



SIR PETER HALL

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Peter Geoffrey Hall

1932–2014

Early years

PETER HALL LOVED TRAINS. His first memories were of his father lifting him up as a two-year-old over the parapet in West Kensington to watch ‘the Piccadilly trains come in and out of their twin tunnels between the District Line tracks’ (Hall, 2014a, 269). By the time he was six he had remembered the now familiar tube map devised by Harry Beck in 1931 in its entirety and was faithfully colouring in the lines, speculating many years later in his Inaugural Lecture at University College London (UCL) in 1992 that he was (probably) ‘the only six-year-old in London who knew all the tube stations by heart’ (Hall, 1994, 12). Amongst his many contributions to urban geography and planning, he was fascinated by communications and wrote eloquently about the impact of new high-speed train technologies on urban and economic development. On 30 April 2015 Transport for London named one of their trains after him, and if you journey anywhere on the London Overground you might see the five-carriage train No. 378204, the *Professor Sir Peter Hall*, plying its way across the network. You know you really have arrived when someone names a train after you. A building, yes, but a train!

Peter was born on 19 March 1932 in Hampstead, north London. This was the inauspicious year when Hitler ran for the Presidency of Germany and Joseph Schumpeter, according to Peter arguably the greatest economist of the twentieth century, left the University of Bonn for Harvard to escape the relentless advance of Nazism. These events, the ensuing world war, the trains and the writings of Schumpeter on economic evolution

determined much of what Peter did during his subsequent academic career and professional life. After war broke out, in 1940 he and his family moved to the northern seaside resort of Blackpool where his father was in the pensions service. In 1943, he passed the eleven-plus examination and went to the local boys' grammar school. It was here that he was exposed to a regime of intellectual rigour that by his own admission dictated his interests in social and political science for the rest of his life. Of his high school days, he said: 'There, like others of my generation, I received an Etonian-quality education, entirely free of charge, in a northern grammar school. Despite the disruptions of the war years, we were taught in classes which now seem almost indecently small' (Hall, 2016, 4).

His early years were rather bookish in his recollection because he was diagnosed with a heart murmur, which in later years he believed to be nonsense, but at least he reckoned that this helped him avoid doing National Service (Phelps et al., 2014). He was much influenced by the masters at his boys' grammar school whom he considered amongst the best intellects that he was ever to meet, and it was there that he first came across some of the heavyweight works of early twentieth-century social sciences. In particular, he considered Schumpeter's work on *Business Cycles* (1939) and his later book *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy* (Schumpeter, 1941) to be the twentieth-century equivalents of Marx's *Das Kapital*, while Keynes through his *My Early Beliefs* and Mumford's *The Culture of Cities* were immensely influential in his subsequent approach to the study of cities and their planning. Combined with reading Orwell and Koestler, he progressed to study geography at Cambridge, where at St Catharine's College he fell under the spell of the newly arrived Director of Studies in Geography, Gus Caesar, who had an enormous impact on an impressive cohort of geography undergraduates including Michael Chisholm FBA, Peter Haggett FBA and Gerald Manners, and whose influence was celebrated in a book edited by Chisholm and Manners (1971). Together with Peter Hall, they and many others would go on to break the mould in urban and regional geography in the following decades.

Caesar's influence on two or more generations of geographers is legendary, and Peter was profoundly influenced by his rigour and passion for dissecting arguments and reassembling them into coherent and cutting-edge ideas. But Cambridge also provided him with a wide circle of friends who would also influence his subsequent intellectual, journalistic and political aspirations. Friends from the novelist Margaret Drabble to the historian Eric Hobsbawm contributed to his social and intellectual life, and there he joined the Labour Party. This social circle gave form to

his aspirations, which he ultimately began to address through his ideas about the role of cities in modern society, which became ever more central to his thinking. At Cambridge he also met the ‘mercurial’ John Vaizey, a Fellow of St Catharine’s, who provided the ideal foil to Gus Caesar, becoming a long-standing friend who in the late 1950s would quite quickly help him establish himself as a member of the Fabian Society (Hall, 2016).

The study of cities

His years in Cambridge were from 1950 to 1956, his undergraduate degree being followed by his PhD which was formally approved in 1959. Cambridge was dominated then by the last vestiges of the Victorian era, the depression years of the 1920s and 1930s, and the Second World War. In the early 1950s, there were the first stirrings of a revolution in culture, a questioning of all that had remained passive and implicit in British social life, and Peter was deeply immersed in these currents. In terms of geography, he was soon attracted to emergent ideas in human geography which were fashioned around a new economic perspective. This approach, which was rapidly taking over the entire subject, was rooted in ideas about spatial location, economic location theory, increasing returns to scale and urban agglomeration. These were first exploited at the end of the nineteenth century by scholars such as Alfred Marshall, Alfred Weber and the German location theorists who built on much earlier forays into urban economics by Ricardo, von Thünen and the French Physiocrats. Peter did not, in fact, contribute very much to the written debate, although he and his first wife were involved in the translation of von Thünen’s *The Isolated State* (Hall, 1966b) a decade after his time in Cambridge. But the synergy with these ideas and geography’s quantitative revolution were there in his perceptions and support for a new geography, although it was left to his contemporary Peter Haggett (1965) to provide the synthesis in his seminal *Locational Analysis in Human Geography*.

Peter ploughed a somewhat different but related furrow. Following Marshall and the more behavioural economic and industrial geographers, best demonstrated in the empirical work of the industrial economist Philip Sargant Florence and the geographer Michael Wise, he embarked on a thesis supervised by Clifford Smith which examined the relative patterns of industries that clustered and located in the port of London. This was a study in extraordinary detail which presaged Peter’s facility to relate the big picture to empirical examples at the finest of spatial scales.

This characteristic is a hallmark of all his work, particularly his later work on technology and innovation as well as his work on urban polycentricity. The thesis was published as his first book, *The Industries of London since 1861* (Hall, 1962). After he completed his PhD residency in 1956, John Vaizey had attempted to get him a research fellowship at Cambridge but failed miserably owing to some over-indulgence at a college party (Phelps and Tewdwr-Jones, 2014). Instead Peter took a job in the Board of Trade, where he worked for less than a year. He hated the job for it comprised an endless bureaucracy of shuffling papers about tariffs on various products. Reportedly he wrote a resignation letter not long after getting the job but kept it in his drawer until he finally did move in 1957, to a position as an assistant lecturer in Birkbeck College, after having tried to get a job next door at UCL (Phelps, 2016; Tewdwr-Jones et al., 2014). There he first taught the geography of Germany, finished his thesis and established himself as somebody with a strong sense of social concern for what was happening in British cities, particularly in terms of how the spatial economy was organised. But it was his long-time mentor John Vaizey who suggested that with his encyclopaedic knowledge of London and his interest in its development he should write about London's future. In 1963, *London 2000* appeared.

