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Forum (41) on the Importance of the Scholarship of Alan P. Dobson (1951-2022)

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Introduction by Warren F. Kimball, Rutgers University, emeritus

This collection of essays has a single, overriding purpose and goal: To remind family, friends, and particularly historians about what a Renaissance person Alan Dobson really was.¹ Family always came first. Beverly and the ladies—Becky, Jess, and Naomi—were his passion.

He was curious about history, about politics, about theory, and about the culinary arts. He could serve up lists of the best pubs and the best walks in the Lake District, Wales, Cornwall, and throughout Scotland; always eager to guide you there.

These eight colleagues each offer a personal remembrance of a different aspect of Alan's works and accomplishments. Wonderfully, each of them also offers a deeply personal look at Alan himself. The historiography that inevitably creeps into eulogies and assessments by historians of another historian is not there to be argued, but to illustrate the nature and breadth of both Alan the historian and Alan the person.

The six essays following mine present a curated collective assessment of Alan's professional accomplishments, replete with warm personal comments. My gratitude goes to David Ryan for his yeoman work in lining up and coordinating them. Thanks to Luís Rodrigues for adding an example of Alan's reach into the Atlantic world beyond his own Anglo-American focus, and to Christopher Jespersen for his concluding remarks.

Participants:

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David Ryan is Professor of Modern History at University College Cork, Ireland, and Research Fellow at the Centre for War and Diplomacy, Lancaster University, UK. He has published extensively on contemporary history and US foreign policy, concentrating on interventions in the post-Vietnam era. His books include *Not Even Past: How the United States Ends Wars* edited with David Fitzgerald and John M. Thompson (Berghahn, 2020); *Obama, US Foreign Policy and the Dilemmas of Intervention* coauthored with David Fitzgerald (Palgrave, 2014); *US Foreign Policy and the Other*, edited with Michael Cullinane (Berghahn, 2015); *Frustrated Empire: US Foreign Policy from 9/11 to Iraq* (Pluto and Michigan, 2007); *Vietnam in Iraq: Tactics, Lessons, Legacies and Ghosts*, edited with John Dumbrell (Routledge, 2007); *The United States and Europe in the Twentieth Century* (Longman, 2003); *US Foreign Policy in World History* (Routledge, 2000); and *US-Sandinista Diplomatic Relations: Voice of Intolerance* (Macmillan, 1995). He is also the author of numerous articles.

Gavin Bailey is an international historian who has taught Politics and International Relations at several universities, most recently Stirling. He has written on the role of military aviation supply diplomacy and the political philosophy involved in the evolution of the Anglo-American relationship. He completed his PhD under Alan Dobson's supervision from 2005-2010.

¹ Lloyd Gardner prompted me to put this tribute together.

Christopher Jespersen is Dean of the College of Arts & Letters at the University of North Georgia in Dahlonega, Georgia, site of the 2018 TSA conference. He is also a past chair of TSA.

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Steve Marsh is Reader in International Politics at Cardiff University, UK, and editor of the *Journal of Transatlantic Studies*. His primary research interests lie in Anglo-American relations, American foreign policy and Cold War history. He is currently co-authoring with Professor Robert Hendershot a monograph *No Time to Die? The Anglo-American Special Relationship*.

Thomas C. Mills is Senior Lecturer in Diplomatic and International History and Deputy Director of the Centre for War and Diplomacy at Lancaster University. He is currently Chair of the Transatlantic Studies Association and an Associate Fellow at Canning House. He is co-editor of *Britain and Growth of US Hegemony in Twentieth Century Latin America* (Palgrave-Macmillan, 2020) and author of *Post-War Planning on the Periphery: Anglo-American Economic Diplomacy in South America, 1939-1945* (Edinburgh University Press, 2012).

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Essay by Warren F. Kimball, Rutgers University, emeritus

“Alan P. Dobson: A Life Well Lived and Loved”

Asked by Alan’s family “to deliver a eulogy of your memories of dad during his professional life, we know you’ll make it light hearted and amusing.”¹ How could I do that? None of us felt “light-hearted,” and I could not separate Alan the historian/politics professor from Alan the lover of the life he was living and of those who peopled that life.

His professional accomplishments have been set forth in all these essays. They seem encyclopedic, which suggests the breadth of Alan’s interests and publications.

But let me try. Alan was intense about all he did. That intensity resulted in his becoming a prolific scholar (after a bump or two that I’ll come to in a minute). He created the Transatlantic Studies Association (replete with journal), was active in the British International Studies Group, and connected with American academics and universities (Baylor University comes to mind) by his talent, energy, and deep interest in Anglo-American affairs. His contributions to scholarship and his help to other scholars are his enormous legacy. His connections with Portuguese historians demonstrated his interest in the transatlantic world of which Anglo-American relations were only a part. An unfinished draft of his history of the Chicago Civil Aviation conference during the Second World War is another.

A footnote if I may (that was one of Alan’s favorite ways of slipping in a good story or more information). Writing for family, friends, and close colleagues, citing all of his publications and professional activities, borders on boredom. Not because of what Alan wrote and did, but because the list is so lengthy. Nor is it needed. An excellent and comprehensive professional obituary by Gaynor Johnson of the University of Kent came out on April 12th, published by the British International History Group.² It was reprinted in the newsletter of the Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations.

So on to Alan Dobson, the multi-faceted professional and human being.

Our first meeting had its own Dobson touch. One summer around 1980 when I was living in New Jersey, a three hour drive to the Franklin D. Roosevelt presidential library on the Hudson river, I got a call from a gruff voiced man whose accent was, to say the least, thick. He explained that he’d like to have a talk with me about the archival work he was doing at that library, and that he’d be happy to drive down. Meet me at my home, I responded. I’ve no idea how he found me in an era without GPS’s, but lo and behold, in a few days a knock came and there stood a perspiring, bearded young man, in what I later learned were his standard wooden sandals. He had underestimated the distance from his motel and ended up walking some five miles in those clogs. We sat outside in my garden and began to talk gardening and history. Hours later we had polished off a six-pack (or more?) of beer. Burgers on the grill followed—and so did a friendship. (Reading this, my Sally, who dearly loved Alan, quite properly reminded me of his very professional commitment to his garden.)

Mentioning beer brings up another example of Alan’s professional dedication—brewing his own real ale. Unhappily, he went French later on and took up cork-sniffing and all that. I forgave him.

¹ This essay is revised from my Eulogy to Alan Dobson that was delivered at services in Wales on 12 April 2022.

² <https://www.bisa.ac.uk/members/working-groups/bihg/news/professor-alan-dobson-1951-2022>

My first trip to Swansea and Wales came when Alan arranged for me to speak at Gregynog Hall as part of a University College Swansea summer program. It was my first experience with a ha-ha, which amused him. As we walked across a field leading to the old hall, I admired its Tudor beauty; Alan quickly warned that it was like a woman with too much make-up—the closer you get the worse she looks.

We visited Bev and Alan as often as we could; sometimes with friends, often just the two of us. When my wife Jackie died, he arranged for me to visit him in Dundee, where he then was teaching, and to stay as long as I wished.

Alan had other professions as well. It was always worth a trip across the pond just to sit at his table. Self-interest suggests caution here, but despite a wife, a son, and a brother who are wonderfully creative cooks, I will say without fear of contradiction, he was the best cook I/we ever experienced. He was a pro.



Photo of Gregynog Hall

A sadly unpublished (I believe) part of Alan’s “professional” life is “Biggles. Some might argue that Biggles was a passion, not a professional pursuit. I disagree. Alan pursued Biggles, talked endlessly about Biggles, and—I suspect—was on the verge writing about Biggles. After all, Biggles related to airplanes.

