

Alan Stewart Curry



Alan Curry died on 20 August 2007.

He will be remembered by older members as the driving force behind the formation in 1963 of TIAFT. He served as its secretary until 1969 and then as president until 1975.

Alan was born in Blackpool, UK on 31 October 1925 and was educated at Arnold School and Trinity College, Cambridge. This latter education was interrupted by a period of National Service in the Royal

Air Force. He was demobbed with the rank of Flight Lieutenant (Wireless). His experience in the RAF resulted in him becoming a radio ham, a hobby for the rest of his life.

On leaving Trinity in 1952 he joined the Home Office Forensic Science Service at its Wakefield laboratory. When that closed he continued at the Harrogate laboratory. There he steadily built his reputation in toxicology and was involved in the first successful prosecution of murder by insulin. His text book '*Poison Detection in Human Organs*', a first 'hands on' book for many years, ran to five editions.

Whilst at Harrogate he helped found the Forensic Science Society and the International Association of Forensic Toxicologists.

He became director of the Nottingham laboratory in 1964 and whilst there, together with George Walker and Geoff Simpson, devised the method to accurately determine alcohol in small volumes of blood, which allowed the 1967 drink driving law to take effect.

In 1966 he was appointed the first director of the newly created Home Office Central Research Laboratory, an organisation that under his enthusiastic guidance rapidly achieved worldwide recognition. He instigated quality control tests that did much to improve performance throughout the forensic science service and the inter-laboratory committees he founded helped to raise standards.

He was promoted to Controller of the Forensic Science Service in 1976. His drive to raise and maintain standards was helped by appointing assistant directors to oversee standards. During his time as Controller he was called to advise many overseas governments on forensic science and served on many international committees. He retired in 1982.

His worth was recognised internationally, being made an Honorary Fellow of the Royal College of Pathologists and awarded an Honorary Doctorate of the University of Ghent. He was the recipient of the Stas Gold Medal from the German Society of Forensic Toxicology and Forensic Chemistry, and the Doug Lucas Medal from the American Forensic Science Society.

After his retirement he still took an active interest in TIAFT, attending many of its meetings. The photograph is of Alan on HMS Belfast at the 2004 meeting.

His first marriage to Miriam Mawdesley was dissolved. He is survived by his second wife Venise Hewitt and his son from his first marriage.

George Walker
BSc C Chem FRSC MEWI



The original TIAFT Board – Back Row: M Mason, R B Furney Sr., R J Abernathy, Harry Leach, Michael Moss. Front Row: I Sunshine, B Finkle, J V Jackson, Alan Curry.

*Taken on the steps of School of Pharmacy, Bloomsbury, London, April 1963.
Kindly supplied by Brian Finkle.*