



ALL SOULS COLLEGE

Peter Marshall Fraser

MC, MA, FBA

6 April 1918–15 September 2007

Fellow of All Souls College 1954–85;  
Acting Warden 1985–7, Emeritus Fellow 1987  
University Lecturer, then Reader in Hellenistic  
History 1948–85

Addresses by  
Professor Stathis Kalyvas  
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A Commemoration on  
Saturday, 31 May 2008



I am a political scientist, not a scholar of classics; and I met Peter Fraser only once, in the Fall of 1999. Hence you would be right if you are wondering why I am addressing you today. Perhaps it would clarify things if I told you that I study civil wars and, that in the context of my research, I conducted a study of the Greek Civil War, including a regional study of the Peloponnese during the 1940s. I use the word ‘perhaps’ on purpose, for not many people call the occupation of Greece in 1941–4 a civil war, and even fewer know about Peter Fraser’s wartime role in Greece: possibly a handful of historians of modern Greece, but certainly not the majority of them; and a few old men in the Argolid region of the Peloponnese, whom I interviewed as part of my research and who retained a vivid memory of Fraser, such as Yorgos Marangos, the baker of a village called Fichtia, who wanted to organize a ceremony in his honour and who kept wondering whether they were ever going to meet again after all those years. They did not.

But why isn’t Fraser better known by historians? His relative historical anonymity, if I may use this expression, is due to two reasons.

First, he did not play a major historical role. He was among a dozen or so young British men whose knowledge of, and interest in Classical Greece led the Special Operations Executive or SOE to select them for missions in occupied Greece. These young men became subsequently known as British Liaison Officers (or BLOs). Apparently the SOE thought that knowledge of Classical Greece made one fit for demanding duty in Modern Greece. As it turns

out, however, the SOE was right. These men adapted admirably to the conditions of occupied rural Greece. Some became famous, at least in Greece – men such as Chris Woodhouse or Patrick Leigh Fermor. Most remain little known.

Second, Fraser did not write a memoir – at least not a published one. As far as I can tell he did not write about his wartime experience and he does not seem to have spoken about it publicly either. When I interviewed him, I asked him about this reluctance of his and he told me that he had no desire to write, downplaying any kind of interest that his experience could possibly elicit. I wonder, though, and would really like to find out, whether he was more open in his private life. In any case, his public reluctance may be due to the fact that, unlike Woodhouse who brokered a major treaty between rival resistance organizations and became the confidante of a major resistance leader, or Leigh Fermor who participated in the famous abduction of a German general in the island of Crete, Fraser did not play a highly visible political role. His public silence may be also due to another reason, about which I will speculate in a few minutes.

As it were, Fraser wrote two brief reports for the SOE, both of which were declassified relatively recently. The first one, consisting of four pages, only covers the period of July to April 1944, and was likely written while he was still in Greece ('Report by Capt. P.M. Fraser on some aspects of the Peloponnese [Dates: July 1943–April 1944,' PRO HS 5/698 S6557]). The second one, consisting of 13 pages and two appendices was his final report; it covers the same period and was probably written after he left

Greece ('Narrative of Capt. P.M. Fraser', PRO HS 5/698 S69557). There is also a shorter note: *Names of Influential Personnel in Argolido Korinthia*. Same file. These two reports give us the general contours of Fraser's mission in Greece, as well as a glimpse of his personality. I will give you a brief overview of the former before turning to the latter.

Fraser parachuted into the Peloponnese, the southern peninsula of Greece, near the town of Kalamata, on 12 July 1943. Eventually, he moved to the Argolid and Korinthia regions of northwest Peloponnese where he spent the winter and spring of 1943–4. On 4 April 1944 he was evacuated back in the southwest Peloponnese (the region of West Messinia) where he spent six weeks, following which he went to Pelion and Thessaly, in central Greece. In terms of both intensity and importance, however, the core of his mission took place in the Argolid and Korinthia – and these are the regions that shaped his wartime experience in Greece.

