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It was Professor Yamey's writings on restrictive practices (Stevens and Yamey, 1965) and resale price maintenance (Yamey, 1964) that first fixed his name in my mind when I was an undergraduate at Oxford as these works were on the college reading list for the PPE paper 'Economic Organization'. I still have the reading list from 1967, which itself makes interesting reading. It was therefore something of a surprise to find that he was the chair of the appointments panel when I was interviewed for a lectureship in accounting at LSE in March 1976. A surprise, but a very pleasant one for I recall that with the courtesy and friendliness with which I have come to associate Basil he made me feel very much at ease. That courtesy and friendliness being next shown six months later when he approached me in the Senior Common Room to welcome me and congratulate me on my appointment.

At that stage I knew Basil only as an economist. However, in those days our third-year accounting undergraduates were given an annual lecture on ancient Greek and Roman accounting by Geoffrey de Ste Croix from New College Oxford. The department and Basil would often take de Ste Croix to dinner at the Athenaeum afterwards and I was invited on several occasions. It was there that I learned of Basil's fame as an accounting historian and in following up a paper by de Ste Croix discovered Littleton and Yamey (1956), a collection of papers on accounting history, two other collections (Yamey, 1978a and 1979b), and later on a third collection (Yamey, 1982), all of which stimulated my interest in the field and in particular in medieval accounting practices and the interaction of law and accounting in the nineteenth century. I know now that accounting history had in fact been taught at LSE for many years and Basil himself had given a number of accounting history lectures to our undergraduates since 1952 (Napier, 1983), the syllabus reflecting LSE's long tradition of research led teaching and clearly drawing on the papers on accounting history Basil had published between 1940 and 1949. In 1978 Basil joined with Leslie Hannah from the Business History Unit to give a Master's course on Business and Accounting History which I audited. That course undoubtedly contributed greatly to the development as accounting historians of those who took it, including the three Christophers (Swinson, Napier and Noke), and Basil and I both subsequently contributed to an undergraduate half unit in accounting

history run by Christopher Napier. I personally further benefited from Basil's encouragement to junior lecturers when he would send me notes about articles in non-accounting journals that I might not have come across and which he thought would be of interest.

Others have written a lot about Basil's reputation and expertise as an accounting historian (e.g. Parker, 1996) and more will be said by others in this volume. Many of us contributed to a *festschrift* in his honour in 1996 in a special edition of *Accounting Business and Financial History* (Parker and Edwards (eds), 1996) which includes a four-and-a-half-page bibliography of Basil's accounting history publications between 1940 and 1996, but his output certainly did not stop then, recent publications including Yamey (2012) and (2011). His many contributions to the accounting history literature continue to be widely cited (for example, the June 2018 issue of the *Accounting Historians Journal* has four Yamey citations in two of the articles and an article in the March 2018 issue of *The Accounting Review* has five).

The late Professor Bob Parker identified a number of features recurring in many of Basil's articles, including 'a detailed knowledge of writings on bookkeeping from Pacioli onwards;...a close reading of writings on accounting history in several languages; an enthusiasm for his subject matter held in check by proper scholarly scepticism; an interest in bibliographical puzzles; a detailed knowledge of actual accounting practices;..... and last, but not least, an excellent command of accounting techniques' (Parker, 1996 p 235). Basil himself has also written about an 'enthusiasm and affection for old books' (Yamey, 1978a, Preface). To these I would add an obvious love of art and an exceptionally keen eye, shown very clearly in his outstanding volume on art and accounting (Yamey, 1986) where he identifies in paintings aspects relating to accounting which may well pass the casual observer by.

People sometimes look to history to see what we can learn from it. Perhaps it is worth noting one comment by Basil on the attempt by Edward Jones in 1796 to reform bookkeeping: 'The efforts of reformers to remove the possibility of fraud in accounts or to facilitate the speedy detection of the culprit were naturally doomed to failure since improvements in accounting methods alone are insufficient to insure commercial probity' (Yamey, 1944 p 415).

## References

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