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# IN MEMORY OF BENGT TURNER

## CHAIRMAN OF THE ENHR

A great many messages have been sent to the ENHR Secretariat after the unexpected and tragic death of Bengt Turner, Chairman of the Network for many years. Many of the messages were spontaneous expressions of sorrow, while others were sent in response to a call for members to send in the notes and recollections of Bengt. It is our intention that as many as possible of these memories should be made available in the Newsletter and on the website.

Not all of these messages are reproduced in the document below. Some of the messages included have also been shortened. To be more specific, the many personal passages addressed to Bengt's family or to myself have been excluded. These expressions of sorrow and condolence have of course been forwarded to his family. The name of the person or organisation that sent the message has generally been noted. But there is a section of very spontaneous messages that are more or less anonymous (only country is noted). It is not at all clear that these should be included at all. I choose to do so, however, because they represent the great shock and real grief that was felt by so many of the researchers who knew Bengt.

*Lawrence Teeland*  
Gävle, Sweden  
June 10, 2007

## A NOTE FROM LENA MAGNUSSON

### In memory of Bengt Turner

We would like to put into words our deepest appreciation for honouring our beloved Bengt. We also thank you for sharing our grief by sending us flowers, letters, emails and phone calls. We would like to express a special thank you, to all of you who attended Bengt's funeral in Gävle on the 13th of April. Sharing that difficult moment with all Bengt's friends from ENHR was valuable to us. We will never forget your generous donations to both The Swedish Children's Cancer Foundation and Médecins Sans Frontières in Bengt's memory.

*Lena, Daniel and Charlotta and Pernilla with their families*

## BENGT AND THE NETWORK

### Hugo Priemus (The Netherlands) on Bengt as the Soul of the ENHR

I have invited Bengt Turner to speak some words after my farewell speech, planned for June 29, 2007. Bengt promised to come, as he had travelled to Delft in 2002, when I celebrated the 25th anniversary of my Housing chair. Things went differently. It is so sad that I had to travel to Gävle on April 13, 2007, to be present at the funeral of Bengt.

Bengt and I have met each other for the first time in the end of the 1970s, at a field trip of the International Federation of Housing and Planning (IFHP). Both of us were in search of an organisation which on a European level could organise housing researchers. Some years later Bengt Turner, Lennart Lundqvist and I brought the initiative further and the European Network for Housing Research was conceptualized. The circle was broadened in an early stage, including people like Ivan Tosics, Liliana Padovani, Frans Dieleman, Michael Harloe and Duncan MacLennan. Pioneering meetings took place in Amsterdam and other European cities.

The first ENHR-anticipating conference ('Housing, Policy and Innovation') took place in Amsterdam, prepared by a local organising committee with researchers from the University of Amsterdam, Utrecht and Delft.

In 1986 the international research conference on 'Housing Policy' was organised in Gävle. This conference was a landmark again in the preparation of ENHR, which was officially launched in 1989.

In June 1989 – the iron curtain was still in place – the milestone conference ‘Housing reforms in Eastern Europe’ took place in Noszvaj (Hungary), organised by Jopseph Hegedüs and Ivan Tosics. The interaction between advisors and researchers in the East and the West of Europe was reinforced on that occasion.

I think there are good reasons now to describe and to analyse the origins of the ENHR: my documentation and my memory on this essential topic are blurred.

When the plans to create ENHR became serious, a serious quarrel originated. An ENHR Coordinating Committee was launched, chaired by Bengt Turner (a charter, determining the rules of the elections etc, was not yet formulated by Lawrence Teeland). But the Research Committee 43 Housing and the Built Environment of the International Sociological Association (ISA) existed already, and was open for all disciplines. Some RC 43 member heavily opposed the idea of a new European Network for Housing Research: they considered this as a threatening duplication. RC 43 selected Willem van Vliet as contact person and the same role was allocated to me by the ENHR Coordinating Committee. And because Willem van Vliet is an extremely kind person, the problems between RC 43 en ENHR disappeared with a high speed. We decided that there was room for at least two organisations. ISA RC 43 serves the whole world and ENHR has a focus on Europe. And the relative dominance of sociology could not be observed within ENHR. Under the inspiring leadership of Bengt ENHR developed, as we all know, from a handful pioneers into a flourishing network of about 1,000 housing researchers, about 100 participating housing institutions and a number of associated members. Working groups were formed, the ENHR Newsletter started in 1990. For an increasing number of researchers from the USA and other continents outside Europe ENHR conferences became the place to be in particular. ISA RC 43 did not object.

Always Bent has been the kind-hearted, inspiring soul of ENHR, everywhere breeding goodwill and sympathy, again and again promoting scientific quality, fruitful applications and professional pleasure and collaboration.

We cannot imagine the ENHR without Bengt. Nevertheless, we have no choice: we have to go on, without Bengt. We all are thankful for what Bengt has contributed and will proceed in his spirit. We wish Lena, always the power behind Bengt, strength and support in these sad moments.

### **Duncan MacLennan (Great Britain)**

I first worked with Bengt in 1979 and spent almost ten years on the Organising Committee (we toyed with the idea of calling it the Disorganising Committee)of ENHR. Through that time Bengt was relentless in his energy to bring all of us together, in embracing the, then, transition economies and in engaging the interest of young researchers.

