

The Nine Lives of Dick Leonard



© Irene Heidelberger, Miriam Leonard, Mark Leonard

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Europe

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Introduction

They say a Tom Cat has nine lives, but Dick Leonard has already packed more than that into his first nine decades.

We have organised the contributions around his nine lives: as a child, an activist in South Kensington, as a Fabian, a husband to Irene and member of the Heidelberger clan, as a Labour MP and activist, as a father and father-in-law, as a journalist, as a historian and as a grand father.

In the pages that follow we hear from 10 journalists, 8 professors, 6 peers of the realm, 5 children and grandchildren, 3 labour leaders, 2 Barristers and one wife.

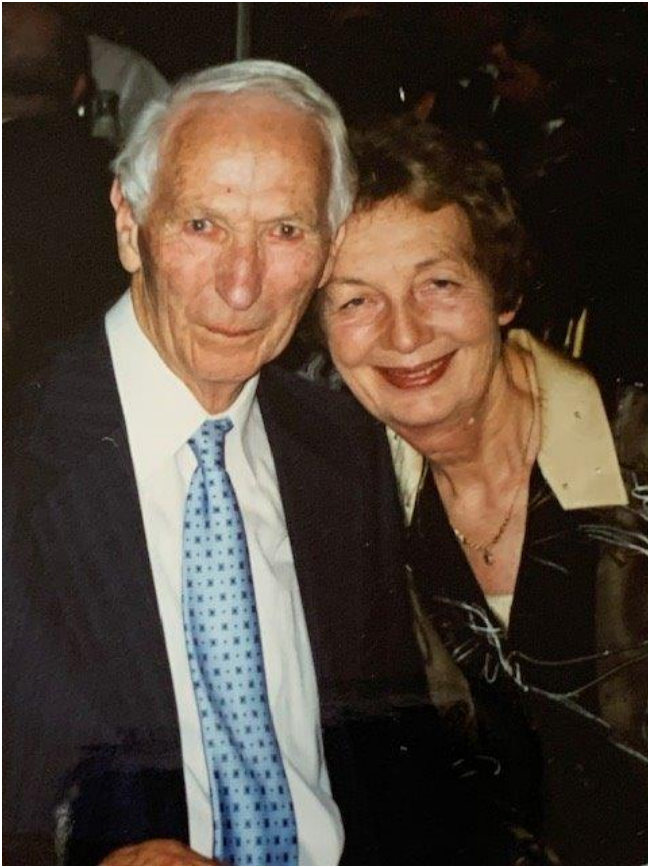
They all talk about what Dick has meant to them - and how they will celebrate his 90th Birthday.

1

The Child

John Leonard

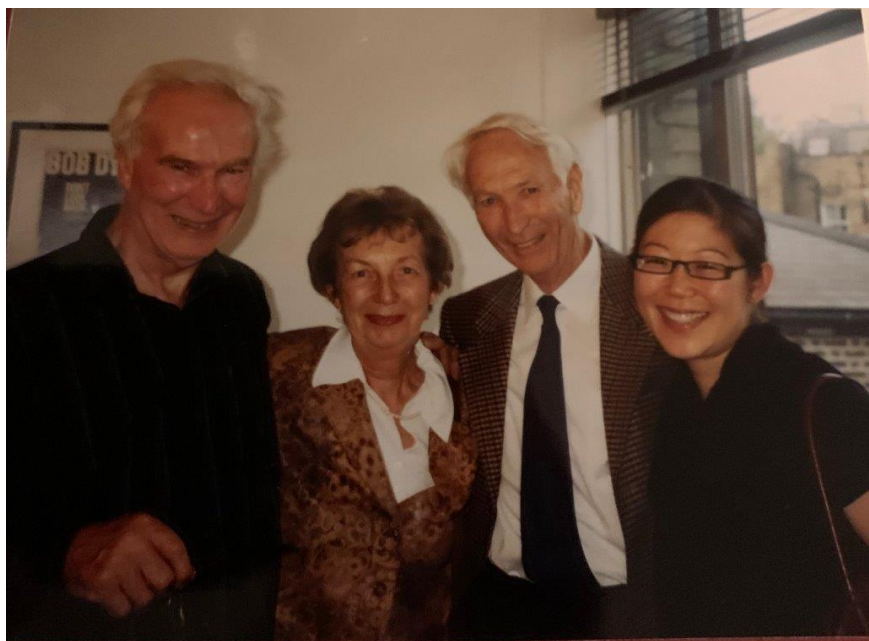
If I had to single out one characteristic of Dick's that has remained constant through his life it would be his integrity. Without this, political life, which is Dick's passion, is all "sound and fury signifying nothing". Dick's great work, his magnum opus, the lives of British Prime Ministers, is full of this, for the greatest premiers have been men (and one woman) of integrity, whatever their political persuasion. Perhaps Peel and Gladstone, Asquith and Churchill, Attlee and Thatcher, stand out because their integrity enabled them to accomplish great things.

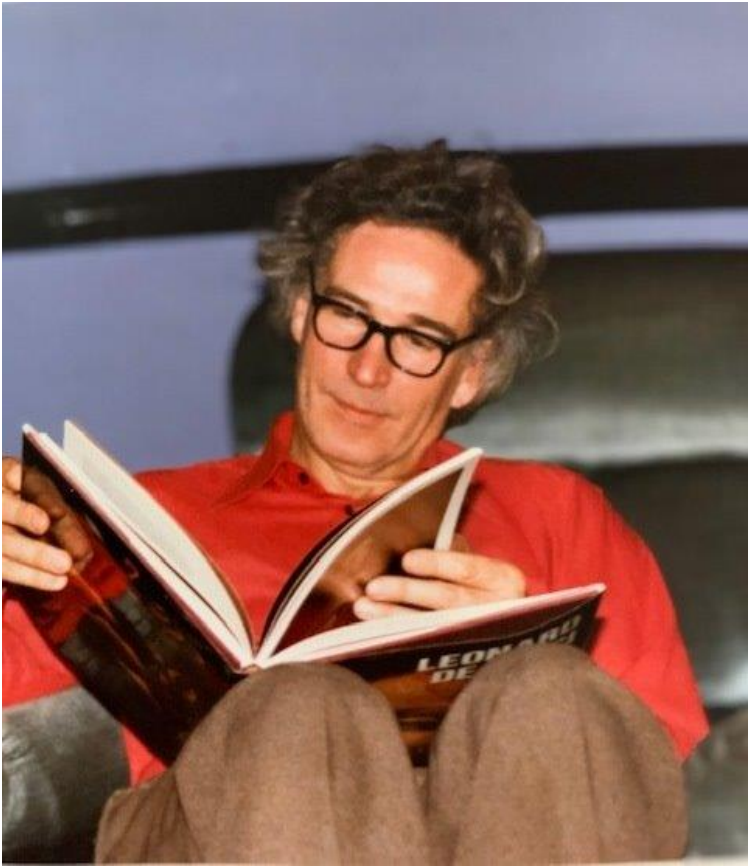


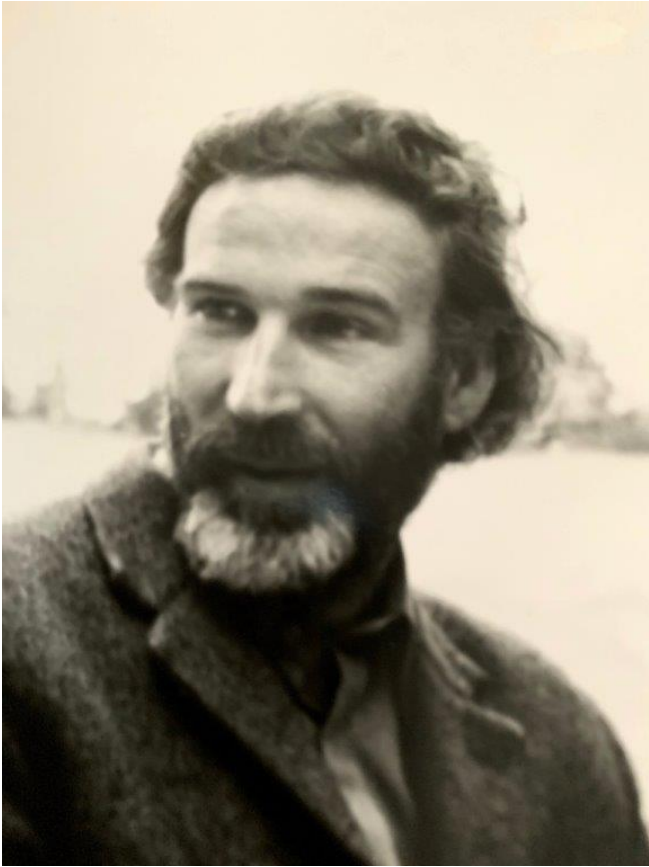
So it is with Dick, whether as politician, journalist or writer - his integrity shines through and illumines all that he does. His stand as a Labour MP on entering the EEC (when the party was foolishly against this) is perhaps the best example of this, for it effectively prevented him from obtaining another constituency. Thus he sacrificed his parliamentary career for Europe. His dedication to the highest ideals of European democracy enabled him to acquire a considerable reputation in Brussels. In family life, his pride in the outstanding achievements of Irene, Mark and Miriam is plain for all to see, for his integrity has been bequeathed to them also.

