

Professor Elfyn John Richards, OBE, FEng, Hon FRAeS, DSc
1914 - 1995



Born in Barry, Wales and educated at the Grammar School there, Professor Richards moved away to continue his education first at University College Aberystwyth and later at St John's College in Cambridge where he read mathematics and physics. After a short period with the Bristol Aeroplane Company he spent his war years at the National Physical Laboratory in charge of aerofoil research. In 1945 he was appointed Chief Aerodynamicist and Assistant Chief Designer at Vickers-Armstrong in Weybridge, responsible for the aerodynamic design of the Viking, Viscount and Valiant. It was here that he developed an interest in aircraft noise that would lead him to become one of the country's leading exponents of aircraft design and a world authority on noise acoustics. In 1950 he took up the new Chair of Aeronautical Engineering at Southampton University and in 1963 became Professor of Applied Acoustics setting up the internationally renowned Institute of Sound and Vibration Research. In 1967 he was appointed Vice-Chancellor of the newly created Loughborough University and here he achieved his

three main goals for the University. Firstly to broaden its academic base, secondly to become more co-educational and encourage female applicants and finally that it should embrace its University status and expand its research activity and post-graduate work. He 'retired' from Loughborough in 1975 and returned to a chair at the Institute he founded at Southampton.

Professor Richards was appointed OBE in 1958 for his work on noise. He was awarded the Taylor Gold Medal of the Royal Aeronautical Society, the James Watt Medal of the Institution of Civil Engineers, and the Silver Medal of the Royal Society of Arts. He served as President of the British Acoustical Society (1968-70) and President of the Society of Environmental Engineers (1971-73). He is commemorated at Loughborough University by the Elvyn Richards Hall of Residence (spelt with a 'v' to encourage correct Welsh pronunciation of the letter 'f!').