



All our Yesterdays – a Hydrological Retrospective

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All our yesterdays traces the development and eventual recognition of hydrology as a scientific subject in its own right in the UK and, later, in the EGS. In the early 1960s, a small Hydrological Research Unit was established by the UK Department of Scientific and Industrial Research to investigate the comparative water use of forested and grassed upland catchments. Hopefully, this study would facilitate decisions of executive departments of government on meeting the rapidly increasing demand for industrial and domestic water supplies. These small beginnings developed quickly into the multi-disciplinary Institute of Hydrology (IH) as a source of independent advice for policy makers, with a capability to undertake longer term research, monitoring and data collection than was feasible in individual government departments or in the universities. Within IH, the range of specialities included not only engineering, physics, geography, geology, meteorology and instrumentation but also pollution, plant physiology, ecology, chemistry and economics. Said quickly in retrospect, the trajectory of the growth of IH seems smooth but, in reality, it masked many struggles between competing disciplines and departments before hydrology emerged as a subject in its own right – the science of water.

When, within EGS, hydrology was acknowledged as a major subject area, the hydrological research journal recognised, formally, by EGS was the Elsevier Journal of Hydrology. Boosted by Special Issues based on EGS symposia, with appropriate EGS convenors as Guest Editors, the number of volumes rose to 13 volumes a year. Finally, publishing delays and costs led to the EGS decision to found its own journal Hydrology and Earth System Sciences (HESS), publishing both regular scientific papers and themed Special Issues. As its founding editor, I am proud of the achievements of HESS, now in the 10th year of publication, and I commend the effective support of all the authors and scientific editors whose integrity, diligence and competence ensured that HESS was cited from its second year of publication, undoubtedly because the

highest standards of peer reviewing were established from the outset and maintained thereafter.

All the papers presented here today, together with the many others which were not able to be included in the symposium, will appear in a Special Issue of HESS later in the year. In it, as a Preamble, are included the texts of the papers delivered in 1973 at the Symposium “The View from the Watershed” for the formal opening of the new Institute of Hydrology building at Wallingford. Lectures by Howard L. Penman, H. Charles Pereira, Marshall Nixon and J. Eamon Nash (my predecessor, the first Head of the Hydrological Research Unit), summed up by Norman Rowntree, the Director of the UK Water Resources Board, testify to their perception of hydrology as a science in 1973. The presentations in today’s symposium, “The View from the Watershed Revisited” are indicative of the many advances made by the hydrological community in the years between.