London 2000 is arguably vintage Hall. This second book was all about the development of London and his speculation of what it would look like in the year 2000, some thirty-seven years in the future, almost two generations away. He essentially took notions about how London had developed as a series of integrated suburbs and projected them forward, assuming that transportation would get ever more efficient, so that long-distance commuters living as far away as Northern France would characterise the future city. He called this book 'an academic polemic' (Johnston, 2014), a plea for an integrated city region rather than a diffusion in the style of Los Angeles, and the power of his argument meant that this was a book he could update; which he did in 1969, adding to it some twenty years later in his follow-up *London 2001*. It showed his flair for journalism, the ability to take rather academic ideas and mould them into interesting documentary and exciting sound bites, which even an informed but non-expert public could easily grasp and relate to. These were very busy years. Peter married Carla Wartenberg in 1962, but the marriage did not last. They divorced amicably in 1966 and he married Magda Mróz in 1967. By then Peter had become the rising star of urban planning. I remember talking to John Parry Lewis in a pub in Altrincham in 1967 about Peter's ideas of how cities would develop. These were

splashed all over the pages of the *Weekend Telegraph* magazine, where the focus was on the development of the south-east region. His fame preceded him because of his ability to communicate important ideas to the wider public about cities and their planning.

In many senses, the book *London 2000* had rapidly projected Peter into the domain of urban planning from urban and economic geography. But it did more than this, for it revealed his and everyone else's deep-seated dissatisfaction with the state of British cities. Although the redevelopment machine was hard at work getting rid of the worst of the slums remaining from the nineteenth century, the policies of urban containment pursued through the British planning system were slowly but surely intensifying their grip on development, although the consequences of this, which would preoccupy Peter during much of his life, were not immediately obvious. Peter himself, however, reflected on two themes which came to resonate everywhere in his writing: first suburbia, the cry of 'homes for heroes' after the First World War and semi-detached London, which had enticed him as a small boy before the war took him off to Blackpool, were something he admired. Second in the mid-1950s, as a student at Cambridge, he spent two trips touring Scandinavia, marvelling at the clean and functional forms of Nordic cities and the apparent ability of those societies to develop cities that were not only workable and pleasant but also did not crush the industrial spirit. These made a marked impression on his view of what urban planning should be all about.

His third book, although by then they were coming thick and fast, was published in 1966 as *The World Cities* (Hall, 1966a). This was a broadening of his perspective on big cities which were part of the emergent global economy but also the highest and best expressions of the entire range of functions that such cities played in national economies. If Peter loved trains, he equally loved travel, and in the 1960s he visited all these cities and extended his thinking to many different types of place. What he saw in these places he took to heart in his writings. Some have remarked that he did not include Los Angeles and Chicago in his original seven world cities (London, Paris, Randstad-Holland, Rhine-Ruhr, Moscow, New York and Tokyo) but he pruned the list, omitting Rhine-Ruhr and adding Mexico City and Hong Kong in the third and last edition of this book published in 1984. By that time, he had visited the Far East, first Hong Kong and then Singapore in 1976. He found, by his own admission, not only cities redeveloping and extending themselves from within, using the latest technologies, but also dynamic, vibrant places that convinced him that entrepreneurship was as important as any collective planning in

building high-quality urban environments. In some senses, his travels provided a developing context for his writings about cities, and these had a major impact on his thoughts about innovation and waves of urban development that dominated his work in the 1980s.

Back, however, to beginnings, to the 1960s where his writings about British cities and their planning were tightly coupled to his emerging role as one of the key intellectuals in the Labour Party, largely through the Fabian Society. The great transition from what Peter and many agreed was the ‘utterly clapped out and dreary country Britain was in those days’ (Hall, 1994, 16) was beginning: you could see it in music, in fashion, in politics and in lifestyles, and it was beginning in the universities. As the party came to power in 1964, Peter became firmly established in various roles as a somewhat junior but key advisor on planning to the Labour governments of the 1960s. Part of their mandate was to fashion the Town and Country Planning system that had been put in place over the previous seventy years into a workable and modern set of instruments that saw cities as being places which functioned both efficiently in terms of their transport and equitably in terms of their welfare. Peter was very much part of this effort through his membership of the South East Regional Economic Planning Council, but he also ventured into practical planning itself, being part of a consortium that proposed a new town for mid-Wales in 1967 and then as part of the team led by Richard Llewellyn Davies which was advising on a plan for what came to be Britain’s last new town, Milton Keynes.

In many respects, this was a decade of enormous activity for Peter. He became a lecturer in 1960 at Birkbeck. Then, prompted by Michael Wise, he moved to a Readership in Regional and Urban Planning in the Geography Department at the London School of Economics (LSE) in 1966, setting up a one-year Masters degree in planning which flew in the face of the accredited two-year professional graduate courses elsewhere. Then in 1968 he moved as Professor of Geography to the University of Reading. His interest in planning extended to its education and profession, and he was very much part and parcel of the new broom that was sweeping through government and planning, in essence establishing a modernising and modernist agenda that sought to introduce, dare one say it, science into the planning of our cities. Peter was no quantitative geographer *per se* but he was heavily immersed in method and data in all his work from his PhD onwards, and he believed throughout his life in the rationality that was being layered on top of the social sciences and on urban planning through the systems approach and decision theory (Phelps and Tewdwr-Jones, 2014).

There was one last piece in the jigsaw of ideas that Peter evolved about planning from his work in the 1960s. He had become one of the key contributors to the weekly magazine *New Society*, which had been established in 1962 and was edited from 1964 by Paul Barker. There are many wonderful stories about his writing pieces for the magazine at short notice (for example, receiving a call from the magazine in Los Angeles airport and dictating a review of Doxiadis's massive text on *Ekistics* immediately over the wire). During the life of the magazine—it closed in 1988—he contributed some sixty articles and in his own words 'several hundred' reviews. His first visit to California was in 1966, where he met Mel Webber at Berkeley who was to play such a role in his future career. He was fascinated by California with its free-wheeling, laissez-faire lifestyle, and its economic dynamism, and it is this that began to solidify his views about the rigid planning system we had in the UK. It all came together in his liaison with Cedric Price, Rayner Banham and Paul Barker in their collaboration to write what almost became a mission statement for what planning should aspire to. In the magazine in 1969, they published *Non-Plan: an Experiment in Freedom*. This was an article urging us to experiment in building and development, to relax planning regulations and to evolve a future for cities that were much freer in their form and function than the British planning system was able to deliver. The article in some sense was a forerunner to Peter's ideas about Enterprise Zones in the mid-1970s but it upset the planning profession, his friends in the Fabian Society and the politicians that he interacted with, and seemed somewhat out of place for somebody who appeared to be rapidly becoming part of the establishment. In fact, to an extent all Peter's writings reflected this love-hate relationship with what British planning was attempting to achieve and it was to dictate his contributions forthwith.

