

OBITUARY



HENRY FRANCEYS PORTER HERDMAN—1901–1967

DR HERDMAN, widely known for his work in the research vessels of the Discovery Committee and National Institute of Oceanography died on 3 September 1967 at the age of 66. He was born at Carnalea, County Down, and educated at Glenalmond and Queen's University, Belfast. He graduated with honours in chemistry in 1922 and was awarded the M.Sc. degree a year later for his research work. He then worked at the Dyson Perrins Laboratory, Oxford, till May 1924 when he joined the scientific staff of the Discovery Committee, being one of the first three or four to be appointed. From then, he was actively engaged in marine research and sea-going activities for 43 years.

His greatest services to science sprang from his enthusiasm, skill and mounting experience in the scientific fitting out of research vessels and development and maintenance of their equipment. Sir Alister Hardy in his recent book *Great waters*, writing about the early development of his continuous plankton recorder during the voyage of the *Discovery* in 1925–27, says "Here I must express my gratitude to Dr. Herdman, our hydrologist, for his help; he was indeed a doctor of machines, and in those early days of the recorder, when a roller would

stick or slip, or the winding clutch might fail, he always seemed to know just what was wrong and how to put it right. Our ship was full of 'gadgets' upon which Henry Herdman was continually performing the most delicate operations with enthusiasm". He did this on a larger scale to the end of his days. He fitted out the *Discovery II* which replaced the *Discovery* in 1929 and saw both the *Discovery II* and *William Scoresby* turned back to research vessels after their war service. He himself spent the war in fitting anti-submarine equipment to new and old ships and spent a winter in Murmansk. In 1961-62 he was responsible for the much larger scientific facilities of the present *Discovery*, and at the time of his death was in charge of the Research Vessel Maintenance Unit recently set up by the Natural Environment Research Council.

While doing all this, he kept up a steady output of more formal science. He had much to do with the development of echo-sounding techniques for the deep ocean and published two reports of the bottom topography of the Southern Ocean with detailed contour charts of the Scotia Sea, South Georgia, Bransfield Strait and Ross Sea. He is perhaps best known to glaciologists for his reports on pack-ice distribution. The first of these, published with Mackintosh in 1940, summarizes the observations made by the vessels of the Discovery Committee over the previous fifteen years. It seems to give the first clear picture of a tongue of drifting pack ice extending eastwards across the Atlantic Ocean from the northern part of the Weddell Sea and separated in summer from the ice near the continent by some hundreds of miles of open water or less difficult ice conditions. In 1953 he gave a detailed account of winter conditions round the northern edge of the pack ice which only few ships have seen and of which he had much experience. His account was accompanied by a series of photographs showing the development from an oily appearance of the surface caused by grease ice to moderately heavy pancake ice. His help with the Antarctic portions of Cook's *Journals* (voyage of the *Resolution* and *Adventure*) is acknowledged by J. C. Beaglehole in the Hakluyt Society's edition.

He was awarded the Polar Medal in 1942 and the O.B.E. in 1967. He was a member of the Glaciological Society for many years. For at least a third of his working life he worked at sea.

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