Where did this integrity come from? Surely from his parents and their upbringing. Cyril left school at the age of 14, endured the horrors of the trenches in the First World War, and then successfully founded a business which provided economic security for his sons to pursue their respective vocations. Kath worked tirelessly for her family, and took such pride in Dick when he stood for Parliament shortly before her death in 1955. Both had matchless integrity, generosity and selflessness, and Dick has inherited these and abundantly surpassed all their ambitions for him

John







2

South Kensington

Margaret Vallance

Do you remember our first meetings in the South Kensington Labour Party?

You were writing your book, *Guide to the General Election*. I was rather in awe of you.

Over the years we have remained friends. When you and Irene lived in Brussels, I and our son, Alex, came to stay with you, and I was able to take him to the site of the battle of Waterloo. Back in London, we attended your book launches, the last of which, the book of British Prime ministers, was also introduced by Keir Starmer, hot from the House of Commons, whose voice is on the radio as I write. Above all, your lovely parties and your friendship.

With love from Margaret

Clive Bradley

I've known Dick now for some sixty years, and Irene for only slightly less. He was chairman of a hopeless South Kensington ward, and quite a lot of us lefty intellectuals trooped along to his flat on Fulham Road for monthly (or so), meetings, moving as soon as possible to the nearby Bull, where the real discussions took place. He'd only just finished being Deputy General Secretary of the Fabian Society (he chaired it fifteen or so years later, in the much more difficult electoral climate of 1977-78), so was at the heart of what we now call Centre Left, and much looked up to by us as a result.

At the time, he was setting out on a complex career of journalism, broadcasting, politics, social activism and assorted academic appointments - like me, he seems to be something of a rolling stone, but unlike me he has succeeded in gathering moss. I can take a tiny amount of credit for his advance as I was fortunate enough to be able, way back, as a novice political editor myself, to commission him to write weekly notes and articles for us, along with a stable that included James Margach and Tony King. Actually, of course, I was the neophyte and he taught me more than I could ever 'teach' him. From there he acquired a massive reputation as psephologist, with a string of Butler election reports, BBC election night broadcasts, deep EEC and EU knowledge, and insightful (that's Dick the high-end journalist for you) prime ministerial biographies – a chapter each right up 'til now to his credit – still writing on his 90th birthday, when I find lockdown and writing totally incompatible.

To all of us, I guess, Dick's greatest and most heroic moment and highlight of his political career was when he was elected MP for Romford in the regretful 1970 election, and voted with other Labour rebels led by Roy Jenkins in favour of the epochal European Communities bill, to herald the UK and other EFTA friends joining the Community. When his Romford seat was recast, making it no longer a Labour seat, he didn't (not surprisingly as being Labour and a pro-EEC activist was a political contradiction then), find a new constituency, so he was lost to the PLP, but his return to his great strengths in 'journalism etc', becoming an assistant editor of *The Economist* and then its man in Brussels, was to find the real Dick Leonard.

I was regularly in Brussels myself then and was invited by Dick and Irene (along I think with many other friends) to stay with them frequently at their apartment in the outskirts of Brussels, commissioning Dick as our EEC man for my weekly, updating myself on inside EU (or rather EEC) trends and politics, and usually enjoying bibulous oyster dinners (usually, as some varieties of Brussels oysters are an acquired taste), or helping ten year old Mark on cooking jacket potatoes in the new microwave. Obviously young Mark had promise but didn't have the family know-how he has today, along with equally brilliant sister Miriam, inherited, Dick always says, from Irene. My ambition is to start a Leonard-Heidelberger library to accommodate (and make available) their *oeuvre*. Their adjacent studies in their beautifully modernised house in Albert Street are such work hubs as to put the rest of us to shame.

Of course, Dick and Irene are old and cherished friends. Like us all, as involved people, we haven't seen as much of each other over the years as I would have liked, and nowadays treasure their Sunday summer salon and our occasional visit to the Chinese restaurant on its posh barge on the Grand Union Canal.

Long may it last.

Jim Northcott

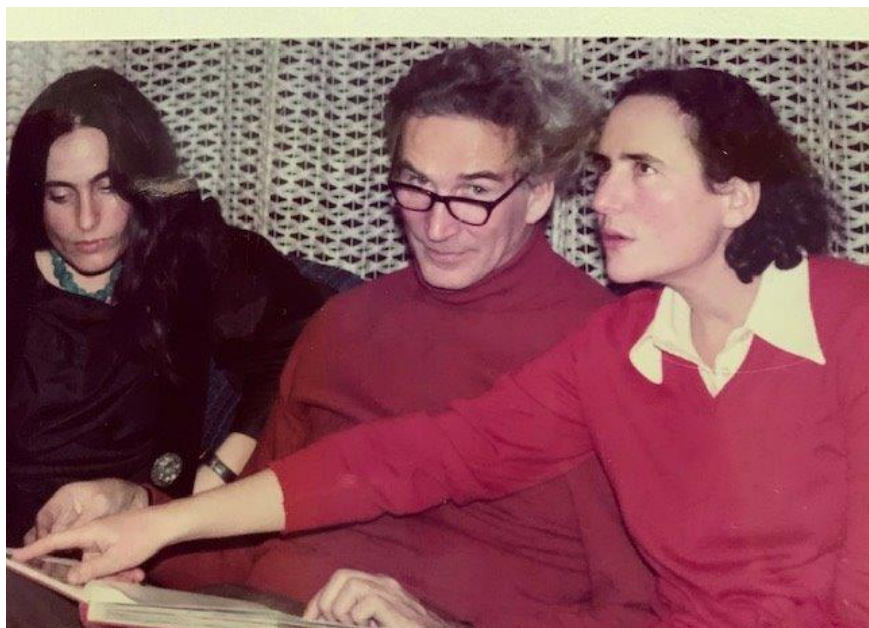
Back in the early 'fifties Dick was a central figure in the South Kensington Labour Party and in the Fabian weekends he ran. We all appreciated his well thought out contributions to the political discussions and, even more, the warmth of his personality. He was such congenial company and a good friend to so many of us.

As Editor of Plebs he gave his support to my Plan for an Efficient Party campaign. This was most useful and much appreciated.

We missed him when he went to Brussels and were glad when he and his delightful wife Irene came back to London – so many happy midsummer parties and special celebrations. And all those book launches! It was encouraging to see that he is still as intellectually active and productive as ever – an inspiring example to us all. Long may he continue!

Jim Northcott





3

Fabian

Brian Lapping

Irene has suggested that we note some memories, to celebrate your 90th birthday. Here are mine.

You and I first met in 1958 or 1959 at NALSO (the National Association of Labour Student Organisations). I think it was at a meeting in Newcastle.

We struck a chord immediately, because we were both fans of Tony Crosland. I had been inspired by “The Future of Socialism”, published in October 1956, my first month as an undergraduate.

I expect I bored you with anecdotes about my parents being simple-minded lefties – almost making me want to leave the Labour Party. It was Crosland’s book – as I told you - that won me back.

You explained – in Newcastle, I think – that you had been involved in the setting up of the Young Fabians. You got me to join.

Subsequently, you did much to shape my career. I went into journalism – first on the Daily Mirror and then on the

Guardian. You helped me secure a secondary (part-time) career as editor of “Venture”.

That led me to spend several hours most weeks in 7 Dartmouth Street. The joy of working so close to Parliament and Green Park, having total independence to commission and publish articles, benefitting from meetings (which you often fixed for me) with colonial leaders who were in London, added up to a unique privilege.

You were then, I think, working full-time in Dartmouth Street. I saw you there only occasionally, as you were busy running the organisation.

When The Guardian sent me overseas – to the Indian subcontinent and to various parts of Africa – you found others to run Venture while I was away. You were thus crucial to my holding onto that job.

For some years, I have been meaning to ask you a question. Soon after Tony Crosland became Foreign Secretary, Susan, approached me and they asked me to write his biography. I started work on it – and stayed with them for a weekend at their house near Adderbury in Oxfordshire. Then Tony died. Susan said she would write his biography. So I gave up mine. My question is, was it you who suggested to the Croslands that I should write his bio?

Please keep going for enough years to enable Anne and me to go on enjoying your company.

Happy birthday,

Brian

David Owen

Dear Dick

This is to wish you a very happy 90th Birthday.

I have known you since we both attended a Fabian weekend. I cannot remember where or when but long before 1972 when I first became a candidate for Torrington. It might have been a year either side of 1969 General Election. I remember you were far more knowledgeable than I was: hardly a compliment since I was hugely ignorant about party politics having only recently joined.

More important you were wiser than I and that has been a constant factor. We both shared a real respect for Tony Crosland's intellect and he was fun to be with. All through you have been one of my key teachers in politics; that much decried but essential part of any true democracy. It is a varied list which might make you smile! Gerry Reynolds, John Mackintosh, David Marquand, Michel Rocard, Denis Healey, David Watt, Roy Jenkins, Polly and Peter Jenkins, Barbara Castle, Johnny Apple, Peter Hardy, Cyrus Vance, Andy Young, Olaf Palme, Jim Callaghan, Mike Thomas, John Cartwright, Danny Finkelstein.

Be strong and thank you for being so important in my life, through good times and bad. Even when we differed as over the EU, you and Irene never allowed it to interfere with Debbie and my valued friendship for you both.

Yours ever

David

Anne Lapping

Happy Birthday ,Dick.

How sad that the virus means we can't expect to be invited to celebrate at one of your and Irene's legendary parties. Maybe next year.

