

OBITUARY

Harold M. Malies, Former Editor of *The Microscope* 1920 ~ 2010

Jeremy Malies

Harold M. Malies, an English-born microscopist and mechanical engineer, who served as Editor of *The Microscope* journal, died on February 22 in Brighton, Sussex, England; the cause of death was amyloidosis. He was 89 and lived for most of his life in Brighton.

Mr. Malies became *The Microscope's* second Editor, succeeding founder Arthur L.E. Barron in 1962, the year Dr. Walter C. McCrone acquired the journal and began publishing it in Brighton. He was Editor until 1965. In 1963, Mr. Malies invited Dr. McCrone and his wife Lucy to Brighton, the scenic resort town on England's south coast, where they held the Micro-63 microscopy conference at the historic Grand Hotel. (The annual conference, now called Inter/Micro, is sponsored by McCrone Research Institute in Chicago.) Mr. Malies also traveled to the United States for several Micro conferences, including a first visit to Chicago in 1964. Arriving at O'Hare airport, he was taken aback when customs agents asked him if he intended to assassinate



Photo courtesy of Jeremy Malies

President Lyndon B. Johnson.

From 1960 to 2000, Mr. Malies was the managing director of Malies Instruments, an optical instrument maker in Sussex, which performed sub-contract work for much of the United Kingdom's optical industry. Many of the company's products were used for testing the properties of metals or observing chemical reactions during food manufacturing. He also produced a special microscope objective used to identify particles, especially asbestos, with the technique known as dispersion staining.

A traditionalist with no interest in electron microscopy, Mr. Malies excelled in mechanics as a schoolboy and invented a device for counting words on a typewriter when he was 12 years old. Later in life he took pride in becoming a member of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers (the U.K.'s qualifying body), writing his thesis on the mechanical design of microscopes.

Mr. Malies was born in Lancashire in 1920 and moved to London as a young man, where he attended London University. At the London School of Printing,

he lectured on photomicrography, including phase-contrast techniques used in medical science.

He served with an ammunition battery in the East Lancashire Regiment during World War II, spending many months under a tent patrolling England's Norfolk coast. At age 19, with only a few hours' leave during a troop transfer in London, he surprised the directors of W. Watson & Sons microscope manufacturers by arriving at their offices in military uniform and asking if he could have a job after the war. He went on to work for the firm and contributed to a zoom-lens camera assembly that was the first of its kind used in Hollywood's motion picture industry. Mr. Malies's other work in London involved photomicrography at the Natural History Museum, where he produced insect images that are still used in textbooks for microscopists and research technicians.

BOOKS AND ARTICLES

Mr. Malies's writings were extensive. His main work is the book *A Short History of the English Microscope: The XIXth Century Instrument* (1981), which is Volume 11 of the Microscope Series monographs currently offered by McRI. The book features chapters on antique stands, focusing mechanisms, substages and mechanical stages. The prose style smacks of his favorite Augustan essayists and is enlivened by a gift for informative digression. In 1959, the Fountain Press (London) published his book *Applied Microscopy and Photomicrography* in which he took pains to avoid discussing equipment, preferring instead to focus on optical principles. Many of the illustrations are by the author, and the plate section, which concentrates on the sheep tick and blowfly, considers the effect of the Davis shutter.

Beginning in 1941, long before he became Editor, Mr. Malies was writing for *The Microscope*, publishing throughout his life some 20 articles about microscope equipment, manufacturers, techniques and the instrument's history. His last paper for the journal in 2007, "A Note on Microscope Design and Coarse Adjustment" (Vol. 55, No. 2), examines the mechanics of a microscope's moveable parts and is written in his eloquently descriptive style: "To begin with, coarse adjustment is generally derived from a rack and pinion which is expected to move with a silky motion that begins imperceptibly and increases its resistance to movement. Note that this is the opposite of the ordinary behaviour of rotating elements where resistance decreases when movement starts."

For 70 years, he had many of his letters published in Britain's prestigious broadsheet newspaper the *Daily Telegraph* about subjects ranging from fluoridation of water supplies to static electricity on cats.

A MUSIC ENTHUSIAST

Mr. Malies was deeply musical, with a particular interest in the Baroque period. He served as president of the Lewes Music Society, a circle of classical music enthusiasts in Lewes, East Sussex. The town is adjacent to the world class Glyndebourne opera house, and during the last five years of his life, Mr. Malies wrote opera reviews of Glyndebourne performances for the local newspaper. He was also active as a conventional photographer and participated in a French-speaking group to hone his skills in that language.

McRI was an important part of his professional life, and he was loyal to Dr. McCrone. While visiting London in 1966, Dr. McCrone struck up a conversation with a taxi driver about his cab and agreed to buy the car when it was to be retired in a few months. Mr. Malies went to a London suburb and was given a lesson by the cabbie on how to drive the vehicle, which had the handling qualities of a small tank. The car spent several weeks in Brighton before being put on a ship at Dover bound for Chicago along with an essay Mr. Malies wrote on the correct way to double clutch the vehicle.

PINECONE COLLECTING

During one of Mr. Malies's American trips, Dr. McCrone lent him a Jaguar E-Type car and sent him to collect pinecones and photograph the immediate environment of the samples. The resinous substance on the pinecones served as a collector of atmospheric particles such as air pollutants and nuclear testing debris. Driving from Chicago through Wisconsin to Amnicon Falls State Park, he precisely followed Dr. McCrone's instructions and placed many pinecones in forensic bags, only to realize with horror that his activities were being observed by park authorities. A little role play as an eccentric English tourist persuaded the rangers that he was acting in good faith, and he often joked that quick thinking saved him a trip to jail.

Mr. Malies married Emily (née Latimer) in 1960 (she died in 2002) and Frances (née McGlennon) in 2009. He is survived by his second wife and a son, Jeremy.