

OBITUARY

With the death on 7 July 1975 of **SIR WILLIAM HODGE**, at the age of 72, the Scott Polar Research Institute has lost a friend and adviser who played a critical part in its evolution. He was chairman of the sub-committee of the General Board of Cambridge University, which in 1956 recommended the present constitution of the Institute. From 1957 until 1972 he was chairman of the University's Committee for the Scott Polar Research Institute. It is this committee which reviews the work of the Institute each year, gives general advice to the director on research and development in the Institute, and uses its influence within the University to help the Institute.

Sir William was Lowndean Professor of Astronomy and Geometry in the University from 1936-70 and Master of Pembroke College from 1958-70. As physical secretary for the Royal Society from 1957 to 1965, and vice-president from 1959 to 1965, he was able to use his national position to help polar research in the United Kingdom. This was important in the period after the International Geophysical Year when decisions had to be taken on the future of the Royal Society's Halley Bay Station, which was transferred to the Falkland Islands Dependencies Survey in 1959. During this period also, the Royal Society's British National Committee on Antarctic Research was the official advisory committee on the scientific programme of the Survey, a role which has ceased with the formation of the Natural Environment Research Council.

Sir William was a forthright man who enjoyed his work and his contacts with many colleagues. His loss will be felt widely in the academic world. He was particularly friendly to younger scholars and his common sense and practical advice on matters concerning the Institute were of great benefit to the present director during his early years here. The staff of the Institute are especially grateful for his role in establishing the effective organization and administration under which the Institute has developed considerably since 1956.

G. de Q. Robin

ALFRED ROSENKRANTZ, one of the outstanding figures in Danish geology, died in København on 8 July 1974, aged 75. He was born on 11 November 1898 in the same city, where he grew up and attended school. Geology became his principal interest, especially the study of fossiliferous sedimentary rocks, but since possibilities for employment as a geologist were very few in 1917, Rosenkrantz enrolled as a student at the Danmarks Tekniske Højskole and graduated as a constructional engineer in 1926. Geology was still his greatest interest, however, and from 1918 to 1925 he worked as a part-time assistant at the Mineralogisk Museum in København. During the summers of 1919 and 1921 he undertook field work as an assistant with the Danmarks Geologiske Undersøgelse [Geological Survey of Denmark]. Through these activities he gained a thorough knowledge of many aspects of the geology of Denmark, as well as unique contacts with an earlier generation of geologists.

During 1926-27 he took part in the Danish expedition to east Greenland under the leadership of Dr Lauge Koch. From the start Rosenkrantz was captivated by Greenland, its geology and its people. He overwintered there during this expedition, living on the newly established colony of Scoresbysund, and quickly became absorbed in the harsh realities of the Greenlandic way of life. His publications on the Scoresbysund region, including two very important accounts

of the marine Liassic deposits in Greenland, show clearly an ability to elucidate the general geological framework in previously poorly known areas. This ability stood him in good stead during his continued field work in east Greenland in 1929, 1934, 1935 and 1936 when he made a series of fundamental observations on the stratigraphy of that area.

In 1935, on the basis of a critical review of Lauge Koch's work *Geologie von Grönland*, a bitter controversy grew up between Koch and a number of Danish specialists in Greenland geology; among the latter was Alfred Rosenkrantz. This unhappy struggle ended with a court case, and with it too the end of almost all co-operation between Koch and the Danish geologists involved. As a result Rosenkrantz abandoned almost completely his investigations in east Greenland and concentrated his future work in Greenland around the western sedimentary areas on Nûgssuaq and Svartenhuk. He led numerous expeditions to this region in the years 1938-39, and between 1946 and 1968. This work established clearly the most important structural, stratigraphical and palaeontological features of the Nûgssuaq-Svartenhuk region.