As you can see, history was not the only professional side of Alan’s life. Best we let Alan speak for himself...

Back in 1984, I was so frustrated at not being able to publish my first academic book that to distract myself and entertain my children I took up my pen and wrote this story. It was for our daughters Becky and Jess; Naomi came along three years later. I remember reading it to Becky and she seemed to like it. For a while I thought of asking the daughter of a friend of ours if she would illustrate it for me, but never actually got around to asking her in the end. Alice was almost forgotten. But some thirty-six years later, with well over a dozen academic books published and having developed some painting skills of my own, I decided to take up the project again.

That comes from the foreword of what, in a way, was Alan’s first book, *Alice the Alley-Cat Finds True Friends*, even though it was not published until 2020.³

³Alan P. Dobson, *Alice the Alley-Cat Finds True Friends* (Swansea: Brynymor Dogotal Press, 2020).

It is a Lancashireman's Aesop fable, as this "blurb" (probably written by Alan) makes clear:

*Alice the alley-cat is lonely, she longs for a friend.
But Gran the groaner shoos her away and Bruiser the bulldog makes her run. Alice is left to catch mice
alone in the dark.
When a little girl comes to stay with Gran, Alice starts to realise that nothing is quite what it
seems. Is Gran really grumpy? Is Bruiser really a nasty bully? And might there be hope for friendship after
all?*

As you read the essays from friends and colleagues, you will come to appreciate why I, and all the contributors to this remembrance, felt so very close and personal towards him.

Why did Alan die? It was not his heart. That was far too big and expansive to have failed him.

When I put on hiking boots, I am always immediately waiting for him to walk into the room and say, let's go for a nice, long walk. Good God, I miss him.

 Essay by David Ryan, University College Cork, Ireland

Our friend and colleague, Alan P. Dobson, died in April 2022 in Swansea, Wales.¹ He was from the outset of our first meeting an inspiring and energetic person eager to advance various projects centred on one of his lifelong intellectual passions: the transatlantic and Anglo-American relations. His passing leaves a huge absence in our community, yet without him the community of what became the Transatlantic Studies Association (TSA) and the *Journal of Transatlantic Studies* (JTS), would never have existed. In his last few years, he also edited the *International History Review*, which had been set up by Edward Ingram, Gordon Martel, and Ian Mugridge; by coincidence Gordon wrote Ingram's obituary in that journal just a few months ago.² It was a mark of deep respect for Alan's character, honesty and integrity to be entrusted with the editorship of the two journals.

I met Alan twenty-two years earlier in April 2000 in Swansea. He had ideas. He wanted to edit a journal on Transatlantic issues, it would be multidisciplinary, and the association he created with its annual conference would generate not only a community, but also contributors, board members and reviewers for the journal. After many years, one of his constant refrains each July as we met in different parts of first Scotland, Wales and England, later Ireland and ultimately in various European cities and the United States, was that it was the camaraderie and the friendships that made the gatherings such pleasant occasions, mixed with intellectual exchange. People, connections with people, and introductions were one of his many invaluable legacies.

Our collaboration began as I was completing a book on *The United States and Europe*, commissioned by Gordon Martel.³ Alan was of course a towering presence in the field. And within a short period, we were working on the journal, the association, and the conference. For over two decades Alan was the centre of gravity, constantly advancing the interests of the journal and the people who contributed to it; he was noted for the extensive support which he provided to younger scholars.

Alan's contribution to the field was enormous. With over ten sole authored books, dozens of articles, and collaborations with Steve Marsh and others, he was prodigious. His main areas of interest were Anglo-American relations, economic statecraft, aviation; he also had an avid fascination with *Biggles*, the adventure books originating in the 1930s written by W.E. Johns, which required mandatory visits to second-hand bookshops around the country to fill the gaps in his collection—he almost had a complete run. His works are too numerous to mention, but a selection reveal the extent of his interests. Starting in the mid-1980s with *US Wartime Aid to Britain*,⁴ and another book on the 'economic special relationship,' he then moved on with *Peaceful Air Warfare*,⁵ in the early 1990s and *Flying in the Face of Competition: The Policies and Diplomacy of Airline Regulatory Reform in Britain, the USA and the European Community 1968-94*.⁶ His surveys of Anglo-American Relations and another co-authored book (with Steve Marsh) on *US Foreign Policy Since 1945*⁷ became standards and were widely used at all levels in the field. He constantly returned to these areas and issues in the chapters

¹ This essay was originally published as David Ryan, "Alan Dobson Obituary," *International History Review*, vol. 44, no. 5 (December 2022): Online: <https://doi.org/10.1080/07075332.2022.2150031>

² Gordon Martel, "Obituary: Professor Edward Ingram (1941-1922)," *The International History Review*, Vol. 44, no. 4, Online, 6 September 2022, <https://doi.org/10.1080/07075332.2022.2107759>

³ Ryan, *The United States and Europe in the Twentieth Century*. Seminar Series. (London: Addison Wesley Longman, 2003).

⁴ Alan P. Dobson, *US Wartime Aid to Britain, 1940-1946* (London: Routledge, 1986). Republished 2023.

⁵ Dobson, *Peaceful Air Warfare: United States, Britain and the Politics of International Aviation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991).

⁶ Dobson, *Flying in the Face of Competition: Policies and Diplomacy of Airline Regulatory Reform in Britain, the USA and the European Community, 1968-94* (Aldershot: Avebury Technical, 1995).

⁷ Dobson and Steve Marsh, *US Foreign Policy since 1945*, second ed., (London: Routledge, 2006).

and articles he wrote. As though that was not enough, he set up book series and served on advisory committees.

He travelled frequently and was honoured extensively, winning book prizes, pursuing Fulbright scholarships in the United States, working as a Fellow at the Nobel Institute in Oslo, and holding other distinguished visiting positions in the Azores, Lisbon, Texas, New York, amongst a number of other awards and destinations. As we talked and he filled me in with his latest travels, there was always the reference to the various friends that he met, their exchanges, and later, as his children grew up, his travels and work included other parts of the United States and Australia to visit them. It seemed there was little point in travelling unless you relished the time with others that he and his wife, Bev Dobson, who were always a presence at the Transatlantic Studies Association's conferences, enjoyed.

Educated in Durham (BA and PhD) and Southampton (MSc), Alan worked primarily in Wales and Scotland. He was employed in the Department of Political Theory & Government, University of Wales Swansea from 1978 to 1999, after which he moved to Dundee with a professorship from 1999 to 2011. He was awarded an honorary Professorship in St. Andrews, and in retirement returned to Swansea. In his obituary for Alan, Steve Marsh observed: "Alan moved institutions seldom in his academic career, reflecting personal values of loyalty, determination and belief that universities would—or ought to—recognise talent and dedication within their ranks."⁸ In many ways, given his wide circle of friends in Swansea, it was a return home—the place of his ongoing community, who turned up in large numbers in April for the celebrations of his life after the funeral. Warren Kimball flew from the US for the occasion, delivering a moving obituary in the service. At earlier times, people from all over the world would stop and stay with the Dobsons. His doors were always open to travellers.

