

Joseph John Edmund Glover

BSc (Hons, UWA), PhD (UC, Berkeley), Honorary Member RSWA

14th July 1924 – 11th February 2020

John Glover passed away in Perth on 11 February 2020 in his 96th year. He had been President of the Royal Society of Western Australia in 1961–62 and Honorary Editor of the journal of the Society from 1958 to 1963.

Joseph John Edmund Glover, always known as John, was born at Mt Barker, about 50 km north of Albany, Western Australia. His father Cecil had emigrated in 1910 from Britain and in 1918, after serving in the Australian infantry during WWI, acquired a farm near Mt Barker of about 500 acres, largely jarrah forest requiring clearing, under the Returned Servicemen Settlement Scheme. His mother Rhoda was a schoolteacher and author of *Plantagenet Rich and Beautiful: A History of the Shire of Plantagenet Western Australia* and another book for schools—John benefited from her expertise during his primary education under the State Correspondence Scheme, as the family lived too far from the town for him to attend school there.

John and his younger brother Eric grew up as country boys and, when John won a scholarship to Perth Modern School and boarded in Perth, he found that he was lacking social skills by comparison with town-raised boys. He went on to the University of Western Australia to study geology, boarding in St Georges College, but joined the RAAF in 1943, training in Canada as a wireless-operator air-gunner to serve in bombers. However, he was discharged in 1945 as a Flight Sergeant, shortly after Hiroshima, without having seen active service. He returned to UWA, again boarding at St Georges College where he was President of the Junior Common Room in his final year, and gained a BSc with first-class Honours in geology as well as collecting two prizes (jointly with Basil Balme) for his thesis in 1947.

His first employment as a geologist was in 1949 with the Bureau of Mineral Resources doing fieldwork mainly in Queensland and the Northern Territory. In 1950 he was awarded a Fulbright Scholarship and a Smith-Mundt Grant allowing him to undertake a PhD at the University of California, Berkeley, in the USA. His thesis on coastal sediment movement at Santa Barbara was supported by the US Navy. In 1953 he returned to his employers, but later in the year joined Associated Australian Oilfields as a Project Leader for field parties in the Bowen Basin, Queensland, rising to Senior Geologist by the time he left in 1955.

His return to Perth in 1955 saw him at UWA as a lecturer and supervisor of Honours and PhD projects in geology. He was Head of Department from 1985 to 1988 and in 1985–86 presided over the Australian Council of Chairmen of Earth Science Departments. One of his significant contributions to the Department during this time was to raise funds and organise a complete refurbishment of the Department's geology museum, together with Professor Harris, as part of the celebration of UWA's 75 years in 1988. The E de C Clarke Geology



John in ~1997

Museum, which was opened in 1989 by the Deputy Premier of WA, is still being enjoyed by students and the public.

John was a Foundation Member of the Geological Society of Australia. He was editor of their journal from 1970 to 1973, and Chairman of the Western Australian Division of the Society in 1968–1969. John was also an active member of the Gemmological Association of Australia and was on their WA Branch (now Division) council in the 1960s and 70s, including as Vice President and President—in 2006 he accepted the invitation to be patron of the WA Division, following Prof Rex Prider in the role. As well as his Geological Society of Australia and RSWA memberships, he was a Fellow of the Geological Society of London, a Fellow of the Gemmological Association of Australia and a Member of the New York Academy of Sciences. John also had *Cleiothyridina gloveri*, a spiriferid brachiopod, named after him by George Thomas in 1971.

In his research on sedimentary petrology, John collaborated with archaeologists, geographers and historians. This was unusual during the 1960s and 1970s, at least in Western Australia. John created links across the



at Bowen Basin field camp in 1953

divisions that then separated Geology, Geography and Archaeology—a collaboration spanning 1971–1993 that produced many papers on the provenance of Aboriginal artefacts during the last sea-level lowstand—at a time when interdisciplinary work of this kind was only just becoming fashionable. As was the case in those days, he was lead author on many of the resulting research papers in over 22 different refereed journals, including several in *Nature*. He also edited volumes arising from many important research symposia held at UWA in which he also made significant contributions to the minerals industry.

On retirement in 1990 John was appointed Senior Honorary Research Fellow and until 2014 worked almost daily in his room near the entrance of the Geology Building, assisting with postgraduate teaching, undertaking original research, writing books and editing. He produced a small textbook and ran intensive courses on scientific writing for Honours students both at UWA

and elsewhere, including the staff of the Volcanological Observatory in Rabaul, PNG where he experienced volcanic eruptions at first hand. He also contributed 140 articles for the *West Australian Geologist*, the newsletter of the Geological Society of Western Australia (WA Division) and, with the help of Jenny Bevan, published a compilation of selected topics that had been covered in these articles into a volume commissioned by the GSA (WA Division) for their 50th Anniversary: *Geological Journeys: from Artefacts to Zircon*.

During retirement, John decided to produce a comprehensive study tracing the careers and contributions of practically all the geologists, as well as notable prospectors and laboratory scientists, operating in Western Australia during the first century of European settlement. *The Forgotten Explorers: pioneer geologists of Western Australia 1826–1926*, was co-authored with Jenny Bevan and released by Hesperian Press in 2010. This well-researched book, launched with the help of Woodside, begins with historical and geological background information leading to the period and tells the stories of around ninety or so characters involved in geological discoveries over the period.

John Glover's contribution to geology at the University of Western Australia, spanning 75 years, from his entering as a student in 1939 and finally retiring as a Senior Honorary Research Fellow in 2014, was remarkable. He was a wise and gentle mentor to many staff. He also maintained a close association with St Georges College where he had been Resident Tutor during the 1970s. In 2010 he endowed a scholarship for students at the college in honour of his parents. Unsurprisingly, in 2004, he was awarded the UWA Chancellor's Medal for his service to the University throughout the years. The Geology Department also honoured him in 2011, naming the John Glover Meeting Room in the Geology Building after him.

In his later years, a road accident outside the university put John in hospital for some time and eventually, in 2014, he entered a local nursing home where he was well cared for and comfortable. Although suffering progressively failing health, he remained lucid and maintained his sense of humour, and enjoyed regular visits by old colleagues up to the weeks before his death from pneumonia. He is survived by his brother Eric and two nieces: Leanne and Janine.

Jenny Bevan

Former Senior Curator, E de C Clarke Earth Science Museum and Honorary Research Fellow,
The University of Western Australia

David Haig

Honorary Senior Research Fellow
Oceans Graduate School
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This obituary is based mainly on autobiographical notes written by John in 2012, and includes material also published in an obituary in *The Australian Geologist*.