

OBITUARY – PETER ANTHONY FLOYD (1937–2021)

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Peter Floyd, who died of cancer on the 11th September 2021, was born on 4th April 1937. He was brought up, and received his early education, in Richmond, SW London. He completed a Geology Honours degree at Leicester in 1959 and gained his PhD at Birmingham in 1962, with a thesis entitled 'Geology of the Lands End aureole from Tater-du to Newlyn, Cornwall'. He was then appointed to a lectureship at Keele University, where he remained for the rest of his professional life, rising to become Reader in Geochemistry and deputy head of department (Figure 1). Peter became a geochemist at a time when analytical methods were changing radically. A few years after arriving at Keele he had established a fully-functioning geochemistry laboratory with automated X-ray Fluorescence spectrometry and the support of a dedicated and loyal team of technical staff. His research work was never purely laboratory-based: he was a keen field geologist who needed to know the setting of each sample he, or his team, analysed. His teaching at Keele, mainly igneous petrology and geochemistry, also included the establishment of introductory geochemistry classes which included field days obtaining stream sediment and soil samples from the lead mining area of North Wales for subsequent analysis by students in the laboratory in order to find the mineralized zones.

His initial research was on the geochemistry of rocks in the metamorphic aureole around the Lands End Granite. His results were published regularly, especially in the *Proceedings of the Ussher Society*, which he had joined on its foundation in 1962. He served for many years on its Committee and as the Treasurer (1968–1975).

By 1972 the main focus of his work in South-West England had shifted to the geochemistry of the mafic magmatic rocks, concentrating mainly on the Devonian and Carboniferous basaltic magmatism. These studies were greatly facilitated by the development of rapid geochemical analysis (mainly XRF) which enabled many more samples to be analysed, as well as the range of analysis being extended to include many trace elements. In much of this research, he collaborated with Graham Lees. He also studied the geochemistry of the Lizard ophiolite and nearby basaltic rocks in collaboration with Maurice Stone (Exeter University) and Colin Exley (Keele University). In 1993 a substantial part of his work was published in the *Geological Conservation Review* volume on the 'Igneous rocks of South-west England', which was jointly produced and edited with Colin Exley and Michael Styles. Subsequently, his interests expanded beyond South-West England. He developed an interest in coeval rocks in the Rhenish Massif in Germany, further east along the Variscan Fold Belt, collaborating with Wolfgang Franke, then at Giessen University. He also undertook work based on rocks he had collected in North Wales, Northern Scotland, South-West Ireland, Brittany, Poland and Turkey, and developed fruitful collaboration with geoscientists from the latter two countries. He also participated in the Deep Sea Drilling Project, Leg 129, when it was sampling some of the oldest oceanic rocks then known from the floor of the western Pacific Ocean.

After the fall of the Iron Curtain, he was an active participant in the TEMPUS scheme, helping to train staff and students from universities in SW Poland in modern geochemical techniques and interpretation. At the same time, he undertook



Figure 1. Peter Floyd in c. 1992. Image provided by the University of Keele.

collaborative research in the Sudete Mountains of southern Poland with Polish Earth scientists from Wrocław University and the Polish Institute of Geology. Some years later he was a key participant in the large EU-funded Palaeozoic Amalgamation of Central Europe (PACE) and Transfer and Mobility of Researchers (TMR) project, co-ordinated from Keele and involving geoscientists from eleven European countries.

His work was published in over 160 scientific articles, many of which have attracted international interest and have been regularly quoted, including one that has achieved more than 5,000 citations. He also successfully supervised the research studies of 12 PhD students. He was a Fellow of the Geological Society of London and a member of various other professional bodies.

In retirement, he also wrote a comprehensive book on 'The Building Stones and Stone Buildings of Staffordshire' and became an active member of the North Staffordshire Group of the Geologists' Association. He continued to deliver invited talks, all well-received, including to the Geology Section of the Devonshire Association.

He and his wife Margaret were very hospitable, intrepid travellers and enthusiastic contributors to the local social scene, including events at Keele University, and at the Reading Room in their home-village of Betley. A man of total integrity, with a first-rate intellect and extraordinary energy, yet without vanity, uncomplicated, genuine and absolutely straight, who never disparaged others, Peter was an inspirational teacher and researcher. With high standards, and an excellent sense of humour, he paid the same degree of meticulous attention to detail in his teaching, his fieldwork and his research.

Peter is survived by his wife Margaret, sons Richard and David, daughter Ruth and their six grandchildren.

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