

Editor's Foreword

The idea for an 80th birthday honor issue for John Beynon came from a conversation that Gareth Brenton, Graham Cooks and I had several years ago. The decision to go forward with the issue was unprecedented since the journal had already honored John with a special issue some 15 years ago. It was decided, however, to make an exception in this case. Some of you may not be aware of it but John was instrumental in getting the International Journal of Mass Spectrometry and Ion Physics founded back in 1968, was on the original Editorial board and published the first paper in the Journal titled: "Mass Spectrometry: the Mass Spectrum of Methanol Part 1. Thermochemical Information." When one of the founding editors, Alan Quayle, retired John agreed to become an Editor, in 1983, a position he held for 2 years. During this period the Journal changed its name, replacing "Ion Physics" with "Ion Processes" to reflect the growth in this area of mass spectrometry in the 1970s. It may also have reflected the fact Helmut Schwarz became an Editor at this time as well and he was very much a part of the Ion Processes field. As a physicist, I am sure John had mixed feelings about this name change but since a substantial fraction of his research also had to do with "ion processes" he reluctantly went along with it.

After a brief false start (we had misplaced his birthday by 2 years) Gareth, Graham and I finally got going on it in Spring 2002. The idea was to put together several retrospectives and personal reminiscences of John with a collection of papers from friends and associates still active scientifically. We had a small but power packed issue in mind and, I think you will agree, that is what we got. We have pieces that deal with John while he was at ICI, at Purdue and at Swansea. In addition, there are 11 research papers from people and groups that have been closely associated with John over the years. My groups paper, for instance, deals with the very last results from our VG ZAB-2F mass spectrometer. (We have recently disassembled it to make space for computers for a number of research groups including our own. Parts of it will live on, however as the magnet and pumps are incorporated into a new instrument we are building.) As I am sure most of you know, the ZAB is a reverse geometry machine (magnet followed by electric sector) that John designed to accomplish mass analyzed ion kinetic energy spectroscopy (MIKES). Personally, I'm not sure if it was the science or the acronym that sold me on the machine! Ours was the 6th machine built and was in continuous use from installation in 1979 until the end

of 2002. How we got it is a story in itself. More on that later.

I am not sure when or where I first met John but I do recall my first extended encounter with him. I was on sabbatical leave with Keith Jennings in Warwick in 1973. Keith had decided to organize the "First European Meeting on Ion Cyclotron Resonance" prior to the Edinburgh Mass Spectrometry meeting. John attended, even though he didn't have an ICR. The conference dinner was held at the Clarendon Arms Hotel, housed in a charming 15th or 16th century building in Kennilworth near Warwick University. Following dinner John invited me to the bar for a drink. Being a novice "drinker" at the time I think I ordered something like an Irish Coffee, which John immediately veto'd. He proceeded to order us both double Scotch single malts (Glenfiddich I think), looked me in the eye, said "over the teeth, over the gums, look out stomach here it comes" and downed his double, forcing me to do the same with his unblinking gaze. Not being a whiskey drinker it was quite a shock causing instant flushed cheeks and watered eyes. Without releasing me from his gaze, he ordered us each another double!! He then lectured me about the dangers of ordering anything with Irish Whiskey in it, pronouncing "Irish going down tastes like Scotch coming up!" At that moment I thought I might be about to give a first hand opinion on the subject.

Apparently I successfully negotiated this initiation ritual because John invited me to visit him at ICI some weeks later. I probably should have known something was up when he also suggested I should pick him up at his home in Staffordshire, and added "oh, by the way why don't you throw your golf clubs in the boot." Dutifully arriving at the appointed time, I was greeted by a smiling host who announced there was some problem at the lab but he'd arranged other activities to fill the day! We then drove to his golf club where he'd arranged a match between the Captain and host Professional playing John and me with the losers to buy the meal following the match. I can't remember all the details but I do remember the 16th (or 17th) hole, a short semi-blind par three. I think the match was even at the time. On arriving at the green there were two balls very close to the pin; happily they were John's and mine. Unfortunately, there was also a ball in the hole belonging to the host professional! I think that hole cost ICI a very nice meal for four hungry and thirsty golfers that September afternoon.

My relationship with John continued to develop and 4 years later I was again contemplating a sabbatical to Britain.

My goal on the first sabbatical was to learn “big machine” mass spectrometry since I did ICR at the time. Unfortunately, Keith Jennings took delivery of the first ever AEI MS-50 51/2 months late, the machine arriving 2 weeks before I was scheduled to leave. Having still not learned any “real” mass spectrometry I was going to give it another try. This time, however, my interests were split since Keith had his MS-50 now running beautifully but John had since moved to Swansea and had designed and had VG build the first ZAB. With Solomon like wisdom, I decided to split my time between the two labs. That was fine with both, but John was a bit miffed (OK, more than a bit) when I decided to live in Warwick not Swansea. I don't think he ever felt I was on sabbatical with him, since I had to train down and back from Warwick every other week, even though I spent days and most nights in the lab. “How could anyone live in England when Wales, the Gower Peninsula and Mumbles were an option” he reasoned. John was (is?) competitive in everything and in Britain at that time Keith was the main competition.

