



Science International

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NEWSLETTER : *International Council of Scientific Unions*

Founded in 1919, to encourage non-governmental scientific cooperation and the right to associate freely for the exchange of ideas and information.

Mike Baker: Executive Secretary of distinction

John Kendrew

Past President, ICSU

Readers of Tennyson will recall the refrain of the Brook:

'For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever'.

Any observer of ICSU might be tempted to think that the Officers may come and the Officers may go, but that, like the brook, Mike Baker goes on for ever. F.W.G.—universally but mysteriously known as Mike—Baker has been with ICSU for more than thirty years, and Executive Secretary for twenty-four of them. Such long service with any organization is rare, and in ICSU's case Mike's nearest rival for longevity was the wartime Secretary-General F.J.M. Stratton, and he lasted only fifteen years. During Mike's long tenure, or perhaps one should say during his long reign, he became identified with ICSU to the extent that one could be forgiven for thinking that Baker was ICSU and ICSU was Baker; he sometimes seemed to be the initiator of all activity and the repository of all

knowledge. I well remember, that during the Istanbul General Assembly of 1974 which was the first ICSU meeting I ever attended and when I therefore became Secretary-General in a state of almost total ignorance, it was Mike who forthwith took me in hand and gave me a series of invaluable elementary lessons. Of course I have depended on him ever since, as have all the Officers of ICSU as well as innumerable members of committees and indeed all those who have worked for or with ICSU.

The office of Executive Secretary is not easy to fill; the incumbent is on the one hand the servant of the whole worldwide organization, more particularly of its Officers, and on the other hand the originator of many of ICSU's activities and, owing to his or her central and full-time position the possessor of an unrivalled store of knowledge and experience and therefore the source, albeit discreet, of much of the creative thinking which should emanate from the central committees. In these varied roles Mike Baker has been an Executive Secretary of distinction. He did an extremely fine job for a very long time,

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Festschrift issue ... Mike Baker, 32 years of service to international science ...

Three decades of international science

In this special issue of *Science International* we pay tribute to Mike Baker, retiring Executive Secretary of the International Council of Scientific Unions.

Mike arrived at ICSU thirty-two years ago on the eve of the International Geophysical Year (IGY), the most complex international scientific project that had ever been attempted. It was a fortunate coincidence for Mike and for ICSU. It allowed Mike to channel his various interests and enthusiasms into a life-long pursuit. His background in science, his conviction that international cooperation is necessary to civilization and survival, his love of language and his critical editorial faculties, his skill as a corridor diplomat and his delight in being chief chronicler of an institution's history—all came together and found expression at ICSU. For the International Council of Scientific Unions, Mike's arrival and long-term commitment made it possible for a far-flung and tenuous global network to become a major force in world science.

In putting this issue together, we have tried to reflect the many different enterprises of ICSU in which Mike had a hand, but especially those international projects of a multi-disciplinary nature or those involving agencies of the United Nations family working together with ICSU: the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research (SCAR), the Scientific Committee on Oceanic Research (SCOR), the Global Atmospheric Research Programme (GARP), the World Climate Research Programme (WCRP), the Working Group on the Effects of Nuclear War (ENUWAR) set up under the Scientific Committee on Problems of the Environment (SCOPE); and the International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme (IGBP). Mike's name is also closely associated with the Standing Committee for the Free Circulation of Scientists (SCFCS), whose work cuts across every disciplinary and geographic boundary. Finally, the signatures included in this special issue are fitting testimony to the global dimensions of ICSU's mandate...

In reviewing the growth of multi-disciplinary projects that have developed since 1957, one is struck by the role of IGY as the prototype and conceptual model for much that has happened. Perhaps the IGY's most significant contribution was in establishing the importance of having a universal system for classifying data. The World Data Centres were set up as a direct result of this realisation, and other efforts were similarly inspired.

ICSU's role in coordinating international research programmes since IGY has triggered scientists' own interest in keeping good records and archives, so that now the crucial importance of information is undisputed. The International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme (IGBP) has established two working groups for the purpose of assessing the current state of knowledge—one on Data and Information Systems, the other on Geosphere-Biosphere Observatories. Recognition of the importance of record-keeping has also opened doors for Third World scientists and countries. The need for baseline observatories and on-the-ground monitoring stations in every geographic region has assured their participation as bona fide members of the world scientific community.

When all is said and done, however, international science is a human endeavour. The ICSU network is vast, and decisions are taken by a small group of people who come and go from the landscape like the tides. But for the past thirty-two years, the one unchanging element amidst the ebb and flow has been the presence of the Executive Secretary. Faithful, dedicated, discreet and constant: Mike Baker was always there. We honour a rare servitor of the international scientific community.

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and on the personal level has been everyone's helper and everyone's friend. He will be greatly missed but it will be surprising if he is not frequently brought back to lend ICSU his great experience in some consultative capacity. He lays down his office at the end of March with all our thanks and all our warmest wishes for his retirement. □

Plus ça change...

Jorge Allende

Secretary, Scientific Committee on Biotechnology

Although I have known Mike Baker for many years, I only had close contact with him in the last three years as a result of the organization of COBIOTECH within ICSU. I specially remember travelling with him in February of 1987 from Paris to Trieste to a preliminary meeting that was very important for defining the future of COBIOTECH. We flew to Venice and from there we took a slow train to Trieste. The train trip gave us a chance to talk, and Mike told me many stories about the old times in ICSU, when its headquarters were in Rome. He

told me that the personalities of the officers and members of the organization were very different but that the subjects debated were always the same. This explained to me why, in the midst of a very heated debate, Mike always kept an enigmatic smile and kept his cool. He had heard it all before!

We will certainly miss Mike in ICSU, but we know that he will be enjoying his retirement in a number of activities that will undoubtedly profit from his great experience in international science. All the best, Mike!

Telephone advice

Attia Ashour

Former President, International Union of Geodesy and Geophysics

My involvement in ICSU began in 1975 when I was elected President of IUGG and represented that Union on the General Committee of ICSU. One of the most contentious issues of the time concerned the status of the Chinese Academy of Sciences and the Academia Sinica. This was a problem troubling to all the ICSU Unions.

In 1977, when I was on my way to Durham, England, where the Extraordinary General Assembly of IUGG was being held, I spoke with Mike on the phone during a stopover at the Paris Airport. Later, at the Assembly, a decision was taken which managed to accommodate both the Academies and which also satisfied

ICSU's scientific policy. Mike Baker's telephone advice to me about the wording of the motion put before the Assembly was crucial to a settlement of the issue. At the subsequent meeting of the ICSU General Committee in Budapest, protests and objections were raised but this did not stop the tide. Several other Unions followed suit and brought Beijing to their membership. In 1982, ICSU itself solved the problem by having two Chinese national members.

It is hard for me to imagine ICSU without Mike Baker. I am certain that he will be involved in many ICSU affairs in the future. I wish him and his family every success and happiness.

CIUS et Unesco : même combat ?

Michel Batisse

Former Assistant Director-General (Science), Unesco

Mike a passé trente-deux ans au CIUS. Avec quelques années seulement de décalage, j'ai moi-même passé trente-deux ans au secteur des sciences de l'Unesco. C'est dire qu'au simple plan professionnel nous étions faits pour

nous rencontrer souvent. En réalité, que ce soit à Tokyo ou à Ottawa, à Sydney ou à Varsovie, ma surprise n'a jamais été d'y retrouver Mike, mais plutôt de ne pas le voir. Qu'il s'agisse de réunions officielles de l'Unesco ou de réunions

non moins officielles de CIUS, ou qu'il s'agisse de conférences variées portant sur toutes sortes de sujets — le climat, la géologie, la biologie, l'environnement, la « science-et-la-technologie », l'eau douce ou l'eau salée — c'était toujours un plaisir de voir Mike solidement ancré au banc du CIUS et un plaisir plus grand encore d'entendre ses interventions, presque toujours ponctuées de quelques « jokes » ou de quelques citations qui, même si elles n'étaient pas nécessairement liées au grave débat en cours, avaient toujours le mérite de détendre l'atmosphère et les esprits.

Ceux qui n'ont jamais eu la tâche inconfortable de défendre les prérogatives et les intérêts d'une institution internationale — gouvernementale ou non — ne savent pas combien il est délicat pour un membre du secrétariat d'intervenir dans les discussions, soit parce qu'il s'agit de représentants de gouvernements qui ont nécessairement raison par nature même quand ils ne savent rien, soit parce qu'il s'agit de savants éminents qui ont des opinions tranchées sur tout parce qu'ils savent quelque chose dans leur spécialité. Par sa simplicité et par sa franchise, par son tranquille bon sens et son discours pondéré, Mike a toujours eu l'art de faire prévaloir les solutions sereines et cohérentes entre les points de vue divergents des uns et des autres. Ce n'est pas le moindre aspect de son talent.

Ce talent, il l'a exercé sans relâche dans les rapports entre le CIUS et l'Unesco. Rapports fraternels bien sûr, mais toujours difficiles : d'un côté la communauté scientifique internationale — qui, comme chacun sait, n'est pas toujours aussi internationale que cela et suit sa logique propre ; de l'autre la bureaucratie paragouvernementale — parfois un peu arrogante dans ses ambitions et généralement un peu trop internationale dans ses constructions. Il

fallait savoir dédramatiser les relations, aménager les intérêts réciproques, rechercher les modalités pratiques de la coopération. Plus que quiconque, Mike a su agir en conciliateur dans ces rapports. Je me souviens de réunions mensuelles de coordination entre les deux secrétariats où l'on ne coordonnait pas grand-chose mais où il veillait à entretenir la bonne humeur. Et je me souviens dans le même temps du soin avec lequel il recherchait une bonne articulation des intérêts du CIUS et des travaux de ses Unions dans le fonctionnement des programmes intergouvernementaux de l'Unesco comme le MAB, le PHI, le PICG ou les programmes de la COL.

Depuis les temps héroïques du Programme biologique international, ces relations de travail entre nous ont rapidement mené à des relations amicales, fondées sur la confiance mutuelle et sur une sorte de complicité. Et bien sûr aussi sur des souvenirs communs, qu'il s'agisse des personnes qui nous étaient chères (comment ne pas évoquer ici notre ami Fournier d'Albe) ou tout simplement de distractions partagées (même si la distraction était un peu risquée, comme lorsqu'un buffle s'était permis de me charger sous les yeux de Mike dans une Dodge du Kenya).

Dans un monde d'interdépendance désordonnée où les organisations internationales sont plus que jamais nécessaires mais où elles n'ont jamais été plus fragiles et plus menacées, l'expérience et le savoir-faire de ceux, trop peu nombreux, qui comme Mike sont capables de faciliter les dialogues et de freiner les égoïsmes sont des atouts précieux. C'est pourquoi j'ai le sentiment que l'on continuera longtemps encore à faire appel à cet homme qui est toujours aussi jeune, et que le CIUS ou l'Unesco auraient bien tort de le laisser trop tranquille dans sa « retraite » au cours des années qui viennent.

F.W.G. Baker

Adzei Bekoe

Former President, ICSU

I first met Mike in 1968 at the ICSU General Assembly. Mike provided all the documentation required for the meeting. His knowledge of people and the background to various issues,

programmes and decisions was most impressive. Chandrasekaran, the Secretary-General, was notable for his detailed knowledge of the statutes and Jim Harrison, ICSU's President, took

remarkable care to see that even newcomers like myself were included in discussions.