I think that an appropriate remembrance would be to award a Bengt Turner Prize for the best ENHR Conference Paper presented by a new researcher at a European institution. I am glad that Mark Stephens has indicated that EJHP will be publishing a special issue and will look favourably on publishing Prize essays should the Prize be established...Bengt was ours, in housing, Europe and policy. We shall all miss him. I have been working outside of Europe for more than three years now and I miss the ENHR, and all of you that I now, and especially at times like this.

### **Christine Whitehead (London School of Economics, Great Britain)**

I first heard about Bengt Turner when friends of mine went to the inaugural meeting of the European Network for Housing Research (ENHR) in 1986. The event was held in a city in Sweden that I had never heard of called Gävle – not that far from Chernobyl – which had unhappily become all too well known that year. My friends came back cheerful - and healthy - commenting on the memorable experience they had all enjoyed - in part because of the ideas that had been discussed but also because of the people they had met and above all the hospitality they had received.

This was Bengt’s way – making getting together useful but also fun. Enabling ideas and working relationships to flourish, while bringing some, but not too much, order into the process. And above all seeking out researchers and housing organisations that could benefit from interaction and wider understanding of policy issues. It was this quite personal mission that, with lots of support from his co-founders and from those he quickly drew into the process (like myself), that has made the ENHR such a vibrant an increasingly important and self sustaining group.

Bengt's reasons for putting so much of his own time and effort into the Network were grounded in his vision for his own institution. He saw the need for it to break away from being a traditional building research establishment strongly linked to national politics. He wanted it to look outward to European experience as well in order to strengthen its academic base. He also greatly valued the independence of research and was wary of too direct an involvement in politics either at the national or European level. But he was outstandingly capable of bringing research findings to bear on policy issues and of ensuring that this vision was heard in the right places.

Academically Bengt was above all an economist who worked within the neo-classical paradigm, bringing evidence to bear on market relationships and the impact of government intervention. In particular he was one of the leaders of a group of researchers who developed econometric models to help develop the understanding of Scandinavian housing markets. Yet he saw housing within the broader urban and regional context as well, where analysis across the range of the social sciences could effectively be brought to bear.

I worked with Bengt in many different ways, including specific research projects, books, articles and conference papers, policy advice; and most notably through our joint chairmanship of the Housing Finance Working Group. This was one of the first ENHR groups to be set up, just at the time when deregulation of finance markets was getting under way and national housing subsidies were being put more and more under threat across Europe. The Working Group continues to thrive.

Bengt could sometimes be difficult to work with because he was always over-committed and excited by each new idea. But working with him was always worthwhile – and always generated new ideas. Most of all he wanted to bring young researchers into his projects and into the Network – to the point where a significant proportion of those currently involved in housing research across Europe today owe their involvement at least in part to his enthusiasm and interest in their work.

Bengt has been my great friend and colleague for almost twenty years. I will miss him greatly.

## **BENGT AS A RESEARCH COLLEAGUE**

### **Peter Boelhouwer (The Netherlands)**

My memories of Bengt Turner go back to the famous ENHR conference in 1986 in Gävle. At that time I was a young researcher and I had just a few contacts with Bengt. His professionalism and enthusiasm struck me deep at that time. With this conference Bengt was also trend-setting for 20 years of ENHR conferences in different parts of Europe. I really learnt to know Bengt well, when I visited the IBF Research Institute in Gävle in 1990. He helped me a great deal with my study of different housing systems in Europe. I was welcomed very friendly at his institute and met a lot of dedicated researchers. The hospitality of Bengt and his institute was remarkable and was the start of a series of intensive contacts. The collaboration speeded up when I entered the Coordination Committee of ENHR. Thanks to the inspired leadership of Bengt, these meetings were always very productive and for all pleasant events. Bengt really managed to combine serious matters with good companionship. I shall always remember his intelligent and humoristic way of leading these meetings. Bengt became not only the founding father of the ENHR, but kept his role as a father of the network for the last twenty years. His name will always be connected to ENHR. As long as we keep the ENHR live and kicking, the memories of Bengt Turner never will fade away.

### **Chris Watson (Great Britain)**

“In memory of Bengt”. I met Bengt Turner for the first time in March 1981. He was one of three researchers from SIB, the National Swedish Institute for Building Research, who visited England and Scotland to establish closer contacts with research institutions, one of which was the Centre for Urban and Regional Studies at the University of Birmingham. A joint meeting was held in Birmingham and was followed a year later by a joint workshop in Gävle on the subject of ‘Current Housing Policy Research’. For most of us in the CURS group, this was our first visit to Sweden and it marked the beginning of a long period of friendly collaboration and exchange that, happily, has continued ever since, at first with SIB and subsequently with IBF, the Institute for Housing and Urban Research of Uppsala University.

When Bengt and others established the European Network for Housing Research in 1998, I am pleased to say that CURS was one of the first to join as an Institutional member; and researchers from CURS have been active in many aspects of the work of ENHR: in its working groups and conferences and in the many informal ways that such a network is intended to facilitate.

