

Obituary

Professor Terence J. Painter
1933–2003



Terence John Painter was born August 1933 in Dartford, UK. In 1954 he gained his BSc in Chemistry from Bristol University, UK, 1956 his MA and 1957 his PhD, both in Chemistry from Queen's University, Canada.

Terry developed an early passion for carbohydrate chemistry, which continued for the rest of his teaching and research career. His early work focused on plant polysaccharides in Lucerne seed and Loblolly pine wood.

In 1960 he returned to the UK to take up the position of Medical Research Fellow at the Lister Institute in London where he carried out groundbreaking research isolating and characterising oligosaccharides from the human blood groups.

In 1964 he moved to the Norwegian Institute of Seaweed Research at the University of Trondheim, Norway (presently: Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU)). Together with colleagues, he

elucidated the fundamental structure of seaweed alginate. He also concentrated heavily on the mechanism of periodate oxidation in a range of plant and seaweed polysaccharides where he demonstrated the formation and role of intramolecular hemiacetals.

By the late 1970s Terry turned his attention to the polysaccharide structure of *Sphagnum* mosses in order to investigate why these plants have such a high cation-exchange capacity and why this plant does not readily decompose upon death. This research led Terry to discover what is known as sphagnum; a polysaccharide, which contains reactive carbonyl groups and prevents other material from biodegradation.

Terry also played a fundamental role in teaching. His course on 'complex carbohydrates' became a classic that inspired many of today's scientists involved in carbohydrate research in Norway.

Today his inspiration and enthusiasm for carbohydrate chemistry continues at the Norwegian Biopolymer

Laboratory (NOBIPOL) at NTNU, with current projects focusing on periodate oxidation and the carbohydrate chemistry of *Sphagnum* mosses.

Over 100 publications of exceptionally high quality are ample evidence of his academic stature.

His contribution to knowledge in the field of carbohydrate science cannot be overstated. As a colleague and

friend he will be dearly missed in Norway and around the world.

Friends and colleagues

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