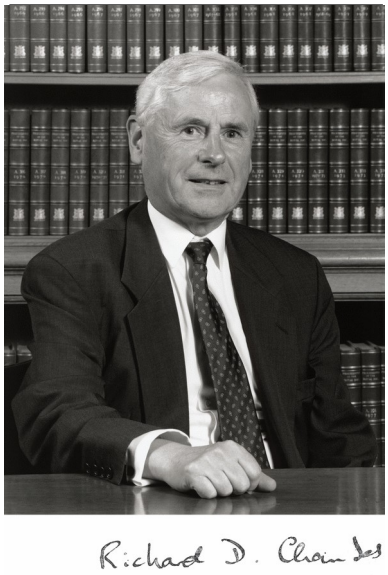
LIFE AFTER TANFIELD



PROFESSOR RICHARD CHAMBERS FRS

PUPIL AT TANFIELD FROM 1946 TO 1953

LIFE AFTER LEAVING TANFIELD

Dick Chambers left Stanley Grammar School in 1953. He was awarded an Exhibition (scholarship grant) to study chemistry at Durham University. He studied under Professor Ken Musgrave, also a former pupil of Stanley Grammar School, and was introduced to organofluorine chemistry for the first time. He began his PhD studies in Durham in 1956, developing the first 'electrophilic oxidation of aromatic systems using peroxy-trifluoroacetic acid'. Dick attended the first International Symposium on Fluorine Chemistry in 1959 at the University of Birmingham.

After receiving his PhD, Dick was involved in research at the University of British Columbia, Canada, 1959–60. After a few months in Canada, Dick received an offer of a permanent lectureship in organic chemistry from Durham University, working with Professor Ken Musgrave again. He was to remain at Durham for the next 40 years. Besides teaching undergraduate courses, Dick was heavily involved in research, concentrating on exciting developments in 'organometallic derivatives of fluorocarbons'. He made significant contributions in this field of research.

He was asked to take a year off from his job in Durham to lecture at Case Western Reserve University in the USA. He took a year's sabbatical leave from Durham and he and his family spent the year in Cleveland, Ohio. His lectures were so successful that the professor suggested that he produce a book based on them. 'Fluorine in Organic Chemistry' was published in 1973, and a revised edition was published in 2004.

Dick was also invited to work in Egypt and Paris during his career, and contributed to many conferences, visiting the USA, Japan, China, Russia and across Europe delivering lectures and developing his links with the scientific fluorine chemistry community.

Dick became a professor at Durham in 1976 and later Head of Department. He appointed many excellent members to the department, which went from strength to strength over the next few decades. During his entire career, Dick led and was involved in important research that advanced the study of fluorine gas and compounds. His unique knowledge and skills were much sought after by industry and with their financial support, Dick and his team made important new discoveries. He was elected Fellow of the Royal society in 1997, in recognition of his enormous contribution to science. His work was also recognised by the world fluorine chemistry community with the award of the highly prestigious Prix Moissan, an award made once every three years by the Maison de la Chimie in Paris and considered the premier award in the field. He received the award at an international event in Shanghai in 2004, not long after his retirement.