Despite the formation of Kommissionen for videnskabelige undersøgelser i Grønland [The Commission for Scientific Investigation in Greenland], for a long time it was only in north-east Greenland, under the direction of Lauge Koch, that systematic exploration and mapping of large areas was being undertaken. There was evidently a great need for a new organization responsible for geological investigations in Greenland. It was natural that, as a leader of the Danish Nûgssuaq expeditions in 1938 and 1939, Rosenkrantz was promoter and member of the committee which established the Grønlands Geologiske Undersøgelse [Geological Survey of Greenland] in 1946. With governmental financial backing work was concentrated in west Greenland; Rosenkrantz continued his Nûgssuaq expeditions, and systematic regional mapping was begun around Egedesminde and progressed southwards.

After holding several university positions Rosenkrantz was appointed Professor of Geology in 1953 at Københavns Universitet, a post that he held until his retirement from teaching in 1966. He received an honorary doctorate from Lunds Universitet in 1965. Some of his most recent works include: *Cretaceous-Tertiary stratigraphy and tectonics in northern west Greenland* (1969, together with T. C. R. Pulvertaft), and *Marine Upper Cretaceous and lowermost Tertiary deposits in west Greenland* (1970).

Rosenkrantz fought tirelessly to bring the tempo of geological activity in Greenland up to a level proportional to the geological problems involved, and he certainly deserves a great deal of the credit for the establishment of the Grønlands Geologiske Undersøgelse made responsible, in 1965, to the Ministeriet for Grønland. Today his far-sighted policy is bearing fruit.

Tove Birkelund

BERT WILLIAMSON, a survivor of the *Karluk* disaster in 1914, died on 9 February 1975. He was born in Gateshead, Northumberland on August 13 1878 and served his apprenticeship as an engineer at Hawthorn Leslie's ship-building works. He worked on battleships, passenger ships and tramp steamers for seven years after serving his apprenticeship and came out to Canada as a "guarantee engineer" with the *Princess Victoria* when she was bought by the Canadian Pacific Railway in 1903. He also served on the *Princess Alice* and the first *Empress of Japan* before joining Stefansson's Canadian Arctic Expedition in 1913.

He was on board the *Karluk*, one of the expedition ships, when it was crushed in the ice north of Siberia in 1914. One group of survivors headed for Ostrov Gerel'da and was never seen again. Another party, including Williamson, managed to reach Ostrov Vrangel'ya. With one companion, Captain Bob Bartlett, Master of the *Karluk*, crossed to the Siberian mainland and the survivors were rescued, just in time. It was Bert Williamson's mechanical ingenuity that helped to keep the party alive; he made a small and efficient stove for cooking.

After a brief period in the public eye as a survivor of the famous disaster he took up his trade again and went back to sea. He was invalided out of the services in 1941 and spent the rest of his life in retirement.

Bert Williamson played a small but significant role in a great event; men like him were the bone and sinew of every Arctic venture. He was a small man, but tremendously tough. To the end of his days he remained alert and cheerful, and was a great favourite with the local children on his walks around the block. The *Karluk* expedition was simply one episode in a long and eventful life. He never believed that what he had done was in any way remarkable. Maybe that was why he was such a remarkable man.

Jim Lotz

SIR JULIAN HUXLEY, the "scientist who made science simple", died at his London home on 14 February 1975. He was 87. Although he was mainly interested in problems of evolution he wrote on a whole variety of subjects throughout his life. It was this wide-ranging curiosity that took him, when he was Professor of Zoology at Oxford, on the first Oxford University expedition to Spitsbergen in 1921, organized by George Binney. On his return he wrote several papers detailing his observations and obviously enjoyed the opportunity presented by the archipelago to study in a small area the different periods of a country's emergence from glacial conditions; he saw the possibilities of relating these observations to his experiences in many other countries.

This was the only Arctic expedition in which Sir Julian was to take part and here is not the place to describe further the life of this outstanding man. In the foreword to the volume published in his honour in 1953 appeared these words: "Few other living scientists have so freely given their encouragement, help and criticism to research workers in biology." Sir Julian's autobiography, *Memories*, is published in two volumes by Allen and Unwin, London.