Reading: geography and planning

I first met Peter at the University of Reading in late 1968 when I interviewed for a job as a research assistant working on his newly acquired project 'Models and Information Systems for Planning' that he had proposed and been granted by the Centre for Environmental Studies. It was hardly an interview, more a fireside chat, but it led me to spending the next ten years working for him and with him. During his many years as Head of Department there, he juggled the Deanship of the Faculty of Urban and Regional Studies with his tireless work in establishing Reading as a centre

for planning education and a vast network of appointments in and out of government and the university. What he began during his brief sojourn at the LSE he continued immediately in Reading, developing an MSc Programme in Regional and Urban Planning Studies, which quickly became a shining light in the landscape of planning education. Planning as traditionally taught at the graduate Masters level was largely a two-year programme, and although Peter broke the mould by arguing for and establishing a one-year programme, he also recognised that the two-year courses were important, and by the late 1970s he had established such an MPhil programme at Reading that mirrored similar courses in the rest of the country.

During these first years at Reading, Peter established himself as the great interpreter and synthesiser of ideas about the British planning system, notwithstanding his growing criticisms of the way it operated and its products. In 1970 he wrote a little book on *Theory and Practice of Regional Planning* that he followed in 1974 with his *Urban and Regional Planning* that became a standard text for new students and informed laypeople alike. The book has gone through five editions, being finally co-authored in the last edition with Mark Tewdwr-Jones (Hall and Tewdwr-Jones, 2011).

The big project that Peter worked on in the early 1970s was a searching and thorough analysis of what planning had wrought on Britain since the Town and Country Planning Acts of the late 1940s established a comprehensive planning system. In his inaugural lecture to UCL (Hall, 1994), as well as in his last paper which is printed in Haselsberger's (2016) *Encounters in Planning Thought*, he talks of the London suburbs in the interwar years and how so many dreams were built around the idea that a house and a garden were the most prized positions that both the working and middle classes could aspire to. He argued that in the interwar years, the great and the good fought hard not only against the growth of the sprawling suburbs, but suburbs in general, and they soon had their way in controlling the growth of cities which came to be the dominant model in the post-war years. It was people like Sir Patrick Abercrombie amongst others who established a coherent, controlling vision that came to pass as the largest cities were contained by their green belts, with any overspill being directed to the new towns. This effectively began when the comprehensive planning system became established in the immediate post-war years. Of those hopes for a house with a garden, Peter said: 'It seems incredible, when one thinks about it: all those thousands of private dreams, all those £5 deposits, all those new worlds were just abolished, like that. And, years after,

when I came to research the whole phenomenon and its effects, we found that ordinary people had indeed lost out as a result: in the 1960s they were paying more, for less housing, than my mother and father had to pay in the 1930s. And it was all because we had a real planning system, quote unquote' (Hall, 2016, 2).

This thesis became the *leitmotiv* of his inquiry into the British planning system, which was deeply woven into his first magnum opus, *The Containment of Urban England* (Hall et al., 1973). In this project, he and his collaborators assembled a massive database associated with urban growth in England and Wales from the 1940s onwards but also set in the context of urban growth throughout the entire twentieth century and a little before. Their conclusion that the planning system had 'contained' urban growth in Britain, with the implication that the endemic sprawl associated with American cities had not come to pass, was both good and bad. On one level, planning had worked to contain the growth of big cities as its nineteenth-century progenitors had envisaged, but on another level this had reduced the supply of land, hence increasing the price of housing. And this was the result of planning from the 1940s to the 1960s: forty years on, these trends have been massively reinforced, with the consequence that Britain now faces a dramatic housing crisis in its sky-high prices of most homes that are now well beyond the reach of all but the wealthiest. In his later years, Peter did not comment so much on what had come to pass but his scepticism became evident, at first implicitly from his inquiry into how the planning system was working in the 1970s. To an extent, he continued to articulate these concerns, particularly in his last book *Good Cities, Better Lives* (Hall, 2014b).

Apart from the many books and articles which reinforced his growing reputation, and his increasing influence in academic and professional bodies such as the Social Science Research Council, the 1970s were dominated by two themes: his growing love affair with California and his increasing frustration with British society and the British planning system. Although his writings were mildly critical of this state of affairs, he was much more muted in his spoken discourse, and only now can we look back at some of the things he really thought were crucial to his understanding of cities from the occasional autobiographical pieces that he began to write after he returned to Britain from California in the 1990s. At the end of the 1970s, he produced *Great Planning Disasters* (Hall, 1980), a book that systematically took apart seven very large planned developments ranging from large-scale vanity projects such as the Sydney Opera House, which was eventually built, to ongoing vicious debates such as

that over the location of a third London Airport, which has not been satisfactorily resolved after more than forty years.

He was a wonderful head of department at Reading. He would give time to anyone who passed his door. He involved every member of staff and every student in the life of the place. It is almost impossible to provide a sense of how revered he was in this role, but I will tell the story of a typical staff meeting at Reading during the mid-1970s. Staff meetings, which would quite democratically transact the business of the department, were held under Peter's chairmanship as head of department every Tuesday during term time from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. The entire staff were duly assembled in Seminar Room B of the temporary one-storey 'wartime' Terrapin buildings that housed the Geography department, still standing and still leaking some thirty years after the war had ended. The meeting sat in eerie silence as Peter drove in in his Audi 100 at about 100 miles an hour and screeched to a stop outside his office at the end of the building. Monika, his secretary, would throw open the fire door, thrust Peter his staff meeting papers and he would run down the corridor to Seminar Room B where the meeting would begin. We all listened and watched this weekly experience. He conducted the business so cleanly, fairly and democratically that no one would ever think he could not be Head of Department. If you were not there, just occasionally the meeting would decide that you should go to the 'sixth form in School X' (to which Peter had invariably been invited) to tell them about geography and convince them to come to Reading. This is the only kind of punishment that makes you think the place and its mission was worthwhile. And Peter himself did his fair share of these duties, including the famous one where he arrived to give a sixth-form talk at a girls' boarding school somewhere in Cheshire on a Friday afternoon, only to find that he was three weeks early! At least he had driven there from London and could get back.

