

PREFACE

This volume, dedicated to the life and memory of George Porter, is a collection of his prominent original papers, each with a commentary by invited scientists, chosen from amongst the many who were influenced by his work. Each commentator has also contributed a paper of their own to demonstrate how their own science has progressed. Some of these are original papers, some reprinted from journals, with permission.

George Porter made many significant contributions, both in science, in the politics of science, and in its promotion. The volume is arranged thematically, beginning with a potted history of George Porter, tracing his modest origins, through his undergraduate career, wartime service in the Royal Navy, and to Cambridge as a research student. It was here that he developed, with Norrish, the technique of flash photolysis for which he is justly famous, and which earned them both a share in the 1967 Nobel Prize. These days are dwelt upon by many of the contributors to the volume, since flash photolysis opened up the study of many research areas, including free radical spectroscopy and kinetics; the study of excited electronic states, firstly triplet states, then singlet states, and the field of photosynthesis, both natural and artificial.

The individual contributions commenting upon George Porter's papers vary from being very personal reminiscences about the way work was conducted, through to knowledgeable scientific assessments of the difficulties of some of the early work on flash photolysis and laser flash photolysis. We also include an appraisal of some of George Porter's contributions in the field of science communication, and his influence on politics and the appreciation of science, principally in the UK, but with an international dimension also.

This volume is intended as a tribute to his qualities as a man, as a scientist and as a friend to many of us who knew him well. We hope it does him justice.

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