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Obituary

B Urban Analytics and City Science

Lionel John March, Founding Editor 1934–2018

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I first met Lionel March in November 1968 when he visited the Department of Town and Country Planning in the University of Manchester where I was a PhD student. In fact, it was a completely accidental meeting for no one told me he was coming to talk to the undergraduate students. I happened to be passing the lecture hall when he was just finishing his talk and the lecturer who had invited him, a friend of his who had been at Cambridge, introduced me. I had in fact already heard of Lionel and the remarkable group he had started at Cambridge in the School of Architecture where he and colleagues were exploring built form mathematically, representing, simulating and enumerating the great variety of possible configurations that could only be generated using formal methods. You may well ask how I knew about his Cambridge group and why I did not know he was coming to Manchester but as I was the only PhD student in the department, there were no research seminars and rarely any visiting lecturers apart from the highest profile planning practitioners. I think my then mentor, George Chadwick, who kept an eagle eye on the field of systematic methods, alerted me to this work. In those days, the research community

in formal methods and models in architecture and planning was tiny but nevertheless, our inquiring minds seemed to sense quite quickly what lay at the cutting edge, despite the fact that our modes of communication were snail mail, the occasional telephone call, and the odd conference. In fact, (the Centre for) Land Use and Built Form Studies (LUBFS) as Lionel's group was called, rapidly projected itself onto the barely formed research landscape that led to the genesis of this journal a handful of years later in 1974.

At our chance meeting, Lionel invited me to come and see what they were doing at Cambridge and some 4 months later, one spring day in 1969, I made my way to Cambridge, marvelling at the fact that LUBFS was located in a Victorian house in Brooklands Avenue well within walking distance from the station, and in fact most of the colleges. It is hard to tell you how stimulating all this was to someone in their early 20s who came from a big, provincial, metropolitan, sooty university where locating departments in houses simply did not feature. I met several researchers in Lionel's group who were working on design methods using interactive computing, building mathematical models at different scales from the building to the city. Phil Steadman, Nick Bullock, Dean Hawkes, Marcial Echenique, Phil Tabor, I remember, all of whom were working with relational, network systems of various kinds, simulating their models using state-of-the-art methods of computation, these were amongst those people who I met who were doing great things. In fact that spring day in 1969, I even saw interactive teletypes for the first time. I felt I had seen the future.

My links to Cambridge and Lionel blossomed from then on largely through the urban models that I was building which were similar to those in LUBFS pioneered by Marcial Echenique. That year, 1969, I moved to be part of a group initiated by Peter Hall working with Eric Cripps, Erlet Cater, and Dave Foot building urban models in the University of Reading, and together with LUBFS at Cambridge and Alan Wilson's group at the Centre for Environmental Studies (CES), we formed a close-knit community working on progressing and developing formal models which had applicability to planning practice and design. In the same year, Alan Wilson with John Ashby from Pion Press founded the journal *Environment and Planning* which quickly became focussed on urban and regional modelling and methods, and it was John's inspiration to consider that Pion should do the same for architecture, to found a journal which would focus on modelling and methods at much finer spatial scales of the built environment. Accordingly, John convinced Lionel to become editor of the new journal *Environment and Planning B* which began in 1974. At that point, the first journal got relabelled as *Environment and Planning A* and the cloning of different variants began in earnest, continuing even to this day with the founding of *Environment and Planning E*.

Lionel had a very clear view of where the journal should focus. He saw it as an outgrowth of Land Use and Built Form Studies which was also complemented by the book series he and his mentor Leslie Martin began called Cambridge Urban and Architectural Studies. The first volume was published in 1972 as *Urban Space and Structures* edited by Lionel and Leslie, then Professor and Head of the Department of Architecture whose political acumen enabled these new formal approaches to design and configuration to prosper at Cambridge. The journal built on Lionel's network of researchers not just in Cambridge by any means but the field was still very small, too small perhaps. In the early years, the journal struggled to get good unsolicited papers, although Lionel promoted it relentlessly and some wonderful papers were published. Indeed, in my view, the journal was as good as it has ever been in those early years.

