

## OBITUARY: Richard David Curtis (Dick) Jones 1943–2017

by Helen Smith

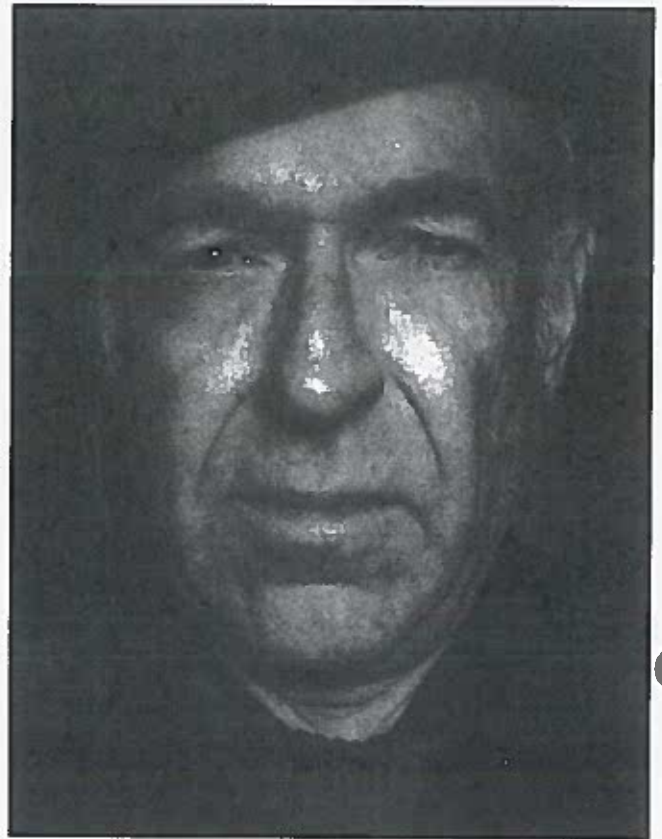
Dick Jones is probably best known to arachnologists as the author of the first photographic guide to Britain's spiders. First published as the *Country Life guide to spiders of Britain and Northern Europe* in 1983, and then revised and republished by Hamlyn in 1989, it was in many ways ground breaking. It was the first accessible field guide to Britain's 'macro' spiders together with some linyphiids and harvestmen; Mike Roberts' Collins field guide appeared 12 years later. Dick not only wrote the text of the book but also took the great majority of the photographs. Photographic guides, even to relatively easily identified groups, were still a relative novelty at that time, but the quality of Dick's images remains outstanding even in this era of digital macro-photography. In 1986 his wonderful close-up photographs of spiders were displayed in a personal exhibition at the Cumberland House Natural History Museum in Portsmouth.



Dick's photographic skills were professional and inspired – he trained as an artist and photographer, lecturing at Portsmouth College of Art and Design for many years. He enjoyed wildlife and macro-photography and described winning the *In Praise of Plants* section of the prestigious, international Wildlife Photographer of the Year competition in 1984 as the 'highlight of his career'.

Like many much more recent recruits to arachnology, Dick's love affair with spiders began through the lens of a camera. He recalled being 'spellbound by spiders and their behaviour'. Wanting to identify his subjects but discovering there was no easy colour field guide, he followed a well-trodden path for aspiring arachnologists in those days: got a microscope and a copy of Lockett & Millidge and taught himself. Dick went on to become a well-known expert, writing the much-needed field guide that we all know and love, and running courses and lecturing in Britain and on the continent. He published the *Cosmos spider guide* in Germany in 1990 and, in 2002, the first French-language field guide to spiders and harvestmen (*Guide des araignées et des opilions d'Europe*). His book *Spider: The Story of a Predator and its prey* was published by Orbis in 1986.

Dick was a self-confessed 'bit of a recluse'. Many in the B.A.S. remember him as great company, enormously



helpful, and a font of knowledge on the sadly infrequent occasions when he joined us for courses and meetings. He was generous in helping to coach others with their photography, and provided the B.A.S. with slides to use for talks by those of us who could never match his skills. He died of cancer on 25th October 2017, at the age of 74, leaving some wonderful legacies to British arachnology. His book inspired a generation of arachnologists, selling over 80,000 copies, as well as supplying a strong second-hand demand once out of print. Having filled the photographic guide niche for a remarkable 37 years, it also inspired and provided a model for the new photographic *WildGuide to Britain's spiders*. Dick's collections of spiders (around 4,000 sample tubes), aculeate Hymenoptera (some 900 identified specimens) and arachnological slides (three 12-drawer filing cabinets) are now with The Manchester Museum, and his database of over 12,500 meticulous records is with the Spider Recording Scheme.

## OBITUARY: Richard Bryan Coleman 1933–2017

by Stuart Corbett

It is with great sadness that we mark the passing of one of the founders of a greater scientific and public appreciation of spiders in the UK. Richard Bryan Coleman (Dick to his family and friends) passed away peacefully in his sleep on 31st December 2017.

Born on 2nd April 1933, Richard grew up on the Kent coast and became a dockyard apprentice at Chatham Dockyard. His National Service was carried out in the Royal Air Force before joining Spemby Medical where he worked for over 40 years, becoming a senior design engineer fabricating cryo-surgical instruments.