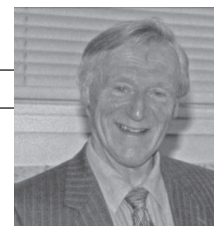


In Memory of Allan Ure

Allan Ure's Career, Scope of Interest and Special Features of his Life

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Allan Ure died on 18 December 2005 at the age of 81 after a period of illness. Dr Ure was well known internationally for his contributions in environmental analytical chemistry and speciation. He has been one of the pioneers in the development of fractionation methods for application to soil and sediments, and contributed with enthusiasm to the progress of this discipline.

His interest for environment and wildlife started in his youth when he avidly explored the coastline and hills of Fife. Allan graduated in chemistry from the University of St Andrews in 1945, but his studies were interrupted by a period of National Service in the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve where he served as a Naval Lieutenant (Radar Officer) on board cruisers and submarines in the North Atlantic and Mediterranean. Allan returned to St Andrews and completed his BSc Honours Degree in 1948. After graduating, he joined the staff of the Department of Spectrochemistry of the Macaulay Institute for Soil Research in Aberdeen where he worked for the next 38 years. Shortly afterwards, he began a part-time PhD at the University of Aberdeen, productively combining his knowledge of electronics gained in the Navy with his chemistry training to receive his PhD degree in 1954 with a thesis entitled 'The Application of Electronics to Spectrochemistry'. Allan worked his way up through the ranks of the Macaulay Institute and retired in 1986 as Head of the Department of Spectrochemistry and Joint Assistant to the Director.

Allan's expertise in electronics enabled him to develop methods for flame emission, atomic absorption and inductively coupled plasma emission spectrometries. As early as 1974, he was publishing papers on the determination of Cd, Hg and Pb in soils and plants as the environmental importance of these elements became recognized. On the basis of these developments, he soon became an expert in the distribution of trace elements in soils and plants, the speciation of biosignificant elements in soils and the impact of the environment on agriculture. Allan contributed to the work of BCR (EC Community Bureau of Reference transferred to the Institute for Reference Materials and Measurements in 2001) and enthusiastically advocated the development of standardized single (for soil) and sequential (for sediment) extraction procedures, which are now widely used in laboratories throughout the world. After his retirement from Macaulay Institute, Allan was indeed commissioned by Dr Ben Griepink at BCR to undertake a feasibility study on harmonization of fractionation methods. He found it ironic that some thirty years earlier he had told the former US National Bureau of Standards (now NIST) that harmonization of extraction procedures for soils and sediments was hardly feasible. It was only by undertaking a grand tour of European analytical laboratories and involving more than 30 renowned European scientists in this venture that he succeeded in initiating a decisive step in harmonizing analytical procedures. This work undertaken between 1987 and 2002 largely contributed to the development of a European network of experts in this field, collaborating in a spirit of friendship and confidence which carried – and will carry for years to come – Allan's fingerprint.

In 1987, Allan began a new career as a part-time lecturer at the University of Strathclyde. His Glasgow-based ancestor, Andrew Ure, had a strong association with Strathclyde, so working at the University was, to Allan, a family tradition he was proud to continue. Initially, Allan was invited by the University to assist for a period of one year following the untimely death of Professor John Ottaway. His

impact at Strathclyde was so significant that he remained for a further nine years before eventually retiring again! While at the University of Strathclyde, Allan helped developed research interests in metal speciation and was the prime instigator of a Master's course in Environmental Science. Allan's relaxed but authoritative style made him an excellent research supervisor and popular lecturer at Strathclyde. Allan's contributions to science were recognised in 1997 through the award of a DSc degree by the University of Strathclyde. In addition to an extensive publication list, Allan's legacy includes a well respected textbook in metal speciation (co-authored by Dr Christine Davidson).

Allan was well known internationally for both his research and professional contributions. His wide reputation led to a close involvement with the Analytical Division of the RSC over many years. He held the office of Chairman of the Scottish Region and was a member of Council, of the Programmes and Analytical Methods Committee and of the Analytical Editorial Board. He was also member of several committees involved with spectrochemistry, served on the Editorial Boards of several journals including *The Analyst* and was involved in the organization of international conferences. This work was recognised with the honour of delivering the 1987 Theophilus Redwood Lecture. Allan was also well respected for his contributions to the *Journal of Analytical Atomic Spectrometry*, through his support of the *Analytical Spectrometry Updates* (and its predecessor the Annual Reports in Analytical Atomic Spectrometry). Allan acted as the ASU treasurer and co-authored many of the reviews. His involvement with ASU as a review assessor continued right up to the Spring of 2005.

Allan was an active sportsman and a successful long distance runner at university. Later on he was a keen and successful bowler in the Macaulay cricket team. He was convenor of the Junior Zoo Club in Aberdeen and his enthusiasm was transmitted to many budding young zoologists in both indoor and field activities. His specialty was 'sea shore beasties' and at one time he kept an octopus and a starfish which was, allegedly, very fond of scrambled egg. Perhaps the rarest and least witnessed of Allan's many talents was that of hare-calling.

Allan was an intrepid traveller and kept the local travel agency fully occupied with his seemingly excessively intricate itineraries. He always carried with him an emergency pack which consisted of oat-cakes, a tube of cheese and a spare pouch of his favourite tobacco. Allan developed an interest in language and could present a most convincing explanation for the origin of words whether they be from Doric (the dialect of North East Scotland) or a Slav language. French colleagues were most impressed when Allan presented an invited lecture in their own language, even if he reluctantly had to admit that he never could successfully bake French bread at home.

News of Allan's death will sadden many colleagues throughout the world. He will be remembered as an enthusiastic and knowledgeable scientist, a loyal and supportive colleague and good fun to be with. On behalf of the scientific community, we communicate our deepest sympathy to his wife Dorothy, daughters Jenny and Helen, son Allan and his four grandchildren.

Allan's colleagues plan to invite papers for a Special Section or a Special Issue 'In Memory of Allan Ure' in JSS.

David Littlejohn, Christine Davidson, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, UK and Jeffrey Bacon, Macaulay Institute, Aberdeen, UK

On behalf of the Editors-in-Chief: Philippe Quevauviller, European Commission, BE