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Elis Wyn Knight-Jones: pioneering marine biologist and polychaete taxonomist (1916–2012)

Andrew S.Y. Mackie[1,*], Gaynor Oddy[2], Philip Knight-Jones[3], John S. Ryland[4], Ernest Naylor[6] and Ioanna S.M. Psalti[6]

[1] Department of Natural Sciences, Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales, Cathays Park, Cardiff CF10 3NP, Wales, U.K. (andrew.mackie@museumwales.ac.uk)
[2] Pulford Road, Sale, Cheshire M33 3LP, England, U.K.
[3] Duke Street, Micheldever, Winchester, SO21 3DF, England, U.K.
[4] Swansea University, Singleton Park, Swansea, SA2 8PP, Wales, UK
[5] School of Ocean Sciences, Bangor University, Menai Bridge, Anglesey LL59 5AB, Wales, UK
[6] Dime Limited, Oxford Road, Littlemore, Oxford OX4 4PE, England, UK
* To whom correspondence and reprint requests should be addressed. Email: andrew.mackie@museumwales.ac.uk

Figure 1. Wyn Knight-Jones. A, photograph with his mother Maud. On the reverse side, his father wrote "Taken circa May 1916 at Hanford, Stoke on Trent & sent to me in France!"; B, in school photograph, circa 1922; C, with Grandfather, circa 1929.

Wyn Knight-Jones was born in White House, Hanford, Trentham Rural District (now a southern suburb of Stoke-on-Trent) in Staffordshire on 7 March 1916. He was the first child of Maud Knight (née Cotterill) and William Ellis Jones; younger brother Owen Arthur was born in 1923. His mother was one of the first women to obtain a Bachelor of Arts degree in Classics (First Class) and, as an external student, followed this with a Master of Arts degree from the University of London in 1907. His father attended University College of North Wales (now Bangor University) and began a career in banking as an accountant in the London City and Midland Bank in Bala, 50 miles to the southeast.

However, at the time of Wyn's birth he was serving as a Lieutenant in the 14th Battalion Royal Welch Fusiliers in the snow-covered trenches of northern France. A few months later he received his first photograph ("Taken around May") of Wyn and Maud at Hanford (fig. 1A). Unfortunately, he was wounded in early June. William wrote a letter (postmarked June 9) to his father Owen from No. 8 General Hospital, Rouen, telling him that the operation to remove two pieces of shell from his (lower back) wound had been successful. After making a good recovery, he was promoted to Captain and returned to Britain to train young troops, before returning to serve in the Army of the Rhine after the Armistice of 11 November 1918. He was demobbed after Easter 1919 and returned to Bala to forge a successful career at the Midland Bank.

Wyn had no recollection of seeing his father in uniform. One of his earliest memories, at the age of 3, was of his genial paternal grandfather warming his posterior in front of the fire at the Agent's house *Bryngwyn* on the Peniarth Estate, Llanegryn in Gwynedd. Owen Jones and the family lived there from his appointment as Estate Agent in 1890 until his death in 1922. Wyn recalled that his father's brother, John Owen Jones (1884–1972), "alternated between school teaching (chemistry) and professional singing"; in newspaper clippings, he was referred to as the "popular artiste" Owen Bryngwyn.

School (1922–1933)

Banking took Wyn's father to the Head Office of the Midland Bank in London. In 1922, Wyn was part of the Kindergarten at Oakland House School, Blackheath in the southeast of the city, but after the summer he was in the 'Transition Division' at Clanricarde House School (fig. 1B) in Sutton in the southwest. His first report was good; "A very keen pupil. Shows decided aptitude for Drawing and has done well in every way."

