

ANIMALCULES

The Activities, Impacts, and Investigators of Microbes

Begun three centuries ago by pioneers who constructed rudimentary microscopes to observe otherwise invisible life, the field of microbiology has often evolved in unexpected ways. Through the techniques introduced by these first luminaries, our knowledge of what Leeuwenhoek called animalcules has deepened considerably. So too has our awareness of our paradoxical relationship with the microbial world. Microorganisms continually assail our tissues, yet they also provide the means of promoting human health and environmental well-being. This entertaining and informative volume provides a broad picture of the most compelling areas of the field, its early history, and its recent discoveries.

Animalcules presents a collection of the columns of the same name that have been published over the course of the past 12 years in *Microbe* (formerly *ASM News*). This volume is an erudite, yet approachable overview of microbiology. It introduces the field's earliest "microbe hunters" in their human context. By chronicling the history, pioneers, and discoveries of microbiology, *Animalcules* provides an important window into the incredible diversity of the microbial world. It covers the pioneering work of early scientists like Antony van Leeuwenhoek, Robert Hooke, and Hideyo Noguchi while also providing thoughtful explanations on timely topics such as Botox, Lyme disease, and bioremediation.

About the Author

Trained as a microbiologist, Bernard Dixon has for many years been a science writer, editor, and consultant. He edited the British weekly *New Scientist* from 1969 to 1979 and now writes regularly for *Lancet Infectious Diseases* and *Current Biology* as well as *Microbe*. He holds an honorary D.Sc. from the University of Edinburgh for his contributions to public debate on scientific issues, and he was appointed an OBE for services to science journalism. He has received the Charter Award of the Institute of Biology, and in 2002 he shared with Steven Rose the Biochemical Society Award "for science communication in the public domain." His previous books include *Power Unseen: How Microbes Rule the World*, *Beyond the Magic Bullet*, *Magnificent Microbes*, and *What Is Science For?* As well as editing the journal *Medical Science Research* for 10 years, Dixon has served as European editor for *Bio/Technology* (now *Nature Biotechnology*). He has been a member of the board of the Edinburgh International Science Festival and the European Federation of Biotechnology's Task Group on Public Perceptions of Biotechnology. He teaches courses on science communication for bodies ranging from Cancer Research UK to the Universities of Oxford and St Andrews.



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