IAN AT BALLIOL

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Following his Doctorate in Moscow and Fellowships at the Universities of British Columbia and Princeton, Ian came to Oxford in 1994 as University Lecturer in Theoretical Physics and as Fellow of Balliol.

Always amused by our peculiar ways, Ian was instantly at home in Balliol with its large school of Physics and of Physics and Philosophy. Students over the last nine years have left with vivid memories of rapid-fire exchanges on a limitless range of subjects, of detailed and painstaking one-to-one teaching, of widely ranging tutorials and classes, and of Ian's innate feeling for the mathematical beauty of his subject. The wiser among them will have begun to appreciate the privilege of contact with a man of profound and towering intellect.

Ian's novel and idiosyncratic lines of questioning in entrance interviews will long be remembered by victim and fellow-interviewer alike. Ian's teaching room in College was unique in my experience. The whiteboard filling one wall, the table and desk, the enormous sofa and the chairs could fill any Tutor's room. There were however no books, perhaps one or two, perhaps a James Bond novel, but not more. All that was needed was in Ians head. Atom and nuclear and particle data were there. All concepts were to hand. All needful theory was derived at the board in real time from first principles and applied to the issue being thrashed out. What an education! What an experience for his students!

With Ian's arrival in Oxford, no seminar speaker could expect to be received in respectful silence. An arm would go up from a row near the front. A probing line of questions would be guaranteed to awaken the audience and to enliven and deepen the discussion.

Ian had a childishly joyful personality open to all from young to old. He was just as delighted when schoolchildren ventured to use him to try out their fledgling Russian as when a new and fundamental insight was developed for a long-standing scientific problem. In build an archetypal Russian bear, Ian had a great love of the outdoors finding relaxation in walking, running, skiing and climbing.

We mourn the untimely death of a man at the peak of his powers. We offer our sympathy to the family who have lost their son, their son-in-law, their husband and their father. We are thankful for the privilege of having had Ian in our midst.