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A portrait of Brian Archer

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Introduction

For Brian Archer's own account of his career as a tourism economist published in Larry Dwyer's edited collection, *The Discovery of Tourism Economics* (2011) he takes the title "Musings of a Multiplier Man". At one level, this title captures exactly the important aspect of Brian's academic work and indeed, as he acknowledged in a keynote speech to the IATE conference in 2011, at least for anyone over 35 it is what he is best known for – multipliers. But, at a rather more profound level, it obscures the great contribution that early scholars of economics, like Brian, made to the development of tourism as a serious field of study. He is one of those early scholars who, in common with a very small band of others, partly by design and partly accident, found himself involved in the serious study of an activity that was taking on global significance. Brian was among the first scholars and as such he set some of the first directions for tourism studies, he helped to bring economic thinking into the field, and he enhanced the understanding of tourism in a way that is still felt today.

In the mid-1960s, when Brian first began to research its economic contribution, tourism hardly existed as a subject of serious study or research. Medlik (1965) identifies some early tourism programmes at the Universities of Rome (1925), Vienna (1936), and at St Gallen and Berne in Switzerland, and of course there were some early vocational hotel schools both in Europe and North America. But for the most part, tourism did not figure as a subject either for study or for research. For that to occur, three ingredients needed to come together. First, tourism as an activity needed to be recognized as important, whether for its contributions or for its problems. This happened during the 1960s with the accelerating growth in tourist numbers and expenditure and with, for example, the recognition by the United Nations Organization of 1967 as International Tourist Year. Second, there was a need for pioneers to start developing programmes of study and research. That was happening at a few places around the world where universities began to spot new opportunities. Third, scholars, by definition from other subject areas, needed to turn their scholarly ambitions to tourism. Economists were in the vanguard of such scholars and among the first of these was Brian Archer. In other words, he was entering a new field and in entering it he helped to create it, and in helping to create it he provided a basis for subsequent scholars to develop and challenge. From this, tourism as an area of scholarly study as we know it today has emerged. This portrait of Brian Archer is, therefore, a portrait of one of the founders of the study of tourism.

Brian is currently Emeritus Professor at the University of Surrey. He retired from his full-time post there in 1994 and retired completely in 2000. Since then, tourism has remained an important part of his life, partly through occasional consultancy studies and

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assistance with journal editing and Ph.D. vivas, and recently through conference contributions, but much more importantly and more extensively through personal travel. For the past 20 years, he has certainly become a highly experienced practitioner of tourism.

As for me, I have now known Brian for more than 35 years. I was aware of his “multiplier” work when I was a student in the early 1970s, and we first met when he came to give a presentation (on tourism multipliers of course) at the University of Surrey which I had joined as member of academic staff in 1975. Subsequently, he became the Head of the Department at Surrey, and we worked together there for some years until I moved away in 1985. During that time, his work played an influential and important role in my development, as a lecturer in tourism and economics. Subsequently, we have kept in contact, partly through meetings at our local supermarket, and, over a pub lunch, he was kind enough to assist in providing information for the preparation of this portrait, by providing documentation, by answering questions, and by sharing anecdotes. Within these, his chapter in Dwyer’s collection has provided important source material (Archer, 2011).

Background

Brian Archer was born in the suburbs of Liverpool into a long-standing dairy farming family. His father subsequently managed a milk-processing company. He was educated at a private school in Liverpool, and, as was common at the time in the UK, as a high-performing pupil at the age of 13 he was encouraged to take classical studies (Latin, Greek, and Ancient History). It was only later in his school career that he took the first of three turns in his academic direction by studying English, History, and Geography. The second turn came a few years later towards the end of his studies at the University of Cambridge when he moved away from Geography towards Economics, subsequently taking a second undergraduate degree in that subject. The third came much later when he moved also into Tourism.

When he left school, he was conscripted into the British Army for two years national service rising to Corporal within a year and then commissioned as an officer. Having finished his national service, he continued his links with the part-time Territorial Army, rising to the rank of Major. During this time, he returned to his studies gaining a place at the University of Cambridge (Fitzwilliam College) to study Geography. Interestingly, while there, he was taught by Terry Coppock, who subsequently, as Professor at the University of Edinburgh, started the Tourism Recreation Research Unit at that University. Terry was another one of those early pioneer scholars, this time a geographer, who took their academic skills into tourism, but according to Brian, at the time at Cambridge, tourism did not figure in their studies.

It is in some ways paradoxical that his turn towards Economics at the end of his time at Cambridge led him to a career as a school teacher of Geography, at Monmouth School. His explanation is that this provided him with the space to study for an external degree from the University of London in Economics and Politics. It also provided him with an opportunity to develop Economics as a subject across the School, which in itself was unusual at the time.

