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The death of Max Perutz

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LONDON - The Nobel prizewinner and eminent biologist Max Perutz died on the morning of 6 February 2002 at the age of 87. Sir George Radda, Chief Executive of the [Medical Research Council](#), where Max Perutz worked for many years, described Perutz as one of the 20th century's scientific giants. "The impact of Max's work remains a foundation on which science is being undertaken today. His Nobel prize winning work on protein structure is more relevant now than ever as we turn attention to the smallest building blocks of life to make sense of the human genome and mechanisms of disease." Perutz won a [Nobel prize for chemistry in 1962](#), for determining the structure of hemoglobin, a pioneering application of X-ray crystallography to whole proteins.

Austrian-born Perutz was one of the founder members of the MRC [Laboratory of Molecular Biology](#) (LMB) in Cambridge, UK, which he chaired until 1979. But he didn't leave the lab then. Radda said "He was still working on research projects and publishing work in his 80s. Once asked why he didn't retire at 65, he said he was tied up in some very interesting research at the time. This sums Max up well. He continued as a 'retired' worker after 1979, publishing over 100 papers and articles during his retirement. Until the Friday before Christmas, he was active in the lab almost every day, submitting his last paper just a few days before then." In his later years he became a highly accomplished essay writer, particularly for the [New York Review of Books](#).

Perutz will be warmly remembered by many fellow scientists for his enthusiastic approach to life. "Max had many interests and a great love of music and will be remembered as much for his science as for his endless drive and passion for knowledge and better communication of research," said Radda.

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