Let me first give you some background about occupied Greece and British policy. Greece was under Italian, German, and Bulgarian occupation following its defeat by the German army in April 1941. Unlike neighbouring Yugoslavia, armed resistance in the hinterland emerged rather late, in early 1943, but it did spread quickly afterwards. There were two strands in the armed resistance movement. One was the communist-controlled resistance of the National Liberation Front, EAM, and its armed wing, the National Popular Liberation Army, ELAS. The other was made of scores of local groups dominated by officers of the Greek army. EAM/ELAS became dominant

despite the marginal pre-war status of the Communist Party for a number of reasons: its clandestine know-how, the appeal of its radical message among certain sectors of Greek society, its centralized organization and, last but not least, its ruthlessness in eliminating competing groups. Concerned as much about the post-war political future of Greece as by the military imperatives of the war, Great Britain sought to achieve some kind of balance between communist and non-communist guerrillas, or *andartes* as they were called in Greece. This task was complicated by policy fragmentation on the British side – the Foreign Office and the SOE were not always on the same page and this turned out to have dramatic consequences for Fraser's mission.

In the spring of 1943, the Peloponnese was still relatively virgin territory from a guerrilla point of view. Peter Fraser's mission was as political as it was military. He was given the task of locating, assisting, and arming 'officer bands', as the non-communist guerrilla groups were known. The fate of his mission can be easily captured in one sentence: 'too little, too late'. Fraser (and the other members of the mission) were late, failed to arm the officer bands in time for them to withstand ELAS attacks, and attempted to strike deals with local EAM leaders that were condemned to failure. By October 1943, all non-ELAS resistance activity in the Peloponnese had ceased and the objectives of the mission turned toward the collection of military intelligence and, close to the war's end, toward what we would call today the provision of humanitarian support to villages. All this was taking place under considerable hostility by ELAS. Indeed, if one wartime actor is

more or less absent from Fraser's reports, it is the Germans. In fact, it is easy to read these reports and forget that Greece was occupied by the Germans. The BLOs moved with relative safety in the vast swaths of the Greek mountains that were relatively free of German presence. In contrast, a civil war raged between the Greeks and the danger to the BLOs typically came from EAM/ELAS. On the one hand, EAM attempted and succeeded in eliminating all non-communist resistance groups operating in the Peloponnese (and pretty much around Greece). On the other hand, and partly as the result of EAM's success, an anti-communist collaborationist army, generically known as Security Battalions, was formed by the Germans and met with considerable success, especially (but not only) in the Peloponnese. The ensuing war between EAM/ELAS and the Security Battalions was extremely bloody.

British missions were not always welcome in this context. 'In reading my present comments on the *andarte* movement', Fraser writes in one of his reports,

it must be borne in mind that my personal relations with EAM/ELAS were always of the worst, since my original mission in that area was to try to find and, having found, to arm non-ELAS *andartes*. I succeeded in finding them (but was not permitted to arm them) and consequently I was always a suspect in the eyes of ELAS. This meant that most of their propaganda in the area was turned against me and I liked them no more than they liked me. I make this personal statement only to make it clear that I am not able to adopt an Olympian neutrality' (*Report*, 1).

In this context, Fraser's reports display a sharp sociological and ethnographic eye, laced with considerable

humour and irony. For instance, his description of the 'influential' people of villages includes doctors but 'not schoolmasters, who represent the worst element of the mountain population' (*Names of Influential Personnel in Argolido Korinthia*). 'I reached', he writes in another passage,

the neighbourhood of Strezova ... with only one untoward incident, namely – when an EAM guide ('a most reliable chap') led us straight on to the main road at a point where a German MG coy was having an early breakfast (*Narrative*, 6).

Fraser's use of metaphors betrays his love for the classics, as when he describes the 'conversion' of the leader of an officer band into an ELAS cadre following a clash which 'resulted in a swift, decisive victory for ELAS, and Vaseos, captured, sung his palinode' (*Narrative*, 7); or, when he expresses his gratitude to a colleague who may have saved him from execution by ELAS:

It was an incident in the true tradition of Greek tragedy; a *deus ex machina* and a forced anticlimax (*Narrative*, 9).

Lastly, his descriptions of ELAS military prowess are rather stinging: 'As we approached ELAS HQ,' he writes about an incident,

there was a large flash and a loud bang and the entire guard, with cries of Germans took up fire positions, in places where they could neither fire nor be fired upon. I, unfortunately, was riding a mule or ass, and was unable to take precipitate action (*Narrative*, 9).

