

Artis, Michael John
(1938-2016)

Charles Goodhart

Michael Artis, universally known as Mike, was born in Croydon on 29 June 1938 to Violet and Cyril, the name Artis reflecting Huguenot origins. They were middle class; his father was a civil servant, and his mother, nee Vincent, was the daughter of a builder's merchant. The family then moved to Blackpool.

Mike was clever and hard-working, a 'bright spark'. He shone at school, winning a place at the top grammar school (Baines Grammar School). From there, Mike gained a scholarship to Magdalen College, Oxford, to read PPE from 1959 to 1961. His tutor at Magdalen was David Worswick, and they formed a close bond.

On graduation in 1961 he was invited to join the Oxford Institute of Statistics. There he worked on his first book and published his first journal article in 1961, both on monetary economics. He then went to the University of Adelaide, recruited by Lydall, ex OIS, and began a life-long strong connection with Australia, returning in 1966 to work as a Consultant for the newly formed National Board for Prices and Incomes (NBPI), especially on its Report on 'Bank Charges', (1967).

Mike then joined the National Institute for Economic and Social Research (NIESR) in 1967, where Worswick was Director, taking over as Editor of its Review from Blackaby. By 1972, however, Mike had been there five-and-a-half years, editing nineteen issues, without having time for much original research, and so only authoring three academic papers, of which the most important was with Nobay, in NIESR (1969). He also participated in the Money Study Group, founded by Harry Johnson in 1969. Supported by both Johnson and Worswick, Mike applied for a Chair at Swansea, starting September 1972, thereby completing a triumvirate of monetary economists: Victor Morgan (1945-66), Ted Nevin (1968-85) and Mike (1972-6).

Mike possessed a gentle sense of humour, as evidenced in his 1973 inaugural lecture; noting that he was Professor of Applied Economics while Nevin was simply Professor of Economics, Mike inquired whether that was because Ted's economics were supposed to have no application.

After Laidler and Parkin left Manchester University, Mike was recruited to fill the gap there, even despite the fractious infighting between the Marxist and mainstream wings of its Economics faculty. Mike was, however, well suited to cope, since he disliked conflict and could comfortably interact with almost everyone.

This marked a watershed in Mike's life, in several ways. First, in his personal affairs: in Blackpool in the early 1960s Mike had met Lilian Gregson, then research assistant at Blackpool Infirmary, and they married in [April 1961](#). Their first daughter, Rosamond, was born when Mike was at Adelaide, a happy period. Their second daughter, Hilary, was born after their return to the UK. However, the marriage ended and they divorced in the mid-1970s. While at Swansea, Mike fell in love with the Economics Departmental Secretary, Shirley Knight, and they married [in February 1983](#) after Mike moved to Manchester. Shirley's children, Mark and Jacqui, accompanied them, and Mike welcomed and helped them.

Second, his academic work, prior to his move to Manchester, had focussed, almost entirely, on Monetary Economics. His first journal article, in BOIS (1961), sought to interpret the contentious Radcliffe Report (1959), followed by his book on *Foundation of Monetary Policy* (1963), an institutional study of the Bank of England's relationships with the financial system. Once at Swansea he reunited with Mervyn Lewis, his previous student at Adelaide, and started looking into the determinants of the UK demand for money. This collaboration resulted in four articles, two books and three chapters in books. Mervyn was to remain Mike's close friend and colleague throughout.

Their main theme was that instances of excessive monetary supply could force actual money holdings to exceed the underlying demand for money, until eliminated via induced adjustments of prices, incomes, interest rates and the money supply itself. They provided an original challenge to the view that the stock of money must be demand-determined, thereby ushering in a strand of monetary analysis based on 'buffer stock money' and 'disequilibrium money'. And turning the

equations 'around the other way' appeared to provide more realistic lag structures. Their two books on monetary policy, *Monetary Control in the United Kingdom* (Artis and Lewis, 1981), focussed on the nature of bank intermediation and its implications for monetary control, and the second, *Money in Britain* (Artis and Lewis, 1991), was widely used by students.

Once Mike arrived in Manchester he began to diversify his research away from monetary economics. He studied both the effects of fiscal policies, undertaking simulations with the Treasury and NIESR models, and also the form of a UK wage equation. Pulling these strands together, he then wrote a textbook, *Macroeconomics* (Artis, 1984). Meanwhile, Mike continued to be sought out as editor, taking over Prest and Coppock's *The UK Economy: a Manual of Applied Economics* with his first edition in 1986 (Artis, 1986).

From mid-1980s onwards Mike's academic interests turned towards European institutions and policies, and their relationship to the UK. Mike was never an abstract theorist and, as an applied economist, wanted to direct his economic knowledge and skills to the leading issues of the day, e.g. whether the volatility of exchange rates and interest rates had changed after EMS, and whether international coordination could stabilise exchange rates, notably in his Chatham House paper with Ostry and his own paper (Artis, 1989). The answer was a qualified 'yes'. Another strand of research was to assess the accuracy of the IMF's World Economic Outlook (WEO), done in 1988 (Artis, 1988). Besides comparing WEO forecasts with actual outcomes, a second approach was to compare them with auto-regressive models.

By the mid-1980s Artis' standing as a leading UK macroeconomist was widely recognised, joining the Panel of Academic Consultants at both Treasury and the Bank. He was Joint Managing Editor of *The Manchester School* for eighteen years, Associate Editor of the *Economic Journal* for ten years and President of the Manchester Statistical Society (1987-9), and elected a Fellow of the British Academy in 1988.

As the 1990s progressed, Mike's focus turned increasingly, almost exclusively, towards European issues. Perhaps his most widely read publication was his edited 1995 OUP book on *The Economics of the European Union: Policy and Analysis*, and he wrote many more political economy studies on the

transition to EMU. With his focus now fixed on European monetary issues, there was a clear attraction to move from Manchester to a newly established centre, the Robert Schuman Centre at the European University Institute (EUI). Mike applied in 1994 for the advertised joint position of a Chair in the Economics Faculty, becoming its first economist. Mike was appointed in January 1995, for a term of four years, renewable once. The main teaching function was training PhD students, of whom Mike had twenty-three. The second was to encourage research, especially on European issues. Mike took part enthusiastically.

His research there mainly followed two separate, but connected, strands, both related to EMU. The first, more technical, set of papers analysed the statistical inter-relationships between the EU economies (and with the United States and Japan), focused primarily on the relationship between the UK and core countries of EMU. The second consisted of a series of macro-economic commentaries on the concurrent political economy developments in EMU. Of these statistical studies, those seeking to assess the extent of 'clustering' between countries were the most original and insightful, ranking countries by their closeness.

His stay at EUI was one of his happiest periods. Even after his renewal finished at end 2003, he returned every summer as a Visiting (unpaid) (Emeritus) Professor until June 2009.

In 2005, he was approached to take up an Economics Chair, and become Director of the Institute for Political and Economic Governance (IPEG), at the Manchester Regional Economic Centre at Manchester University. He continued to work on economic cycles in different regions and countries.

His crowning achievement then was an international symposium (2009) that he organised on 'Business cycle behaviour in historical perspective'. Most papers presented there were published in a special issue of the *Manchester School* (2011). This issue included two of his joint papers; but he was also a Guest Editor, and the Introduction came out under his name.

Regrettably by this time he was no longer capable of continuing his academic career. While driving home to Knutsford in October 2009 he suffered a severe stroke. Initially it was hoped that he might

recover, but he was then struck down by several hospital infections and became incapacitated, needing 24-hour care. His condition deteriorated and he died on 8 January 2016.