

DAVID WATSON MACKIE, 1902-1984

It is with deep regret that we have to record the death of David Mackie on 27 August 1984, only a week or so before the celebration at Flatford of the formation of his Flatford Mill Spider Group from which our present society derived. Tributes were printed in this journal in 1969 and 1982 (for his 80th birthday) but his death will bring many personal memories to British members, for there were few occasions and meetings in this country which he did not attend with his active support. He appeared at the first Field Studies Council spider course at Malham Tarn in 1954, preceded by a reputation as a "character" and an amateur of distinction. Spider courses at that time were unknown here and his enthusiasm and leadership within each group did much to ensure their success and to discover what needed to be taught. His wide knowledge and experience of natural history made him a splendid companion in the field and he was a good teacher, for he always understood the difficulties of beginners, although he himself learned identification remarkably quickly and he ran very successful courses at Bootham Hall School, York in 1965, at Malham Tarn in 1967 and at Juniper Hall in 1968. An account has

been made in a previous tribute of his work in starting and for eleven years himself producing by hand the forerunner of this journal. It was a remarkable performance, and a re-reading of those early and often extremely interesting articles brings back the happy enthusiasm of those days and of the activities which David led. For he was a true amateur and pursued natural history as a recreation, knowing very well that its enjoyment would only come as the result of hard work and knowledge, a fact of life that he was at pains to stress. It is unlikely that he foresaw in those early days the development of his Study Group or realised the rich vein of interest that he had struck, but when by 1969 our members made demands that meant sharing the burden of administration, he gave the new society his full backing and constant loyalty for the rest of his life, only becoming impatient if he felt the interests of arachnology as a recreation were in danger. He knew the great enjoyment of pursuing a worthy purpose in congenial company and always wanted to share that with others. We owe him a great deal and will miss him very much.

G. H. L.
