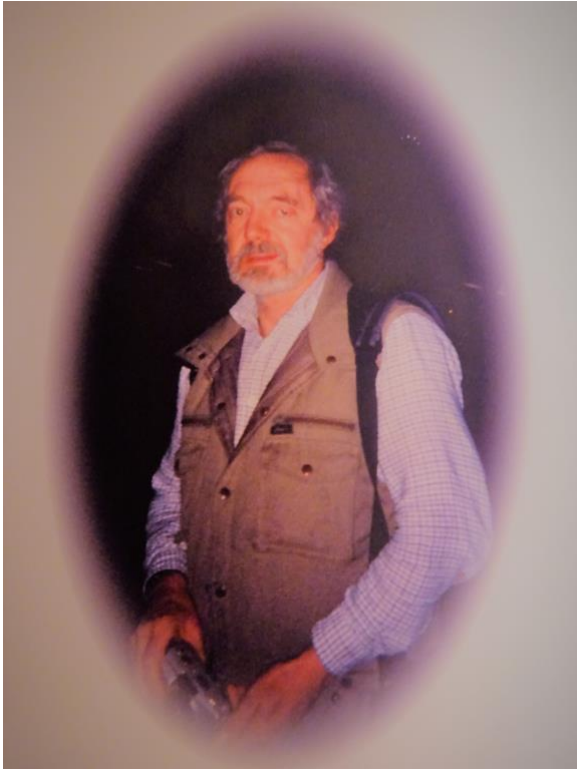


## Remembering Don Goddard 1947-2000.

Ann Goddard



01. Don Goddard

Since retiring I have finally had the time to sort through many of my late husband's papers and collection boxes. It has been both a poignant journey and a pleasure to read through the many letters and reports he left behind.

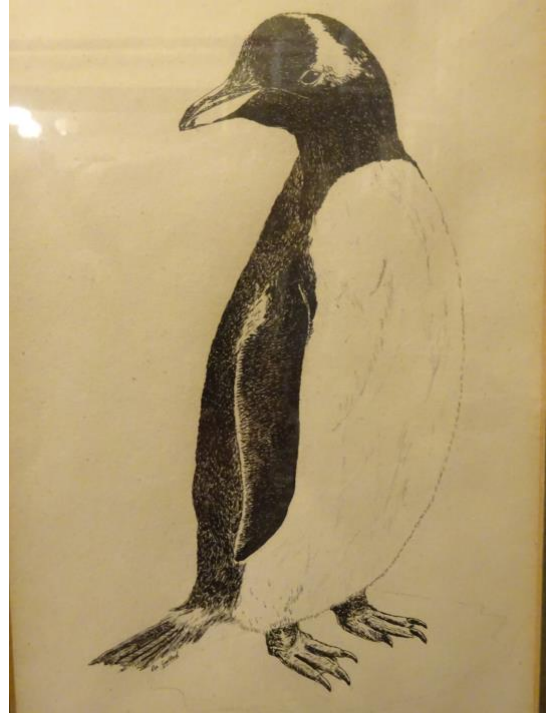
At the time of his death he was working as an Ecological Surveyor and carried out many site surveys for the Worcestershire Wildlife Trust. I have been busy going through his recording cards ensuring all his local records are entered on the Worcestershire Biological Records database. My next task is to try and find a home for his extensive collections.

Don was captivated by natural history from a very young age. His mother would often tell the story of how she would check his pockets for worms and woodlice when he was a toddler. After a trip through the washing machine, followed by the mangle, this was not a pretty sight! All through his childhood he had a succession of pets but was always happier with insects – particularly beetles. Having found a beetle he couldn't identify he took it to the local museum (Leicester) and met the then Curator of Biology Ian Evans who fostered this interest.

Whilst a pupil at Gateway Grammar School in Leicester this early fascination, coupled with a sense of adventure, led him to join an ecology expedition to the Faroe Islands in 1966 with the City of Leicester Youth Service. He went on to study Biological Sciences at Leicester University (1967–1970) and continued an interest in expeditions – joining an Arctic Norway Expedition in 1969, being deputy leader of a 1970 Monach Islands Expedition, and also acting as entomologist on an expedition to Eastern Turkey in 1970 (grant aided by the British Museum).

