

ANDREW RODGER WATERSTON  
OBE, BSc(Edin), FRES

Rodger Waterston was born on 30 March 1912, at Ollaberry, Shetland. He died on 12 July 1996, in Edinburgh, aged 84. With his death Scotland has lost one of its last great all-round scholar naturalists - a distinguished figure, competent and confident to study and publish on the taxonomy and field biology of almost any group of the animal kingdom. Through the breadth of his interests in entomology, malacology and the study of the Scottish fauna, together with a bountiful helpfulness and a persistent and determined backing of what he believed to be worthwhile, Rodger was a strong stimulus behind the flowering of much that was good in the study and interpretation of zoology in Scotland over more than half a century. It was in recognition of this that in 1982 he was awarded the Neill Prize Medal by the Royal Society of Edinburgh, of which he had been a Fellow since 1946.

He was the younger son of James Waterston, who was at that time a minister of the United Free Church at Ollaberry, with wide formally trained interests in natural history. Within a couple of years the family moved to London, where Rodger attended St Paul's School while his father became a distinguished entomologist, first with the Imperial Bureau of Entomology then, after war service, at the British Museum (Natural History). Regular contact with some of the great names of entomology no doubt encouraged the development of Rodger's entomological interests, and he held strong memories from that boyhood experience. Probably he learned his excellent field skills in boyhood. He then read Zoology at Edinburgh University, obtaining his BSc with 1st Class honours in 1934. With several others who were to go on to develop notable careers in biology, including Marie Elizabeth Campbell whom he was to marry in 1938, he participated in Edinburgh University Biological Society's classic 1935 expedition to survey and record the fauna and flora of Barra. This experience began a lifelong association with the Outer Hebrides that included living for sizeable parts of his last 30 years on Barra, and major studies on the fauna of those islands.

He switched from postgraduate study during 1935 to join the Natural History Department of the Royal Scottish Museum (one forerunner of the present National Museums of Scotland) as an Assistant Keeper to work on the invertebrate collections. Although progressively specialising in entomology, he brought with him a much broader expertise, having already published several papers on molluscs and also on other non-arthropod invertebrates, and these wider interests were sustained throughout his life and continued to be reflected in some of his scientific publications.

At the outbreak of war Rodger was seconded to the Ministry of War Transport as District Transport Officer for Clydeside until 1942, after which he served with the Royal Scots for a year. In the autumn of 1943 he transferred to the Colonial Office's Middle East Supply Centre, Cairo, as Locust Officer in the Middle East Anti-Locust Unit and took charge of the Palestine Anti-Locust Unit in Saudi Arabia.

The need for locust control did not end with the war, and Rodger stayed on, travelling widely in the Middle East, India and NE Africa to construct the framework necessary to monitor and control such an erratic and explosive pest. He was appointed Chief Locust Officer in charge of operations in the Middle East, Eritrea and Ethiopia in 1947, and from about that time until his return to Scotland in 1952 he was Entomological Advisor to the British Middle East Office and Attaché for Scientific Affairs at the British Embassies in Cairo and latterly Beirut. In addition to field research, Rodger's work in the Middle East was largely concerned with establishing technical cooperation and coordination in the control of the desert locust across some very difficult international frontiers. Rodger's success in the Middle East, for which he was made an OBE in 1952, is testimony to personal qualities of patience, tact, integrity and dignity that remained easy to spot in the person I came to know from 1980 onwards.

In 1952 he returned to the Royal Scottish Museum, becoming Keeper of Natural History in 1958 until retiring in 1973 (though he was retained in a research capacity as Keeper Emeritus until 1977). It was a good period in the Museum not just for entomology, but for zoology as a whole. Rodger developed the collections, secured a number of important donations and bequests, improved their accessibility and exhibition, and brought to the Department several new staff who gave distinguished service. It is to Rodger's time that the current operation is largely traceable. He redirected much of his own entomological research from *Hymenoptera* and *Hemiptera*, which he had collected extensively in pre-war days, to *Odonata* and *Neuroptera* in response to a major bequest, the Kenneth Morton collection, that had come to the Museum during the war years and which both needed and merited extensive curatorial work. He took great advantage of the willing entomological contacts made overseas to collect specimens to develop these collections further. He published particularly on dragonflies, especially those of the Middle East, finding the time to do so largely after his retiral. Other important publications at this time were on the fauna and ecology of the Outer Hebrides. As a co-editor of the *Scottish Naturalist* from just before the war and again from 1983, he was involved in editorial standard-setting, and he did much as an advisory referee to help the Curwen Press and subsequently Harley Books to achieve their exceptional standards in entomological publication. In fact, blessed as he was with a superb memory and an eye for detail, he made a strong scientific contribution simply through the unstinting help he gave to others. He was also one of the founders of the Scottish Natural History Library, and it was largely due to Rodger's efforts that it received both the library of the Royal Physical Society of Edinburgh and the natural history holdings of the Royal Society of Edinburgh.

Although modest by nature, Rodger was an excellent raconteur with a nicely dry sense of humour. His wide intellectual interests, and the respect in which he was universally held, mean that he will be deeply missed: the excellence of his life's work, however, is indelibly embedded in the zoological collections of the National Museums of Scotland and through them we shall continue to respect and enjoy him as a gifted naturalist and scientist. He is survived by his wife Marie and their daughter.

MARK R SHAW

