

Mr Robert Taft FRSPSoc

Citation: For services to the Remote Sensing and Photogrammetry Society

Robert Taft has been at the centre of RSPSoc activities since the Society's creation in 2001, acting as Honorary Treasurer, Council Member and wise counsellor to the whole Council and the Executive Committee in particular. On this, the occasion of Bob stepping down as Honorary Treasurer, it was felt appropriate to recognise his immeasurable services to RSPSoc through the award of the Society's Founders Award.

Bob has had a long association with both RSPSoc and one of its forerunner societies, the Photogrammetric Society. Bob's involvement with the Photogrammetric Society (PSoc.) dates back to the early 1980s, when he became a regular and active participant in meetings and events such as the Thompson symposia. In 1988 Bob was elected as a member of the Council of PSoc., a position he retained until the creation of RSPSoc through the merger with the Remote Sensing Society (RSS) in 2001. As a businessman, rather than either an academic or a "techie", Bob was clearly the ideal person to become Honorary Treasurer of PSoc. in 1990, and he acted in this role for nine years. In 1999, he at last found a successor as Honorary Treasurer and become Vice-President of the society. Bob's term of office did not, as would usually have been the case, lead to the Presidency of PSoc, events being overtaken by the merger with RSS to form RSPSoc. Following the 2001 merger of the societies Bob became the first Honorary Treasurer of the new society. This was a pivotal role not only in ensuring sound finances for the fledgling RSPSoc but also in ensuring a strong photogrammetric voice continued on the Council.

Bob started his professional career with Military Survey as a cartographer, later going on to become a photogrammetrist. This paved the way for a later phase of his career, when he managed a contract at the Survey & General Instrument Co. Ltd. for the maintenance of military orthophoto systems. In addition to SGI, Bob also worked for GeoSurvey International, Helava Associates (affiliated to General Dynamics), LH Systems and Leica Geosystems. Those who have had professional dealings with Bob, either as colleagues or customers, highlight his good humour and his attention to detail, both as a salesman and as an after-salesman. These qualities ensured that Bob was always extended a warm welcome by customers wherever he went.

We can learn something of Bob the man through his contributions to *The Photogrammetric Record*. They comprise a report on a conference in the USA; an interesting short paper entitled "The potential pitfall of creating human hardware" (presented at the Birmingham Symposium in 1982); and a *Letter to the Editor* entitled *Physical dimensions of The Photogrammetric Record*, effectively from "Disgusted of Redhill", after the Editor had accepted advice to change the format of the journal by a few millimetres in order to obtain best value from paper stocks purchased by the co-publishers.

As Honorary Treasurer of RSPSoc, Bob's good humour has always defused his natural and necessary role as assiduous guardian of the purse and, just occasionally, aggressive cost-cutter and budget critic. His wise counsel to Council, coming from the businessman's perspective, has always been greatly valued and he has become indispensable as the role of Honorary Treasurer has become more complex. Having been on Council since the Society's inception, Bob can truly be seen as a founding member and so justly deserves the Society's thanks embodied in the Founders Award.

Richard Armitage (Chair, Awards and Professional Standards Committee), Paul Newby, Stewart Walker and Stuart Granshaw.

The photograph below shows Bob Taft, left, being presented with the Founders Award by the Society's President, Paul Curran.

