

In Memoriam

Ivor Grattan-Guinness (June 23, 1941–December 12, 2014)

Joseph W. Dauben, Niccolò Guicciardini, Albert C. Lewis,
Karen Hunger Parshall, Adrian C. Rice

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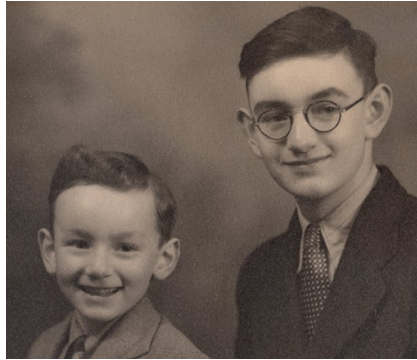
Ivor Owen Grattan-Guinness was born on June 23, 1941 in Bakewell, Derbyshire, about 30 miles south-east of Manchester. His mother, Helena (Lena, née Brown (1902–1985)), was the daughter of the Chief Inspector of Police in Blackburn, Lancashire. Her side of the family's lineage stretches back to North Wales. Ivor's father, Gerald Henry Grattan-Guinness (1909–1985), graduated from King's College London with a B.A. honors degree in mathematics in 1930. That same year he officially changed his surname from Guinness to Grattan-Guinness. This reinstated a family name that had been given to several generations of his forefathers and other members of the family, among whom was the influential Protestant evangelist and author, Henry Grattan Guinness (1835–1910), known today primarily for his works on biblical prophecy. The male line runs directly from Ivor back to Arthur Guinness (1725–1803), founder of the famous Irish brewery empire, with others including the Earls of Iveagh along with Guinnesses who were prominent in the army, banking, politics, and the Church of England. Although Ivor's parents' immediate forebears were descended from Baptists and Methodists, Ivor's own family was not religious.

In registering his name change, Gerald listed his profession as “School Master.” From London he went on to become a mathematics teacher in Bakewell, and in 1952 moved the family to West Yorkshire, where he served as Deputy Director of Education in Huddersfield. While not an active research mathematician, Ivor's father published a number of articles of interest for mathematics teachers in *The Mathematical Gazette*.

Having grown up in Bakewell until he was eleven years old, Ivor entered the best local grammar school, Huddersfield College, when his father took up his new position in 1952. The College, founded in 1838 under the patronage of the Earls of Ripon and of Halifax as well as Earl Grey, sought to include in its curriculum the sciences as well as the classics. As an academically-oriented institution where students were admitted only by examination with an attendant interview, it seems to have been especially strong in mathematics. According to Tom Parker, one of Ivor's best friends at Huddersfield, the “inspirational” mathematics instructor during their last two years, Cambridge Wrangler Leslie Horsfall, “helped give me a love of mathematics, and I imagine *Jim* too” [TP to JWD, July 14, 2015].

At Huddersfield, Ivor was known as “Jim,” a name borrowed from one of the characters on the then-popular BBC radio series, *The Goon Show* (1951–1960), in which the comic actor Peter Sellers first became famous. As Paul Fairbrother, another childhood friend of Ivor's, recalled: “At school, Jim was the acknowl-

E-mail addresses: jdauben@att.net (J.W. Dauben), niccolo.guicciardini@unibg.it (N. Guicciardini),
alewis@edu-adv-foundation.org (A.C. Lewis), khp3k@eservices.virginia.edu (K.H. Parshall), arice4@rmc.edu (A.C. Rice).



1948: Ivor (left) at age 7, with his older brother and only sibling, Bryan, at age 16.

edged expert on *The Goon Show*, knowing all the jokes, mimicking all the voices, repeating all the catch phrases.” It was one of the characters, “Little Jim,” that inspired Ivor to take on the name “Jim” as his moniker [Fairbrother, 2015]. Anyone who knew Ivor well would remember his uncanny ability to parrot unusual accents, be they English or foreign; this was a “skill” likely honed through avid listening to the comedic foreign accents so characteristic of the show.



September 1953; Huddersfield College. Ivor is in the back row, center, directly behind their form (class) master, Mr. Chadwick, a mathematician. Paul Fairbrother is to Ivor’s right and Tom Parker next but one to his left.

Ivor also revealed his literary side. At least two of his works—a poem, “An Ill Wind” (1953) and a short story, “Uncle George in Charge” (1956)—appeared in the *Huddersfield College Magazine*. In his last year but one, he also played the role of Lancelot Gobbo in “The Merchant of Venice.” Lancelot, a shrewd but innocent serving boy, is “good-natured, full of fun, and rejoices in a practical jest” [Warde, 1915: 103–104]. Ivor must have savored the role!

At his father’s insistence, in his last year at Huddersfield College Ivor took—and promptly won—the examination for a prestigious mathematics scholarship at Wadham College, Oxford. During the long summer vacation between leaving Huddersfield and going up to Oxford, however, Ivor worked briefly for a local architectural firm. There, part of his time was spent producing large maps of the Scottish island of Rhum from Ordnance Survey maps.

While Ivor made a serious study of mathematics, life in Oxford was by no means all work and no play. Among his friends was Alan Blaikley, who was reviews editor of the Oxford student newspaper, *Cherwell*. Together they devised a prank, namely, to set up a pseudo-trend, having become “intrigued by

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