



GORDON WISE

A Memorial



FOREWORD

Dear Family and Friends,

My son Gordon Scott and I feel deep gratitude for the loving sympathy that we have received and the knowledge that prayers have been offered for us and for our beloved Gordon, since he went to his rest eighteen months ago. The power of prayer has been palpable throughout Gordon's suffering. I give thanks to our parish priest and Eucharistic minister who brought Holy Communion to us weekly when Gordon could no longer attend Mass.

We could not see, during the pandemic, nor indeed now as we grieve over the tragedy in Ukraine, how or when to plan for a Memorial Mass and gathering of friends. We are instead sending you this booklet containing tributes from some of his family in Australia and a selection of many colleagues across the world.

Gordon was an adorable husband and I know how fortunate I was to marry such an able, happy, witty and faith-filled man. He truly swept me off my feet when he proposed. I had always admired him but never expected to marry him. Just the week before he asked me, I realised I was falling in love with him. It has been a great romance. There is no doubt in my mind that his

greatest joy was to have a son of whom he was very proud. We have had some incredible experiences, including much travel, but those journeys were always for a definite purpose, as you will read. As for his ambition and knowing many important people, it is true he was ambitious and single minded in his aims, but I know that his motive was always to give thought, friendship and support to those who carried much responsibility.

Everything changed in 2002 when Gordon suffered a significant stroke which meant hospitalisation for six and a half months with various therapies almost every day and he tackled these with all his grit and determination. He was bored at the weekends when the therapists were off duty. I am immensely proud of the way he tackled his recovery.

Many who receive this are well aware of the work we have been engaged in, but I know that for some of you it has been a mystery. Some of the contributions you read here will, perhaps, lift the veil and you will understand better what Gordon tried to do. The very first comes from his oldest and best friend, Jim Coulter, and it touches me deeply. The day before Gordon died, he asked me to call Jim in Melbourne, Australia. Jim could just hear his frail voice breathe, 'Hello, Jim'. Early next morning, he raised his head and pointed up as high as he could reach, then curled up and went to sleep for the last time. I think that was his final take off. He was flying away, higher than the sky.

Please continue to pray for us and I will pray for you. May God bless you all.

With my love,

Marjory

Jim Coulter

I saw Gordon's Sunderland flying boat take off 20 minutes before me on D-Day. A few days before, the Commander in Chief of Coastal Command had proclaimed that in our Squadron we could expect a 50% casualty rate. Fortunately, this was a prophecy that didn't come to pass, although between us we had survived five crashes in the course of our training, before tackling the German U-boats.

We had first met up at our secondary school, Perth Modern. Gordon was Editor of the school magazine. I submitted a piece about encountering Moral Rearmament. I had concluded the article, 'I returned not a changed man, but at least a thoughtful heathen.' He rejected it because he could not envisage such a change!

But soon afterwards Gordon himself went to an MRA House Party because he heard that his girlfriend was going to be there. Before long his change in how he approached life was highlighted in the school magazine:

*In G. S. Wise a change is seen,
No longer young and blasé.
His morals have a firmer trend,
His jokes are now not risqué!*

At the end of the war Gordon was on his way home to resume his job in the West Australian Public Service. But in the middle of the night he was awakened with a clear vision. He told me he had seen Jesus reaching out his hand to him, saying: 'I have need of you.'

Gordon spent the rest of his life answering that call.



A LIFE OF SERVICE BUILT ON BELIEFS

From the obituary printed in the West Australian, 26 January 2021

by John Cowdell

former President of the West Australian Legislative Council

Gordon Wise was the son of former West Australian premier Frank Wise and dedicated his life to building trust across the world's divides through the movement known as Moral Rearmament.

Gordon had cause, on more than one occasion, to reflect on the possibility of early mortality. In the course of service in the Royal Australian Air Force during World War II he survived nearly 1,000 flying hours and three crashes and was subsequently awarded the Legion d'Honneur for his role in supporting the Allied landings in France. His normal duties were providing protection for Atlantic convoys and the northern convoys to Russia. He summarised wartime life as 'a mixture of nicotine, challenge, risk, fear, boredom, camaraderie and above all devotion to duty.'

Born in Queensland, Gordon received most of his primary education in Broome and Carnarvon before his family moved to Perth. He gained experience as a cub reporter, under sub-editor Paul Hasluck, at the *West Australian* newspaper. He initially looked to a career in either journalism or politics but on his father's advice joined the State Treasury Department. Events overtook the best laid plans however, and in January 1942 Gordon signed up as an aircrew trainee. Following initial training he was sent for further training and deployment in the UK.

If World War II was the first great crusade in Gordon's life that took him away from his West Australian home and family, it was not to be his last. Gordon became a leader in the Moral Rearmament movement, also known as the Oxford Group in the UK and now Initiatives of Change. Introduced to the movement by Canon John Bell in Claremont, Gordon's growing commitment was evident during the war years. He requested assignment to Coastal Command, not on the basis of greater safety, but because he 'wanted to save lives serving as convoy escorts, rather than take them by bombing cities.'

After the war, Gordon committed to full-time service in MRA, first in Australia and then Europe, where the movement fought to forge co-operative structures based on Christian principles and points of contact with other faiths, and to facilitate reconstruction. Gordon was particularly active in creating co-operative labour relations mechanisms in the Western democracies. Gordon's work in this regard was enhanced by the position of his father as Labor premier and the commendation of national figures such as John Curtin.