There are a thousand stories I could tell you about Peter during the ten years I worked in the department at Reading, but as the 1970s dragged on—and this was quite widely viewed as a pretty dreary decade—Peter's view of Britain soured. He worried that the brave new world that he dreamt of in the 1950s and he aspired to support through his work on planning and politics with the Fabian Society in the 1960s, was falling apart, and his belief in America, particular in the enterprise of California, deepened. He began work on patterns of urban growth there with Marion Clawson, which led to a joint book *Planning and Urban Growth: an Anglo-American Comparison* (Clawson and Hall, 1973), and his discovery of what was happening in the Far East in Hong Kong and Singapore

convinced him that the key question of the good city was all about innovation and enterprise, which he formulated in his particular version of the Enterprise Zones concept, which he argued should be places where the planning system should be 'suspended' or at least 'relaxed', alienating him further from the mainstream of the Labour Party and the Fabians. In 1979, reflecting on all this doom, he said: 'I was in Manchester for the conference of the Institute of British Geographers. The sky was leaden and the Fallowfield Hall of Residence, where they had housed us, was a more than usually dreary example of that uniquely sordid British art form. It was the second winter of discontent and all the tanker drivers in the north of England were going on strike. I was sitting in a motionless queue for petrol, wondering whether I would get back to London or be forced to sell the car for scrap. I suddenly decided that I had had enough. I got to the nearest telephone and called to say I was a candidate for the vacant job in Berkeley. A year and a half later, I took up residence there' (Hall, 2016, 16).

California: cities as cycles of creation and destruction

In the 1980s Peter was at least half the time in California at Berkeley as Professor of City and Regional Planning. There he initiated several important studies on technology and cities, drawing heavily on the writings of Joseph Schumpeter, while gradually acquiring important administrative positions such as Director of the Institute for Urban and Regional Development. Until 1988, however, he shuttled back and forth between Berkeley and Reading, keeping his position at Reading in a half-time capacity and joining Berkeley full-time only after he had been courted by the UK Economic and Social Research Council to become its Chairman. This event was marred by the fact that as he was considering the role, the government decided the Council should move from central-inner London, where Peter lived, to Swindon. He then decided to quit old England for good, and he became Emeritus Professor in Reading in 1988.

California was still living the American dream when he disembarked on those shores. The microcomputer had just been invented by two kids in a garage in Palo Alto and Turing's vision of the universal machine was about to be demonstrated writ large on an unsuspecting population. The 1980s was the decade when Silicon Valley not only began to produce the personal computer but also began to shift from the production of chips to software, when the seeds of local and wide-area networking were sown,

and when computers emerged to become more about graphics and text than numbers. Peter quickly came to be fully immersed in this culture, noting first that the kind of entrepreneurship that he believed characterised the good city was loosely related to cycles of technological development. I will return to his interest in transport and technology a little later, but once in California he discovered a book by Gerard Mensch (1979) who argued that innovations come in cycles and are part of the forces that take a country out of economic depression. Following Schumpeter (1939), Mensch argued that such cycles also contain within them the seeds of their own downfall, and once the technological hype has passed, they drive the economy into another depression from which it can only recover once a new wave of technology is generated. Such cyclic boom and bust and back again is a familiar story for many evolutionary economic waves of various lengths.

Schumpeter (1939, 1941) referred to these as cycles of creation followed by destruction, and argued that economic development was composed of such long waves. He accredited the idea to Nikolai Kondratieff, an early twentieth-century Russian economist who was sent to the Gulag in the 1920s for his revisionist and entirely sensible ideas about how economies function. Kondratieff waves, often about fifty or so years in length but somewhat indeterminate nevertheless, were the phenomenon that Peter believed defined the way that technologies determine the form and function of how the contemporary city evolves (Batty, 2016). In this he brought to the surface ideas that had been established when he was first introduced to Schumpeter's writings in his sixth-form library, and he thus planted his flag on this terrain with a couple of pieces in *New Society* that brought these notions to the attention of social scientists and urbanists (Hall, 1981, 1983). Of these, he said, 'these two articles, in particular the second, are my own personal favourites. I think that in the three pages that Paul Barker allowed me, I said a lot about what anyone needs to know about the career and work of this extraordinarily exotic and brilliant man, whose career sounds like something from a Hollywood silent movie of the 1920s' (Hall, 2016, 17).

During these years, his work on Kondratieff and Schumpeter was fused with his interest and contributions to urban growth in America, Britain and Europe. He produced six books on this area over a nine-year period from 1985 to 1994, beginning with an edited volume with Ann Markusen called *Silicon Landscapes* in 1985, which he followed with *High Tech America: the What, How, Where and Why of the Sunrise Industries* (with Markusen and Glasmeier, 1986), *Western Sunrise: Genesis and Growth*

of *Britain's High Tech Corridor* (with Breheny, Hart and McQuaid, 1987), *The Carrier Wave: New Information Technology and the Geography of Innovation, 1846–2003* (with Preston, 1988), *The Rise of the Gunbelt: the Military Remapping of Industrial America* (with Markusen, Campbell and Deitrick, 1991) and last but not least in 1994 with his long-time colleague at Berkeley, Manuel Castells, *Technopoles of the World: the Making of 21st-Century Industrial Complexes*. His *Carrier Wave* book is perhaps the most focused on long waves but the notion of entrepreneurship, the emergence of the information economy and the changing military–industrial complex suffuse all these works. One last complement to this theme involved his participation in a series of conferences begun by John Brotchie from CSIRO in Melbourne, who in 1983 ran a meeting in the University of Waterloo, Ontario which led to a series of four books on the impact of technologies on future cities of which Peter was a co-editor. These drew on many convergent themes in technology, transport, urban growth and on the impact of new information technologies, and these were to guide all his work from the 1990s into his later years. His work in California thus led to at least ten books on technological change, but at the same time he was continuing with his work on other themes that resonated with his earlier work on the British planning system.

There were two other perspectives in his work that grew slowly in importance during this time. The first was his concern for urban growth in Europe, and at the start of the decade in 1980 he published his research from an SSRC grant with Dennis Hay *Growth Centres in the European Urban System*, while he also updated his book on *Europe 2000* (Hall, 1977) and projected his first book on London into a slightly different speculation in *London 2001* (Hall, 1989). However, his really classic work in this period, which in my opinion ranks alongside *The Containment of Urban England*, is his *Cities of Tomorrow: an Intellectual History of Urban Planning and Design in the Twentieth Century*, published in 1988, which brought together all the key planning ideas and theories with so much of how planning had developed in Britain from the late nineteenth century. But it also set this in the wider context of how cities and planning systems elsewhere in the western world had also developed, drawing on how the British system had contributed to these institutions and ideas and how they in turn had influenced planning in Britain.

