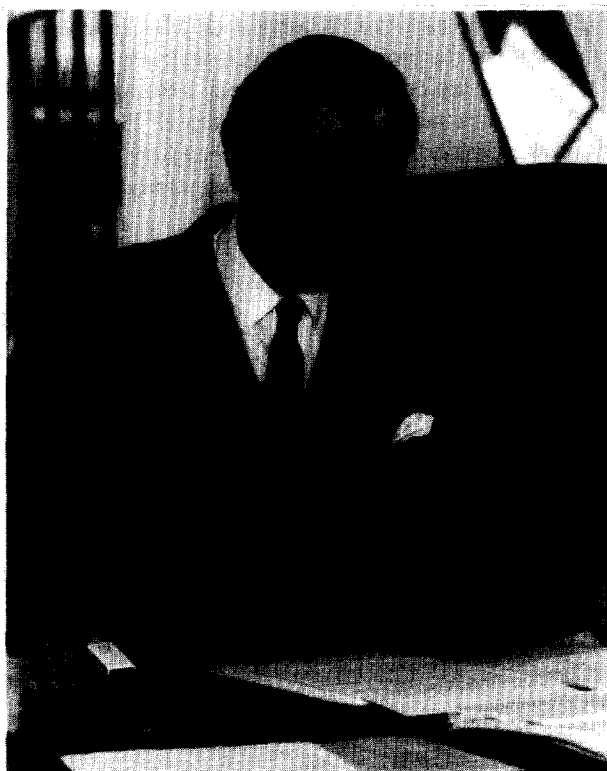




OBITUARY

PROFESSOR TOM AP REES
1930–1996

Tom ap Rees, Professor of Botany at Cambridge and long-time member of the Editorial Board of *Phytochemistry*, was killed in a road accident whilst cycling home from the Botany School on the evening of 3 October. As a plant biochemist of international distinction, his death is a serious loss to the scientific community. We extend our sympathies to his wife, Wendy, and his three sons.

Tom was born in Frome, Somerset, went to school in Wales in Llandovery College and studied at Oxford University, gaining his D.Phil. after working with Dr J. L. Harley. After 18 months at Purdue University in Indiana, he moved to Australia. There he took up a Botany Lectureship at Sydney University and then moved to the Plant Physiology Unit of CSIRO. However, within 3 years he was back in England as a lecturer in Botany at Cambridge, and he remained at Cambridge for the rest of his life. It was here that he developed his research programme on carbohydrate metabolism and its regulation in plants. Working with only a handful of students he made important discoveries about the enzymes of plant respiration, of carbohydrate storage and further metabolism. In all, he published over 100 research papers, many of them appearing in the journal *Phytochemistry*. His lasting contributions to our knowledge of carbohydrate metabolism are contained in his review chapters in Conn and Stumpf's comprehensive plant biochemistry series, which was published by Academic Press in the late 1980s.

I first knew Tom as the co-author with David Davies and J. Giovanelli of their textbook on plant biochemistry. This was the first modern plant biochemistry textbook to appear after the Second World War and although it became out of date rather quickly it made a considerable impact at the time. Tom was an indefatigable referee for *Phytochemistry* and was very generous with his time, being responsible

for monitoring the great majority of carbohydrate papers that were published in the last two decades. In his own work he was meticulous about methods for measuring enzyme activity and always insisted that authors avoided any 'sloppiness' in their techniques. He was a formidable referee and never missed a weak strand in an argument for some new hypothesis about an enzymic control point. He always insisted on the highest possible standards being applied to any piece of plant research, however humble.

My last memory of Tom was seeing him give one of his inimitable lectures to the German Botanical Society in Bayreuth in 1995. It was a masterly lecture before an audience of 400 and he was careful, as always, not only to include some of the very latest results hot from his laboratory, but to generously acknowledge the work of all the students involved.

Tom had many other qualities, not least that of being a superb University teacher. At Cambridge in 1965 he established a new course in the biology of the cell which was eventually used as a model for interdisciplinary courses throughout the country. Later, from 1986 to 1991 he was Director of Studies in Biology at Cambridge before then taking on the Headship of Plant Sciences. He was a kind and generous host, twice inviting the Editorial Board of *Phytochemistry* to meet for their annual gathering in his College Gonville and Caius. During his life, he was utterly dedicated to the advancement of experimental plant science and he will be sadly missed.

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