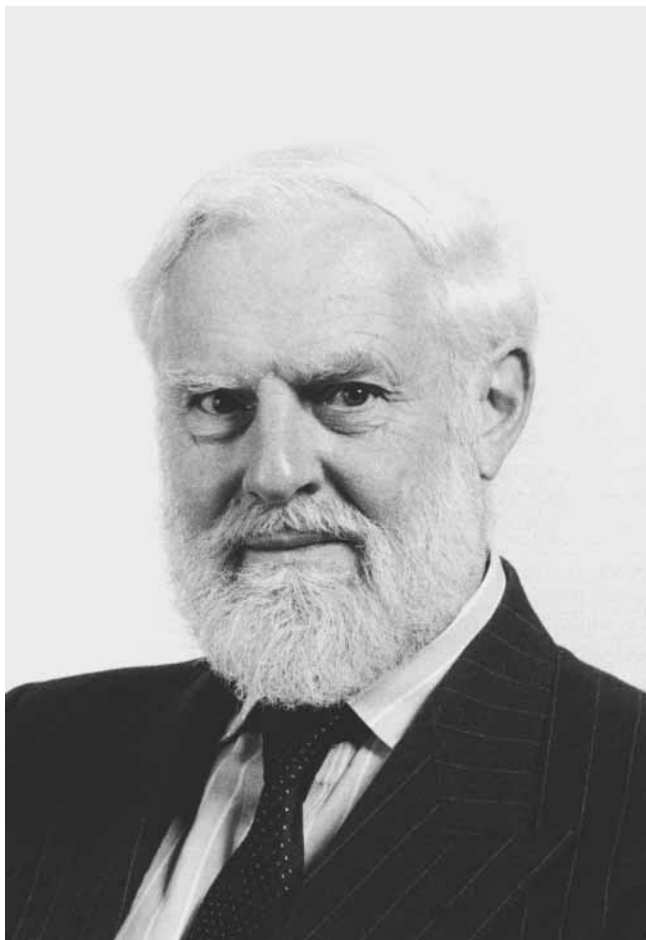


OBITUARY

Professor John W. Neale (1926–2006)



John Neale was born in Burton-on-Trent where his father was concerned with the grocery business and, appropriately to the town, his grandfather was a cooper in the brewing industry. After leaving school he spent two terms at Manchester University, passing the First Year examinations and, in 1943, volunteered for wartime service in the Royal Navy. One year later he was commissioned an officer and served in the hazardous but vital role of minesweeping. With discharge from the navy in 1947 he rejoined Manchester University to follow a BSc General degree in Geology and Geography with subsidiary Zoology, graduating in 1949. It was during this time that he met his future wife, Patti, who was a fellow undergraduate. Upon graduation he was appointed as Assistant Lecturer in the small Sub-department (later a full Department) of Geology of the University of Hull, which was to be his scientific home for the rest of his professional life. John Neale and his senior colleague Lewis Penny, who also joined in 1949, were the only members of

staff and for some years taught the full spectrum of Geology between them. John Neale's diaries record how they had intensive discussions about developing their sub-department and building the teaching collections. The department grew in numbers of students and staff and won a reputation for sound teaching and, in time, for research. It is therefore easy to understand how saddened John Neale was when, following a reorganization of Earth Science departments in British universities, the department he had worked so hard to establish was closed in 1991.

In the early years there was little time for personal research and it had to be carried out in addition to normal duties. For his doctoral research John Neale was initially advised by an ill-informed external person to map the Jurassic rocks of the Market Weighton structure located some 15 miles (25 km) to the northwest of Hull. He soon discovered that lack of exposure made the task impossible; however, he set about trying to map the structure by means of shallow, hand-drilled auger holes. At weekends, aided by a member of the Technical Staff, he would cycle to the Market Weighton area to drill holes. It soon became clear that only microfossils could date the auger samples satisfactorily and at this point he redirected his energies towards the far more promising Lower Cretaceous Speeton Clay exposed on the coast north of Flamborough Head. He was awarded a PhD by the University of Hull in 1961 for his work with Lower Cretaceous ostracods, but it is important to note that his doctoral research was carried out in spare time and was self-supervised. Several publications arose from the abortive Market Weighton project, of which De Boer *et al.* (1958) is the most important.