I was privileged to be the proverbial 'right hand person' from the outset on the TSA and the *JTS*, but there was never any doubt on who was guiding the association and the journal to which his broad international community kept returning. Alan's qualities of integrity, respect, and a patience that he could maintain in public (sometimes masking inner frustrations, which over a pint later might begin with the words 'can you believe ...' evinced incredulity, even though his tolerance and humour normally prevailed and settled the issue with a knowing smile). The lunches, coffee breaks and evening meals were as important to him as the papers delivered at the various conferences. It was that engagement with humanity that cut across the contemporary direction of some higher education. Alan reminded us and set the example to pursue our research interests and publish in our desired locations over and above the pressures to chase impact and citation statistics. Gaynor Johnson noted in her British International Studies Association (BISA) obituary: "He was also fair minded, kind and possessed a great generosity of spirit. He was an astute reader of people, and, as many people have commented to me recently, a gentleman as well as a scholar."⁹

As the years passed, our friendship grew with visits to each other's homes and institutions. His family always came first, and we frequently received updates on the 'children's' various pursuits and in time those of his grandchildren. Alan adored the time spent with them; he taught them and others to paint, he recovered an old piece of writing, and published an illustrated children's book in recent years.¹⁰ He thoroughly engaged life with a multiplicity of hobbies and recreation. We talked frequently of gardening, cooking, walking whether it was the hills or on the coasts of Wales or West Cork. Increasingly, over time after the business of the journals

⁸ Marsh, "An Obituary for Alan Dobson," Transatlantic Studies Association, April 26, 2022, <https://www.transatlanticstudies.com/news/2022/4/26/an-obituary-for-alan-dobson-by-steve-marsh>

⁹ Gaynor Johnson, "Professor Alan Dobson (1951-2022)," British International History Group, 12 April 2022, <https://www.bisa.ac.uk/members/working-groups/bihg/news/professor-alan-dobson-1951-2022>

¹⁰ Dobson, *Alice the Alley-Cat Finds True Friends* (Swansea: Brynymor Dogotal Press, 2020).

or the association was complete, the emails were filled with recipes or notes on the vegetable patch. The exchanges were perennial.

Sometime, earlier this year, I told him of the edible labyrinth I created in my garden. There was no reply. And then within no time, the tributes started to flow into our emails. There are many posted on the TSA website¹¹; Tom Mills, the current Chair of the TSA reached out to many, bringing people together, at least virtually at first. Writing from Macau, Priscilla Roberts: “The TSA and the Journal are some of Alan’s ultimate memorials. Without him, I do not think they would have happened.” From London, Mick Cox observed: “His work on Anglo-American economic relations set the gold standard in the field, while his leadership in encouraging work on transatlantic studies through the journal and the Association was of immense importance to colleagues around the world.” Jeff Engel appreciated his love of malt and his ability to strike up conversation with whomever he was with. Lloyd Gardner simply lamented, “Lord, how he will be missed. I have nothing but great memories about him and Bev. A couple of scotch tasting evenings at his house and trips out to the shore near them. I think also of his art and how he led so many lives. He will be sorely, sorely missed.”

¹¹ <https://www.transatlanticstudies.com/alan-dobson-tributes>

“Alan P. Dobson and Anglo-American Relations”

It was an honor, an education and, most of all terrific fun to work with Alan Dobson across a host of projects in transatlantic relations writ large—and even those we couldn’t. We had so many things we wanted to explore. Some were thwarted for want of resources. The diplomatic history of Anglo-Americans relations ticks few contemporary academic and funding agendas. More especially, though, our ratio of ideas to time was rarely well calculated. And as it turned out, we had even less of the latter than we thought.

Alan’s footprint in the academic landscape of Anglo-American relations is large and deep—and will likely remain so. Four factors support this view. First, there is a simple function of volume: four monographs, three edited books, nine articles and twelve book chapters on various aspects of UK-US relations—not to mention the many lives he touched during his various visiting fellowships, teaching, and fastidious book reviews. This is a legacy of which many academics would be proud—and for Alan it was just one branch of his publications. The second factor is Alan’s ability to communicate his research to a range of different audiences, spanning specialist through to undergraduate student. His passion for the subject was infectious and he complemented this with great generosity of his time. At many Transatlantic Studies Association conferences, I heard him engaged in earnest conversation with postgraduate students about this and that aspect of Anglo-American relations. Similarly, his 2005 monograph may not have had the catchiest of titles—*Anglo-American Relations in the Twentieth Century: Of Friendship, Conflict, and the Rise and Decline of Superpowers*¹—but it nevertheless rapidly became core material for academics and students alike. It evidently withstood the test of time, too, because it can still be found on many university reading lists—mine included.

At the same time, Alan mastered multiple specialist fields of study within Anglo-American relations. He wrote with the same aplomb on Anglo-American political philosophy as he did on the intricacies of diplomatic summit negotiations. However, two specialist fields especially stand out. The first of these is the political economy of UK-US relations, the sub-field in which Alan first established his scholarly credentials with his monographs *US Wartime Aid to Britain* and *The Politics of the Anglo-American Economic Special Relationship 1940-84*.² Both books became staple reading for scholars interested in post-World War Two UK-US relations. Indeed, Alan was delighted when Routledge re-issued the former in 2021, if also somewhat irritated by their high pricing and failure to upgrade its presentation beyond the original typeset dating from the days preceding personal computers. Then, in 1991 Alan cornered another part of scholarship in Anglo-American relations with his monograph *Peaceful Air Warfare: the United States, Britain and the Politics of International Aviation*.³ This blended his passion for Anglo-American relations with a childhood fascination with the voluminous Biggles series by W.E. Johns. It was a combination that spawned more monographs on aviation, an obsessive hunt for a copy of every Biggles book, and a raft of compelling stories and anecdotes—not least the trialling of an aeroplane’s emergency exit by Alan and his incredibly supportive wife, Bev. At the time of his passing, Alan was two thirds of the way through another monograph on Anglo-American civil aviation negotiations—work which some of his close associates hope eventually to bring to fruition in some shape or form.

Perhaps the most important reason why Alan’s work will long be remembered and valued, though, is his willingness and ability to evolve as a scholar throughout his career. I like to think that I may have played a small part in this, at least in my grumpiness about the disciplinary narrowness of traditional scholarship in

¹ Alan P. Dobson, *Anglo-American Relations in the Twentieth Century: Of Friendship, Conflict, and the Rise and Decline of Superpowers* (London: Routledge, 1995).

² Dobson, *US Wartime Aid to Britain* (London: Croom Helm, 1986); Dobson, *The Politics of the Anglo-American Economic Special Relationship 1940-84* (Brighton & New York: Wheatsheaf/St. Martin’s, 1988).

³ Dobson, *Peaceful Air Warfare: United States, Britain and the Politics of International Aviation*, (New York: Clarendon Press, 1991)

Anglo-American relations. But then, maybe not. Alan knew his own mind, and, once launched upon a course, he was a force of nature. Either way, though, he was receptive to new ideas and held a deep personal commitment to advancing scholarship in Anglo-American relations. A valuable insight into his thinking about the field can be found in the timely reflective piece he penned for the *Journal of Transatlantic Studies* in 2020: “The Evolving Study of Anglo-American Relations: the Last 50 Years.”⁴

Around a decade ago now, Alan and I decided we wanted to do something to bring more scholars and perspectives into the field of Anglo-American relations. We had already launched a book series on Anglo-American relations with Edinburgh University Press but still needed a means of widening focus and participation. So we set out upon a series of edited books. We began relatively gently in *Anglo-American Relations: Contemporary Perspectives*. Here we complemented traditional analyses of functional cooperation with engagement of cultural history, transnational governance, strategic culture, and environmental politics. Our next book, *Churchill and the Anglo-American Special Relationship*, took a traditional focus of Anglo-American scholarship, Winston Churchill, and went in new directions. For a scholar moulded in the traditions of diplomatic history, this was a bold embrace of studies of identity, discourse, memory, commemoration, and corpus-assisted discourse analysis. And in our last book together, *Anglo-American Relations and the Transmission of Ideas*,⁵ Alan took his journey still further, including literature, political philosophy, international law, identity, and race relations in an investigation of whether there the UK and US have a shared political tradition.