Among others, Gordon briefed Winston Churchill and Anthony Eden on the merits of the work he and his colleagues were involved in, eliciting the comment from the former that: 'It is a great thing to have a great aim in life', which Gordon used in the title of his autobiography.

Over the next 30 years, Gordon was active in campaigns throughout South East Asia, the Indian subcontinent and Japan. As part of the press corps, he attended the first Non-Aligned Nations Conference in Bandung, Indonesia in 1955, which had an influence on governmental policies. This work was interspersed with regular visits to WA and the US and continuing industrial ministry in the UK.

For over 20 years Gordon and his wife, Marjory, hosted meeting places in London for a wide range of people. He saw his role as that of enabler, connecting individuals to Christian principles and building alliances. Gordon had a special skill of introducing people to each other and recognised that there was bound to be diversity in seeking the mind of God.

Kim Beazley

*Governor of Western Australia;
long-time family friend*

Memories flood back as I think of Gordon. Such a quintessential Australian – laconic, laid back. But also focussed and committed. An easy road of politics and public service opened up to him after war service. Instead, he chose the hard road. How to remake the world after its war devastation. He was inspirational.

As I think of him, I am reminded the rest of us have classified his as the great generation. How well men like Gordon wore that accolade.



SPONTANEOUS BRILLIANCE

Rajmohan Gandhi

*Historian, journalist and former Member of Parliament, India;
fellow-traveller with Gordon for more than six decades*

I salute this utterly remarkable human being who was at home in the skies and on earth, in Australia, England, and a dozen other lands, and in the hearts of a diverse and far-flung community, where he found a lasting place through his wit, brilliance, and unwavering, unflagging commitment.

I worked very closely with Gordon in God knows how many places, including Brazil and Vietnam, Switzerland, the UK and India, and treasure his comradeship at the news magazine *Himmat*, where he was a swift and acute analyst of global events.

I saw him talk and move with all kinds of people: elected and unelected leaders of nations, venerated heads of religious communities, captains of global industry, activists protesting the status quo, waiters, chauffeurs, students, and others. To every conversation he brought a most appealing and very Australian sense of spontaneous equality, standing toe to toe, looking everyone in the eye.

Gordon could steal a speaking platform with two minutes of eloquence. One of his quiet (and probably unconscious) flourishes was to extend his right arm and bring two long fingers together, his pen between them, as he delivered the clinching phrase. His wavy silvery hair, and the broad smile that rarely left his face, concealed a razor-sharp mind that was constantly travelling to situations (and friends) far away.

In his final phase of extreme physical disability, Gordon struggled successfully to relearn the basic motions of human existence. What a feat that was. Even during that phase – a heroic one also for Marjory and for Gordon Scott – Gordon continued to pour out affection and courage for his friends.

Dear and amazing Gordon, I salute you from afar, knowing that you will see.

Peter Everington

In the 1970s Gordon and Marjory were in charge of MRA's largest residence in London, 44 Charles Street. A constant flow of guests came, and frequently in the evening there would be a large buffet reception, or a select dinner party bringing together leaders on opposite sides of a divide. Jean and I co-hosted the house with Gordon and Marjory, and happily our son was born during our three years there.

As Secretary of the Oxford Group, MRA's legal entity in Britain, Gordon carried a heavy workload with an apparently light touch. Seasoned by his years in Europe, Asia and the USA, he reached out to the leadership of Britain in many fields, while maintaining touch with friends in other countries. One evening he gave me a folder of twenty-five letters received that day, to read overnight and give suggestions for reply. The vastness was beyond my ken.

In cricket terms, he was the big-hitting batsman while I kept up my end. He was particularly supportive of the work Jean and I were doing alongside very experienced colleagues in relation to the Arab and Muslim world. Grappling with great issues, he also had a deep sensitivity to the individual. As need arose, he would give me a cheerful word of encouragement or rebuke, bringing liberation from whatever held me back.

These qualities can only be explained by the touch of the Almighty which his Australian school friend Jim Coulter has talked about. It is one thing to murmur 'Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.' Gordon took the further step of devoting all his talents to achieve this central task. There is a cost to such a calling. And delights too.

One of these was finding Marjory. A cook and caterer by training, she brought Scottish shrewdness and her own deep faith into a shared commitment. Everything we celebrate in his life from the mid-1960s should be equally ascribed to her. And in the long years of his final disability, she picked up all the practical affairs of their lives.

He had a tough love for this country, chafing at the rigid stances of our class war, and the paternalism of empire. He also recognised our heritage of faith and fought to bring that to bear on our industrial and civic life. With his Australian verve, he could tease the British out of self-importance and point us to partnership with nations we had dominated.

The human mind all too easily clouds the line between God's will and self-will. Like most of us, Gordon quite often crossed that line in the wrong direction. Unlike most of us, he was swift to acknowledge his own mistakes. Transparency won him the trust of those he set out to help, whether at the grass roots or among the eminent.

He gave up much to serve us here, unsalaried, in the faith that where God guides, he provides. Now his Sussex gravestone is part of our British landscape. We shall long remember him with gratitude and affection.



Edward Peters

Fresh out of school and idealistic as I was, Gordon Wise made an immediate impression on me. His flair, sense of fun, charisma and sheer Australian-ness were enticing, and so too his quick wit, sharp mind and clarity of thinking about current affairs and the responsibility we each carry to live lives relevant to meeting world needs.

