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PETER A. HUDSON - AN APPRECIATION

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Peter Hudson died on the 18th August 1983, at the tragically young age of 39, after a long and debilitating illness.

I am grateful to Professor Aubert and his colleagues for being given the opportunity to pay tribute to a remarkable man, to whom it was my privilege to be friend, colleague and deputy for 15 years. This occasion is particularly apt as Peter was well known for his participation in this conference series. He attended every M-T, since M-T 3, Hamburg, 1970, usually as an author; indeed his name appears on four papers here.

Peter was born 23rd July 1944 in Oxfordshire. His secondary education was at Bicester Grammar School and, in 1962, he joined the staff of the Clarendon Laboratory at the age of 18. He continued his higher education in physics, mainly on a part time basis, at Oxford Polytechnic and this culminated in his achieving first class honours in The Institute of Physics Graduate examination of 1966. This in itself was a considerable achievement, as this route to qualification is far from easy, but, on top of this, so good was his performance in the final examinations that he was awarded a travelling scholarship which he used to visit many of the major magnet and cryogenic laboratories and associated industries in Europe. This was his first contact with what was to become an important aspect of his professional life, namely his involvement with magnet technology and applied superconductivity on an international basis.

It was shortly after this, in 1968, that Peter was put in charge of the High Magnetic Field Facility Group of the Mullard Cryomagnetic Laboratory which was then under the overall direction of Professor N. Kurti. Thus Peter succeeded Martin Wood who had left to start the Oxford Instrument Co. The fact that he was only 24 years old, when he was given this responsible job, is an indication of the reputation he had already acquired, and the confidence shown in him by an important department of one of the world’s foremost universities.

This confidence proved to be more than well founded as, during his short life, Peter was principally responsible for developing the facilities in Oxford to a level whereby they were unrivalled in the U.K. and compared very favourably with most of the much larger, high field laboratories in the world.

It is impossible to give a detailed catalogue of his professional activities here; it would take too long. Some measure of the extent of these activities is that he was the author of some thirty publications, on many of them I was a co-author and this will always be a source of pride to me. It is appropriate, however, to briefly...
review his many principle achievements.

In my opinion his most outstanding contribution was simply that he was an excellent group leader. He inspired in the members of his team an enthusiastic energy which was channeled into successfully accomplishing a great many important projects.

For example, the success of the Oxford hybrid magnet installation, one of the first and still one of the most heavily used of its kind, is in no small part due to his thoughtful, and competent, planning. He pioneered the idea of incorporating large superconductive magnets into self-contained, and highly versatile, portable units available, on a shared basis, to many researchers for diverse applications. Only recently he initiated the idea of simplifying the construction of high power, poly-helix solenoids and this has already resulted in a 12% improvement in the maximum field available from our basic 2 MW system. We hope soon to increase our hybrid magnet capability by 30% using the same ideas. He had an uncanny and instinctive "feel" for his subject backed up by a thorough and comprehensive knowledge. He was very hard working. Some of you here may recall his efforts as the industrious and highly efficient secretary of the MFSP Conference held at the Clarendon Laboratory in 1978.

In 1977 his seniority became sufficient for him to be given the status of Master of Arts in the University of Oxford and in 1981 his professional achievements were recognised by his election to Fellowship of The Institute of Physics.

I can claim to have known Peter, professionally, better than anyone. Our working relationship spanned a long and happy period during which my respect for him continually increased. I owe him a great deal and I am by no means alone in this. I am to succeed him in the post which for so long had been associated with his name. This alone gives me a prestige I don't deserve; it will be difficult to approach his high standards but when I last spoke to him he expressed a wish that things should continue to progress unabated and it is therefore my duty to see that they do. This task will be made very much easier, to begin with, because of the momentum he continued to build up until, literally, the day he died and the characteristically meticulous way he left his affairs in the Laboratory.

It will be apparent by now that Peter had many excellent qualities. If I were to be forced to name just those essentially personal characteristics by which I will remember him, they would be his total integrity, honesty and reliability. His courage was also outstanding. Never throughout his dreadful illness did I, or anyone else, hear him complain even when things were very bad.

Peter and I first travelled abroad together to come here, Grenoble, ten years ago. I wish he was here now and I know he is also missed by many of you who knew him and were his friends. We should, however, not forget those who miss him most, his wife and family. I know everyone here will join me in expressing our sincere condolences and best wishes to Maureen, his wife, to whom he was very happily married for 18 years, and his sons Simon, 11, and James, aged 9. They have lost a husband and father but in his memory they can take justifiable pride.