When Alan and I sat indexing this *Transmission of Ideas* book we had no idea it would be our last. In fact, once he had finished his aviation book we were already set upon our next project. It was not to be. But in many ways this encapsulated Alan. With so much work in Anglo-American relations behind him, he had already helped shape the field and left it in a stronger, more vibrant condition than when he had entered it. Yet he rarely looked back at his academic footprint. There was so much more to do, and never enough time to do it.

⁴ Dobson, “The Evolving Study of Anglo-American Relations: the Last 50 Years,” *Journal of Transatlantic Studies* 18: 4 (2020): 415-34.

⁵ Dobson and Steve Marsh eds., *Anglo-American Relations: Contemporary Perspectives* (London: Routledge, 2012); Dobson and Marsh, eds., *Churchill and the Anglo-American Special Relationship*, (London: Routledge, 2017); Dobson and Marsh, eds., *Anglo-American Relations and the Transmission of Ideas: A Shared Political Tradition?* (New York: Berghahn, 2022).

“Economic Diplomacy”

Alan Dobson was fond of telling a story of mistaken identity from early in his career. When he submitted an article to an American journal which reflected his interest in economic diplomacy, one of the reviewers raised the question of whether the author might be a Communist. Alan Dobson was not a Communist as anyone who discussed politics with him would quickly find out. But the story serves to show how studies of economic diplomacy were viewed at the time Alan began publishing in the mid-1980s. Still on the margins of diplomatic history, those studying economic aspects of international relations were assumed to be politically aligned on the far left, if not outright Communists.

It was indeed the New Left authors of the 1960s who first placed economic motives and ambitions at the centre of an analysis of American foreign policy. William Appleman Williams began the trend in 1959 with the publication of *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy*, a seminal study of US foreign policy from the Spanish-American War of 1898 to the post-World War II era which placed America’s quest for markets and the promotion of an open door policy at the heart of the story.¹ Significant works which also foregrounded American economic concerns followed over the course of the decade. Lloyd Gardner explored the economic expansionism of the Roosevelt administration; Gabriel Kolko examined the economic imperatives underpinning American diplomacy during the later stages of the Second World War; and Walter LaFeber produced works on both American economic expansionism during the late nineteenth century and the economic motives driving America into the Cold War in the post-World War II years.²

When Alan published his first book in 1986, *US Wartime Aid to Britain*, it was obviously not the first work to be published with a focus on economic diplomacy.³ But as the anecdote above illustrates, histories of this kind were still viewed, by some at least, as a minority interest pursued by those on the political fringes. Alan’s choice to follow in the footsteps of the ‘Wisconsin School’ of historians reflects two consistent themes present throughout his career: on the one hand, the bravery to disregard the perils of working on unfashionable topics; and on the other, sufficient open-mindedness to take inspiration from those of a different ideological outlook.

Alan was clearly aware of the former trait when he mischievously included a quotation from A. J. P. Taylor at the top of one of his first major articles, a study of Anglo-American competition for post-war civil aviation rights published in *The Historical Journal* in 1985: “It is all dead stuff,” Taylor warned, “never to be stirred again except by some researcher desperate for a challenge.”⁴ Alan proved more than up to the challenge, demonstrating in the article how civil aviation became a major source of tension in the Anglo-American relationship of the Second World War. He brought other similarly unfashionable topics to life and demonstrated their overlooked importance within relations between Britain and the United States. For example, another early article, also from *The Historical Journal*, depicted Anglo-American negotiations over the course of 1941-42 concerning the international wheat market, again demonstrating the political significance of an apparently niche economic concern to the broader wartime Anglo-American alliance.⁵ It was of course the

¹ William Appleman Williams, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1959).

² Lloyd Gardner, *Economic Aspects of New Deal Diplomacy* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964); Gabriel Kolko, *The Politics of War: The World and United States Foreign Policy, 1943-1945* (New York: Vintage Books, 1968); Walter LaFeber, *The New Empire: An Interpretation of American Expansion, 1860-1898* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1963); LaFeber, *America, Russia and the Cold War, 1945-1966* (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, 1967).

³ Alan P. Dobson, *US Wartime Aid to Britain* (London: Croom Helm, 1986).

⁴ Dobson, “The Other Air Battle: The American Pursuit of Post-War Civil Aviation Rights,” *The Historical Journal*, 28 (1985): 429.

⁵ Dobson, “‘A Mess of Pottage for Your Economic Birthright?’ The 1941-42 Wheat Negotiations and Anglo-American Economic Diplomacy,” *The Historical Journal*, 28 (1985): 739-750.

subject of civil aviation that truly gripped Alan’s imagination in the years that followed and led to a voluminous body of work, which is discussed in this forum by Gavin Bailey.

The second trait mentioned above—the ability to engage with and learn from those of a different ideological stripe—was most notable in Alan’s work more squarely focused on Anglo-American economic diplomacy during the Second World War. The debates between traditionalists, revisionists, and post-revisionists on the role of economic motives in US foreign policy were often fraught, and by the time Alan began publishing, somewhat staid.⁶ While not pretending that Alan had any superior claim to objective analysis that eluded other historians, the lack of an overt ideological stance in Alan’s treatment of economic diplomacy did mark a refreshing break with the past.

A more obvious way in which Alan was distinguished from the scholars cited above was that he was British. While his work never contained any hint of a nationalistic bias, Alan’s extensive use of British archives did lead to a portrayal of the relationship between Britain and the United States in which Britain exercised significant agency. While always conscious of the country’s status as a junior partner by the time of the Second World War, British politicians and officials—as depicted in Alan’s works—were equally aware of where Britain did hold advantage over the United States, as in aspects of the civil aviation industry or in its broader historic economic predominance in many parts of the world. As a result, a more evenly balanced picture of Anglo-American economic diplomacy, which made clear the limits of American influence, emerged in Alan’s writings.

Both the relative lack of an ideological axe to grind and the greater weight given to the British perspective led Alan to a distinctly different depiction of the US-UK economic relationship during the Second World War than had appeared in previous works. In Gabriel Kolko’s study of the wartime alliance, for example, Britain appeared as a rather one-dimensional opponent of the trade liberalisation pursued by the Roosevelt administration.⁷ Both in *US Wartime Aid to Britain*, and in his numerous articles and book chapters on the subject, Alan’s portrayal of the economic relationship between Britain and America is far more nuanced. While acknowledging that the US ambition to pursue an ‘open door’ policy in the post-war era caused tensions with Britain, Alan was more precise in explaining the nature of Britain’s reservations regarding this goal. These largely related to the timing of trade liberalisation in the context of reconstruction in the immediate post-war era, Britain’s projected balance of payments, and the associated need to rejuvenate the country’s export trade.⁸

In sum, Alan Dobson’s treatment of Anglo-American economic diplomacy during the Second World War added a depth and nuance to the subject. He was also able to situate the economic dimension of the relationship within the broader political alliance and ultimately tell a very human story. Alan’s lively, accessible, and at times humorous style of writing was reflected in his character. As well as his extensive writings on economic diplomacy, civil aviation, economic warfare, and the Anglo-American political relationship, his influence was widely felt through the establishment of the Transatlantic Studies Association and the *Journal of Transatlantic Studies*. Perhaps most remarkable was the seemingly inexhaustible support and encouragement he provided to younger aspiring scholars, including several who are represented in this forum.