We all owe a great debt of gratitude to Bengt for the inspiration that lay behind the setting up of ENHR and for his leadership of the organisation for almost twenty years. Bengt was a good friend, a supportive colleague and great ambassador for the housing research community both in Europe and in many other parts of the world. He is fondly remembered and sadly missed.

## **CONTRIBUTIONS FROM NEW HOUSING RESEARCHERS WITHIN THE ENHR**

### **Birgit Kasper (Germany)**

I will never forget my first conference in Warsaw, my first international conference presentation and both of you (Bengt and Lawrence) asked Freia and me to organise the seminar for the YHR in Vienna. Because I had no institutional affiliation, it was great for me, that you trusted us that we could organise such a thing. Again, it was this friendly and serious attitude that made me agree. In the end, during the “normal” difficulties that come along with the organisation of an event, his email-answers and decisions were just supporting all the time. A great teacher.

My last little conversation with Bengt was in Ljubljana in the bus from the conference center back downtown. As you know, Germany lost the game against Italy and he asked me, how I feel. In the end, he said that he was sorry, too, because they played so good...I am sure, you know what I mean, it was his way of being serious and not serious at the same time.

### **Chen Lu (China)**

*“In Remembrance of My Honored Teacher Bengt Turner  
- From a Student He Would Never See.”*

I am a graduate student from China, majoring in Real Estate Economics, Renmin University of China. I was so astounded and would hardly describe my complex feelings when hearing from my tutor Prof. Ye Jianping-who is the dean of Land Management and Real Estate Department-of the bad news about Prof. Bengt Turner.

As a student who always focuses attention on the development and analysis of international and regional markets of real estate, I had the opportunity to read the active points of view from Prof. Bengt Turner, Chairman of ENHR and chair of Institute for Housing and Urban Research at Uppsala University. I would never conceal my respect to the widely honored professor, who has devoted all his passion, energy, wisdom and finally, life, to his beloved career as one of the leading scholars in the field of Real Estate Economics. I felt deeply regretted every time when see the picture of him and his could-never-renew CV on his main-page connected to the Website of Uppsala University. Prof. Bengt would for ever have his usual sunny smile in the backdrop of ocean stretching to the horizon, which seems that his intelligent, creative and logical ideas would come out at any moment, just as any day during the past years. Smile, is his best way of communication with the world. I could hardly imagine how Prof. Bengt would smile to soothe people around him when he was undergoing the unbearable pains, even in the last days of his life; he touched everyone who knows him by his optimism and positiveness.

The interests of Prof. Bengt covered six main fields of real estate economics and he had great contributions to the evolution of housing market, not only in Sweden, East Europe, Europe Union, but also in the whole world. I was always inspired by his analytical problem-solving structure. His rich outcomes also gave me great power to build up sound foundation of basic theory and scientific way of thinking and organizing when doing research work during study. Here, I, just as a common student, would like to use my simple words but deepest feelings to express my memory and respect of the great scholar. Prof. Bengt, just as what my tutor talked to me, and from the articles of his friends, students and colleagues who have written to memorise him, was really a respectful kind man. Though he would never see the vivid future of his beloved field, and would never know the worship from a Chinese

student, I would like to do my best and help him witness the development of both real estate market and the theory world.

### **Tom Kauko (Finland)**

This time the Newsletter bought a shocking piece of news! Bengt Turner belongs to a small group of people who, even though I met them only a few times, had a profound affect on my way of judging academia. He also was a living example of how one can combine business and pleasure in academic meetings; we had indeed Bengt Turner the rigorous housing economist, and Bengt Turner the cheerful entertainer.

I remember Bengt best from the first three of altogether seven times I met him in academic meetings: in the Maastricht IRES conference (1998), in the ENHR young housing researchers seminar in Istanbul (1999), and in Gävle ENHR conference (2000). In those days I was a PhD student with rather bad self-esteem. Without relaxed and student friendly mentors like Bengt around, it would have been more difficult to get a grip of the academic protocol. When I doubted the neo-liberal policy mantra of World Bank economists, Bengt assured me that scientific evidence of policy failure will show up – and how right he was. I also remember how Bengt, amidst all the football watching arrangements (for the Holland-Italy EC semi-final) in Gävle, told me that the academic research should always come first in life – all else is of secondary concern. This of course does not contradict with yet another image of Bengt – I have a photo of Bengt dancing wildly with Turkish PhD students on a boat along Bosphorus – on an euphoric evening of dolphin spotting, Turkish folk-music, fresh fish and sufficiently Raki.

I believe now that academic life – like any other life – should not be too serious. Being a serious academic does not have to mean being dull. Bengt was one of the most serious academics I met but was never dull. And the longer I knew him, the less I was sure of if he was joking or serious. The annual ENHR meeting has lost its Master of Ceremony.

## **RECOGNISED BY SISTER ORGANISATIONS TO THE ENHR**

### **Rebecca Chiu, APNHR**

“In remembrance of our beloved friend Bengt” A great privilege of being the convenor of the Asian Pacific Network for Housing Research was to have the opportunity of getting to know Bengt as a colleague and as a friend. My first personal contact with Bengt was when he came to the housing conference in Hong Kong in 2000, which was organized with an intention of proposing the formation of a housing researchers association in the Asia Pacific. Bengt did not know of such an intention when he registered for the conference, but gave full support and shared his experience generously in a session convened to discuss the possibility. He had since then been a stout supporter, coming to every APNHR conference, and took pleasure in visiting the cities where the conferences were held.

