

Record

Sir George Deacon CBE, FRS

SIR GEORGE DEACON, President of the Institute from 1961–4, died in November 1984 aged 78. Sir George spent much time during the years 1927 to 1939 in different ships of varying conditions of discomfort and foul weather pursuing his studies for the Discovery Investigations Committee from which he was able to compile his notable Discovery Report concerning the chemical determination, the mixing and the circulation of those distant and complex waters.

During World War II he led an important Wave Study Group at the Admiralty Research Laboratory. Their findings not only enabled wave forecasts to be made off potential invasion beaches, but also formed the basis for all modern sea wave studies.

By 1949 a post-war awakening in Britain of the marine sciences was apparent with the foundation of the National Institute of Oceanography at Wormley in Surrey. George Deacon was appointed Founder Director who, with his extensive sea experience and his enlightened and determined approach to all matters concerning the science of the sea, was the ideal leader to recruit young scientists into their dedicated profession. At the same time he played a major role in the promotion of international oceanography, a wide and expanding field where his counsel was eagerly sought.

Deacon's interest in long-term oceanographic research, which he always favoured above short-term ad hoc investigations, was tempered by his belief that oceanographic knowledge could enhance the practice of the art of navigation. Hence he was an excellent choice for President of the Institute of Navigation from 1961–4. His Presidential Address concerned the close relationship which should surely exist between those who study the ocean environment and those who navigate within that environment.

Among George's 200 or so scientific papers was one on *Oceanography and Navigation* which gained for him the Bronze Medal of the Institute, which was added to his many other awards including the Royal Medal of the Royal Society, the Founder's Medal of the Royal Geographical Society and the Albert I Medal of Monaco.

George was a quiet, friendly, yet utterly determined man who was always approachable and willing to explain the intricacies of ocean science to the layman.

I met George for the last time at the AGM of the Institute only three weeks before his death on 16 November, aged 78. He was in his usual enthusiastic mood, telling me of the imminent publication of his book on Antarctic oceanography written with a view to its use in teaching.

He will be greatly missed at gatherings of scientists and others with interests in the ocean, not least at our own meetings of the Institute which he served conscientiously for many years.

G. S. R.

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