

Obituary

Dr M. Elisabeth Sharpe

Dr M. Elisabeth Sharpe, who died last year, was Editor of the *Journal of Dairy Research* from 1975 to 1989. During this period she devoted her considerable energies and talent to putting the *Journal* on a sound financial footing and expanding its contributions from authors in the developing world. Becky, as she was known to her friends and colleagues, was highly successful in both these goals and the *Journal* continues to build upon her success to this day.

Her editorship was the culmination of a notable scientific career, full of achievement and friendships. Born in 1916 in Barnsley, Yorkshire, Becky Sharpe completed her BSc degree at University College London in 1937 and went on to a year of postgraduate study in microbiology at the University of Manchester. She then joined the staff of the National Institute for Research in Dairying, Shinfield, an Agricultural Research Council Institute and a part of the University of Reading. She left in 1942 for a 4 year stint with The Boots Company in Nottingham and returned to Shinfield for a 30 year period of exemplary research in dairy microbiology in the Department of Bacteriology.

The Department had a tremendous group of researchers and was a really exciting place for many of us to start our careers working with people like Becky Sharpe, Bruno Reiter, Frank Neave and Christina Cousins. Becky interacted with many of us over her career, and her research resulted in hundreds of publications and contributions to the scientific literature on the microbiology and microflora of milk and dairy products. She is probably best remembered for her work on staphylococci, micrococci and the lactobacilli. Often she pioneered the development of new techniques for the growth, isolation and identification of these Gram-positive organisms. She was especially pleased with her work as a contributor and editor for *Bergey's Manual of Systematic Bacteriology*, which continued after retirement. She received her PhD from the University of Reading in 1951 and a DSc degree from the University of London in 1973.

On a more personal note, the author remembers Becky as a generous and stimulating scientific colleague. She was always willing to listen to the ideas of a young and inexperienced scientist and offer help and advice. She was highly respected and well known in the world of dairy microbiology, and many outstanding microbiologists either worked with her or trained under her. Her laboratory was a favoured stop for researchers from across the globe.

After retiring from active research in 1976 she remained very active in scientific circles. Her Editorship of the *Journal* was a major commitment, but she was also an active participant in scientific society activities, particularly as a fellow of the Institute of Biology. Her numerous scientific contributions, and the health and international flavour of the *Journal* speak to her professional accomplishments. Her friendship and help will be fondly remembered and missed by all of those fortunate enough to have worked with her.

Professor A. J. Bramley
University of Vermont