**LOU MACCHI (1954 – 2017)**

Lou was born in London and his life-long interest in geology was inspired by a teacher in secondary school. In 1975, he obtained a First Class Honours Degree in Geology and Geography at the University of Hull (only the second person ever to have done so) where he also completed his PhD on the sedimentology of the Penrith Sandstone. He was a Fellow of the Geological Society and one of the first Chartered Geologists.

Lou left Hull for Liverpool University where he was a staff tutor for two years, a role in which his enthusiasm and gift for explaining geological concepts (and especially his comprehensive practical notes) were much appreciated by his students. In 1981, Lou left academia to become Manager of Reservoir Geology for a consultancy near Chester, building a substantial staff of geoscientists into a successful business.

In 1988, he left to set up the Reservoir Associates consultancy with two colleagues. Soon after this, the partnership divided into Reservoir Associates International run by Lou and Reservoir Associates North Sea run by his long-term friend and colleague Brian Cullen. The distinctive “RA” logo for both companies was designed by Lou and the companies provided geological consultancy for 29 years. During this time, Lou worked on projects in 34 countries worldwide, notably in Algeria where his work included multiple sedimentological, petrological, exploration, pre-acquisition and reservoir-modelling studies. His ability to speak French was of enormous benefit during his work in North Africa (Libya and Tunisia, as well as Algeria) which continued for many years.

Lou had a lasting impact on the exploration for and development of hydrocarbons in areas as diverse as the North Sea, the Irish Sea and, more recently, the South Atlantic in the area around the Falklands. His work in the UK included the onshore and offshore Carboniferous, Southern North Sea Rotliegendes, onshore Permian, Triassic, onshore Rhaetic and Jurassic and the West of Shetland. He was also involved in peer-group assessments of field-development and field-unitization programmes.

He loved the work on the Falklands and likened it to the old pioneering days of oil exploration. He was one of the first members of the original team in 2004 that developed the Sea Lion play to drill-ready status. He accurately mapped out the future (as he had already done in many other parts of the world, for example Portugal) and when the first well was drilled, they hit oil first time. Many more wells were drilled and hundreds of metres of core obtained and Lou worked through them all. Most satisfying was the validation of the early models to the credit of that pioneering team and Lou’s legacy is a series of beautifully-drawn core logs and reservoir models that have served to underpin the technical fundamentals of the project others have taken forward.

He was fascinated by all aspects of geology and his long-term research interest in defining the geometries of sandbodies provided a highly practical insight into reservoir geology. Although primarily focused on fluvial, fluvio-deltaic and aeolian deposits, the numerical database he assembled included lagoonal, shoreface-shelf and turbidite systems and provided analogue information for use in predicting lateral dimensions etc. for reservoir-simulation purposes. These skills were greatly appreciated by numerous client companies and co-workers.

He was also involved in the setting up and co-ordination of multi-disciplinary research projects, with the participation of several universities, to investigate the origin and geochemistry of chlorite and illite cements in the Southern North Sea.

He was a great field geologist and it was here that he was most at home. His field excursions to France, Ireland, Cumbria, northwest Cheshire and Tunisia were legendary and appreciated across the industry, as was his ability to enjoy the “après geology” into the small hours and still appear the next morning without any apparent lasting ill effects, eager to set off into the field, followed by often not-so-enthusiastic delegates.

Lou maintained a deep enthusiasm for geology throughout his successful career. In particular, he loved the Sahara Desert and, in common with one of his literary and scientific heroes, Major R A Bagnold, the physics of how sand dunes form. He ran educational field trips to the Tunisian Sahara so often that he became known by locals as *“Loup du Desert”* - a pun on *Lou of the Desert* and the French for *Wolf of the Desert.*

He had many adventures, such as having to hide behind a sand dune for a whole night when the Tuareg visited his camp in the Sahara, driving into Algiers just as the tanks were rolling in and the army took control in 1992 or having to dig roads and cross crocodile-infested rivers to get the field vehicles to the right locations in Madagascar.

A rare quality was his innate ability to explain the complexities of his subject equally well to both his peers and his students. Throughout his career and in a wider sphere, Lou was able to talk with almost anyone from any background, a skill grounded on his patience and the knack of finding a topic that the person was interested in and then talking to them about it (and not at a superficial level). Everyone has said how much they learned from him over the years.

Friends and colleagues in the industry valued his broad technical and commercial understanding and his meticulous attention to detail. He was always at ease, he had a kind, positive, optimistic and pragmatic attitude and a very warm personality. His sense of humour was evident, whatever the situation and he kept everyone’s feet firmly on the ground. He suggested clever solutions, co-operated, communicated, supported, advised and, despite his enormous success and abilities, was, at heart, a modest, down-to-earth and unassuming man.

He was a man of great integrity, exceptionally well-read and with a fiercely independent mind, thinking deeply about everything and never taking anything at face value or being afraid to say what he thought.

A testament to Lou the geologist and the man was seen in the huge number of people from around the world - family, friends and colleagues - who attended his funeral and spoke so fondly of their friend.

Away from geology (although he never really was), he was a respected member of the community in which he lived and attended one of the Queen’s garden parties at Buckingham Palace in recognition of his services to the community. His non-geological interests included walking in the Cheshire countryside where he lived with his wife Alison and a succession of rescue collies, spending time in the local pub, eating and drinking with friends and driving his beloved Aston Martin.

He will be greatly missed by all who knew him.