He describes an ELAS team he was training for a sabotage action that never took place as having 'decided to abandon warlike sports and return to gentler arts' (*Narrative*, 10).

Here is his description of a local ELAS chieftain, Kosta Cannelopoulos, alias Akritas. He was:

a miniature Ares Velouchiotis [a famous military leader of ELAS], not so clever, but equally cruel, and though unbalanced, quite an amusing conversationalist (*Narrative*, 5–6).

As for the logic of EAM leaders, consider the following passage about the negotiations to sign an agreement of co-operation between ELAS and an officers' group:

Frangos [a local EAM leader] was, however, I feel, anxious to sign some superficial agreement, to strengthen his position in the event of his attacking officer bands: for, if he signed it, he would be able to say 'I cannot have broken this agreement, otherwise I would not have signed it in the first place' (*Narrative*, 5).

All this sounds quite funny, but it was not. Fraser was moving in a bleak universe. Consider this passage from one of Fraser's reports on the local helpers of the British mission:

The names of people in the towns are not really of much value because so many have been killed by the Germans and Security Bns or EAM according to their respective proclivities. Any such list needs to be kept very much up to date (*Names of Influential Personnel in Argolido Korinthia*).

To make matters worse, the behaviour of the resistance movement was hardly commendable. Quite the contrary. In fact, the term 'concentration camp' was used by Fraser (and other BLOs) to describe camps run by ELAS in the 'liberated' countryside (*Appendix 'B' to Final Report by Capt. P.M. Fraser*).

So, let me conclude this brief description by going out on a limb and advancing a possible explanation for Fraser's reluctance to talk and write about his experience. One of the ugliest, and I believe most traumatic dimensions of his mission was the fate that awaited the villagers who helped him personally and the mission. He writes:

...our mere presence in a village was a most unwelcome burden to the villagers, who were almost certain to be maltreated by ELAS if they gave us any assistance whatever (*Narrative*, 12).

In his report on influential personnel he singles out a local doctor:

Dr Karas is one of the most influential men in the Argolid, the most influential in the Inachos valley. Keeps his opinion to himself, except behind closed doors. Is very pro-British and was very good friend to me. Recommend him for medical services 100% (*Names of Influential Personnel in Argolido Korinthia*).

This report was written in the Spring of 1944. A few months later, in June 1944, Karas, his wife and several of his friends were arrested by ELAS, tortured, and executed. The same dreary fate awaited several other people who helped Fraser survive the winter of 1943–4, including a few with whom he was very close. Their names are all but forgotten today and in some instances they are singled out in highly partisan 'histories' of the period as collaborators of the Germans on the basis of the logic that if they were killed by the resistance they must have worked for the Germans. My own sense from my single interview with Peter Fraser is that of a sense of sadness he felt about the loss of these individuals – and this may perhaps explain his

silence.

It is perhaps fitting to end this address, with Peter Fraser's own words, from the last paragraph of one of his reports:

To draw a conclusion from experiences is peculiarly satisfying: it ties up loose ends, and gives to the experiences a formal nature they would otherwise lack. In my own case, no conclusion is possible for the conclusion lies in the future of the Greek people, certainly the most tiresome people in Europe and certainly the most loveable (*Narrative*, 13).

*Stathis N. Kalyvas*

I should like to begin with a few words on my enormous personal debt to Peter Fraser. I met him first when I was elected to a Prize Fellowship in 1958, half a century ago, and was already committed to writing a thesis on the third-century Greek historian of Rome, Cassius Dio, a task for which I was wholly unqualified and unprepared.

From the moment that I came to the College, Peter's technical knowledge, advice (often delivered in brisk and firm terms), and above all his sweeping knowledge of the Greek world, from Homer to Byzantium (and indeed to the present), and from the Balkans to Afghanistan, was absolutely vital. I often wonder whether without his presence and support I would ever have got through.