⁶ Brad Simpson, “Explaining Political Economy,” in Frank Costigliola and Michael J. Hogan, eds., *Explaining the Historiography of American Foreign Relations* [1991], 3d ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 58-73.

⁷ Gabriel Kolko, *The Politics of War: The World and United States Foreign Policy, 1943–1945* (New York, NY: Random House, 1968).

⁸ In addition to *US Wartime Aid to Britain*, see Dobson, “Economic Diplomacy at the Atlantic Conference 1941”, *Review of International Studies*, 10 (1985): 143-63; Dobson, “The Export White Paper, 10 September 1941”, *The Economic History Review*, 39 (1986): 59-76. For the post-war period, see Dobson, *Anglo-American Relations in the Twentieth Century: Of Friendship, Conflict, and the Rise and Decline of Superpowers* (London: Routledge, 1995).

“Alan Dobson as an International Historian”

Alan’s principal contribution to the field of international history was in twentieth century Anglo-American diplomatic and commercial relations, especially the period since the Second World War. In the 1980s and the 1990s, he was one of the first to define these fields on the European side of the Atlantic, and his ideas show a consistency that meant that intellectually he swam as often against the historiographical current as he did with it.¹ Alan’s work conveys an essentially positive view of Britain’s relations with the United States.² In a nutshell, the culture and diplomatic priorities of the two countries did more to unite them than to divide them. Their mutual belief in capitalism and in the promotion of democracy as bulwarks against the different forms of ideological tyranny that emerged in the twentieth century provided the basis for a solid rapprochement that culminated in the 1980s in the famous Margaret Thatcher-Ronald Reagan special relationship. While some questioned the existence of any kind of special relationship between Britain and the United States, then and have done so since, Alan’s account is one of organic evolution.³

Alan’s work illustrates another distinctive feature of his approach to writing international history. In an academic culture where broad sweep of history books are often viewed pejoratively as little more than student text books, Alan reminded us that without defining the shape and makeup of the forest, the significance of the individual trees within it is much more difficult to ascertain. And for Alan, Anglo-American relations was made up of a lot of trees, indeed a more-or-less infinite number.⁴ In the 1990s and in the first decade of the twenty-first century, when most historians focussed on the high politics, diplomacy, and strategic dimensions of the relationship, Alan encouraged the incorporation of cultural and inter-disciplinary synergies into the field and did so, crucially, without denigrating the importance of the more well-established approaches. For Alan, the cultural turn in international history was not shrouded in controversy or a phenomenon that should be seen as a sudden, jarring innovation. It was a natural part of how a historian should approach the study of any topic; that is, from as many perspectives as possible.

But while Alan’s overarching view of the Anglo-American relationship is generally more positive than many scholars of his generation, it would be completely wrong to suggest that his was simply a cosy view of a diplomatic relationship that many today continue to view as key to the British government. His work on economic diplomacy makes it clear that that closeness was quite remarkable, unexpected, and even counter intuitive,⁵ and that while Britain and the United States were united by more than divided them, those divisions where they existed were profound, even seismic. Alan’s numerous articles emphasise how enormous the transformation of the relative fortunes of Britain and the United States were, especially in the first half of the twentieth century. Few scholars realise just how rapid and extensive the decline of British commercial power was during that period, and that it was largely at the expense of the massive expansion of the economy of the United States. This is a particularly important point because Britain’s commercial prowess was central to its

¹ A useful overview of Dobson’s views on the developments and trends within the Anglo-American relationship can be found in the journal of the Transatlantic Studies Association, an organisation he founded in 2002. Alan P. Dobson, “The Evolving Study of Anglo-American Relations: the Last 50 Years,” *Journal of Transatlantic Studies* 18:4 (2020): 415-34.

² Dobson, *The Politics of the Anglo-American Economic Special Relationship 1940-84* (Brighton and New York: Wheatsheaf/St. Martin’s, 1988); *Anglo-American Relations in the Twentieth Century: Of Friendship, Conflict and the Rise of the Superpowers* (London: Routledge, 1995).

³ Dobson, “The Reagan Administration, Economic Warfare and the Closing Down of the Cold War,” *Diplomatic History* 29:3 (2005): 531-556.

⁴ Dobson, “The Years of Transition: Anglo-American Relations 1961-67,” *Review of International Studies*, 16 (1990): 239-58.

⁵ For example, Dobson, “Economic Diplomacy at the Atlantic Conference 1941,” *Review of International Studies* 10 (1985): 143-63.

identity as an imperial power and as a European Great Power; indeed, there was no other country for whom the stakes in these respects were higher.

Another dimension to the Anglo-American relationship that Alan's work brings into the spotlight is the tensions caused, ironically, by both countries being victorious allies in the First and Second World Wars. The same tensions also existed with Britain's relations with France, and for similar reasons. In practical terms, the two world wars did little to give the promotion of democracy in the post-war eras a particular Anglo-American identity, even though it had been central to the war aims of both countries. The relationship was also resistant to the prevailing culture of internationalism, especially before 1945; another irony, given that the League of Nations, the organisation created to promote this, was an Anglo-American construct.⁶ Both Britain and the United States were realist states who believed that national self-interest trumped any other kind of responsibility. So what, according to Alan, was the glue that held the Anglo-American relationship together? His answer returns us to the study of culture. It was the many small, soft diplomatic dimensions; the common language; the shared experience of being dominant world powers; the common history of the two countries before the American Revolution; the British and Irish ancestral roots of many American citizens by the start of the twentieth century. This emphasis on the human dimensions of the relationship was also underpinned as the century progressed by a mutual advocacy of liberalism and human rights, for example the emergence of a common ethical framework to their military and strategic activities through NATO and the United Nations and also as individual state actors.⁷

Foreign policy cannot be understood entirely outside its domestic context. Although Alan was not, like most international historians, given to writing at length about the internal politics of the countries central to his work, he did pass comment on the way that the different political cultures within Britain and the United States had a bearing on their relationship. Both had a bicameral system, with an upper and lower house.⁸ However, it was the federal nature of American political organisation that resonated most with Alan. The advantages and disadvantages of this system to the United States offered important lessons to Britain on matters of sovereignty and national identity in the decades after the Second World as the British government grappled with membership of the European Economic Community, the forerunner of the European Union.⁹ His work in this area also demonstrates that the multifaceted nature of Anglo-American relations was not limited to the nuances provided by cultural and inter-disciplinary perspectives.

⁶ Dobson, *The Politics of the Anglo-American Economic Special Relationship 1940-84 and Anglo-American Relations in the Twentieth Century*.

⁷ Dobson, "When Strategic Foreign Policy Considerations Did Not Trump Economics: British Cold War Policies on East-West Trade," in John Fisher, Effie G. H. Pedaliu, and Richard Smith, eds., *The Foreign Office, Commerce and British Foreign Policy in the Twentieth Century*, (London: Palgrave/Macmillan, 2016)" 361-81.

⁸ Dobson, "Labour or Conservative: Does it Matter in Anglo-American Relations?" *Journal of Contemporary History* 25 (1990): 387-407

⁹ Alan, "The Special Relationship and European Integration," *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, 2 (1991), 79-102.

