

Alexander Herriot, M.I.C.E., M.C.I.W.E.M. 1913-1999

From time to time there emerges someone who while pursuing a successful career in one profession is remembered by many of those who knew him for the contributions he made in another field of activity; Alex was one of these. From boyhood he spent many holidays on the island of Arran. Later in the 1930s, while studying civil engineering, it is perhaps unsurprising that he took up an interest in geology as a hobby. What is more remarkable is that having equipped himself with a petrological microscope, and having mastered the use of this instrument in the study of thin sections of rocks, he acquired a mastery of igneous petrography of truly professional standard.

Alex joined the Society in 1937 and devoted a lifetime of support to it thereafter. He was a member of Council for 35 years, held the office of Treasurer and was elected President from 1976 to 1979. His interest in Arran and its igneous rocks in particular never abated. It is no exaggeration to maintain that his knowledge of the island was unsurpassed and when the professionals needed help they could rely on Alex to keep them right on the intimate details of the outcrops there. He published a number of papers in *The Scottish Journal of Geology* and the Society's *Proceedings* and was co-author in 1983 of the 3rd edition of the *Geological Guide to Arran*. The value of his work was acknowledged by the British Geological Survey when it incorporated many of Alex's observations in the 1987 edition of the geological map of the island.

His interests in geology were not confined to Arran. He collected material from many parts of the British Isles and from farther afield. One certain way to please was to present him with a piece of some exotic rock from a far country. His only stipulation was that it had to be big enough to make a thin section of it. Latterly his collection of thin sections exceeded 5000 and it is now housed in the Hunterian Museum where it constitutes a remarkable memorial to his skill and passion for igneous petrography. This enthusiasm was infectious. With Alex's encouragement many of the Society's members were persuaded to take up the making of thin sections as a hobby and there was a surge in the sales of Canada balsam.

Alex's service to the Society was recognised in 1983 when he was made an Honorary Life Member. In 1990 he was presented with the Worth Medal of the Geological Society of London in recognition of his 'scholarship and devotion to the advancement of geology'. But above all he is remembered with affection by all who knew him for his passion for geology, his patience and good humour when he taught others the skills that he had acquired, and the meticulous attention to detail that accompanied his investigation in the field or under the microscope.

The above obituary was published in *Proceedings of the Geological Society of Glasgow* for Session 141 (1998-1999), pages 13-14.