He indeed knew the art of networking. He saw no barrier between ENHR and APNHR. Promptly he put me on the mailing and attendance list of the Co-ordination Committee of ENHR, and readily joined the Steering Committee meetings of APNHR. He invited me to visit his Institute in 2002. It was in these ways that ENHR and APNHR became the extended family of one another, and facilitated the transfer of the experience of ENHR to APNHR. He must have taken APNHR as a young sister whom he had committed to help grow to full blossom.

I fondly remembered the times when we explored together Kuala Lumpur, Kobe and Beijing. It was also fun to take him to try different restaurants in Hong Kong when he visited as external examiner of our housing degree courses. As those who knew Bengt would agree, his keen sense of humour, lightheartedness, enthusiasm, knowledge and non-aggressive manner made him a pleasant and trustworthy friend and colleague.

Bengt had led a very successful life as he had made a difference to the world and people around him. I feel very sad that he is no longer with us, but he shall be remembered with smiles and grins because he was a jolly good fellow.

## COMMENTE FROM ORGANISATIONS AND GROUPS OF RESEARCHERS

### **Peter Malpass, Housing Studies Association, (Great Britain)**

The news of Bengt's death has saddened all his friends in Britain and on behalf of the Housing Studies Association I would like to extend our sincere condolences to his family and colleagues in Sweden. Bengt will be remembered here as an inspiring figure in the housing studies community, who combined serious scholarship with a ready wit and cheery enthusiasm. His contribution to the ENHR was, of course, immense and he will be impossible to replace. His untimely loss is a blow to us all.

### **David Clapham (Great Britain)**

I am still in shock after the news and missing Bengt very much as I am sure you all are. Although I am not going to be able to make the funeral in Gävle, I wanted to let you know of my own tribute. I was beginning to work with Bengt on a Handbook in Housing Studies with Sage along with Bill Clark. We have agreed with the publishers to continue with this, but to dedicate the volume to the memory of Bengt with a memoriam where we can talk about his contribution to Housing Studies. This will take some time to come to fruition, but I hope it will be a suitable memorial. One of many I am sure.

### **Working Groups Coordinators at OTB (The Netherlands)**

All ENHR working group coordinators, working at the Research Institute OTB of the Delft University of Technology, are deeply shocked and feel a deep pain: we have lost our dear friend, colleague and chairman Bengt Turner.

This is so unfair for his love Lena, his dearest friends, like you yourself, and many, many others.

The ENHR is more than just a professional network. A proof is that people, like Iván Tosics and yourself, informed some of us yesterday evening. The ENHR is also a network based on the (inter) generational friendship. And Bengt was responsible for this as well.

We hope that the Coordination Committee will find ways to commemorate Bengt as friend, colleague and chairman at the next ENHR-conference and beyond.

With tears in our eyes,

*Andre Thomsen, Frank Wassenberg, Gerard van Bortel, Henny Coolen,  
Marja Elsinga, Nico Nieboer, Peter Boelhouwer, Roland Goetgeluk*

## SWEDISH AND OTHER NORDIC COMMENTS

### **Ingemar Elander (Co-ordinator of the Centre for Urban and Regional Studies at Örebro University Sweden)**

*“In memory of Bengt Turner”*

In my experience Bengt combined several admirable characteristics: he was not only an intellectually sharp and efficient scholar, and a strongly committed social scientist, but also a dedicated caretaker of housing and urban studies, nationally as well as internationally. I would like to exemplify his responsibility for this broad field of research by going back to the Autumn of 2004 when many of social science researchers in Sweden became furious over the way the national research council Formas (The Swedish Research Council for Environment, Agricultural Sciences and Spatial Planning) gave priority to the natural sciences, largely neglecting the social sciences. The fury was triggered by the announcement that 19 out of 20 applications that were accepted for the final round of a multidisciplinary program call (“Formel Exc”) were mostly narrow natural science projects, despite the fact that there were many ambitious social science orientated, cross-disciplinary program applications that had also been submitted.

Bengt did not just complain internally about this but wrote a very concise and critical open letter to the chief executive of Formas, founding his criticism on data compiled from the that organisations's own research budget. In the letter, Bengt convincingly showed that there was a sharp gulf between words and deeds of Formas. On the one hand, they pleaded in various documents for research in

favour of clarifying the conditions for sustainable urban development. On the other hand, when it came to the allocation of research money, Formas showed an overwhelming priority for projects orientated towards natural science. In his own words, Bengt revealed “a pattern that does not correspond with Formas’ own instructions and its own, bold program texts”. Bengt found that the main cause for this double talk was the fact that most of the research secretaries and referees had a natural science and technological background, whereas sociologists, geographers, economists and other social scientists were “marginalized to a 5 - 10 per cent presence”.