Over the next twenty years, I always wondered how Mike kept his sense of balance when confronted with so many ideas and proposals from new players who didn't know that many of their ideas had already been discussed and rejected years earlier. Usually, Mike responded to "new" ideas with caution, but not always. He was most

enthusiastic about involving scientists from Mainland China in ICSU activities and worked tirelessly for years until success was achieved at the Cambridge General Assembly in 1982.

It took me a long time to realize that Mike's name was not consistent with his initials—F.W.G. Maybe he will let us into the secret before he finally leaves ICSU. We shall miss him, but with Julia Marion-Lefevre as his Deputy, the transition will be a smooth one.

Invisible agent

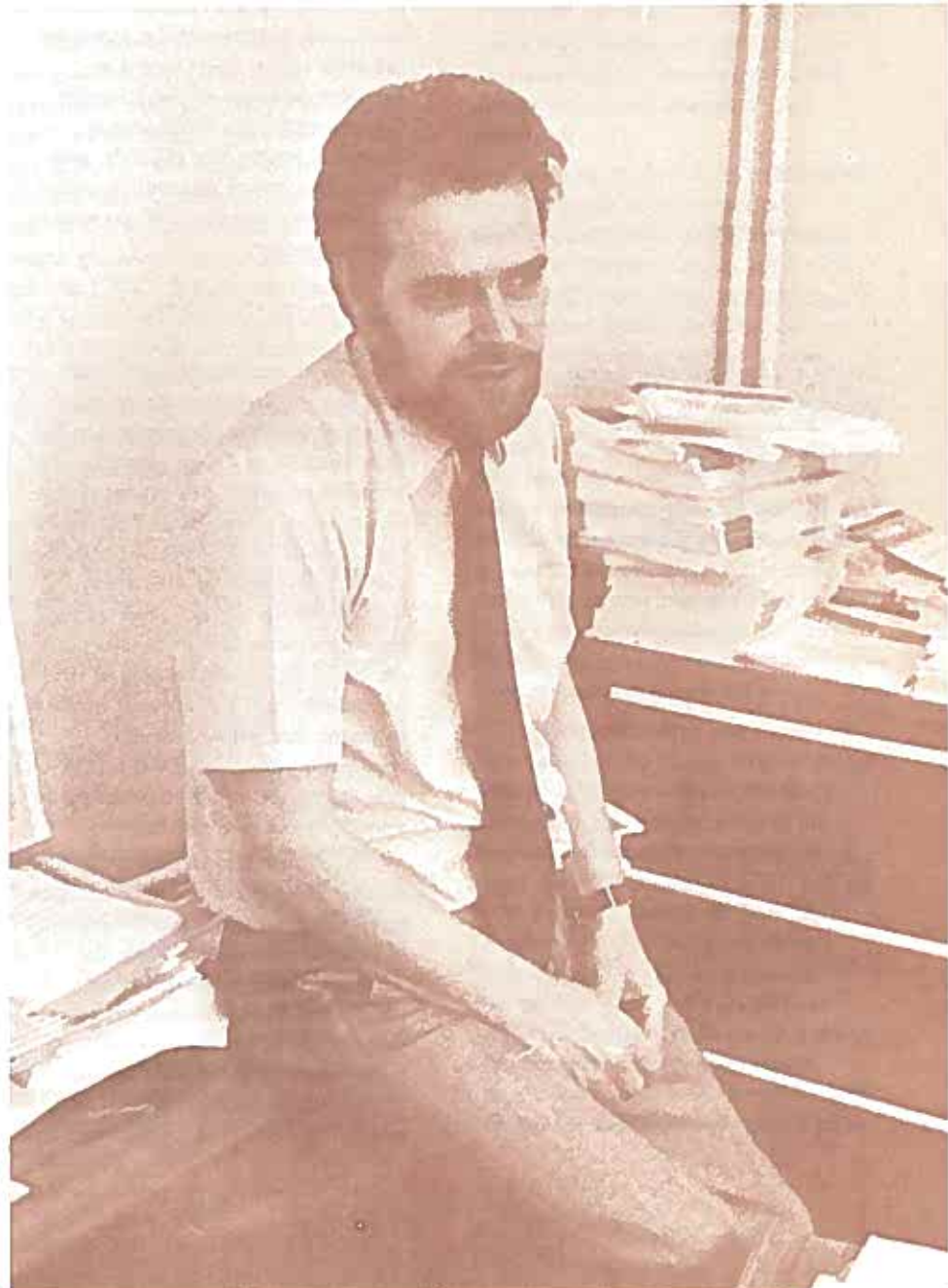
Vladimir Beloussov

Former President, International Union of Geodesy and Geophysics

Mike Baker could accomplish great deeds without posing in the limelight. This is the ultimate art and virtue of an executive: the enterprise flourishes but the agent is not seen. It is more often

the opposite, when in his activity the administrator strives for self-expression and display. Mike Baker found his personal expression only in the achievement of results.

Mike Baker in situ.



A happy association

Dino Blašković

Former Secretary-General, ICSU

Before being elected Secretary-General of ICSU during its General Assembly in Vienna in 1963, I already had had some experience with international organizations such as the World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Cell Research Organization (ICRO). Nevertheless, my association with ICSU opened my eyes to the problems involved in global multi-disciplinary projects. As I took over the duties of Secretary-General, the International Geophysical Year was producing its flood of data and information to the secretariat of ICSU—five or six people, including Mike Baker.

I was astonished by the number of scientific Unions and various Scientific and Special Committees working within the framework of ICSU. My duties with ICSU, which lasted until September 1968, involved contact with the officers of ICSU and member bodies on the one hand, and members of the secretariat on the other. Mike Baker served as Executive Secretary of the Scientific Committee for the International Biological Programme (SCIBP), and during the year of preparation before it was launched in July 1964, we worked closely together.

In 1965, Mike was named Executive Secretary of ICSU. At the same time several other biological and interdisciplinary programmes inspired by IBP were being launched, including Unesco's Man and Biosphere Programme (MAB) and later, the Scientific Committee on Problems of the Environment (SCOPE).

In 1966, Mike took on the work of the Secretary of the new Committee on Science and Technology for Developing Countries (COSTED). In this he was energetic, thoughtful in his observations, and always ready to follow through.

When we got together socially with his family and friends, the conversation concerned not only ICSU business, but also the various social and cultural issues in different countries which Mike found interesting.

It was a privilege to be acquainted with Mike Baker, and I would like to express my best wishes for his future. My own stay with ICSU was a happy one despite the hard work I had to perform. But I was much younger at the time.

Cutting through the pious generalities

Nigel Calder

*Science writer and member,
Media Advisory Committee*

The cheery face of Mike Baker must have first registered on my retinas in the office of the *New Scientist* in London more than 30 years ago, when he was probably bringing glad tidings of the International Geophysical Year. If I am hazy about this, it is because Mike has always been a part of the scenery, throughout my life as science writer. Encounters with him in various parts of the world are as unsurprising as they are pleasurable, and I have never hesitated to phone him when in need of information or advice. Even a lapse of a year or two seems only a minor pause in a long-playing conversation.

And what a conversation! Over the decades Mike Baker has been my mentor in all the great issues and programmes of international science, from the Antarctic Treaty to Global Change. He has guided me, and many others, through the substantive science and the policy issues of world-wide activities in space research, ecology, solar-terrestrial physics, the effects of nuclear war, and

any other topic within ICSU's immense intellectual domain.

Mike has the gift of thinking like a journalist, in the best sense of our often-abused profession's contribution to human understanding. That is to say, he instinctively cuts through the pious generalities and technical jargon in which the utterances of the international scientific community are often cast, to the story that is worth telling and the contentious matters that lie behind the platitudes.

My guess is that this facility in grasping the story, so useful in communicating ICSU's messages to the press, is also the secret of Mike's success in managing ICSU's affairs. He has led a very small permanent staff working with a world-wide army of distinguished scientists who act as part-time volunteers. Experience tells me that the surest way to win a scientist's friendship and collaboration is simply to show a reasonably well-informed enthusiasm for his or her subject, whatever it may

be. I suspect that is how Mike has charmed them, from Beijing to Caracas, and secured their unpaid labour on behalf of ICSU.

To say that for me and my fellow science-writers Mike Baker is indelibly 'Mister ICSU' is an understatement. He pops up at a United Nations conference, at a space symposium, at the European

Science Foundation. . . anywhere, in fact, where scientists from different countries seek to pool their efforts for the sake of all humanity. More than anyone else I can think of, Mike personifies the hope that the science we love may turn out to do more good than harm.

That September of SCOPE

Francesco di Castri

*President, Scientific Committee
on Problems of the Environment*

Il y a dans un coin de ma tête une toute petite place pour ma musique de fond, «*September in the rain*», un motif doux et triste, qui m'accompagne pendant les longs déplacements en avion et qui m'a permis de surmonter indemne les conférences les plus érigées des Nations Unies et de l'UNESCO, et même les assemblées générales de l'ICSU.

Mais pour le SCOPE tout a commencé officiellement «*that September*», celui de 1970 où ce comité pour l'environnement, qui avait été créé par l'ICSU en 1969 à Erevan, se réunissait pour la première fois à Madrid. Il était une fois un jeune homme qui n'avait jamais entendu parler de l'ICSU, il était une fois un jeune homme qui représentait déjà tout ce que l'ICSU avait de continuité dans l'action et de flexibilité dans l'approche : le premier c'était moi, le deuxième c'était Mike, et nous étions tous les deux à Madrid.

Les ignares doivent être récompensés, raison pour laquelle j'ai été tout de suite élu vice-président du SCOPE (à moins que ma plus grande facilité d'obtenir des cafés de par ma connaissance de l'espagnol n'ait donné aux autres membres du SCOPE un aperçu de mes capacités pour la coopération internationale).

En relisant le rapport de cette première réunion du SCOPE à Madrid, on est impressionné, rétrospectivement, par la clairvoyance démontrée par les participants pour couper, dès le début, toute dérive mégalomane, pour s'auto-contraire à des buts réalisables, pour tout miser sur la qualité et la crédibilité de l'action, pour ériger l'initiative et la liberté des groupes de travail en tant que règle de conduite pour le SCOPE : une sorte de Déclaration des droits du

scientifique participant à des activités internationales pour ne pas être soumis à une bureaucratie centralisante.

Même si on voulait rechercher les racines historiques du grand programme actuel de l'ICSU, l'International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme ou Global Change, on pourrait en retrouver quelques-unes alors, dans le premier groupe de travail du SCOPE, «*Materials which may significantly alter the biosphere and the environment—their determination and biological assessment*».

Il y avait à Madrid des personnalités marquantes de la vie scientifique internationale, Gilbert White, François Bourlière, Thomas Malone, entre autres. Mais, moi-même, j'étais très attiré par le jeu du petit British, de Mike, qui avec une brève remarque ou une boutade discrète pouvait faire dévier le cours de la discussion vers des horizons plus réalistes. Et ma sympathie croissante pour Mike ne venait pas simplement du fait qu'il m'avait remboursé mes coûteux frais de voyage du Chili en moins de cinq minutes, en éparant quelqu'un comme moi qui avait été (et devra l'être encore plus dans sa vie) sous l'emprise de grandes bureaucraties internationales et nationales.

