

# THE INSTITUTE OF BIOLOGY PROFILE

► **Age:** 53  
► **Address:** Queensberry Place, London, near the Natural History Museum.  
► **History:** Founded in 1950. At the time fears were growing that biology wasn't being taken seriously enough as a science. It was in the shadow of physics, chemistry, and astronomy to some extent. A series of postwar meetings between various groups of scientists found there was a demand for a central body to act as a focus for the hundreds of separate biological societies in the UK. The institute obtained a royal charter in 1979 and continues to operate as a registered charity.

► **Today:** Drawing on the knowledge and experience of its 14,500 members, the institute acts as an independent body and has submitted many advisory documents to the Government, including papers contributing to the debate over GM crops. It also publishes journals and provides guidance on funding, education and employment opportunities in different fields of biology.

The institute locates experts within biological research and forges strong links between the Government, industry and the bioscience community. It is affiliated to more than 80 biological societies, which has helped to unify biological research. It is also a member of the Biosciences Federation, which brings together the expertise of 100,000



bioscientists worldwide to respond to issues on which it is consulted.

► **Publications:** The institute supports biological research and collates developments in the forms of books, information sheets and four publications.

*Biologist*, published by the institute for members, contains articles looking at the latest developments within biological research. Members receive six free issues a year. June's edition of *Biologist* includes the detrimental influence of habitat loss on butterfly survival. The removal of natural habitats has caused the decline of certain British butterflies and has even caused migration northwards.

*Biobits* is a newsletter which provides a profile of members and details of recent activities within the institute and its branches around the country. There is also information from some of the most important decision-makers in the Government and the research councils.

*The Journal of Biological Education* is for members and non-members and looks at biological issues covered in education. This is of particular benefit to teachers and lecturers of biology.

*Studies in Biology* is published in association with the institute and Cambridge University Press and is a series of introductory textbooks for undergraduates, covering areas examined within their degree.

► **Membership:** The advantages of membership of the institute include free subscription to *Biologist* and *Biobits*, as well as a discounted rate for *The Journal of Biological Education*. Members and fellows are awarded Chartered Biologist (CBiol) status. This is a professional qualification for bioscientists, recognised throughout Europe. The institute also puts forward applicants for professional status as European Biologists (EurProBiol). It has a "continuing professional development" scheme for its members.

► **Renowned Fellows:** Stuart Kind was the first forensic scientist to be elected as a fellow of the institute. His work was crucial to tracking down the Yorkshire Ripper and it paved the way for computers to be used in criminal investigations.

Sir Ralph Riley was a leading plant geneticist and expert in crop genetics and biotechnology. Sir Ralph's discovery of the PH gene led the way to the first true experiments in genetic engineering.

The institute has honorary fellows, including Sir David Attenborough, the double Nobel Laureate Frederick Sanger, the inventor of DNA fingerprinting Sir Alec Jeffreys, Dame Barbara Clayton and Sir John Vane.

PHILIP BROTHERHOOD  
AND JOANNE SOKILL