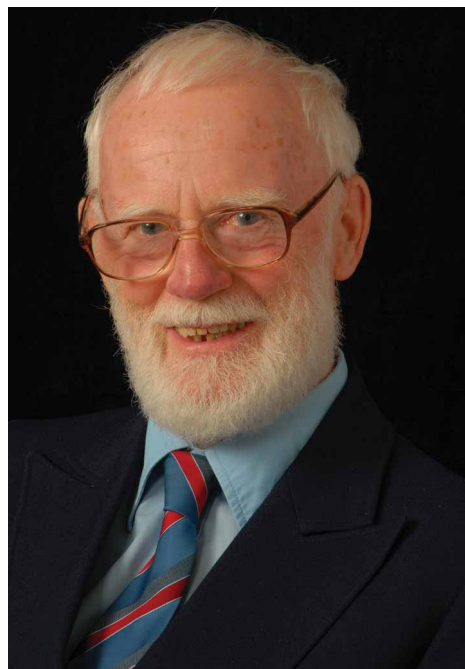


# Alan F Wright

1934-2013

**G**ENEROUS, practical, kind, determined, modest, helpful, energetic, knowledgeable are just some of the many qualities attributed to ICES fellow Alan Wright by the contributors to this obituary. He was born and died in the same house in Birmingham, but during the intervening 78 years he travelled widely; visiting 80 countries on all five continents, including two winters spent in Antarctica for British Antarctic Survey (BAS).

Following a BSc degree in mechanical engineering at Birmingham University, Alan became an apprentice at Bristol Siddeley Engines working on rocket motors. From here he joined BAS, where his surveying career began. It was work recognised at the highest level and he was awarded the Polar Medal by the Queen in 1967. After leaving BAS, he went on to work as a site engineer for a contractor, then moved to Tellurometer UK — the company that would ignite his passion for electronic surveying. He was to amass an extensive collection of equipment during his lifetime. He made many friends during his time at the company and supported surveying



projects, including the Royal Geographical Society's International Karakoram Project in 1980 — donating a full set of CA1000 EDMs for the eight-month expedition. After 15 years of promoting rapidly advancing surveying equipment, he left to form his own company; Global Surveys Limited. Yet his fondness for the Tellurometer instruments remained and he co-authored a book on their history in 2008 — that same year he also managed to get an original 1957 M/RA1 working again.

He was a pioneer of early GPS systems and the demand for his services was high. He saw his business go through some troubled times, yet the faith in human nature and inherent goodness of people that would see him let down by some, was the same that saw him cherished by his many friends and the tight-knit surveying community. He ran Global Surveys Limited for 30 years until 2010. Writing for his old school magazine, Alan said "at the time I was sad to close it because I really had enjoyed my work. Now, years later, I am very happy that I did and am free of all hassle that competitive bidding involves."

He joined ICES in 1983. He was an active member of the Geospatial Engineering Practices Committee. He contributed to the International Affairs Committee and headed the institution's delegation at numerous congresses and working weeks of the International Federation of Surveyors (FIG). His areas of interest were positioning and measurement, and engineering surveys. He was a keen contributor to FIG's History of Surveying and Measurement Group, with a particular

An extract from the British Antarctic Survey 1:250,000 scale map Adelaide Island and Arrowsmith Peninsula. The Wright Peninsula is a well-known feature because of the location of Rothera Research Station. People travelling for field training, equipment testing and recreational travel from the base had to cross the Wright Peninsula to access the rest of Adelaide Island. ©BAS

passion for the Struve Geodetic Arc — a UNESCO world heritage monument. Alan was involved in a project to extend the arc, which begins in Norway, via the 30th meridian down to South Africa to create a 'Cape to Cape' monument.

He was a big supporter of young people; working as a scout leader for a number of years, and providing prizes for surveying students at Nottingham Trent University. Alan's hobbies matched his adventurous nature. He was a keen skier first taking to the sport when preparing for the Antarctic. He learned to ski in a school hall using ropes and broom handles before taking to the slopes in Scotland — where he was pulled to the top of the mountains by tractor. He loved walking and climbed the Welsh mountain Plynlimon just a few days before he died.

Alongside the friends, family and colleagues Alan's life has touched, it is his time in Antarctica that will be his lasting legacy. Standing southeast on Adelaide Island, between Stonehouse Bay and Ryder Bay, is the Wright Peninsula, named after the young man who surveyed it from 1961-1962, Alan Frederic Wright.

*Contributions from Jim Smith, Jonathan Walton, Rory Stanbridge, Rev Dr Paul Beetham, Colin Spencer, British Antarctic Survey*