Je devais découvrir une dizaine de jours plus tard les racines secrètes de ma sympathie, encore «*that September*», à Rome pour l'Assemblée générale du Programme biologique international, à Rome où siégeait encore l'ICSU, à Rome où se nichait la famille de Mike chez laquelle je pouvais récupérer de mes fatigues anglophones, en parlant en français avec Mme Baker, tandis que Mike et ses enfants s'adressaient à moi dans un adorable italien à l'accent romain (moi qui suis Vénitien). Le *Little Big Roman British Friend* était né pour

moi «*that September*» et l'on devait se retrouver pendant la vingtaine d'années qui s'ensuivit dans les plus étranges situations.

Comme à Canberra, l'année suivante, le deuxième «*September*» du SCOPE en 1971, dans la chorégraphie et l'efficacité de Maurice Strong qui préparait la conférence de Stockholm sur l'environnement, et où je présidais (Chilien de cœur, mais avec passeport italien) le groupe de travail du SCOPE sur les priorités des pays en voie de développement, tandis que Mike (avec passeport britannique, mais international de conviction) participait aux activités du groupe, en s'adonnant aux priorités

relatives à l'éducation et à la formation sur l'environnement.

Et tout au long de ces presque vingt années, chaque fois que je me sentais asphyxié par l'aliénation de certaines méga-conférences, il me suffisait de m'approcher avec un «*Ciao Mike, come ra?*» pour respirer en toute simplicité un souffle de réalisme et de bon sens.

J'oubliais de dire que «*that September*» à Madrid et à Rome n'était pas «*in the ram*», mais lumineux et plein d'espoir; le même espoir que j'ai de pouvoir dire pendant encore une bonne vingtaine d'années, *Come ra Mike?*

James Cornell

President, International Science
Writers Association



Efficace et charmeur

Jean Coulomb

Former President, ICSU

Aux quatre coins de la planète, les chercheurs et les administrateurs de la science, qui sont parfois les mêmes hommes, discutent ferme chaque fois que le Conseil International des Unions Scientifiques lance une nouvelle opération mondiale. Ils savent qu'elle leur donnera beaucoup de travail avant d'obtenir les résultats espérés. Mais le Conseil lui-même, et son fonctionnement, sont souvent mal connus. On croit savoir qu'il siège depuis toujours dans un quartier bourgeois de cette ville européenne qui fut jadis en tête du progrès. En fait il y occupe un petit immeuble où passent des personnages renouvelables, présidents ou secrétaires généraux, dont on pourra retrouver les noms dans l'Annuaire. Mais il y a un élément permanent dans ce jeu de massacre. C'est un gentleman plein d'humour, à qui ces termes franco-britanniques s'appliquent parfaitement. Son rôle est de verser sans arrêt du baume sur les petites blessures d'amour-propre que peuvent se faire ces messieurs et de maintenir un équilibre raisonnable entre nations et entre disciplines.

En contradiction avec la permanence apparente de cette organisation du Conseil, il subsiste au fond de quelques mémoires un ou deux souvenirs anciens auxquels de vieux acteurs attachent beaucoup de prix. On y voit un jeune Anglais à la barbe blonde (le même Mike qui prend maintenant sa retraite) dont l'élégance et l'urbanité faisaient déjà merveille au sein de l'état-major bruxellois de l'Année Géophysique Internationale (AGI), première et gigantesque entreprise de l'ICSU. On revoit la silhouette du président Sydney

Chapman, dont la stature scientifique et humaine était connue bien avant l'AGI mais qui s'est alors révélé comme un meneur d'hommes. On retrouve le secrétaire général Marcel Nicolet, dont l'activité maintenue est une joie pour ses nombreux amis. Émergent enfin quelques comparses, par exemple Robert Maxwell, qui publie les *Annales de l'Année Géophysique Internationale* (l'AGI) et à qui on pourrait appliquer le vers de Victor Hugo : « Déjà Napoléon perçait sous Bonaparte ».

A l'esprit d'un de ces survivants se présente encore un autre tableau : au cours de l'action entreprise par Georges Laclavère pour assurer à l'ICSU qui quittait Rome, un point de chute digne de lui, une bataille héroï-comique pour vaincre la résistance désespérée d'une administration récalcitrante et installer l'ICSU dans ses meubles.

La distinction avec laquelle Mike Baker a exercé pendant tant d'années des fonctions délicates (son rôle à l'intérieur de l'ICSU tel que, en plaisantant un peu, je me suis permis de l'évoquer), la diplomatie active et souriante dont il a fait preuve dans les relations de l'ICSU avec les autres organisations internationales, gouvernementales ou non, font de son départ un petit événement planétaire. Souhaitons de tout cœur qu'il trouve de nouvelles occasions d'accomplissement dans le temps qu'il va pouvoir consacrer à l'un des sujets qui le passionnent, dans des entretiens avec sa chère femme, ses grands enfants, ou ses nombreux amis ; qu'il poursuive ainsi dans un cadre moins contraignant d'existence harmonieuse et pleine que nous lui avons vu pendant tant de fécondes années.

The right word at the right time

Jim Dooge

Former Secretary-General, ICSU

Mike Baker has for so long played a key role in ICSU affairs that he is almost the personification of the continuity of the ICSU effort to encourage international cooperation in science and to improve the well-being of mankind. The closer one gets to the centre of ICSU, the more one wonders at the amazing scope of Mike's contribution. His appreciation of the key problems in various branches of science, his unrivalled ability to identify the key people in different disciplines,

and his mastery of the arts of communication, all combined to maintain ICSU as a vibrant and effective organisation.

The quality I recognize most readily is Mike's great resourcefulness at times of difficulty, exemplified both by an ability to suggest an ingenious solution to an impasse and by a facility for reducing tension by some humorous remark when progress was impossible. I recall in particular his patience and skill in the long discussions leading to the

resolution of the Chinese problem at the Cambridge General Assembly in 1982. Equally vivid are memories of his dedication and continued exertions in promoting cooperation between the international communities in science and in engineering through the medium of COWAR, the Committee on Water Research.

All of us in the ICSU family have found Mike Baker to be an untiring collaborator and delightful friend. Upon his departure from ICSU, the collaboration will not be the same, but the friendship will endure.



Mr. ICSU

Lars Ernster

Former Secretary-General, ICSU

After 32 years with the organization, 26 of which were spent as Executive Secretary, it is not surprising that Mike Baker is often referred to as "Mr. ICSU".

The first time I met Mike was some eight years ago when we were introduced by my friend Olof Tandberg, Foreign Secretary of the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences. Mike was on one of his visits to Stockholm and the three of us had dinner together at the Restaurant Anglais. Interestingly—and perhaps symbolically—my first dinner with Mike after the termination of my office as ICSU's Secretary-General was again at the Restaurant Anglais. I say symbolically, because this latter occasion somehow represents the completion of a circle, at the same time as it promises continued contact with Mike after his departure from ICSU.

I shall always remember my first visit to the ICSU secretariat in Paris. It was in June 1982. Being then the only

nominee for the post of Secretary-General in the upcoming elections at ICSU's 19th General Assembly in September 1982, I felt I should take this opportunity to learn something about my future duties. I had written down some questions, which I wanted to go over with Mike. "Before we discuss your questions," said Mike, "I think I should inform you that, even though you are the only candidate for the office, ICSU's rules of procedure allow for the submission of additional nominations up to two months before the General Assembly, that is, until July 13th. Although this is unlikely to happen, I thought I should at least warn you."

A small episode, but so typical of Mike! He informs you when you think you are already informed, and he warns you when you don't think you need any warning. This, I learnt over the years, is one of the many benefits of working with "Mr. ICSU". Sitting next to him at a meeting in Paris, Geneva, Ottawa, Berne, Sofia, Munich, Moscow, Rome or Beijing and receiving a whispered warning or a paperslip saying "You may wish to refer to Resolution..." or "We already considered this proposal in 19..." gives you a feeling of confidence that only those who have been in this kind of situation know how to appreciate.

But far beyond that, I have had the privilege of getting close to Mike as a human being. Hiding behind the serious beard is a boyish smile and glittering eyes, reflecting a special sense of humour that one learns to appreciate more and more as time goes by. Our friendship is based on mutual respect, a sense of fairness, and the ability to accept one another the way we are.

I wish to thank you, Mike, for all these years of excellent collaboration and friendship, and for all the pleasant hours we have spent together at ICSU.

Photo : Bruno Durand





*A Sunday excursion to the holy town of Zagorsk, during the Executive Committee Meeting of ICSU in Moscow, May 1984.
From left to right: F.W.G. Baker, J. Marton-Lefèvre,
G.K. Skryabin, L. Ernster and J.C. Kendrew.*

Putting principles into practice

Chris Garbers

*President, Council for Scientific
and Industrial Research, South
Africa*

As an adhering body to ICSU, the CSIR would like to pay tribute to Mike Baker as someone who, over many years, succeeded in putting the principles of ICSU into practice. Working quietly behind the scenes, generously allowing others to fill the more prominent roles, Mike combined the essential ingredients for the conception and successful implementation of major programmes of international scientific cooperation. As a result of these ventures, scientists were able to speak and cooperate more freely,

organizations worked together despite their differences of opinion, while new opportunities for meaningful international contact were created, for the benefit of all people.

Mike's much sought-after advice is always given with the greatest sense of fairness to all parties concerned. His unique combination of wisdom, insight and experience, together with the ability to see far ahead, will stand ICSU in good stead for many years to come.

*A constant strength in a
changing ICSU*

George Garland

*Former President, International
Union of Geodesy and
Geophysics*

For scientists whose association with the International Council of Scientific Unions is limited to the past decade or two, it is perhaps difficult to conceive of the difference between the ICSU of 1957 and the ICSU of today. One person—Mike Baker—has been centrally involved throughout those 32 years of dynamic change, years which represent more than one half of ICSU's 58-year life.

At the time Mike joined ICSU, the Council was about to launch the International Geophysical Year (IGY), the largest international scientific venture ever. Certainly that was a bold step for an under-funded organization with no record of coordinating major projects, and one frankly little known to most of the world's working scientists. It was a time of uncertainty, but there could not have been a better time for Mike to become associated with ICSU, for it brought him into immediate contact with those wise men who led IGY to an astoundingly successful conclusion. Mike's own training had been in an entirely different field—biology—so that his enforced involvement with the geophysical sciences went far toward equipping him to cope with the broad spectrum of ICSU interests.

By the end of the IGY in 1958, many of the great scientific advances, for example, in space and in Antarctica, had been made. The project also showed that true international scientific cooperation and data exchange were possible, and that an apparently fragile, non-governmental organization such as ICSU could carry out major projects. The Council inevitably turned to new initiatives, but Mike's involvement with IGY was not over. Perhaps few people outside of the field remember the enormous labour that went into the completion of the *Annals of the IGY*, wherein were reported the detailed scientific results, as opposed to the more spectacular popularizations. It is true that a strong international editorial committee was established, and a commercial publisher produced the volumes. But liaison and understanding between those two disparate groups was

vital, and became increasingly difficult as the years passed. Not only did Baker provide this liaison; he was called upon to complete some volumes himself, for, as the reporter for one discipline wrote in 1969, "it proved extremely difficult to obtain the manuscripts" which scientists had agreed to prepare. The final volume of the *Annals* (XL VIII) was not published until 1970, thirteen years after the launching of the project. Through all of this period, Mike Baker, with a skeleton staff, was involved in the launching of new ICSU activities, such as the International Biological Programme, many of which drew upon the experience learned in IGY. There was a series of extremely successful programmes in solar-controlled disciplines, such as the International Quiet Sun Year, and in the solid earth, such as the Upper Mantle Project. At times it appeared that ICSU was over-committed to major programmes, and the wonder is that so much was accomplished with such a lean central office. Today ICSU faces perhaps the greatest challenge of all, the International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme (IGBP), and while Mike Baker will not be leading the ICSU secretariat when IGBP is in progress, he leaves ICSU a legacy of experience dating from IGY days.