The appearance of tourism

Apart from cricket and rugby, and also developing his skills as an accomplished conjuror, Brian’s other great passion during this time, and indeed subsequently, was travel. By the

time he was at Monmouth School, he had already visited most of the countries of Western Europe and some in the east, as well as the USA, Canada, and parts of Africa. In the early 1960s, this was exceptional. His interest in tourism had an early start. As he explains it, his professional interest in economics and his personal interest in tourism came together almost by accident from a chance meeting, during a return visit to Cambridge, with a former Economics Tutor at his college who had moved to the University College of North Wales, Bangor as Professor and Head of Department. The outcome of this encounter was that he took a post as Senior Research Officer in the newly formed Economic Research Unit at Bangor. The first major project for Brian was an economic study of the Isle of Anglesey. Although not ostensibly about tourism, the nature of the region and Brian's own interests were in his words "crucial in helping to bring together the two strands of tourism and economics into a meaningful relationship" (Archer, 2011, p. 5). An outcome was one of the first so-called "multiplier studies" bearing the name of Brian Archer as a co-author (Sadler, Archer, & Owen, 1973). This then led to his studies for a doctorate examining the state of the art in tourism economics. Further regional tourism impact studies, initially in the UK and later in many other parts of the world, followed as well as a permanent lectureship at the University and eventually the Directorship of the Institute of Economic Research. This period also brought him into teaching in Macroeconomics, Regional Economics as well as a new course that he introduced in the Economics of Tourism and Recreation. It was during this time that Brian's pre-eminent role as the "Multiplier Man" was consolidated with the publication of *"Tourism Multipliers: The State of the Art"* (Archer, 1977d) which for the first time brought together the thinking to date of the position and proper use of the multiplier to understand tourism.

The final major step in Brian's career was to a Professorship at the University of Surrey, following the retirement of the Rik Medlik, who was the first professor in this field in the UK. His involvement at Surrey was to last for more than 20 years during which time he served as Head of Department and Pro-Vice Chancellor. At Surrey, Brian joined one of the few "mainstream" tourism centres at that time that offered tourism-related degree programmes and research. He continued the development of the department and continued his research work in tourism impacts and in other economic issues concerned with tourism. The subsequent appointment to Surrey of Steve Wanhill and John Fletcher, both economists and both trained at Bangor provided Surrey with a powerful economics team that brought worldwide attention to the University.

Academic and other contributions

The twin themes of economics and tourism that were brought together in the "Anglesey Study" have provided the *leitmotif* for Brian's career. The first step in this was bringing the theory of economics, particularly macroeconomics into tourism, to understand the role that tourism plays in generating incomes and employment. The fact that this was done in the context of specific studies of tourist regions also served to bring together both theory and practical implications for destinations. At the heart of this work was both the challenge of measuring the demand for tourism but conceptually more importantly of identifying tourism in models based on traditional industrial classifications, an issue that was originally solved in the Anglesey study by adding rows and columns for tourism to the input-output tables – an early precursor of satellite accounting. This work had two important effects. First, it added both the understanding and rigour to the growing field of tourism as an area of study. Brian brought this together in the publication cited earlier (Archer, 1977d), and it is not surprising that he received regular invitations to present his

work at academic conferences notably, originally in the USA at, for example, Colonial Williamsburg, Virginia; Sun Valley, Idaho (Archer, 1973); and Scottsdale, Arizona (Archer, 1977b). In his CV, he identifies 50 such conferences, seminars, and colloquia. Second, it took Brian into a range of other studies both in the UK and overseas on projects funded by local and national governments as well as by international agencies such as the World Bank, UN World Tourism Organization, and the United Nations Development Programme. His CV lists over 30 such studies in destinations from the Lake District in the UK, to the Bahamas, Bermuda, Fiji, Hong Kong, Mauritius, the Seychelles, and Vanuatu to name just a few. With a passion for travel, this certainly met at least one of Brian's goals. At the same time, as an economist, he increasingly looked beyond the impacts of tourism to consider also issues such as project appraisal, cost-benefit analysis, manpower and training needs, data needs, statistical needs, and more general tourism development studies, and he spent some time as Special Advisor on Tourism to a House of Commons Select Committee. Brian's skills as an economist were clearly recognized in many of the countries and regions where he worked, such that he was regularly invited to return, not only to carry out economic impact work but also to provide more general economic advice. In the case of the Bahamas his relationship lasted for 8 years and for Bermuda 28 years.

Many of these studies subsequently appeared as publications, both free standing and as journal articles. Apart from his 1977 study of tourism multipliers, he published a number of journal articles on this topic (Archer, 1971c, 1972, 1976, 1984a; Archer & Fletcher, 1988, 1991; Archer & Owen, 1972). He also developed his work specifically in relation to the economic impact of domestic tourism which represented some of the earliest considerations of this element of tourism (Archer, 1977a, 1978) and on the impact of tourism on regional and island economies (Archer, 1971a, 1989a, 1998). Furthermore, he produced a series of UK and internationally based tourism impact studies for specific destinations (Archer, 1977c, 1984b; Archer, de Vane, & Moore, 1977; Archer, Shea, & de Vane, 1974). And he also began to explore in his research and publications other economic dimensions of tourism. As his career developed, he covered a wide range of such issues including, for example, manpower (Archer & Shea, 1977); evaluating publicly funded projects (Archer & Shea, 1980); gravity models (Archer, 1975a); and measuring and forecasting tourist demand and expenditure (Archer, 1975b, 1980, 1986, 1989b). Outside tourist demand and impact issues, he also considered other aspects of tourism relating, for example, to the economic dimensions of sustainability and the broader consequences of tourism (Archer, 1996; Archer & Cooper, 1994), tourist legislation (Archer, 1971b), tourism and amenity values (Archer, 1970), and broad trends in tourism (Archer & Lawson, 1982). In 1979, he brought some of his international experiences together at his inaugural professorial lecture at the University of Surrey to relate his work to the Third World, entitled *Tourism in the Third World: Some Economic Considerations* (Archer, 1979).

