

IPA NEWS

IN MEMORIAM JOHN RICHARD BALDWIN (1935–2013)

John Baldwin, a former member of the UCL Phonetics Department, died on 14 April 2013, at the age of 77, after a long illness. He was a member of the IPA Council in 1984–1990 and served for a time as Treasurer.

John was born on 2 June 1935, the only child of a watch and clock repairer in Plaistow in east London. The family remained in London during the war years, and despite the hardships and dangers of the blitz John excelled at school and gained a scholarship to Stratford Grammar School in Forest Gate. After National Service he took his first degree (in languages) at Nottingham University and began his teaching career at Kingston College. In 1966 he joined UCL and started his doctoral research on the intonation of Russian under the supervision of J. D. O'Connor. In the same year he became a member of the IPA, and made his first contribution to *Le Maître phonétique* (characteristically this was a review of a Serbo-Croat reader and grammar – there seemed to be hardly a language of eastern Europe with which John was not familiar). He gained his Ph.D. in 1973 and a revised version of his thesis was published as Baldwin (1979). From the late 1970s John's attention turned increasingly to forensic applications of phonetics and he served as an expert witness in a number of high-profile cases. His experiences resulted in co-authorship of an early book on the subject (Baldwin & French 1990), which remains widely cited. John's emphasis was always on auditory judgement rather than instrumental methods.

Aside from phonetics, John's great passion was the folk music of the Balkans. He became an accomplished performer on a number of instruments, particularly the tamburitza, and was a founder member of the band Dunav, which is still flourishing. John's music enlivened many a phonetics colloquium, and on one memorable occasion he gave a public lecture on speech rhythm at UCL, beating out examples on a drum borrowed from the band.

In his sixties John began to be progressively affected by Huntington's disease. At first he was cared for by his wife Olive (they had married in 1960, having met through their shared membership of a Bulgarian folk-dance group), but from 2007 he required full-time residential care and Olive herself died in 2008. Their sons Adam and Oliver visited him regularly to the end.

References

- Baldwin, John. 1979. *A formal analysis of the intonation of modern colloquial Russian*. Hamburg: Buske.
Baldwin, John & Peter French. 1990. *Forensic phonetics*. London: Pinter.

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