

No. VII.—**Obituary Notices: James Livingstone Begg,
James Stewart Nicol**

J. L. BEGG.—By the death of James Livingstone Begg on 11th August, 1958, the Society lost a valued member, one of the succession of gifted amateur geologists who have served the Society since its foundation a century ago. It is regrettable that he did not live to enjoy the Centenary Celebrations, which were in progress at the time of his death.

Born at Dennistoun, Glasgow, in 1874, Mr. Begg received his early education at Garnethill School. From there he went to Paris, where he studied Art for three years. In 1908 he entered his father's business of house-factor and property-agent, becoming a partner in 1917. At the time of his death and for many years previously he was a Justice of the Peace in the County of Lanark. He first became interested in geology while attending evening classes at Glasgow University, and joined our Society in 1905.

As relaxation from his busy professional life Mr. Begg devoted much of his spare time to collecting fossils and, becoming especially interested in the Ordovician and Silurian rocks of the Girvan District, eventually concentrated on the study of this area. He was a born collector, blessed with patience and a quick eye. Over the years he built up a very fine collection of fossils, especially trilobites, which is now in the Hunterian Museum of the University of Glasgow. Mr. Begg was interested in fossils not only for their intrinsic beauty but also for their scientific implications, and made special studies of some of the material he had collected. As a result he published a series of valuable geological papers in our *Transactions* and in the *Geological Magazine*. His collection includes numerous specimens that have been described by himself or others, notably the late F. R. C. Reed, as types of new species and these form a most valuable part of the collection. His papers published in the *Transactions* of this Society include the following:—

- 1931. "*Trinucleus* in the Girvan Area". Vol. xviii, p. 607.
- 1931. "On the Genus *Cyclocystoides*, with a description of a new species from the Ashgillian of Girvan". Vol. xx, p. 21.
- 1944. "Two New Trilobites from Girvan". Vol. xx, p. 260.
(jointly with F. R. C. Reed).
- 1946. "Some New Fossils from the Girvan District". Vol. xxi, p. 29.
- 1950. "Some New Girvan Trilobites: with a note on the ventral aspect of *Phacops elliptifrons*". Vol. xxi, p. 362.

Mr. Begg's collection and his palaeontological work earned for him an international reputation. His contribution to geological science was recognised by the Geological Society of Edinburgh in the award of the Clough Memorial Prize for the period 1941-42 and by the award of the Wollaston Fund of the Geological Society of London in 1946.

No one has rendered greater service to our Society than Mr. Begg, who was elected to the Council in 1910. From then until 1956, with only one short break, he served the Society on the Council in one capacity or another, for no less than forty-four years. He was appointed Honorary Treasurer (1917), Vice-President (1919-22), President (1935-38) and Vice-President again for two further periods (1948-51 and 1953-56). Mr. Begg's Treasurership, extending over thirty-one years, became somewhat of an institution in the Society. So much was his financial administration valued by members that during his Presidency and Vice-Presidencies the question of appointing another Treasurer was never even raised.

In November 1948 he was unanimously elected an Honorary Member, a rare distinction conferred in recognition of his geological work and in appreciation of his long service.

Over many years, Mr. Begg played a prominent part in all activities of the Society. Frequently he arranged exhibits from his collection and discussed them at meetings. On two occasions, he exhibited jointly with his life-long friend, the late James Wright, specimens from Gothland, Sweden and Hook Head, Ireland, giving accounts of the geology of these areas. Mr. Begg regularly attended the Society's excursions, on many occasions as leader, especially in the Girvan area. In addition, he was always pleased to organise and conduct small parties of members on special expeditions.

Mr. Begg was versatile and gifted. A successful businessman and a good geologist, he was also an artist of merit. Proficient in various media, his favourite was water-colour, and he loved to paint scenes that appealed to him, especially if they had some geological interest. Many of his friends now possess a charming water-colour painting that is a happy reminder of him. Drawings made by him to illustrate certain papers combine the accuracy of the scientist with the skill of the artist.

Mr. Begg, a happy and genial person who radiated kindness and friendliness, was regarded with affection and esteem by his

many friends. His interest in them and in their doings was sincere, and he was always happy to be of service to them.

In private life he enjoyed his home, his family and grandchildren, and his friends. The death of his only son in World War II was a crushing blow from which he never fully recovered. He is survived by his wife and two daughters.

The Begg Collection in the Hunterian Museum and his published papers form a lasting memorial; his service to the Society is recorded in its archives; and his happy and friendly personality remains vividly in the memory of his friends. E.D.C.

J. S. NICOL.—James Nicol was born in Glasgow on 2nd March, 1890. Educated in the same city, he saw active service with the Glasgow Yeomanry during the First World War. Much of his working life was spent in Glasgow where eventually he was in business as a manufacturers' agent with continental connections. He died on 27th August, 1957.

Always interested in natural history, he became a member of the Glasgow and Andersonian Natural History and Microscopical Society (now the Andersonian Naturalists of Glasgow) in 1939 and a member of our Society in 1951. He participated actively in the lives of both societies, being a vice-president of the former body at the time of his death and having acted as convener of its geological section for several years. For our Society he did duty as an auditor from 1952 onwards.

James Nicol will be remembered as an enthusiastic amateur geologist who observed much at home and on journeys to Africa, Scandinavia and elsewhere, and who delighted in sharing his knowledge with others. He is survived by Mrs. Nicol. A.H.



James Livingstone Begg

The above obituary was published in *Transactions of the Geological Society of Glasgow*, Vol. 24, Issue 1 (1960), pages 108-110.