In 1926, aged 10, he started boarding at Fonthill Preparatory School, East Grinstead, Surrey. The school wrote to his father in May re-assuring him that Wyn was "settling in

wonderfully well" and making friends. A letter from Wyn to his mother was also positive, but he complained "we scarcely ever go out" and mentioned thinking of murder regarding the lady who came to wake him in the morning! By December, Wyn had clearly settled in and was doing very well academically, though the Headmaster (Rev. Walpole E. Sealy) wrote that "Wyn's love of jests — apparently mistimed? — lost him his Class Prize this term." The next report in April 1927 noted that Wyn seemed to have taken the previous comments to heart, "sensible boy." There were criticisms again in the August report, but that December he won the Class Prize. This up and down pattern was frequent throughout Wyn's remaining time at Fonthill, although in December 1928 the Headmaster grudgingly acknowledged that appendicitis could have affected his work that term. Nevertheless, he managed to pass the Common Entrance Examination for Epsom College in the summer of 1929. The notification of this in early July happily coincided with his father's promotion to General Manager's Assistant at the Midland Bank. Wyn also showed signs of ability in singing, handicrafts, cricket and hockey during his time at Fonthill. In his last school report (August 1929), Rev. Sealy noted that Wyn had come 4th in the class, "which was none too bad". However, he followed this with a warning: "He is of course more capable than he likes us to imagine, and should do well in life: but he must not postpone his efforts too long, or he will find himself a bearded old man boring his grandchildren with the great things that he might have done, if he had been more ambitious."

Wyn started attending Epsom College following the summer break (fig. 1C) and his reports soon followed their usual pattern. They were at first poor, though his potential was readily recognised. His marks in Latin were a good barometer of his progress and response to criticism. In November 1929 he was 19th in a class of 22, yet only a year later he was 3rd equal. The Housemaster wrote "I rejoice to hear of increased effort at Latin and hope it will spread to other subjects." By March 1931 He was 1st in Latin, but improvement was still desired in other areas – and in later reports the need to make more effort was frequently voiced. Wyn responded and his reports from late 1931, and throughout 1932, were good. Conversely, in December, his teacher's comments regarding Zoology were worrying: "Weak. I can hold out no hope for his obtaining a scholarship unless he makes a stupendous effort and vast progress." Concern at his lack of academic application continued in 1933. Nonetheless, Wyn continued to fulfil his potential in other areas. He gained 1st string athletic colours, played in the 3rd XV rugby team and obtained his Bronze Medallion from the Royal Life Saving Society. In addition, in November 1932, he received his Certificate 'A' for the Infantry syllabus in the Junior Division of the Officer Training Corps. In his last Epsom report, in July (aged 17), his Housemaster wrote "Has taken life too easily lately but has done some useful work as a prefect." The Headmaster was more encouraging and wrote that he was a good and promising boy, who should do well, and he wished Wyn well for the future.

University (1933–1939)

"If you're keen on zoology, you'd better go to Bangor" was his father's advice (Knight-Jones, 1996). Wyn easily passed a 'scholarship interview' with Professor F.W. Rogers Brambell FRS and became a student at the University College of North Wales, regardless of there being no actual 'scholarship' available. Brambell had been a prime mover in establishing a Marine Station at Menai Bridge (Psalti, 2001), and the two quickly developed a lasting friendship. True to form, Wyn admitted that it took him another 3 years "to become even moderately studious." Wyn enjoyed university life to the full and took part in athletics, rugby, and rock-climbing. He was awarded full colours for boxing, representing the University of Wales at the Universities Athletic Union (UAU) finals of 1937. In March 1935, he received his Certificate 'B' qualification in the Artillery syllabus of the Officers Training Corps (Senior Division). Wyn also joined a number of university clubs and societies. He was Secretary of the Chess Club, Student President of the Biological Society, and took part in several productions of the English Dramatic Society. Wyn met fellow student Mary (Luned Mary) Morgan-Jones and they began dating (fig. 2A, B).