One example which sticks in my mind is the moment when I showed him a draft of my first, and long-forgotten, article, 'Some Speeches in Cassius Dio'. It was not only that I got an instant lesson in how to formulate citations of books, articles and ancient texts (and represent these in typescript), but that the first paragraph as drafted contained the proposition that Dio 'should not be despised or neglected'. The text came back with a note in the margin: 'Who would?' There were two vital lessons here. Firstly, to Peter, it was not just the central canon of 'great literature' which was valued, but the whole legacy of Greek culture. And secondly, do not go in for vacuous rhetoric.

In the Summer of 1959 Peter, I and one of the most original, engaging and regretted figures of post-war All Souls, Alan Tyson, made an unforgettable journey on foot across the central Peloponnese from East to West, in the process visiting many of the sites of his wartime experiences. If my memory is not playing tricks, at one point he

showed us the fortification on whose construction he had been conscripted by the occupiers to work, unaware that he was a British agent.

Though of course it did not then seem so to me, Peter was at that time still a young man in the early stages of his career. What I could not mistake was his splendidly irreverent and sardonic view of personal pretensions, institutional respectability and what would later be called political correctness. Hence his one-line characterisation, with echoes of T.S. Eliot, of the British School at Athens: 'Schoolmistresses in print frocks talking about Mycenae'. That sceptical style did not prevent him later from playing an important role as its Director.

In 1958 Peter was 40, and in 1957 had published *Boeotian and West Greek Tombstones* with T. Rönne, which should be recognised as a forerunner of the modern style both of local or regional studies and of the treatment of inscriptions in their physical, artistic and architectural contexts. The same year had seen his masterly edition of Rostovtzeff's great *Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire*, a still unsurpassed demonstration of how local material can be woven into a sweeping overall narrative.

By the 50s and 60s, Peter, working very much on his own, had acquired a vast range of knowledge of the Greek world from the Classical period to Late Antiquity, and was recognised as a scholar with a grasp on the local history, and local evidence, of many parts of the Greek world, from the Greek mainland to Samothrace, Rhodes and Egypt. But I do not think that anyone then would have

anticipated the scale, variety and novelty of the major accomplishments that were to come.

Firstly there was his great three-volume *Ptolemaic Alexandria* of 1972. I still wish that someone had had the sense to get him to change the title to *Alexandria under the Ptolemies*. 'Alexandria' has a resonance which 'Ptolemaic' decidedly does not. But Peter had no time for such frivolities. As for the book itself, massive and austere, with enormous notes, it shows a very distinctive side of Peter's engagement with, and mastery of, the evidence from the Ancient World. That is to say his extensive and detailed examination of the intellectual activity conducted in Alexandria, including philology, geography and antiquarianism. His writing in this area is seen at its best in the last main chapter, 'The World of Callimachus', perfectly matched by his British Academy lecture of 1970, 'Erastosthenes of Cyrene'. I still wonder if, equipped with an appropriate introduction, these two great pieces of writing could not be put together in a paperback, bringing out the high points of the Alexandrian culture of the third century.

Peter's very individual engagement with the scholarly and technical writing produced in Antiquity reappears again in his *Cities of Alexander the Great*. He was of course deeply interested in Afghanistan, which he visited several times, and in Alexander's legacy there, and the book has a wonderful sense of the vast landscapes of Central Asia where Alexander established Greek cities. But, I would suggest, his real focus in this book is on Greek geographical writing (and indeed it also deals with Chinese writing). Who wrote what, and in what form, with what motives? In

short, this book too is above all a contribution to intellectual history.

The same is also true of his truly major posthumous work, *Greek Ethnic Terminology*, which the kindness of Simon Hornblower has enabled me to read in typescript. Again, why, one might ask, the forbidding title? Any younger scholar would have called it something like *Individual and Community in Greek Culture*, or at least have included the word 'identity' in the title. The book, which will be published by the British Academy, does indeed use a vast range of evidence, literary and documentary, and is an important contribution to Greek social history. But the word 'Terminology' is not there in the title by accident or oversight. Firstly, much of it concerns a work of Late Antique Greek scholarship, the *Ethnica* of Stephanus of Byzantium. Secondly, there is Peter's own interest in Greek philology. How were adjectives indicating ethnic, communal or geographical identity formed from the corresponding proper names, of peoples or areas? Thirdly, to Peter, as to that other great Ancient Historian from All Souls, A.H.M. Jones, the Ancient World, in all its aspects, did not have to be *made* interesting. It just was interesting.