One of the host couples at the Moral Rearmament centre Tirley Garth, in Cheshire, Gordon and Marjory were like parents to many of us eager young people from all around the world who were based there in the early 1970s. My friendship with them – and with a young Gordon Scott – deepened considerably in the late 70s when I volunteered as an assistant to Gordon in his outreach work to national and international leadership, based in London and then also for three months in New York. I experienced at first hand his personal care for people of every background, and his gift of friendship and accompaniment, which supported many in national life battling for values and social justice.

My own friendship with Gordon built on the close bond he, and later Marjory, had with my parents. My English father and Dutch mother worked closely with him in Germany and Northern France in the late 1940s on missions dedicated to reconstructing relationships across a war-ravaged Europe. The friendships they built with German miners, industrialists and others, played a small part in the emergence of a united Europe.

In 1980, after becoming engaged to Elisabeth in a midnight phone call to Australia, I crept quietly alone back to my bedroom past Gordon and Marjory's door. Gordon's head appeared and, after I confirmed the success of my mission, he headed straight for a drawer and presented me with a tie as my first engagement present. So typical of his generosity – as too was his and Gordon Scott's crossing of the North Sea to attend our wedding in Sweden a few months later.

Decades on, after Gordon's stroke, Elisabeth and I visited him and Marjory often and always relished our energising conversations about personal and global happenings. The twinkle and zest never left him, in spite of the trials he suffered. His faith in a higher and guiding purpose was there to the end.

Chris Evans

Anne and I remember so much about Gordon – his love of ice cream and bananas; the way he transcended his own roots in Australia without ever being anything other than Australian. But very significantly, the way he became a bridge between the powerful founding generation of MRA in Britain and those who followed. I think this took a lot of thought and energy; his encouragement to us, his enthusiasm and lack of judgement if we did things differently.

As befitted the son of a Labour politician, Gordon met and befriended labour leaders wherever he went, working closely with Bill Jaeger, a campaigner committed to social justice, and others who also saw the crucial importance of the labour movement after the Second World War, in Germany and increasingly in Britain itself. It was serious and delicate work, with much at stake in the future of post-war Europe. And he had a fund of amusing stories from those times. One of their colleagues was called Hanni Blundell, and Jaeger, who was famously hard of hearing, admonished Gordon that he really shouldn't be calling her 'Honey' quite so often.

Their world-wide network of friendships was extended by regular participation in the ILO (International Labour Organisation) meetings in Geneva. Their participation was encouraged by the Secretary General, Francis Blanchard, and others.

The friendships and trust that Gordon and Marjory established among dockers' leaders in Liverpool when they lived there in the 1960s – a time when industrial relations there were fraught – attracted the attention of the then Bishop of Liverpool, Stuart Blanch, who became a life-long friend. A close colleague from this time was Conrad Hunte, who had resigned his captaincy of the West Indian cricket team and left his stellar sporting career to undertake bridgebuilding and reconciliation work too.

This aspect of Gordon's work had to take a lower priority as he increasingly took on national and global leadership roles in MRA from the 1970s onwards, although he never lost his interest in it.

I remember him as a friend and mentor. And his story about presenting a tin of Australian peaches to Winston Churchill deserves its own page in the history books.

Dick Ruffin

Two memories stand out from the first of many journeys I took with Gordon. In the Spring of 1966, during my first year at Oxford, Gordon took me to meet labour leaders across Europe. His ostensible purpose was to correct misinformation being disseminated about MRA and its work of conciliation. But an additional unspoken purpose was to help me find confidence in a God who could get through to even an agnostic like myself.

In Vienna, we met Cardinal Koenig, the Archbishop. I wasn't much into church affairs and felt uneasy when told to kiss his ring. My relief was palpable when, sensing this, he quickly withdrew his hand and beamed with a warm-hearted smile that instantly put me at ease. Gordon later became a close friend of the Cardinal and was generous enough to share that friendship with my wife Randy and me.

A second memory from that trip, even more embarrassing, was a meeting with the Mayor of Milan. Gordon asked me to tell a little news of MRA's activities around the world and the change it sought to bring to societies and communities. I had little to say, but that didn't stop me from saying quite a lot. After going round and round for 15 minutes or so, I finally ran out of gas. Gordon never interrupted, and left me to draw my own conclusions about just how effective an encounter it had been.

Upon our return to Britain, we talked about what we had experienced. Ever so gently, Gordon asked whether I felt ready to give as much of myself as I understood to the little that I understood of God. I did so, and thence began a life adventure from which I have never turned back.

That adventure held some unexpected challenges. In the wake of the social revolutions of the 1960s, MRA in the United States had converted itself into an educational enterprise that aimed to inspire a new generation of Americans. It did good work, but lost its moral and spiritual edge. To restore that edge, a small band of Americans committed itself to social transformation based on personal change and the leading of God's Spirit. It addressed America's most pressing challenge, racial reconciliation, and pioneered new approaches to conflict resolution. A strong team emerged and the work flourished. But this was only possible because of the sacrificial commitment of friends from across the world. None among these gave more vital support than Gordon. For more than 25 years he came faithfully, often more than twice a year, to live and work

alongside us, using every opportunity to foster unity and trust in God. We will never forget his friendship or the wise counsel that he brought to our Board and national team.

Gordon was also, from the 1980s on, at the heart of successful efforts to enable our global movement to embrace change in its culture, ways of operating, leadership and communications, so preparing it to play an important role in this 21st century.