There are so many questions I want to ask you. What are you writing now? After Gladstone and Disraeli perhaps Starmer and Johnson. What do you make of their rivalry ? And who is the Labour intellectual who will now make the needed Crosland- like leap forward in the party's thinking ? Your books on political history helped me catch up on what I should have already known with real pleasure. And coming up to date, it was at your last book launch that I realised there was much more to Keir Starmer than a clever lawyer awkwardly talking to a camera.

But I have never properly thanked you for helping a temporary refugee from television into one of the most rewarding phases of my career. You took the risk of commissioning me to write for the Economist and then said Andrew wanted to meet me which scared me but then he offered me a job. You were a nurturing boss in an initially mysterious environment. I was amazed at my first editorial conference when section heads made their offers to hear Brian Beedham read out slowly " Japan, maybe East Germany, China....." But you always explained the Britain section's stories behind the gnomic headlines, thank goodness – so I knew what I was supposed to be writing about!

Friendship , conversation, politics and birthdays .Enjoy them all just as you make sure others do .

Love

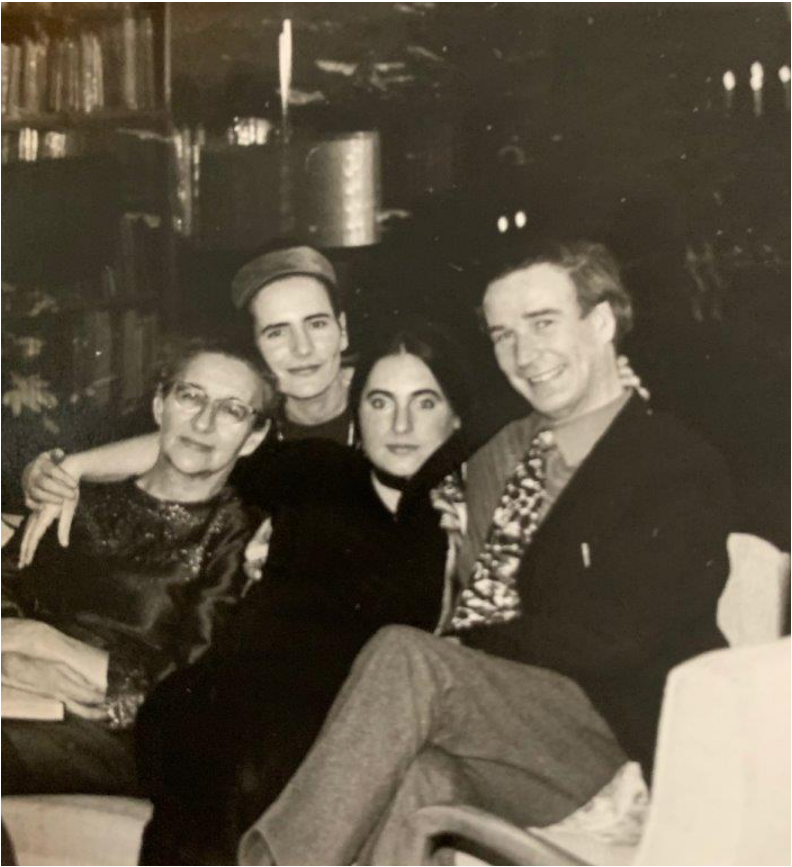
Anne

Dianne Hayter

I was so honoured, soon after I joined the Fabian Society as Assistant General Secretary in 1974, to discover that Dick was one of my predecessors! Despite being in slight awe of him, he was helpful straight away and taught me a lot about writing, editing and politics, especially when I wrote my first ever publication (a Fabian tract, of course). Since then, his friendship, wisdom, kindness and many books – as well as his and Irene’s hospitality, in Brussels, France and in London – have been a source of pleasure and, always, learning.

David Caplin

One of the advantages of marrying Dianne was to be welcomed into the Leonard circle, with Dick’s conversation, hospitality and books adding to my pleasures.



4

Heidelberger

Irene Heidelberger-Leonard

Imagine a three act play with an exposition, a climax and a resolution. An exposition in Bad Godesberg and London, a 30 year long climax in Brussels and a gentle resolution in London.

Act 1

Dick is the main protagonist of this three act drama:
To me, the 16 year old school girl, he seemed like a young God. A 29-year old gentle giant at his most ardent. blindly in love with a puritanical unworldly adolescent. I had everything to learn and he taught me everything. He taught me Life.

Never patronising, always on equal terms. Our age, our ideals, our imaginations differed. Dick respected the difference and paved a way, so I could follow my own personal path. He supported me unstintingly throughout my stumblings towards an academic career. He read Grass and Andersch, Améry and Kertész. And I followed him as best I could in his political accomplishments, sat through GMCs, in London, in Romford and witnessed with admiration his bold stand on Europe in the House of Commons in 1972. Mark and Miriam crowned our partnership.

Act II

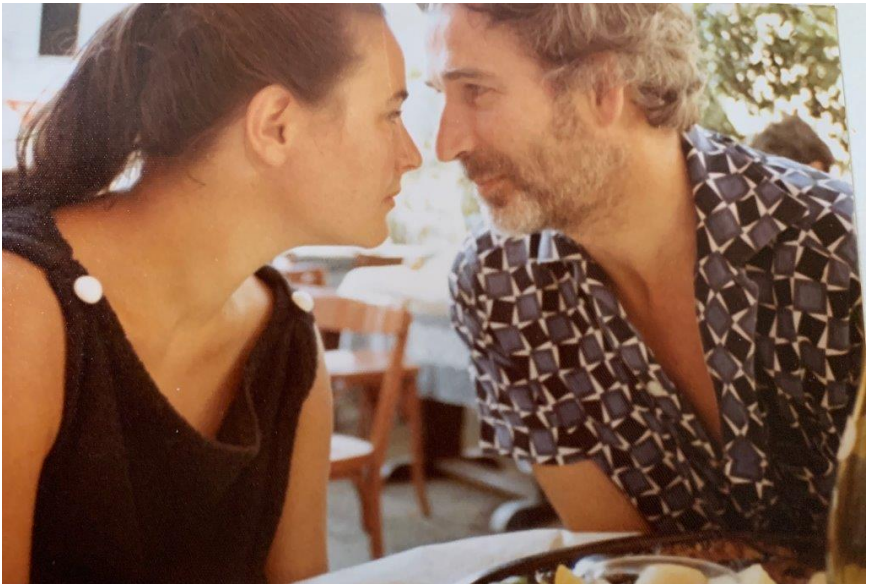
Brussels was a climax for the whole family: Dick flourished as a journalist with *The Economist*. Mark and Miriam were thriving at the European School. And I found my feet with a full Chair in the German Department of the Université Libre de Bruxelles. In truth, I was only able to blossom, because Dick made it possible. *The Economist* wanted him back in London, but Dick decided - unilaterally - to leave *The Economist*, so that we could stay in Brussels and I could accept the position. He re-invented himself, forged a new career as a brilliant free lance. In the last 10 years he masterminded a narrative of three centuries of British Prime Ministers. We made a pact that we would return to London, when I retired.

Act III

Having created his personal account of the 18th, 19th and 20th century, Dick, the historian, now gives himself to the narration of the 21st century after taking a detour with his micro studies of *The Titans: Gladstone and Disraeli* and *The Rivals: Fox and Pitt*. Nothing can deter him, not even his

failing health. He remains undaunted, insatiably curious, an optimistic fighter for a European world, a fervent groupie of our new Labour Leader Keir Starmer.

His public contribution is immense, but it is nothing compared to the encouragement, the richness, the generosity, and the ardour he bestows on Mark and Miriam, Jakob, Noa and Isaac. And to me the 90 year old is more than ever the young God of sixty years ago. Dick radiates light where there is darkness, he radiates goodness where there is corruption, he radiates happiness where there is despair. Dick is not only the hero of this play, he is the hero of my life.



Anne Hallauer

My dear Dick,

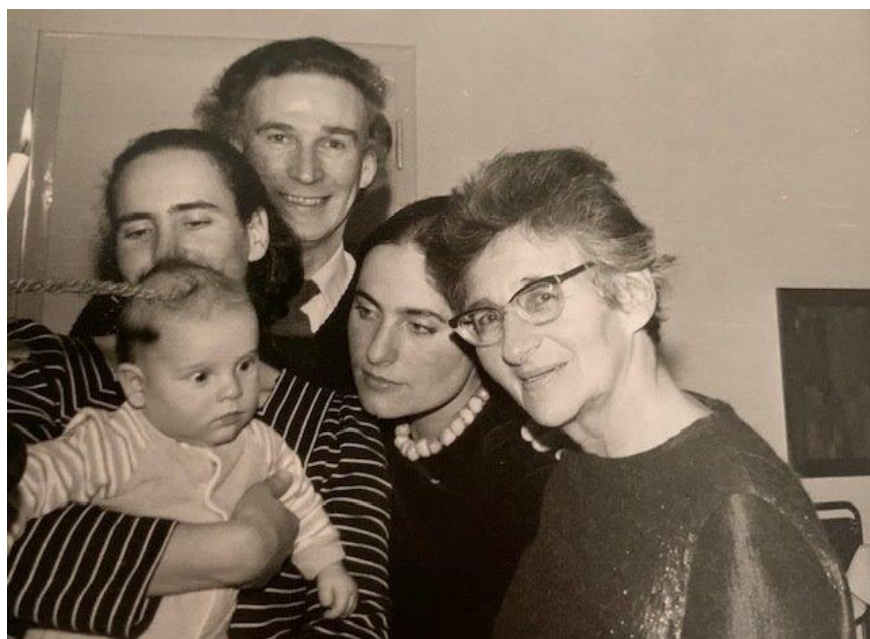
when you married my little sister in 1963, I hardly knew you; I was just impressed by a good-looking young man who was deeply in love with Irene. At that stage I was not aware of the undeserved luck in store for me to become related to such an exceptional man. But very soon, I felt your immense friendliness and generosity. Not only did you accept to have our mother live with you in your house when she helped Irene, then a student, look after the children; you made her feel respected and you admired her deep knowledge which made her happy and feel totally at home, and being as passionate as Irene, she was able to return your affection. She had believed in you from the very first day of your acquaintance.

