

The day we met Julian Tudor Hart

One sunny April day in 2014 we knocked on the cottage door. We had arranged to see Julian Tudor-Hart but his wife Mary told us he was not well. 'But wait a minute', she said.

'Yes', it was OK to come in. Julian was in pain from sciatica and rather fed up. However he roused himself and within moments the conversation was flowing. As it then did over lunch and all afternoon.

He was then at 87 and had spent most of his working life at Glyncoed Health Centre, in a former mining valley in South Wales. His left-wing lay deep and he stood unsuccessfully for parliament three times as a Communist Party candidate. Although personally charming, considerate and hospitable he still was fiercely opposed to politicians whom he thought were betraying ordinary people.

We ranged over his considerable research, the 'Inverse Care Law' being the prime example. By his life he showed that it was possible to combine daily practice with substantial academic work. In 2006, he was awarded the inaugural Discovery Prize by the RCGP as "a general practitioner who has captured the imagination of generations of GPs with his groundbreaking research". He was respected by those who held very different views to his own, and in turn freely admitted learning from those who opposed him

Retirement for Julian was clearly not inactivity and his passion never faltered as we talked. Inevitably the time to leave drew near and we admired the view over the Gower from his window. We broached the question of why the glorious creation we see can be evidence for a Divine Creator. And Julian, deeply convicted socialist that he was, surprised us by his answer. "I am closer than you think'.

Julian Tudor Hart had a vast influence upon others personally, medically, politically and academically. He showed us how fruitful a dedicated life can be, even a mere practising GP.