But that is not all. His other monumental achievement is of course the *Lexicon of Greek Personal Names*. Four volumes have so far been published. The three parts of the fifth volume, on Asia Minor, are still to come, with the first of them due for publication next year.

To appreciate the originality of the conceptions which went into this project, the significance of the fundamental classification of the entries by regions, and the sheer scale

of the literary and documentary material which had to be gathered and stored, one needs to read the Introduction to Vol. I, a truly humbling experience.

The project began in the early '70s. However profound the thinking which went into the choices which structured its design, it is surely now beyond question that it could not have been brought to fruition without Elaine Matthews' involvement, her mastery of the ever developing and changing capacities of Information Technology, her independent grasp of the subject-matter, and, especially towards the end, the personal support which enabled Peter to remain at work in the new Ioannou Classics Centre until only a short time before his death.

In a different era, the pages of a major work of reference such as this would have been set by hand by professional printers. As it is, the pages of the *Lexicon*, entirely composed in camera-ready copy in the project's office, represent a masterly demonstration of intellectual and visual design in combination. It is very rare for a major work of reference to be simultaneously a profoundly original work of scholarship.

My last extended conversation with Peter, in his home before he had to be moved to a hospice, touched on the family holiday which we spent last year in Corfu. Instantly, Peter brightened up, and began to talk eagerly of the history of the island, at all periods, and of the collection of books on it which he had gathered over the years. It is a pleasure and comfort to know that, as he wished, his ashes have now been interred not far from there, in the British Military Cemetery on Cephalonia.

It is due to that unquenchable energy, and that love of Greek culture, language and history of all periods and areas, that today we can not only look back with gratitude and admiration, but can still also look forward – to the completion of his great project on Greek personal names, and to the publication of a major new book. I suppose that there have been few scholars who died in their ninetieth year of whom that could be said.

*Fergus Millar*

Peter Fraser's connection with All Souls was important to him and valuable to the College. He did not come to All Souls, or indeed to academic life, by any ordinary route. He was averse to ordinary routes. As a classical scholar he did Classical Mods at Brasenose in 1939, but did not go on to Greats. Instead he joined the Seaforth Highlanders soon after the outbreak of war. The choice of unit reflected his pride in his Highland Scottish ancestry. He liked malt whisky and had a Gaelic speaking grandfather who, he said, knew no English. Nor did he obtain a doctorate as a step up on the academic ladder. He disdained ladders. His first treatise, on Rhodian history and epigraphy, was never published but was entered successfully for the prestigious Conington Prize of the University.

In the post-war period, however, formal qualifications were less important than they now are, and a good reputation with the leading scholars in one's field could serve to secure an academic appointment. In this Hugh Last, who was Camden Professor of Roman history until 1949 and then Principal of Brasenose until 1957, helped Peter on his way. When after the war Peter was a candidate for a Fellowship at Oriel in competition with Brunt (later Professor of Roman history), Last reassured Brunt, who was afraid that Fraser would be elected in preference to himself, that he need have no fear. Peter had told the Fellows of Oriel that he did not want to teach. He meant by that: not to have his time taken up by tutorial teaching, which with the combination of numbers returning from the war and the rising generation was then

very demanding. With Last's support Fraser was instead made a university lecturer in Hellenistic History in 1948. But this did not give him a lasting college connection, and in his mid-thirties he needed one.

The connection with All Souls came in 1953, shortly after the election of John Sparrow as Warden in 1952. Last, Bowra and Dunbabin recommended him to the College Research Fellowship Committee and so did Major Antony Andrews, who had been with him in Greece during the war and became Wykeham Professor of ancient Greek history in 1953. Fraser had acquired a formidable reputation in classical circles at a young age, and the college offered him an Extraordinary Research Fellowship. He accepted with delight and took up the Fellowship in 1954.

