Foreword

Anne Crowther: An Appreciation

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Anne Crowther's career is not easy to summarise because it has been characterised by both extraordinary breadth and outstanding depth. Her contribution to academic life has been so great in part because she has involved herself, energetically and productively, in a wide variety of universities, methodologies and topics of research, administrative commitments, and types of teaching and supervision. Throughout, her professionalism has been enhanced by degrees of warmth, generosity and co-operativeness that would stand out in any academic setting.

Educated as an undergraduate in her native Australia at the University of Adelaide – where she took first-class honours in English in 1964 – Anne proceeded to Somerville College, Oxford, where she took a DPhil in British history in 1968 under the supervision of Agatha Ramm. Having flourished as a student in those contrasting environments, Anne subsequently prospered as an academic not only at the new universities of Kent (1968–73) and Stirling (1973–5) but also at Cambridge (Fellow and Tutor of New Hall 1975–8). At each of these institutions her colleagues greatly lamented her departure. But it was at the University of Glasgow, a Scottish urban university of medieval origin which constituted yet another variant in her academic environment, that she spent, highly productively, the bulk of her career – as Lecturer from 1979, Senior Lecturer from 1988, Reader from 1991 and Professor (of Social History) from 1994 until her retirement (which altered the pattern of her academic endeavours without diminishing them) in 2006.

I can write most confidently of her time at Glasgow, where she and I were colleagues from 1979 to 2000, teaching a course together for thirteen of those years. I arrived in the university only nine months after Anne, but by the time of my entrance she was already a dynamic and substantial force in what was then the Department of Economic (later Economic and Social) History. Adapting without hesitation to the relatively unfamiliar task of teaching modern European economic history – a project in which, she and I, historians of Britain, in somewhat cavalier fashion divided the four leading economies between us – she also quickly became a much admired lecturer and tutor in the second-year course in

British economic and social history. Before long she had also launched a vigorous programme in third- and fourth-year (honours) teaching on topics ranging from the Poor Law and poverty, to crime, to medical history and beyond. She also undertook postgraduate teaching – in the history of industrial relations, for example – and a varied programme of postgraduate supervision.

These bare facts of Anne's teaching cannot convey the passion, dedication, expertise and co-operative spirit that she brought to these various endeavours. Even in a department noted for its diligent care for students, Anne was an outstanding teacher. None could surpass, and few could even aspire to equal, her care in course design and class preparation or, even more so, her knowledge of her students and her attention to their welfare. The especially able and the particularly diligent received appropriate encouragement, while other students received admonition when it was due but always with a kindly stimulus toward improvement. Throughout this teaching and associated pastoral care, moreover, there was constant innovation in approach and content, not least in Anne's dedicated pursuit of computer-based teaching and methods of teaching more generally. Also, while passionately devoted to undergraduate teaching, Anne played a key role in the development of the postgraduate programmes both of the department – for example, she devised the Research Resources and Skills for Historians course for all postgraduates and served as an exemplary supervisor of doctoral theses – and of the wider School of History and Archaeology. It was entirely appropriate, therefore, that she directed the departmental honours programme for many years, that she served in the 1990s as a highly effective head of department and that she proved an influential director of the university's Centre for the History of Medicine for five years from 2001. In these administrative roles, as in her teaching, Anne was not only substantively dynamic but also a very positive personal presence, always ready with a joke (often irreverent), a concerned question and an invitation to warm and lavish hospitality provided with her husband and fellow academic John Crowther at their Cambuslang home.

Anne Crowther's teaching and her administration have always been rooted in formidable research and scholarship. Here, as in her other academic pursuits, Anne's passion for scholarly discovery and her rigorous standards have proved immensely effective on a wide range of subjects using methods both quantitative and qualitative. Her doctoral research resulted in *Church Embattled: Religious Controversy in Mid-Victorian England* (1970). She then transformed herself into a major economic and social historian of modern Britain, with a particular interest in public policy, as indicated by *The Workhouse System* (1981) and *Social Policy in Britain 1914–39* (1988). Soon the academic world saw the fruits of her newly developed expertise in Scottish history and legal history, notably in *On Soul and Conscience: The Medical Expert and Crime: 150 Years of Forensic*

Medicine in Glasgow (1988, with Brenda White). Anne's addition of prowess in medical history gave rise to *Medical Lives in the Age of Surgical Revolution* (2007, with Marguerite Dupree) and to *A History of the Royal College of Nursing 1916–90: A Voice for Nurses* (2009, with Susan McGann and Rona Dougall). Alongside these books have been a profusion of journal articles (in periodicals such as *Historical Journal* and the *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*) and book chapters. These have been characterised, like her books, by both imaginative-ness and precision, as is her current work on the Scottish way of recording births and deaths, utilising the records of the registrar general for Scotland, initially funded by a prestigious Wellcome Trust Programme Grant for five years.

Not surprisingly, Anne's research achievements have brought widespread recognition from the broader scholarly community, often in the form of invitations to serve in key roles outside the university (in which she also made significant contributions at faculty and senate level). She has been a frequent, and an especially diligent, external examiner of courses and theses. A member of the Research Assessment Exercise panel for History both in 1996 and 2001, she also served as chair of both the Scottish Records Advisory Council and the Scottish Records Association. A member of the History of Medicine Panel of the Wellcome Trust, and a board member of the Social History Society and of the Society for the Social History of Medicine, she also edited the latter's journal, *Social History of Medicine*. She is a fellow both of the Royal Society of Edinburgh and of the Royal Historical Society.

All these contributions and achievements help to explain the very high esteem in which Anne Crowther is held by colleagues at Glasgow, throughout the UK and well beyond. But that very high regard also rests on her very attractive personality and on the highly congenial approach to colleagues near and far that has characterised her whole career. She has always managed to combine with academic excellence an extraordinary warmth, liveliness and generosity. She has been a leader but, gifted with a capacity for give-and-take, also a much esteemed collaborator in teaching, administrative and research activities. Commendably critical of unpromising proposals and ideas, she has backed those she thought well of with an unselfishness also typical of her approach to the careers of her colleagues, including my own. A lively and effective debater, her infectious good humour has leavened many an encounter with superiors, equals and subordinates alike.

Academic life depends on high standards and dedication for its reputation and its usefulness. Yet academia flourishes best when professional prowess is accompanied by an extremely positive personal approach. In all these respects Anne Crowther has been, and continues to be, a model.