My own involvement in the journal came through another happy coincidence. I had been offered a one-year visiting assistant professorship of civil engineering at the University of

Waterloo in the year 1974–1975, studying transport modelling with Bruce Hutchinson. In the summer of 1974, at the second land use models conference run by LUBFS which was held in Churchill College, Cambridge, Lionel announced that he had accepted a position in the same university – in systems design engineering at Waterloo. We arrived within a couple of weeks of one another and thence began a very stimulating year where I learned about Lionel's approach to the geometry of the environment and he learned about my work on spatial interaction modelling, with us writing a couple of papers together. One of these was in *Environment and Planning B*, and it appears in the virtual issue which Sage have put together of Lionel's papers, papers which complement in every sense, these obituaries.

In the year at Waterloo, I became involved with the journal sitting on the editorial board. During that year too, Lionel began to indulge his interests in what he called configurational studies – in arrays of building plan elements and the relations between them that ultimately coalesced in his thinking of buildings as polyominoes and related constellations. With Ray Matela, he wrote some fascinating papers (see the virtual issue), but it was in that year that Lionel also discovered the work of George Stiny (and his colleague James Gips) on shape grammars. Thence began a life-long collaboration between George and Lionel that George describes in his obituary for Lionel which follows this one. The approach to buildings as grammars thence found a key place in the journal, and it quickly became a focal point internationally for these new formal approaches to architecture and urban design.

Lionel stayed a little longer in the University of Waterloo than my single year there, but he too returned to England in 1976 taking the Chair of Design at the Open University, and he immediately set about recreating his research group, rebuilding from the ground up. LUBFS, however, had continued to prosper in Lionel's absence for he had laid strong foundations and many of those who I met on that spring day in 1969 continued to do great work there. In fact, LUBFS had been rechristened in 1974 as the Martin Centre (after Leslie Martin who had retired as Professor of Architecture). At the Open University, Lionel immediately set up the Centre for Configurational Studies, first attracting Phil Steadman from Cambridge with whom he had written a beautiful book of great clarity called *The Geometry of Environment* in 1971, Ray Matela followed him from Waterloo, and then George Stiny came from UCLA where he was working with Bill Mitchell. Catherine Cooke also came from Cambridge, Ramesh Krishnamurti from Waterloo, and Jeff Johnston from Essex University. Lionel's network was rich beyond description, and within a matter of two years, he had built a really powerful group including Chris Earl whose obituary to Lionel (as well as papers in the virtual issue) is also included here.

Then out-of-the-blue, so-to-speak, came an offer Lionel could not refuse. He was invited to become Rector of the Royal College of Art (RCA), and he perceived that here was a canvas on which he could paint a much bigger picture. He first got George Stiny appointed but to cut a long story short, the environment was toxic, and he was frustrated at every step. This was the era when he passed the editorship of the journal over to myself. In fact, I acted as co-editor for some five years from 1982, but Lionel was so hemmed in by his job at the RCA, and the fact that the field the journal addressed was so small and vulnerable that he, John Ashby, and myself decided to broaden the remit to include systems approaches to physical planning. In fact, Lionel bailed out of the RCA in 1984 and moved to UCLA where his kindred spirit George had been appointed a little earlier and where Bill Mitchell had established himself. The group Lionel surrounded himself there also reflected his long time interest in shape grammars and configurational studies, in geometry and the environment. My own involvement with Lionel lessened in that although still involved in the journal, I saw less of him with his move to the US, although we did have some contact in the early 1990s when I myself was at SUNY-Buffalo.

I have many stories about Lionel, particularly from our Waterloo years and from my occasional visits to see him in Los Angeles. In the last 20 years, he revisited his earlier interest in humanism and architecture and latterly in geometric composition. But whenever I met him, he was always a delight to talk to, erudite, sharp, someone who basked in intellectual debate and who was highly focussed in driving new ideas about environment and planning ever further. When I published my recent book *The New Science of Cities* (2013) which is all about flows and interactions in cities, he immediately contacted me to express amazement that I had not included more on Benton MacKaye, one of the people whose work he had researched during his Harkness Fellowship at Harvard-MIT in the early 1960s. MacKaye indeed is a key figure in the analysis of flow systems in cities, and I was duly humbled not to have included more about him, but this illustrated Lionel's immense knowledge and insights into very diverse aspects of our field. I last saw him at the 50th Anniversary of the Martin Centre just before Christmas 2017, and Peter Carolin, who did so much for Lionel in his last days, told me that Lionel had enjoyed every minute of his time at the event, despite being very unwell. His spirit will live on of course while the ideas that he drove forward continue to mature. The mission of this journal is to continue to reflect these ideas.