When he arrived in College he was at first, like others coming to All Souls for the first time, somewhat at sea. He asked the Manciple, the formidable Bert Watson, how he could have his books moved from Brasenose to All Souls. 'Don't worry, Sir,' Watson said 'I will get a couple of Fellows to go across and collect them'. His sole duty was to pursue academic research, and in his first couple of years he spent more than a third of his time abroad, mainly in the Middle East. Despite occasional debate about whether his class of Fellowship should be changed, he retained the Extraordinary Research Fellowship until retirement from his University post, later converted into a Readership, in 1985. He then served two further years as Acting Warden of the College during the Vice-

Chancellorship of Patrick (later Lord) Neill, who had succeeded Sparrow as Warden.

Sparrow certainly approved his appointment. Though he was in general no admirer of research as a way of life, he had a shrewd eye for talent and admired Fraser's war record and research, which reflected well on the College. The Warden was apt to divide academics in All Souls into those who could have pursued another career and those who could not. Peter properly belonged in the former class. He was in charge of a liberated area of northern Greece when only 26. He filled a number of College and University offices with serene competence. More telling still, he combined for the three years 1968–1971 his duties as an Oxford Reader and a Fellow of All Souls with being the head of the British School of Archaeology in Athens. Usually, those holding the Athens post took leave from their universities while they did so. But this anomalous, perhaps unprecedented, combination was agreed by both College and University. Moreover, in the course of his academic career, Peter applied for some administrative posts. One of these was the secretaryship of the British Academy, another the headship in 1972 of Van Milders College at Durham University. In short, he had reason to think that he had more than books to give the world.

Sparrow's view of Peter was respectful, and he once said in a letter to the Registrar of the University 'I think that Fraser probably cares more about work and less about money than any other member of the College'. Another way of putting it, from Peter's point of view, comes in a letter to Sparrow from the Kyklades. 'Life here is cheap and unexciting, which is what I like.' During his long

tenure in College he was away earning money only in the year 1973–4, when he was a professor at Bloomington, Indiana. He and Sparrow got on well and were good friends in later years.

As stated, Peter did not arrive in All Souls by the ordinary route of a Prize Fellowship, a route which by a long-standing tradition marked the Prize Fellows as the College élite. Aged 36 on arrival, he welcomed those whose research was on what he saw as the right lines but found others, younger than himself, clever but patronizing. He liked to meet people from different walks of life but naturally resented condescension. He dined regularly in College and made an agreeable companion, being particularly kind to Fellows who arrived without having known the College previously. His reserve was however such that he was not easy to get to know well. He shared the view, then prevalent, that one should not in a social context talk about one's subject. Peter felt at home with some of those who had interests outside academic life, such as Rohan Butler, Jeremy Morse, and Patrick Neill, not to mention, going back to his Brasenose days, Robert Runcie, who later came to All Souls for a term when, as Archbishop of Canterbury, he was the College Visitor.

Although to the outside world he conformed to the All Souls image of doing no teaching, he in fact not only gave graduate seminars but taught a number of able pupils individually: Brian McGuinness, the biographer of Wittgenstein; George Forrest, later Wykeham Professor of Greek History; and Robert Wade-Gery. To Fergus Millar and Simon Hornblower, two future classicists who were

doing doctorates during his time at All Souls, he was in effect a second supervisor, not formally appointed as such but readily available for consultation upstairs in his splendid rooms between the Hawksmoor Towers. All of them warmly appreciated his efforts.

But research was his core concern, and together Oxford University and All Souls College enabled him to devote his career to research on the ancient Greek diaspora and its aftermath in the Islamic world. In this respect he followed in footsteps of Edgar Lobel, the papyrologist, a Senior Research Fellow of Queen's from 1938 to 1959, who likewise disdained teaching, academic gatherings and other distractions from his research on the *Oxyrhynchus papyri*. Indeed the Lit. Hum. faculty mentioned the two together when pressing for Fraser's promotion to a Readership in 1959. The faculty initiative took time to mature, since there was a limited quota of Readers, but in 1965 he was appointed to an *ad hominem* Readership in Hellenistic history, which he held until 1985.