Later when I came to London several times a year you always welcomed me more like a sister than a sister-in-law, I gradually had the opportunity to discover the width of your own knowledge in so many different fields such as literature, art and, of course, politics. I was even allowed to visit Parliament with you and accompany you and Irene to Romford, your constituency as a member of parliament.

Now, at 90, in spite of your constant work on your books or your articles, which is remarkable – never stopping to think about past or present political problems – you still remain calm, friendly, open-minded and listen to your interlocutors. You are always able to answer their questions in a very precise way.

Dearest Dick, I thank you for what you are and wish you health and the possibility to write many more books on the Prime Ministers to come.

Anne



Alain Heidelberger

Très cher Dick,

Quand je pense à toi, je vois un homme souriant, sympathique, détendu, à l'humour charmant, attentionné à l'égard de tous, à la pensée et aux paroles libres. Et comme le sourire est contagieux, je suppose que, comme moi, ceux qui pensent à toi se mettent à sourire eux aussi.

Je n'ai que de bons souvenirs !

Alors que, tout jeune homme, je passais quelques jours chez vous, tu m'as emmené un soir faire une promenade jusqu'à Primerose Hill. J'étais très heureux de ce moment passé ensemble, oncle et neveu. Nous discutons agréablement et à bâtons rompus. Partis au crépuscule, nous sommes arrivés la nuit tombée au sommet, Londres scintillant à nos pieds. Puis, surprise supplémentaire, tu m'as invité dans un pub très cosy, avec de jolis vitraux colorés. La magie de l'ambiance se prolongeait, j'étais émerveillé et fier.

Autre souvenir : tu avais rendez-vous avec Edward Heath chez lui et tu m'as emmené avec toi. Il nous a reçus de façon assez « casual », dans sa grande cuisine à l'ancienne, carreaux vert sombre vernis aux murs, fourneaux en fonte et laiton, le tout dégageant une atmosphère chaleureuse et douillette. Pas complètement conscient du caractère exceptionnel de la situation, j'ai pensé : « Ah, ses amis aussi sont souriants et décontractés ! Quelle façon intéressante de voir la vie ! »

Et même ces derniers temps où tu es malmené par des soucis de santé, ton sourire, ton optimisme, ton goût pour la vie restent intacts, tu es toujours prêt pour tous les projets, comme Bérénice et moi l'avons constaté à Thurey il y a deux ans.

Grâce à Irène et toi, j'ai deux adorables cousin(e)s qui ont chacun(e) fondé à leur tour une famille splendide.

Je souhaite mentionner aussi la joie de connaître ton frère, sa femme et leur descendance, remarquables eux aussi de gentillesse. Ma fille Valentine, qui a passé plusieurs semaines avec la famille d'Andrew, a été accueillie très chaleureusement par les Leonard de toutes les générations et t'es reconnaissante pour cette mise en contact.

En y repensant des années après, je m'aperçois que tu as été pour moi l'un des premiers représentants d'une branche des homos sapiens bénie par les dieux et caractérisée par le talent naturel de combiner amitié, humour tendre, liberté et capacité à prendre le recul nécessaire par rapport aux événements.

Bérénice, mes filles et moi te souhaitons un très bon anniversaire. Nous regrettons tous que les virus divers obligent à en reporter la célébration et attendons impatiemment de fêter tous ensemble cette respectable dizaine.

Ton neveu Alain.





Claire Billen

Quand je pense à Dick, je vois son sourire et ce sourire m'enveloppe, m'emplit de paix et de bonheur.

On pourrait en parler longtemps mais tous ceux qui le connaissent savent ce que je veux dire.

Mon plus beau souvenir avec Dick est la visite de l'exposition *l'Empire du sultan* au Palais des Beaux-Arts de Bruxelles, où je l'ai accompagné en 2015.

Toute une matinée et un déjeuner, seule, avec Dick !

Mon anglais est déplorable de pauvreté. Nous avons donc communiqué par les 'antennes', les gestes et le regard. La proximité de cet homme immensément curieux, cultivé, avide et si heureux de comprendre et de continuer à s'informer est un enseignement pour la vie. L'exposition était ample, les salles démesurées, les sièges désespérément rares, les escaliers nombreux, rien n'y fit ! Nous avons tout exploré : Dick appartient au monde, quoi qu'il en coûte à son corps. Cette matinée de 2015 en était une démonstration exemplaire.

Mais ce n'est pas tout ! Ce que j'ai compris aussi ce jour-là c'est que Dick est quelqu'un que l'on aime sans devoir le lui dire. Il le sait et il vous le rend comme si c'était évident de toute éternité. Il se laisse aider et c'est un don. Confiance, bienveillance, joie d'exister au milieu des autres, sans peser, en toute discrétion mais sans non plus dissimuler, voilà l'humanité de Dick ! Évidemment, derrière cette humanité qui s'effectue comme une source s'écoulant dans le calme, doucement mais sûrement, il y a Irène. Elle la rend, chaque minute, possible. Elle l'alimente aussi, de concert avec les enfants.

Il est difficile de parler de Dick, sans évoquer le foyer de Dick, sa lignée. Ils sont l'expression d'une alchimie familiale exceptionnelle, puissante – et que je sache - unique. Dick en est le point d'équilibre mais chacun y occupe une place essentielle.

Quand je téléphone à Londres, j'entends Dick chanter dans son bureau. J'adore de capter ce petit moment ensoleillé. Il n'a rien de superficiel ou d'anecdotique. Il est la preuve que l'on peut construire le bonheur.

« Lovie, c'est Claire à l'appareil » (à prononcer avec un bel accent britannique). Je voudrais encore longtemps entendre cette phrase, une private joke dans la famille Leonard, qui doit s'apprêter, avec ce signal ironique, à voir les communications extérieures de la maison se perturber pour un peu de temps...

Dick, je pense à ton sourire et à ton humour : le don généreux de l'indicible.
Heureux anniversaire !

Claire



Jan Grant

What a rooted and welcome presence, Dick, you have been in my life for nearly fifty years! I have such a sense of your wisdom, kindness, knowledge and humour threading through that time. It has been a privilege to know and to learn from you. When I first met Irene you were in the House- what an exciting time – and I have gained a great deal politically from following your career, listening to your patient explanations and reading your books. And I have greatly enjoyed meeting so many varied and gifted people at your book launches and your wonderful parties - for you have always been so generous with your warm invitations. You have offered Geoff and me such welcoming hospitality over so many years – in Brussels, Burgundy and Albert Street.

Now, in my history studies I have finally reached Walpole, the first Prime Minister, so I shall press on accompanied and helped by you and your Prime Ministers! I shall be very glad to have you as a companion.

I count myself extremely fortunate to have you as a friend for you have immensely enriched my life.

Thank you.

I wish you so much celebration and joy for your birthday.

Jan

Barbara Kappen

Dear Dick,

your way of loving. There are some moments I shared with you and Irene in your everyday life from time to time since 50, yes, 50 years. And what I saw, first of all, it was tenderness, discrete and steady, what a precious

combination ! I mean, one doesn't find that very often, for such a long time, I mean, it is a miracle.

And then, dear Dick, your way of working. I listened to you, from time to time, and there were not just informations about your work and all the hundred details, what I heard, it was more than that. It was your passion, passion pure. Since - such a long time ! I won't say, it is a miracle, because you worked hard for it, but nevertheless ...

And now, your way of battling between home and hospital, to rejoin your bureau, to continue writing, to restart your work in spite of every thing, as you did so many times - and all that with a certain serenity. You don't know yet, how much I am admiring you, how much you helped me already, to take courage.

Thank you,
Barbara

Caroline Cooper

I know Dick through Irène – a wonderful couple. In the 1960s we struggling post-grads in the British Library reading room were impressed with Dick coming in to pick Irène up at closing time. 'He's an M.P.', somebody whispered....

Then there was Albert Street: an impressive long, shared table, one of them seated each side of a stack of A4, printer, fax machine etc. – whatever we all had in those days. How many couples, I wondered, could so amicably and productively share a desk?

Then (when?) charming Mark and Miriam.

Brussels: Dick, as always a warm and welcoming host.

Burgundy: where we arrived one evening just as he was directing an artisan to attack a wasps' nest in the eaves.

And now Albert Street again: Dick emerging smiling from his study. Books on the EU, then all those Prime Ministers (fifty-five of them?). Is Theresa May finished? And is he working on Johnson? His many friends and admirers are waiting to know, but even keener to see Dick again. We hope very much that Lockdown etc. will make it possible to tell him in person, on his ninetieth birthday, how much we love and admire him.

Hazel Abel

A couple of weeks ago I met Dick, quite unexpectedly in the street where we both live. He was out for a walk with his physiotherapist. I was greeted with so much warmth and friendliness that I was quite overwhelmed. He was obviously very frail but his warmheartedness shone out. How lucky we have been to have him as a neighbour!

