

FLEURE, HERBERT JOHN (1877 - 1969), geographer

Name: Herbert John Fleure

Date of birth: 1877

Date of death: 1969

Spouse: Hilda Mary Fleure (née Bishop)

Parent: Marie Fleure (née Le Rougetel)

Parent: John Fleure

Gender: Male

Occupation: geographer

Area of activity: Nature and Agriculture; Science and Mathematics

Author: Mary Auronwy James

Born in Guernsey, 6 June 1877, the son of John Fleure (1803 - 1890) an accountant and Marie (née Le Rougetel) his wife. He was blind in one eye and his attendance at the States Intermediate School, Guernsey, 1885-91, was irregular because of poor health. Despite illness he continued his studies at home, learning from books and his natural environment; he passed the London matriculation examination in 1894 and London Intermediate B.Sc. in 1897. In September 1897 he gained a scholarship to Aberystwyth, where he became a founder member of the Student Representative Council, published articles in the college magazine and obtained a first-class honours degree in zoology in 1901. The University of Wales awarded him a fellowship enabling him to go to Zurich, Switzerland, to study marine biology. Whilst there he mastered German (he was already fluent in French), and published the results of his research which gained him a D.Sc. degree (Wales). He returned to Aberystwyth in 1904 as a lecturer in zoology, geology and botany. He served as head of the zoology, geology and botany department 1908-10, head of the department of geology for a short period, and Professor of zoology from 1910 till 1917 when he was appointed the first (and only) Professor of anthropology and geography. He left Aberystwyth in 1930 to become the first Professor of geography of Victoria University, Manchester.

In 1905 he began an anthropological study of the Welsh people. He visited villages in all parts of Wales to make a survey and measurements, and give lectures. He reported on his progress to Section H (anthropology) of the British Association for the Advancement of Science in 1907 and (with T. Campbell James) published a report in the journal *Man*, the first of nearly 30 articles by him on anthropology. His epochmaking paper on the geographical distribution of anthropological types in Wales appeared in 1916. He published text books such as *Human geography in Western Europe* (1918), *The Peoples of Europe* (1922) and *Races of England and Wales* (1923), whilst his classic paper *Régions Humanies* which was published in Paris was widely translated. Between 1927 and 1956 he was joint author with H. J. E. Peake of the remarkable series of 10 vols. *The corridors of time* and in the meantime he published *French life and its problems* (1942) and *A natural history of Man in Britain* (1951 and 1959). He did much work for the teaching of geography in schools through his labours for the Geographical Association, of which he was secretary and also editor of its journal *Geography* for 30 years, 1917-47.

He became president of many learned bodies, including the Cambrian Archaeological Association in 1924, while universities and scientific societies honoured him wherever he went; he was elected F.R.S. in 1936. But it was as a teacher that he was best remembered, his approach being thought-provoking rather than overlaid with facts.

In 1910 he married Hilda Mary Bishop of Guernsey, formerly a student at Aberystwyth, and they had 3 children. On retirement in 1944 he moved to London and later to 66 West Drive, Cheam, Surrey, where he died 1 July 1969.

Author

Dr Mary Auronwy James

Sources

Biographical Memoirs of Fellows of the Royal Society, 16, 253-70 (see 271-8 for his bibliography)

Who was who?

Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [Herbert John Fleure](#)

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