At that time a new Chairman of the Formas Board (Göran Enander) had been appointed. Bengt followed up his open letter by requesting a meeting with him. The meeting took place in Stockholm on March 8th, 2005. Bengt, accompanied by Stellan Lundström (professor at the Royal Institute of Technology) and myself, very clearly and without piercing overtones, repeated his main critical points, and it was my impression that the Chairman listened with great interest. Whether the current practice of Formas has changed in a way which is more in accordance what we asked for, I am not sure. The December 2006 call for environmentally relevant social science research could, however, be seen as one step in the right direction. Anyway, the way Bengt promptly took action in this case fits very well with my overall impression of him as a serious, sharp and dedicated scholar who was not afraid of challenging those who sit on the money. It was notable that his doing so was not primarily for his own sake, but for all of us who are committed to housing and urban studies. I miss him very much.

### **Hedvig Vestergaard (Denmark)**

Thanks for informing us. We are so sorry to hear that Bengt passed away. Today I have send the below message to my colleges at SBI as well as the below mentioned in our network in Denmark. We have a very deep respect for Bengt’s contribution to develop and promote housing research and we are thankful for the services he has paid us in Denmark. Our thoughts are with our friends at the Swedish Institute and Bengt’s family.

Kære venner,

Jeg har i dag fået denne meddelelse om Bengt Turners død, som jeg gerne vil dele med jer. Bengt var en ven af mig, afdelingen og instituttet. Han har tjent boligforskningen og vores sag og været en helt enestående kraft bag udviklingen af det nordiske, europæiske og internationale samarbejde. Bengt var også en rigtig fin fyr med hjertet på rette sted, og så havde han en god humor.

Æret være hans minde,  
Hedvig

### **Jón Rúnar (Iceland)**

Jag ber dig att framföra mina djupaste kondoleanser till Lena och till Bengts familj. Bengt betydde oerhört mycket för mig och mina forskningssträvanden, först via ENHRs tillkomst och sedan via stödet jag fick ifrån IBF, inte minst vid mina två vistelser i Gävle som gästforskare 1994 och 1998. Mitt samarbete med Bengt nådde sedan en höjdpunkt när vi arbetade intensivt ihop i samband med ENHR-konferensen i Reykjavík 2005.

Jag framför också hjärtliga kondoleanser från Ingi Valur Jóhannsson och Magnús Árni Skúlason, båda medlemmar av organiseringskommittén för ENHR-konferensen 2005, samt från konferensens arrangör, Inga Sólnes hos Gestamóttakan. Med sorg i hjärtat,

## **SPONTANEOUS STATEMENTS FROM INDIVIDUAL RESEARCHERS**

Bengt’s dead is a terrible shock. I cannot believe he is not among us anymore and that he will not be the one opening and closing the Rotterdam conference with his own style, his humour. We will miss him so much, not only now but at any conference, any ENHR-meeting.

*(The Netherlands)*

Dear colleagues and friends! Just suddenly I found information about death of Bengt Turner. It is a terrible loss for me as for all of us. He personally did so much for me, that it is impossible to evaluate. May I kindly ask you to pass my words of the condolence, respect and regret to his wife and son.

*(Russia)*

I am still shocked and find it hard to accept like all of you I think. I am sure that members and the CC will do their best for the continuation. I am also sure that this was his wish. He gave birth to ENHR, used his energy to develop and expand it. Indeed he helped people living other parts of the world to develop similar networks

*(Turkey)*

I don't know what to say. Since yesterday when I got the first message, I keep thinking it's not possible. Bengt was Bengt, just so involved, present, acute. He has done so much, given so much of his person. We are terribly shocked and sad. Please do let his wife know how much we sympathise with her.

*(France)*

I am shocked and very saddened to hear of Bengt's death. He has always been so kind and supportive to me since we have meet, very generous with his advice and help, such entertaining company and obviously a great mind.

*(Ireland)*

Really devastating! We are all in great shock at the Institute since this morning, when the sad news arrived. It is difficult to believe that we are not going to see him again, as we always enjoyed his company!

*(Slovenia)*

It is really very, very sad news. It seems to me even impossible to take it for real.

*(Italy)*

I receive this message with a heavy heart. Please convey to Bengts' family our sincere condolences and pray God gives his family the strength to bear this loss.

*(Egypt)*

This is very sad news indeed. Bengt will be sorely missed by so many, and we were privileged to have known him, worked with him and enjoyed so many wonderful ENHR experiences with him. If it is convenient for you, please convey my sympathies to his family.

*(Ireland)*

It was with deep regret that we learnt the heart-rending news of the passing away of Bengt Turner .We sincerely acknowledge the great contributions of Bengt Turner to ENHR and its members. He was source of strength and inspiration to many members of ENHR. May his soul rest in peace in heaven and guide us for years to come.

*(India)*

## **BENGT AS A PERSON**

### **A Note and Poem by Roland Goetgeluk (The Netherlands)**

What about Sweden?

In 1978 the band The Stranglers sang about Sweden:

*Let me tell you about Sweden  
Only country where the clouds are interesting  
Big brother says it's the place to go*

*Too much time to think, too little to do  
Too much time to think, too little to do  
Too much time, too little to do*

*'Cos it's all quiet on the Eastern front*

*Fluctuations at a minimum  
Hypochondriac tombstone  
Sense of humour's gone astray somewhere*

∞

Did they touch the right chord?

No!

