

WALTER NORMAN HAWORTH



Walter Norman Haworth was born at Chorley, Lancashire, UK, on March 19, 1883. He attended the local school until the age of fourteen when he joined his father, Thomas Haworth, to learn linoleum design and manufacture. His interest in chemistry was aroused through the use of dyestuffs in his work. Some coaching enabled him to pass the entrance examination of the University of Manchester, and in 1903, he entered the Chemistry Department as a pupil of W.H. Perkin, Jr. He graduated with first class honors in 1906. After three years research, he went to the University of Göttingen in Germany. In 1910, he received a D. Sc. and returned to Manchester. which awarded him another D.Sc. in 1911. In 1911, Haworth took an appointment as a demonstrator at the Imperial College, London and in 1912 he moved to St. Andrews University, St. Andrews, Scotland, as Lecturer and Reader in Chemistry. In 1920, he was called to the Chair in Chemistry at the University of Durham and in the following year succeeded Phillips Bedson as Director. He was appointed Professor and Director of the Department of Chemistry in the University of Birmingham in 1925 and he remained in this position until his retirement in 1948, becoming Dean of the Faculty of Science and acting as Vice-Principal during 1947-1948. He was active in his retirement, serving on many Boards and Committees; and represented the Royal Society at the Seventh Pacific Science Congress in New Zealand during February, 1949.

Much of his research work was done on the structure of the sugars. He devised a form of representing the sugar molecules in ring form rather than placing the carbon atoms in a straight line. The ring form presented more accurately the molecular structure and was more useful in describing chemical reactions in which the sugar was involved. Haworth also worked on Vitamin C and was the first one to synthesize it in 1934. He suggested the name ascorbic acid, a name now universally accepted. He received the Nobel Prize in chemistry in 1937 for his investigations on carbohydrates and vitamin C. Paul Karrer shared the Prize for his investigations on carotenoids, flavins and vitamins A and B2. Haworth was knighted in 1947.

He died on March 19, 1950.

Reference:

http://nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/chemistry/laureates/1937/haworth-bio.html

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