I first met the Leonard's in 1970 when I knocked on their door to wish him all the best in the election. That was the start of an enduring friendship with them which has lasted throughout their years spent in Brussels. It was a pleasure to have them back as neighbours again on their return. I have felt grateful for their presence in our street ever since that first meeting.

I have watched him preside over his family with all the loving kindness that one could wish for in a father and husband.

I look forward to more encounters with this remarkable man.

Hazel



5

Labour Party

Keir Starmer

I owe a debt of gratitude to Dick at three stages of my political career: my selection as the Labour candidate for Holborn and St Pancras (2014), my election as member of parliament for the constituency (2015) and my election as Leader of the Labour Party (2020).

When I stood for selection as Frank Dobson's successor, I was daunted by the challenge that I faced. During my five-year tenure as Director of Public Prosecution, I had been precluded from any political involvement. My rivals included the current Leader of Camden Council and a former Leader. Dick was one of the long serving members of the local Labour Party who encouraged me to stand and has supported me at all subsequent stages of my political career. Dick has also been a good friend. His summer parties present the opportunity to meet the fascinating array of friends which he has accumulated in politics and journalism over the past 60 years.

Dick and I share one embarrassment. We were both at our homes, unaware that burglars had entered and were walking

out with our televisions. I was absorbed with work at my desk; Dick at least had the excuse that he was asleep.

It has been a pleasure to be at the launch of two of Dick's many books: "A History of British Prime Ministers" (updated to include Cameron) and "Titans: Fox Vs Pitt". His many books are essential source materials as Labour charts a new radical agenda for the next decade post Covid.

Both Dick and I are passionate Europeans. We both regret the decision that Britain took at the referendum in 2016. The European Union has cemented 75 years of peace in Europe. In my legal practice, the European Convention on Human Rights has provided a set of values that I have sought to promote. As Dick enters his 91st year, both he and I will strive for the closest relationship with our European partners, albeit one outside the European Union.

Happy 90th birthday.

Gordon Brown

Dear Dick

Congratulations on your birthday !

While I know that you've been confined to hospital recently I hope you are keeping better and despite the social distancing will enjoy the celebrations for your 90th birthday. You deserve to: you have achieved so much for such great causes over the years and your steadfast support for progressive change over all these decades marks you out as a hero whom we all admire.

I have enjoyed your writings and your recollections of the difficult as well as good days on the centre left in British politics.

You have influenced some of our greatest leaders and bolstered their faith in equality and in the benefits of international cooperation.

And you kept the flame for social democracy alive when it was thought we could never again regain power.

I thank you for the positive influence you had on what we did as a Labour Government and I know there are many like me who are so grateful for the help, advice and encouragement you gave them over the years.

I am sad like you we are leaving the European Union but pledge to you we will keep alive our Europe links and our belief that what we can achieve together, will always be greater than anything that can be done in isolation.

Enjoy the applause and good wishes of all your friends!

Gordon

Neil and Glenys Kinnock

Dear Dick,

Please accept our very best wishes for a very happy birthday.

We slog along with the usual twinges (old age, we discover, is a very dangerous place) but, like you, we benefit hugely from great family love and support and NHS rescues. We are very fortunate.

Politics, and therefore life, alternates between frustration and desperation with odd, relieving episodes of celebration... Joe Biden's victory in the USA is an obvious source of delight and his defeat of the cowardly, lying orange Narcissist made me ecstatic. Today is Joe's birthday, by the way, so you are in very good company.

Here, however, we have our own Poundshop Trump – only the colour is different – and we face ruinous Brexit in less than seven weeks.

Tawney said that we can be taught “by the tides or by the rocks”. The tide came in 2016, the rocks come next year. We can only hope that the terrible instruction will be quick, short , and effective...The experience, sadly, is more likely to be long, corrosive, and catastrophic. It will be an awful price to pay for monstrous national pretence and the delusions resulting from it – or is it the other way around? Anyway, it is a bloody homemade mess.

You, I know, have had some bumpy weeks and I trust that you are now out of that.

Be sure that countless people join with Irene and your dear ones in wanting you to thrive and give all of us the joy of your ‘90’s.

All the very best, stalwart comrade!

Warm regards,
Neil and Glenys (Kinnock)

David Lipsey

I have known Dick Leonard as a friend and colleague for nigh-on half a century. The link between us started with Tony Crosland. In 1970, Dick was elected to parliament as MP for Romford in 1970. He served as a very young looking Parliamentary Private Secretary to Tony Crosland, then shadow environment secretary, until he lost his seat due to boundary redrawing in the first general election of 1974.

I joined him as an even-younger looking adviser to Crosland. At 24, I was known as was known as a “chocolate soldier” paid for by the then Rowntree Reform Trust to provide back-up to opposition front-bench spokespeople. I went into government as Crosland’s special adviser when Labour won that election, so in a sad sense, I was in as Dick went out. Never mind: in practice it did not make a big difference and Crosland continued to seek his advice long after he could provide it as an MP.

We were friends and allies until Tony tragically died of a stroke as Foreign Secretary in 1977; and indeed we were friends and allies ever after. Dick’s strength was in giving Tony purely political advice. Generally he shared Tony’s revisionist political views, first set out in “The Future of Socialism” in 1956. But he was probably less gripped than the master by the minutiae of policy. His advice was on what to do and what to say.

And it was good advice too. When Harold Wilson resigned as prime minister in 1976 Tony threw his hat into the ring. The most perfunctory canvass of MPs showed that he was going to do disastrously badly. He should have followed Dick’s advice that he withdraw. Dick even went so far as to brief that he was going to. But Crosland, ever the optimist, ran on; and his reward was a bruising 17 votes.

He continued to promote Crosland’s politics long after his death. We joint edited a book of essays “The Socialist Agenda” in his memory in 1981. (I must have chosen the ghastly title because he would never have been so dull). He subsequently edited another book of essays, “Crosland and New Labour” in 1999. The extent of his influence over Tony Blair and New Labour cannot be fully reckoned. But he was never stuck in the past. Indeed it was at his house where I first met one Keir Starmer, who knows wisdom when he sees it.

After losing his seat, Dick had to carve out a new career. He was immediately recruited to the Economist where he served

for more than a decade. Curiously this was the same path I followed when jobless after leaving the Times in 2002. For the Economist and later the Observer he was an expert Brussels correspondent – no Boris Johnson he! And though his Brussels work ran down, especially after he moved back to England, he found a new career as a historian. Successive books on British prime ministers were widely acclaimed.

Dick has a bullish temperament, not often down. He has been sustained by his two gifted and much-loved children: Mark, a great Europeanist and Miriam, a great classicist. Above all he has been blessed in his marriage to Irene, herself no mean academic, who has stood behind him through life's vicissitudes. Theirs is a marriage of true love. His health is not what it was. But his brain remains as acute as ever. As does his life long desire to influence the world, especially the political world, however bleak it seems. I salute at 90 a lovely lovely man.



Robert Latham

"In 1975, when I moved to London and to 10 Albert Street, I did not realise that I was moving into such a hotbed of Labour activism. Our block, consisting of six houses, included Dick and Irene at No.16 and Shirley and Ieuan Jenkins at No.8. Their respective sons, Mark and Harri were equally active.

I was a Camden councillor from 1982 and 1990. This was a period during which the Labour party was at war with itself, ensuring that it kept itself out of power for 18 years. Dick was safely based in Brussels during the rise and fall of the Social Democratic Party. During this period, we were on different sides of the political divide.

Dick re-joined the Labour Party in April 1992. By this time, I had moved to another part of the ward. Dick has always been a great supporter and a fountain of good sense. Whenever the ward Labour Party canvass or deliver leaflets, it has always been a delight to find Dick at home and have the opportunity to discuss political developments. In signing two of his books, he has kindly described me as "a born Foxite" and "forever young and an intuitive Croslandlite".

In 2017, I went on a world cruise and had the pleasure of reading "A History of British Prime Ministers" from cover to cover. In November 2016, Dick had added a dedication:

"For Robert, a doughty fighter for Labour whom I feel sure will stop at nothing to ensure that the next PM is Labour and preferably the MP for Holborn and St Pancras".

Dick had the foresight that Keir would be the next leader of the Labour Party. May we both see Keir as the next Prime Minister.

And, happy 90th birthday, Dick, from all members of the Regents Park Ward Labour Party.

And, Moira also adds her best wishes.

Robert Latham

Jan Royall

Dear Dick

Warmest congratulations on your 90th birthday. This is worthy of great celebrations but these must be tempered by the wretched virus.

You are an extraordinary man – a journalist and writer with sound political judgement, wonderful values and a deep passion for social justice, equality, human rights and all the pieces that make up the jigsaw that we call the European Union. You have taught me so much, not only through your books and our conversations but also by being a very special human being. I love the way in which you show your deep love for Irene, your children and your grandchildren, when too many men are afraid to do that. I love the way in which, even at the most difficult times, you have always spoken in favour of the European Union, when too many politicians have been and are afraid to do that. In fact, I love so many things about you and your humanity – and so did Stuart.

I would relish the opportunity to talk with you about politics in our country, in the EU and in the world. We have lived through a tumultuous period with little hope but with Keir as Leader of our Party, Joe Biden and Kamala Harris on their way to the White House, vaccines becoming a reality and Dominic Cummings out of Number 10, hope is returning. We still have the blight of Brexit but in a few years' time common sense will prevail.

