

Stanley Woodell 1928 – 2004

J. Steel and A.W. McDonald

Stanley Reginald John Woodell, always known as Stan, was first and foremost a kind and dedicated man, with a love of wild and desolate places, a sense of adventure, and a great commitment to conservation. He was born in 1928 in Shepherds Bush, London, and after completing his early education secured a place at Durham University, where he took a degree in Botany and also studied the pollination biology of the genus *Primula* for his PhD.

Stan's interest in taxonomy and genetics and his love of travel took him, after graduating, to North Carolina to study on a King George 6th Fellowship. It was here that he met Rebecca Glass, his future wife, whose interests in conservation and bird life echoed his own. On their return to the UK Stan took up a post as Lecturer in Ecology at the University of Oxford, 1959-1988, combining research, fieldwork and teaching with a commitment to protect the countryside he loved. Stan was elected to a Governing Body Fellowship of Wolfson College in 1967. His many roles at Wolfson included being Vice-Gerent 1979-81, Emeritus Fellow 1989-2004 and Fellow Librarian – as someone with a great love and respect for books, this was a position he held with much pleasure.

Stan became the Society's Honorary Secretary in 1961 and was its Honorary Editor for nearly 40 years. He resuscitated the *Proceedings* for a few years and introduced the Journal *Fritillary* in 1991. He took his turn as President in 1967 and 1968. Stan also gave his time to the Field Studies Council and was on its Governing Committee for many years.

In 1959 Stan and Becky, along with other local naturalists, attended the inaugural meeting of the fledgling Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Naturalists' Trust, BBONT (now BBOWT). The Trust was set up at that time with the aim of conserving the plants and animals of those three counties, a topic close to Stan's heart. He was instrumental in the purchase of Asham Meads and Lapland Farm Meadow. That BBOWT has gone from strength to strength and now has over 20,000 members is a testament to the hard work and enthusiasm of many people, but Stan played an important part in that success, serving on their first elected council and chairing the Scientific Policy Committee. He was Chairman of the Vale of Aylesbury Region of BBOWT from 1976 until his death.

Stan joined the Botanical Society of the British Isles in 1954. He spent more than 20 years organising volunteers who collected plant records throughout Oxfordshire. This resulted in his co-authorship of the Flora of Oxfordshire published in 1998.

Stan's feet were always firmly on the ground, and he forged strong relationships with his students, many of whom remained friends. His latter years were blighted by ill health but he continued to work, travel and explore new countries when possible and spend time 'in the field' – always his first love. Sadly, Stan died on the 24th April 2004 but his vision and commitment to conservation live on both through his research and the organisations he supported.