Michael Batty
Editor

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Talking to Lionel March

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I met Lionel March 41 years ago – in March 1977. I had flown in from Los Angeles that morning and took the train from London to Bletchley. I learned later how auspicious this was – as a schoolboy, Lionel had invented a new algebra of multi-dimensional numbers that impressed Alan Turing, who encouraged him to pursue his interest in math. Turing worked at Bletchley Park during Second World War doing cyphers and breaking codes, and earlier at Princeton University, he had established the logical basis for calculating with computers, that still holds sway today. Of course, Lionel didn't exactly follow in Turing's path. Instead, he turned to art and design, and how math might inform how we understand them and how to practice them freely in an open-ended, creative process. Certainly, Lionel knew more about architecture than anyone I've ever met. His mathematical interest in art and design matched mine perfectly, and his "scientific" instinct to count and measure balanced my "artistic" instinct to see.

Ray Matela, one of Lionel's graduate students at Waterloo, was now a lecturer in Lionel's Design Discipline at the Open University (OU) in Milton Keynes. He picked me up at Bletchley Station and drove me to the campus – in those days, both the OU and Milton Keynes were largely under construction (a number of us, including Lionel who liked good names for things, dubbed the latter, "Mud City"). It was late in the afternoon when Lionel first came into view in the corner of a giant office in two temporary huts that had been cobbled together. I told Lionel many years later that I thought the most impressive part of his OU office was the extravagant taxonomy he had constructed in files on the far wall. There was a box for everything imaginable in art and design, and math – stacked and lined up, column and row, in an amazing grid. Lionel encouraged me to explore the contents of these boxes anytime I pleased – he was always generous in this way. It was a great adventure and a great revelation – the only problem was that every one of the boxes I opened was empty. I guess Lionel wanted others to put their own stuff in his boxes, or was this his way of showing me how perilous taxonomies and hierarchies could be? I had another theory, too. I was sure that Lionel's imagination was far in advance of what anyone knew about art and design – there was nothing to put in his boxes, he simply saw beyond what anyone had managed to do. Talking about how to fill these boxes excited both of us. In fact, talking was how it started.

When I walked into Lionel's office, the very first time late that afternoon, we looked at each other and started to talk. I don't remember any formal introductions – merely a rapid turn to art and design, and math. What do you think about this? How would you look at that? It was wonderful; I'd been hoping for this for a long time. We went on for several hours and then adjourned to the Bedford Arms in Woburn with Ray Matela and Chris Earl, who was Lionel's research student, and later took his position as Professor of Design at the OU. We talked more over dinner and into the night, and we continued in this way from then on – at the OU, in London at the Royal College of Art (RCA), when Lionel was Rector and I was

Dean, in Los Angeles at the University of California (UCLA), and then between Stretham (Cambridge, UK) and Cambridge, USA, when Lionel retired to Spring Cottage and I took a position at MIT.

A few months after I got to know Lionel at the OU, he told me he was very surprised at how young I was. He had seen my first paper on shape grammars and wanted to include some of its methods in *The Geometry of Environment*, his influential book with Phil Steadman, but it was too late, it had gone to press. My shape grammar paper showed how to get a lot of novel designs from a few easy rules and simple shapes, and Lionel was convinced that you had to be old and distinguished (a chief) to figure this out. Lionel liked to exaggerate in this way, and we let him do it. About this time, he was working with Chris Earl on how to count all possible architectural plans in terms of planar maps. I still think it's the best formal work he ever did – one for the ages, really first rate. He talked about it endlessly – especially at the OU, but also at joint seminars with Bill Hillier's group at the Bartlett in London, and with researchers and graduate students at the Martin Centre on Chaucer Road in Cambridge. Lionel liked to make his mind go click, click, click immediately to the right answer. I tried this several times myself, but I always got stuck on the first click or the second one – Lionel never seemed to experience this. Once when I returned to the OU after a few weeks in Los Angeles, I found the huts filled with three-dimensional models made from the four building gifts in Froebel's kindergarten method. I'd sent Lionel a copy of my paper "Kindergarten Grammars" to review, and as soon as he saw how my rules worked in terms of local symmetries – no one else did it this way – he couldn't stop himself from trying them out. Click, click, click – his enthusiasm knew no bounds. Lionel's extravagant designs and models were marvelous.