The second theme was his emergent but long-standing interest in trains and transport, which came to dominate his later years just as it had his early life. In his writings on London and on the planning system, his concern was for the balance between transport modes, but he was an

ardent advocate in the 1970s and before for cities in which the automobile held a key role. Indeed, he went so far as to suggest that some disused railway lines might be turned into roads (Hall and Smith, 1976). This led him to write various articles about transportation in general in the 1970s, but in 1980 with David Banister he organised a series of SSRC seminars to consider the transport planning process. This resulted in the book *Transport and Public Policy Planning* (edited with David Banister, 1981) and he began to indulge his interest in rail with his book *Can Rail Save the City? The Impacts of Rail Rapid Transit and Pedestrianisation on British and German Cities* (with Carmen Hass-Klau, 1985). These were to an extent preludes to the focus on public transportation which occupied him extensively in the last ten years of his life, but it is hard not to suggest that it was his synthetic view of cities and their planning that enabled him to develop the ideas about public transport that he did. The slowing influence of California to an extent mirrored these themes.

One last political perspective influenced his activities during his toing and froing to California. The dreary 1970s gave way to Thatcherism in Britain in the 1980s, and this was the time when the government and Conservative party began the process of demolishing the old industrial structure of the country that Peter himself assumed would have taken place anyway from the socialism of the 1960s, much more benignly of course than it did. In the 1980s, the process was anything but benign, but his estrangement from the mainstream Labour Party was given real focus when the Gang of Four—key social democrats in the party, Shirley Williams, Bill Rodgers, David Owen and Roy Jenkins, with several from the Fabian Society—broke from Labour to form the Social Democratic Party in 1981. Being good friends of Peter from his Fabian Society days, he hurried to join them and became part of their intellectual inspiration for what would eventually follow Thatcher, although by the late 1990s the movement was called New Labour, and the SDP by then had merged with the Liberal Party.

To an extent, Peter's relationship with both England and California was one of love-hate. He could not resist either and he was much influenced by the other great political event of the late 1980s, which was the demise of the eastern bloc and the end of the cold war. This had an enormous impact in the United States and ushered in an economic recession which affected California with its great military-industrial complexes more severely than anywhere else in the USA. The state university system in California went into a tailspin and a generous early retirement programme was set in play. Meanwhile various approaches were being made to Peter

to attract him to UCL to take the Bartlett Chair of Planning, which had been held before by many distinguished planners such as Holford and Abercrombie. In fact, he had been approached when this Chair last came up in 1976, only to be told that he was a candidate amongst several others, so he ruefully told me back in our Reading days when I was a lecturer in his department. But he and his wife Magda, who always argues vehemently that she is a Londoner, judged that the time was right to return, and in 1992 he made the transition back. The toing and froing ended, at least somewhat, and for the rest of his life—which was the longest period he had worked anywhere, some twenty-two years—he became established at UCL, adding a second Emeritus Professorship in California to his list of honours and, by this time, an increasing number of doctorates which honoured his work.

Back to the old country:
cities, civilization and urban form in Europe

Peter arrived back in the UK to a full-time position at UCL in 1992. He still had a succession of projects from his California days—how could he not—and he pursued these to a successful conclusion. Schumpeter in fact became part of the background to his concerns for European cities, for urban polycentricity, and for transport which he considered was the ‘Maker and Breaker of Cities’ after Colin Clark’s immortal subtitle to his *Town Planning Review* article ‘Transport’ in 1958. But first there was the matter of writing a great treatise pulling all his ideas about cities together from his first thoughts in *London 2000*. He began work on what was to some extent ‘the’ magnum opus, *Cities in Civilization: Culture, Technology and Urban Order*, which ultimately appeared in 1998. In my view, this is the third of his great works which sits alongside his *The Containment of Urban England* and *Cities of Tomorrow*. Others may disagree, for after all he did write and edit over fifty books, but in many senses, from what he said, he considered these three amongst his most satisfying intellectually. *Cities in Civilization* put him alongside Mumford, another one of his boyhood heroes whom he had in fact met during his early career in the 1960s. His essential thesis was that the succession of civilizations that characterised the city in history were marked by deeply rooted urban innovations that could only come from processes of creation and destruction that were consistent with but well beyond the economic and technological concerns of Schumpeter and others: in short, cities in civilization were as much cultural oases in the

long march of history which were dominated by golden ages of urbanity (Johnston, 2014).

The book was badly marketed by his publishers who considered it a ‘trade book’, one of those that sit in stacks in bookshops enticing the general readers to browse and buy immediately, but it was not this at all. It got remaindered rather quickly and, by Peter’s own account (Hall, 2016), it was hardly sent out to any journals dealing with planning, cities and urban studies for review. It was at first a disappointment but it did win the most coveted of prizes. In Peter’s own words (Hall, 2016, 22), ‘In 2005, I was working in my study at home when the phone rang and a voice said: “I am phoning to tell you that you have just won one million Swiss francs, and this is not a hoax”. I was reassured that he did not ask me for my credit card details, and even more so when a letter arrived telling me that I was the recipient of the 2005 Balzan Foundation Prize, for work on the social and cultural history of cities since the sixteenth-century – clearly a belated recognition for the *magnum opus*.’ Part of the requirements for the prize was that he was to spend half the money on new researchers. Such was the dire state of finding money to support PhD students in UCL then (and even more tragically now), this came as manna from heaven, and served to support two excellent students whom I also came to be involved in advising together with Peter towards the end of his life. But more of this below.

When Peter returned to UCL, he plunged himself into renewing and reinvigorating his work on European cities and regionalism that he had begun in his Reading years and that had taken somewhat of a back seat during his sojourn in America, where Schumpeter had come to be very much his intellectual inspiration. However, one of the wonderful things about moving is that you often reflect on your life so far, and indeed Peter did so in his inaugural lecture in UCL which he delivered in 1992 and which was published in two parts (Hall, 1994, 1996). A lot of the material in this memoir comes from his reflections there, which indeed he updated in his last publication. This was by way of an autobiographical piece which I had the privilege to edit and bring up to date before its publication in the book *Encounters in Planning Thought* (Haselsberger, 2016). His first years at UCL were somewhat marred by the difficulties over staffing and budget cuts in the Faculty (the Bartlett), and by the time he had settled seven years had passed, and he was forced to retire for a third time in 2000. He then took the position as Director of the Institute of Community Studies which had been set up many years previously by his good friend and Fabian colleague Michael Young, and it was here that he began to set the scene for the major project of his last decade—*Polynet*: his classic

study of polycentricity and urban development, urban growth and regional balance in Western Europe, which led to the book with Kathy Pain entitled *The Polycentric Metropolis: Learning from Mega-City Regions in Europe* (Hall and Pain, 2006).

