

ERNEST W. MARWICK

On Sunday 3rd July, the eminent Orkney scholar, Ernest W. Marwick, died in a car crash. No relation to that other late distinguished Orkneyman, Dr. Hugh Marwick, Ernest was cast in a like mould. Scholarly, gentle, almost diffident, yet he could fight for a cause and in the words of George MacKay Brown:— “for such a shy man he could give a resounding trumpet call.”

He was born on the Mainland of Orkney at Evie in December 1915. Because of ill health he had little formal schooling but he did study under Edwin Muir at Newbattle Abbey in 1953–54. For a time he was on the staff of the **Orkney Herald** while he also contributed many articles to **The Orcadian**. His last article to that paper appeared **post mortem**. He was the local reporter for the BBC and a very frequent contributor to the new Orkney local radio.

He contributed to **Norveg**, the journal of Norwegian Folk Life Research, and he also travelled in Norway making recordings of Norwegian traditional music and studying the links between Orkney and Norway. His researches were many but his books are unfortunately few: **An Anthology of Orkney Verse and Orkney and Shetland Folklore**. Despite the paucity of his formal written work, Edinburgh University recognized his talents by bestowing upon him the honorary degree of Master of Arts in 1976.

Ernest was always willing to share his knowledge and enthusiasm for Orkney and members of the Scottish Society for Northern Studies will recollect just how infectious his enthusiasm was at the first Conference of the Society held in Orkney in 1973. At Ernest's funeral on a uniquely hot sunny day, three members of the Society were there to pay their last respects to a distinguished Nordic scholar, an outstanding Orcadian and a most kindly man.

Ian Keillar.