Dear Bengt, you have falsified this song in so many ways.

∞

Thank you for thinking a lot, since not thinking means 'go to pot'.  
Thank you for being so active on the western, southern and eastern fronts  
since our world needs many bonds: not shaken, but surely stirred.  
Thank you for all the dynamic presentations, unreadable slides, statements  
and decisions with dry wit since logic reveals itself in bel esprit.  
Thank you for being familiar with the young and mature colleagues in the  
network since it shows that home is where the heart is.  
Thank you for the opportunity to remember dear Frans when he suddenly  
passed away some while ago.  
Thank you for being so courteous to some specific person in the CC and  
myself last year.

∞

Friday 13 April 2007, I will glance up to the sky.  
A nice cumulus nimbus may float by.  
Frans will have reserved that one there,  
I suppose you'll meet in silence and have a beer.  
Down earth, we will enlarge the Turner's ana<sup>1</sup>,  
And try to ease the pain of your dear, dear Lena.

∞

*Roland Goetgeluk*  
Delft, 10 April 2007  
The Netherlands

## **Iván Tosics (Hungary)**

*"Bengt Turner*

*My Memories about a friendship of 24 Years*

The first time I met Bengt was in 1983. This was the year when I started my job as urban sociologist at ÉGSZI, a large Hungarian state owned institute in the building branch. Quite unusually under the socialist circumstances, ÉGSZI had a bilateral agreement with the similar Swedish institute. As a young researcher and was involved in the Hungarian team, when the Swedish delegation arrived to Budapest in Autumn 1983

Such visits were very formal at that times, having some official discussions (strictly limited to technical questions, avoiding any political or structural issues), but dominated by eating and drinking when the Westerners arrived to Hungary, extended by shopping during the return visits, when Hungarians visited Sweden. The first picture in the attached picture compilation (picture 2 on page 1,

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<sup>1</sup> A collection of anecdotes about a person or place.

i.e. 2/1) shows Bengt around 1985 in one of the visits to Southern Hungary (Mórahalom), surrounded by local leaders. In Autumn 1983 something unusual happened. We immediately discovered each other with Bengt, as being different from the rests of the delegations. Already at this first meeting we started our private discussions, the wonderful free „flying” over several topics, based on critical approaches and ironic opinions. No one was „Saint” in our discussions, we analysed everyone and everything, and our sharp opinions and judgements were very close to each other from the beginning.

Our freshly established contact became very fruitful for both sides. Bengt managed to convince the organization committee of the first, real important European international housing conference (1986, Gävle), that it is necessary to have besides the well known Western names, including Peter Marcuse, Jim Kemeny, Lennart Lundqvist..., also someone from „behind the Iron curtain”. Thus I was invited to Gävle as one of the keynote speakers. The preparations for this event went relatively smooth, I had „only” to rewrite my presentation six times, until it was approved by the leaders of ÉGSZI (they criticised my analysis of the Hungarian housing policy as being too dark – finally they gave up at the seventh version of the paper, which did not essentially differ from the first). At that time the connections from Hungary to Western institutions were not at all free, faxes and letters were controlled and even telephone conversations had to be announced. Bengt – not missing the opportunity time to time to make his usual ironic remarks – was strong and determined enough to survive all administrative difficulties (in this also my boss, late János Zsebedits helped a lot on Hungarian side). Thus in the course of the Gävle conference the foundation of focussed west-east links could be laid down.

By the middle of the 1980s I already had a long history with working together with my friend, József Hegedüs. We, as young Hungarian housing researchers, started to become known in the international research scene, as a result of our first English language publication of 1983 in the IJURR. Fortunately enough, our critical analysis, aiming for a reform of the socialist housing system, was allowed and even supported in Hungary, which in this decade was in almost permanent reform period regarding the different sectors of the socialist economic (not allowing, however, similar discussions in political fields). As a result of this situation we were well connected to the highest national decision makers in the housing field, who were sitting in the very powerful National Planning Office. We could convince them that an independent expert view on Hungarian housing would be very useful, helping the reform efforts aiming at a more open, market oriented housing policy.

So it happened that in 1988 Bengt was invited to Hungary for 30 days, to study the housing policy and form an expert opinion on it. This was the first case that a „Westerner” was allowed to spend so long time with work in Hungary in this field, even getting access to top secret documents on housing policy reform ideas. Thus Bengt played a unique role in the 1980s, as he was allowed to enter the „uncharted territory” of the Hungarian housing policy.

During these 30 days, besides working together on the subject, we used every occasion to study the circumstances of everyday life, way beyond the professional aspects of housing. I remember to take Bengt with me for a whole day, showing him the usual activities of Hungarian persons in the second half of the 1980s. He came with me to put Nóra to school, Dávid on the bus which carried him to the kindergarden, etc. He enjoyed to have this insight view on Hungarian life – only making a particularly strong remark after standing for one hour in the queue to take out some money from my bank account ... His remark was understandable as he told me, Swedish people never join queues longer than six persons...

