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## Preface

Louis Harold Gray (Hal) was a one-in-many-millions sort of man. His personal qualities were remarkable and his scientific abilities too. His work has benefitted innumerable people. (You, dear reader, were safe when your last X-rays were taken, thanks to his work.) Yet Hal is almost unknown outside his specialised field of study. So his story and achievements deserve to be told. Hal's life was unusual; it could be the subject of a Hollywoodish tale of overcoming life's hurdles, with participation of a *deus ex machina*. For those interested, some more details of the relevant science are described in an Appendix. However, the text can be understood without it. Work on this book began in 1982, when many of Hal's contemporaries were still living. All of those I contacted (except one) were happy to comment on him, and among them there were well over a hundred of his schoolfellows. Family and work colleagues were equally happy to talk and write about him. Hal's unusual high school, Christ's Hospital, had an enormous influence on many aspects of his adult life. Distilling all the available information was a long and happy task which caused increasing awe for Hal the man, his scientific achievements and his life. His story more than justifies the telling.

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