At the RCA, a year or so later, Lionel and I used to go up to the glassed-in aviary on the roof – where painters went to draw, away from all of the confusion and hubbub in the storeys below – to talk about his ideas on alphabetic and numerical codes in Alberti and Palladio, and how these related to my ideas on seeing and observing in visual calculating in shape grammars – the connection was a reach at best, but it didn't matter much when you were talking. Alberti, the complete Renaissance man, was the perfect combination of Lionel and me. On the one hand, he was skilled at inventing new cyphers and codes that related letters and numbers – Lionel couldn't get enough of this, especially as it applied to architecture – and on the other hand, Alberti had an eye for visual calculating in shape grammars, when embedding worked to find triangles in squares – faces and other familiar things in clouds and tree trunks. And Alberti liked to tell you what he thought; he was also famous for his "table talks" – entertaining after dinner stories, sometimes about his approach to art and design. I'm sure that talking to Lionel in the aviary and occasionally, a Romeo y Julieta in Jay Mews were what made the RCA OK – even if London (Kensington) was an absolute delight. I used to get my Havana cigars from the walk-in humidor on the lower level of Alfred Dunhill on Jermyn Street. There were always stories to tell. The clerk asked the gentleman ahead me what he could get for him. He replied in a deep Texas drawl, "I'll take two." The clerk returned with two boxes of coronas, Romeo y Julieta, No. 2. The clerk turned to me, and I said, "I'll take two." He returned with two coronas in a small Dunhill box. When I told Lionel about this, he laughed with that huge laugh that filled the entire space around him. He wasn't surprised; he knew all about the vast Southwest, traveling around America as a Harkness Fellow – and he couldn't resist telling me about everything he saw. There's a striking poster of Lionel and me in silhouette talking in his office at the RCA – I'm sure I was smoking a Havana, one of my Romeo y Julieta coronas from Dunhill. The poster was an advert for a public discussion between the two of us on art and design, and their math. I'm afraid we were the only ones who were really interested, but it didn't matter – we were talking.

I left the RCA after a year to return to UCLA; Lionel joined up a year later. He became a native overnight. Maybe it was all of the sunshine in Los Angeles, or the endless freeways – Lionel could never manage to change lanes, so he was forced to take off-ramps to all sorts of strange places. He ended up knowing more about Southern California than anyone I knew, and I grew up wandering around the Griffith Observatory, rebel without a cause. Then there were Lionel's pink shirts with open collars, his gold chains, his flashy apartment in Brentwood, and soon enough, Rudolph Schindler's How House in Silver Lake, surely the equal of Schindler's own house on Kings Road in West Hollywood. California dreaming in every possible way – but it was real for the next 15 years or so. Lionel and I had lunch together every Wednesday at the Moustache Café in Westwood. It was a short walk from the UCLA campus, nice all year and especially enjoyable when the jacaranda and bougainvillea were in bloom in soft purple and deep red. We were such regulars that the table was already set when we walked in, with an open bottle of our usual wine. Once when I was waiting for Lionel to arrive, our waitress told me that she really enjoyed it every time we came in. She and her colleagues would stand out of sight listening to us and try to figure out what we were talking about. I told her that that's what Lionel and I were trying to do, too. When he finally arrived, he simply sat down and without any pause, started talking about rational approximations of the cube root of 2. I don't remember exactly why this was important, but the ratio he liked most was uncanny – 63/50. Try it to three decimal places. That's what made talking to Lionel so much fun – there was always something to do that worked. It was a typical Wednesday afternoon.