That second sabbatical was memorable for many reasons but the most important was becoming convinced that the ZAB was the machine for me. The reverse geometry opened up so many possibilities as John had so insightfully seen 5 years earlier at Purdue, and clearly marked a major change in direction in my career. Over the next 20 plus years my group published 92 papers from work done on the ZAB, the last appearing in this issue. Happily one of them was a collaborative effort with John.

A close second in importance was my introduction to the Rugby Club, a Welsh euphemism for “saloon loosely associated with an athletic endeavor.” My freedom from home responsibilities during my Swansea weeks presented John's sense of hospitality and fun with irresistible opportunities. He was especially happy with my “genetic” block to more than a couple of drinks, both because it reduced his bar bill and because on more than one occasion I became the designated driver. More than once I found myself piloting his seemingly huge Range Rover through the definitely narrow back streets of Swansea looking for that Indian Restaurant John was certain stayed open past midnight. By the time we would arrive I had sobered up all passengers with one close shave after another, often with cars simply parked there. I remember thinking nostalgic thoughts toward that big red monster years later when John told me he had to sell it: “It was drinking more than I was,” he explained.

John was a great collector of liquors, having literally hundreds of varieties in his over stocked bar at home. Somehow, this wasn't enough however. One night after work he invited me home to dinner. While we were chatting he indicated it was time to taste his experiment in progress. He rummaged under the sink and came out with three bottles of vodka, each having “steeped” a designated time in spicy paprika (peppers). He set up a pair of shot glasses, filled each to the brim with bottle 1, and gave me that “over the teeth, over the gums . . .” look. Boom, down she went to be immediately replenished with bottle 2, then 3. I don't

remember the results, or the dinner, but Yvonne, (John's wife) was kind in a head shaking sort of way.

The Welsh are passionate about more than Rugby (clubs). Perhaps the highlight of my sabbatical came when John fixed me up to be a guest at a Pontydellis (sp?) Men's Choir practice. I arrived at 7.00 p.m. at the designated school auditorium to find over 100 men milling around and beginning to take their places on risers set up for the occasion. Welsh male choral singing grew out of the difficult life style associated with coal mining in the valleys of Southern Wales in the 19th century. Many of the men at that time were illiterate and virtually none could read music. What evolved was a special musical scale of 14 or 15 “notes” that the men could master with no additional musical knowledge. It is hard to convey the emotion and power with which they sing. During the practice all songs were done in Welsh, yet it transported me into a flowing river of beautifully coordinated harmony and I couldn't have cared less about the actual words being sung. At the intermission I was introduced, extravagantly of course as is the Welsh way, and the structure of the music explained (at least the director did his best!). Following the practice about 20 of the men whisked me off to the local pub where they serenaded me, and everyone else, with American show tunes until closing time.

Not long after my Welsh/English sabbatical I managed to get John to visit our lab at UCSB for a few days. He gave his usual entertaining and informative lecture to the department, most of which I don't remember. I do recall the slide of a particular metastable transition, however. The peak was dome shaped, with a small bump in the center. John thought it was interesting enough that he immediately scanned it again and showed the two spectra side by side. Hmmm.

During the visit John did spend some small time at the lab but most of the 4 days were spent in the Botanic Garden and other Santa Barbara beauty spots taking close up pictures of tiny flowers. He was exceptionally good at this and eventually amassed an enormous collection from around the world, a fair bit of which he “shared” with me on a subsequent visit to Swansea.

Of course we had to take John out to dinner during his visit. My then wife Diane made all the arrangements at the fanciest and trendiest restaurant in Santa Barbara. We were accompanied by our Department Chair Glyn Pritchard, a Welshman through and through, and Glyn's wife Jean. The evening got off to a disastrous start. On arriving at the restaurant at the appointed time we were informed that we didn't have a reservation and that they were fully booked. Well, Diane isn't one to take that sort of an answer from some know nothing maitre'd and a rather public shouting match ensued. All I remember are the parting shots where Diane threatened that John was a member of the Royal Society and the maitre'd responded that he didn't care if he was the King of England, we weren't going to get a table! After which Diane stomped off and we dutifully followed.

