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COVER LEGEND

In 1933 James Wilfred Cook (b. 1900) and his associates at the Royal Cancer (now Royal Marsden) Hospital in London isolated 1:2-benzpyrene, later designated 3:4-benzpyrene (J. W. Cook, C. L. Hewett, and I. Hieger, The Isolation of a Cancer-producing Hydrocarbon from Coal Tar, Parts I, II, and III. J. Chem. Soc., Pt. 1: 395–405, 1933). Concentrates of the active substance were prepared from pitch, and each fraction showed characteristic spectroscopic lines at 4000, 4180, and 4400 Å. Two unknown benzo-pyrenes, among other end products, were obtained from a low melting-point fraction. These were shown to be 1:2-benzpyrene and 4:5-benzpyrene, the syntheses of which were accomplished by Hewett. Unlike 1:2-benzpyrene, 4:5-benzpyrene did not produce skin tumors in mice.


The photograph of Sir James Cook was obtained through the courtesy of Sir Alexander Haddow. A schematic of the 3:4-benzpyrene structure is shown in the accompanying illustration.