

James G. MacDonald PhD



After completing undergraduate studies at the University of Glasgow, Jim embarked on postgraduate research on the petrology and geochemistry of the Clyde Plateau Volcanic Formation and graduated PhD in 1965.

He was appointed for a year as a research assistant to H. I. Drever at the University of St Andrews and during that period took part in an expedition to West Greenland to study the volcanic rocks of Ubekendt Ejland. In 1967 he joined the Department of Adult and Continuing Education in the University of Glasgow, where he remained until retirement, by which time he had been appointed as Director of Life Long Learning.

Jim joined the Geological Society of Glasgow in 1963, serving on the council as editor of the proceedings and then for six years as honorary secretary until his election as president in 1979. On a visit to Iceland he invited Professor Sigurdur Thorarinsson, on behalf of the society, to deliver the first joint celebrity lecture, which took place in 1973 before an audience of 350. He served again as president from 1994 to 1997.

Jim has always maintained that to be an effective educator he had to develop his own understanding of geology and to this end, when time permitted, he took part in research projects in the Czech Republic and the Rhodope Mountains of Bulgaria, and University Exploration Society expeditions to Iceland, Finland and Crete. He visited the Hawaiian Islands three times to study volcanic features and observe the development of the Pu'u O'o eruption. He has led many study tours to Norway, Iceland, France, Ireland, Bulgaria, Greece, the Canary Islands, Madeira and the Hawaiian Islands.

Jim succeeded Professor R. A. Howie as principal editor of the international journal Mineralogical Abstracts and in this capacity served as a vice-president of the Mineralogical Society of Great Britain and Ireland. In 2001 he was awarded the MBE for services to adult education. After retiring in 2001, he has continued his own life-long education by studying the geology of the Island of Gigha.