A little more than a year ago, Lionel invited me to an architectural evening at Magdalene – his college at Cambridge – followed by a candlelight dinner in the Hall. This wasn't particularly romantic – the Hall was never wired for electricity. Lionel was a real celebrity at Magdalene, a distinguished alumnus in architecture, who contributed significantly to architectural education at UCLA, the equal of other Magdalene luminaries such as the literary critic IA Richards, who also ended up in America. Everyone knew Lionel and greeted him warmly – "Look, it's Lionel March!" There was lots of talk. The American presidential election had just concluded, so there was plenty to say. But our conversation turned quickly from the politics of the day to art and design, and math – the focus hadn't changed. After the dinner concluded, we returned to Spring Cottage and talked into the night. Nothing unusual – perfect.

I talked to Lionel on the phone the week before he died. Well, I did most of the talking, and he did all of the laughing. Parkinson's made it difficult, if not impossible, for him to talk, but his mind was as sharp as ever, and nothing could stop his laughter. I went on about ST Coleridge's famous distinction between fancy and imagination in the *Biographia Literaria*, and Oscar Wilde's critical spirit. Coleridge's "esemplastic power" – this puts imagination in motion – animates the critical spirit at the quick of shape grammars. Coleridge and Wilde were in some ways Alberti and Palladio. Lionel caught on to this right away, laughing throughout an impulsive monologue – he had more esemplastic power than anyone, and it never diminished. It was just like the first day we met at the OU. It was just like always.

George Stiny
MIT, USA

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Lionel March: Sharing ideas through research

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Lionel March, scholar and artist, inspired generations of students and colleagues to combine the formal and the creative in planning and design. His contributions to theory and practice ranged from mathematics to painting, from computation to stage set design, from architectural history to architectural practice at its most daring; a modern Alberti. His career at the University of Cambridge in the Department of Architecture, in Canada at the Department of Systems Design in the University of Waterloo, in Milton Keynes at the Open University, in London at the Royal College of Art, and ultimately in Los Angeles at University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) was remarkable for his individual achievements, the research groups he established but most of all for his outstanding generosity in sharing ideas. Talking with Lionel made people think differently. His students and colleagues loved him for this generosity, while university administrators were often exasperated by his mercurial mischievousness. His eye for the winner, in supporting new talent and new ideas in design, was unrivalled.

His early years growing up in Brighton and Hove were interrupted by a wartime evacuation to Leeds where he remembered its black buildings, which must have seemed a marked contrast to the white stucco terraces at home. At grammar school in Hove in his sixth form mathematics class, he wrote a paper constructing a new algebra. This eventually landed on Alan Turing's desk at Manchester. The personal letters from Turing to Lionel are a terrifically clear explanation of the general mathematical concepts into which Lionel's algebra fitted. You sense Alan Turing's generosity in explaining beautifully, essential mathematical ideas as well as his urgent support for growing talent; something that Lionel did throughout his life.

Lionel made his way to Magdalene College, Cambridge after two years National Service in the Royal Navy. He enjoyed this time immensely, valuing the hard work and comradeship. These were key features of life and work in his research groups subsequently. At Cambridge, studying under Dennis Babbage, another of the Bletchley Park codebreakers, he was captivated by H. F. Baker's comprehensive treatment of geometry but admitted to finding that his first year mathematics did not engage his creativity enough. He changed to Architecture in his second year and set about his lifelong journey to unify the formal and the creative. As President of the Cambridge University Opera Group, who were in the avant-garde of opera in the UK with a reputation for staging new work, Lionel designed sets for several productions. In 1957, its members formed the New Opera Company, presenting in their first season at Sadler's Wells, new operas including the first English production of Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress* for which Lionel designed the sets. Widespread professional recognition of his stage set designs was complemented by formal academic success, with the award of a first class degree. He

continued painting and designing, including a series of book covers for Cambridge University Press paperbacks and notably *The Elements of the Topology of Plane Sets of Points* by Max Newman, Turing's colleague at Bletchley Park and Manchester. Rules determined grid proportions, colours and overlaps in this abstract composition, particularly apt for the topic of the book.