A MAN WHO GAVE BOUNDLESS CARE TO ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Yukihisa Fujita

Former State Minister of Finance and Former Member, the Diet of Japan

After Leiko and I married in 1981, we were invited by Gordon and Marjory to live with them at 44 Charles Street in London, and then moved with them to 4 Buckingham Place. The first dinner guest there was Son Sann, the exiled Cambodian Premier. But he was only one of the many leaders and ordinary people from Asia and the Pacific that the Wisers looked after for decades.

In 1957 Gordon was in Tokyo where he was reunited with Senator Mrs Shidzue Kato, an opposition MP, and Mrs Yukika Sohma, a prominent citizen whose father was seen as the father of Japanese parliamentary democracy, whom he had met around a decade earlier. Japanese Prime Minister Kishi was preparing for a nine-country tour of Asia and the Pacific. Gordon told them of his conversation with a Filipino he had met, who had suggested that Kishi ask for forgiveness for Japan's role in the Second World War before he talked about trade. Kishi accepted their suggestion. *The Washington Evening Star* wrote, 'Premier Kishi is back in Tokyo after having completed one of the most unusual missions ever taken by a statesman of his rank. He visited nations that Japan threatened with conquest and he has publicly apologized for his country's actions during the war.'

Gordon gave support to many individuals from my region of the world, particularly when they were in difficulty. These included Thai politician, union leader and journalist Sang Phathanothai, who was detained following regime change in Thailand, and whose children were taken to Beijing by Chinese leader Zhou En Lai to protect and educate them; and Reverend Phra Bimaladhamma, who Gordon escorted on international missions and presented to the Pope, and who later suffered under house arrest for four years before becoming the most revered monk in Thailand.

The Wisers entertained many Japanese in London, from early champions of MRA's work to delegations from Nissan, Toshiba and the Government. It was a continuation of the vision of MRA's founder, Frank Buchman, that the Japanese could be 'Makers of Peace'.

I too received enormous personal care and training from Gordon. In this tribute I want to affirm my conviction to be one of those peace-makers at the time when otherwise divisions and conflicts will prevail on this Earth.

Maung Maung Thaung

*Mining engineer in Australia whose father was in
Myanmar Prime Minister U Nu's cabinet*

Gordon came to Burma over six decades ago with Frank Buchman and his colleagues Peter Howard and Rajmohan Gandhi.

U Nu had close contact with MRA. He saw the importance of its message to the future of Myanmar but faced considerable opposition. Myanmar was in political turmoil in terms of the effectiveness of its parliamentary democracy after its hasty post-war independence from Britain. Gordon and others undertook a significant amount of unofficial diplomacy in the hope of averting national tragedy, including escorting U Narada, Presiding Abbot of the Burmese monks, to an international conference in Brazil and to meet U Thant, Secretary General of the United Nations, in New York in 1961.

These four men saw very clearly how the political turmoil of the time could have adverse political repercussions for the country in the years to come. This gift of foresight came not because of brain power, but because they were in close contact with the inner voice which must be the ultimate authority in human and world affairs.





Tianethone Chantharasy

Former Lao Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs

Gordon Wise played a vital role in my life, for which I am profoundly grateful.

In 1957, at an international conference for Moral Rearmament at Mackinac Island, Michigan, USA, Gordon introduced me to a world of personal change and how it could impact change in others. My first thought after learning to listen to the inner voice, was to ask my wife, Viengxay, for her forgiveness for my selfish ways in our earlier years of marriage. She forgave me, and in turn apologised for her own bitterness.

On my return to Laos, Viengxay and I worked as a team, sharing our stories with others and our personal experiences about the power of listening to the inner voice.

The initial meeting with Gordon continues to have a deep effect on our lives to this day. Gordon opened our hearts to the world and has made the world our family.

Jonathan Lancaster

Our family's connections with Gordon began with a late-1950s homestay with us in Melbourne, where his 'all-out' engagement with Moral Rearmament greatly encouraged our own explorations into 'walking the talk' of our professed faiths. In 1973 I joined a small group led by Gordon on a journey from London to Canberra through India, Burma, Thailand, Laos, Vietnam, the Philippines and Papua New Guinea – a development of friendships sustained over years by him, and a convincing and challenging demonstration of the impact of a lifelong people-centred, change-making vocation.

Andrew Lancaster

I'll never forget a lunchtime walk in Tokyo in 1989 when, engrossed in conversation, Gordon and I became hopelessly lost – until suddenly we were in familiar territory again. Gordon's personality was infectious, adventurous and inclusive. I was one of many drawn to engage in the endless adventure to which he was committed. After Gordon's stroke in 2002 Margaret and I visited him in hospital. Seeing him so incapacitated was painful, yet what remains equally deeply etched in our memory of that encounter is his indomitable spirit.

David Lancaster

In 1971, quite soon after working in India and arriving in the UK, I received a note from Gordon inviting me to consider working alongside him in the tasks he was carrying as Secretary of the Oxford Group. It was a privilege to accept and a joy to get to know him as a friend. Gordon was a big thinker and a team-builder. I cherish every memory of a trusted friend. It was such a blessing to have known Gordon and worked with him, and a joy to help look after him on his and Marjory's last visit to Australia.