Finding a substitute “elegant” dinner spot in Santa Barbara on a Saturday night in summer was a hopeless task. So we

lowered our sights a bit and strolled down the street to a decent Mexican restaurant. Of course even they were busy but did say something should open up soon. Since their bar was full, we ended up sitting on the entrance steps in our sartorial finery drinking margaritas from 2 litre carafes. Somewhere during the first carafe John started telling stories and singing off color ditties and we all agreed the stuffed shirt maitre'd had done us an enormous favor. After the enchiladas we retired to Glyn Pritchard's house and listened to Welsh hymns in the semi darkness (on the floor) drinking single malts. I think a mutation occurred this night in my "genetic" block since more than a couple of drinks disappeared!

John was the third person to win the American Chemical Societies Field and Franklin Award for Outstanding Achievement in Mass Spectrometry, following Al Neir and Klaus Biemann. As is the custom there was a symposium held to celebrate the award at the Spring ACS meeting, held that year in Denver. John graciously invited me to be one of the speakers. By now it is apparent that John is more than a great scientist, he also is an entertainer. As way of illustration, John once showed me how to open one of those small bags of crisps that come with British sandwiches. He demonstrated using my bag, of course. He placed the crisps in the open palm of his left hand and smacked it smartly with his right hand and sure enough the top flew open. Smiling at his cleverness, or so I thought, he returned my now open bag of crisps to me. Of course when I peered inside the only contents were "crisp dust" which pleased John no end, along with all others witnessing my naiveté. As luck would have it, I was the lead off speaker in John's award symposium. Among other things, I told the audience about John's clever way to open bags of chips. I then proceeded to pull out a large, 8 oz bag with which to demonstrate. I held it carefully in my left palm and gave it a mighty whack with my right hand. A sonic boom filled the room as the seal on the bag flew open. Of course it wasn't the top of the bag but the bottom that opened spraying chip fragments in a 10 ft circle. I can't recall what any of the speakers had to say that day, but the steady crunch, crunch crunch as they spoke will be with me always.

As the years progressed John and I continued to interact but actual lab visits became less frequent. I remember his excitement when our group did the first high resolution translational energy spectroscopy experiment, somehow managing energy resolving powers of 80,000, well above instrument specifications. He quickly decided it was the double focusing properties that allowed this to occur on the ZAB and set off with Gareth Brenton to improve and advance the technique, which they have very successfully done. When we would both attend a meeting we would always plan a lunch or dinner together, often accompanied by Yvonne, to catch up on the latest science and gossip. When John finally decided to retire he did it like he did everything else; full speed ahead! He was not only a Professor at Swansea he was also a Royal Society Research Professor, an appointment not only glistening with prestige

but accompanied by a sizable annual honorarium that could be spent on anything. When John notified the Royal Society he was retiring they informed him his Royal Society post was for life and there was no need to resign their professorship. He could use the honorarium as he saw fit. Undeterred he resigned anyway, probably the first person to do so before a memorial service had occurred! The Royal Society Research Unit he founded at Swansea survived the transition and became the Mass Spectrometry Research Unit still producing good research and research students.

John was great at presiding over things, and at his best as an after dinner speaker at conference banquets. As a consequence he was always in demand. I first heard him hold forth at that International Mass Spectrometry Meeting in Edinburgh in 1973. The meal began with parade of bagpipes accompanying a large, 3 ft Haggis held aloft on a silver tray. On reaching the head table Alan Quale, adorned in kilt and sash, ceremoniously stabbed the Haggis with a gleaming foot long knife. One would have thought it was an English Haggis! Only John could have properly ended a meal begun with this level of pomp with his mixture of stories, limericks and general banter. Of course the Drambuie they served during his talk didn't hurt either!

Remembering this gift, I invited John to be the after dinner speaker for a symposium I had organized at Warwick to present Keith Jennings with a Special Issue of IJMS honoring his career on the occasion of his 65th birthday. I was delighted when he accepted. I hadn't seen John for a number of years and wasn't quite sure what to expect. I knew he always traveled first class and was ready to provide him a suite at a local 4 star hotel but to my surprise he stayed in University accommodations along with the rest of us and even drove up from Swansea in his own car! Of course I didn't offer him the suite up front (sorry John!) but maybe he would have turned it down anyway. Even at age 74 John hadn't lost a beat and his humorous but engaging handling of the event was just what I'd hoped for.

That was the last time I've seen, or communicated directly with John. Recently I heard he'd had a stroke but was on the road to recovery. I've also heard he'd sold his house in Mumbles and moved into a place with less upkeep, and hopefully closer to the Rugby Club! I intend to see John before he reads this, however, since I hope to present the bound copy of this issue to him personally at a lunch or dinner with some friends and colleagues at hand. He doesn't know this yet, so I'd better come through!!

No matter what, thanks John for a lifetime of memories, good science, good fun and your commitment to excellence. The next round of drinks are on me!

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