“Alan Dobson and Civil Aviation”

One of Alan Dobson’s numerous areas of scholarship was civil aviation. I wanted to speak about his substantial achievements in this area with reference to the five books Alan wrote over three decades, from *Peaceful Air Warfare*, published in 1991 to *A History of International Civil Aviation From Its Origins Through Transformative Evolution* published in 2017.³⁸

Most accounts of civil aviation history tend to originate from three wellsprings: biographical and historical accounts of specific airlines and figures, business management literature, and finally technical specialist literature focused on aircraft and their equipment. All can have elements to recommend them, but generally most demonstrate clear limitations in terms of historical explanation.

Accounts of airlines, although sometimes well-researched, can frequently suffer from excessive closeness to their subject and the lack of broader context common to biography. Technical literature, although approaching definitive factual analysis can often share these flaws and can sometimes almost comically divorced from broader historical reality. One of my favourite examples of this, which I shared with Alan, was an account of the disastrous development of the RB211 jet engine which led to bankruptcy of Rolls-Royce and the near failure of the flagship British industrial sector in the early 1970s. According to the author, this was attributable to American perfidy towards one of their main foreign commercial rivals. One of Alan’s advantages as a historian, clearly displayed here and in his work on the Anglo-American relationship, was his ability to keep such developments in perspective rather than let them distort his analysis. Finally, business management literature can vary from insubstantial commercial puffery to more substantive strategic analysis, but even at its best it can still suffer from a lack of context and broader historical understanding. This is where Alan Dobson’s contribution as a historian of international politics made all the difference. He explored areas of international conflict, competition, and collaboration with a rigor and scope which raised analysis of the subject to a more substantive and cohesive level. As he put it in *Peaceful Air Warfare*, “some aspects of aviation have attracted relatively little attention, in particular where aviation comes into contact with politics and diplomacy.”³⁹ Alan did more than any to rectify that.

Alan’s early and enduring enthusiasm for the ‘Boy’s Own’ aerial adventures of Biggles by W. E. Johns expanded to encompass civil aviation by two influences. The first of these was a comment by his PhD supervisor, Charles Reynolds, that the exchanges between President Franklin D. Roosevelt and Prime Minister Winston Churchill over the 1944 Chicago civil aviation conference included some of the most ill-tempered of their extensive wartime correspondence. This clearly piqued the interest of the historian, while an early recollection of his father-in-law’s airline travel in the nineteen sixties, when air travel was uncommon, expensive, glamorous, and even futuristic laid a path for future enthusiasm.

The result was *Peaceful Air Warfare: the United States, Britain, and the Politics of International Aviation* (1991). This built upon Alan’s initial work on Anglo-American economic collaboration to provide a new perspective of what was, with some validity, a subject within the arena of the ‘Special Relationship’. From his coverage of the Chicago Conference of 1944 to the Bermuda 1 and 2 conferences of 1946 and 1977, Alan’s account

³⁸ Alan Dobson, *Peaceful Air Warfare. The United States, Britain and the Politics of International Aviation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991); Dobson, *Flying in the Face of Competition. The Policies and Diplomacy of Airline Regulatory Reform in Britain, the USA and the European Community 1968-94* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1995); Dobson, *Globalisation and Regional Integration. The Origins, Development and Impact of the Single European Aviation Market* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2007); Dobson, *FDR and Civil Aviation. Flying Strong, Flying Free* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); Dobson, *A History of International Civil Aviation: From Its Origins, Through Transformative Evolution* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017).

³⁹ Dobson, *Peaceful Air Warfare*, 1.

mapped out a structure for the evolution of the international diplomacy and the resulting agreements which shaped commercial air travel from the end of the Second World War to the end of the Cold War. This was still very much an Anglo-American story, with some justification, in an area where, as Alan put it, the two countries could, and did, determine the character of the civil aviation system after the initial failure to internationalise liberal regimes in the civil aviation world at the end of the Second World War. The intangible is important. Following the example of influences such as Michael Oakeshott, one of Alan's strengths as a historian was to understand and acknowledge the relevance of issues such as 'character' in historical explanation, while at the same time investigating significant case-study examples of competitive collaboration which compare to David Reynolds's work on the evolution of Anglo-American co-operation.⁴⁰

Another of his strengths as a historian was his ability to expand the framework of his analysis. If his first work in the field drew upon existing traditions as an organic outgrowth of his work on economic statecraft and that of the Special Relationship in particular, his next book took on new territory. *Flying in the Face of Competition: The Policies and Diplomacy of Airline Regulatory Reform in Britain, the USA, and the European Community, 1968-94* (1995) built upon his previous work to investigate the impact of British, American, and European approaches to deregulation in the post-Gulf War era where the international airline market faced considerable turbulence from new political developments. Although not perhaps a case of new tricks for an old dog, the recognition of the importance of the European Community (as it then was) as a new and influential player on the scene allowed Alan to throw new light upon the successes and failures of prior bilateral Air Service Agreements, such as Bermuda 1 and 2, to liberalize international air travel. But some themes remained constant; the new prominence of deregulation, market liberalization, and resulting business strategies (such as the early evolution of strategic alliances to overcome the tyranny of 'chosen instrument' and flag-carrier airlines) did not change Alan's view that the airline business 'was not just business,' and that it now involved even more complex politics and diplomatic negotiations. Despite his historian's reluctance to predict the future, this observation would be proven correct in the progress of his own work.

Globalization and Regional Integration: The Origins, Development and Impact of the Single European Aviation Market (2007) investigated the regime which developed over the following decade. While *Flying in the Face of Competition* provided a strategic overview of the civil aviation world at a point of flux between an international civil aviation system built upon an Anglo-American tradition of competitive bilateral agreements and one exposed to new pressures and actors, *Globalization and Regional Integration* belied its deeply unsexy title to provide something of a tour de force of the events which followed, notably over attempts by the US, the British, and the EU to reach an over-arching Open Aviation Area agreement to match the simultaneous development of a Single European Aviation Market.

Although Alan was never excessively concerned with style, in my opinion this might be one of the best examples of his ability to fluently master complex technological, legal, and diplomatic detail and express it with clear, cogent, and even forceful argument. When it comes to the matter of excessive concern, Alan was even less bothered with cover for the political scientists than usual in this work, baldly stating that: "It has no pretensions to theory."⁴¹ Nonetheless, the range and detail of Alan's analysis, grounded firmly in original source research and oral history from the participants, may never have been displayed so effectively. Nor perhaps was a certain wry sense of humour which I enjoyed detecting. The repeated anecdote by diplomatic bureaucrats about newly independent nations first acquiring a steel mill and then a national airline as a symbol of national virility could take a different and more hypocritical tone depending upon the context involved.

But of course, this may be down to personal bias. And this is where I make my own, brief, appearance in the story. Alan kindly credited me as one of his research students who assisted with the research for the book.

⁴⁰ Michael Oakeshott, 'The Rule of Law' in *On History and Other Essays* (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1999) p.128-131; David Reynolds, *The Creation of the Anglo-American Alliance 1937-1941. A Study in Competitive Co-operation* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1981).

⁴¹ Dobson, *Globalisation and Regional Integration*, 2.

Unlike Steve Marsh, from whom Alan would seek advice and commentary on the text (probably over a glass of good malt Scotch, and possibly sampled while dressed in silk smoking jackets and reclining in handsomely-tooled leather armchairs), my contribution involved wrestling with the satanic photocopying machines in the Stygian gloom and infernal heat of the basement of the Dundee University Law Library, copying large extracts of European Commission directives and European Court of Justice summaries for the book. Jean-Paul Sartre may have claimed that ‘Hell is other people,’ but I maintain that this experience came a close second.

