles Shaw and my uncle Sir Robert Rhodes James), the Professor of History and Editor of the D.N.B. Colin Mathews and several others. Bingham in his moving speech described exactly how Andrew had 'opened magic casements' into new worlds through his enthusiasm and knowledge.

After I left Sedbergh in 1960, Andrew's influence remained at a subterranean level until 1978. Although he corresponded frequently with my uncle Robert, I did not keep in touch, though I knew he had moved from Sedbergh to become Headmaster of De Aston School, Market Rasen. So I was particularly delighted to receive a wonderful letter from him concerning my book on *The Origins of English Individualism* in 1978. It put my whole rebellion against Marxist historiography into

perspective and I started to see why I had managed to escape the entanglements of the new fashions of my Oxford days. I quoted part of the letter in the preface to my *Culture of Capitalism*.

Since then we have kept in touch regularly and he has helped me in numerous ways. He has read drafts of several of my books, commenting in detail and with the same mixture of humour, wisdom and erudition that he applied three or four decades earlier to my childhood efforts. It has been a privilege to get to know him again in a new relationship. Part of his life and work is incorporated in a video interview which I conducted with him in c.2000, partly in the superb four volume typed history of his and Jilyan's life, 'Swavis Mongrelian'.