In memoriam – Roger C. W. Berkeley (1937–2010)

Roger Berkeley, formerly Senior Lecturer in the Department of Bacteriology, University of Bristol, UK, died on 18th September 2010.

Born in 1937, he studied for his Bachelor's degree at the University of Nottingham, stayed there for his PhD on the bacterial decomposition of chitin, and then moved to Bristol in 1964. He quickly became an active member of the teaching team for the BSc in Microbiology, and on the arrival of Professor Richmond (later Sir Mark Richmond) a few years later he made an important contribution to the design and delivery of molecular microbiology teaching, an area in which the Department soon acquired a strong international reputation. Roger also served the University of Bristol and its students in other ways. He became the Faculty of Science Tutor, a position in which he gave special guidance to undergraduates in the Ordinary Degree curriculum, and in 1984 he became warden of one of the student residences, Badock Hall, thus bringing his organizational and pastoral skills to the benefit of a wider group of students.

Shortly after he arrived in Bristol, he began to develop a programme of research on members of the genus *Bacillus*, initially concentrating on extracellular enzyme transport across cell membranes in *Bacillus subtilis*, and subsequently embracing the classification and identification of species of the genus *Bacillus* – with a number of publications from the 1970s to the 1990s. Notwithstanding this evolution in his research activities, he retained his interest in chitin and its applications and in chitinases. He contributed to a number of student texts and research books and edited several of the latter over the years. Many British microbiology students of the 1970s fondly remember the textbook *Micro-organisms: Function, Form and Environment*; this was written by staff of the Bristol department and Roger contributed to no less than three of its chapters: on microbial nutrition, the structure and classification of prokaryotes, and soil microbiology. This list gives some idea of the broad scope of his interests and expertise. This range of activity was supported by a long string of research students, for whom Roger was a very effective, wise, and inspiring supervisor.

As a scientist, he will probably be best remembered for his contributions to the taxonomy of the aerobic

endospore-forming bacteria, the research area that dominated his later work. He applied miniaturized phenotypic characterization tests, automated chemotaxonomic analyses and computer taxonomy to the classification and rapid identification of these organisms; he was probably the first member of his university department to make use of that now universal and essential piece of equipment, the personal computer. He participated in the organization of two important symposia in this field. The first of these, entitled *Aerobic Endospore-forming Bacteria*, was organized by the Systematics Group of the Society for General Microbiology, and was held at the University of Cambridge in 1979; its contributors were well aware that the *Approved Lists of Bacterial Names* were soon to be published, and so the meeting was most timely. The second symposium was called *Bacillus 2000; Applications and Systematics of Bacillus and Relatives* and was organized also by myself and some other members of the Subcommittee on the Taxonomy of *Bacillus* and Related Organisms, of the International Committee on the Systematics of Bacteria (or ICSB, as it was then called). It was held in Bruges, Belgium in 2000, with support from the Belgian Society for Microbiology and FEMS, and attempted to bring *Bacillus* taxonomists and applied microbiologists together in recognition that bacterial taxonomy should be an activity with a clear practical purpose. So popular was this event that one delegate asked – early on in the proceedings – when will the next such meeting be? Roger also co-edited both of the books that were published in conjunction with these symposia. His written work on *Bacillus* culminated in his co-authoring (with Dieter Claus of the Deutsche Sammlung von Mikroorganismen) the *Bacillus* chapter for the 1986 edition of *Bergey's Manual of Systematic Bacteriology*. While he published a number of original papers on classification and identification, his major legacy is probably the enthusiasm with which he infected members of the following generation of *Bacillus* taxonomists – myself included.

Roger was a very sociable person and a great networker. He served the Society for General Microbiology as its Cell Surfaces & Membranes Group Convener from 1975 to 1979, and as the Meetings Secretary from 1980 to 1985. In

the 1980s–90s he was successively the Secretary and Chairman of the ICSB/ICSP *Bacillus* Subcommittee.

Roger and his wife Stella formed a very strong and mutually supportive partnership, and she recalls her hours spent on proof-reading Roger's PhD thesis and preparing many of its figures. Outside the academic world, Roger was well known as a discriminating bon viveur, a generous host, a passionate and accomplished offshore yachtsman who had both cruised and raced under sail (including several Fastnet races) and, latterly, with Stella, explored the

Baltic coasts of several countries in their motor yacht. He was also a keen photographer and lover of jazz. Members of the *Bacillus* Subcommittee and his other former colleagues and collaborators send their sincere condolences to Stella, their children Charles and Louise and his granddaughter Kate.

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