On a Commonwealth Fund Fellowship to the US at the Harvard MIT Design Centre in early 1960s, he worked in many media including film, studying Frank Lloyd Wright and travelling extensively in the US compiling material for a PhD thesis, which was cut short by an offer from Leslie Martin in 1963 to develop proposals for a plan for Whitehall. Throughout his time in Cambridge, Lionel had been thinking about architectural and urban form, and he was engaged to provide the formal and rational basis for Martin's plan published in 1965. Lionel analysed the requirements for this new national centre for the Civil Service, generating proposals for spatial layouts and overseeing the printing of the report in its large A3 landscape format. The story goes that one night he was locked inside the publisher's Chancery Lane offices of Her Majesty's Stationery Office absorbed in layout and design. This total concentration on the task in hand – design, calculating, painting, talking and listening – powered Lionel through a large and disparate portfolio of duties and activities. Lionel, now just 30 years old, flowing with new ideas worked in Leslie Martin's office, where his ideas again came to the fore. The St. Anne's and Balliol graduate accommodation, across the road from the English Faculty Library in Oxford, has a symmetry and back-to-front plan, which always seemed to me to have Lionel's signature.

In 1968, he was invited to set up the Centre for Land Use and Built Form Studies (LUBFS) at the Cambridge Department of Architecture. He set about formalising possible built forms, in particular comparing grids of courtyards with pavilion configurations. He explored building in lines not 'blobs', analysing layouts in terms of energy, daylight, transportation and amenity, with his growing team. A substantial programme of research resulted in a wealth of publications and PhD theses. Lionel's group were early pioneers of computational methods, and a spin-out company, Applied Research Cambridge, commercialised these ideas with great success. This was one of the first such enterprises in Cambridge, now the premier hub for applied sciences from which such spin-off companies have emerged in the UK, and underlines Lionel's pivotal role in shaping both pure research and its pathways to professional, commercial and social benefits. The broad scope of this work was beautifully presented in *Geometry of Environment* (1971) with Phil Steadman, Lionel's colleague at Cambridge and subsequently at the Open University. The approach at LUBFS was not without its critics concerned that the beauty, value and humanity of architecture might be compromised by rules, mathematics and computation. Meanwhile, in 1974, Lionel took a position as Professor of Systems Design at the University of Waterloo in Canada, a leading centre for computer modelling, combinatorial mathematics and for design and systems science.

Lionel's fifth decade from 1974 to 1984 showed him at his most brilliant, brave and vulnerable. He embraced new mathematics in systems complexity, entropy, computation and logic for planning and design, establishing, as founding editor, *Environment and Planning B* (*EPB*) in 1974, this journal which has published the very best of latest research for over 40 years. It is the point of reference for scholars and students in spatial modelling and design generation.

Between 1976 and 1981, Lionel held the Chair of Design at the Open University in Milton Keynes. There he assembled an international group at the Centre for Configurational Studies. He put his heart and soul into the Open University, still young as an institution, being immensely generous with his time, talking about new ideas in design, seeking new

ground in his synthesis of the formal and creative, alongside service at the research councils and other advisory roles. Lionel was instrumental, with the mathematician Robin Wilson, in developing the hugely successful cross-disciplinary course, *Graphs, Networks and Design*, which has been presented continuously at the Open University, with necessary revisions, for over 35 years.

His book *The Architecture of Form* (1976) which he edited with a wide range of contributors began with his own groundbreaking article 'The Logic of Design and the Question of Value'. This raised the hackles of his latent critics. Lionel was far above this fracas; he was exploring ideas and how they work, not prescribing answers, and he had more interesting things to do.

The flow of papers in *EPB* was demonstrating that generative and computational methods were revolutionising design principles and practice. Again, Lionel led from the front. For example, at the Open University, a project with George Stiny and Ramesh Krishnamurti delivered a general shape grammar interpreter, implemented on one of the first VAX computers in the UK, for which Lionel secured funding. This interpreter remains a key reference point in design computation today, with generative methods ubiquitous in architecture schools. In everything he did in this period, Lionel went out and made the future.

In 1981, Lionel was appointed Rector at the Royal College of Art, perhaps seeing this as a chance to locate this revolution on a world stage. But Lionel was vulnerable, without a research group to constantly renew his energy and momentum. His ideas for the methods and institutions of research did not land on fertile ground, at the time, but they are now established at Design Schools around the world.

Lionel's next two decades, 1984–2004 were spent at UCLA. He taught and talked to great effect, painting and writing across a huge range of topics including his book, *The Architectonics of Humanism* (1998), which complemented Wittkower's renowned work 50 years earlier. Lionel was fabulously generous in Los Angeles, welcoming guests at the How House, a Rudolf Schindler masterpiece in Silver Lake. I remember when visiting California on holiday with our youngest daughter, Lionel and Maureen celebrated her 13th birthday with us and their grandson Tyler, who was completely charming and clearly destined for great things, with a Sunday brunch at a one-time sound stage on sunset, entertained by a jazz band of senior ladies.