The mischievous side of his personality was well expressed and some of his exploits gained him a notoriety that was long remembered in the university. One such anecdote implicated Wyn in the release of Cabbage White butterflies (obtained from the Zoology Department) into the projector beam at a local cinema. Two other tales were recounted in the book published to celebrate 50 years of Marine Science Laboratories at Bangor University (Psalti, 2001: 24): "Knight-Jones broke into Powys Hall just before the exams and replaced the blotting paper with toilet tissue. On another occasion he disturbed a ladies' garden party by staging a fight with a friend on the roof overlooking the College garden, then proceeding to throw him down from a considerable height. Only later was it revealed that this was a borrowed tailor's dummy."

Despite these escapades (and others), Wyn did start to take his studies more seriously. He was enthralled by things that interested him and by the knowledgeable scientists that he met through Brambell, or through invited lectures to the Biological Society. For the latter, he remembered being particularly impressed by Walter Garstang, first director of the Lowestoft Marine Laboratory and father-in-law of Alister Hardy (Knight-Jones, 1996). Wyn further developed his interest in marine biology by volunteering to assist H.A. Cole at the Fisheries Experiment Station in Conwy during the 1937 and 1938 summer vacations. He also participated in a Marine Vacation Course at the Marine Biological Association's laboratory in Plymouth around Easter-time 1938. Wyn obtained a First Class Honours BSc in Zoology that very same year.

In 1938–39, Wyn had carried out some research into the nervous system of *Saccoglossus* (Enteropneusta) under the direction of Professor Brambell. Following on from this, and on Brambell's advice, he made contact with Professor J.Z. Young FRS at Oxford with a view to developing this work for a DPhil. His preferred location appeared to have been Magdalen College, however, Young advised that obtaining a scholarship to Jesus College was a better option at that stage.

Figure 2. Wyn Knight-Jones. A, with Mary Morgan-Jones at University College of North Wales, Bangor, circa 1939; B, with Mary, digging at Abersoch, northwest Wales in 1940; C, on leave in Brussels, March 1945; D, in dry suit, with daughter Carolyn, circa 1958.

Wyn then applied for (June) and successfully obtained (July) a Meyricke scholarship of up to £100 p.a. to Jesus College, Oxford, supported by positive testimonials from Brambell, R.W. Dodgson OBE (Ministry of Agriculture & Fisheries, Conwy; and close relative of 'Lewis Carroll') and University College Principal, D. Emrys Evans. The 'Scheme of Research', appended to his letter of application, began "To complete my studies of the histology of the nervous system of Hemichordata and Urochordata, and if possible to extend them to Polyzoa, Phoronidea, and Brachiopoda, in the hope that such work might throw further light on the phylogenetic relations of these groups to one another and to the Chordates and Echinoderms." He ended with "I plan to spend two years at Oxford, and to enter for the degree of DPhil." He was accepted at Jesus College in October. His first two papers were published on the settling behaviour of oyster larvae (with H.A. Cole) and on a new record of *Phoronis*. With the outbreak of war, he scarcely completed the Michaelmas term. Wyn and Mary married on December 9, and he was commissioned in the Royal Artillery, joining the Officers Training Corps at Colwyn Bay.

War Service (1940–1946)

Relatively little is known of Wyn's war years. He rarely talked of them, as was common for many of those involved. He served much of the war based in the United Kingdom. He was successively Gun Position Officer, Command Post Officer and Regimental Survey Officer in regiments of the 3rd Division and 15th (Scottish) Division. He attended courses in Physical Training and Artillery Survey, and competed in Divisional boxing and cross-country running. In addition, he was secretary to several Officers' Messes and President of a Regimental Institute. In 1944, he was in service in Western Europe, landing around D-Day+10 (i.e., ca. June 16). He was promoted to Captain and Troop Commander that October (fig. 2C). Wyn and Mary's first son, Peter, was born in November.

