OBITUARIES

The Society is sad to announce the death of two distinguished Fellows The biology brainteaser

JACK COHEN CBiol FRSS

(1933–2019)

reproductive ‘biologist and science-fiction consultant

Zoologist Jack Cohen CBiol FRSS (or FIIBiol as it was in the days of the Institute of Biology) has died aged 86. Cohen had two lifelong passions: biology and science fiction, and was a character who few who had encountered him would forget. “Biologist,” some of you may be saying? Well, Cohen thought that ‘biology’ needed an extra ‘o’. This will possibly give you an insight into what he was like.

Cohen grew up in Stoke Newington and at an early age was selling tropical fish in London. The profits from this enabled him to go to Hult to read zoology (or should that be zoo-ology?) and get both his BSc and PhD (on feathers) by the age of 26. He then started to specialise in reproductive biology. He began his career in earnest at Birmingham University, working there from 1959 to 1967, after which he spent a while working in IVF clinics.

Cohen was an active member of the Institute of Biology and served a number of strata on various committees including its Council and its Biometrical Sciences Committee. He helped draft the Institute’s Royal Charter and contributed to the West Midlands branch.

Science fiction (SF) was Cohen’s other passion and he was well known from the 1970s onwards at Britain’s national SF event, the Charter and contributed to the West Midlands branch.

Cohen was also known for his occasional appearances on TV’s popular science shows and, for biologists; his textbooks. His books included Living Embryos (1963, 1967, 1980), Sparmutzmata, Antibodies and Infertility (with W F Hendry, 1973) and The Privileged Ape (1989). After his IVF work in the late 1980s, he ended up down the road from Birmingham at Warwick University, where he worked in part with mathematician Ian Stewart. The two went on to write The Collapse of Chaos (1994 and 2000) and Evolving the Alien (2002).

Meanwhile, in SF, Cohen knew of one fan, Terry Pratchett, who was then largely unknown but who had begun writing and seemed to beheading places. Eventually Cohen introduced Pratchett to Stewart and not long after a collaboration resulted in The Science of Discworld, which spawned three sequels.

Cohen spent his final years at a retirement complex in Poole with his fourth wife. There, in their living room, was an inevitable tropical fish tank. On the news of his passing, well over a hundred messages flowed in from friends and colleagues. Cohen was an ‘unusual’ man, a character whose writing was often described as ‘fossiliferous’. He was a character who few who had encountered him would forget. “Biologist,” some of you may be saying? Well, Cohen thought that ‘biology’ needed an extra ‘o’. This will possibly give you an insight into what he was like.

Jack was an inspirational teacher of biology: highly knowledgeable about animals, intelligent, stimulating, challenging, eccentric, an enthusiast, who thought out of the box, not infrequently wrong but always in an interesting way. Every university department needs one Jack Cohen.”

Jonathan Cowie FFG, science writer and former Head of Science Policy and Books at the Institute of Biology.

DR HERBERT AUBREY HAWKES

(1921–2019)

“FOUNDING FATHER OF FIELD ECOLOGY”

Born in 1921, Bert Hawkes commenced his further education at Huddersfield Technical College in 1939, but it was interrupted by the Second World War. Subsequently he graduated from Leeds University in 1947 with a BSc (Hons) in botany and zoology.

In 1957 Hawkes joined Birmingham College of Advanced Technology (now Aston University) and remained there until his retirement in 1984. He continued teaching on a part time basis well into the 1990s.

Aside from his studies on sewage treatment processes, he pursued research into methods for biological surveillance of river water quality. With his groundbreaking work to develop methods for controlling the flies that breed in biological filters, Hawkes was a founding father of field ecology.

Hawkes was an active Fellow of both the Institute of Biology and the Institute of Water Pollution Control, and became a consultant to many organisations, including the World Health Organization. For his outstanding contribution in the field of sewage treatment, Hawkes was awarded the Wiliam Dunbar Medal in 1984 by the European Water Association.

Hawkes passed away shortly after his 98th birthday in April 2019, leaving his wife, two daughters, four grandchildren and a great granddaughter. A character who few who had encountered him would forget. “Biologist,” some of you may be saying? Well, Cohen thought that ‘biology’ needed an extra ‘o’. This will possibly give you an insight into what he was like.

Bert Hawkes was an outstanding contribution in the field of sewage treatment, Hawkes was awarded the William Dunbar Medal in 1984 by the European Water Association.

CROSSWORD

Mystery clues for a misty session and your chance to win a £25 book token

Across

1 Field to order specifics gin or cocktail (6,2,7)
9 Upset stomach having dined (6)
10 No beer distributed with Alcoholics Anonymous (6)
11 Starts off Xmas etc. well (4,4)
14 Think about forming container for chlorine (6)
16 Mint possibly requires I’ve got gold content (9)
19 By going around stay from the right path (5)
20 American state, not Idaho (5)
21 Always ecological (9)
24 This clan in attractive bottles (6)
26 Twix my red disturbed (8)
29 Chances to recover some part (8)
30 Time to publish (6)
31 More than one? Everyone else surprisingly (6,7)

Down

2 Something to eat, that can be assembled into solid weapon (7)
3 Golf, one gets into it in a big way (5)
4 Half of bisexuality working to determine family member (9)
5 Delicate female wading bird (5)
6 It has no cells, nor it is solid, liquid or gas (6)
7 Sources not so varied for medicines (5)
8 It sets the stage for display of bad temper by rowdy outsiders (7)
10 A specific word for laxatives or back of house (5)
11 Informal word for lavatories by home (5)
12 Sort of cup for tea imbibing at home (5)
15 In underground hollow river has to be present to cut away at the rock (5)
16 Settle down, forming roots (5)
18 One you once embraced men, getting upset they are unfriendly (5)
19 My goodness how things can get stuck (2,3)
20 Are assembled into solid weapon (7)
22 True one is moving (2,5)
23 Computer circuit ahead of the others (6)
24 It borders north-east river that’s very sluggish (5)
26 Trees shed could be short and wear off (5)
27 Could be titanium was in direct contact with aluminium (5)
28 Result, a private ballroom for bedroom without it (5)

This issue

All answers come from the world of biology. These clues only provide a subsidiary indication of their answers. Down clues consist of the traditional combination of definition and subsidiary indication.

How to enter

To be in with a chance of winning a £25 book token, send us your completed puzzles by Thursday 29th August.

Please include your name, address and membership number with your entry – an email address would be handy too. Post your entries to: Crossword, The Biologist, Royal Society of Biology, 1 Nasaoo Street, Islington, London WC3 0DB.

Last issue’s winners

Well done to last issue’s winners: Richard A Oatley CBiol MRSS and Ian Masters FRSS. Book tokens are on their way to you.

Could you recommend a member?

The Royal Society of Biology represents, supports and engages with anyone who has an interest in the life sciences, and offers membership grades to suit all levels of expertise.

Existing members are uniquely placed to help grow our membership – and to increase the influence we are able to exert. A significant number of new members join as a direct result of a recommendation from someone they know and trust.

If you have a colleague, friend or family member who would benefit from Society membership, please email their details to us – and let us know if you’d like us to mention your nomination.

email: membership@rsb.org.uk www.rsb.org.uk