

SIR ANDREW HUXLEY

Sir Andrew Huxley, former Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, and President of the Royal Society, London was born in Hampstead, London on 22 November 1917. His father, Leonard Huxley, LL.D., was the son of the renowned evolutionist and supporter of Charles Darwin, Thomas Henry Huxley. Andrew Huxley was also a half-brother to the late Sir Julian Huxley, FRS, and to the late Aldous Huxley, the writer and philosopher.

Andrew Huxley was educated at University College School and Westminster School, London. Before World War II, Huxley was an undergraduate at Trinity College, Cambridge. He graduated in the physical sciences in 1938, and then took an advanced course in Physiology, during which one of his teachers was AL Hodgkin. But his formal introduction to research was the short period he and Hodgkin spent together at the Marine Biological Laboratory at Plymouth in the summer of 1939 when they succeeded in recording with an internal electrode the resting and action potentials of the giant nerve fibre of the squid. This collaboration may be described as full of potential and exciting, but it was brought to a halt by the prospect of war. After a year as a clinical medical student, Huxley spent the remainder of the war in operational research on the application of radar to gunnery, first for the Anti-Aircraft Command (1940-42) and later for the Admiralty (1942-45).

When the war ended he returned to Cambridge where he was appointed to a demonstratorship in the Department of Physiology in 1946. He then took up a Research Fellowship at Trinity College where he was able to continue the very fruitful collaboration on electrical excitation and conduction in nerve fibres which he had started with Hodgkin in 1939, work for which they shared the 1963 Nobel Peace Prize in Physiology or Medicine jointly with Sir John Eccles. It is a matter of interest that the formidable task of computing theoretical curves of propagated action potentials was performed with the aid of only a hand-operated calculating machine!

In 1951 Huxley was appointed Assistant Director of Research in the Department of Physiology, Cambridge University, and in 1959 Reader in Experimental Biophysics. From 1951, partly as a result of a long standing interest in microscopy, his researches were concentrated in the mechanisms of muscle contraction. He developed a variety of optical, electrical and mechanical techniques for making precise observations on isolated muscle fibres. From 1960 to 1969 he was Jordell Professor and Head of the Department of Physiology at University College, London, and from 1969 to 1983 he was appointed as a Royal Society Research Fellow.

Sir Andrew was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1955, served on the Council from 1960 to 1962 and from 1977 to 1979, and was President of the Royal Society from 1980 to 1985. Among many other appointments, he was President of the British Association for the Advancement of Science for the year 1976-77, a member of the Agricultural Research Council from 1977 to 1980, a Trustee of the National History Museum and also of the Science Museum in South Kensington, London, and a member of the nature Conservancy Council. From 1986 to 1993 he was President of the International Union of Physiological Sciences.

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Huxley's active and analytical mind and his calm unruffled temperament have become legendary within scientific circles. As President of the International Union of Physiological Sciences, he was a member of the International Council of Scientific Unions (ISCU) and he served on its executive. In this capacity he played a major role in endeavouring to maintain the free circulation of scientists and of scientific information around the world.

He has been the recipient of numerous academic honours and he holds twenty-six honorary doctorates from many international as well as British universities, including the Honorary Science Doctorate from his Alma Mater, Cambridge.

He is an Honorary Fellow or Member or Foreign Associate of a number of academies of science and medicine in the old and new world; and has Honorary Fellowships at numerous prestigious institutions. In 1974 he was made a Knight Bachelor in the Queen's Birthday Honours list. In 1983 Sir Andrew was admitted to the Order of Merit.

In recognition of Sir Andrew's remarkable contributions to science, it is with great pleasure that the University confers upon Andrew Huxley its highest honour, the degree of Doctor of Science, *honoris causa*.