Wyn was wounded at the Rhine crossing near Wesel on 26 March 1945. He was in the front of an armoured vehicle when an armour-piercing shell struck. By strange coincidence, reminiscent of his father's wounding in 1916, he was hit by two shell fragments. In Wyn's case the wounds were to the chest,

and he soon found it difficult to breathe and impossible to walk or exert himself. He was invalided home; firstly to Botleys Park Hospital, Chertsey, in Surrey, then to Caernarfonshire & Anglesey Hospital in Bangor. While recuperating, he corresponded with several fellow officers, who affectionately addressed him by the nickname 'Jonah'. The war in Europe was ending and they were pre-occupied with logistical and administrative matters. Once censorship was lifted, they revealed they were in a small village 20 miles NE of Hamburg. Following his recovery (but with shell fragments still *in situ)*, Wyn was Troop Commander in a Training Regiment until he was demobbed (18 April 1946). He was mentioned in Dispatches (for distinguished service) and this was published in the London Gazette on the 4th April.

DPhil (1946–1950)

Wyn wished to complete his DPhil at Oxford. His application for a 'Further Education and Training Scheme' grant from the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MAF) was successful and, on 27th June 1946, he was awarded £320 p.a. plus tuition fees to complete his DPhil at Oxford. The following month he was appointed Senior Scientific Officer at MAF, but granted leave for his studies. In 1946, he attended the Trinity and Michaelmas Terms at Oxford, conducting his research under Dr William Holmes, before returning to fisheries research for the Ministry. From June 1947 to February 1950 he was engaged (with R.E. Savage and H.A. Cole) in establishing a laboratory at Burnham-on-Crouch, Essex. The main aim of the new laboratory was to elucidate the conditions necessary for the revival of the Essex oyster industry. Indeed, his renewed research on oysters with Cole produced the landmark paper in which the phenomenon of gregarious settlement was first described (Cole and Knight-Jones, 1949).

In March 1948, he received permission from Oxford to change the title of his thesis from 'A Study of the Nervous Systems of Hemichordata and Urochordata' to 'On the Nervous System, Behaviour and Development of *Saccoglossu*s.' A year later he tentatively enquired about his status and of submitting his thesis. The Steward at Jesus College informed him that his name had been kept on the books and that "By virtue of the fact that we have to claim dues and fees from the Ministry each term, you are not such an obscure member as you may think, except for one short period when we really did lose sight of you." Wyn completed his thesis and obtained his DPhil in 1950.

Bangor (1950–1956)

Wyn had an interview for the post of Director at the forthcoming Marine Station at University College of North Wales in May 1949. He was one of five shortlisted candidates, but was unsuccessful. Fabius Gross, the Austrian scientist famed for his experiments on the effects of chemical fertilisers on the growth of phytoplankton and fish, got the job (Psalti, 2001). However, in December, Wyn was successfully appointed Lecturer in Marine Zoology (at a salary of £900 p.a.) under Gross. He started work on 1 February 1950. Unfortunately, Gross soon became ill with leukaemia and he died in June 1950, aged 44. Wyn became Acting Director, but was again unsuccessful in becoming Director in 1951; Dennis Crisp was appointed. Many believed his earlier undergraduate exploits at the University had acted against Wyn and that his subsequent designation as Deputy Director was very much a consolation prize. However, the University had to also avoid the nepotism trap as Wyn's father was then Treasurer of the University College.

He contributed much to the early success of the new marine station that was established at Westbury Mount at Menai Bridge in 1952. The original Westbury Mount House was demolished in 2012 to be redeveloped as a new Innovation Centre (SEACAMS), bringing researchers and businesses together. Wyn got on well with the new Director and, in fact, they lived in adjacent houses in Bangor and Wyn's younger son Philip (born August 1948) remembers playing with Crisp's son Graham. Wyn and Mary's daughter Carolyn was born in June 1954.