There are other ways in which the ICSU of 1989 differs from that of 1957. One—most important—is its recognition by working scientists throughout the world. A number of factors brought about this change, but one of these must certainly be Mike's striving to improve ICSU's image through newsletters and *Science International*. Another is the degree of respect in which ICSU is held by intergovernmental organizations such as UNESCO. Many elected officers of ICSU strove to accomplish this, but Mike worked, with tact and firmness, on an almost daily basis to achieve this respect.

Many scientists not directly involved with ICSU committees will remember Mike through the General Assemblies of ICSU. I personally remember him at those of Vienna, Bombay, Paris, Madrid, Helsinki, Istanbul, Washington, Athens, Amsterdam, Cambridge and

Ottawa, greeting every delegate by name, keeping the elected officers on course, and betraying none of the stress which must have been present during the inevitable crisis situations. How he managed the time to take part in the social events which accompanied these Assemblies is a mystery, but he did,

and lost no opportunity to promote international understanding through his calm, confident, and friendly presence.

Truly, Mike Baker has been a constant strength in a changing ICSU—an ICSU which has grown so much in stature during the 32 years he devoted to it.



Promoting international understanding: Mike at lunch during a General Committee meeting in Dubrovnik (September 1981), with Messrs. Belousov (left), Manshard, de Jager and Seibold. In the background are D.A. Bekoe and T.F. Malone.

Among princes and peasants

Phyllis Glaeser

Executive Secretary, Committee on Data for Science and Technology

When I first met you 15 years ago, you already had 17 years of ICSU behind you, and had just moved the ICSU secretariat from Rome to Paris. You were seated in what is now the SCOPE office, steeped in papers, aided by Grazyna Buczowska who, in her warm, slavic fashion, added to the hum of 51 Boulevard de Montmorency. I soon realized that you were a walking encyclopedia on ICSU's activities, its projects, its people.

Since then we have shared the privilege of being surrounded by people of excellence, intelligence and creativity. Yet we both know it is not easy to maintain an equilibrium among the scientists and the projects they hold

close to their hearts. We forget that the work of ICSU, CODATA, and all the Unions and Committees is carried out by volunteers.

In your position you were also faced with a plethora of projects. Much of your energy went to the International Geophysical Year, the International Quiet Sun Year, the International Biological Programme, Radioactive Waste and, more recently, the Global Digital Mapping and International Geosphere-Biosphere Programmes, to mention only the tip of the iceberg. Many of us referred to you as "the survivor". Whatever the catastrophe you would somehow, with a cynical remark or play on words, take the seriousness

out of the situation, using your innate wisdom to navigate deftly among princes and peasants. It was no coincidence that a copy of Nevil Shute's *On the Beach* was always close at hand, a reminder of the ultimate disaster...

Other memories surge: of your working late into the night, editing and giving clarity to ICSU documents; of Christmas celebrations when you led us

in a round of carols and old English songs.

You'll be leaving the Hôtel de Noailles, but then, there'll always be one of your stray little ladybirds to remind us of the indelible trace you've left on ICSU.

Take with you my warm remembrances and gratitude for having kept the ICSU ship steady and on course for 32 years.

First principles

Stuart Glover

Secretary-General, International Union of Microbiological Sciences

The International Unions of Microbiological Sciences (IUMS) owes a considerable debt of gratitude which it is happy to pay as a contribution to this well-earned Festschrift. Mike guided IAMS/IUMS along the long and tortuous path to admission to ICSU with patience, skill, and unvarying good humour. Once inside the ICSU family Mike was unstinting in his help and advice to me personally as a "new

boy" and was an unerring guide through the labyrinth of international science. He is a master of the acronym and it is easy to understand why the first law of international science stated that, "FWGB equals ICSU". The second law, that "FWGB equals MIKE," is one that I have never understood and one that I hope Mike will one day reveal.

Spadework and tinkering

Jim Harrison

Former President, ICSU

It is difficult to realize that Mike has arrived at "that happy age when a man can be idle with impunity". In fact, he hasn't, he is simply moving on to other things—renovating an old farm, transplanting trees from other countries, consulting for ICSU, writing and, I hope, visiting friends who can put him to work on jobs we need done.

There are different ways of being an effective Executive Secretary. Mike's way was to be the unobtrusive source of information for the officers and scientists of ICSU; to make sure that everything was in order for meetings; and to do the spadework that enabled ICSU to work in harmony with other organizations. He carried incredible amounts of information in his head.

In 1961 the International Union of Geological Sciences (IUGS) was formed and accepted for ICSU membership at the General Assembly in London. Its President, E.R.W. Steacie, a Canadian, died the same year and I took over. As President of IUGS I attended my first ICSU Executive Board meeting in Prague, in 1962. There I was seized by Georges Laclavère and led to the high table to sit with the officers, with only

my ignorance to guide me. Or so I thought. Directly behind me sat a young bearded gent who passed me slips of paper from time to time—slips that provided me with the bases for making intelligent comments on what seemed to me to be bizarre proceedings. His words must have been very wise indeed, even though he was a junior member of the team, for I found to my alarm that I was elected to the Finance Committee! For the next ten years, including two as President, I benefitted from Mike's extraordinary ability to have the right information at the right time.

Later, I spent another eight years on ICSU business as Chairman of committees on radioactive and toxic wastes. Mike acted as Secretary to both groups, keeping us on track and making sure we finished on time. During this period I learned of another of Mike's special talents: he edited the reports I prepared so skilfully that I thought I had written them just that way. Both committee reports were accepted by major journals as edited by Mike. I wonder how many times over the years Mike has made other officers look good without their being aware of Mike's ministrations?

Naturally, Mike and I became good friends—how else could we have stood each other over such a long time? I am also a great admirer and friend of Jacqueline Baker, who helped out during my early days with ICSU. I have fond memories of dinners at their apartment, of picnics with the family, and of friendly counsel always. On several occasions, Mike was able to join the Harrisons at our home on the St. Lawrence River. There I discovered

that Mike is a gifted tinker, or mender. He soldered copper piping, repaired plumbing, and patched boats—a most welcome guest.

Mike, backed by Jacqueline, has helped to build ICSU as we know it today. May both of them enjoy retirement as much as I have; but Jacqueline, don't expect to see much more of Mike around the house. Good luck to both of you. Thanks, Mike.

A gardener of science

Carl-Göran Hedén

President, World Academy of Art and Science

ICSU provides a very fertile soil for many disciplines, but they are like delicate plants that must have the right (organizational) climate in order to give an optimal yield. But to achieve this, the financial drip-irrigation system must receive constant attention from a patient and experienced gardener, who must also do most of the thankless weeding and pruning as well as the editing of various seed-catalogues. All scientists have reason to thank Mike Baker for having done just that for more than three decades.

Scientists move in different orbits, normally with ICSU close to the centre. Having circled this organization in various positions for as long as Mike has been the Executive Secretary, I can easily pin-point him as the source of much of the Council's gravitational pull. Presidents and Secretaries come and go, but Mike has provided them with the institutional memory which helped them to keep some professional clusters from taking a tangential course, at the same time as other scientific bodies were brought into ICSU's powerful field of attraction.

This institutional memory has guided the organization through a period of unparalleled significance for science and society, including the genetic breakthrough which shows that *Homo sapiens* is not an evolutionary dead end.

The spectre of interacting global problems now highlights many challenges: environmental pollution, soil erosion, deforestation and loss of genetic resources, salination and desertification, water and energy shortages, ill-planned urbanization, drug abuse and proliferation of dangerous technologies, financial and military follies, and finally, the political systems that now squander both human and natural resources. For the individual scientist the inescapable conclusion is that a way must be found to weld knowledge and responsibility more firmly together. ICSU's Committee on the Free Circulation of Scientists and the newly-established Ethics Committee can provide very useful tools for reinforcing the link between knowledge and responsibility.

ICSU is of course a focal point for the generation of new knowledge, but the global problems that we now face also require creative contributions in the form of the silent knowledge which is generated by artists and writers. I want to pay tribute to Mike for having translated his personal awareness of this fact into many years of constructive service as Vice-President of the European Division of the World Academy of Art and Science.

It is my privilege to join the choir of well-wishers in honouring a unique and constructive individual.

Eponymous saint

Joseph Hulse

*Chairman, Inter-Union
Commission on the Application
of Science to Agriculture,
Forestry and Aquaculture*

Perhaps because my father was one I hold all Bakers in highest esteem.

My first meeting with Mike Baker was at the U.N. Conference on Science and Technology for Development (UNCSTD) Symposium of Non-Government Agencies at Singapore in January 1979. Near the end of the last day he described a new commission ICSU was about to create, to do with the application of science to agriculture, forestry and aquaculture—this last added by Mike to give it a pronounceable acronym—CASAFA.

Mike's soft West Country cadences put me in mind of the visit my wife and I made to a small Devon fishing village soon after we were married. Of an evening all the world met in the pub where the menfolk put down astonishing quantities of a local fermented brew—rough cider—best described as an acquired taste. One evening I commented to the publican on the impressive absorptive capacities of the locals and asked: "Don't these

fellows ever become drunk?" "Drunk, no" came the answer, "but we had a fellow laarst week burrst."

The West Country penchant for playful pointed wit appears in a recent letter from Mike. I had sent a draft article for his critical comment. Alliteration had evidently been overdone and earned the observation: "Your accomplished aptitude in aiding, oft artificially, alliteration's artful agency adds much to its originality."

To put in print all in Mike that has endeared, encouraged and enlightened might appear as a multi-hybridization of the eponymous Saint and his attendant angels. It could be, nonetheless, that George-Louis Leclerc Buffon anticipated Mike Baker when he wrote: "Le style est l'homme même" and "Le génie n'est qu'une grande aptitude à la patience".

We can indeed be thankful for Mike's gentle, gracious and generous style, and for his unstinting patience with those of us less endowed in like virtue.

Mike is Mike

Cornelis de Jager

Former President, ICSU

Some time ago I was describing to friends what the people at ICSU were like during my time there as President. For most of them I gave details of their background or function at ICSU. But when I got to Mike, I just said, "Mike is Mike—that's all there is to know". This simple statement was a most extraordinary compliment indeed, for no one is known as universally and generally in the international scientific community as Mike. Usually his family name is not even mentioned in conversations.

But "Mike is Mike" has another connotation: during the many years I knew him he never tried to impress or to boast. He was just himself, with his natural kindness, his dedication and unselfishness, but at the same time his very independent attitude. That the ten years I was involved in the ICSU Executive Board were so pleasant was due in large part to the fine cooperation with Mike. It was only once that I saw him slightly at a loss, and this event might be worth mentioning.

