

DERRICK NORMAN LAWLEY
MA, DSc
Mathematician

Derrick Lawley, one of our most senior Fellows, died on 27 February 2012. An outstanding mathematician, with over 60 papers to his name, he was a pioneer in various difficult aspects of multivariate statistical inference.

His engineer father had an inventive streak, and Derrick's talents showed early. Years at Charterhouse led to an Open Scholarship to Clare College Cambridge, and First-class graduation in 1937.

His early employment as a statistician with the distinguished Scottish School of Educational Research at Moray House, Edinburgh, involved him not only in problems of standardising mental tests (The Moray House Test) but also in the vast topic of factor analysis. As a consequence of this association with the late Sir Godfrey Thomson, he became an authority on this field of statistics, a status that not only earned him a DSc but also, in 1948, brought him election to Fellowship of the Royal Society of Edinburgh.

He delighted in telling of an incident in about 1940, when he was under consideration for applying his mathematical expertise to an unspecified wartime task. During an interview, he was subjected to an IQ test. He noticed that in front of him was a Moray House Test that only a few months previously he had spent much time validating and standardising! His 1963 book with A E Maxwell (*Factor Analysis as a Statistical Method*' 2nd ed. 1971, Butterworths) has long been the standard introductory text for psychometricians.

A Fellow of the Royal Statistical Society, elected in 1946, Derrick was one of the first to bring strict modern principles of statistical estimation into the structure of factor analysis. His 1968 paper (Jöreskog K. G. & Lawley D. N. New methods in maximum likelihood factor analysis. *British Journal of Mathematical and Statistical Psychology* 21, 85-95) was a major methodological advance in the period before computer sophistication produced efficient numerical procedures for the maximisation of a complicated likelihood function.

In 1946, Derrick was appointed Lecturer in Statistics in the University of Aberdeen. Only a year elapsed before Professor Alexander C. Aitken recalled him to Edinburgh as Lecturer in Statistics, with diverse responsibilities, in the University of Edinburgh.

In 1966, Edinburgh undertook a major expansion in its facilities for teaching and consultation in statistical science. Derrick now found himself translated, as Reader, to David Finney's new Department, where he became a central pillar in loyal support of his old friend until retirement in 1982. Many newcomers to the staff later expressed their gratitude to Derrick and his wife for hospitable help around the time of their arrival.

Marriage with Ruth Freeman came in 1948. The couple were enthusiastic hill and mountain walkers. He tended the garden of their new house meticulously and made it highly productive, as fondly remembered by their one daughter. He was a good pianist and lover of classical music. Blessed with – or cursed with (?) – perfect pitch, he was a regular attender at concerts in his city.

Derrick left few personal records. I am indebted to Miss Anne Lawley and to Professor Colin Aitken for help in confirming much of the detail above.

David J. Finney

Derrick Norman Lawley, MA(Cantab), DSc(Edin). Born 26 March 1915; Elected FRSE 1 March 1948; Died 27 February 2012.