His work in UCL thus veered sharply towards Europe whose cities he had always admired, picking up the threads from earlier work with Dennis Hay at Reading where he had published *Growth Centres in the European Urban System*, and this enabled him to expand and deepen his critique of the British planning system in a much more constructive way than ever before. It also enabled him to balance the notion that cities are the crucibles of innovation in the USA in particular with the gentler way in which cities in continental Europe had developed in the last twenty-five or more years. The notion too that cities were no longer monocentric, rather homogeneous structures which had dominated his and everyone else's thinking about urban form and function some fifty years before, became significant. Urban development was now based on constellations of smaller towns and cities forming a wider swathe of polycentric urbanisation particularly in western Europe, and this appeared a much more satisfactory model than that adopted by many of us a generation ago. This he articulated using a descriptive model of people flows that showed how Europe had dealt with sprawl. In this he was much aided by the Balzan prize that attracted two very good research students, Basak Demires and Jonathan Reades, who got to grips with the digital revolution, extending and expanding the whole domain of information flows that had clearly come to dominate the way cities form and evolve. This is still unfinished business for all of us and Peter had only just come to grips with this perspective, but he was convinced of its importance, particularly the changes that the digital revolution was making to the century-old mantra that form follows function, which is only now under really intense scrutiny.

Peter's view of British planning, European cities and the general state of how we build better cities is nowhere better summed up than in 2014 in his last book, *Good Cities, Better Lives: How Europe Discovered the Lost Art of Urbanism*, which takes the argument about what is the 'good city' well beyond the strictures and critiques begun in *The Containment of Urban England* and *Great Planning Disasters* written in the 1970s. Peter identifies the tragedy over affordability and housing, lack of integrated land use and transport planning, the demise of strategic planning, the inability to balance the economy and provide some semblance of fairness, and the awful quality of construction and development in British cities in the last fifty years. He uses this as a foil to contrast British with European

cities, and he makes the point that the almost wilful neglect of quality in our cities has made them almost unliveable in parts. In the other book he published in 2014, he revisits some old ideas. To resolve the housing crisis, there are now suggestions that we renew our interest in new towns and garden cities. In the second edition of *Sociable Cities: the 21st Century Reinvention of the Garden City*, written with Colin Ward, he points to a new way which strongly connects with the old, revealing himself once again as the master of contemporary planning history. There he argues that new garden cities should be a good bit bigger than Howard's (1898) view that they should be no larger than 30,000 persons. But before I examine his return to these old pastures which involve containment, sprawl, transport and urban form, it is time to assess how his colleagues and peers reflected his contributions through the many honours that were heaped upon him during the last half of his life.

Achievements honoured

Peter began to receive honours for his work almost as soon as he began to write in the 1960s, with the Royal Geographical Society (RGS) honouring his work in 1968 with the Gill Memorial Prize 'for the encouragement of geographical research in early career researchers who have shown great potential'. Ten years later, in 1979, it was clear that he had established himself as one of Britain's premier urban geographers and planning academics, receiving the Adolph Bentinck Prize for his work on European cities and planning, in particular for his book *Europe 2000* (Hall, 1977). In 1983, he was elected as a Fellow of this Academy, only the fourth geographer to be so honoured after Darby (1967), Coppock (1974) and Gottman (1977) (Johnston, 2003). To an extent Peter was regarded by some at his election as an historical geographer, notwithstanding his move into planning, but during the next thirty years he was central to expanding Section S3 with respect to all geographers and human geography. Always with an eye for the brightest and the best, Peter was supportive of broadening the role of geography into public policy and applied scholarship.

In 1988, he received the highest honour of the RGS, the Founder's Medal, and in the same year he was honoured as a fellow of his old college, St Catharine's. In 1989, he was elected as a Member of the Academia Europaea and in 1991 received the George Stephenson Medal of the Institution of Civil Engineers. In 1998, he was created Knight Bachelor, this only being surpassed by the Queen naming him in 2003 as a 'Pioneer

in the Life of the Nation'. In 1999, he received the Ebenezer Howard Memorial Medal of the Town and Country Planning Association, and in 2001 the Prix Vautrin Lud (the so-called 'Nobel de Géographie'). In 2003, he received the highest accolade of the Royal Town Planning Institute, its Gold Medal. When honours are received their path may never be smooth, and Peter had more than his fair share of critics when it came to his views about planning. He was proposed several times for the Royal Town Planning Institute Gold Medal, but his writings on Non-Plan and the sentiments contained in his *The Containment of Urban England* and *Great Planning Disasters* books did not win him many friends in some of the higher echelons of the planning profession. It took a lot of pressure for the Gold Medal to be awarded (Tewdwr-Jones, 2016), although there was widespread approval when at last it was conferred.

In 2005, the Deputy Prime Minister presented him with a Lifetime Achievement Award, and that year he won the Balzan Foundation International Prize for his magnum opus *Cities in Civilization*, which enabled him to complete aspects of his work on polycentricity and networks that had remained beyond his *Polynet* project. In 2008, the International Union of Architects awarded him the Sir Patrick Abercrombie Prize, and posthumously in 2014 he was given the Alan Hay Award for significant contributions to Transport Geography by the Transport Geography Research Group of the RGS. In addition to all of this, he received fourteen honorary degrees, and many other appointments of note such as President of the Regional Studies Association and of the Town and Country Planning Association. He was a giant amongst us all in terms of the impact of his written word, with over fifty books and 2000 individual articles, notes, reviews and reports produced during his lifetime (Knowles and Rozenblat, 2016).

Peter Hall held many other appointments besides his Professorships, but two areas of his academic and professional life should not go unremarked. He was a founder member of the Regional Studies Association in the mid-1960s, and what could be more natural than for the rising star of the new planning to take on the editorship of the Association's new journal, *Regional Studies*. And so the first issue appeared in 1967, quickly establishing itself as one of the key places in which to write about planning. The journal *Urban Studies* which had been founded some three years earlier in some respects acted as a foil to *Regional Studies*, although there was never any turf war with respect to content. Peter acted as editor until 1979 when John Goddard, Peter's PhD student from LSE days, took over, but during those twelve years in Reading those of us in the Department of

Geography who were within the planning field had a grandstand view of how a good journal was actually edited. Peter used many of us as referees, giving us a real sense of how important good refereeing was to the process of publication. This was a young person's world—Peter himself was only thirty-five when he became editor, and the average age of the academic staff in Geography at Reading at the start of the 1970s was no more than this. This was a new journal in a new era when it looked as if a new, more equitable and scientifically prepared world could be fashioned from the planning of cities. Although Peter himself was conscious of some of the doubts over the momentum for change that had been established, these were exciting times, and many of us considered the journal to be cutting edge.

