

JAMES ERNEST RICHEY was born on 24th April, 1886 at the country rectory of Desertcreat in County Tyrone, the son of Rev. John Richey. His school education was at St. Columba's College, Rathfarnham, County Dublin. In 1904 he entered Trinity College, Dublin, and graduated B.A. in Natural Science in 1908, with the Senior Moderatorship and Gold Medal. In 1909 he obtained the engineering degree of B.A.I. from Trinity. Thirty years later the same University awarded him their degree of Doctor of Science.

After completing his training at Trinity College, James Richey spent a year (1910-11) at Oxford University as Demonstrator in Geology. Successful in the written competition for entry to the Geological Survey, he was appointed to the staff in Edinburgh and there, on 14th July, 1911, he joined the West of Scotland unit under C. T. Clough.

In the years following, Richey was at work on the Carboniferous Limestone in spring and autumn, and on the Tertiary lavas and intrusions of Mull in the summer field seasons. His first scientific paper jointly with R. G. Carruthers, on **The Lower Limestones of Renfrewshire and North Ayrshire**, was published in Vol. 15, part 2 of the **Transactions** of our Society.

In October 1914, Richey joined the army and served on the Western Front in the 75th Field Company of the Royal Engineers, attached to the Guards Division. While on military service he was wounded, and won the Military Cross.

Demobilised with the rank of Captain in January 1919, he returned to Survey work, continuing that year with the succession of the Calciferous Sandstone lavas in north Ayrshire. The following year saw the completion of his share of the field survey of Mull and the start of his work in Ardnamurchan which continued into 1924 and is recorded in the memoir **The Geology of Ardnamurchan, N. W. Mull and Coll**, published in 1930. From 1925 to 1929 he lost his official geological connection with the west for, on Murray Macgregor's appointment as Assistant Director in 1925, Richey was promoted to be District Geologist of the unit in the east and became responsible for the field survey from Lanarkshire to Midlothian, in Sutherland, and at times also in Fife, Orkney and Shetland.

In 1929 Richey returned as District Geologist to organise the work of the Western unit, then advancing into the metamorphic rocks of Morvern and Moidart and into the Carboniferous and Permian of south Ayrshire and Dumfries. During this very active period of administrative as well as field work, he prepared the exhibit and the explanatory Regional Geology Handbook on **The Tertiary Volcanic Districts of Scotland**, in time for the opening of the new Geological Museum in South Kensington in July 1935.

In the war years 1939-45 normal surveying ceased and Richey was busy in meeting enquiries on scarce mineral commodities, on water supply problems and on other matters relating to the war. He retired from the Geological Survey in 1946, but continued to be active, both in the field as a consultant and on committees, being Vice-President of the International Association of Volcanology from 1936 until

1948, Chairman of the British Volcanological Association from 1950 to 1958, and serving on the Mineral Resources Panel of the Scottish Council (Development & Industry) for many years.

On leaving the Survey, he continued to live in Edlnburgh and took up academic work as a lecturer at University College, Dundee. In those days, the Dundee Department was small, poorly equipped and sadly understaffed, but Richey brought to it his wide experience and communicated his own blend of wisdom, enthusiasm and humour to his students. In his later years at Dundee, he collaborated with Frederick Walker in planning the expansion of the Department and about this time, came to live in Monifieth.

While the official publications most generally associated with Richey's name, and recognised world-wide as major contributions to earth science, are the memoir and map of Ardnamurchan, his official contributions to the geology of Scotland are in fact far-reaching. It is only necessary to mention those on the succession and petrology of the Calciferous Sandstone lavas, on the Carboniferous Limestone Series, on the causes of areal variation in Carboniferous successions, and on sedimentation features and on the tectonics of Moine Schists. His name appears as author or as contributor to twenty-seven official publications, and as a surveyor on no less than eleven one-inch geological maps.

Richey's skill at tracing igneous contacts brought him back to Ireland during the 1920s. There, during periods of well-earned leave from the Survey, he restudied the intrusive masses of the Mourne Mountains, Slieve Gullion and Carlingford. He based his work on the 19th century mapping of the Irish survey and demonstrated clearly that there, as in the west of Scotland, central intrusion was a characteristic feature of Tertiary igneous activity.

His scientific attainments brought him fully deserved recognition. He was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh in 1927, and was General Secretary from 1946 to 1950 and Vice-President from 1956 to 1959. From the same Society he received the Neill Medal in 1965. Further honours came when the Royal Society of London made him a Fellow in 1935, and the Royal Irish Academy an Honorary Member in 1966. He was an Honorary Fellow of the Geological Society of America from 1948. At home the Society of Engineers paid tribute to his work on Highland dam sites by making him a Fellow in 1952 and by awarding him their Baker Medal in 1954. He was a Fellow of the Geological Society of London from 1910, and that society in its turn saluted him by the award of the Lyell Medal in 1933.

James Richey was closely associated with both the Glasgow and Edinburgh Geological Societies. He joined the Edinburgh Society in 1911, served as President from 1946 to 1948 and was awarded the Clough Medal in 1964. His attachment to our own Society extended over a span of 46 years, during which he was our President from 1929 to 1932 and an Honorary Member from 1965.

He will long be remembered by many as an amiable and able leader of field excursions. As a lecturer, his skill was perhaps best seen in the brilliant syntheses of

his own and his colleagues' work, as in his Presidential Address to our Society on **Tertiary Ring Structures in Britain**.

His vigorous health was failing when, in 1968 he and his wife decided to move from the astringent climate of Angus and to live near a married daughter in the midlands of England. Not long after leaving Scotland, he died peacefully in his sleep on 19th June, 1968, at Coleshill in Warwickshire.

He married Henrietta Lily McNally in 1924. To her, and to their three daughters and three grandchildren, the Society offers its sincere sympathy.

E. M. PATTERSON.

J. PHEMISTER.



James Ernest Richey

The above obituary was published in *Proceedings of the Geological Society of Glasgow* for Session 110 (1967–1968), pages 3-6.