

John Murray and from the Challenger expeditions, later boosted by material brought to the surface by ships of the Royal Navy. After working in the Admiralty during the Second World War he returned to the Museum but was heavily involved in developing UK oceanography, including the setting up of the Institute of Oceanography (then the National Institute of Oceanography). When he retired in 1972 John Wiseman was Deputy Keeper of the Mineralogy Department. The Museum records show that he had published 36 papers in his career.

It was John Wiseman who provided my introduction to the Mineralogy Department in 1969. He had been no mean athlete in his earlier

years and would stride about the department with seemingly boundless energy. He had a habit of always jangling his substantial bunch of museum keys in his pocket as he walked around the department. This provided a warning of his approach to the staff and my memory of that first visit is that we hardly encountered a soul on our tour round the department. Had they all taken refuge in side rooms and store cupboards? I met him on a number of occasions after his retirement and he always retained a lively interest in the department and never failed to recall earlier discussions and dealings with his colleagues.

A.M. CLARK

GEORGE RYBACK 1936–2003

George Ryback was born in Russia on 10th January 1936. Little is known of his early life in the Ukraine, he and his mother being reluctant to talk about it, but World War II caused major upheavals. His father was killed, his family never being informed, which was normal in Russia, and their home was over-run by the Germans. When the Red Army advanced, young George with his mother Tanya and her mother, who came from the noble Razumovsky family, retreated into Bavaria. Here they experienced many nights sleeping in interconnected cellars to shelter from British air-raids. Soon after the end of the war they found their way to London, where

they had some relatives in the De Freitas family. Tanya met and married a Ukrainian emigré baron who was the writer's godfather, who soon brought George and the writer together. We shared a keen interest in chemistry and minerals, which provided the basis for a friendship which was to last the rest of George's lifetime. Initially he understood very little English, but within six months he was remarkably literate. He attended St. Paul's School, Hammersmith, where he put the school's mineral collection into order, then proceeded to New College, Oxford, for his degree in chemistry, with subsidiary mineralogy, the latter being taught mostly by Peter Embrey. At



Oxford he became friendly with Arthur Kingsbury the noted mineral collector. After graduation he stayed on to research for his DPhil in organic chemistry. He worked for a short time at the Medical Research Council at Mill Hill, then was invited to join the crack research team of Professors Comforth and Popjak to work on biological organic chemistry, soon becoming an expert at manipulating minute quantities of material. Within this team, for example, he worked on mevalonic acid, and also isolated the hormone which causes sycamore leaves to fall in the autumn, determined its full stereochemical molecular structure and synthesized it. He moved to Sittingbourne when the team became part of Shell Research Ltd., continuing advanced research, and when the team eventually broke up remained at Shell for the rest of his career.

Familiarity with infrared spectroscopy was a consequence of his organic research, and we teamed up early on to apply this technique to our interest in mineralogy. A scientific approach to topographical mineralogy was another aspect of our co-operation to the end of his life. This approach is exemplified by the application of his

sharp faculties as Editor of the *Journal of the Russell Society* to processing papers submitted by a wide variety of authors. A further example is his work in his last few years on the anomalies of the published work of his late friend Arthur Kingsbury carried out by close examination of Kingsbury's collection, now in the Natural History Museum, London. His many published papers include one on a new mineral, matthedleite, and a considerable number on species new to Britain and to Ireland.

George died in March 2003 of acute respiratory problems followed by pneumonia. He is survived by his wife, Anne, and their children Michael and Elinor.

He will be missed by many people and in many ways. His loss is tragic to his family and friends, but is also a loss to science and humanity. His sharp brain was a reservoir of skills and knowledge, and he was an unusually pleasant person, with a wonderful sense of humour, and completely incapable of evil; if only more people were like him the world would be a much better place.

R.S.W. BRAITHWAITE