I met John in 1995. I had enrolled for the University of Manchester’s unique M.A. in History and Social Anthropology of Science, Technology and Medicine, which was jointly run by the Centre for the History of Science, Technology and Medicine and the Department of Social Anthropology. This degree was one of many interdisciplinary activities that John had initiated. Soon after my arrival, during one of several drink receptions that form an integral part of induction weeks at British universities, John treated me like an old friend. He seemed genuinely interested in what I had to say and offered me a funded Ph.D. project: he had been approached by an organisation of Swiss orthopaedic surgeons who wanted their history written, the AO (Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Osteosynthesefragen). It was necessary to read German to do this. I decided that I was not ready to work on the history of the AO. The project went to the University of Freiburg, where Thomas Schlich turned it into into a fine book, published in the book series that John edited.

The project John had in mind for me was a typical example of how his work on local Manchester issues extended outwards and eventually went global. He had developed an interest in orthopaedic surgery when researching his book on Medicine and industrial society while based at the institution down the road, University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology.

3. Pickstone, n. 2.
had supervised a Ph.D. dissertation on radiotherapy in Britain in the 1980s, much of which focused on developments at the Christie Cancer Hospital.8

During my first few years at Manchester, however, John was occupied predominantly with *Ways of knowing*, his ambitious and innovative historical sociology of science, technology and medicine, which he was committed to publish in time for the 2001 Research Assessment Exercise.9 As is evident from the name of our Centre, which he launched in 1986 after moving from UMIST to the University of Manchester, John believed in the value of integrating the histories of science, technology and medicine. And he followed the sociologist Nicolas Jewson in linking knowledge production to social and economic developments outside universities, hospitals, museums and laboratories.10 In *Ways of knowing* he developed four ideal types (after Max Weber) of knowledge production that he suggested emerged from the fundamental changes which western societies underwent since the Enlightenment: «natural history», «analysis», «synthesis» and «technoscience». John argued that all these ways of knowing are still with us: scientific progress has not been about replacing the old with the new, but rather about displacing it, moving it sideways into different niches. *Ways of knowing* was a boldly synthetic book in an age of detailed case studies, for which John met with much scepticism, but was also much admired. He gave many talks, around the globe, trying to persuade others to apply his framework.

The third main pillar of John’s work was political. This goes back to the 1970s and 1980s, when the university was an intensely political space. John has described the interdisciplinary constellations that characterised the intersections of academia and (health) politics in a long footnote to a chapter on «Radicalism, neoliberalism and biographical medicine»11. In recent years his political engagement found its strongest impression in his

interest in and work (with Stephanie Snow and others) on the contemporary history of medicine, and especially of the British National Health Service (NHS)\(^{12}\). John felt that many of the NHS reforms of recent years were ill thought-through and not supported by evidence\(^{13}\). These reforms, he suggested, happened in such dizzying succession that those within the Health Service lost orientation. Historians of medicine, he argued, could and should provide useful evidence, and orientation.

Those of you who collaborated with him know that John’s requests could sometimes be infuriating. His timing was not always great; he was very spontaneous, and each idea was very, very urgent. I worked out a strategy of dealing with such requests, and I am sure others did, too. In my experience, John was always open to criticism: if you had good arguments, he would listen. If that did not help, and I still did not agree with his request, I would sit on it for a while. There was a good chance that a new idea would come along and he would forget. John’s friends at the University of Manchester and elsewhere will miss his very special brand of interdisciplinarity that emerged from encounters at conferences, in common rooms, cafés, evenon buses or airplanes. Many of these he turned into projects, often unfinished —15 filing cabinets in our department bear witness. John had something intelligent and enlightening to say on almost any issue. We will miss his intellect, imagination and synthetic mind, and above all his generosity and friendship.