When Peter passed over the editorship in 1979, he had already assumed the mantle of another project that involved editing a rather different kind of journal, *Built Environment*, which had evolved from a rather popular and populist magazine called *Official Architecture and Planning*. *Built Environment* quickly moved to stressing particular themes—as special issues—and the focus was on more popular topical commentaries, but in no sense was there any dumbing down of the kind of content that dominates and continues to define *Regional Studies*. *Built Environment* has always published state-of-the-art work. Peter acted as editor until Mike Breheny joined him in 1982 and then in 1993, when he sadly passed away, Dave Banister took over, Stephen Marshall joining the team in 2012. For this review, there is a particularly important issue of the journal honouring Peter, where all the contributions are from his PhD students over the many years who comment on their experiences of being a researcher advised by this great man (Hebbert, 2015).

Practical planning: the return of the garden city

Peter Hall was involved in professional practice from the word go, and his first efforts in being part of planning teams in the 1960s noted earlier involved new towns. First he was involved with Tom Hancock with proposals for a new town at Peterborough and then there was the abortive but unusual proposal for a new town for mid-Wales, 'a new town for Newtown' so to speak, where he worked again with Tom Hancock, plus Alan Wilson, Chris Foster and John Goddard, on a plan to turn the area into a tourist and retirement area while also proposing to stem rural depopulation and boost the local economy. This plan was killed by local politics, and it

seems strange now that it was ever conceived at all, but it was paralleled by his involvement in the planning of Milton Keynes, which was led by Richard Llewellyn Davies and his partnership and involved Mel Webber during his sojourn in the UK at the Centre for Environmental Studies in the late 1960s. During these early years, Peter was a vocal and inspirational member of the South East Regional Economic Planning Council from 1966 to 1979, where his knowledge of London was essential to their debate involving the growth of the region, and its impact on the rest of the nation, particularly the problem of the drift south which Peter was involved in throughout his entire life. This was particularly resonant with the boy from Blackpool, and would come to dominate his last years with his concern for regeneration in his home town.

Through the 1970s his involvement usually as an advisor or consultant to big projects and to the formulation of national policy grew. His political connections to the Fabian Society and the Labour Party helped somewhat in this, but it was his encyclopaedic knowledge of planning, cities and London in particular as well as his focus on regions that made him a sought-after advisor to successive governments. During the years of the Heath government (1970–4) he met Michael Heseltine, who was a junior Minister at the Department of the Environment, and this led ultimately to a friendship with Michael and to Peter acting as advisor to the Department of the Environment on his return to the UK in the early 1990s prior to the Blair government coming into power. In these advisory roles, his ideas for the high speed rail link (HS1) from London to the Channel Tunnel were formulated, with the subsequent approach to regenerating east London and northern Kent being a consequence of this policy. He was even involved in Cross Rail 1, while his appointment to the Urban Task Force which was set up in 1998 to inquire into how cities might be made more compact and densified, with brownfield land being brought back into the supply for housing, cemented his new interests in urban regeneration, even influencing the title of his new position as Bartlett Professor of Regeneration and Planning, after his retirement in 2000 from the Bartlett Chair of Planning. He continued to advise governments when the Deputy Prime Minister, John Prescott, took over the Department of Environment (renamed by then) in 1997, being involved in continuing discussions about the importance of transport, particularly high-speed rail, and the continuing and inevitable discussions about a new airport for London.

Peter had many other appointments during his lifetime, which involved governments in the UK particularly in transport and regional planning, in Europe at the Commission, and in the UK Research Councils, being

heavily involved with the SSRC before it became the ESRC in 1981. He acted as external examiner to countless academic programmes and he had more than his fair share of PhD students, starting in his years at the LSE. Indeed at Reading he was always identified as the PhD advisor for all the students in human geography during the years he headed the department—all the years I was there from 1969 to 1979—and even though this was a nominal role in a quirky system, he was very heavily involved with all these students as Michael Hebbert's (2015) issue of *Built Environment* makes clear. Indeed, on a more personal note, his enormous support for my own subject area—computer models and the science of city systems—led him to be a key supporter if not progenitor of UCL's initiative in setting up the Centre for Advanced Spatial Analysis (CASA) in 1995 very soon after his return there.

Peter was extremely good at identifying the mood music not only in British planning but also in human geography and transport research. In the BBC documentary *The Secret Life of the Motorway*, filmed in 2013, he makes the key point in Part 3, which is subtitled 'The End of the Affair', that by the early 1970s the love affair with the car inside British cities was over.¹ The abandonment of the urban motorway programme before it could wreak its damage on London in particular signified a sea change in how we began to think about the complexity of cities. He said that at the end of the 1960s there was a 'huge flip change in popular attitudes from a belief in wholesale reconstruction of cities around the car to a belief in conservation, preservation of existing cities limiting impacts of the car on the city to the maximum extent possible'. This change also presaged other significant forces with respect to what was happening in British cities and essentially began to bring back ideas from an earlier era. The love affair with the car, although over, still continued for a while, yet the forces for change were hard to quell immediately, while at the same time the policy of containment which reduced the land supply to minimal levels slowly but surely was increasing housing prices to levels that have now become unsustainable in the biggest cities. It is not surprising that onto this agenda has come the resurrection of ideas about self-contained cities—new towns in general but garden cities in particular. This smacks to an extent of nostalgia, but it has been raised in earnest by the Town and Country Planning Association, of which Peter was President in his later years, and has been picked up by current political activists as a way of beginning to think through our housing problems.

¹ <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rs89onnjI5Y>> (accessed 16 May 2016).

As if to give some added push to this trend, Peter was hugely supportive of this renaissance, so much so that at his eightieth birthday celebration which was held on 29 March 2012 in the Provost's room at UCL he was presented with a cake onto which, using the latest in computer-aided design for icing sugar, a diagram had been laid out. This was a picture of Ebenezer Howard's (1898) satellite cities diagram, which reflected the three magnets that showed how the congestion of the central city could be resolved in an array of garden cities that sought to bring the town back into the country. The cake is no longer with us but the picture is worth preserving.

