

## IN MEMORY

**Dr. Marek Andrzej Jerzy Piasecki**  
12 September 1931 – 13 June 1999

Dr. Marek Andrzej Jerzy Piasecki died, after two severe strokes, in Shrewsbury Hospital, England, on the 13<sup>th</sup> of June, 1999. It was shocking and very sad news to all who had known him, including many geologists and friends in Poland.

Marek Piasecki was born in Warsaw on the 12<sup>th</sup> of September, 1931, and he lived there with his parents till 1945. Marek's father, who had been involved in underground activities and co-operation with the British, was killed by the nazis at the end of the war. In 1945, facing the encroaching Soviet occupation, with the help of the British Intelligence Service, Marek together with his mother and brother, passing the green border, left Poland and eventually arrived in Great Britain. As it came out later – practically, for the rest of his life.

Marek was educated at Worktop College and Queen Mary College in London, where he graduated in 1957. It was there that he became interested in geology – the field of science that was his life passion. In 1957, after a temporary post lecturing at Southampton, he got a position as lecturer in the Department of Geology of Hull University. Marek obtained his PhD and worked at that department till 1990 when it was closed. Then he moved to the Department of Geology at Keele University, where he worked as a senior lecturer until his retirement in 1997.

Marek was an excellent geologist and petrologist. His main areas of study were in the Caledonides in Scotland, Norway and in the Appalachians of Canada. His extraordinary enthusiasm and his interdisciplinary attitude to research problems, and in particular the usage of modern structural methods, combined with detailed petrology, and co-operation with isotope geochronologists (e.g. Otto van Breemen), resulted in outstanding scientific achievements which forced geologists to revise previous concepts

concerning many important aspects of the geology of the Caledonides.

In 1990, soon after the political change of 1989, Marek Piasecki visited Poland. His enthusiasm for the country of his childhood resulted, among other things, in the creation of a new university educational scheme within the TEMPUS Joint European Project. This co-operation involved research teams from Keele University (UK) and University College Dublin (Ireland), and Polish colleagues and students from geological departments at the Jagiellonian, Silesian and Wrocław Universities, accompanied by research teams of the Polish Geological Institute and Polish Academy of Sciences. The success of this TEMPUS Project was largely a result of Marek's hard work. Tens of students and scientists participated in courses, ranging from weeks to 10 months, at the co-operating Western universities. They got not only access to modern laboratories and technologies but had opportunities to share the experience of British and Irish colleagues during excellent field trips. Marek was not only the organiser of field excursions but, also, an extraordinary field teacher, always with deep personal involvement. All who went on his field courses will always remember his enthusiastic, often idiosyncratic lectures presented in remote parts of the Scottish Highlands. Apart from student training, Polish institutions received from TEMPUS significant material support, including geophysical equipment, microscopes, computers, books etc.

During his visits to Poland, Marek also became fascinated by current geological studies being carried on at that time, and in scientific discussions, first of all concerning the puzzle of the structural mosaic of the Sudetes and their position within the European Variscides. His close co-operation with Zbyszek Cymerman resulted in new



Marek Piasecki (second on the right) with Polish students in the Scottish Highlands in 1993.



Marek Piasecki "hunting" shear indicators during field excursion to Scotland in 1993.

tectonic ideas, involving the suspected terrane theory which has inspired continuing discussion and controversy. Marek was also an active member of the "geochemical team" of several British and Polish scientists and a number of Polish students, whose studies aimed in constraining palaeotectonic settings of early and mid Palaeozoic magmatism in that part of the Bohemian Massif. All these activities helped to create a new international research project, "Palaeozoic Amalgamation of Central Europe" (PACE), funded by the EC and involving several institutions from the U.K., Germany, Belgium, Denmark,

France, Czech Republic and Poland. The project is coordinated by J.A. Winchester (Keele), and Marek was a kind of "Godfather" to this research Network.

Marek Piasecki will remain in the memories of his colleagues not only as an outstanding scientist but, also, as a kind and helpful person always interested in and with a deep understanding of human problems. His untimely death shocked his many friends and colleagues who sorely miss him, but retain a deep affection for him in their memories.

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