Alan’s next work, *FDR and Civil Aviation: Flying Strong, Flying Free* (2011) revisited some familiar territory, but offered some new interpretations of well-established episodes, notably the 1944 Chicago conference, which he now placed in a long-term retrospective analysis of Roosevelt’s attempts to spread a liberal international order. Although Alan still regarded it as a failure, with larger globalist ambitions unable to entirely overcome national self-interest, he reinterpreted Roosevelt’s legacy within his longer-term strategic objectives to arrive at possibly more nuanced picture in a manner that demands the chronological perspective of the historian.

Alan sympathetically traced the subsequent evolution of civil aviation liberalization through the lens of Roosevelt’s thinking. Although alive to the role of personalities in bureaucratic policymaking in prior work (notably of figures such as Lord King in *Flying in the Face of Competition*), Alan here drew upon detailed re-examination of the impact of officials such as Roosevelt’s Chairman of the Civil Aeronautics Board Lloyd Pogue, or notorious autocrats such as Pan American’s chairman Juan Trippe to arrive at some new and nuanced conclusions. These further illuminated a subject which Alan had previously covered in great depth; if there was ever an argument for authors to maintain continued scholarly reappraisal, this work provides it. Warren Kimball discusses another example of this in his introduction. Who else but Alan could have managed to educate the seminal historian of Lend-Lease on esoteric terms such as “cabotage,” encapsulating the tension between the commercial freedom for a foreign airline to carry international passengers within a national territory and the defense of national sovereignty and self-interest involved in its protection. While Kimball humorously discusses this terminology, this point offers an insight into a key issue Alan had identified as representative of the conflicting philosophical, legal, and political distinctions at the epicenter of civil aviation diplomacy two decades before. Sometimes the devil really is in the detail.

Alan’s final work on the subject, *A History of International Civil Aviation From Its Origins Through Transformative Evolution* (2017), takes us full circle, bringing together a comprehensive account of the accumulated knowledge of three decade’s work on the subject. Although much of the framework was familiar, Alan expanded the book’s chronological coverage to include the first efforts to internationalize civil aviation after the First World War and included new details (and analysis) of events after the deregulation described in *Globalization and Regional Integration*. Appropriately, he identified some significant and unchanging themes involved.

Above all, his view of his primary task remained unchanged since 1991; he was engaged in unapologetic historical explanation. Despite his knowledge of International Relations theory and political philosophy (as evidenced in significant observations such as the influence of Hugo Grotius on Roosevelt’s thinking), his concern was always to provide the empirical evidence necessary before theorizing could begin.⁴² In the meantime, historians should feel free to derive at least some enjoyment from his ‘Methodological Interlude,’ in *A History of International Civil Aviation* touching upon regime theory, realism, and idealism, with the footnoted advice for the uninterested to painlessly skip the relevant section. Theory was his servant, never his master.

Nonetheless, if there are parallels to be drawn between his work in civil aviation, economic statecraft, and US foreign policy, they are evident in his understanding of the competing tides of idealist liberalization and

⁴² Dobson, *FDR and Civil Aviation*, 3-5.

Hobbesian realism; internationalist liberal interdependence against state sovereignty, interest, and power and even functionalism springing from the establishment of international technical and administrative institutions such as IATA (International Air Transport Association) and ICAO (International Civil Aviation Organization), which allowed post-war civil aviation to develop into the safe mass transit characteristic of the process of globalization which we have all experienced in our lifetimes. That these were present and acknowledged were less important to him than how they were understood and how they impacted upon the actors involved in the story he told. As Alan observed; “Surely that is a story worth knowing.”⁴³

It was, and it will remain so for anybody reading his books.

⁴³ Dobson, foreword to *A History of International Civil Aviation*.

“Alan Dobson and Portuguese Academia”

Alan Dobson was an inspiration and an example for a new generation of researchers who had the privilege of contacting him and working together. His influence on this new generation of researchers in Portugal was remarkable. I met Alan Dobson in the context of an international conference, “Lives and Consequences: The Local Impact of the Cold War,” on the local impacts of the global Cold War, which was organized in 2003 by Jeffrey A. Engel at Yale University.⁴⁴ At the time, we realized that we both had ongoing research projects on US military bases in Europe during the Cold War period. Along with Charlie Witham, Dobson had presented a paper on the US nuclear submarine base in Scotland during the Cold War and I had been studying the US military base in the Azores, Portugal, also during the Cold War. This first contact resulted in the panel at the annual TSA conference in Dundee in 2004, entitled “The Impact of US bases in Europe,” moderated by Alan Dobson and with interventions by Engel, Charlie Witham, and me. This common interest in US military bases would result in a number of other initiatives, in which Alan always played the role of mentor, actively contributing with ideas and suggestions. Among them were the international conference held on the island of Santa Maria in the Azores and an Advanced Research Workshop funded by NATO’s Science for Peace Program held in Lisbon in 2007. Alan was decisive in organizing all events, bringing his knowledge, his enthusiasm, and his suggestions for new researchers to invite and new topics to explore.

It is worth highlighting the organization in 2006 of the international conference, “American military bases in Europe: a comparative perspective,” which took place in the middle of the Atlantic, on the island of Santa Maria, in the Azores, with the collaboration of local entities and organizations, many of which were also encouraged and, I may say, fascinated by the personality of Alan Dobson and his knowledge on this subject. It was particularly gratifying for Dobson and for everyone involved to be able to receive and to hear in Santa Maria the testimony of one of the former US soldiers involved in the first US contingent to arrive in the Azores during the Second World War, Norman Herz.⁴⁵

Dobson’s collaboration and inspiration were also decisive in the preparation and organization of the NATO Advanced Research Workshop, in Lisbon, 2007, with the title “Political and Social Impact of Military Bases. Historical Perspectives, Contemporary Challenges.” Here, the scope of analysis on military bases went beyond the temporal limits of the Cold War, to also cover the present, with panels on the social impact of military bases and their relationships with local communities, on the US Global Defense Posture Restructuring, and on existing military bases in the Black Sea Area and Southern Europe. Here we had the opportunity to deepen our collaboration with our colleagues at the University of Odessa, in particular with Volodymyr Dubovyk, and also with the Joint War College in Lisbon. This event resulted in the publication of a book in which Alan Dobson participated with one of the most important chapters.⁴⁶

Finally, I would like to share here another, perhaps lesser-known, facet of Alan Dobson, in addition to that of professor and researcher. In 2016 Alan agreed to join the external monitoring committee of the Center for International Studies at ISCTE–University Institute of Lisbon, which I directed at the time. The role played by Dobson was crucial. After participants had carefully read the reports we prepared, a two-day visit to our university and our research center took place, with the committee having the opportunity to meet separately with the technical support staff, younger researchers, professors and researchers, and the management and the scientific committee. As a result, the Commission led by Dobson prepared a report with a diverse set of

⁴⁴ <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/event/lives-and-consequences-the-local-impact-the-cold-war>

⁴⁵ <https://ipri.unl.pt/index.php/pt/arquivo-agenda/2007/326-82>

⁴⁶ Alan P. Dobson, “Operation Lamachus: the Holy Loch US Nuclear Base and the Dangers of Local Radiation Pollution,” in Luís Rodrigues and Sergiy Glebov, eds., *Military Bases: Historical Perspectives, Contemporary Challenges*, (Amsterdam: IOS Press, 2009), 29-39. DOI: 10.3233/978-1-58603-967-7-29

suggestions for improvement and refinement that turned out to be decisive in our preparation for the following year's assessment by the Portuguese scientific system.

