

Tribute to Ian Michael (1958–2023)

Publisher extraordinaire

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1. IM Publications

The publishing house IM Publications Open, Chichester, UK has over 40 years of outstanding achievements. The company's outreach to the market can be found on the website: www.impopen.com

Another, much favored meeting place, was at the nearby pub "The Fox Goes Free." If anything, such locales only expedited, and made the hard editorial work much more pleasant.

HERE IS THE COMPANY'S OWN MASTHEAD:

IM Publications Open (IMP Open) is a specialist publisher of books and open access/free-to-read periodicals, primarily in analytical chemistry. We are focused on ensuring that we provide a first-rate, personal service to all our customers—authors, editors, book buyers. As the world of publishing becomes increasingly dominated by larger and larger corporations, this approach from a smaller company is much appreciated. In addition, we publish and market a number of books in the fields of near infrared (NIR) spectroscopy, mass spectrometry, surface analysis, sampling and chemometrics.

We also publish proceedings of conferences on behalf of the organisers. Examples include the "Proceedings of the XIII International Conference on the Applications of Magnetic Resonance in Food Science", "Proceedings of the 18th International Conference on Near Infrared Spectroscopy" and "Proceedings of the 7th and 10th World Conferences on Sampling and Blending."

Ian Michael's commitment to professional collaboration with authors and editors knew no boundaries! His main arena was analytical chemistry in general, spectroscopy in particular, the latter with a clear focus on Near InfraRed spectroscopy. But the scope of interest was wide, very wide, reflecting on Ian's own widely ranging interests.

2. Conducting business

IM Publications often did business in an unusual manner. While normally, authors and editors would have to pay a visit to the Publisher's domicile for working sessions (never mind that many of these could be managed as internet affairs), it was just as well the case that when complex hands-on work was on the agenda, Ian was not shy of reversing the whom-visits-whom regimen, Figure 1.

3. IM Publications – invaluable help and support for IPGSA

The impact of Ian Michael's influence on the development of the barely 20-year-old organised scientific community of sampling has been overwhelming ... How did this come about?

Well, the start has all to do with the discipline of NIR analysis, which is much closer to Ian's own training and expertise – spectroscopy. In a career mostly dabbling with chemometrics, in 2015 I was invited as keynote speaker at the prestigious NIR world conference, NIR2015, Iguazu, Brazil ... possibly because I had inserted myself as a speaker at the preceding NIR2013 conference, with the intent of rattling the NIR cage, re. the importance of knowing at least something about sampling – before analysis.



Fig. 1: Ian Michael – editorial session, at a coffee bar at Heathrow airport 2019, “situated just about midway between Copenhagen and Chichester, travelling times considered”.

Thus, I met Ian for the first time at the NIR 2013 world conference in La Grande Motte, near Montpellier, France. Enjoying the well-known camaraderie and ambience in the NIR community, one afternoon my path happened by the exhibition hall, and as fate would have it, I gravitated to a stand manned by Ian, whom I at this time only knew as the publisher of NIR News, which I had marveled at and envied, for many years. “Such an effective, easy-on-the-eyes communication platform for the NIR community!” was my first opening comment.

In parallel, at this time, I was heavily engaged in trying to organize a very different scientific community, the world sampling community, from which we often looked enviously to our NIR freres because of the long-standing tradition of successful, well-organised world conferences, the elegant NIR News, and a Council working hard and professionally for the common good with regular, high-quality world conferences. “What’s not to like? We samplers should be able to do the same!”

Suddenly, in a spontaneous move, I blurted out: “Ian, there are many parties outside the NIR community who admire the NIR News and the community it serves – Do you have room for one more?”

Ian: “One more what?”

KHE: “One more scientific society!”

Ian: “Well, yes of course, why not? – Love to!”

And with that small step, with Ian’s characteristic kind interest in helping out with scientific endeavors, what became *TOS forum*, the SAMPLING column in *Spectroscopy Europe* and later a successful sampling textbook was already well under way. This first step included my bold suggestion that we simply steal the layout, format, and design of the well-accomplished NIR News (at that time some 15 years on the road already) – pure highway robbery! It so happened that this spoke directly to Ian’s pride over his NIR child.

NIR 2015
Brazil
Highlighting South America



Fig. 2: “The Critical Role of Representative Sampling before Analysis, NIR or Otherwise”.

Directly after this chance encounter, a first accord was soon outlined, without which the community affairs of the world sampling community would have been much different. The organised affairs of the International Pierre Gy Sampling Association (IPGSA) owe an enormous debt of gratitude to Ian for his immediate, and very kind willingness to help. I am also sure, that his satisfaction in the responsibility as Publisher and Editor found this new diamond-in-the-rough irresistible.

In the following short time span of just a decade, it has been an enormous privilege to collaborate with Ian on many projects. At first the series of *TOS forum* issues, but very soon he also invited me to start up a blogging column on sampling issues (complete writer's freedom). He mentioned, again with pure and well-earned pride, that he had several other column enterprises running with highly creative and successful editors. So, again, why struggle to invent a new thing, when it has already proven itself over many years?