In 2004, another decade and another place, saw Lionel and Maureen retire to Stretham, near Ely. He kept talking with colleagues and continued publishing and painting with several series of algorithmic digital works. Lionel travelled in retirement with a special love of the Greek island of Lesbos. Sadly, Maureen passed away a few years back, and Lionel relied increasingly on his children and carers. Everybody loved Lionel. One of Lionel's last excursions from home was to the Martin Centre 50th Anniversary celebration. He was excited about meeting colleagues from his intellectual adventures. Lionel was kind and generous; in between orders for more coffee, lighting the fire or putting him to bed. His daughter Candy was with him when he breathed his last, in peace.

Chris Earl
The Open University, UK

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And in memoriam, Lionel March dressed up . . .

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I have written a more formal appreciation of Lionel March's academic work for another journal (*Architectural Research Quarterly*). What follows here are some personal reminiscences about two small but symptomatic aspects of Lionel's many interests and accomplishments.

Lionel and I were students of architecture together at Cambridge, he five years ahead, although the gap in our ages is wider because he spent two years in the Navy doing National Service. The first occasion on which I passed any length of time in Lionel's company was on a working holiday with the Civic Trust, whose mission was to beautify Britain's towns and countryside. Our job was to demolish, by hand, a Second World War machine gun emplacement on the Devon coast. (Today, it would be listed as an ancient monument.) The Royal Engineers came to help at the start by blowing up the building, early one morning, but it just rose up and came down again in one piece. We set to work with our sledgehammers, but the concrete structure was very heavily reinforced, and we made little impact. Part of the reinforcement was in the form of large sheets of metal. Lionel became much more interested in liberating these and setting to work to hammer them into a suit, like the Tin Man in *The Wizard of Oz*.

This was the first I had seen of Lionel's recurrent enthusiasm for dressing up. During the land use and built form years, he hosted a number of riotous fancy dress parties. His life's

passion was of course geometry, and this was in evidence in several areas of his daily life including tailoring. He built suits made only from rectangular pieces – so-called 'rational clothing'. There are many traditional types of garment made just from rectangles, like harem pants and kimonos. But Lionel's experiments showed why this principle has not generally been followed in modern tailoring for men.

With a friend, I hired a pleasure boat on the Cam for our 21st birthdays and invited Lionel. We were ready to leave and Lionel had not arrived. Then, a small figure appeared hurrying across the green opposite wearing full naval uniform and perfectly circular dark glasses. Lionel's wife Lindsey followed the boat in their camper van but was even later and never caught up, the van appearing at each stopping point along the route just as the boat moved on.

Much later, I was idly Googling 'Lionel March' and came across a post-colonialist critique of a short story by E. M. Forster called 'The Other Boat'. Not published in Forster's lifetime, this tells the story of the on-board romance between Captain Lionel March and his 'dusky bunkmate Coconut'. I rang Lionel up and asked, did this not throw new and maybe unwelcome light on his time in the Navy? Lionel said this was very interesting. One of his friends in the Navy had been Midshipman Desta, a member of the family of Haile Selassie. The two of them had spent much time working on the design of a uniform for Desta for the time when he would become an admiral in the Ethiopian Navy.

When Lionel got to Cambridge, one of his great interests was opera, which took him away from his studies in architecture. He designed sets for several Cambridge productions including the premiere of Stravinsky's 'Rake's Progress' and then for the New Opera Company at Sadler's Wells in London. He was a member of the student opera society: they put on Benjamin Britten's 'Billy Budd' whose libretto is by E. M. Forster. They invited Forster, who was then living in King's College, to dinner. Lionel thought that perhaps on this occasion he had been telling anecdotes about his National Service and that Forster had stolen his name for the short story.

Unfortunately, an ugly fact spoils the beauty of this anecdote. 'Lionel March' and 'Coconut' had already featured as children in another story by Forster written in the 1930s. Maybe meeting the real Lionel March prompted Forster to revive his old characters!

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