Together, this body of work transformed the literature about tourism. It represented work that was both theoretically based and rigorous and in the process it helped on the one hand to counter the idea that tourism was somehow of little economic worth, a "candy floss" industry, and on the other to dispel some of the exaggerated claims about the economic importance of tourism. It also added to what, at that point, was a fairly sparse, research-based literature about tourism. For the newly emerging undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in tourism, this represented a vital new resource and in many ways it is not surprising that economists at the time, including Brian, were in the forefront of the development of tourism as a field of academic endeavour. I doubt whether there was a

degree programme in the Western world in the 1970s and 1980s that did not spend at least some time considering Archer's work on tourism multipliers. From the standpoint of the twenty-first century when the field of tourism research is just as likely to take an interpretivist or critical stance as it is to take a positivist stance and is just as likely to be qualitative as quantitative in methods, it is hard to remember or even imagine a time when research hardly existed. The importance of the early researchers, like Brian, in the field of economics is that they brought their academic disciplines to tourism and in doing so laid the groundwork that has been being built upon by subsequent generations of tourism scholars.

In the context of subsequent scholars, of course, Brian has been directly involved in their preparation and development and many of his former students have gone on to be world leaders in their academic field. Prominent among these are Professor John Fletcher and Professor Steve Wanhill who have been close collaborators with Brian throughout their careers, from their student and early career days at Bangor, to the time they spent with him at Surrey and in their subsequent positions. They have continued to work closely with him. As a legacy of their time with Brian, they are both recognized as leading economists in their field with Steve, for example, as the founding editor of the *Journal of Tourism Economics*. Similarly, Brian was involved in the early research work of two of the first women in this field, examining the Ph.D.s of Christine Hope and the late Thea Sinclair, both of whom went on to professorships at the Universities of Bradford and Nottingham, respectively.

Influences and legacies

In turning his attention towards tourism, Brian Archer, with a few others, was something of a new phenomenon in our field. Like other scholars at about the same time, such as Professors Terry Coppock, mentioned earlier, and Richard Butler, both geographers and Professor Erik Cohen, a sociologist, to mention just a few, he used his discipline to help explain and provide insights into a complex and increasingly important human phenomenon. In doing so, he always remained an economist, drawing on the heritage of economics and in Brian's case influenced by a few early mentors such as Professor Jack Revell, Head of Economics at Bangor and Professor Peter Sadler, subsequently Professor of the Economics of Sparsely Populated Areas at the University of Aberdeen. But at the same time he also became associated with the new field of tourism and through his association he helped to establish some of the content and boundaries of the new field. His move to the University of Surrey in 1978 was an important part of this. Over a 10-year period under the leadership of Professor Rik Medlik, another economist who had brought his skills to the hotel and tourism sector, Surrey had become established as a major centre for tourism studies. In joining Surrey, Brian was placed at a key centre of this new field.

From this position, supported and influenced by his colleagues John Fletcher and Steve Wanhill, Brian continued his research, publication, and teaching, and he began a programme of course development. This obviously placed economic issues at the centre of much of the work, but more importantly it helped to strengthen the importance of research-based scholarship. Tourism scholarship has moved on dramatically since Brian's early time at Surrey. Economics has been joined by all the other disciplines that help to explain tourism, and as noted earlier, tourism research is no longer dominated by positivist and quantitative approaches. Yet, the influences of the early scholars remain. They created the original domain of study and they began to create its content and its approaches. It is this that the subsequent generations have been able to work on. For economics, Brian Archer was one of the key early scholars and his multipliers still appear in many tourism programmes.

Brian has now been in retirement for more than a decade. During this time, as already noted, his forays into the practice of tourism have been regular and far ranging, taking him all over the world. By contrast, his involvement with the profession of tourism research and teaching has been more infrequent. However, as subsequent scholars have in their turn begun to reflect on the development of their subject, which has now become an established part of the academy, they have turned to the early scholars like Brian Archer for their reflections. It is in this context that he came out of retirement to give a keynote address at the 2011 Conference of the International Association for Tourism Economics, titled “The Trials and Tribulations of a Tourism Economist”. Appearances by early scholars like Brian are important in ensuring that those who followed in their footsteps do not forget the origins of their field of study and in Brian’s case will not forget the role of the early economists and of the multiplier.

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