In a modest way the College supported his research financially. In 1955 it provided him with a grant to visit Egypt. In 1969 it helped with the Index to his work on Ptolemaic Alexandria. In later years the College supported the Lexicon of Greek Proper Names, an enterprise entirely of Fraser's devising. The project was at the time criticised by some philistines as pointless but has in the long run proved of great scholarly value. In 1976 the College agreed to help subsidise it for five years and provided renewed support in the later stages of the project. As a reviewer remarked in 1995:

A dusty loft in Oxford's strangest college, All Souls, is where the whacky but worthwhile Lexicon was born more than twenty years ago.

Though the British Academy from 1973 provided funding, in particular for Elaine Matthews' crucial role as his chief assistant, the Academy did not pay Fraser anything. As he remarked, 'the credit belongs to All Souls for supporting me in a lifetime of seclusion'.

Is seclusion the right word? Peter was reserved, not merely about his war-time service but about other phases of his life, such as his period running the British School in Athens. He shunned praise and thanks but at the same time welcomed appreciation. His attitude to many people besides himself, and indeed to the College, was equivocal. The modern Greeks were 'both lovable and tiresome'. He was

pleased to hear that the General Board [of the University] will have the opportunity of looking at the terms of my post – it is a ghastly body of petty politicians, but good may come of it.

The fine collection of College memorial addresses that he edited in 1989 took anonymity to its limits. There is in it no indication of the editor's identity. But in *Who's Who* Peter listed the book among his publications. As regards the College, despite his mistrust of the slick or pompous he was a loyal and affectionate Fellow who took the Prize Fellowship seriously and read the classics scripts most carefully. He could say harsh, often amusing, things about

people he really quite liked and respected. Living examples would jar, but of a deceased scholar he remarked 'Islamic studies have lost their acutest, if not their most organised mind'. When the work of a candidate was described at a meeting as an *opus classicus*, he dissolved in laughter. This bent fitted a scholar who once remarked that 'I must think up some indiscretions for my after-dinner speech'. His dismissive remarks did no harm, since the victims did not know what had been said. They could if needs be savour a quip made by the last surviving pre-war Fellow of All Souls, Tony Wozzley, who died recently. When criticised for something he had done as Proctor, he told me 'I don't mind what is said behind my back. It was what is said to my face that bothers me'.

Peter regularly took on the chores he was asked to perform for the College. In 1960–1 he was Junior Proctor, a post which it is now difficult to get academics to fill. In 1962 he took over the Domestic Bursarship from James Fawcett. There should be no interregnum, he thought, since

fellows need to have a Bursar to complain to, and also like to feel that their domestic comfort has not been forgotten for too long a time.

Peter relied a good deal on Manciple Watson, whom he treated as a sergeant-major to himself as adjutant. He held the Bursarship until the long vacation of 1964, when physical and mental exhaustion induced him to resign, to be succeeded by another academic, James Salway. Warden

Sparrow regretted his decision, since

he was rigorously conscientious and entirely efficient. The dryness of his manner was seasoned with humour.

Fraser thought at the time that a full-time professional Domestic Bursar should be appointed, but that has happened only very recently.

He was Sub-Warden in 1980–2 in the time of Warden Neill, who ‘very much enjoyed working with him and being guided by him in the ways of this strange academic world’. His reading of the New Testament in Chapel was particularly appreciated. He liked the Warden, but disagreed strongly with his advocacy of the admission of women, in view of its likely effect on the domestic life of the College. But when women were admitted his usual courtesy and solicitous concern were in evidence. When Neill became Vice-Chancellor in 1985 Peter was an obvious choice as Acting Warden. In that role he kept the College on an even keel for two years and was, in the words of one obituarist, ‘an unexpectedly popular, even cult, figure with’ the All Souls fellowship, especially some of its younger members, ‘largely because of his amusing, but subversive and unprintable, “Fraserisms”’. He was a good chairman, imperturbable and impartial. In retirement he continued to turn up in College and enjoy festive occasions; and his affection for the College led him to compile the admirable collection of 33 Memorial Addresses that was published for private circulation in 1989.

He prefaced these memorial addresses with an (unattributed) fragment of Pindar, to the effect that: ‘the body of all men is subject to overpowering death, but a living image of their life still remains.’ Few Fellows of the College have proved themselves so loyal, imaginative, and lively.

Tony Honoré

