

## OBITUARIES

### LEWIS FREDERICK PENNY (1920–2000)

Lewis Frederick Penny died in Northallerton on the 10th of August, 2000, just before his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday, after a long illness. Born in London and educated at Oundle, he decided to follow both his geologist grandfather and father (Chief Geologist of Trinidad Leaseholds), entering Trinity Hall, Cambridge, in 1939. One year later he was on a troopship bound for India with a commission in the Rajputana Rifles. Serving in Persia and with Iraq Force, by 1945 he was in Singapore de-briefing prisoners of war. Returning to Cambridge, he took a first in both parts of the Natural Science Tripos in 1949. Meanwhile, he had married Mary, and first Catherine was born, followed later by three brothers. Appointed Head of the Sub-Department of Geology at University College Hull in 1949, he inherited one wooden hut, one technician, one English and two African students, followed by a new intake of 18 students and a newly appointed Assistant Lecturer. In the same year, he began his long and distinguished association with this Society.

He rightly decided that students and teaching should take priority over personal advancement and research, arguing that only by producing good, well rounded, well trained, employable graduates would the Department gain a reputation for excellence. His insight paid off and his graduates were always readily accepted by mining and oil companies and by geological surveys that were then their main destinations.

Teaching the full London University Honours Degree, as well as one and two-year service courses for other Departments, involved at least 22 to 25 hours of formal teaching per week. This was in addition to administration and building-up map and specimen teaching collections. As an excellent Department Head with great wisdom and humour, he shielded his junior staff from administrative chores as much as possible. Thus, he was able to facilitate their research in the limited available time. His own meticulous, detailed research on the Quaternary enabled him to show that the Ice Age in East Yorkshire ended c. 18,000 years ago, not 50,000 as previously thought.

With a 'shoestring' budget, the first Easter Field Excursion to Shropshire was by train and bicycle. In 1954, he successfully took the Sub-Department to full independent status coupled with all the drafting of courses and syllabi consequent on Hull attaining full University status. The Department developed an *esprit de corps* unrivalled in the University. All this time, Mary proved an ideal Head of Department's wife and, during term time, students were invited round to tea at 94 Newland Park on Sunday afternoons. It was always a pleasure to visit them and to enjoy their company, and to view the 'cricket pitch'. Time and time again, old students and staff alike remarked that it was a very happy Department.

By the end of the 1950s, he had built up the Department to parity with other provincial universities. In creating a chair in 1962, the University brought in an outside candidate giving

rise to a strong feeling of injustice both among his own staff and more widely outside. He accepted the decision with dignity and his peers soon refuted the University's lack of faith. He proved an excellent and popular President of this Society (1963–1964) and his two Presidential Addresses were a model of lucidity; the printed version is still regarded as the authoritative account of the Quaternary of the East Riding. He was a founder member of the Quaternary Field Study Group, and its first Secretary/Treasurer (1964–1968). This group later became the Quaternary Research Association, which elected Lewis as its second President (1971–1973). The success and smooth running of the Birmingham 1977 INQUA meeting owed much to his work as its Treasurer. His administrative ability made him Honorary Secretary of the Yorkshire Naturalists Trust (1968–1972), and he was Secretary of the first Geological Society Working Group on Quaternary Correlation in Britain, co-authoring its definitive report (1973). Cambridge University awarded him a doctorate on the basis of his published research, the University of Helsinki its Quaternary Research Medal (1973) and our Society the Sorby Medal (1979). A genus and species were named in his honour. Hull Geological Society made him a life member and, such was his standing with Quaternary research workers, that on retirement he was honoured by a specially written Festschrift of Quaternary essays.

In 1980, after 31 years service to the University, Lewis retired as Senior Lecturer, and he and Mary went to live in Northallerton, where they enjoyed spending time with their family. They regularly visited their two children who had settled in New Zealand, and pursued their interests in gardening, ecclesiastical architecture and walking in the Dales. Lewis was no mean flautist, and his love of music was conveyed to two of his sons who took up musical careers. His fine sense of humour was remarked on by all who knew him, and the sadness of his passing will be tempered by many memories of happy encounters and time spent in his company.