In the report, Dobson and the other members of the monitoring committee left indications that can be grouped into three distinct areas: organization and operation; research and funding; postgraduate education. Regarding the first point, the report highlighted the very strong collegial feel and the high degree of professionalism from staff to faculty, although it also highlighted the existing difficulties due to the existence of numerous short-term contracts and the difficulties in guaranteeing staff and researchers more stable professional situations. The recommendation was clear that over time, short-term contracts should become the exception rather than the rule. Regarding research and funding, the Commission encouraged the Center to pursue and intensify its interdisciplinary character, distinguishing international studies from IR, and to consider that this characteristic could be used to promote the Center and attract high quality faculty and research students.

Alan also recommended that, in its quest for internationalization, the Center should further encourage publications in English by its researchers and that, considering the current success in achieving external funding awards, the Center should consider the appointment of a specialized officer for post-awards management. At the teaching level, the report concluded that International Studies at ISCTE was a major attraction for students and faculty alike and recommended that ideally the Center should seek to develop a PhD program in International Studies, which would draw on a recruitment pool that is different from those that are currently drawn on by existing departments and schools. The success of the existing MA program should provide candidates for the PhD programs.

ISCTE's Center for International Studies adopted almost all of these recommendations, which were contained in the final report. In my view, they were the basis of the evaluation of our institution the next year and the very significant increase in the level of funding guaranteed by the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology. The PhD program in International Studies began in 2021. Alan Dobson's recommendations and advice went well beyond the report. His presence in Lisbon during those intense days of work was an invaluable contribution to our Center and to the University as a whole, a fundamental stimulus for us to continue on our path, always trying to maintain as our foundation the advice given by Alan and the lessons of his conduct as a person and as a scholar.

Concluding Remarks by Christopher Jespersen, University of North Georgia

Through the personal and the professional lives he led over decades and decades as a husband, father, grandfather, friend, colleague, scholar, founder and much, much more, Alan Dobson touched so many people that it is nearly impossible to know where to begin and where to end. The contributors here illuminate some of the many facets of Dobson's extraordinary career, but they also highlight the warmth of his friendship, the brilliance of his insights, the thoughtfulness of his commentary, and, to borrow from Tom Mills, the mischievous way he could tweak those in the academy with a wry observation or two. Gavin Bailey also makes note of Alan's wry sense of humor, which was very much part of how Dobson took his profession seriously. And yet, he was himself one of the most unassuming and genuine of individuals anyone could imagine.

Steve Marsh reminds us that Alan never dwelled on his past accomplishments. He was ever looking forward always ready to climb the next scholarly mountain. Indeed, Marsh displays how the traditional approach Alan had long championed blossomed into new avenues of discovery and exploration toward the end of his career. Despite Alan's penchant for looking forward, as all the authors here so ably demonstrate, and as we collectively pay tribute to Alan and his work, it is difficult not to look back to appreciate just how he shaped the field "and left it in a stronger, more vibrant condition than when he had entered it."

Gaynor Johnson describes Alan's contribution as being as frequently at odds with the prevailing wisdom as his work was in unison with that same wisdom. Mills lays out the case for how Alan's scholarship "added depth and nuance" to Anglo-American economic diplomacy during World War Two. Bailey breaks down Alan's approach to his scholarly pursuits, starting with the empirical evidence and building from there. Alan did not shy away from theory, Bailey observes, but "Theory was his servant, never his master."

Once labeled a Communist by a misguided reviewer of one of his manuscript submissions to a journal early in his career, Alan Dobson was most certainly not that, but just as assuredly, he was British, although not of the simplistic or jingoistic type, Mills writes. What that meant was that Alan made extensive and effective use of British archives and brought a detailed, nuanced, and sympathetic assessment of British officials and the difficulties they faced in negotiating with the Americans both during and after the war. America may have been the senior partner, but Britain was not without influence.

Johnson describes Dobson's scholarship as arising organically from the sources. She enlists the trees-and-forest metaphor to explain that while Alan never forgot the importance of details, he kept his focus on "the shape and makeup of the forest." There was the bigger picture. He embraced multiple perspectives, applied a rigorous methodological approach to his scholarship, all the while maintaining an open mind to new ideas, something echoed by all the contributors. What was the glue that bound together the Anglo-American relationship as the question applied to Alan's scholarship, she asks? She settles on culture, both political culture and the common history that bound the British and their American counterparts together, but also "the human dimensions of the relationship."

It is those "human dimensions" that so manifestly underscored Alan's works as well as his personal and professional life that thread their way through all the contributors' remembrances and summaries of Alan, his work, and his life. Enthralled from boyhood with the Biggles books, Alan maintained that enthusiasm and happily shared it with others at conferences as off he set off to the local bookstore to check out its collection. Another aspect to these "human dimensions," Mills mentions, was "the seeming inexhaustible support and encouragement" Alan "provided to younger aspiring scholars."

In addition to his support for individual scholars of all ranks, Alan also affected whole institutions, as Luís Nuno Rodrigues recounts. When asked to participate in an external review of the Center for International Studies at ISCTE–University Institute of Lisbon, Alan wrote a series of recommendations that led to

increased funding the very next year from the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology. Indeed, Alan's ability to build relations led ISCTE to arrange to host the 2020 transatlantic studies conference, something that had to be postponed because of the pandemic, but the genesis for which began in 2003 when Alan reached out to Luís to participate in a panel on the local impacts of the global Cold War.

In assessing Alan Dobson's scholarly works and the impact he had on the field, all the authors also speak, either indirectly or directly, to how Alan was a friend and colleague as well. "The lunches, coffee breaks and evening meals were as important to him as the papers delivered at the various conferences," David Ryan asserts. Indeed, they were. Along with a few contributors who were present at the creation, Alan founded the Transatlantic Studies Association (TSA) with the goal of creating a scholarly community that widened and diversified under his leadership. He hosted the TSA annual meeting in Dundee in 2002, 2004, 2008, and 2011, and he also set in motion the opportunity for the conference to move to other locales like Cork, Canterbury, New Castle, Plymouth, and Lancaster. And when TSA moved to the continent in Ghent and then Middleburg, or when TSA first traversed the Atlantic to land in Dahlonaga, Georgia, Alan was there, happily welcoming new attendees and thoroughly enjoying the varied experiences.

Although a seasoned traveler in his own right, Alan was, as Ryan observes, a consummate host. It wasn't just the garden he cultivated and from which he picked fresh vegetables and herbs for the evening's repast, or the menu he carefully crafted, to include a lovely selection of wine, or even the array of single-malt scotches he kept in store for an after-dinner drink; it was the entire experience: the companionship, the conversation, the sheer joy of coming together as colleagues and friends, the opportunity to make new friends and welcome old ones. Alan and Bev could not have been more hospitable.

In assessing an individual's impact across a long career, there is most obviously a person's contributions to the profession. In the case of Alan Dobson, however, there is also the personal connections he made with senior scholars, with peers, and with faculty just starting out. Alan welcomed them all; he engaged them in ways both out of his own intellectual curiosity and out of a desire to assist, to learn, to rethink his own assumptions, and to challenge others. And throughout it all, he did so with great, good humor, sensitivity, and above all, a love for the journey. "There was so much more to do," Marsh says, and with Alan that was always true. A "lively, accessible" character, as Mills concludes, Alan brought so much to his interactions with others, including great humor, or "a wry sense of humor" as Bailey recounts. "A gentleman as well as a scholar," Gaynor Johnson wrote in another forum. Ryan, quoting Lloyd Gardner, correctly reminds us that Alan Dobson "will be sorely, sorely missed."