Soon, a virtual conveyor belt of SAMPLING columns saw the light, comprising a convenient short-story format for explaining the intricacies of the Theory and Practice of Sampling (TOS); this was exactly the kind of work I was excited about doing. The first column appeared in the February 2014 SE-26(6) issue, and only twice since then did we miss out on this commitment – Damn ;–]

4. An introductory textbook

But what was not planned originally, dawned upon me after the first SAMPLING 25 columns: Here was a full curriculum for an “Introduction to TOS”, but for the NIR community ‘only’. Surely, there would be interest for this topic also beyond the fence line ... In fact, this opportunity fitted very well with the course of my personal career re. sampling, and how to reach out to ever broadening scientific, technological and industrial circles. And so, the idea of a textbook was born. Yet, from a handful of individually conceived column formats to an organised textbook, was a very long stretch. There would have to be an enormous editing job, dressing it all up to be more consistent and tying it all together properly.

In this work, Ian came forth with a plentitude of inspiration and creativity and supplied an enormous drive. The 2020 textbook: “Introduction to the Theory and Practice of Sampling” would never have seen the light were it not for his unflagging collaboration spirit, and efforts. Also, it was clearly right up his alley, to have a free hand to design a new book layout, format, style from scratch. Never was there a more perfect collaboration, as I was in the beginning mostly interested in the subject-matter (TOS) and the scientific storytelling – while gladly (to put it mildly) relinquishing all the technical design, editing, collating, typesetting, and laying out a plethora of illustrations and references to be left in Ian's very capable hands. There was no wish he would not try to honor; I only recollect two times, when yet another wild idea was met with a “Sorry, No,” absolutely justified from a publisher's point of view.

To be honest, the book also benefitted enormously from Ian taking charge of the language used by the author; many were the times that the author's wish for some more colorful language than in ‘your ordinary, dull textbook’ did not reach the final printing: “There are limits to flippancy in the books I produce”. Still more than enough reached the finishing line, so ultimately the book met with both our satisfaction as an unconventional endeavor. All in all, including standing corrected quite often linguistically, it was pure joy doing this project in solidum.

This prestige project textbook was proudly launched in February–March 2020, just in time for ... COVID ... Well, instead of despairing, we thought that a global pandemic might allow some scientists, some technologists, some industrialists ... a little extra reading time. So, forced by the global lockdown, we immediately started on our next joint project: How to market this new book effectively? To what degree we succeeded, history will eventually be the judge, but right up until spring 2023, there were no complaints in either Copenhagen, nor in Chichester. This marketing endeavor turned out to be just as interesting and challenging as writing and producing the book in the first place.

I count the work behind this textbook among my most happy professional career experiences. All our many hundreds of e-mail ping-pongs, SKYPE sessions – and the vital, in-person meetings reign supreme in terms of professional friendship, mutual respect, and general good living.

5. IPGSA salutes a desktop publishing giant

THANK YOU, Ian Michael, for being there for the small niche endeavor of sampling. What started out professionally as a side bar in relation to Ian's main interest and work for analytical chemistry, spectroscopy, and NIR, meant the world to the International Pierre Gy Sampling Association. Ian was also instrumental with respect to helping the community concerned with hyper-spectral image analysis; see IM Publications homepages: <https://www.impopen.com/>

THANK YOU, Ian Michael, for midwifing 50+ SAMPLING columns, concluding with SE35-2, which happened to be on a topic of close personal interest for more than two years. We also concluded editorial work on one more column just two days before Ian lost his brave battle with leukemia (appearing in what was scheduled to be SE35-3). With permission from Ian Michael's estate, we are in the position to bring a *simile* of this last SAMPLING column ever produced (see Appendix).

This was to have been the first column on historical sampling topics, courtesy by the inspiring American sampling scholar Alan Rawle.

THANK YOU, Ian Michael, for eleven comprehensive issues of *TOS forum*, an introductory sampling textbook, which from autumn 2023 will be available as an E-book (thanks to Katie Michael), two impeccably produced Sampling World Conference Proceedings as well as the special publication: *Economic Arguments for Representative Sampling* in a special issue of *Spectroscopy Europe* in 2021. These three publications represent Ian’s well-contemplated efforts to come up with a modern facility for documentation of scientific conferences and similar directed publications, reflecting so well the company’s aspirations – and notably at a significantly reduced cost, and with markedly shorter production times than conventional approaches. In fact, the Proceedings from WCSB7 and WCSB10 and the “Economic Arguments ...” were a source of considerable professional pride for Ian – and we could not agree more.



Credit: Katie Michael; used with permission.

Today they are a leading-edge asset for the IPGSA.

We are forever in debt to your intellect, interest, creativity, kindness, and overwhelming professionalism.

R.I.P. Ian Michael

APPENDIX

With permission from Ian Michael’s estate, we are in the position to bring a simile of this last SAMPLING column ever produced, taken from *Spectroscopy Europe* Vol. 35 No. 3 (2023). The column can be found on the following pages in its original layout.

TOS forum

Starting 2024 *Sampling Science and Technology* (SST) is a direct continuation of *TOS forum*, which was published by IMPublications in the decade 2013–2023.

The complete archive can be found here:

impopen.com/tos-forum

