

**IN MEMORIAM
MARJORIE M. SWEETING (1920-1994)**

The karstologists of all over the world were struck by news that on the New Years Eve 1994, died of severe illness one of the greatest modern karstological personalities, Reader in Geography at the University of Oxford, Dr. Marjorie M. Sweeting. The Slovene karstologists remember her sympathy with the Slovene and Dinaric karst, reflected in her basic works on karst, in her frequent visits to Slovenia and in her help to educate the researchers from the Dinaric karst. The beginning of her interest into Slovene and nearby Dinaric karst go back to the period soon after the War. From Diary of Pavel Kunaver we learn that she visited Slovenia in 1951 for ten days and they together visited all the tourist and karst places of importance in Slovenia; from Bohinj and Savica, over Bled to Cerknica Lake, Rakov Škocjan, Planinsko Polje with Vranja Jama, to Postojnska jama, Predjama, Škocjanske jame and the whole Istria. Even better she got acquainted with the Slovene and the rest of Dinaric karst during the Fourth International Congress of Speleology in 1965; she took part in the Pre-Congress excursion to high-mountainous karst of Triglav and into Valley of Seven Lakes and in the Post-Congress excursion along the Adriatic Coast. Also later she visited Slovenia to take part at various meetings (1978, Symposium on Intensity of Karstification; 1987, Human Impact on Karst); in the latter case the Geographical Association of Slovenia awarded her a special decoration in recognition of her merits at invigorating the professional contacts between the British and Slovene geography and karstology (the meeting of Executive Committee of the Geographical Association of Slovenia, September 17, 1987). In her major work *Karst Landforms* (1972) a deep impression left by her stay in Slovenia and in the rest of Dinaric karst may be felt. Several times she guided the Oxford students of geography at karstological field trips through our places.

Dr. Marjorie Sweeting, born in 28 February, 1920 in a family of pianist and university professor of geology, got the knowledge and interest for natural sciences since her birth. From her mother she inherited the love for music, opera in particular, but she never realized her wish to visit the Opera House in Bayreuth. Her career started by studies at Cambridge where she obtained a First Class and in 1948 she was awarded the doctorate for her thesis on "The Landforms of the Carboniferous Limestone of the Ingleborough District, N.W. Yorkshire." Because of her thesis this landscape became famous as one of the typical karst areas in the world. In 1951 Marjorie Sweeting began missionary work in Oxford and was appointed Lecturer and Director of Studies in Geography at St. Hugh's College. This is a college with which she has been associated ever since, occupying many posts including Dean and Senior Tutor and in 1977 she was awarded the distinction of being given a

personal readership, from where she retired in 1987. During this time she was even appointed Acting Head of the School, which under English, in particular Oxford circumstances hardly ever happens to a lady. She lived 33 years in Oxford. A major feature of her career is the influence that she has exercised on generations of British karstologists and geographers, later leading karst geomorphologists in various parts of the world. Her name is respected in all Anglo-American geographical, and in particular geomorphological circles and not the less elsewhere in the world.

It would be interesting to know why she decided to study karst in Great Britain; however, one may suppose that in her youth she started with geomorphologically less known and thus for basic studies more convenient area. The caves in Yorkshire karst were known previously, in particular was famous Gaping Ghyll, but before Marjorie Sweeting started her researches the area was the domain of geologists mostly. M. Sweeting researched the micro-morphology of the karst surface and related superficial morphology and underground cave levels. Her speleological knowledge was of great help. The Karst of Yorkshire and its successful presentation was a spring-board for wider world that offered to the young English lady, after tradition, numerous opportunities for voyage and research. At first she visited the karst in Malaysia, followed by Jamaica and Fitz-Roy Mt., Australia. Inbetween she travelled a lot over Europe and systematically recognized the most important karst areas. After she educated a series of karstologists she, in her mature age, set out on longer voyages to some important karst regions. In the seventies and eighties she almost exclusively published researches in Sarawak and south China karst. Thus she contributed an important share to international treasury of knowledge of various global karst types and regions, in particular tropical karst of Southern China and the Guilin province became her promised land to which she dedicated her book about the China Karst.

All of us, that today with respect and gratitude remember Prof. Sweeting, know her rich work within the sphere of karst denudation to which she consecrated a great part of her research efforts. She was one of the initiators of dynamical approach to karst development and thus the first who theoretically discussed the corrosion intensity in karst and its measurements. She headed the commission on Karst Denudation of the International Speleological Union. Very important is her study of limestone petrology impact on karst processes and morphology.

Marjorie Sweeting took part at numerous international karstological and speleological meetings, she was appointed as a visiting professor at numerous American, Australian, South African and Chinese Universities and everywhere she was the central figure in the exchange of karst knowledge. She received national and international honours, she was "persona grata" in France where she was in particular respected due to her ability for international scientific communications regardless the differences in language or method.

By the departure of Miss Sweeting probably ends an important period of karstology development in the second half of this century where she left deep traces. Many of us have the privilege to profit from her profound knowledge and her commitment to international fieldwork, collaboration and exchange of ideas. She was always willing to share all her knowledge and cognition. All her life Miss Sweeting lived for her students and for karst and such life was worth living. And therefore all of us that have the privilege to meet the deceased remember her as a gentle and kind person who knew how to give to the students and how to extract the misteries of karst.

Jurij Kunaver