During his professional life John Neale established an international reputation for his work on Ostracoda. He was unique in his generation for research that encompassed both living and fossil material from a range of modern and past environments from freshwater to marine. In the case of the modern material this involved the careful dissection and illustration of appendages and many of his papers include finely executed anatomical drawings of appendages, together with detailed descriptions of carapace characteristics. He enthusiastically adopted the scanning electron microscope, working to re-figure some of his old material in addition to new taxa via the *Stereo-Atlas of Ostracod Shells*, which he co-edited for several years. It is not entirely clear what drew him to ostracods. The Zoology Department at Manchester University was home to two ostracod workers, H. G. Canon and E. J. Isles, but he seems not to have had much contact with them during his student days. Indeed, his wife had a closer academic connection with Canon than he did. There is no doubt, however, that his background in both Geology and Zoology from Manchester and the example of Canon are reflected in his research work, and appropriately his first ostracod paper concerned both living and fossil representatives of the Quaternary–Recent genus *Normanicythere* (Neale, 1959). The

basic material was derived from the 'Sub-Basement Clay' of Dimlington on the coast east of Hull and it is tempting to think that he was directed to this deposit by colleague Lewis Penny who was a Pleistocene specialist. The paper discussed the subfamily Hemicytherinae Puri, 1953 (now family Hemicytheridae) and the first draft was so critical of Puri's poor original definition of the (sub)family that the Editor persuaded him to tone down the remarks. This turned out to be a blessing in disguise, as the paper attracted the attention of Harbans Puri who invited him to a meeting of Recent ostracod workers in Naples in 1963. Participation in the Naples meeting led to John Neale being requested to organize a second meeting in Hull in 1967 (Neale, 1969), from which developed IRGO (the International Research Group on Ostracoda) and the series of international meetings now called ISO (International Symposia on Ostracoda), the most recent of which (ISO 15, numbered from Naples as the first) was in Berlin in September 2005. John Neale's own contribution to the Naples meeting was a substantial review paper assessing the factors influencing the distribution of modern British ostracods (Neale, 1965), a paper that was cited for many years subsequently. Between 1956 and 1994 he published 106 original papers and book chapters, and edited five books, mainly on ostracods. The range of his work is impressive, from the late Jurassic to Recent in age, geographically from Antarctica to Novaya Zemlya, and environmentally from the marine waters of the Celtic Sea to the rice fields of Sri Lanka. To palaeontologists he is probably best known for the work on which his doctoral thesis was based, the ostracods of the Lower Cretaceous Speeton Clay (e.g. Neale, 1962), which he extended via studies of material from France and Ukraine and which was ably supplemented by a number of research students working on foraminifera, ammonites, gastropods and bivalved molluscs, as well as ostracods.

A further benefit of the invitation to the Naples meeting was that John Neale extended his international contacts. He met Richard Benson, which led to an invitation to act as a sabbatical

replacement for a year in the University of Kansas while Benson was on a research cruise. As his reputation grew he travelled widely and lectured in Brazil, Canada, China, India, Japan and Russia. The closure of his home department in 1991, coinciding by chance as it did with his retirement age, meant the loss of research facilities unless he was willing to travel to the University of Leeds. Thereafter he devoted himself to his large garden and active membership of three amateur operatic societies. His scientific contributions were recognized by the award of the Gold Medal of the University of Beijing, the John Phillips Medal of the Yorkshire Geological Society and Honorary membership (in 1999) of The Micropalaeontological Society (he was Chairman of the Society; 1976–8). John Neale's collections, together with those of other University of Hull micropalaeontologists, are housed in the Natural History Museum, London with a full list of his publications.

John William Neale was born in Burton-on-Trent, central England on 19 November 1926 and died aged 79 in Hull on 20 January 2006. He is survived by his wife, Patti, and a daughter and a son; an elder son predeceased him. John Neale was a private man of quiet integrity who set himself high standards and expected the same of others.

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