

Margaret Wilson Stanier 1919 – 2007

Margaret Stanier, who died on 13th September this year at the age of 88, was a powerful and worthy editor of our Bulletin for many years. Born in Ealing she was educated at Somerville College, Oxford being awarded her BA in 1941, and BSc in 1944 and teaching there shortly afterwards.

In 1947 she applied for and was appointed to, a teaching post at the Makerere College, on the outskirts of Kampala in Uganda (now the University of East Africa), which was at that time affiliated to University College London and rose to become Senior Lecturer in Physiology. During this time she did the work for which she gained her Oxford D.Phil in 1953. On her return to Britain in 1955 she joined the Department of Experimental Medicine in Cambridge, undertook agricultural research at the Babraham Institute and in 1962 was elected to a Fellowship at Newnham College with the impressive title of *College Lecturer in Physiology and Director of Studies in Medicine and Veterinary Science* and was awarded a Cambridge PhD by incorporation.

Over these years she authored or co-authored many works published both in Nature and elsewhere and between 1984 and 1989, she was a co-author of two books on aspects of physiology.

At Newnham she soon took an interest and involvement with their observatory and its 4 inch equatorially mounted telescope. Margaret took on the organisation of the telescope's use, the induction of students in the operation of the instrument and later in her life, wrote a history of the telescope. It was in this period too that she really took up her many hobbies and parallel interests which she expanded and extended following her retirement.

She was made a Fellow Emerita of Newnham College upon her retirement in 1984 and, taking up bell-ringing, she became a keen change ringer of the 'tricky' bells at Swaffham Prior tower.

Margaret was a niece of Sir William Stanier FRS the renowned steam engine designer of the 1930s, whom she referred to as Uncle Will; something that could be rather disconcerting to steam enthusiasts standing rather in awe of the great man. She always treasured a special spanner that he personally made for her – and stamped with his name – so that she could regulate her wrist watch when in Uganda.

Always having a keen botanical interest Margaret became involved in the restoration of the Devil's Ditch (an Anglo-Saxon earthwork now an SSSI) near Newmarket. She undertook monitoring and reporting on the rare flora there and wrote articles about them.

It was probably her mother who first ignited Margaret's gnomonic interest by making dials from sticks in the garden and Margaret joined the British Sundial Society in 1990 only months after its formation. She attended every Annual Conference thereafter until 2006. Over the years she contributed many articles for the Bulletin and, in 2004, wrote a *Guest Editorial* for the NASS Compendium.

It was in this period too that she wrote, what have become to those interested in dialling, seminal monographs describing in considerable detail the dials of Oxford and jointly with Alexis Brookes, those of Cambridge.

Her appointment as Bulletin Editor after Charles Aked's resignation, brought a welcome and logical change to the Bulletins' numbering scheme and it implemented a new though fair, rigour in the standard of articles that were published. Anecdotes of her attention to detail abound with one author being refused a reference to a 'New Saxon Dial' and yet another, anticipating a problem with having to use both American and English spellings of Diallist in the same article, being surprised at her acceptance of it.

Margaret was a forthright and entertaining lady whose contributions to British dialling and to the British Sundial Society in particular will be remembered for many years. She is sorely missed by all who had occasion to know her.