

Vale Gordon Stewart Cooper AM

Gordon Stewart Cooper, formerly of Mosman, is survived by his wife Kath and his two children, Merryn and Angus, now each married and with children of their own, and an unsurpassed reputation as a tax professional. Gordon was a prolific author of conference papers, co-author of a CGT text and a presenter of many CPD sessions.

He was a founding member of the editorial board of the ATLB, a member of the inaugural Tax Practitioners Board, an adjunct Professor at ATAX, UNSW and the Patron of the Australasian Tax Teachers Association. For many years Gordon chaired the televised Coopers Problems in Practice to which he would invite four fellow professionals to discuss tax developments in an unscripted and unedited televised show which ran for 30 minutes.

The discussion points forwarded by Gordon for each show included a word (eg “cambist” or “backspang”) to be incorporated in the ensuing technical discussion. The panelist who used the word first was celebrated at the post-show lunch at the 3 Weeds Hotel in Rozelle.

On technical matters Gordon was generous with his time and a mentor to many younger practitioners. He chaired the Challis Tax Discussion Group in Sydney and was a member of at least two other discussion groups.

Gordon always occupied a front row seat at CPD sessions and conventions, usually directly in front of the speaker. His ponytailed hair making him instantly identifiable to those sitting behind.

On the Friday before the incident, which culminated in his passing a few days later on 24 June, Gordon had spent the day “shaking the bucket” outside Woolworths at Rutherford in the Hunter Valley to raise money for The Children’s Charity Variety .

Over a red that evening, preparing the yeast for homemade pizzas, he spoke proudly of the \$750 he raised in a day long solo effort.

He spoke of his appreciation for the security attendant who offered to fetch him a coffee, after first threatening to throw him out of the Shopping Centre, and who would not later accept payment for the coffee. So Gordon put the price of the coffee in the bucket.

By the second red he had explained his theories on why solo collecting was wasteful of effort. Over the Saturday and Sunday his theories were proved correct – a pair of collectors raised \$3400. On the Saturday he expounded why more funds could be raised if the counting could be organised more efficiently. On Sunday he was proved correct on this issue too. At the time of the incident Gordon was making his way to the Variety club meeting at St Leonards no doubt to report on the successful fund raising.

Gordon had participated in the last 10 Variety club Bashes and served as a committee member, then Treasurer and finally a Board Member of Variety (NSW).

The Variety club was just one of Gordon's passions. Another was placing quotes from "Alice in Wonderland" at the head of tax technical papers.

Gordon's other passions included cricket, rugby, craft beers, red wine especially purchasing cases of Grange, aged Hunter Valley Semillons, cheese, dressing up, Harry Potter, wood fired barbecues, cooking duck sausages to celebrate a new wine release, old English Cars of which he had a number including a Morris Ute (FBT free of course) a 1936 Rolls Royce, a handmade Morgan and a Bristol. But Gordon could not be tempted with any type of sea food.

Gordon attempted to attend every Australian home test cricket series, sitting in the members' area sporting his Lords Members' Tie and jacket but he never managed to attend the Boxing Day Test, his most recent attempt foiled by his desire to spend Christmas with Kath and their children and grandchildren in Brisbane.

Gordon spoke knowledgeably (and correctly) of the joys of drinking White Port alongside the Douro in Porto on a warm afternoon and could sniff out a craft brewery in the Adelaide Hills, the Hunter, the Mornington Peninsula, around Ballarat, and even at Carterton 90 kms east of Wellington in New Zealand but he was mightily frustrated on a weekday in Melbourne when, cab trip by cab trip, he discovered that inner Melbourne's highly regarded craft breweries only opened around 16h00.

Gordon was a frequent visitor to the micro brewery at the Lord Nelson Hotel in Argyle St Sydney and was proud to have his "pint" pewter tankard hooked on the wall. Later he ensured that Angus' half pint tankard was also on the wall.

At restaurants it was never wise to leave the wine list in Gordon's hands too long, his expansive knowledge of wines that ought not be left untasted ensured the education of many palates.

For many years Gordon's Mosman extensive cellar was guarded by three dogs, the Collie sisters Meg and Angel along with the pesky terrier Archie. The three dogs enjoyed personally addressed postcards, from friends in international locales, and birthday parties each May at which human guests were permitted.

Gordon was born in Tunbridge in the UK on 21 February 1951 and was enticed to migrate to Australia to fill a position at Hancock Woodward Neill as a tax accountant, that firm later merging with Offner Hadley, that merged firm later merging to form Hungerford Hancock Offner, the firm that grew and merged again to emerge as KPMG.

Although born a "pom", Gordon was a proud Australian and a keen supporter of its various customs and teams. In 2010 he organised frivolity at his Duck Hollow vineyard and ensured all his guests were

in the appropriate mood by requesting that they participate in Clean Up Australia Day and then take part in a Hot Air Balloon trip over the Hunter.

Although recollections are not great there could have been two separate weekends involved, one of which was his 60th birthday celebration. No matter 3.5 kms of each side of Deaseys Road was cleaned up by Gordon and his guests that afternoon. And on the Sunday morning Gordon was zipping about the Newcastle skies in a fighter jet. On landing he was very green.

In 2010 Gordon, along with the founding General Editor of the ATLB and a close friend he met at Hancock Offner, decided to support the Jane McGrath Foundation fundraising at the Sydney and turned up in matching pink shirts. On the way into the ground on the third day the trio purchased pink bandannas and then sat in the front row of the Members. They captured the attention of television crews which resulted in the three of them, dressed in pink, as lead items on national news bulletins that night.

The rest is history, they progressed from pink shirts and pink bandannas to pink suits, pink shoes and shoelaces set off by pink hair and beards. They headlined the news bulletins across Australia each year inspiring vast numbers of copy cats to acquire and wear pink apparel at the Sydney test to participate in the fundraising.

Gordon's weakness was his ignorance of technology.

Gordon's long suffering personal assistant spent hours covering for him on technology matters before finally providing him with a set of slides to accompany a CPD session at the SPAA conference in Adelaide in 2009 where he wished to discuss the "elephant in the room".

The slides featured elephants. Gordon mastered the technology in a packed convention hall.

During the last Ashes Series in England the television coverage captured Gordon sitting behind the bowler's arm in the Members at Lords – in his pink suit.

Gordon did not respond to text messages from friends in Australia. On his return to Australia he explained that he didn't know how to text from the UK and that, although bemused and wary at first, the Lords Members finally warmed to his outrageousness and lined up for "selfies" with him, a phenomenon with which he had no familiarity.

In April 2017 he compiled and sent a single text message containing multiple photos of him sitting on an elephant in South Africa.

Gordon Stewart Cooper will be missed by many.