This is by no means the end of the story. In fact it might just be the beginning. In 2013, the second Wolfson Prize competition was announced to address the question 'How would you deliver a new Garden City which is visionary, economically viable, and popular?' Peter of course entered the competition, with a proposal entitled *Social Cities Freiburg Fashion*, which also included his colleagues David Lock and David Rudlin. Peter's proposal built on key ideas from the city of Freiburg in his last book *Good Cities, Better Lives: How Europe Discovered the Lost Art of Urbanism*, but it also stitched together ideas about HS2 and the proposal to raise land values with city clusters near Daventry, Rugby and Preston. In many respects his proposal was a great synthesis of many ideas that he had adopted and refined throughout his life dealing with the regional question and garden cities and grasping the crisis in housing markets with proposals to revitalise the north. His long-time colleagues David Rudlin and Nick Falk from URBED won the prize (Falk, 2015) with a proposal that was more conventional in many ways, also built on the idea of garden city clusters but with none of the regional focus that Peter had perceived. In many senses, the competition itself was a great step forward. It released a torrent of ideas and a social concern that appears to have been absent in Britain for a long time. There were 279 entries and it gained the support of various political heavyweights such as the Prime Minister. It could well herald a sea change in our thinking about how we deal with the future city, and it stands as yet another testament to a great man.

And in conclusion: back to trams and trains

Some of us get the chance in life of revisiting past experiences many years later, and so it was with Peter Hall. His earliest memories of tube trains in west London and his formative years in Blackpool where you could not

escape the domination of the town by its trams came back in one of life's grand symmetries during his last ten years. In the early 2000s, the Blair government, having abolished 'boom and bust', decided to float the idea that with their new-found wealth the British people should be allowed to indulge in large-scale organised gambling but in the form of super-casinos, and a competition was to be held to decide where the best locations were to be. The whole project was organised around the idea that such casinos would spur regeneration. Many run-down places, and by then Blackpool was certainly in this category, decided to form organisations to enable the bidding process. In 2003, Peter applied to be chairman of *ReBlackpool*, Blackpool's Urban Regeneration Agency, and he was duly appointed, holding the chair from 2004 to 2008.

I never asked Peter why he applied for this position, but I am guessing that it was part of his coming to the end of one responsible role and questing for another. His Directorship of the Institute of Community Studies ended in 2003. Although he retained his Professorship in some sort of part-time position at UCL, he felt that a role in doing something about regeneration in a place which had given him much, felt right. He was even able to convince some bureaucrat in UCL to add the term regeneration to the title of his Bartlett Chair. Blackpool in his schoolboy days, even in wartime and certainly just after, was a vibrant, working-class holiday resort whose bracing air, cheap but wholesome fish and chips, the array of penny slot machines and the trams—especially the Blackpool trams—were the envy of many other places. Much of this had gone by the early 2000s to be replaced with the unemployed, large crowds of the young and inebriated, a declining infrastructure, a decaying Tower and poorly maintained trams. Even the mainstream political parties had virtually abandoned the town for their annual conferences. Regeneration, even through a super-casino, seemed a preferable course. At the time of the super-casino bid, Peter spoke at a regeneration conference at the Reebok Stadium in Bolton and said: 'Blackpool is a town which has lost its industry, lost its focus during the 1980s and some may say it has lost its appetite to attract. We have a unique chance here to change around the fortunes of a resort which many have already written off and this chance comes with the urban regeneration of some of the most deprived areas of the town' (*Blackpool Gazette*, 2014). And so the competition began.

By 2008, the whole casino debate had been shelved after government backtracking, unease over possible negative impacts on local populations and a generally poor public reaction. Blackpool had already missed out in any case with the announcement that Manchester was the chosen site, and although some regional aid was offered as a consolation, the regeneration



Happy 80th Birthday, Peter Hall

Plate



The naming of the *Professor Sir Peter Hall*

of the town was increasingly the name of the game. Casinos had been part of the spin of recent governments, and after these were abandoned the need for proper regeneration in many places became even more urgent. Physical as well as social infrastructure is still essential to regeneration and Peter, in the light of his work on *Polynet* with Kathy Pain and several European partners, initiated a study of tram–train projects called Sintropher (Sustainable Integrated Tram-Based Transport Options for Peripheral European Regions) for which the group received substantial funding from the EU Transnational Co-operation Programme covering western Europe. Peter’s success in getting European funding for this imaginative initiative took Blackpool officials by surprise. After successfully overcoming initial set-up matters, the project was hosted by UCL (Osborne, 2016). When Peter passed away, the project, although incomplete, was still very much on course. In essence its findings were investments in which trains and trams could be coordinated in various ways to increase accessibility and mobility in their wider regions where such systems already existed in some form. Extending and renewing the tram system in Blackpool and its wider region, the Fylde, was the local goal of the project in the UK. The results of the study are now published, but the project clearly marked out Peter’s longstanding themes in thinking and doing something about the quality of life in our cities: transport, regeneration, economic innovation and regional balance—these were themes that run through all his work, which are cast in his publications in the wider context of what we know about cities and what the planning system is capable of delivering to meet these wider goals.

Peter Hall passed away on 30 July 2014. He made an enormous impact on our understanding of urban and regional planning. The depth of his insights and the extent of his influence has already led to many obituaries on his passing. Indeed, a short volume in the Springer Briefs on Pioneers in Science and Practice entitled *Sir Peter Hall: Pioneer in Regional Planning, Transport and Urban Geography* (edited by Knowles and Rozenblat, 2016) appeared within eighteen months of his death. Within a year of his passing, the London Overground train named after him was celebrated in a public ceremony. It is a nice tribute to him that many of his colleagues at UCL and beyond convinced the train company to endorse the impact of his contributions in this way. I can do no better than complete this memoir by illustrating this act of generosity in acknowledging what he did for the fields of urban and regional planning, geography and transport.

MICHAEL BATTY
Fellow of the Academy

Note. I am grateful for the comments and reflections of many people who offered their advice on what is the hardest of all quests: writing about someone you know as a professional and academic colleague but of course never really know. Michael Hebbert, David Banister and Ann Rudkin, like myself, all worked with Peter from his days in the University of Reading to those at UCL. Mark Tewdwr-Jones and Nick Phelps constructed the remarkable Festschrift on the occasion of his eightieth birthday and interviewed Peter many times in compiling the various contributions to his story. Mark was also instrumental in two events in Peter's later life: suggesting and getting his birthday cake engraved with Howard's garden cities diagram, and initiating the train-naming process that enshrined Peter's name on the London Overground. Patsy Healey, also a Fellow of the Academy, picked up various themes in her advice and sought to clarify Peter's views of the British planning system. Ron Johnston, who has also written an obituary for Peter as well as being a Fellow of the Academy and Editor of these Memoirs, provided essential and insightful advice.

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