John W. Neale

### DAVID AUDLEY CORBETT MILLS (1933–2000)

David Mills died at Moreton Morrell, Warwickshire, on the 31st of August, 2000, at the age of 67. He was born at Church Stretton, Shropshire, and attended Shrewsbury School before studying geology at the University of Nottingham. On graduating in 1957, he joined the Geological Survey and was assigned to work in north-east England. There he began a long association with geological maps and with their practical applications.

His first geological mapping was in the valley of the River Irthing, in the north-eastern corner of the Bewcastle Geological Sheet (12). Soon, as an alternative to losing him to National Service, the Survey transferred him to work of more immediate economic significance in the Durham Coalfield (Sheet 32, Barnard Castle). When this work was completed, he was transferred once more, to the newly formed North Wales Unit where he contributed to the Denbigh and Rhyl sheets.

For a brief period, 1965–1966, he was seconded to the Ministry of Technology, at their regional office in Leeds. Following this, he was back in north-east England to carry out, from existing mapping and borehole records, the desk compilation of the Wolsingham (26) and Richmond (41) sheets. During a significant part of the 1970s, David was attached to the geological and site investigation studies being carried out by Babbie, Shaw & Morton prior to and during the construction of the water-carrying tunnels linking the Tyne, Wear and Tees valleys. He also was part of the Geological Survey team that remapped the Newcastle-upon-Tyne District (20).

It was during this latter period that David's great talent as a map compiler and editor was recognized by his management. Thus, in the early 1980s, he joined the Marine Geology Group as editor of the Offshore Geology 1:250 000 map series. This series, of over 300 maps, was the culmination of a major BGS and Department of Energy study of the UK Continental Shelf extending over two decades. From this time onwards, to his retirement, hundreds of geological maps crossed David's desk. His task was to ensure that the maps were produced to a common standard and that these offshore productions were prepared to the same high standards as the Geological Survey's traditional land maps. He was involved in all stages of map production, from the early draft stages through to the drawing office and final printing. This task took considerable managerial and diplomatic skills. It was almost invariably done with a smile on his face, though there were occasions when his anger would erupt if a map was late or not up to what he judged was the required standard. Many a discussion was held in his smoke-filled room to resolve a problem on the new nomenclature for the offshore Quaternary succession, the style of the sea-bed sediment maps or other such issues. By the time of David's retirement from BGS in July 1990, most of the offshore maps were completed. The production of this series on schedule owed much to his own individual efforts, to his willingness to accept responsibility, and to his ability to manipulate and cajole both senior and junior BGS staff to see the job through.

During his time working on offshore maps, he never entirely

forgot his land-based roots. Thus, seeing that there were difficulties in the compilation of the Newcastle-upon-Tyne 1:50 000 Geological Sheet, he persuaded management to add this to his already extensive duties. Nor was he finished on retirement. He had had, for a long time, an ambition to prepare a memoir for the Newcastle District. Many thought that this would not be possible given that the mapping team had long since scattered with variable documentary records retained. David persuaded management otherwise, and the wisdom of that can be judged from the memoir written and published during his retirement. A similar ambition to write a memoir for the Wolsingham District was left unfulfilled at his death. In his final years, he embarked on a new career as a part-time lecturer in geology at the Department of Adult Education of Warwick University.

David was more interested in the practical application of geology than in academic research. He was a pioneer, at the 'grass-roots' level, in the conversion of the Geological Survey from an 'old style' public service body into the present-day more commercially orientated organization. He was not a prolific publisher, his principal publications, with a few notable exceptions, are to be found in around half a dozen Geological Survey 1:50 000 geological maps and sheet memoirs. His geological legacy, however, is much greater than this would immediately suggest. For example, the value to the nation of the Offshore Geology 1:250 000 map series is immense and probably incalculable, having a significant bearing on both the exploration and exploitation of valuable economic resources, most particularly oil and gas. David's crucial role in their preparation will be his lasting memorial.

David joined the Yorkshire Geological Society in 1958, and always took a great interest in the affairs of the Society. Many will remember his years of service on Council, during which time he was Assistant Secretary (1967) and General Secretary (1968–1970).

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