

## Brian Webster (1939 - 2008)

Brian Webster was born in Bournemouth on the 20<sup>th</sup> June 1939. He was a spirited boy, enjoying climbing trees at the nearby recreation ground. After passing the 11-plus he attended Bournemouth Grammar. As well as playing rugby and football (in goal since he was tall) he enjoyed athletics and threw the discus for Hampshire. He learnt the piano at an early age and continued playing throughout his life.

He went up to Magdalen College Oxford to study Chemistry in 1958, spending his final year on a theoretical chemistry project with Professor Coulson in the Applied Mathematics department. During one of his holidays he met his future wife Mary who was studying physics in London.

Brian and Mary were married in Bournemouth in 1961, spending their honeymoon travelling around Scandinavia taking in the culture and scenery. After a year in Oxford they sailed to Australia via Suez, under a Commonwealth Scholarship. They returned via the Panama Canal to Glasgow. Brian secured an assistant lecturer post at Glasgow University whilst he completed his PhD in theoretical chemistry. He was then appointed to a permanent lectureship at Glasgow University.

His four children, Bridget, Adrian, Sonia and Zuleika were born between 1964 and 1970. In 1972 the Webster's took a one-year sabbatical leave at the University of Stuttgart in Germany - appreciating a different culture and language.

At Glasgow University his area of research was theoretical chemistry. He was considered a superb lecturer, ranging from introductory chemistry courses to advanced bonding and quantum mechanics. His research students found his wide knowledge - outside chemistry - stimulating.

He was internationally known for his work on bonding, solvated electrons, muons and other topics, attending and speaking at scientific meetings and conferences. He made visits to other universities including a short term professorship at the university of Paris. He wrote a large number of scientific papers. He co-edited the book *Electron-solvent and anion-solvent interactions*, published in 1976, which described the current state of research on solvated electrons. His book, *Chemical Bonding Theory*, was published in 1990, and was also translated into Japanese.

In Autumn 2000 he retired and was designated an Honorary Research Fellow. He continued pursuing his own research from home including academic writing.

His wide range of interests including music - he played the piano, the clarsach harp and had an appreciation and knowledge of both classical and modern music. He was widely versed in the arts - painting, sculpture and literature. He loved walking, both in Scotland and the Alps, and mountain biking in the Highlands. He enjoyed gardening with a love of flowers both in his own garden, and in gardens throughout Europe.

Those involved in muonium chemistry owe Brian a great debt for putting the subject on a firm footing with what must have been amongst the first -- if not the first -- computational backing: Born Oppenheimer checks, *ab initio* structure determinations of muonium-containing radicals etc. He is remembered too for his stentorian voice and inimitable chairmanship style! My own memory of Brian is of a generous and kind man, who was a wonderful source of humanistic support and intellectual succour, particularly to the young.

He died on 17 October 2008 and is survived by his wife, Mary, his four children and five grandchildren.

Chris Rhodes.