May you have a happy birthday and may the year that follows be happy and healthy.

Much love

Jan Royall

Sandra and Dick

Dear Dick

Congratulations from both of us on reaching this milestone. We hope you will be able to enjoy the day and have a great time with the family. They must be very proud of you.

We want to celebrate your many achievements - as an MP, organiser, journalist, writer, thinker (amongst other things !). You have been an inspiration in sustaining a commitment to the need for a fairer society. The example you have set matters so much. You have made a real difference. This is a chance for us to thank you.

And more recently there has been the pleasure of getting to know you better - sharing the occasional glass of wine, reading your books, and the fun of talking to you about today's events. Long may this continue!

Happy birthday and much love from two Young Fabian neighbours,

Sandra and Dick

Hugh and Win Burton

Dick – we in Witney will be hoisting the flag and raising our glasses to you on this day.

It was precisely on this day, twenty years ago, in your and Irene's Brussels residence, that you inveigled me into joining your croquet club in Genval. I've never regretted it for a minute. It's not a complete coincidence that our new home in Witney's Retirement Village has its very own first class, though reduced size croquet lawn. It may be Golf Croquet we play now, rather than the up-market Association Croquet but better, I keep telling myself, than Garden Croquet. No more ferreting around in the bushes searching with one's partner for one's partner's croquet balls.

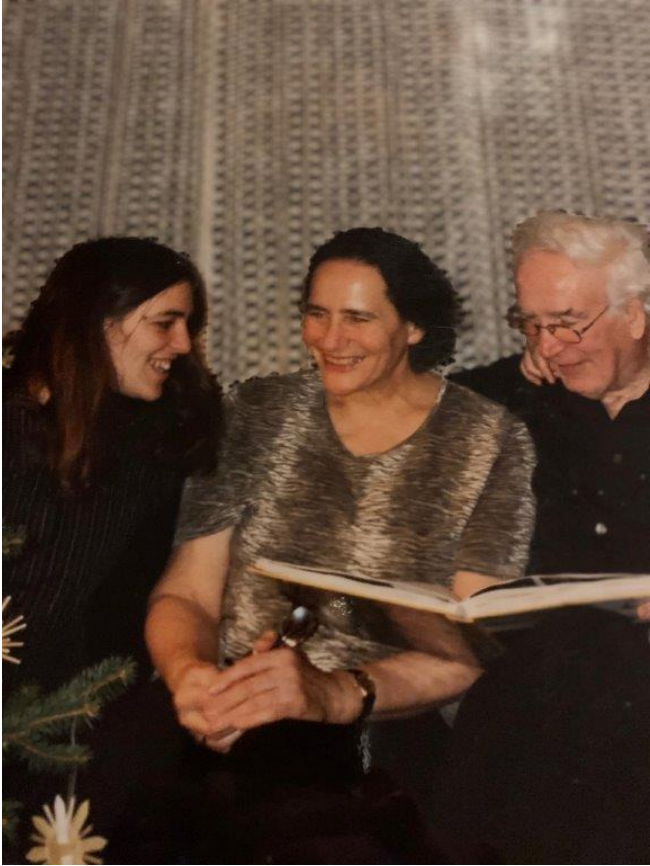
And now you are ninety – what's in store? Whilst we will be looking back in our photo albums and files more frequently to instances when our lives have crossed – to Austria and Schloss Kassegg in the wintry snow and to the Sicily to Malta sailing jolly aboard Tai Luk one summer in the late 1990's, we don't doubt that you will have your next publication on the stocks (although that does sound an unlikely place for drafts to be).

I imagine there is nothing new in being 90 – if only that we, like others before us, have to get our mouths around a new vocabulary - our new verbiage including lockdown, furlough, COVID-19 etc. The historian that you are will say "what's new – when we were born....."

Many Happy Returns from us both, Dick.

Cheers!

Hugh and Win



6

Father & Father-in-Law

Miriam Leonard

Dada, I am in complete awe of you. You have been more productive in your ninth decade than I have been in any decade of my life! Your reserves are staggering, you find fortitude and inspiration even in the most difficult of circumstances.

But I shouldn't wonder: this has been a pattern you have followed your whole life. You came from a loving but modest home and you have achieved so much. But the way you have borne all these achievements so humbly is perhaps the quality in you I value most. You never sought congratulation or admiration for your endeavours, you have just poured your life into each of your vocations with a sense of purpose and determination. In our family you have always occupied the role of the "no drama Obama". But no less than Obama, this sense of reasoned calm is married to deep conviction and passionate resolve to pursue your causes.

My memories of growing up with Dada as a father: cycle rides through the salt marshes in the Ile de Ré, singing

obscene Brassens songs in rural Burgundy, triumphs on the croquet lawn, listening to the news on the hour every hour, teaching us about politics, history, geography and about human kindness but never TEACHING us.

Every day I feel deep pride to have a father like you. A father who made a difference in the world and a father who touched the lives around him and made those lives immeasurably better. Your companionship with Mama is a staggering inspiration. And in your roles as father, father in-law and grandfather to me, to Phiroze, to Isaac your tenderness, wisdom and devotion shines through and lights up our world.





Mark Leonard



Dear Dada,

I feel so lucky to have you and mama as my parents: I literally won the genetic lottery! You have been so supportive and generous through all my life phases. I owe most of my knowledge, the values I live by, the things I treasure and the breadth of my horizons to you, Mama and Oma.

The fact that we were given so much makes me marvel even more at what you and mama (who were given so little in comparison) have achieved. I still can't fathom how you, as a little boy, decided to chart your own course by getting involved in Labour politics, continuing your education, rejecting religion and militarism and embracing Europe.

Even more important than your impressive political, intellectual, literary and journalistic achievements is the way you have done it. Every time I come across people who worked with you they talk about your decency and generosity. You have always been on the side of the future – from polling to international relations to the classless society. But my biggest inheritance is to have been granted some of your legendary resilience which allows you to see opportunity in all circumstances, no matter how bleak.

I always felt your love was unconditional. I knew you expected a lot of us but you were careful to let us find our own way, and even to make our own mistakes. You have always been there for us and that is why we will always be there for you and mama.

Your adoring son,

Mark



Phiroze Vasunia

If I were as expert a versifier as you are, I would have composed a limerick for the occasion . . . sadly, prose is all I can manage.

Dick, you are the best father-in-law in the whole world. I think of you, however, not just as a father-in-law but as a friend, an intellectual, a gentleman, and a raconteur without parallel. Your integrity, old-world charm, and good cheer are a model for the rest of us. I don't know how you've done it, but you've written so many excellent books, each one surpassing the last in erudition, wit, and flair. Your command of British politics and British history, and indeed world events, is astounding. You are also the most entertaining after-dinner speaker I know. And you're so modest about all your achievements!

But the thing that touches me the most is your kindness and generosity and the warmth with which you welcomed me into your family when we first met (thanks to your lovely daughter Miriam), and the kindness, generosity, and openness that you continue to show me now. Isaac is so very excited to see you every time, and even just the prospect of coming to see you thrills him immeasurably. Being in your presence makes him happy— and me too. Thank you for everything.

Happy Birthday!

With all my love,
Phiroze

Gabrielle Calver

Dear Didi,

Happy Birthday! 90 years of life! 90 years of living, loving and giving. Not quite 90 years of inspiring Jakob about politics and chess but 90 years worth of wisdom and experience have gone into Jakobs shorter 11 which he will always treasure. I am not sure there are many 11 year olds who would willingly pick up *The Economist 's World Atlas of Elections - voting patterns in 39 democracies*. As for Noa she absolutely adores you. She might not share your passion for capitals but she is now very adept with a chess board and has become very Nana-esque in her desire to keep you well and strong!

And it's not just Jakob and Noa it's all of us.

Thank you for Mark - for all of you that has gone into all of him. Thank you for inspiring all of us with your astounding memory, your love of politics, your intelligence, kindness, modesty, generosity, zest and hunger for life, always such positivity in adversity.

All my love

Gabrielle



7

Journalist

John Kerr

Scene : The dining room in the Rue Ducale, all gilt and mirrors. Time : lunchtime, any time between 1990 and 1995.

Cast : the British correspondents, a formidable crew, all but one bearing notebooks; and the embattled Permanent Representative.

Often he found himself on the ropes, battered by the brilliance of Britain's finest, determined never to lie, but keen not to reveal Whitehall's strategy, or lack of one. Like Baldrick, he had a cunning plan : when the hounds bayed most, off went the host. Deflection was his friend.

"That's an interesting question : I wonder what John thinks ?"

And the mighty Palmer would often fall for it, and tell.