During the early part of 1980, ICSU was concluding the preparation of an Agreement which would bring China back into ICSU while not losing Taiwan

from its members. This Agreement was the result of years of negotiations, and all of us in ICSU were most pleased with this outcome. For the final formulation of the Agreement it was necessary for a delegation consisting of the then Secretary-General John Kendrew, Mike Baker and me to go to Beijing and Taipei to meet with the officers of the respective Academies, and to smooth out the last remaining obstacles.

We stopped over in Hong Kong, intending to stay at a hotel that Julia remembered from long ago as being nice, simple and fairly cheap, in "classical colonial style". When we arrived, however, we found that the colonial-style hotel had been replaced by a luxurious palace. But having entered, we could not retreat and had to accept our fate. We were shown to our respective suites and I was followed in by a bellboy bearing a platter of the finest French soaps, from which I was invited to make my selection. Half an hour later when we saw each other again, Mike burst out: "Did you see the price of the room? And on top of that, some fellow came along who wanted to sell me pieties of soap!"

Twenty years ago, twenty years on...

Stella Keenan

Secretary-General, International Federation for Information and Documentation

In sending greetings and best wishes to Mike Baker on the occasion of his retirement from ICSU, my first meeting with Mike comes to mind. This was at the International Council of Scientific Unions Abstracting Board (ICSU-AB) meeting in Rome in 1968. It was an exciting meeting throughout which Mike Baker was extremely generous in guiding a very new Executive Director of the U.S. National Federation of Abstracting and Information Services through the agenda—both formal and informal. He gave quiet and wise advice on the representation of the Scientific Unions, and he briefed me on the intricacies of the Abstracting Board's relationship to its then parent body ICSU—a subject being hotly debated at that meeting, especially in private corridor and back room discussions.

Twenty years later, in early 1988, Mike was again providing guidance to a Secretary-General of the International Federation for Information and Documentation (FID) on the services that should be provided by a professional organization to the scientific and technical information community that it serves. In addition, he suggested ways in which ICSU could assist FID in improving publication procedures, negotiating contracts with publishers, and in other ways.

Mike's strong sense of the importance of information and the need to involve the scientific community directly in information service development has been a constant and personal inspiration for twenty years. I look forward to the next twenty years...

Psychology opens doors

Friedhart Klix

Former President, International Union of Psychology

I
September '80. As newly-elected President of the IUPS, I was asked to give an idea of my plans during the term of office. I answered, "I have one principal aim—our Union should become a member of ICSU." "Oh," said a colleague, "that has been our aim for a long time. I can give you one piece of advice though: you must win Mike Baker's support. He is the only one who can show you the way to the door which is usually kept tightly locked. He cannot open this door himself, but he knows the owners of the keys, for, as you well know, there are several locks to this door."

II
September '81. Boulevard de Montmorency. Talk with FWG Baker. Mike, who had been listening, said: "It will be very difficult for you. . . . You have only a slight chance." "Who owns the keys?" I asked. "In your case, chiefly Richard Keynes, Mr Biology of Cambridge, and Bruno Straub, Chairman of the Admissions Committee. Besides, you should also keep the physiologists in mind. They have the same acronym as the IUPS." "Thank you," I said. I knew what I had to do.

Bruno Straub, warm-hearted and friendly, was an honorary Doctor of the Humboldt University (my university). Richard Keynes and I found much in common in the histories of the Royal Society and the Humboldt University. Together we met Klaus Thureau, a physiologist, who is fully familiar with the age-old problems between physiology and psychology. Today I would like to express my appreciation to all of them. I would also like to thank Mark Rosenzweig, who found the keys for votes from national academies.

III
February '82. A few days before the meeting of the Admissions Committee, I telephoned Mike Baker in Paris. "Hallo Mike, how are our chances at the Admissions Committee in London? And what about the support in Cambridge?" Long pause. I then heard Mike's measured and deliberate words (I find he speaks the "clearest" English I've come across). He said, "Well, I believe your chances are quite poor. But you ought to keep in mind that I am a bad forecaster. . . ." Well, the last sentence turned out to be true.

Thank you, Mike.

Retour aux sources...

Georges Laclavère

*Past President, Scientific
Committee on Antarctic Research*

Il y a, en marge de la vallée du Rhône, aux confins de la Provence et du Dauphiné, une petite vallée, la Combe de Sauve, qui va se perdre dans les derniers contreforts des Préalpes. Une petite route suit le cours de la rivière; un chemin, maigrement entretenu, s'en détache. Prenez-le. Passez en seconde car il est raide, pas très large. Tout au bout de ce chemin, complètement isolée, vous découvrirez une grande ferme, très haut au flanc de la montagne qui, il y a peu de temps encore, n'était qu'une vieille ruine. C'est là que Mike, avec Jacqueline, après Londres, Bruxelles, Rome et Paris ira «planter ses choux» à l'écart des grands itinéraires, parmi une population clairsemée de cultivateurs et de bergers, dans une nature aux charmes virgiliens, «*ensoulejada tou l'an*» comme on dit dans le dialecte du pays. Les bras laborieux de toute la famille, secondés par l'aide bénévole des quelques paysans du coin, tous des amis, ont eu tôt fait de transformer la ruine en vaste demeure, rustique, mais confortable. Mike pourra, enfin!, y caser ses livres, ses manuscrits, ses revues, ses coupures de journaux, bref tout ce qui s'accumule au fil des ans, quand comme lui on a le culte de la chose écrite ou imprimée.

Le passage de la vie active à la condition de retraité est une transition parfois difficile. Si longtemps à l'avance que l'on en soit averti on en est toujours surpris. Pour les uns ce n'est que le point de départ d'un acheminement progressif et sans histoire vers une fin inéluctable. Pour d'autres

c'est l'avènement d'une vie nouvelle, libérée de contraintes, parfois ardemment souhaitée. Mike ne sera pas en peine pour occuper son temps. D'abord il pourra se livrer à sa passion, la céramique, difficile à pratiquer dans un logement parisien. Il pourra flâner dans les marchés des bourgs du voisinage, un de ses passe-temps favoris, dénicher chez quelque obscur brocanteur un objet de collection. Combien n'en a-t-il pas visité de ces marchés ou foires aux puces, aux quatre coins du monde d'où il ramenait bibelots, épices, tissus, estampes, que sais-je. Il avait même rapporté un jour d'un marché de Kaboul un abominable manteau de peau de bique, qui empestait l'atmosphère une lieue à la ronde! La compagnie des personnes du cru ne sera pas pour lui déplaire. Il a toujours aimé se mêler aux gens simples et, pour visiter un pays, il préfère le char à bancs local aux luxueux autocars capitonnés des agences de tourisme. N'oublions pas non plus que l'ICSU, tentaculaire (et il faut s'en réjouir), qui fait main basse sur tout ce qui, de près ou de loin, a quelque connotation scientifique, ne peut, sans faire appel à des talents, mener à bien ses ambitieuses entreprises et saura bien retrouver Mike dans sa discrète thèbaïde, pour quelque écrit, quelque rapport, quelque mission...

Ei, *last but not least*, ses nombreux amis de par le monde connaîtront vite le chemin de montagne qui les conduira vers un havre de paix où ils seront assurés d'être accueillis avec la plus cordiale et affectueuse hospitalité.

Mike the gentle man

Devendra Lal

*Former President, International
Union of Geodesy and
Geophysics*

This is the last time I address you as the Executive Secretary, but as you retire, you can feel a great personal satisfaction in having brought ICSU to its present high standing.

Often when administrators retire, there is a sense of great relief. But you are an exception; during the past thirty-two years you have nurtured ICSU with loving care and good ideas and a strong commitment. You have had a very objective way of assessing problems. You gave tremendous importance to every detail, talked and wrote to the international scientists with a unique personal touch, identified good contacts,

appreciated what was important and urgent for ICSU, and went ahead to do the necessary.

ICSU can boast of a brilliant list of past and present Officers, but it is generally not appreciated that their ideas have first to be given shape and then executed. In fact, I know personally why busy academics agree to serve for the cause of ICSU. The main reason is in fact yourself and your colleagues who make up the nerve centre of ICSU.

Mike, you will always be remembered for your enormous contribution to ICSU; and none can

match you for doing things efficiently while doing so in the most gentle manner. You do speak softly, and when you spoke softer, your words fell harder. I have learned many a lesson in international scientific conduct from you. You have helped me, and a large number of scientists young and old, by making each play their role effectively towards free and intense international cooperation in science. And that's what ICSU is all about.

So you can gently leave the podium, being sure you have left ICSU with a tremendous momentum to continue on the path of global scientific cooperation and free exchange of thoughts.

I and my colleagues wish you a very happy, prosperous, and creative life after ICSU. I am anxiously waiting to see how things work out. I am also to retire soon and must find out from you about how to behave.

Science education: ICSU-CTS

John Lewis

Former Secretary, Committee on the Teaching of Science

When Mike Baker began his many years of service, ICSU was concerned almost exclusively with scientific matters. Scientists were concerned with the frontiers of knowledge, education was left to the teachers. Gradually it came to be realized that it was the science teachers, whether at school or university, who were the geese which laid the golden eggs on which both the scientific community and industry depended for the future, especially at a time when more and more countries around the world were developing their scientific activities. So it was that five years after Mike Baker's arrival on the ICSU scene that an Inter-Union Commission on Science Teaching was established.

At the 12th General Assembly held

in 1968, the Commission was modified and the Committee on the Teaching of Science (CTS) rose in its place. As his responsibilities within ICSU became greater, Mike Baker handed over the care of CTS to Julia Marton-Lefèvre, but he always maintained a very benign interest in the Committee and has encouraged its various chairmen and secretaries for the last 20 years.

CTS was set up to further, on an international scale, progress in the teaching of science at all levels of education; to cooperate with other organizations concerned with any aspect of the teaching of science; and to facilitate cooperation between the teaching commissions of the International Scientific Unions. The



Promoting intramural cooperation: Phyllis Glaeser (left) and Sarah Levavasseur, neighbours from the CODATA secretariat upstairs, enjoying a picnic with Mike on the garden steps of the Hôtel de Noailles.

Committee includes a representative from each of the Scientific Unions, as well as other members nominated by ICSU and representing the regions of the world. It also acts as a consultant to Unesco on various matters related to science education.

Over the years, CTS has been involved in a series of major conferences in all parts of the world. It has been particularly concerned with the needs of the developing world and in this has collaborated with COSTED (the ICSU Committee on Science and Technology in Developing Countries). It has encouraged developments at primary school level, on integrated science at the secondary level and at university level through its series of booklets on University Learning Strategies. It established a series of workshops around the world on technician training and on the production of low-cost equipment. Collaboration between the various biological Unions was promoted, as well as between mathematics teaching and all the other scientific disciplines. Environmental education was not forgotten and there were links with the International Union for the Conservation

of Nature and Natural Resources. It was instrumental in the establishment of the International Council of Associations for Science Education (ICASE) which has brought together science teacher associations in over 60 countries.

It was a source of regret to the Committee that in 1979 the United Nations Conference on Science and Technology for Development (UNCSTD) failed to highlight the importance of educating scientists and engineers for developing countries, in spite of a strong stand by CTS. The Conference did identify other issues that were essential for development, and the Committee on the Teaching of Science responded by going outside the traditional boundaries of education to concentrate on interdisciplinary topics such as health, food and agriculture, natural resources, the environment, ethics and social responsibility. It is significant that CTS is now turning its attention to problems associated with the public understanding of science.