He was then appointed to the British Antarctic Survey which led to the award of PhD in 1976. Based on Signy Island he researched the population ecology and physiology of Antarctic soil mites which included a three year tour of duty in the Antarctic overwintering twice. Don enjoyed life on base and during his time down south did encounter Antarctic wildlife larger than soil mites! (e.g. Elephant

seals and of course don't forget the penguins). It was here that he learnt to scuba dive, completing many under ice dives, and also went on 'holidays' man-hauling a sledge across the snow and camping. It was on base that he learned to cook. Chef required days off and personnel had to take turns standing in – not popular with many. Don enjoyed it and swapped other duties (like latrine duty) with other people's cook duties. Seems a good swap to me! He became an excellent cook.



02. Penguin drawn by Don whilst in the Antarctic

I met him on his return home when we both worked in the Natural History Section at Leicestershire Museum. Don was a contract biological assistant (1978-1981) carrying out field surveys of SSSI sites. This included his writing chapter 4.9 Coleoptera (Beetles) of the Leicestershire Museums Publication No. 16 '*North-east Leicestershire Coalfield. Report of a biological survey. 1978*'.

I knew what I was getting into when, on inviting me to join him on a weekend woodland walk, it took us two hours to get out of the car park because an interesting beetle was found under a stone—so, of course, many more stones had to be turned over!

At this time Don was involved in Jennifer Owen's Leicestershire garden project '*The ecology of a garden*' by identifying beetles and lacewings. (Owen, J. (1991) *The ecology of a garden. The first fifteen years*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press). Don continued this involvement right up until his death in June 2000.

We moved to Worcestershire in 1982 at first renting a farmhouse on Camp Lane in Shelsley Beauchamp. Surrounded by old grassland it was a delight to look out of the kitchen window and watch Green Woodpeckers looking for ants amongst the anthills. I remember Don was particularly excited when he found a glow worm *Lampyrus noctiluca* on the kitchen floor. At that time we often saw their greenish glow on a summer's night along the lane. (Only the wingless female glows strongly, to attract the flying males).

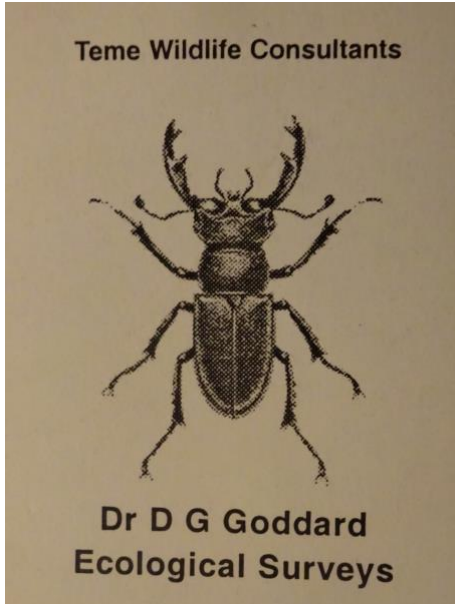
Don became a teacher of 'A' level biology working for many years at Wolverley High School. He particularly enjoyed the academic stimulation of the sixth form but later returned to his first love of biological recording and conservation becoming a well-known figure with the Worcestershire Wildlife Trust and carrying out field surveys for them.

He would often return home happy but covered in 'Bobby's buttons' from goose grass or smelly mud from a pond. Indeed he always

carried an "I've fallen in the pond" set of clothes in the boot of the car.

In 1998 he took on a post of Invertebrate Ecologist (Biological Survey Team) with the National Trust travelling to many National Trust Sites throughout England and Wales - a time that he particularly enjoyed.

Entomology was his passion and as in the words of J. B. S. Haldane, like his maker, 'he had an inordinate fondness for beetles'.



03. Dr D. G. Goddard Ecological Surveys

**His daughter Hannah writes:**

I have many fond memories of my father. He ensured my sister Jennifer and I obtained his enthusiasm for nature and the countryside. He was always on hand to pass on his knowledge, especially about all the wonderful things we used to find whilst out and about.

Some of my fondest memories involved beating bushes with a stick whilst holding a big sheet underneath to see what fell out of the trees. Then we would try to collect the specimens using a pot with two tubes, one with net on the end. Making sure we sucked on the right one was important; otherwise we got quite a shock!

He instilled in both me and Jennifer a passion for the natural world, for saving the environment and that it is OK to ask questions. He was an expert in his field and I couldn't be prouder to call myself his daughter.



04. Don with his daughter Hannah 1990



05. Hannah with her younger sister Jennifer in the mud. 1994

**Images**

- 01. Don Goddard
- 02. Penguin drawn by Don whilst in the Antarctic
- 03. Dr D. G. Goddard Ecological Surveys
- 04. Don with his daughter Hannah 1990
- 05. Hannah with her younger sister Jennifer in the mud 1994