He was one of a select and hardy band of pioneering divers who began using SCUBA to further their scientific research in the late 1940s and 1950s. This increased access to, and use of, SCUBA ultimately led to the founding of the British Sub-Aqua Club in 1953 (Rogerson, 2013). Wyn recalled his own experiences at this time (Knight-Jones, 1998), "We acquired dive masks and snorkels in 1953 and an aqualung in 1954." Syed Zahoorul Qasim was Wyn's first research student, arriving in October 1954. They collaborated, as a sideline to Qasim's PhD work on primary production, on studying the responses of various animals to pressure. One *in situ* experiment in 1955 saw Wyn observing *Eurydice* on the seabed of Menai Straits, while Qasim above kept the dinghy on station. Wyn had just finished when he noticed the seabed "rushing by at astonishing speed". He surfaced and, seeing the concerned look on Qasim's face, hauled himself aboard without delay. They had travelled a considerable distance south, but managed to row north against the current and found "a kindly eddy" that helped them home. Qasim was the first student from Menai Bridge to obtain a PhD in Marine Biology (1956). He was later (1967) awarded a DSc and played a significant part in founding the National Institute of Oceanography in Goa. In the 1980s he became Secretary to the Indian Government in the Department of Ocean Development, and initiated India's explorations in Antarctica. Wyn's diving exploits became renowned and his leaking dry suit, evidently ill fitting his slender frame (fig. 2D), more often than not resulted in him getting wet and numbingly cold.

Wyn published 17 papers on a range of subjects between 1951 and 1955. These included ciliary beating in Metazoa, invertebrate larvae at Naples, animal distributions in the rocky intertidal and sublittoral, responses of plankton to changes in hydrostatic pressure, and two from his own DPhil studies. His laboratory experiments on gregariousness during the settlement of barnacles (Knight-Jones, 1953) became a classic work in experimental biology (Toonen, 2005), and his insights into metachronism and ciliary beat (Knight-Jones, 1954) was clearly the product of a very original mind. He built a mechanical model from Meccano® to demonstrate ciliary movement to students. Unfortunately, this was no longer working when he showed it to the senior author in the 1990s.

Throughout this period, Wyn remained ambitious for career progression and, in 1954, he applied for the Chair of Zoology at

Figure 3. Wyn Knight-Jones. A, examining seaweed for polychaetes with Phyllis in Russia, September 1996; B, with Phyllis, 2005.

Bedford College, University of London. While this was unsuccessful, he had more luck when interviewed by Council members at the University College of Swansea in 1956.

Swansea (1956–1981)

As the first Professor of Zoology at Swansea, Wyn was immediately tasked with organising the new Department. He delivered his inaugural lecture 'Marine Biology in Wales' on the 4 December 1956 (Knight-Jones, 1957), primarily describing his work, and that of his former colleagues and student Dr Qasim, to date. He finished by mentioning his current staff – Dr Ernest Naylor, recently joined marine ecologist and isopod expert, and Mr Macfadyen "of terrestrial habits" – and outlining the great opportunities he saw for Marine Biology at Swansea. These ranged from fouling organisms in Swansea docks, shore ecology and local fisheries to making use of the Dale Fort Field Centre and diving the clear waters around Skokholm Island in southwest Wales.

Wyn was soon busy and, continuing his work at Menai Bridge on pressure responses, similarly installed tall glass tubes in the stairwell of the Natural Science Building. In addition, he carried out research on the settlement of Spirorbinae, underwater surveys, intraspecific competition, and the biology of cirripede larvae. Marine biology was becoming a major subject matter in the University and a paper with his first research student at Swansea (Phillipu Hewa Don Hemasiri De Silva) marked the start of his career as a polychaete taxonomist (De Silva and Knight-Jones, 1962). Spirorbins were to be a profitable research field both for Wyn and many subsequent students.

