

## **Professor W. B. Fisher**

Professor William Bayne Fisher who died on 29th June aged 67 was Professor of Geography at Durham University from 1956 to 1981. Apart from his considerable achievements in building up one of the largest geography departments in the country, he did much to encourage Middle East studies long before their importance was widely recognised. War service with the Royal Air Force in Syria, the Lebanon and Libya gave him a lifelong interest in the region. His authoritative book *The Middle East, a Physical, Social and Regional Geography*, first published in 1950 has gone through seven editions. He was appointed first Director of the Centre for Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies at Durham, and first Principal of the Graduate Society. In both capacities Bill Fisher took great delight in welcoming visitors and research students from the Middle East, many of whom experienced his warm and generous hospitality. Libya played a special part in Bill Fisher's career. As meteorological officer at RAF El Adem towards the end of World War II he acquired an excellent knowledge of the regional environment. In 1953 as Lecturer in Geography at the University of Aberdeen he led a highly successful staff-student expedition to Cyrenaica. He was a long-standing member of the Society for Libyan Studies and served on the Council from 1977 to 1980. He will be greatly missed by his many friends in Britain and the Middle East – not least in Libya where several of his ex-students hold high office.

*GERALD BLAKE*