Robert Lancaster

The friendship with Gordon is like a richly coloured thread in the tapestry of my life. Beginning when I was a young boy, and stretching to my years in Britain, it re-appeared when Gordon spoke at Betsy's and my wedding and continued with his and Marjory's many times staying with us in New York City. His friendship was always warm, thoughtful, sometimes bracing; he was always a cheerful, witty, loyal and inspiring comrade.

Chris Mayor
and his daughters Sarah and Ali

Gordon, or Uncle Gordon or UG, as Ali and Sarah knew him, was a dear part of our extended family. Chris first met Gordon when he was 17, soon after Gordon's return from war service in 1945, at the first national conference MRA had held in Australia.

Chris says, 'For 75 years he was my mentor, close friend and colleague, sharing so many adventures, especially in India and other parts of Asia. Another adventure was to have his assistance as Best Man (none better), a duty he simultaneously undertook for me and our friend, Stan Shepherd, when we married Janet and Aileen in a double wedding at Mackinac in 1958.

'Gordon had the great art of not only making friends but keeping them. And he won their trust.'

Sarah and Ali first met him when the Wisers visited Australia in 1977. Sarah and Ali soon adopted Gordon Scott as the younger/older brother they had always wished for, a friendship that continues to this day. In 1984 when Sarah arrived in London for a gap year, she found herself staying in the wardrobe of UG's study, and loved being part of family trips to Scotland, driving across France to the MRA summer conference in Caux, Switzerland, as well as the tourist 'greatest hits' of British grand homes and thatched cottages. UG's wicked sense of humour, twinkly eyes and Australian accent and sensibility did much to make her feel instantly at home. When Ali arrived in 1988, she too was welcomed into the Wisers' home at Buckingham Place as another of the many Australian travellers new to London. For Sarah and Ali, the shared history between Chris and Gordon helped stem feelings of homesickness because they felt as close to him as any biological uncle. Over the years, Sarah also enjoyed catching up with UG during the week of 24/25th March to share news of their mutual birthday celebrations.

We miss him dearly, but are so grateful he is free of his earthly body and can see him at the controls of his Sunderland as he wings his way around heaven.

REMEMBERING MY BROTHER

Penelope Valentine

Due to his travels and commitments to MRA work, as one of the four younger Wise siblings I was not able to spend much time with Gordon when I was growing up, so I didn't really get to know him as a brother until I was in my teens and early adulthood.

As a person who dearly loved all of his family, it only became clear to me much later the personal sacrifice he made by being so far away over the decades in his dedication to his life's work.

His devotion to staying in touch, however, meant that there were many letters and postcards from the world over – written in Gordon's 'distinctive' hand. He kept tabs on our family's comings and goings and was a far better correspondent than I was. One letter I wrote to him aged 13, which he obviously thought rather quaint, he kept for more 50 years, only returning it to me a few years ago.

The first memory I have of Gordon was a visit he made to us when I was a small child in Darwin. He had a 'funny' accent and was tall and handsome. As I grew older it seemed very sophisticated to have an elder brother who lived overseas. This was especially so when Gordon was working in Asia. Around birthdays and Christmas, small packages would arrive containing pretty silver and enamel brooches and small ivory trinkets. I thought I was very exotic wearing my unique jewellery.

When I was 13, the MRA film *The Crowning Experience* was released in Australia. From memory, I believe Gordon and Jim Coulter brought it to Perth, where it had a short run in a major city theatre. I was absolutely entranced and arranged for my teacher and friends from school to see it too. I had a new camera and photographed Gordon on a family picnic. The 'mysterious' brother from overseas was clearly real.

As time progressed, I was delighted to be invited by Gordon and Marjory to be Godmother to Gordon junior – by proxy, from half a world away. I'm not sure that I understood what this was supposed to entail (nor that I have fulfilled those duties with much distinction!), however it provided a special bond of affection between me, my brother and his family that meant we kept in close touch over the years, even though mostly by correspondence.

It was to Gordon, Gordon and Marjory, that my daughter Kate turned when she found herself alone in London, having parted ways with travelling companions. Typical of the Wise family, they welcomed her, fêted her and made sure she was cared for. How wonderful it was for her, and subsequently her brother Luke, to have such caring family close by as they branched out into the world. They have so many great memories of the times they spent together.



Colin Svanberg

Son of Gordon's sister, Una

My fondest memory of Gordon was when, in his MRA days, he kindly allowed me to stay at 44 Charles Street. It was always a hive of activity. Gordon was busy doing his work and the guests were truly amazing – from royalty to political leaders from other countries to the young MRA people eagerly following in his footsteps.

Ray Watson

Son of Gordon's sister, Shirley

Gordon was truly loved by his sisters Una and Shirley. Whenever he visited Perth they would arrange family gatherings so that he and Marjory could meet any new relatives or just catch up with the extended Wise clan. Trips to the south-west forests or Rottneest or the Perth hills were high on the tour agenda, as were picnics with all the home-made trimmings. I am sure Gordon enjoyed these visits as much as his family here in Perth, as did my wife Shauna, daughter Vanessa and I on our visit to the UK in 2012 for the London Olympics, when we came to their home in Ticehurst.

OUR EXTENDED FAMILY

Barbara Down *with Marian Kingsley and Mary Jones*

I was Gordon's secretary from 1979 to the mid-1980s. Being his 'secretary' does not really capture what the role entailed; it was so much more than that. Gordon and Marjory welcomed me into their home, 4 Buckingham Place, where I became part of their family, enjoying many adventures together as well as helping to prepare, serve and sometimes eat a meal with their vast range of friends, including church leaders, European royalty in exile, journalists, politicians and mere mortals like myself.

