



## REVIEWS and Comments

Thanks John - delighted to get this and what a great thing to have accomplished. What's next?

**Professor Margie Wetherell**, *New Zealand*

Your book is superb, well written and, obviously, well-illustrated. Thanks for sending it. It is interesting, highly readable and shows you can do much more than drawing maps, Hunt!

**Andrew Blowers**, *Emeritus Professor of Social Sciences Open University*

It's fascinating filling in all kinds of early detail about someone I thought I knew quite well. I'm not far into the book yet but there's much there which I'm sure I've heard and forgotten over the years (close on 50 of them!) Plenty of new and interesting info too, of course. I really love the poem that gave you the format for the book; a very interesting and different way of constructing your story.

**Muriel Long**, *Leicester, UK*

I enjoyed re-reading it and to be honest and I found many more 'nuggets' that I hadn't read the first time. Also enjoyed finding out more about Anne and her work for the Sunday Times. The 'Munsell Colour System' was fascinating and the fact that you used a start-up called 'Zoom' ha ha ...

**Mike Whittle**, *Milton Keynes*

John it's wonderful – the fascinating beautifully written text, the amazing set of imaginatively chosen photos (so many, superb!), the reminiscences – oh and I LOVED the cartographers getting lost, am still giggling (so is my NZ daughter). Thank you so much too for the acknowledgement, I'm glowing!

**Ruth Finnegan**, *OBE FBA FAFS FRAI, Emeritus Professor The Open University, anthropologist and prize winning author.*

I just wanted to add that I thought it was really lovely that you included the remembrance to Dick – very special. What a star you are, and also you too Anne for all the work you put into the book. We are amazed you could remember it all John, we certainly couldn't remember our 'history' in such clear detail. We do know now you can draw a straight line!!

**Di and Eric Thompson**, *Stony Stratford, Bucks*

This is a delight. I was very pleased to see poems by Thaiquan and Dick as well as references to Andy Blowers, Ruth Finnegan, Margie, Peggotty, the Mole connection and a picture of Chris Brooks with a Mac. I particularly enjoyed the story about blowing up the BBC's lights and can well imagine the joy of taking your Box Brownie into the Chapel followed by the horror of the cascading glass.

**Dr D Weinbren** *BA MA HEA, Curriculum Manager, Open University*

My overall impression of reading this delightful book can be summed up in two Chinese idioms 爱不释手 meaning 'be so fond something so as not to let go of it' and 图文并茂 meaning 'excellent in both illustration and text'. The reading of this work has reinforced my view that history is not just about chaps, and geography is not just about maps, and the reader closes the book with a lesson of cartography well-learned.

The five sections of the book clearly set out the author's accommodation, education, occupation, professional association and finally, jubilation in retirement, with headings that clearly signposted the reader to the current places and next destinations. The illustrations add to – and by no means detract from – the words, they enrich the contexts with vivid visual textures.

The moral and professional progress of the author is linearly depicted since he was born 'exactly one year before VE day' (page 7). The personal and historical contexts are thus shrewdly entwined. The narrative sweeps on and we learn about his parents, his birthplace, and his schools. The sub-title of this

book – *with cartographic meanderings* – is aptly wonderful and wonderfully apt, so as to prepare the readers for what is in store for them. The *Oxford English Dictionary (OED)* list an example of “meanderings” in 1783 HANNAH COWLEY *Which is the Man?* III. i. 351 ‘ *To their genius are all their faults imputed; which are considered as the graceful meanderings of a mind too ethereal to be kept down within the Rules of Common Sense.* ’ These **cartographic meanderings** which the author takes us are ‘graceful’ and beneficial, for which we are grateful. We learn about the ability of SYMAP (pages 43 and 44) , blood distribution maps (pages 46-51) and read a succinct account of the advent of the Geographic Information Systems (GIS). We also learn where to ‘draw the line’ and the ‘graphics, rules and principles’. It is refreshing to meet again the ‘My Wife and My Mother-in-law’ picture by the American cartoonist, William Ely Hill on page 66 in one of the delightful “Chance Encounters” section printed in blue, with the caption “They are both in this picture – Find them.” “Chance encounters” sections, printed in blue, are outside the auto-biographical thrust of the main text.