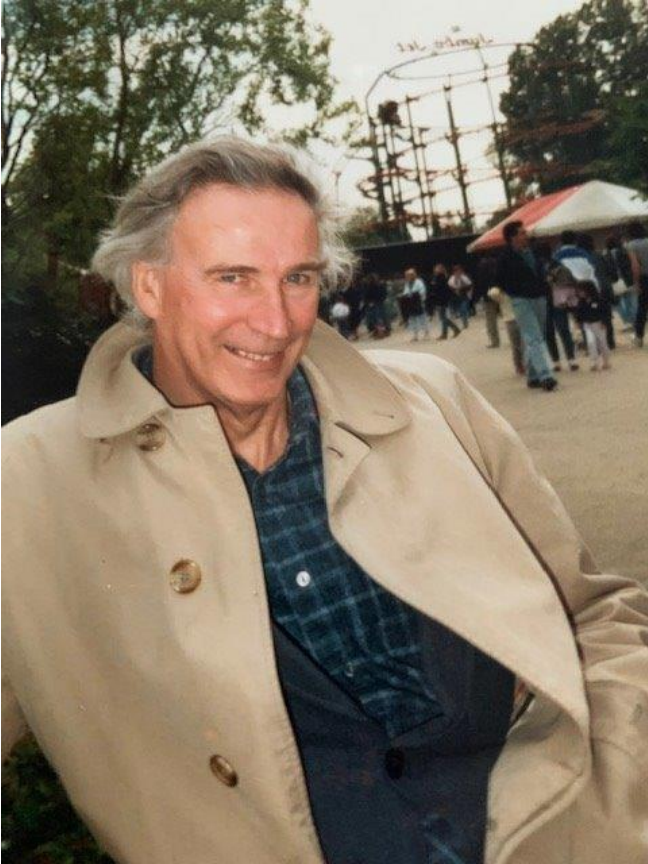
"Lionel, your finger's on the pulse, what's your view ?" And

the Demon Barber cutting through all complexities, would expound the three things we needed to know. "Charles, what does Delors want ?" And polymathic Grant, the biographer, would offer an informed Presidential insight. And Boris, unburdened by notebook or homework, might crack a joke. And I would have had time to come up with an answer, if anyone still remembered the question.

Dick would smile, silent and sphynx-like, throughout; and I knew that he had seen through me, and my technique. I knew he enjoyed seeing me duck and weave, and get away with it. Just as I knew that he knew, perhaps from Roy, that there were bits of the Thatcher/Major script and strategy that didn't come naturally to me. And I hope he knew how much I welcomed his opinion and advice, always given modestly and privately, often drawing on a historical analogy I wouldn't have spotted.

Dick, you taught me a lot. Back then, in the golden days when we all believed in the Union, its deepening and widening, and our place in it. Back then when Boris was only an amusingly irreverent irrelevance. And ever since, as the books have rolled out, always wise, always unassuming, always drawing on the same feeling for history, with its parallels and precedents. A diplomat may duck and deflect, a wise man digs deeper. And I have always admired your conviction, whatever the setbacks, that the arc of history bends towards justice. How we need that optimism now.

Stick around, Dick. Happy 90th. John Kerr



David Buchan

Dick is not a national treasure, he is a European treasure – and not just because he is treasured by his many friends on both sides of the Channel. Our paths first crossed at the Economist in London in late 1974. However it was all too brief because I moved on to the FT, and a couple of years later to Brussels. In the late 1970s Brussels had the Bulletin, but unfortunately not yet Dick to explain in its pages the intricacies of Belgian politics. Luckily, when I returned to Brussels in the late 1980s Dick was in situ to untangle for us expatriate Bulletin readers the cats-cradle of Belgium's politics in its three dimensions – Flemish, French and German (you didn't know about the German, unless you read Dick). Like very many others, Lisa and I have so enjoyed the incredibly warm hospitality of Dick, Irène, Mark and Miriam that for us began in Brussels and that continues in Albert Street. Of course I have been quite unable to keep pace with Dick's literary output, of which I particularly appreciated his combined biography of Gladstone and Disraeli; I wish that had been around when as part of the Oxford history course I had to flog through separate tomes on each of these characters.

In the early 1990s I co-wrote a book about the EU with Nico Colchester, whom I remember saying to me at the outset "I don't want us to write a guidebook to the EU" – and we didn't. What we wrote was a good book, translated into a few languages, but there was only ever one edition. Today, Dick's Economist guide to the EU is in its 10th edition, and rightly so.

David

Bill Keegan

Dear Dick,

Many congratulations on your 90th. You are an example to us all - not least with your invaluable series of books on British prime ministers, and those indispensable guides to the EU.

I have been reflecting on how much I enjoyed our Observer partnership on various EU stories. How stimulating were those legendary Brussels lunches - not a bottle of Perrier water in sight.

I have dined out many times on the time at a Lisbon EU summit where we got the wrong bus, noticed that everybody else was speaking French, and nearly accompanied Mitterrand on his surprise flight to Sarajevo.

By the way: 90 ? You were absolutely right to take out life membership of the London Library....

Best wishes,

Bill



Lionel Barber

Among the very small group of passionate but well informed British journalists in Brussels, Dick always stood out. This was all the more remarkable because he was one of the most understated reporter-commentator I have ever met.

This was why, one day, I intervened to defend his presence at a select briefing by the Foreign Office spokesman, a very pompous individual who went on to become permanent secretary.

I will never forget the delight on Dick's face. He valued friends and returned favours - a true gentleman journalist

Happy birthday, Dick

Lionel

Charles Grant

Dick Leonard had a big influence on my career. I met him for the first time in the autumn on 1988, in Barbanera, a posh Italian restaurant near the Berlaymont building in Brussels. Bill Emmott, then the finance editor at the Economist and my boss, had advised me to see him. I had been offered the job of Brussels correspondent but was unenthusiastic about taking it. I had no great interest in the EU and hoped to be posted to somewhere more exciting like Paris or Tokyo. So I went on a short trip to Brussels to write a story about EU financial regulation and consider the pros and cons of living and working in Brussels.

While eating his favourite *tortellini in brodo* and *grilliata mista*, Dick persuaded me that there would be much more to write about than mere milk quotas: Jack Delors' Commission was pushing ahead with the single market programme and the story was becoming political. Dick made the point that it would be fun to be Brussels correspondent. He was right, so I have no regrets about taking the job, even though I ended up with a life sentence of EU wonkery.

Throughout my four-and-a-half years in Brussels, Dick and Irene's house in the Rue des Bégonias always offered warmth and hospitality. There were many dinners and parties – including the sad evening in 1992 when we watched the election results on TV as Labour unexpectedly suffered a decisive defeat. I enjoyed spending time with the teenage Mark and Miriam since they were the only people I knew who liked the then rather unfashionable Beatles and Dylan as much as I did.

The convivial hospitality continued after Dick and Irene returned to London. That return also led a wonderful coda to an already fulfilling career: a succession of fine books on

British prime ministers and other great figures from the 18th and 19th centuries. I cannot think of another historian who wrote so many good books when he or she was in their eighties. However, there were several fine composers who, like Dick, produced great work in their ninth decade, including Richard Strauss, Michael Tippett and Elliott Carter. Dick is a modest man. If he was more boastful he could point out that he has known just about all the key people in the Labour Party who are both interesting and important, since the 1950s. In recent years I recall seeing Keir Starmer speak at the launch of at least two of Dick's books.

Dick has blown hot and cold on the Labour Party over the years, as it has veered between sensible policies and lunacy. About 30 years ago I recall helping – alongside Mark and I am sure many others – to persuade Dick to rejoin the then Kinnockian party. Dick must be very happy with the way that this year the party has shifted back towards the Croslandite social democracy that he has always espoused.

John and Majella Palmer

I first saw you Dick, not physically, but on the television. It was late at night during - I think - the 1959 general election. You were being interviewed - I think - by Robin Day and you were there in your capacity as a national officer of the Fabian society. I followed your subsequent political career as the Labour Member of Parliament for Romford. Although as someone on the radical left, I sometimes disagreed with your views on specific issues, I soon became aware of your intellectual depth and your profound grasp of the complexities facing those who seek far reaching reform of our society. I later understood how this was fed by your expert knowledge of Britain's modern and premodern history.

As a result of this acquaintance-at-distance, I really did feel I somehow already knew you when we first met as fellow correspondents covering the European Union when you, Irene and your family moved to Brussels in 1989. Whatever our differences on specific political issues, it soon became apparent that we shared a deep commitment not only to UK membership of the European Union but to the wider process of European integration. Discussion about all of this - and much more - helped pass away those long hours as we awaited the outcome of all interminable EU ministerial and Heads of Government late night meetings. But Irene and you became an integral part of Majella's and my social network in Brussels, a city for which we both share a very soft spot.

Back in London we have all had to face not only the dark political drama surrounding Brexit but the unknowable future relationship Britain will now have to forge with an ever enlarging and further integrating European economic and political union. But regular social encounters - including the unmissable Leonard family summer drinks parties - have helped dispel the gloom. During this time I have been an awe-inspired witness to your incredible productivity as a historian, regularly turning out books on the politics and politicians of the past three centuries. You sometimes make me feel lazy!

Strength to your writing arm. You have much to contribute to our shared fascination with the great issues of our age.

With affection and respect,

John and Majella Palmer.

Peter and Janice Norman

"Dick is a model of kindness and decency — and as such a rather rare creature in this often cruel world.

We can go on... for Dick is a polymath. A distinguished commentator and historian, whose own experience of life in politics shines through in his journalism and other writings.

It is difficult to believe Dick is celebrating his 90th birthday this year because he is eternally young at heart. As is obvious to any outsider, he is a devoted family man, whose roles as husband, father and grandfather are cherished by those closest to him. And we count ourselves really fortunate to have Dick and Irène as friends.

But above all, it is Dick's kindness and decency that mark him out as someone very special."