Gordon would be quite prolific in how many letters he dictated every day – and at first, I thought that if I whizzed through them then that would be job done for the day, but soon discovered that Gordon then felt he could happily produce some more! However, Saturday mornings were safe as that was the time when we all knew that Gordon would be washing and polishing his car.

Gordon had great trust in his secretaries. He was London correspondent for an Indian publication. One day he invited me to interview Salman Rushdie in his study, despite my trepidation, and on another occasion a friend and I drove off to interview a controversial Asian politician. Both interviews were published in Gordon's name, but it was the first time for many years that I had been paid for work!

Another of Gordon's secretaries, Marian Kingsley from Australia, worked for Gordon from 1975 to 1977, when there was a big conference in London involving African delegates including Alec Smith, the son of Rhodesia's Ian Smith. 'I remember Gordon's love of humour; something that has kept me going this past crazy Covid year. A special memory was him driving me to my wedding in Perth to Richard in 1987.'

Mary Jones worked with Gordon in the 1960s. 'The first time I remember meeting Gordon was in Newcastle in the '60s when he made such good friends with the dockers, miners, shipyard workers and management types too. In the dockside office, he taught us about how to live into other people's lives and learn from them and work together. I expect Gordon kept friendships from those days for the rest of his life.'

Margaret Cosens

Gordon and Marjory have had this way of making lifelong friends with those they interact with, and that includes those of us who worked as secretaries for Gordon and with Marjory. When I heard the news of his passing the word about Gordon that came overwhelmingly into my mind was 'unrestricted'. He was unrestricted in his friendships, sharing them with countless others. In his attention to a wide range of matters from significant global interactions to cleaning his car. In his inclusiveness, his interests, his energy.

Jean Sutherland

My time as part of the Wise family remains a special chapter in my life. So many of us shared in and benefited from the generosity of a life well lived.

What I love about Gordon is that he shared of his life: his love of his family; his warmth, his caring, including noticing those little details that make a difference; and the time he invested in me and others. It was also reflected in his friends from so many walks of life many of whom I happily got to meet.

I have so many special memories of him, and of Marjory. The holidays they included me in, hosting my 21st birthday, the walks we went on, our visits to Merseyside, arranging for phone calls home to my family at special times, our friend Nada Middleton – the other secretary 'he kept in the attic', according to a young Gordon Scott, owing to our place of work in the loft of Tirley Garth.

And so much more. Just the other day I was talking about my 'family away from home' with a friend. When I got home I dug out a lovely photo the Wises sent me a while back of a family gathering with their family in Scotland. It's at arm's length as I write and brings a smile to my face each time I look at it.

Of course, Gordon's particular sense of humour and sharp wit was par for the course! I'll never forget his line about the Australians being chosen by the best judges in England and Ireland. I also value that he shared his talents so freely. I learned a lot both directly and indirectly. His discipline when it came to writing: his regular column for *Himmat* and writing to length, which helped inform my journalism journey. I was so proud to later have an article published in *Himmat* myself. Also, his keen interest in global affairs and incisive views.

As much as Gordon may no longer grace us with his presence here on Earth, he will continue to grace my life and, I'm sure, many others.

THE NEXT CHAPTER

Graham Turner

Journalist and writer

I first came across a very gung-ho Gordon in Singapore in 1956 or 1957 when I was in the RAF. At that point, he was spending a good deal of time in Laos and Cambodia. He had, of course, already fought in a war, and was moving at some speed to try and deal with issues far beyond my comprehension – at a time when I was largely focussed on cricket.

Much later in London, Gordon and Marjory worked with my wife Jean and myself to organise a series of working dinners, at which we would always manage to get together a whole raft of interesting people to make connections about matters of the day.

Later again, we saw a good deal of Gordon and Marjory when they had moved to Taplow, outside London. During one of conversations Gordon told me, most movingly, of one particular night during the long hospital stay after his stroke.

He was desperately ill with a serious infection, so ill he had been put on a side ward. His doctors were afraid he might not survive. He was, he told us, absolutely at the end of his tether, so low in mind and body that it would have been the easiest thing to just give up the ghost and slip away.

At that moment of ultimate desperation, he reached out to God and simply asked, ‘Do you want me to live or die?’ ‘I want you to live!’ came the reply, so Gordon fought to hang onto his life. Amazingly, he was to live for nearly 20 richly fulfilling years more.

Gordon, I felt, was very like his native country, Australia, in that he always conveyed a great sense of space and openness. Talking with him, you didn’t encounter attitude or attitudes. Of course, he had opinions and there was nothing in the least bland or limp about him. Instead, he welcomed you with all your opinions, attitudes and oddities and gave you space to express them without any judgement from him.

You could disagree with him about all sorts of things – the merits of Mrs Thatcher, for example – but Gordon never, ever, wrote anyone off. Final *ex cathedra* judgements were not for him. And every conversation I ever had with him was bathed in humour.

Yvonne Greenwood
Gordon's first live-in carer

I saw that Gordon was able to empathise and communicate with people on all levels of society – which made him so good in the work he dedicated himself to. Seeing him in action was a real privilege and something I will never forget.

I remember Gordon as a gentleman and thoroughly decent person who I came to admire. He cared deeply about peace in the world, peaceful solutions through friendship and dialogue. He had the seamless ability to communicate with people from all walks of life and cultures. He knew how to put people at their ease, feel respected and listened to. Despite his communication difficulties after his stroke, Gordon would help me understand who he was, and what was important to him through favourite paintings and photographs.

