

Editorial

N Mukunda, Chief Editor

We have all learnt that the proper modern understanding of how Darwinian evolution by natural selection actually works is the result of the labours of the trio – Ronald Fisher, Sewall Wright and John Burdon Sanderson Haldane. The first two have probably contributed more in a sustained and deep manner to the foundations of the subject. But very few can come anywhere close to Haldane in breadth of interests and brilliance of conception and expression. We present many facets of the man in this issue – his personality and range of accomplishments as superbly recounted by Vidyanand Nanjundiah; his sojourn in India from age sixty five in 1957 till his death seven years later, and all he tried to do in that period, described by Partha Pratim Majumder; an excellent review of Ronald Clark's 1968 biography of Haldane by Ramachandra Guha; and a 1937 article of Haldane's reprinted in our Classics Section.

Haldane was a courageous and colourful person who held very strong social and political opinions and had no hesitation in voicing them. He was a prolific source of ideas and questions, and a serious and committed populariser of science. He criticised the establishment and bureaucracy, both in England and in India, most fearlessly. A charming photograph shows him clad in dhoti and jubba, standing beside a suited, booted and tied Mahalanobis – we wish we could have included it in this issue! Nanjundiah's introduction to the Classics article gives orientation and background which must be read before plunging into vintage Haldane.

The centenary of the Curies' heroic saga of perseverance in discovering polonium and radium is marked by an article by M S S Murthy. And a member of the Indian team at the 1998 International Mathematical Olympiad describes his and the others' splendid performance.



'... the universe is not only queerer than we suppose, but queerer than we can suppose.'

– J B S Haldane