Thus it can be seen that what began in a small way in Mike Baker's early years in ICSU has thrived and expanded.

*A young man is retiring and an
old man is looking back*

Viggo Laursen

*Special Committee,
International Geophysical Year*

The notice that Mike Baker is about to retire from ICSU after thirty-two years of active service gave rise to a bit of reflection on my part. After all, it would seem that I have known Mike Baker through all these years, and yet he still gives me the impression of being a young man.

I tried to go back in time 32 years and found myself in the busy period of preparations for the International Geophysical Year 1957-58. As a member of ICSU's Special Committee for the IGY, I would catch glimpses of the immense amount of work going on in the Brussels headquarters under the expert guidance of Professor Marcel Nicolet and with the able assistance of an enthusiastic staff, including a certain Mike Baker.

A closer contact was established in 1978, when ICSU invited me to help make arrangements for the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the IGY, the 50th anniversary of the Second International Polar Year 1882-83, and

the 100th anniversary of the First International Polar Year 1882-83. With his great administrative abilities and his command of languages he facilitated the work in every possible way. When leaving Paris, our group also brought with it the pleasant memory of the enjoyable dinner parties given by the Bakers in their cosy home near the Bois de Boulogne.

By that time Mike Baker had taken a particular interest in the First International Polar Year 1882-83, and in the form of a dissertation he was preparing an account of this first large-scale attempt to carry out simultaneous geophysical observations over a greater part of the earth's surface. His research brought him to Copenhagen, in the hope that details of the Danish participation might be found in the archives of the Danish Meteorological Institute. However, they were not readily available, and I was subsequently entrusted with the task of digging up such details wherever they might be

found. I spent several pleasant mornings in the Danish Central Record Office, poring over heaps of old, hand-written documents and learning a lot.

It would seem that Denmark took a very active interest. In February 1881, less than 18 months before the observations were supposed to start, the participation of only five stations was assured. Captain N. Hoffmeyer, Director of the Danish Meteorological Institute and Secretary of the International Polar Year Commission, then announced that Denmark was ready to join and would operate a Polar Year station in Greenland.

Fortunately, the following months brought several additional promises of participation, so that Mike Baker, in his dissertation, was able to enumerate not less than 15 expeditions sent out for the purpose of establishing special Polar Year stations in high northern and southern latitudes.

One expedition, organized by

Finland, went to Sodankylä, about 100 kilometres to the north of the arctic circle. Near the site of the Polar Year station a permanent geophysical observatory was eventually established in 1913 by the Finnish Academy of Sciences, and this observatory took a very active part in the observations of the Second International Polar Year and of the International Geophysical Year. In the summer of 1983, there were centennial celebrations and an important symposium in Sodankylä.

This event comes back to my memory just now, because it gave me one more opportunity to meet Dr. Mike Baker. The symposium was a great success, but it also demonstrated once again, that enterprises like the Polar Years and the Geophysical Year, together with their contribution to a better understanding of the physical properties of the earth, may contribute also to the furtherance of a better understanding between people.

A night to remember

Tom Malone

Former Treasurer, ICSU

Among many vivid recollections of interaction with Mike Baker is one evening spent with him and George Laclavère in George's apartment in Paris in July, 1963. The issue at hand was concerned with one of the pillars of ICSU—Free Circulation of Scientists. As President of the American Geophysical Union and Chairman of the U.S. National Committee for the International Union of Geodesy and Geophysics (IUGG), one of my responsibilities was to ensure a productive General Assembly of IUGG in Berkeley in September of 1963. Questions had arisen concerning the admission to the United States of scientists from the German Democratic Republic and the attendance at the IUGG General Assembly of the scientist from Taiwan. As President of IUGG, Professeur Belousov in Moscow insisted that GDR scientists be permitted to attend the General Assembly, but was troubled by the legality of the scientist from Taiwan to represent China.

I had been sent by our Academy to Paris as a special ambassador to resolve the matter with IUGG Secretary General Laclavère—in a telephone consultation with Professor Belousov in Moscow.

Laclavère put in a call to Moscow and we set up a long-night vigil in his apartment to await the return call. During that long evening we resolved a goodly share of the world's problems over a bottle of Johnny Walker. The call finally came through and the outstanding issues were all satisfactorily resolved, with the end result that the Berkeley meeting proceeded with the GDR scientists in attendance as well as the scientist from Taiwan. During the course of that evening, a rapport was established between Mike and me that has withstood the vicissitudes of collaboration on many, many scientific matters over a quarter of a century. I will treasure the memories of that collaboration as long as I live and hope that Mike will recall one or two instances in his many years of science retirement. He has earned that exalted status and the affectionate good wishes of all of us.

First impressions

Julia Marton-Lefèvre

Deputy Executive Secretary, ICSU

I first heard about ICSU in 1974 when I was a young programme officer working at Unesco on a United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) project in environmental education. One of my first assignments was to organize a meeting of experts and representatives of Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) to give us guidance on how to proceed with our ambitious plans for the programme and on how to spend the rather large amount of money available in the early years after the Stockholm Conference. The representative of ICSU to this first meeting was the then Chairman of the Committee on the Teaching of Science (CTS), Dr. Al Baez, who was a most articulate and enthusiastic spokesman for science education and for the important contribution which could be made to our programme by ICSU. We were so convinced by Dr. Baez that we immediately entered into close relations with several ICSU bodies and the person whom I then saw on a more regular basis was, of course, Mike Baker, the Executive Secretary.

I remember that Mike had a habit of dropping in unannounced to my office at Unesco and inevitably walked away with a promise of a contract for one or another ICSU body to help with our environmental education effort. I ended up learning something about ICSU and admiring the dedication and perseverance of its Executive Secretary.

I was in fact so impressed by all the NGOs that I got to know in those early days of my international career that I began to think that I could function more effectively within an NGO, and at the end of 1977 I was faced with the rather pleasant dilemma of having to choose among job offers from several of them.

I have never regretted my choice of ICSU nor my 11 years spent as Assistant and then Deputy to Mike, whose example will help me follow in his footsteps in the challenge I have accepted in becoming Executive Secretary of ICSU.

ICSU and meteorology

Pierre Morel

Director, World Climate Research Programme

Nowhere else has the personal contribution of Mike Baker been felt more than in the relationship of ICSU with various governmental organizations, particularly the World Meteorological Organization (WMO). The Joint Planning staff for the ICSU/WMO Global Atmospheric Research Programme (GARP) happily remembers Mike Baker coming to visit from Rome, carrying the best *marrons glacés* the Peninsula had to offer. For more than 20 years now, ICSU has been able to successfully uphold the scientific integrity and calibre of its joint programmes with WMO: first GARP and then the World Climate Research Programme (WCRP), thereby establishing a model for cooperation between an academic, non-governmental organization and a specialized United Nations agency.

GARP was established by the United Nations General Assembly in December 1962. Its original objectives were to understand:

- the transient behaviour of the atmosphere as manifested by large-scale fluctuations of the atmospheric

circulation, with the prospect of increasing the accuracy of weather forecasting over periods of days to several weeks; and

- the factors that determine the statistical properties of atmospheric circulation, and the physical basis of climate.

The Programme had a major impact on the pace of development of operational meteorology, leading to effective use of global satellite data as well as ground-based observations, and accurate five-day weather forecasts. It also gave the international science community the impetus to consider global environmental issues and the managerial competence to undertake global research projects.

On the other hand, GARP did not solve all outstanding problems: initial priorities were clearly placed on the first objective, global weather forecasting, and relatively little was undertaken to address the problem of climate change. This was the reason for merging further research on the physical basis of climate and climatic variability with WMO's World Climate Programme, leading to a

new joint endeavour of ICSU and WMO, the World Climate Research Programme (WCRP), to deal effectively with the second objective of GARP.

The common difficulty faced by ICSU and WMO is that of aggregating immensely diverse elemental processes into meaningful large-scale factors of global climate and environment. For this purpose, we require increasingly comprehensive field measurements, including remote observation from space, as well as laboratory operations and mathematical computations. For this reason, the cooperation of operational weather services and environmental agencies has been instrumental in the success of GARP and continues to be an essential component for global climate research. Hence the need for a close alliance between ICSU and WMO.

The aspirations of individual scientists are not conducive to undertaking vast coordinated research efforts on a long-term basis. Yet, the requirement for organized team work is expanding, as human investigations range farther and farther from the capabilities of an individual investigator. The time is past when Lord Wollaston, the scientifically-inclined British aristocrat, could present the sum total of his laboratory equipment to a visiting friend, on a plate carried by a footman. Yet, there is a price to pay, an overhead

charge one might say, for getting involved in large, multi-disciplinary cooperative programmes. The price is measured in terms of time spent to engage the attention of other partners, to argue for approval by overcommitted administrations or even, to communicate with the media for building up public support and influence with politicians. At this juncture, the scientist must realize that he is a member of a human society, not simply committed to the pursuit of scientific visions. The scientist must examine in fairness his role in society and find the ground upon which his usefulness to fellow-men can be established. In short, the scientist must strive to serve, and yet avoid becoming subservient.

The working relationship between non-governmental organizations like ICSU and governmental organizations like the World Meteorological Organization, is but an amplified version of this basic dilemma, rendered more sophisticated by the managerial skills afforded by each organization. It is indeed a major achievement of ICSU's small executive staff and select body of officers, that the Council has held its own so well over the years facing considerably more affluent and bigger intergovernmental agencies. Let this in particular be a tribute to the dedication, vast knowledge and diplomatic skill of Mike Baker.

Young Baker some thirty years ago

Takesi Nagata

Former Vice President, Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research

One of the outstanding articles in a Japanese science history book, titled *Chikyu Kansoku Hyaku-Nen* (One Hundred Years of Cooperative Research of our Earth), edited by N Fukushima and myself in 1983, is a clear and compact history of the First International Polar Year 1982-83, written by F.W.G. Baker. Indeed, this book was published in memory of the centennial of First International Polar Year. The same book contains various reminiscences of Second International Polar Year 1932-33, written by old Japanese scientists who contributed to Second Year themselves, as well as systematic summaries of research work performed during International Geophysical Year (IGY), 1957-58 and succeeding ICSU international

cooperative research programmes on our planet and its neighbourhood.

The only article on the First International Polar Year in this book is the one contributed by Mike Baker, which completes the whole history of *Chikyu Kansoku Hyakunen*.

My first personal contacts with Mike Baker were at various places in Europe a little before the start of IGY. In those days, my old friend, George Laclavère, was almost always accompanied by a young British gentleman, Mr. Baker, and often by George's daughter, Melle Jacqueline Laclavère, wherever we went for international geophysical meetings. It appeared to me that both Mike and Jacqueline were extremely capable and precious assistants for Monsieur

Laclavère. I believe that Mike Baker learned much from George Laclavère about coordination and cooperation in our international community of natural scientists from so many different nations.

I have met Mike Baker since then when I attended international scientific meetings in Europe. He has been a good personal friend for a long time. I still have a very pleasant memory of cooking a Japanese-style dinner at his home in Paris many years ago. The original idea of my cooking of *Sukiyaki* (a well-known beef dish of Japanese style) in Paris was suggested by Mme Laclavère. When I brought all necessary materials for *Sukiyaki* with me by air from Tokyo to Paris, Mme Laclavère organized a little bigger dinner party than I had expected, and not in her own home, but in Mike Baker's. So, I worked very hard aiming for the best *Sukiyaki* dinner available in Paris. I still think that the results of my bio-chemico-physical experimental works

in Mike's kitchen were not too bad, so that all guests and myself were able to enjoy the Japanese meal accompanied by excellent French wine. This is my one and only experience of cooking a meal by myself in Europe, though they say that I have a pretty good reputation as a cook of oriental meals among my American friends.

