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CHARLES MAURICE YONGE

9 December 1899—17 March 1986

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BY B. MORTON

MAURICE YONGE, formerly Regius Professor of Zoology at the University of Glasgow, was a marine zoologist of great distinction. His early pioneering work on marine invertebrate feeding and digestion soon brought him recognition. He led the highly successful Great Barrier Reef Expedition of 1928–1929. In 1932, he was appointed the first Professor of Zoology at the University of Bristol, where he remained until 1944 when he moved to Glasgow. His research interests ranged widely but it was in the relation between form and function and evolution of the bivalve Mollusca that his major contribution lay. He was a dedicated scientist who travelled widely, a fine teacher and a prolific writer. He served on many professional and government committees.

ANCESTRY

Charles Maurice Yonge was born on 9 December 1899 at Silcoates School, near Wakefield, Yorkshire. His father was John Arthur Yonge M.A., J.P. (1865–1946), who was headmaster of the school and had also been educated there. The school was intended primarily for the sons of Congregational Ministers, Maurice's grandfather, the Rev. John Arthur Yonge (1838–1922), serving in this capacity at a church in Warrington. His great-grandfather was also John Yonge (1805–1872) and a solicitor in Islington. Upon the death of his grandfather, papers that came into Maurice's possession indicated that the family was originally from Cornwall. His great-great-grandfather, George Yonge (1758–1837) was born in Mevagissey, his father, Joseph Yonge (1716–1766), being one of the principal men in the town and largely concerned with the Pilchard fishery. Joseph died when George was only eight years old and his mother, devastated by the death of her husband, died just three years later. George was the youngest of a family of five, and a guardian placed the three younger children in apprenticeships. George was bound to a Mr Petherick to be instructed in clock and watchmaking and, in 1778, moved to London with the intention of obtaining instruction in the art of watch finishing; without such a skill he could not be master of his trade. He succeeded in becoming articled to a watchmaker called Top, who had a business at 131 The Strand. In 1772, having acquired the necessary skills, he set up business on his own in Fore Street, Andover, remaining there until 1792. In that year he took over the business of his former master, Top, in The Strand. Successful and innovative, George was appointed clockmaker to the Duke of Clarence, later to become William IV. The business

collaboration with Tom Goreau and, at 65 and thus within five years of retirement anyway, it seemed not just logical but imperative, for his continued interest in research, to step aside from his Regius Chair at Glasgow and make room for a successor. Accordingly, on 11 February 1964, Maurice wrote to the Principal, Sir Charles Wilson, about the possibility of withdrawal from his chair. Wilson persuaded the University Court that Maurice should be able to resign his chair as of 31 December 1964 but remain as a Research Fellow until retirement on 30 September 1970. Maurice thus completed 32 professorial years, precisely, and in his 20 years of service as Head of Zoology at Glasgow created a department with some 500 students and an academic and technical staff of well over 50, making it the second largest in Great Britain. Such a move allowed Maurice to continue his research upon the Bivalvia and his research visits: to the Hopkin's Laboratory at Pacific Grove in 1966 and 1969 and to Friday Harbour, the summer campus of the University of Washington, in 1969 and to Singapore in the same year.

Maurice, however, was still surveying the bivalve superfamilies (or families) and during the rest of the 1960s, free of departmental responsibilities, he researched the Chamidae, the coral associated scallop *Pedum*, the hammer oyster *Malleus* and the Carditacea (106, 107, 110, 112). He was able to return to the Western Pacific on two more occasions as a participant in the *Te Vega* (1965) and *De Moor* (1967) expeditions. On 5 January 1965, he joined the Stanford University research vessel *Te Vega* at Singapore. The vessel had participated in the International Indian Ocean Expedition but was to make two final cruises, each of three months duration, in the Pacific. The metal-hulled schooner visited Sabah (W. Borneo), Zamboanga (The Philippines), Rabaul (New Britain) and Kaeta (Bougainville) to Honiara (Guadalcanal) in the Solomon Islands. The cruise was led by Laurence Blinks, Director of the Hopkins Marine Station at Pacific Grove, and carried some dozen graduate students. Maurice shared a tiny cabin with the ichthyologist Dan Cohen, who he described as 'a cross between Abraham Lincoln and Groucho Marx' and 'with whom he would have gladly travelled the world', even in the tiny cabin. The cruise was adventurous and packed with incidents from pirates in the vicinity, to the vessel shipping a wave which put the main generator out and with the auxiliary generator carefully sited under it, that too. The adventures and mishaps came rather too frequently for some, however, and when one student remarked that the coastline the ship was passing at the time looked like the coast of California, Laurence Blinks was heard to murmur he wished it was! On this cruise, which Maurice enjoyed enormously, he worked on *Malleus* (and *Isognomon*), *Pedum* and completed work on the Carditacea. The cruise ended at Honiara and he flew home via Fiji, Tahiti, Acapulco, Mexico City, Bahamas and Bermuda.

During 1966, Maurice corresponded with M. Dubuisson, Professor of Zoology but also Rector of the University of Liege, who was planning an expedition to the Great Barrier Reef under the leadership of Professor A. Disteche. Although the expedition was mainly concerned with underwater photography, Maurice and, at his suggestion, Tom Goreau, were invited to join. They spent several weeks on the *De Moor*, a disarmed frigate, while it was based at Cairns between September and October 1967. Here, he was able to visit Low Isles, almost 40 years after his initial sojourn there (although his huts had been destroyed by a hurricane), Lizard Island and Yonge Reef on the Outer Barrier. Maurice and Tom were