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## Tribute: Professor Peter Francis BSc PhD 1945-1999

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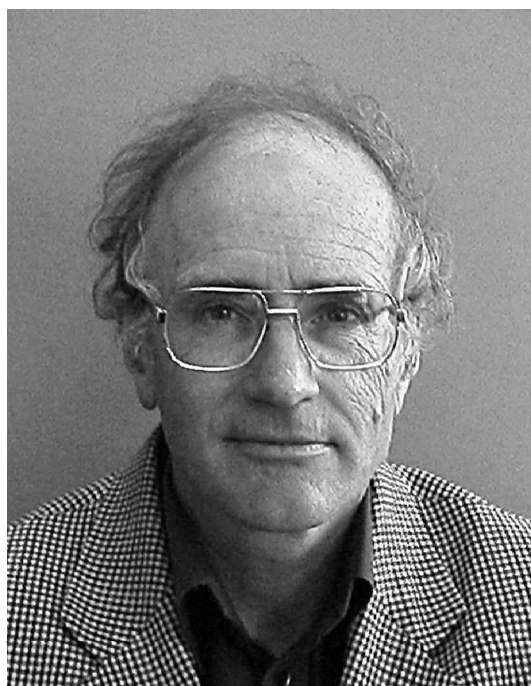
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# Tribute

Professor Peter Francis BSc PhD  
1945–1999



It is with great sadness that we make here a tribute to Professor Peter Francis, whose life was unexpectedly cut short after the Discussion Meeting and during the preparation of this publication. Peter was a leading international figure in volcanology and made a great many important contributions, sadly the last one being the paper to this Royal Society Discussion Meeting and his involvement as a convenor.

Peter obtained a first class degree at Imperial College in 1968. His PhD was concerned with Precambrian rocks in northwest Scotland, but his real love was volcanoes. He became involved initially in studying the remote and spectacularly beautiful volcanoes of the Andes, where he pioneered exploration of many previously unstudied volcanic complexes. He led a highly successful expedition to the Cerro Galan Caldera, NW Argentina, in 1981, which documented for the first time one of the largest volcanoes on Earth. Peter became a pioneer in the applications of remote sensing to

volcanoes both on Earth and on Mars. More recently, Peter's research turned to volcanic gases, where he worked with his former student, Clive Oppenheimer, to apply Fourier transform infrared spectroscopy to making high-precision remote observations of volcanic gas species on several volcanoes. This interest is reflected in his contribution to this issue.

Peter spent most of his academic career at The Open University, where he became recognized as an outstanding educator as well as a highly accomplished researcher. His skills in communication and writing are particularly evident in his books written for the general public on volcanoes and planetology. These books, written in a clear lucid style and highly readable, must have touched large numbers of people outside science, helping them to understand about our planet's most spectacular natural phenomenon and sharing Peter's sense of wonder.

Peter was not only admired for his science, but was regarded as a reliable and very good friend by many colleagues and students. He was someone who one could rely on for his calmness and good sense in a crisis, characteristics that came to the fore during the eruption of the Soufrière Hills, Montserrat. He was also an excellent person with a dry sense of humour, and great honesty. All of us in the volcanology community will miss him.

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