

## The Three Pioneers

Jóhannes Jóhansen (1937-1996)  
 Jóannes Rasmussen (1912-1992)  
 Sigurður Þórarinsson (1912-1983)

*Paul C. Buckland*



*Jóhannes Jóhansen (1937-1996)*

This collection of papers, stemming from a conference held in Tórshavn during May 1998, owes much to the inspiration of three eminent North Atlantic scientists, two Faroese, the palynologist Jóhannes Jóhansen and the geologist Jóannes Rasmussen, and one Icelandic, the tephrochronologist Sigurður Þórarinsson. To characterise any of these men by a particular field is to do them an injustice; each was something of a poly-

math. Jóhannes graduated from Copenhagen in botany in 1966 and returned to Faroe with the Danish Geological Survey. His detailed knowledge of the islands and their flora provided an ideal base for what formed the core of his doctoral research, the history of the Holocene vegetation. His palynological and plant macrofossil studies also encompassed Shetland, and he wrote extensively on the impact of man on both island groups; his ideas on the earliest set-



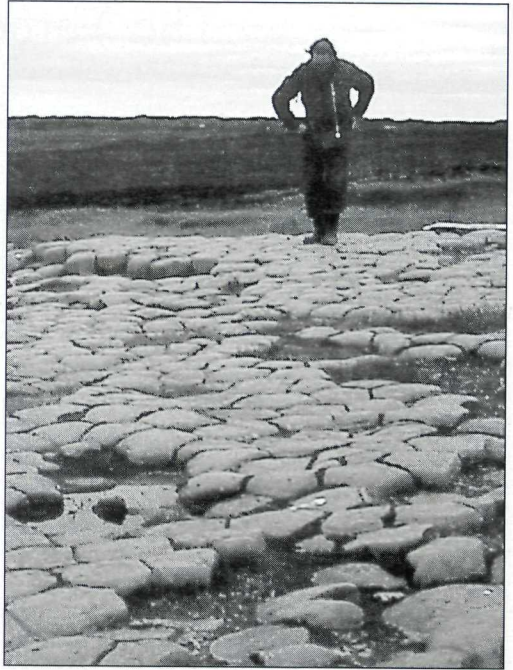
*Jóannes Rasmussen (1912-1992)*

tlement of the Faroes led to not a little controversy, which is picked up on in a number of the contributions here.

Jóannes Rasmussen, Jóhannes' predecessor as Director of the Faroese Natural History Museum, was primarily a geologist. His fieldwork provided the basic subdivision of the Tertiary basalt sequence in the Faroes, and he also carried out much of the detailed stratigraphic mapping for the geological map of the Faroe published in 1969.

It is the work of Sigurður Þórarinsson which perhaps links most of the papers in this volume. He was a pioneer in North Atlantic palynology in his association with the international team of archaeologists working in Þjórárdalur, Iceland, before the Second World War, and the science of tephrochronology, which links all of the islands of the North Atlantic and on to the European mainland, was essentially Sigurður's invention.

Research into environmental change in the North Atlantic region owes much to these



*Sigurður Þórarinsson at Kirkjubæjarklaustur, S Iceland, July 1980.*

scientists, each pioneers in their own field. It is intended that this volume will provide a suitable tribute to them.