Mlle Jacqueline Laclavère was one of the guests that evening in Paris. When I attended another scientific meeting in Rome several years later, I was warmly entertained by Mike and Jacqueline at their home.

Now, Mike is retiring from his long-time, unselfish services to ICSU. Three decades have passed so rapidly, but our natural sciences have been tremendously developed during the period, largely owing to continuous efforts of ICSU and its executive staff. As a retired old scientist, I would like to warmly welcome Mike Baker as a new member of our second-life community of international scientists.



1. Brussels 1957: the telex in the IGY office brought news that a satellite called 'Sputnik' was circling the Earth. From left: Maurice Hautfenne, Paulette Doyen, Marcel Nicolet, and Mike Baker.

2. Thirty years later, members of the IGY secretariat met for an anniversary celebration at the Palais des Congres in Brussels. From left to right: Mike Baker, Paulette Doyen, Marcel and Alice Nicolet, Maurice Hautfenne, Delphine Jehoulet, Jean Palange and Phil Mange.

*L'Année géophysique
internationale et l'arrivée de
Mike Baker*

Marcel Nicolet

*Secretary-General, International
Geophysical Year*

Janvier 1957. L'Année géophysique internationale (AGI) allait commencer officiellement dans six mois. Plus de soixante comités appartenant à toutes les nations avaient manifesté leur intention de collaborer à l'AGI à l'échelle planétaire. Il s'agissait de coordonner les observations dans le cadre de disciplines les plus diverses : météorologie, radiations nucléaires, géomagnétisme, aurores et lumière du ciel nocturne, ionosphère, activité solaire, rayons cosmiques, longitudes et latitudes, glaciologie, océanographie, sismologie, gravimétrie avec l'addition de satellites aux fusées comme nouveau moyen d'observation.

Le secrétariat général du Comité spécial de l'Année géophysique internationale (CSAGI) établie à Uccle-Bruxelles sous l'égide de l'ICSU, et constitué de Paulette Doyen, Francine et Maurice Hautfenne, Delphine Jehoulet, Phil Mange et Jean Palange, avait fourni pendant quatre ans un effort exceptionnel, entre autres choses, dans la préparation et l'organisation des assemblées internationales du CSAGI en 1953 (Bruxelles), 1954 (Rome), 1955

programme des fusées et des satellites et, en outre, avec un complément politique : la présence d'une délégation de l'Academia Sinica de la Chine populaire arrivée de Pékin en Espagne via Moscou, Bruxelles et Genève. *Quid novi?* L'ICSU s'est réuni à Pékin en 1988.

Dès le début de 1957, Delphine Jehoulet devait partir en d'autres lieux et Phil Mange devait retourner aux États-Unis. Mais F.W.G. Baker (sa première lettre), rapidement Mike Baker (sa deuxième lettre) et promptement Mike (sa troisième lettre), après avoir franchi la Manche, arriva à Bruxelles avec l'équinoxe du printemps. Il entra de plain-pied dans les arcanes de l'organisation de la science internationale coordonnée et ainsi était intégré *de jure* dans les allées et venues de l'ICSU. Sa digestion fut rapide, son adaptation une réussite et son apport à l'entreprise un succès. Il suffit de consulter les multiples volumes des *Annals of the International Geophysical Year* publiées par Pergamon Press pour se rendre compte, en partie, de ce que Mike a toujours accompli de charmante



(Bruxelles) et 1956 (Barcelone). L'assemblée du CSAGI de 1956 avait été une réunion de chaudes discussions internes avec comme addition scientifique l'annonce par le comité de l'URSS de sa participation au

humeur. Tout n'est cependant pas révélé. Mes archives personnelles, saupoudrées de quelques souvenirs, pourraient en dire davantage encore avec l'aide de la mémoire de Mike.

Ainsi les textes du télex étaient toujours l'objet d'une attention particulière, car ils nous apportaient souvent des éléments inattendus et essentiels. Par exemple, des différences (un simple mot) entre le texte reçu et celui publié par la presse ou mieux (photo page 24) une confirmation de la véracité du symbole (1953) de l'AGI : un satellite tournant autour de la Terre, le premier *Sputnik* en octobre 1957.

J'ajouterais encore, car ce n'est pas la moindre des choses, que c'est l'Année géophysique qui porte la responsabilité

de la première rencontre de Mike avec Jacqueline. Ce fut à Moscou, lors de la dernière assemblée générale du CSAGI en juillet 1958, avant la fin officielle de l'Année géophysique internationale. Jacqueline Laclavère était avec nous, prêtant main forte au secrétariat.

En conséquence, tout est bien qui finit bien. En tout cas (photo page 25), les membres du secrétariat de l'AGI se sont retrouvés à l'occasion d'un anniversaire, à Bruxelles au mois d'avril 1987. Toute la famille était réunie, trente ans après l'arrivée de Mike.

Our beacon through stormy waters

Thomas Rosswall

Executive Director, International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme

The International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme: A Study in Global Change (IGBP) is, according to the outgoing ICSU President, Sir John Kendrew "the most ambitious, the most wide-ranging, and in its impacts on our understanding of the future possibilities for mankind, the most important project that ICSU has ever undertaken".

International scientific cooperation is a complex affair. The maze of acronyms alone is bewildering and it can be hard to judge which projects are the best ones to associate with for the development of a programme like IGBP. We have been fortunate that Mike Baker has a long and outstanding record of service to world science. His

keen interest in the IGBP has been a source of strength and wisdom for the Special Committee. Like a never-failing beacon he guided our ship over the sometimes stormy waters. Due to Mike we were able to steer between the Scylla and Charybdis of the ICSU archipelago. At IGBP meetings, he provided low-key but sound advice on how to avoid many pitfalls and stumbling blocks. If we tripped over some of these in our inexperience, he always helped us to get back up.

We value his friendship. We hope that even if he will be spending more time in Provence, we can still count on his experience and enjoy a close collaboration for many years to come.

A solid foundation

Sanga Sabhasri

Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Science Technology and Industry, Bangkok

I have known Dr. Mike Baker for more than ten years. During that time it has been a most rewarding experience to cooperate with such a highly qualified person. I have to say that he

served ICSU with unique dedication, wisdom and foresight that laid a solid foundation for the progress of ICSU and a close relationship among scientific communities of the world as a whole.

Master of information

Jorge Sahade

Former President, International Astronomical Union

My first contact with ICSU was meeting Mike at the Helsinki General Assembly. On that occasion I started eight full years of association with the Council—in the Executive Board, in the General Committee, and in the Committee for Science and Technology Education in Developing Countries (COSTED). The association was for me

a most pleasant experience, not only because of the richness of ICSU's issues, but particularly because of the many people from different fields and from different places that I had the privilege and the opportunity to meet and make friends with.

The first of those new friends was Mike Baker. Mike always impressed me

for his brilliant performance, for his extraordinary capacity for work and for his ability to master information on any subject under discussion, whether related to ICSU or to associated bodies.

Mike has been indeed the soul of ICSU during the past thirty-two years and we will certainly miss him very much. I wish him the best of everything he will be doing after March.

Non-governmental science organizations

Eugen Seibold

Former President, International Union of Geological Sciences

Governments have always influenced the directions for research in their own nations and have developed national facilities to meet their own needs. Non-governmental scientific organizations were created to unify national groups of similar disciplines through their national academies or similar bodies—hence the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry, and other discipline-oriented Unions. Later, these came under the umbrella of the International Council of Scientific Unions, of which the fourteen geological sciences is one. These Unions became much more significant in the 1950s with the successful international experiment of the International Geophysical Year.

Mike Baker came to ICSU as part of the team in ICSU that helped in the management of that experiment. So he has been one of the leaders in bringing ICSU to world attention and recognition. His thirty-two years at ICSU were the critical years. He has shepherded many new Unions into the fold, including IUGS, and his diplomatic, low-key approach has greatly reduced the number of problems. Whatever the future holds for ICSU, and we think it can only be more impressive with the launching of the International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme, it will be built on the base that Mike Baker did so much to establish.

Discussions «paraprandiales»

Jean Scherrer

Former Secretary, International Union of Physiological Sciences

Retrouver assez fréquemment Mike Baker, depuis près d'une décennie en ce qui me concerne, dans son bureau du boulevard de Montmorency ou dans quelque restaurant intime et modeste des environs ou du 13^e arrondissement, était toujours plaisant et des problèmes de politique scientifique pouvaient alors être utilement et agréablement posés, discutés voire résolus. Des considérations plus vastes étaient également de saison. Il me semble adéquat de rappeler ici une question majeure, présente lors de plusieurs de nos entretiens : le choix devant lequel se trouve placé le genre humain entre un mode de vie confortable et prolongé que souhaite l'immense majorité des individus, quel que soit le continent qui les abrite, et la croissance démographique telle qu'elle se manifeste à l'heure actuelle.

Les continents émergés, les océans qui les baignent, la mince pellicule d'air qui enveloppe le tout sont manifestement incapables de subvenir aux besoins et désirs d'une humanité démographiquement croissante. Deux raisons évidentes et intimement liées s'y opposent : le facteur majeur est la

limitation des matières premières disponibles et renouvelables sur la planète Terre, l'autre facteur l'encombrement par les déchets quelle que soit leur forme. L'intelligence de l'homme, son ingéniosité, son labeur ne peuvent affronter victorieusement l'expansion des populations et celle des besoins de l'individu. Un choix est inéluctable : il dépasse largement les clivages politiques, sociaux, économiques, continentaux ou autres.

Il serait inexact de tenir pour malthusiennes les considérations qui viennent d'être présentées. C'est un libre choix qui est proposé et non une ligne de conduite univoque. D'excellents arguments peuvent être invoqués soit en faveur d'une diminution des besoins de l'homme, qui très souvent n'ont pour finalité que le plaisir, soit en faveur d'une diminution de la démographie, estimant que pour l'espèce humaine comme pour les animaux un optimum planétaire existe et que celui-ci a déjà été atteint, en bonne partie aux dépens du reste de la biosphère.

Les dimensions considérables et

l'importance du problème soulevé n'échappent à personne. Bien entendu, des approches parcellaires ont déjà été réalisées, parfois sous un aspect rigoureux tel l'effort ayant abouti à une monographie de l'ICSU (*Global Change*), ailleurs dans un contexte plus passionné : celui des mouvements écologiques. C'est le devoir de la communauté scientifique mondiale, comprenant les sciences humaines, de réaliser une étude prospective du choix qui s'offre encore aux populations du globe terrestre. Il y a une réelle urgence à la faire : on peut en effet redouter que dès les premières décennies du XXI^e siècle l'incompatibilité des besoins de l'homme et de la progression

démographique ne s'affrontent avec une grande violence.

