

Geoffrey Brigstocke had been a very good friend since our student days before World War II, he at Magdalene College, Cambridge and I at Imperial College, London. After his period as a prisoner of war, and my internment in Canada, we saw each other again frequently in postwar London. Geoffrey had become a high civil servant in the Ministry of Transport, and in March 1974 he had attended, as official British representative, a meeting in Moscow. Flying home he reached Paris, where he was forced to disembark from his BEA flight, as the ground engineers at Heathrow, London, had gone on strike.

He must have thought himself lucky to be allocated a seat on a London bound flight of the Turkish airline, THY Flight 981, a DC-10 aircraft, made by McDonnell Douglas. On Sunday, 3 March 1974 the flight took off from Paris Orly at 11.11 GMT and crashed 11 minutes later, all 346 passengers perishing.

The reason for the crash was soon established; as the rear cargo door had been insufficiently locked, it flew open, and the cargo compartment was therefore decompressed. The air pressure in the passenger compartment above the cargo was strong enough to fracture the weak floor between the two compartments. The control links between the cockpit and the rear control surfaces were embedded in this floor, the links broke, the aircraft became uncontrollable and dived steeply to the ground.

Stanley Stewart in his *Air Disasters*, Arrow Books 1986, fully analysed the previous history of the rear cargo door of the DC-10, which had already failed on numerous previous occasions. Owing to many political, administrative and technical mistakes in the USA, the closing mechanism had never been properly corrected. On the fateful day at Orly, an Algerian mechanic, unable to read the English warning instructions on the door, once again failed to close it correctly.

Geoffrey was by this time married to Heather, who had naturally also become a very good friend. As gifted as Geoffrey, her career as a school teacher, Head Mistress and as High Mistress of the famous and fashionable St. Paul's Girls' School, had been as rapid as her husband's. Since Geoffrey's tragic death, I saw her as often as possible, we talked a lot about him and I was able to tell her of his Cambridge days. Heather of course had many other friends and later, when she was created Baroness Brigstocke, and thus a member of the House of Lords, our meetings became a little less frequent. Many years later she married again, Lord Griffiths, the well-known Judge.

Heather joined the Editorial Board of *ISR* and graciously hosted two of its Dinners, at St Paul's Girls' School in 1988 and at the House of Lords in 1992. On many a happy Christmas, Heather and her children became my family.