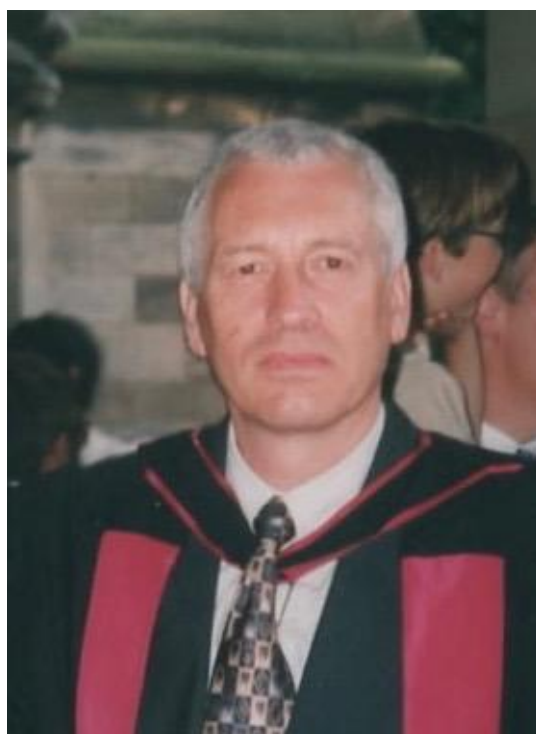


Obituary: Allan J. Hall (1946–2021)



Allan James Hall was born in Dunfermline on 23rd December 1946 to James and Christina and was the younger brother of Ken. Allan met his wife, Irene, at Dunfermline High School and they married in 1967 while he was still an undergraduate in the Grant Institute of Geology, The University of Edinburgh. As a couple they moved around for the next 10 years, first to Durham for Allan's PhD then to Paris as a post-doc and a brief spell at Newcastle before settling in Bothwell when Allan joined the Department of Applied Geology at the University of Strathclyde. The Bothwell house was to be the family home until his death on 1st January 2021 at the age of 75. Michael was born in 1978 and Malcolm followed in 1980. Irene was a primary school teacher and after the boys were older she returned to teaching in a role of support for learning and inclusion. Sadly, she passed away in 2008, only three years before Allan retired. Theirs was a happy home with lots of laughter, family outings on bicycles and family holidays in the UK and further afield, often on the back of Allan's attendance at conferences. Allan had an easy-going nature and was a patient father encouraging his sons to be inquisitive. In the 1980s they visited California and in 1991-92 Allan had a sabbatical when they went to Australia and New Zealand.

Allan was always keen to embrace new technologies and was quick to adopt home computing. Both sons graduated with degrees in computing science from the University of Glasgow.

A few years after retiring in 2011, Allan was diagnosed with PSP – progressive supranuclear palsy, a rare condition which increasingly led to problems with balance, mobility and, later, speech. These physical problems didn't diminish his desire to be involved with his archaeological research or attending lectures of the Geological Society of Glasgow which he did up until the first Covid-19-induced lockdown in March 2020.

Michael married Maria in 2018 and Allan became close to Maria's family, especially her mother Bridget. Malcolm was working in the USA but returned to the family home as Allan's carer when his illness progressed. Both sons were instrumental in providing the care and engaging support

services that allowed Allan his wish to remain in his own home to the end. Special mention must be made of his personal assistant, Grzegorz (Greg), who provided daily care, healthy nutritional meals and outings to local parks for Allan.

As an undergraduate, Allan would commute from the family home to the university on his scooter over the Forth Bridge. For a time he was involved with the student newspaper. Following his graduation with a first class honours degree in geology in 1968, Allan and Irene moved to Durham where he spent 3 years studying synthetic sulphosalts, especially tetrahedrite, under the supervision of Roy Phillips. His thesis of 1971 was on *The mineralogy of some synthetic sulphosalts*. There followed a post-doctoral position at the Université de Paris and a brief post in Newcastle University before Allan was appointed a lecturer in the young Department of Applied Geology at the University of Strathclyde in 1976. He was instrumental in changing the culture within the department by bringing together the academic and technical staff socially to appreciate that success could only be achieved by working collaboratively. In 1989, Allan moved, with the rest of the staff and students, to the University of Glasgow to form the new Department of Geology and Applied Geology. Following increasing collaboration with Drs Richard Jones and Effie Photos-Jones, in 1998 he transferred into the Department of Archaeology where he remained until he retired. In Archaeology, he investigated industrial minerals in Greece and early metal exploitation in Scotland, conducted geomorphological surveys around the River Earn and had his share of undergraduate teaching and supervision of research by BSc, MSc and PhD students.

Most of Allan's research was funded by small to moderate grants from mining companies, charities or government departments, but he was co-Principal Investigator on a large grant studying the origin of life on Earth in collaboration with Mike Russell resulting in papers in the late 1990s and research which continued till the end of his active academic life. His research has focused on understanding the chemical behaviours of ore and industrial minerals using standard and novel techniques. Mentioning some of the topics he investigated shows his breadth of interests: gold mineralisation, laser isotope analysis, redox behaviour of iron sulphides, carbonation of concrete, methanogenesis, sulphur isotopes, emergence of life – on Earth and on Mars, the socio-economic significance of industrial minerals in antiquity, historic mortars, lead isotopes in musket balls, Bronze Age copper mining in Greece, CO₂ in Scottish rivers, Mediterranean sugar, Al geochemistry in early medicines and the post-glacial geomorphology of Strathearn.

Allan was unassuming, kind, generous with his knowledge and an accomplished academic; he is proud of the success of his research students whom he encouraged to publish while still working on their PhDs. He supervised 14 research students and was a mentor to many more, such was his approachability and unselfish willingness to share his knowledge.

Allan was the author of almost 100 scientific papers with almost as many co-authors covering a wide diversity of research areas. In addition, he authored a similar number of reviews, conference abstracts and unpublished reports. Collaborating with Colin Gribble, Allan wrote the first student textbook to combine transmitted and reflected light microscopy. He was a member of the Mineralogical Society of Great Britain and Ireland for which he was on the committee of the Applied Mineralogy group and the organising committee for its 1994 conference.

In addition to his teaching duties, he took a major role in admin tasks including the departmental lead for the first research excellence survey. Allan served on a variety of committees for the departments, faculty and the university as well as on national bodies. He oversaw the running of the XRD laboratory with Murdoch Macleod and Dugald Turner and the polished section laboratory with John Gilleece. In Archaeology, he was convenor of the Technical Liaison Committee for many years and established lunchtime “science” talks. He was an adviser of studies for all of his time in the University of Glasgow, first for geology students then for those studying archaeology.

Allan joined the Geological Society of Glasgow in session 125 (1982-1983) and was elected on to Council in December 1988. He was President from 1st December 1991 to 8th December 1994 (sessions 134-136). This was also the final three years of Janey MacDougall's long service as secretary. During his tenure, he led an excursion to the northern Lake District and another to East Kirkton and the Bathgate Hills. He also presented the 9th and 10th Professor George Memorial Medals to W. J. Kennedy and Diane Edwards.

Allan is survived by his sons, Michael and Malcolm, and by his brother, Ken.

Iain Allison