En écrivant ces lignes je suis une fois de plus frappé du mal qu'on éprouve à résumer correctement une conversation à bâtons rompus. Une distorsion, un durcissement des idées est quasi inévitable ; le rédacteur de l'entretien l'introduit malgré lui : je n'ai certainement pas manqué à cette règle générale. En effet les discussions « paraprandiales » avec Mike Baker sont loin d'avoir eu l'aspect à la fois pessimiste et impératif que la lecture de ce texte pourrait donner. Il s'agissait simplement d'un échange d'idées amical et animé, porteur néanmoins d'un certain message.

Everan revisited

Ron Smith

*Chairman, Technical Activities
Coordinating Committee, ICSTI*

It is my pleasure as a representative of the International Council for Scientific and Technical Information (formerly ICSU AB) to convey to you our very best wishes on the occasion of your retirement as the Executive Secretary of ICSU. As you know, our organization has gone through good and bad times during the last twenty years, and it has been a great strength to know that you were always available to us with advice and help. To attempt to list these occasions would probably be an embarrassment to you, but I would be remiss if I did not say how appreciative we have always been that, at a time of particular crisis in our affairs, you were ready and able to house the ICSTI secretariat in the home of ICSU.

On a more personal note, Mike, it has been a great pleasure to me that we have remained friends over so many years. Among our most enjoyable occasions the memories of the meeting in Erevan remain outstanding. The evening we spent sampling a product in which, to say the least, we had a mutual interest was long and fulfilling. Our subsequent code including the term "Ding Dong" has confused many around us ever since. May it long continue to do so.

From all of us, to you, our very best wishes for a long and happy retirement. I know we shall always keep in touch.

Depuis vingt-sept ans...

Yella Stevanovitch

*Executive Secretary, Union
Radio-Scientifique Internationale*

Ma première rencontre avec Mike Baker remonte à l'automne de 1961. J'avais été « prêtée » par l'URSI à l'ICSU (dont le personnel au secrétariat n'était guère nombreux à l'époque) pour assurer la traduction en langue française des documents de l'Assemblée générale à Londres. Très intimidée par toutes ces personnalités que je ne connaissais encore que de nom, j'eus la chance de

pouvoir travailler avec Mike qui, d'emblée, me mit à l'aise par sa gentillesse et sa jovialité. Il y en avait du travail à cette Assemblée où les discussions roulaient bon train sur la meilleure structure à donner à l'ICSU et sur l'opportunité de la création de nouveaux comités ! Pendant un des rares moments creux, nous avions eu tous deux, Mike et moi, la même idée de

nous esquiver pour boire tranquillement une tasse de café dans un entresol quasi désert. Et là, nous nous mîmes à bavarder, évoquant les grands sujets qui nous tenaient à cœur : la mission de l'ICSU et des Unions tendant à assurer une collaboration scientifique internationale exempte d'esprit politique et de préjugés, vastes programmes pluridisciplinaires réunissant les scientifiques du monde entier, conquêtes futures dans l'ère spatiale qui venait de s'ouvrir... Bref, encore

relativement jeunes tous deux, nous étions prêts à réformer le monde. Et, au fil des années qui ont suivi, Mike ne s'est jamais départi de ce bel enthousiasme et de cette attitude de tolérance et d'amabilité qui le caractérisaient. Depuis voilà vingt-sept ans, je m'adresse à lui, toujours avec le même plaisir, pour lui demander conseils et informations. Tous mes vœux l'accompagnent dans une retraite que je lui souhaite heureuse et sereine.

Thank you, Mike

Bruno Straub

Former President, ICSU

For more than 25 years I have been associated with ICSU. I watched the Council's growth, enjoyed the benefit of discussions in IUBS, SCOPE, IUB, the ICSU Executive Board and a number of ICSU committees. The ideal of the universality of science has brought us together. In the second half of the 20th century it did not look easy to advance this ideal. The cold war, nationalist and ideological trends appeared to work against a world-wide understanding between scientists of all continents. There was a time even when the existence of ICSU appeared to be threatened. Fortunately, it now looks at the end of the eighties as though history justifies those who believed in international cooperation. ICSU has been proved right whenever its ideals were pursued with a realistic attitude.

Throughout the period of my association with ICSU, Mike Baker was behind me every day in Rome and then in Paris. For me it was very reassuring to know two things. One, that he had in his head all the diverse problems which are connected with the past, present and future trends in ICSU affairs. Second, that he was an astute judge of many hundreds of ICSU members. Both these personal abilities have contributed to the success of Mike's work on behalf of international cooperation, and we owe him thanks for the help he gave us.

Science is progressing at an ever increasing pace, solving problems and discovering new ways. ICSU must and will change accordingly. What it did achieve in the past thirty years will form a solid foundation for the future.

Mike Baker, M.A.

Olof Tandberg

Foreign Secretary, Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences

The abbreviation in the attached headline does not appear among the 434 listed as approved abbreviations in the ICSU Year Book 1988. I know, because I have just been looking. Still, the abbreviation "M.A." is a very distinguished title affixed to the name of a very special person. In this case, M.A. stands for Master of Abbreviations. It is obvious, really, because a number of the ICSU abbreviations are Mike's own brain-children.

For some fifteen years I have had the privilege, first of knowing F.W.G. Baker, then of learning to know Mike Baker, and eventually becoming Mike's friend. Mike became a friend in the sense defined by the late Sir Clement

Atlee, who states in his memoirs that a friend is a person whom you like even though you know him.

Mike Baker practised networking long before this concept was given the name. He exploits his network in order to find the right string to pull. What is even more remarkable, is that he pulls the strings so tenderly that the policy decision-makers are certain that they themselves have made the ultimate decisions. Over the years I have telephoned Mike on many occasions for help in finding solutions to specific problems. He has never failed me, even though some of the solutions were highly unorthodox.

Mike possesses the rare ability to care for his friends without making a

fuss about it. He carefully protects the fragile roots of amicability and frequently conceals his personal affection in the use of condensed puns—warm, witty, and nonsensical in nature. Mike's ambiguous understatements are not always understood, but they are a source of blissful mirth to the supporters of APHIA (The Association for the Promotion of Humour in International Affairs).

What has been the motivating force for Mike during all these 32 years? The answer is not as simple as the question. Neither pride, wealth nor power was involved. He genuinely believes in the value of ICSU as an organization. Moreover, I have learned of two passions, both of which have helped Mike to remain just Mike.

One is his particular interest in polar research, which started to develop in 1957 when he worked for the International Geophysical Year (IGY) secretariat and continued to grow when he became general editor of the IGY Annals. It was fascinating to follow his

raids on second-hand book stores looking for literature on polar science, preferably from the Heroic Ages.

The second *elixir vitae* for Mike Baker is his keen interest in nature, especially in growing plants. As I live in the Bergius Botanical Garden in Stockholm and have had Mike as a guest on several occasions, I have been in a position to observe this at close quarters. It is a source of great pleasure to see how, after a hard day, Mike quickly refreshes himself in this garden that has been laid out for the scientific study of plants. You must, of course, pretend not to see when he discreetly takes samples of weeds or roots and stows them away in his pockets. These samples are destined for Mike's own green valley in the south of France.

Knowing that he now intends to transform his elixirs into a private golden life, we are many who envy him for his wisdom to leave in time. We thank Mike Baker, M.A., for his good work and his good humour. We wish him well for the future.

Quiet, but to the point

Klaus Thureau

Treasurer, ICSU

Marnie Philips

*Former Executive Assistant,
ICSU*

It is quite impossible in this short piece to do justice to all Mike Baker has done and has been for ICSU. While passing in review all the occasions on which we—as the "Munich Office"—have met and worked with Mike, we agreed that there is one particular quality which made him special for both of us.

Committee meetings tend to be a wordy business at the best of times. Mike was always one of the quieter members of all meetings we could remember—but when he made a statement it was always carefully

considered, pithy and to the point. Taking this point further, it occurred to us that Mike's utterances had an almost literary quality about them: mostly quiet and understated, they were often characterized by a dry irony, a subtle play on words, a finely nuanced differentiation of meaning. Whatever the tone of the statement—witty, factual, conciliatory—it was always a masterpiece of phrasing and revealed a deep love of language.

Thank you, Mike, for the great pleasure you gave us.

With a splash of salt water

Elizabeth Tidmarsh

*Executive Secretary, Scientific
Committee on Oceanic Research*

ICSU created the Scientific Committee on Oceanic Research (SCOR) just about the time that Mike came to ICSU, and both SCOR and Mike were the product of IGY. Thus SCOR was his introduction to international ocean research, and he has been a good friend and adviser ever since. He was co-editor of Vol. 46 of the Annals of IGY, the volume on oceanography.

SCOR's first major initiative after

IGY was the International Indian Ocean Expedition. The detailed planning for IIOE was launched in 1958 and field operations—the "Assault on the Largest Unknown"—were concluded in 1965. It was during this period that Mike became Executive Secretary of ICSU and developed his special interest in things marine.

SCOR has been much involved in the International Biological Programme,

The Global Atmospheric Research Programme, and on into the current World Climate Research Programme and the International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme, for which SCOR's Joint Global Ocean Flux Study will provide a major component.

The seas of international ocean cooperation are not always smooth or well charted, especially where many agencies are involved. Mike's advice and assistance have often been instrumental

in avoiding rocky shoals. His humorous and even-handed approach to ensuring that the science comes first will be missed by all of us. The marine scientists that SCOR represents appreciate his friendship and cooperation over the years, and we add our very best wishes on his "retirement" to those that will undoubtedly come from all sections of the ICSU family.

Who is he?

Peter Waser

Former President, International Union of Pharmacology

What is he?

A traveller, a reporter, a peddler, a scientist, a clerk, an engineer, a writer, a communicator, a doctor, a teacher, a musician, a painter???

What is he doing?

Working, vacationing, measuring, demonstrating, joking, charming, explaining, scolding, minimizing,

maximizing, playing, lecturing???

Where is he?

In France, Switzerland, Haiti, New Caledonia, Tahiti, Canada, Corsica, Japan, Algeria, China, Madagascar???

If it's all of the above, it must be Mike Baker, Executive Secretary of ICSU!

Congratulations and regards.

The proof is Mike

Talal Younès

Executive Secretary, International Union of Biological Sciences

While at Unesco, before moving from 'Place Fontenoy' to the 'Hôtel de Noailles', I used to think of the ICSU family as a temple, with ICSU's role and work in the field of international science resembling a religious activity, with its supplicants, priests and temple; it was obvious that Mike was the principal servant.

When asked to write a few words on the occasion of Mike's retirement, I was first pleased for this opportunity to say how enjoyable and enriching it was to have him as a work-neighbour, a colleague and a friend for almost ten years. Then, I discovered how difficult it is to publicly express the kind of personal feelings and esteem that you share with a friend such as Mike. So instead of expanding on fine sentiments I have put forth some questions:

- Is it possible for one person to serve all the scientific disciplines and interests of ICSU?

- Is it possible for a person to keep his enthusiasm, optimism and openness over a long period of time?

- Is it possible for one individual, acting as a missionary, to attract highly specialized scientists to the broad themes of international cooperative research and get them to work on a volunteer basis?

The answer is — Yes. The proof is Mike!

Yet a paradox remains: why is it that ICSU, now almost 70 years old yet still in a juvenile stage of development, continues to generate new ideas and programmes despite its meagre resources, while many younger international organisations associated with ICSU initiatives have succeeded in attracting major financial support?

Next page: the man who has made a career of helping others will at last have time for his own projects. Mike at Combe de Sauve. (Photo courtesy of Ebba Tandberg.)