Our joint sociological interest lead us to discover all types of neighborhoods in Budapest, even those to where tourists never went to. One evening I took him to a quite low class bar on the Grand Boulevard, to study local life. Coming out, in a side street a totally drunk person asked Bengt (hearing that we talk English), whether he has money to exchange. Bengt loved such situations and told him, yes, I have some Swedish Crowns. This was a currency practically unknown at that time in Hungary. In this moment the guy stopped his tottering, took a vertical position and told Bengt the exact exchange rate of Swedish Crowns. From this Bengt understood, that Hungarian people are serious if it comes to business, however drunk they are...

Bengt enjoyed to discover the immense controversies of the late socialist, partly already collapsing system, where many market elements already appeared and public control was very inefficient. He told me that every time he took a taxi from Moszkva square to his rented flats, the price he was asked to pay was different. Once, when the price was more than double of the normal, he told the taxi driver

that he has a „turbo” taxi-meter and only paid the average price, which the driver accepted without saying anything... Testing the public transport system, Bengt used the same one ticket for 30 days, until all the 9 wholes were punched – and he was never caught...

Thus before the end of the 1980s we already developed a strong relationship containing professional visits in both directions. Picture 3/1 shows a group of Hungarian housing officials on their study visit to Sweden in 1988, which was organised in our cooperation, with me as the guide and translator at once. One of the members of the Hungarian delegation was the head of a Ministerial department, and this was his first trip to a Western country... Our close link and understanding with Bengt made it possible to break through all the obstacles on both sides and lead to results, exchanges which were unthinkable earlier.

Bengt became acquainted with the group of East-central European housing researcher which we established with József in the early 1980s. He was able and willing to join this group to the idea of an European network, therefore the researchers of the post-socialist countries got the possibility already in the moment socialism collapsed in their country to join a truly European network. Due to this openness from Bengt's side, ENHR became from the first moment a more balanced network between Western and Eastern countries than most other networks in other disciplines.

In Summer 1989, several month before the “iron curtain” fell down, we decided with József to establish our own private company, Metropolitan Research Institute. We did not have all the money needed for the establishment of a company, thus we asked our foreign and Hungarian friends to participate as shareholders. Bengt was, of course, the first whom we asked and who agreed to enter this venture. Thus for some years (until the late 1990s) we were also business partners. Picture 5/1 shows the full ownership group in 1992: József Hegedüs, Gábor Locsmándi, Ray Struyk, Bengt Turner, Stuart Lowe, Iván Tosics, Pal Baross. Needless to say, this was more friendship than real business – our once-in-a-year meetings were good cross-cultural and cross-boarder discussions. Time to time Bengt made, in his own particular ironic style, some remarks on the quality of the financial reporting of the company, he was, however, never dissatisfied with our results. Pictures 2/3 and 3/3 show the moment of signing some important documents, probably at the end of the 1990s when we with József “bought out” all the other shareholders.

In the 1990s Bengt visited many times Hungary, and at such occasions he participated in the life of our Institute. Pictures 2-3-4/2 were prepared at a Summer excursion of MRI into the Buda hills, and Bengt was a really good partner in all the activities in this excursion.

Each time he came we took some time to visit interesting parts of Budapest. 6/2 shows Bengt, Lena and Daniel at the large second hand market – some of the old photo-cameras and microscopes collected by Bengt are coming for sure from this and other similar places in Budapest.

The conferences and the Coordination Committee meetings of ENHR gave us the opportunity to visit many places in Europe together. Picture 4/3 was taken somewhere in Scotland, after the Glasgow housing conference, while 6/3 probably during the 2000 Gavle conference. Picture 1/4 shows the Coordination Committee in Bled, Slovenia. 6/4 and 1/5 were taken at the Madrid CC meeting, 2/5 in Poland. Most times Bengt participated in the slide-competitions, 3/5 shows him as member of a strong team. 4/5 shows Bengt in the far back, standing on the top of a table in Cambridge in 2004, giving a speech. 5-6/5 and 1/6 were taken in Reykjavik, in 2005.

As one of the close friends of Bengt I always tried to visit him whenever going to Sweden. 3-5/4 shows an unforgettable excursion with Lena and Süle: with the motorboat Bengt took us to a place where we could feel the almost untouched nature around a Swedish lake. Another occasion for such an excursion was the Reykjavik conference: 2-5/6 are pictures about our attempt to get a glimpse about Iceland outside of the only one large city. Bengt and Lena rented a car and David and I joined them for a full day, having been able to visit many of the interesting places.

5/6 and 1-4/7 are pictures about my last visit in Bengt's and Lena's house, in May 2006. This was the first time I saw Bengt in the role of a happy grandfather. Besides the barbecue and the fine wine the wonderful thing in such gatherings are the almost endless chats about all aspects of the family, politics, travel, hobbies – photographing was one of our common and very much discussed interest. And, continuing our old habit, even that time we made a small exploratory study visit in the Gavle night, looking and discussing what other people were doing...

Bengt was one of the very small number of people in the world with whom I was „on the same wave”. We understood each other from half words and could always tease other persons – which

usually lead to endless laughs. There were big moments during ENHR conferences – who could forget the night swimming in Piran or in Balatonfüred, the Scottish dance in tilts of Steve Mayo with Duncan MacLennan in Glasgow, etc. Many people, and not only the members of the Coordination Committee, who met more often, had the feeling that ENHR is a big family and this was mainly due to the openness of Bengt who was in good relationship with everyone.

