

Edward Watson 1916—1982

Edward Watson was born in Belfast in June 1916 and spent the majority of his professional life at the University College of Wales, Aberystwyth, where he was appointed to a lectureship in 1947. Since 1968 until his retirement in 1980, he held the position of senior lecturer in the Department of Geography.

Although he began his academic career as a human geographer, Eddie soon became addicted to physical geography and, in particular, periglacial geomorphology. His specific research interest, which he pursued with unlimited vigour and enthusiasm, centered upon the Pleistocene periglacial conditions of Mid-Wales. His Ph. D. thesis, which he completed in 1967, was entitled "The periglacial element in the landscape of the Aberystwyth region". In retrospect, this and his subsequent studies stand out as one of the few systematic attempts to evaluate the periglacial legacy in the British Isles at that time. He travelled widely in his search for both ancient and modern analogues, and visited Alaska, the Soviet Union, Poland, Belgium and France on numerous occasions. A number of widely-quoted publications bear witness to his scholarship. It was also natural that he was asked to translate Professor Tricart's classic text "Géomorphologie des Régions Froides" into English, and this appeared in 1970. In 1977, he presented an important summary paper on the periglacial environment of the British Isles, published in the Transactions of the Royal Society of London.

Between 1972 and 1980 Eddie was Secretary of the Co-ordinating Committee for Periglacial Research, a Working Group of the International Geographical Union. He worked closely and tirelessly with its Chairman, Professor Albert Pissart, in the reorientation of periglacial geomorphology at the international level. Their objective was to broaden the scope of periglacial geomorphology from its traditional Pleistocene and European heritage. A number of highly successful meetings and symposia were organised under their auspices, first in Wales in 1975 which Eddie himself led, then in Belgium and the Netherlands in 1978, Lapland in 1979 and Hokkaido, Japan, in 1980. During this period, periglacial geomorphology changed from a rather specialised branch of climatic and historical geomorphology to a discipline in which quantitative field process studies, experimental/laboratory work, and applied aspects all received equal attention to that of the Pleistocene. Eddie was intimately associated with the changes and he provided constant support to Albert Pissart. Those of us who had contact with Eddie were impressed by his willingness to accept new ideas, his enthusiasm in the field, his sincerity, and, above all, his devotion to his chosen discipline.

This volume of papers, presented at the IGU Periglacial Commission meeting in Iceland in 1982, is dedicated to the memory of Eddie Watson, a scholar and periglacial geomorphologist.

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of Periglacial Phenomena.

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