

**Professor Wallace S. Pitcher
(1919 - 2004)**

One of the most outstanding authorities in granites, Professor Wallace S. Pitcher (Wally), died in Liverpool on Saturday September 4 at the age of 85. The geological sciences have lost a recognized leader, a man excelling in human virtues and generosity, a distinguished, courteous and good-humoured British gentleman. As a student of Professor Herbert H. Read, the author of the famous Granite Controversy, Pitcher was involved early in his career in the hot debates of the 50's concerning the origin of granite. It is in this area of geological knowledge where he would contribute soon after with a holistic approach to the subject of granitoids. His view was strongly founded on field work, an activity in which he displayed his superlative capacity of observation and a keen eye to capture the subtleties of rocks at all scales. Thus, he became a real anatomist of granites, the author of a new nomenclature through which he classified and described plutonic terranes.

A long and sustained period of research on the Irish plutonic complexes of Donegal occupied Pitcher during the 50's and part of the 60's, during which he discovered a remarkable variety of intrusive mechanisms and proposed models to account for the petrological diversity observed in those complexes. The Donegal work culminated with the publication of a major volume (Pitcher and Berger, 1972). However, his main contribution to granitology would take place in the Andes of Peru where he commenced in 1965 an almost 20 year study of the 1600 km long Coastal Peruvian Batholith and its hundreds of plutons. In this adventure, Pitcher engaged many of his colleagues from Liverpool University and a great number of graduate students strongly attracted by his scientific authority and enthusiasm; thus the Liverpool 'Perú Team' was born. The result of this research is probably the most comprehensive and detailed account ever produced concerning a multiple and composite batholith. Pitcher's dissection of the Coastal Peruvian Batholith into segments, superunits and units established a nomenclature whose rationale has been successfully applied to other Andean complexes,

powerfully influencing a significant number of students of plutonism around the world. The volume 'Magmatism at a Plate Edge', published in 1985, is an excellent synthesis of all the contributions to this long-standing Perú Project. Some of us still remember the yearly Peru Meetings held at Liverpool University, attended by geologists of several countries working on Andean subjects, and the cheerful garden parties organized for the occasion by Wally and Stella Pitcher at their home in Upton.



At the beginning of September 1973, Pitcher visited Chile to attend the IGCP Symposium on Circum-Pacific Granites and took part in a Santiago-Mendoza traverse which was dramatically interrupted by the tragic events of September in Chile.

Professor Pitcher held key positions in many university and government bodies in charge of the planning and organization of geological sciences in the United Kingdom. In 1962, he became Professor of Geology at Liverpool University, a chairmanship he only relinquished at his retirement in 1979, but continuing as a full-time Emeritus Fellow up to 1983. However, his contributions to granitology continued for several more years as attested by his excellent book 'The Nature and Origin of Granite' published in 1993. He served as President of the Geological Society of London, the oldest learned society in earth sciences of the world, and in 1978 he chose the occasion of the Presidential Address to read one of his most illuminating papers, 'The Anatomy of a Batholith'.

Geologists in all parts of the world will miss this wise British gentleman, who one day started walking along the mountains of the earth seeking to grasp why and how granites were formed and why they are where they are.