I loved how childish Bengt sometimes was. It was our joint interest to experiment, to understand how systems work or do not work. From two very different countries with very different backgrounds through our sense of humour and our sociological curiosity for life we managed to build up a very good and long-lasting, deep friendship.

I wish it could have continued for several more years...

I will never forget you, Bengt!  
Budapest, 8 April 2007.

## **COMMENTS DELIVERED AT THE MEMORIAL SESSION FOR BENGT TURNER AT THE START OF THE ENHR CONFERENCE JUNE 25, 2007 IN ROTTERDAM, THE NETHERLANDS**

### **Dr. Sasha Tsenkova (Canada)**

Bengt Turner!

It is with great sadness that we gather here today at the ENHR Conference in Rotterdam to pay tribute and to commemorate the life and the accomplishments of one of our distinguished colleagues and a friend.

As a Chair of this network, researcher, faculty member, volunteer, and mentor, Bengt Turner was an exemplary colleague. As the founding member and first Chair of the ENHR, Bengt drew upon his expertise to articulate an integrated vision of network in which European educational and research institutes collaborate to produce leading-edge research for the wider benefit of society. His broad interests and intellectual commitment pushed this further to build the largest housing research network bringing today people and institutions from more than 40 countries.

As an expert on national, regional, and European housing policy and comparative housing finance, Bengt was an advisor to the United Nations, the World Bank, and consultant to several governments in Eastern Europe. We often exchanged notes, and jokes, on the challenging task of making a difference in the world of rapid transition and change. We collaborated on papers and studies on housing reforms in the Baltics and Ukraine and recently published a paper on the future of social housing in Eastern Europe in the *Journal of European Housing Policy*. It was a privilege to work with Bengt. His scholarly contributions in the area of housing policy evaluation and housing finance are numerous and varied. He is the author and co-author of more than 15 books. As Professor of Economics at Uppsala University, he was well known to his colleagues and PhD students for his commitment to excellence in research and established a powerful legacy. One of his seminal books *Housing Reforms in Eastern Europe*, co-edited with Ivan and Josef, was the one that influenced my own research and was instrumental in defining my personal scholarly career.

In thinking about Bengt, I also recall the times spent at the Institute of Housing Research in Gavle. We had many interesting discussions and shared wonderful moments with Bengt and Lena. This is when I discovered that we had a common passion for antiques as all three of us toured antique markets in the Swedish countryside. Bengt was an avid traveler who had been to more than 70 countries. His great knowledge about history, culture and traditions of these different places enriched every conversation.

A person of great wisdom, warmth, and integrity, a personal friend to so many of us, Bengt will be missed by everyone who had the privilege of getting to know him.

### **Hedvig Vestergaard, Danish Building Research Institute**

*In memory of Bengt Turner's service to the Housing Research World*

Bengt Turner created a space for networking, knowledge and humanity

We are here today to honour Bengt and to remember, respect and learn from what he did for the housing research community and for housing research.

Essentially we are here to honour what he did for us so we can become the researchers we like to be. Now the task is to continue his work and to make sure that the European Network of Housing Research goes on.

Bengt created a space for communication and learning, a network where we share and discuss research, create knowledge, meet colleagues and make new friends. Bengt had a remarkable ability to take contact, to communicate with each of us and to establish a relationship of trust.

The space Bengt created has many dimensions – a local and a national dimension as well as an international. I first meet Bengt at a Nordic research seminar in 1983. I have had the privilege to work together with Bengt on the ENHR coordination committee since 2002 and also organizing the research conference in 1996 in Denmark. I learned a lot in this process and I am truly thankful to Bengt that he let me into his space. But the best part of it was coming to the institute in Gävle in Sweden to participate in seminars and lectures.

Bengt and his colleagues at the Institute for Housing and Urban Research in Gävle worked together with the whole city to create a space for and to promote housing research. And Bengt made sure to have interesting programs and to invite people in time. Bengt knew who to call on, how to commit people and how to make them do their best for housing and housing research.

Gävle, Bengt's home base, has a firm position in Sweden as the place to visit in order to know more about and to discuss housing issues. In March, in the depth of winter, stakeholders in Swedish housing would arrive year after year to participate in the “Housing Week” in Gävle. These housing weeks in Gävle are very impressive to be present at. Bengt and the institute have a firm grounding and their research is appreciated.

Every fall they also invited their Nordic colleagues to research seminars. Bengt made sure that the event took place in Gävle or somewhere else in one of the Nordic countries. And he especially worked to involve new researchers and the PhD students.

Bengt came to Denmark many times to help and support housing research and to give us advice. He served on research evaluation committees and supported us by explaining what the preconditions for developing housing research are.

According to Bengt, the most important thing a researcher has to do is to write papers and to present them in workshops. He was very worried about researchers not doing that. So workshops are important. And Bengt made sure that workshops were the backbone of all our events.

Bengt had a good sense of humour. One of his stunts was to use one or two not very fancy overheads. Bengt reached out to all of us. That is why we are here today in the space he created with us.

We shall miss his cleverness and energy as a researcher. Above all we shall miss his warmth, his laughter and his jokes.

Thank You!