

While quantum physics is one of the greatest scientific achievements of the twentieth century, it is also notorious, even among physicists, for being difficult to understand. CERN theorist John Stewart Bell, who died unexpectedly on 1 October, did much to remove these obstacles and unravel the paradoxes which riddle quantum theory and had led some early thinkers, notably Einstein, to be sceptical. Never fearing to enter intellectual territory where few others dared to tread, John Bell helped put the unfamiliar dogma of quantum mechanics on a firmer footing.

He moved from the UK to CERN in November 1960 for an active and prominent career. His famous 1964 Inequality specified how results of simultaneous measurements on separated physical systems can be correlated, and has been described as 'the most important recent advance in physics'. (With characteristic modesty, he described it himself as a 'dilemma'.) The Adler-Bell-Jackiw anomaly, found in 1969, pointed out profound questions in field theory.

Despite (or perhaps because of) his depth of understanding, he was also sympathetic with those he called the 'why bother?ers', agreeing with them that 'ordinary quantum mechanics is just fine for all practical purposes'. Putting this ap-



John S. Bell 1928-1990.