Diving was an important activity and the clear waters of southwest Wales were readily accessible for fieldwork. Both his sons and colleagues have similar memories of some of his exploits. Typically, they recall being left alone in the small boat while Wyn disappeared below with the instruction "Just follow the bubbles, old boy." This was rather worrying and no easy task, for he hardly seemed to breathe! Even more colourful escapades ensued. In 1965, the family toured France and Spain on holiday. However, as usual, Wyn was actively collecting at every opportunity. In Spain, he attracted the attention of the Spanish naval police when he inadvertently dived near Franco's yacht. A couple of years later, returning from a successful diving expedition he led to Chios in the Aegean, Wyn had to convince Greek Customs officials that that he was not removing marine antiquities from the country; he was taking only the insignificant little tube worms that were attached to fragments of amphorae! Julie Bailey-Brock later published an account of the Chios spirorbins (Bailey, 1969).

Wyn was generous in providing help, advice and ideas to colleagues and students, and would unselfishly edit and enhance their manuscripts and other writings. He would regularly collect material for his undergraduate practical classes and postgraduate students, and always led by example. Wyn held his student audience's attention through his quiet charm, humour, and droll sometimes risqué delivery. As a professor he was never a 'committee man' and often had to be reminded that he should have been in a particular meeting ten minutes ago! He published regularly and produced 24 papers between 1956 and 1968, including important contributions to the study of intraspecific competition between sedentary marine animals (Knight-Jones and Moyse, 1961), and to the systematics of marine leeches (Knight-Jones, 1962).

However, family life changed in October 1968 when he and Mary divorced. A relationship subsequently developed with Phyllis Fisher, a keen SCUBA diver he had met at a field outing at Dale Fort (Mackie et al., 2011) and, after a whirlwind romance, they married in July 1969. Phyllis quickly took an interest in his work. She was made a Research Associate at the University in 1970, and the following year accompanied Wyn on a two-month research and teaching visit to South Africa. Wyn was interviewed by the *Cape Times* and, talking about their work on spirorbins, said "It's ridiculous that these creatures should be our bread and butter, but we are quite hooked on them now." This visit was followed in later years by collecting trips to many countries and together they became the foremost taxonomic experts on this group of polychaetes.

The birth of their daughter Gaynor in July 1972 did little to slow them down. They took a cruise from Lisbon to Funchal,

Las Palmas, Tenerife and Lanzarote in 1974, and another from Casablanca to Gibraltar in 1976, gaining access to collecting opportunities at ports in the Canary Islands, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Cape Verde Islands, Madeira and Spain. In the following years, fieldwork was generally more modest, with Phyllis obtaining her MSc in 1977 and her PhD in 1980 from Swansea, and Wyn being awarded a DSc from Oxford in 1977. Then, they finally realised their long-planned South American trip, collecting in Brazil, Argentina, Patagonia and Peru from February to April 1981 (Knight-Jones and Knight-Jones, 1991).

In May 1980, Wyn had written to the University College Principal asking to retire in 1981, when he would be 65. The reply noted that the normal retirement age was, "as you know, 67" and his request to retire early would have to be approved by College Council. This was granted and Wyn officially retired in October 1981. A meeting was held in his honour at the Linnean Society in London on 16 December 1982. The Proceedings, titled 'Biology of Marine Invertebrates', were published in the *Zoological Journal of the Linnean Society* in 1984, and included 17 papers and an introduction by the editor (Ryland, 1984). The Department of Zoology in Swansea presented Wyn with a bound volume.

Retirement (1981–2002)

On retirement, Wyn showed little sign of taking it easy. He and Phyllis always welcomed fellow scientists and friends to their house *Bryngwyn* on Gower, South Wales. Together, they continued to work and publish on polychaetes, collecting at locations in Britain and abroad (Mackie et al., 2011). They successfully applied for an Anglo-Australian fellowship from the Royal Society and, in 1983, embarked on a three-month collecting tour of Australia, taking in the *First International Polychaete Conference* (IPC) at the Australian Museum, Sydney. Phyllis attended the first five Polychaete conferences (1983–1995), but Wyn did not always accompany her – saying someone "had to stay and look after the cat." However, wherever possible, they would go together. Travels abroad included Turkey (1987), Faroe Islands (BIOFAR Symposium), Sweden and Norway (1991), France, plus Fourth IPC (1992), New Zealand and Hawaii (1993), Iceland (BIOICE project, 1994), and Russia (fig. 3A), also attending the *31st European Marine Biological Symposium* in St Petersburg (1996). Wyn was still certified as fit to dive aged 77, but was restricted to sheltered conditions and a maximum depth of 20 m.