With all our best wishes

Peter and Janice xxx

Simon Alterman

I met Dick soon after arriving in Brussels to take charge of the Reuters bureau in Brussels. I quickly realised how little I knew about Europe and how much I still had to learn about journalism. Dick became not just a friend, but an invaluable source of wise and calm counsel. That was only to be expected in someone who was at the time quite literally writing the book on The European Community, the pocket guide which I kept close at hand for the next 10 years. In addition, his weekly columns in the Bulletin made the murky world of Belgian politics rather less impenetrable for all of us who focused mainly on European matters. Dick also kindly agreed to take on one of the most thankless tasks in any Reuters bureau: updating the biographies of the great, good and not so good in case they suddenly became newsworthy or, more usually, dropped dead. All of them probably got far better obituaries than they deserved. But what I remember

most about Dick was not his expertise, his prolific output or even his unfailing enthusiasm and amiability. It is that, in a place where many people of far less distinction displayed considerably more self-importance, Dick was always modesty personified. I don't think I've met such an accomplished man who wears his eminence so lightly.



Bill Emmott

As a keen but green young man arriving in Brussels, arriving also into journalism for the first time, what I needed (apart from my own strong nerves and a goodly dose of chutzpah) was kindness, guidance, tolerance and empathy. These days this is often called 'mentorship' but what I got from you was much more than that word seems to imply.

We are talking about the events and sentiments of 40 years ago but some things still feel sharp in the memory. Your kindness is exemplified especially in my memory by your decision to invite me to join you at the European Council in Venice in June 1980 barely a month after I had arrived. It was your first such summit as Brussels supremo so you might well have wanted to avoid distractions, and there was no strict need for me to be there, but still you brought me along to show me how it all worked and perhaps to sense at least some of the swish of Maggie's handbag. As well as being a sheer delight, that visit also had the great merit of enabling us to enjoy some rather good lunches together, all no doubt in the interests of research and planning.

That visit certainly set me up for two wonderful years in Rue Ducale during which I not only enjoyed your friendship and that of Irene but also thereby received from you and from Brussels a gold standard of training and experience, in journalism and in European affairs but also in how to manage relationships of all sorts. If I were to be asked to reduce it to one phrase, my choice would be 'the value of kindness'. That is what I drew from you, my first proper boss, and which I have tried to apply in all my subsequent roles and dealings, naturally not necessarily with 100% success. I think you might agree that this is even something you have applied in your writing. Whether as a journalist or as an author about prime ministers and much else besides, you seem to me to have been appropriately firm, realistic, sober and robust in your judgements, but never unkind. Would that all of us, as we try to emulate your fine example of continuing to write and be published in our later decades, offering our thoughts to an often ungrateful world, could say the same thing. Thank you Dick – and Happy Birthday!

Bill

8

Historian



David Marquand

Dear Dick and Irene

I was very moved by Irene's message to me. My goodness, what a long time it's been since we first met, I think it was at a Fabian summer school somewhere in the wilds of North Wales, is that possible? Anyhow, I just wanted to say how much your friendships have mattered to me. Dick was closer to Crosland, whereas I was a dyed-in-the-wool Jenkinsite. But that doesn't matter very much (if at all). What I remember particularly was our meetings - over several long years - in France, and later in London. Dick's books have fascinated me, particularly the 'Great Rivalry'. And we've been on the same side in many tough battles -- particularly over the European issue.

I particularly remember visiting you in your French house, and (also) your visiting Judith and me in ours. I'm greatly heartened to learn that Dick is now 90. I'm a mere 86! But Dick has managed to produce more books than I have. I've particularly enjoyed your 'Titans: Fox versus Pitt' and Dick's dedication to Irene. I wonder how you see things now? Are you as depressed as I am? Or are you, in spite of depression, a congenital optimist, as I also am? We live near Cardiff now - technically in the Vale of Glamorgan - but, despite lock-downs here and there, we're still enjoying life. Judith has just finished a family history - a topic not just of concern to Jewish immigrants as her grandparents were. And I'm working - really working?? -- on what I imagine will be my last book. The working title is 'Sea of Troubles: Four Nations Disuniting'. 'Sea of Troubles' is meant to recall Hamlet's soliloquy 'To be or not to be That is the question';

and ends up by saying that it might be nobler to take arms against a Sea of Troubles.

.....Cardiff is a fascinating place, at least in pre-lockdown times. The cultural life - particularly musical and operatic - is magnificent. And we can go wherever we like in Wales, though not to England, or for that matter to Scotland. (And it does happen to be my native city.) My god, though, it sometimes seems to me that the two great causes I've cared for in my life - Europe and social democracy - are now in a very parlous state.

As ever

David



Anthony Seldon

Dick Leonard is an utterly brilliant historian of the Prime Minister, the best that Britain has. His volumes are learned, pacy and entertaining. He has illuminated the office much better than any other figure.

More than that, he's been an extraordinarily generous and helpful colleague to countless researchers and scholars like myself. When stuck about the truth of anything to do with the Prime Minister, I have always contacted Dick, and know that I'll get a prompt, friendly and accurate answer. He's an absolute saint and very happy 90th birthday!

Anthony Seldon

Judith Marquand

I did not know you at all well until we moved to Brussels in 1977. I know I had met you a few times before that – I have vague recollections of a party or other gathering in London when you introduced Irene to us for the first time – but it was only when we started to arrange our family move to Brussels that I learnt what a kind, considerate and hospitable person you were, in addition to your public persona as a former MP, a journalist and a writer of historical books.

Later memories abound, of visits to two different houses in Brussels, to your house in Burgundy, and to 16 Albert Street, where your summer lunch parties were a highlight of many of our summers. We were less successful in tempting you to our house in Oxford, but I do remember at least one visit, where our proximity to Ruskin Hall prompted a range of your memories.

Congratulations on your 90th birthday!

With affection

Judith

Andrew Taylor

Publishing is less fun, less civil than it used to be - an industry under pressure from all sides. Working with an author like Dick (Leonard) though, who has latterly published both his *Guide to the European Union* and *British Prime Ministers* volumes with Routledge, restores some of the gloss. Always a pleasure to work with, rigorous but courteous and considerate, his books are also expert, accessible and important, enriched by pretty much unrivalled expertise and long experience. I'm very grateful Dick came to us to publish new versions of his books.

Mark Garnett

If I could see Dick at the moment I'd tell him how much I value our friendship, and how that I wish I'd met him many years ago. I've enjoyed our disagreements about the past, just as much as our agreements concerning the present. I cherish memories of the launch of *Titans*, and of our subsequent discussion at the BBC.

Get better soon, Dick, and many congratulations on passing another milestone in your journey. In particular, I hope that before your birthday we'll have celebrated the political downfall of at least one mindless populist.

All my best wishes
Mark G

Frank Auerbach

Happy Birthday!

I have been fortunate in having Dick Leonard as a neighbour. A success! Both, publicly, in his vocation and avocation and, privately, in his splendid family. All without the slightest trace of self-importance.

Love
Frank



9

Grandfather

Jakob Leonard

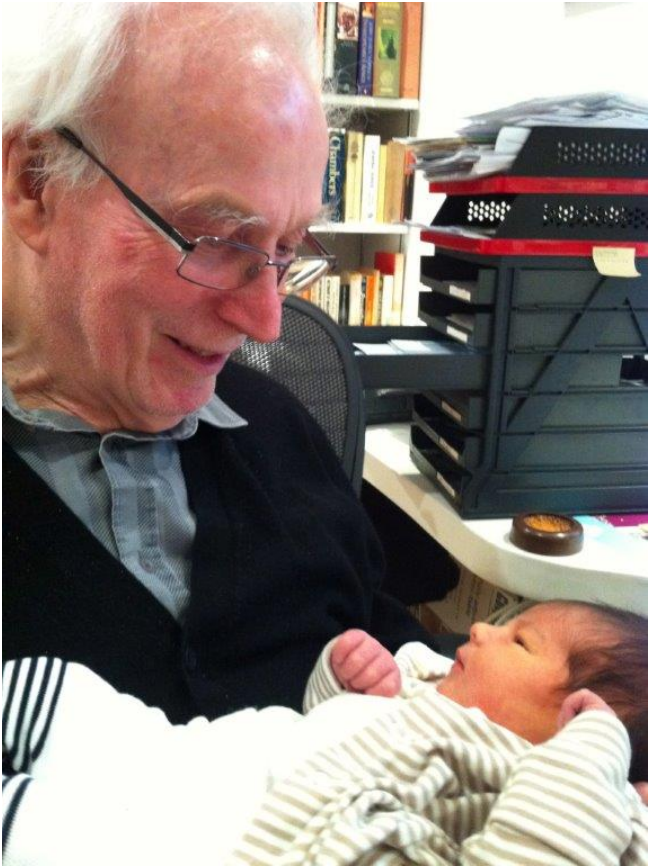
Dear Didi,

You are our star glimmering bright, our large, purring tom cat, our scarred and slashed favourite armchair which never gives up. You are our walking dictionary and encyclopedia, our pumping heart, our light and hopeful sunrises, our very own grandmaster and Didi.

Didi, I could not wish for a more loving grandfather and I cannot express my gratitude to you being there to talk to and to play with whenever I call. I am extremely lucky to have such a treasure living down the road. This is why with an elated heart I wish you a euphoric 90th birthday.

Love Jakob





Noa Leonard

Dear Didi,

You are the most wonderful Didi anyone could ever be. You have taught me how to play chess, and made me laugh, smile and be happy. Without you I wouldn't be the person I am now.

You are spectacular.

Happy Birthday to my joke-maker, writer, punctuation-teacher, Tom Cat and best Didi ever !

Love

Noa

Isaac Vasunia

When I think of Didi, I think of:

Indian Raja

Watching iPlayer on his knee

Reading books on the sofa

Frank Sinatra's *My Way*

I love you Didi because you have always done it YOUR way.

Isaac





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