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Obituary

ROBERT STAVELEY BOUMPHREY MBE FSA died at his home in Winchester on 23 August 1987, aged 71. Born in 1916 and educated at Liverpool College and at Pembroke College, Oxford, he joined the Colonial Audit Service in 1939. After service in Nigeria until 1943, his next overseas appointment was to the Falkland Islands as Colonial Auditor from 1947 to 1951, during Sir Miles Clifford's term as Governor. It was typical of Boumphrey that he should interest himself in the history of the islands and also in Antarctic exploration, following a visit to South Georgia and, early in 1950, a tour of British bases as a member of the Governor's party in RRS *John Biscoe*. His next posting, at the opposite extreme of climate, was as Senior Auditor in the Federation of Malaya, whence he moved to Singapore, there finishing his colonial service as Deputy Director of Audit in 1958-59. He now turned to a new career, first as Bursar of Godolphin School, Salisbury, then as Finance Officer of Durham University, and finally, in 1964, as the first Bursar of the newly formed Lancaster University, where he served until his retirement in 1982.

Boumphrey was a kindly man whose ordered mind, scholarly pursuits and wide travel made him a stimulating companion under any circumstances. Outside his family and professional work, his abiding interests were in genealogy and heraldry, and he was an authority in both fields, being the author of several books. His tour of duty in the Falkland Islands led to the publication of papers on the islands' place-names and on the early history of Port Louis; an annotated translation of H. W. Klutschak's paper on a visit to South Georgia in 1877-78; and an edited account of the discovery of Victoria Land in 1841. His (and others') unpublished *Preliminary derivations of some Falkland Islands place-names* remains the most useful source of information on that subject.

Geoffrey Hattersley-Smith

Dr JOHN STANLEY CUMPSTON died in Canberra on 6 August 1986, aged 77. A graduate in law of the University of Melbourne, he entered the public service in 1934. While serving in the Department of External Affairs he assisted E. P. Bayliss, Chief Cartographer of the Department of the Interior, in the compilation of the world's first reliable map of Antarctica, published in 1939, and for which he wrote a handbook of historical background. This work earned Cumpston the degree of Doctor of Letters of the University of Melbourne in 1949, and official recognition in 1966 with the naming for him

of the Cumpston Massif in Australian Antarctic Territory.

During World War II Cumpston served in the Western Desert and was mentioned in despatches for service during the siege of Tobruk. With demobilization came a series of overseas postings, including one to the Australian Legation in Santiago where he developed an interest in Chilean Antarctic activities. It was while serving as Secretary to the Australian High Commission in Wellington, New Zealand, that John Cumpston began to take an active interest in the affairs of the New Zealand Antarctic Society, contributing to their state-of-the-art publication *The Antarctic today* (1952). He also found time to carry out research on the history of the southern sealing industry and especially the history of Macquarie Island, his definitive account of which was published in 1968 by the Australian National Antarctic Research Expedition (ANARE).

After retirement in 1969 Dr Cumpston visited the USA as director of the New England Microfilming Project on behalf of the Pacific Manuscripts Bureau (PAMBU), Australian National University. The object of the project was to obtain microfilm records of American whalers, sealers and traders in the Pacific during the 19th century. Dr Cumpston recorded no less than 420 reels of film covering the contents of numerous East Coast archives. On the second of these trips in 1976 he received injuries in a car accident which were to impair his health for the rest of his life. Dr Cumpston's second great achievement during retirement was the establishment of the Roebuck Society, funded entirely from his own resources and intended to help amateur historians publish the results of their research. Over thirty of these publications, mostly in the field of early Australian history, constitute a continuing memorial to John Cumpston's love of scholarship.

H. G. R. King

L. M. ('Max') FORBES, a former editor of *Polar Record*, died on 19 October 1987. An obituary will appear in the April 1988 issue.

Mrs W. M. HAYES. Mrs Winifred M. Hayes died at her home in Malawi on 16 September 1986. Her many friends miss her deeply. I feel she should be remembered in *Polar Record*, and tribute paid to the part she played at the birth of the Scott Polar Research Institute. As Miss Winifred Drake, nicknamed Francis, she became my

father's first Assistant at the fledgling Polar Institute in 1925. She worked for nothing to start with (she called it 'unofficially'), giving invaluable encouragement and help in sorting, labelling and arranging exhibits for the museum, cataloguing the books, dealing with correspondence, as well as entertaining eminent explorers and the many undergraduates who called for advice about preparing their own expeditions. She would also deluge the musk-ox heads with Keating's Powder—all this as well as filling a full-time post teaching at the Cambridge County Girls School. Francis was an inspired help to the Director in many ways. She was full of ideas and energy, took much of the burden of administration from him, and managed to persuade people to donate precious items to the museum, among them Mrs Oriana Wilson, who gave many of Dr Wilson's paintings to the Institute. Francis also helped to get *Polar Record* started. A revealing first paragraph in the Annual Report of the Committee of Management for 1931 (printed in *Polar Record* 2: 37, 1931) reads:

The valuable services rendered during the year by Miss W. M. Drake, who has been acting as Assistant to the Director, have enabled the Institute to extend its activities. It has been possible, for instance, to have the building open daily from 2 to 4 p.m. for visitors, and over three hundred people have taken advantage of this arrangement.

In 1931, having seen the first issue of *Polar Record* appear in print, Francis relinquished her post to Miss Betty Creswick (now Mrs J. I. Moore). She married G. D. Hayes and was whisked away to a tung plantation in Malawi. She never lost her interest in the Polar Institute and in polar matters; during the War she came to England and worked at the Institute again for a time. In her mid-eighties she gave a speech at the dedication of my father's

memorial plaque in 1984 in which she described the early days with great charm and vitality. I feel that without Francis's drive and dedication, her wit—caustic as it could be at times—and humour, at the start, the Institute would not have become so rich in exhibits and so high in international renown as it did so early in its foundation.

Barbara Debenham

Prof J. A. STEERS, a former Acting Director of the Scott Polar Research Institute, died on 11 March 1987 at the age of 87. Born at Bedford on 8 August 1899 he was educated there and at Elstow School. Subsequently he read geography at St Catherine's College, Cambridge, and was elected to a fellowship in 1925. Shortly afterwards he was appointed a demonstrator and subsequently lecturer in the Department of Geography. In 1949 he succeeded Frank Debenham as Professor of Geography, a post he retained until 1966. Prof Debenham was also founder and first director of the Scott Polar Research Institute; and so it came about that Prof Steers, in his capacity as Head of the Geography Department, took over the acting directorship of the Institute after the resignation of Dr Colin Bertram on 31 December 1956. He served as chairman of the then Committee of Management until the appointment of Dr Gordon Robin as the first full-time Director on 1 April 1958. Subsequently Prof Steers worked closely with Dr Robin, helping to steer the Institute through its newly constituted role as a sub-department in the Department of Geography. As is well known, Prof Steers' academic interests lay in the coastal phenomena of the British Isles rather than in polar studies, but he displayed continuing interest in the work of the Institute and was ever ready with the benefit of his wisdom when the need arose.

H. G. R. King