Wyn supported Phyllis (fig. 3B) throughout her art project on the Welsh Slate industry and during her illness at the turn of the century (Mackie et al., 2011). At the same time he himself was finding it harder to concentrate, but he persevered and completed his last scientific paper (Knight-Jones and Knight-Jones, 2002).

Health (2002–2012)

Wyn remained in good health throughout the 1990s. Photographs of him at home and on fieldwork show him as active as ever. One photograph from 1997 shows him sitting on the ridge of the roof at *Bryngwyn*, busy repairing the chimney! His last known fieldtrip was to Salcombe and Looe, southwest England in October 2003, only a few weeks after a hip replacement operation. In May 2004, he was elected a Fellow *Honoris causa* of *The Linnean Society of London*. His last driving licence was issued in December 2003, however, there were increasing signs of ill health and in 2005 he had his first visit to a memory consultant. As his health deteriorated over the following years, he was nursed at home by Phyllis. Plans were made for them to join their daughter Gaynor and family at Sale, near Manchester. Unfortunately, Phyllis' health was failing also and she passed away in January 2009. Wyn, suffering from Alzheimer's Disease, moved to Sale and was lovingly cared for until his death from pneumonia on the 9th February 2012, a month short of his 96th birthday.

Reminiscences

Many letters and e-mails were received following Wyn's death. These cannot all be included here; however, those that are provide an insight into the respect and affection he received from all who came in contact with him.

His influence on his former students was everlasting. Pete Vine wrote "He was a really important figure in my life and I shall never forget the encouragement he gave me." Julie Brock recalled learning "to dive in Abereiddy quarry, collecting slate with spirorbids on them. At times it was very cold and Prof would sit in the boat after a dive, drink his bottle of cold water and munch on an apple. He will always be a very gracious and patient advisor."

Those who visited him at *Bryngwyn* had similar thoughts. Nechama Ben-Eliahu: "Years ago I visited with them both in Swansea, and it was an important and memorable visit for me." Tara Macdonald: "He certainly left an inspiring legacy – and I won't forget his excitement about his work, even well after retirement. He was a kind man, and I appreciated that as a young scientist." Chris Mettam wrote that Wyn had a "long and creative life that anyone could be proud of. It was an honour as well as a delight to know him."

Wyn in the field was equally memorable. Mike Kendall: "The abiding memory I have of him comes from the late 70's when he and a field team, all dressed in wet-suits, called into the Robin Hood's Bay lab for coffee totally unannounced. His arrival totally panicked Jack Lewis who wasn't used to that sort of thing, but amused the rest of us." Greg Rouse: "I'll always remember the time I met him and Phyllis at Heron Island. I was new to polychaetes but they were kind to me. Wyn impressed me immensely in that he carried their SCUBA tanks out the reef crest, more than 500 m! He was in his mid-60s at the time." Helmut Zibrowius remarked on Wyn's energy: "I met them last in the Faroes (BIOFAR Symposium) in 1992. Wyn then was still agile in the tidal zone between boulders looking for spirorbids. They were a kind help when young I touched to spirobids (now I am retired, too)." Victor Gallardo recalled Wyn and Phyllis visiting Chile in 1981 and remembered Wyn's humorous comment on "the stately attitude of a humble street dog."

Wyn's qualities were recognized widely. Brian Morton wrote "Very sad. Another one of the 'Greats' gone. But he had a long, productive, active and eminent life." Pat Hutchings and Steve Hawkins were of a similar mind, "He was a scholar and a gent."

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