On page 30 we see the author’s first “test” drawing on white enamel with hand-lettering, and a picture of three instruments from the past: a contour pen, a distance measurer, and a compass for drawing very small circles. For many readers, the Ordnance Survey (OS) is almost a household name, and which the author joined in 1962. In customary honesty the author tells us that, “In conversation I always called myself a surveyor assistant – which made me feel better anyway!” (page 27). Readers who are so strict with names can do well to remember Shakespeare’s Juliet’s line “that which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet.”

In a section on “my cars” (pages 25-26 )the author refers to “a nice registration plate” of his Audi TT, JRH, as if the author wants to silently quiz his readers, JRH stands for the author’s full name John Richard Hunt. A delightful anecdote concerning names occurs on page 42 when we learn that

*When I arrived at the entrance several booted and suited staff were waiting and for a very brief moment in time I was mistaken for THE Lord John Hunt of Everest fame, the Royal Geographical Society president at the time.” (page 42)* A classic case of mistaken identity, in other words.

Quiet humour intrudes again on page 68 when at the author’s invitation Prof Eila Campbell gave an after-dinner speech at the Society of University Cartographers annual summer school in Swansea “she gave a very lengthy review, so lengthy in fact that the audience were straining to get away as the conference bar was about to shut. I was very unpopular afterwards for not stopping her earlier!” (page 68).

The author drew a series of blood distribution maps for Dr Arthur Mourant in 1975-76. Arthur Ernest Mourant (1904-1994), haematologist and geologist, who had his own entry in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. On page 55, we learn how the OU’s VC at the time, John Daniels, came to the author’s office with his Apple laptop to ask him to set it up so that he could receive and send e-mails from home. In one of the “Chance Encounters” sections on page 58, flying up to Aberdeen in September 1992, the author sat next to gentleman busily sketching who turned out to be the famous Austrian painter and cartographer, Heinrich Berann. Such snippets of information, accumulatively, makes for a larger effect which sees the author encountered or worked with ‘academic celebrities’ in the ‘flow of humanity’.

One of the highlights of the OU cartographic venture was the *Third World Atlas* (First edition, 1983 and second edition, digitally produced 1986) for the *Third World Studies* course. The process of making it is meticulously described which is an eye opener for the general reader. It is worth pointing out that many great things in the world owe a huge debt of gratitude to people who work silently behind the scenes, such as the contributors to *Third World Atlas*.

The “Family Extras” section (pages 89-92) – providing information on John’s parents, wife, and the twins - is a joy to read. The book supplies two blank pages headed “Notes” (pp.99-100) which make the author-reader connection more explicit.

The SOAS, mentioned on page 49, should have been the School of **Oriental** and African Studies, and the Chinese version of “Life’s Journey” poem is actually a Chinese **translation** done by my father from the English original by myself.

I have found the list of references, contemporary mapping links, and a ‘reading and using maps’ sections particularly useful. Colleagues in the Social Sciences Faculty can read a poem by Dick Skellington in the “Remembrance” section, whilst the author’s own poem appears on page 38.

Tactile dimension-wise, this book was well printed on good quality paper and the text has an uncluttered feel to it which is pleasant to hold and behold. This book also reveals a facet of the Open University’s cartography in particular, and reading the author’s first days at the OU is like delving into

the institutional history of this amazing university. Having accompanied the author on his “Life’s Journey”, the reader comes away from reading this book, with a great feeling of being, like Willy Russell’s Rita, ‘educated’.

On a purely personal note, I take advantage of this opportunity to express my heartfelt thanks to John in writing for reproducing my entire poem on page 6 and the Chinese translation by my father on page 79, and for mentioning the **revised** last line of my poem on page 72.

*Thaiquan Lieu, Curriculum Manager, Open University, Milton Keynes*