Once, he talked about the ‘gum tree’. This puzzled me. Of course, it was a reminder of his homeland which he dearly missed. He encouraged me to see for myself the mature gum tree in a nearby garden, just one of many joyful outings. It was a truly magnificent eucalyptus, gnarled and weatherworn. A connection to thoughts of his home and maybe, something much more. Gordon’s inner strength seemed to emanate a quiet determination to keep his aim as best he could.

Sacha O’Leary Quinn

Whenever I think of Gordon the image I have is so vivid – a living memory rather than a past one.

Caring for Gordon was an absolute pleasure. I was always greeted with a smile and he was always so obviously pleased to see me. It was always so lovely that we could also all chat together in the mornings whilst I supported Gordon to prepare for the day. It’s strange what triggers one’s thoughts. I had never heard of the *i* newspaper before I started my journey with Gordon. Now, whenever I see it on a newspaper stand Gordon springs to my mind, and a smile to my face in remembering him.

My fondest memory, which will be with me always, is once Gordon was ready to transfer to the kitchen for breakfast, we had our own special phrase: ‘Are you ready to rock and roll, Gordon?’ To which he would smile and give me the thumbs up. It made us all smile.

I write this with the warmth that I still feel when I think of not only Gordon, but also of you, Marjory. Your utter devotion, strength and realism.

Gill Sellors

My fondest memories of Gordon are from when he used to zoom along on his electric scooter to where we would walk for his daily exercise. He was so full of life and energy. That's when he used to ask me about my family and how they were doing. He genuinely cared. Such a caring and loving man. My friend.

Laarni Perry

I will always remember the first day that Gordon, Marjory and I met. He realised I was from the Philippines and said 'Mabuhay', which is Filipino for 'Hello'. We instantly clicked. We became really close very quickly after I started looking after him, and I still miss the singing with him as we walked together and his smile when he saw me.

It was a privilege and an honour to have known him for what became a number of years. He was a friend and I still miss him.

Marge Lombard

What can I say other than it was an honour to have cared for Gordon even if it was for a short time towards the end of his long and eventful life. He and Marjory always made me feel so very welcome. I loved reading his book and listening to his stories about his travels and the people he met along the way. Such an interesting man, and a gentleman I will never forget.

Liz Wendt

I came to meet Gordon for the first time 15 years ago through my involvement in a local social group, meeting once a month for tea parties. We soon became very good friends and despite not knowing Gordon prior to his stroke, there was a shared understanding and ease in our relationship.

We had many outings, and I would take him swimming which, for him, would provide a sense of freedom and liberation; for me, much pleasure in seeing his enjoyment and ease of movement within the water which on a day to day basis he was so cruelly deprived.

Gordon's sense of humour and lust for life were inspirational and I had such admiration for his positive stoicism and strength of character. He was remarkable in the amount of interest and enthusiasm he displayed for others, and I will be eternally grateful for the words of wisdom and guidance offered and for the many laughs and funny moments we shared together.

Tony Davies

I will always treasure the memories of the two and a half years I worked for Gordon as a support / carer, as his mobility became more difficult in his later years. Even though he was confined to a wheelchair he still wanted to be as active as possible. There were regular trips to a local swimming pool which he loved. He was a far better swimmer than I was!

And there were other adventures. Gordon and Marjory invited my wife Felicity and me to join them on a Norwegian Fjords cruise in 2014, and I enjoyed driving them to London on a number of occasions: a couple of times for Western Australia Day services at the Queens Chapel of the Savoy; a visit to the top of the Shard for Gordon's 90th birthday; and of course, to see their son. We also had a memorable trip to Keswick in the Lake District to see an old friend from wartime days, rekindling fond memories of visits in years gone by.

Then there was the time Gordon decided he'd quite like to take a flight over Kent and East Sussex in a light aircraft and asked if I could organise this. When I contacted a local airfield I asked if Gordon would be able to take the controls. They asked me his age and when I told them they said a firm 'no'. We arranged the flight anyway - Gordon even said I could have a lesson if I wanted to!

On the day we arrived at the airfield a very young-looking instructor greeted us. I explained that we had originally booked in the hope that Gordon might be able to fly himself. To my surprise the instructor took a look at Gordon and said to me 'If you can get him in the pilot's seat, he can take the controls once we are in the air.' Well, it took some pushing and shoving but I got him in.

I took a picture of him sitting in the pilot's seat with the biggest grin ever. And once in the air Gordon flew us down to the sea and then along the coast. We flew back flying over Ticehurst and I was able to take an aerial photo over Gordon and Marjory's house.

When we'd finished Gordon had to fill in the visitors' book, and I was astonished to see that his date of birth was at least 20 years older than any previous flyer!

Karen, Eleanor, Madeline and Constance O'Conor

When I think of Gordon a lovely warmth spreads through me, his ability to make you feel special, his kind words, that amazing smile, how you could talk to him about any subject and he always had time. Gordon loved life, he enriched my life, and I am so very grateful.

Our daughter Eleanor says, 'I will always remember his infectious laughter that lit up every room, and will forever treasure all the time we spent together and the wonderful stories of his childhood and later life.' Her sister Madeline adds 'He was one of the most incredible and inspirational men I ever met. When I was working at Barchester Wadhurst Manor, the care home where the Wises had a respite visit, it always made my shifts better and something to look forward to. I was still learning the ropes and he was so kind and patient with me and made me feel I was not a complete disaster – even when I spilt porridge down both of us, he just laughed!'

