

Obituary

Mr Ross Maine

The Australian meteorological community was greatly saddened to hear of the sudden death of Mr Ross Maine on 16 November 1986. At the time of his death, Ross occupied the position of Assistant Director (Communications and Computing), in the Bureau of Meteorology's Head Office after a distinguished career encompassing appointments in meteorological operations, research and administration. He had been an Associate Editor of *AMM* since 1977.

Even in his earliest days, as a meteorologist in the 1950s, Ross was always seeking practical quantitative solutions to the day-to-day forecasting problems of the Bureau. Colleagues from that time remember him using a rudimentary hand calculator to perform vorticity advection calculations from manually analysed charts. His objective statistical method for predicting maximum temperatures in Adelaide was the first of its kind in Australia.

In meteorological research, and numerical weather prediction in particular, Ross was very much a pioneer in his field. Building on overseas research advances and experimentation at Melbourne University in the early 1960s, Ross laid the technical foundations for the Bureau's subsequent entry into

operational numerical weather prediction. This was no easy task. Innovative solutions were required (and found) to the problems of computerised meteorological analysis over the data sparse ocean areas of the southern hemisphere, and major hardware systems were acquired which at that stage were at the forefront of computing technology. Most importantly, a doubting profession had to be convinced that it was all possible and that practical results of real value in the forecasting process could be achieved. Ross made critical contributions in all of these areas.

During the latter stages of his career, Ross was principally concerned with the management and administration of the Bureau's extensive computing facilities. He successfully guided a major upgrade of these facilities in 1982 and was the principal architect of the Bureau's new Automated Regional Operations System (AROS). At the time of his death, Ross as always was still searching for ways of improving the Bureau's services through the innovative application of new technology. Ross had a special ability and experience in this regard which will be very difficult to replace.

