

James Morrison PhD



Jim was born and brought up in Aberdeen and graduated in Biochemistry from Aberdeen University in 1964. He then moved to Glasgow University, where he did a PhD under Hamish Keir and Prof J. N. Davidson on DNA replication in herpesvirus. 'JND' was a friend of 'TNG' (T. Neville George); indeed the two families holidayed together. After a spell as research fellow at Stanford University with Nobel laureate Arthur Kornberg, he spent the rest of his career at Glasgow University, teaching science, medical and vet students and continuing his herpesvirus research. Latterly, he became interested in all viruses and especially their evolution, because from the mid-1980s the DNA and RNA sequences of all kinds of viruses were determined and so the genetic relationships between them could be evaluated.

He has always been interested in rocks of hill and shore in NE Scotland. About 1980, he renewed an interest in hydro-electric schemes, especially those of pre-1950 vintage; this "exposed" him to more rocks and started a strong interest in geology. In the early 1980s Graham Durant, then at the Hunterian, introduced him to the Geological Society of Glasgow, where he made steady progress with the help of "real" geologists, including Brian Bluck, Chris Burton, Jim MacDonald and Geoff Tanner, and people at BGS Edinburgh, especially the late John Mendum.

Jim's initial interest was the Highland Boundary fault, but this soon extended to all Highland geology and especially the Great Glen Fault and the Moine Thrust. Starting sea kayaking in 2004 allowed him to explore some of the less accessible areas of Mull and Shetland. His interest in virus evolution has parallels with the notions of the evolution of geological structures in the Highlands, especially in the period 1200-400Ma.

Jim joined the Geological Society of Glasgow in 1986 and served on the council for three years as an ordinary member before taking on the post of meetings secretary, which he held for 25 years, from 1990 to 2015. He served as president of the society from 2015 to 2018.

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