And our eldest daughter, Constance, feels 'Gordon had an inimitable capacity to make people feel welcomed and valued. From the moment I met him and was treated to his beautiful sparkling smile, I felt lucky because I knew he was someone special. I am so very sorry that Gordon is gone but very sure of all the amazing good he leaves behind.'

John O'Conor

Even a little of Gordon, as so many over his remarkable lifetime of service to and care for others will confirm, means an enormous amount. Each time I met him I was struck by his kindness towards others, his determination to be his best for others and his interest in others. It could clearly be frustrating for him sometimes not to be able to communicate his words more easily; even so, it seemed to me that none of us were ever in any doubt about his meaning. He conveyed such interest, encouragement and concern, always wrapped in gentleness, in laughter and in love.

The outdoor funeral service for Gordon was beautiful, enhanced by its setting. The wind in the trees, the calling of the birds and the rustle of leaves, and even the distant background noises of everyday life were all a gentle reminder of the great wheel turning. It felt peaceful at the still point of it, Gordon's body at rest and his spirit fondly and protectively embracing all, his life echoed in the words of St Francis's prayer. All parts were in their place, from Scotland to Australia with faith, through his very own words, at the very centre of everything.

Mgr. Seán Healy

*Parish Priest, St. Teresa's Beaconsfield;
formerly Gordon and Marjory's parish priest in Burnham, Bucks*

I often drive through Taplow and think of Gordon when I see his and Marjory's former home at the edge of the village. He was a fascinating man, full of good sense, wisdom and faith. I am sure that he will have the 'reward of his labours', and he will be in my prayers, as well as you Marjory, and that God will bless you in the years ahead.



AFTERWORD

Reading these pages prompts so many smiles of recognition as well as the fondest memories of my own. The love of ice cream – Dad’s relationship with ice cream went back far longer than his relationship with Mum or me – and how a Saturday trip for a haircut or to go swimming was invariably accompanied by it; meticulously planned family holidays and other ambitious journeys. When we were still living at Tirley, I was asked what I wanted to do when I grew up. I said ‘wash the car and go to London, like Daddy.’ Although sometimes away from home a lot, Dad was a very big and beloved figure in my life. While I haven’t exactly followed in his footsteps, I’m often surprised at how much, both consciously and unconsciously, I’ve tried to echo the very best of his approach to life and his convictions.

Given the nature of Dad’s commitment, work and home life wasn’t just blurred, it was one. That wasn’t always easy. But this was countered by the fun and humanity he brought to what he felt was his calling. He wore his heart on his sleeve. My aunt Lel writes of his distinctive handwriting, which featured on sometimes multiple letters a day when I was at boarding school. I think he missed me more than I missed him. We didn’t always see eye to eye, although as others have noted, he was always willing to hear another point of view, often allowing it to expand his thinking.

Living on ‘faith and prayer’, as my parents did, Dad loved a bargain, and better still, the chance of winning a competition. For years we subscribed to *Reader’s Digest* in the hope that our lucky numbers would come up in its Great Prize Draw. What we won were several ballpoint pens and mini diaries. And my partner Michael vividly remembers Dad nipping around a supermarket at great speed making sure he had the benefit of all the three-for-twos and extra loyalty points on offer.

After his stroke, I was always amazed at how he refused to let the restrictions this imposed on his life frustrate him. Instead, every day was an adventure, as he tried to do more and more. This was his spirit until just the last few years. I’ll never forget his pulling himself to his feet at his 80th birthday party to say ‘Hello, everyone.’ It brought the house down. A year before, to the day, he’d been hovering between this world and the next.



Almost annually, Dad would ask to go back to Australia. Mum pulled off the extraordinary feat of organising four trips back Down Under, as well as to India and other places, with cherished travelling companions who could support them both. When the to-do list got a bit too much for her, I took over the planning and chaperoning. One Spring, the three of us visited the Anzac cemeteries of the Somme. Michael and I also sailed with Dad across the Atlantic to New York to say a final farewell to the US and friends of over 60 years. And I think we were as flabbergasted as Mum was when Dad and I made it back from a week in Moscow in one piece.

A week or two before he died, I asked Dad if there was anyone whom he wanted to see. He pushed out his mouth in what we used to call his 'Donald Duck' look - a sign he was thinking hard - and his eyes went wide and bright and he shook his head. Is there anything left for us to say to each other?, I asked. Again, he shook his head, making his little hand gesture. Everything was done. He was already seeing his sisters, who had both recently passed away, as well as his father and his beloved mother, who he'd lost when he was just 19 and away at war, and a host of others from across the decades. They were all ready to welcome him, and he really was ready to go.

Gordon Scott



We are so grateful for the dear friends, representing scores more who could have equally been included but which would have made this more of a directory than a booklet, whose words are featured on these pages.

And also to those whose photographs we have featured, including David Channer, Tony Davies and Edward Peters.

*Thanks also to
Ginny Wigan, Teresa Fairweather and
Print Matters, Hailsham for their professional support.*

*Do please seek out Gordon's own memoir, A Great Aim in Life,
which is accessible online at
<https://www.foraneworld.info/material/publications/great-aim-life>,
to join more of the dots between the milestones and aspects
of his life that are covered here.*