

OBITUARY
David Wynford (“Wyn”) Evans

Wyn Evans, as he was always known, had contributed to the work of SCOLMA for 20 years and more. Back in the days when *African Research and Documentation* was a joint publication with the ASA (UK), Wyn was joint editor for SCOLMA with Marion Johnson of Birmingham’s Centre of West African Studies. Wyn’s tenure of this post was 1976-80, and during this time he also regularly produced cumulative indexes to *ARD*, something which we have found difficult to keep up with since.

There followed long periods when Wyn was on the SCOLMA Committee, where his sound sense and thoughtful insights were invaluable in bringing our work forward. Most recently he rejoined the Committee in 1990 and almost immediately found himself nominated for Treasurer, a post which he willingly accepted. As his successor in this post I have inherited his accounts, impeccably clear and accurate, as you would expect.

Wyn was one of a number of ex-University of Birmingham library staff active in SCOLMA; they are a redoubtable band and another three are currently serving on the SCOLMA Committee. Wyn had come to Birmingham from the National Library of Scotland, and it was in Birmingham that I first got to know him when I started there; he became my unofficial mentor. Sound professional advice was coupled with a store of droll anecdotes, such as that of his observing the conference delegate who one mealtime suddenly realised that his tie was dangling in his soup as he carried his tray across the room but, with both hands occupied, was unable to succeed in doing anything about it. Not a SCOLMA conference, I’m sure.

It was through Wyn that I first got bitten by the African Studies bug and became involved in SCOLMA. ‘Why don’t you go on the SCOLMA Committee’, he said to me at the time (he’d moved to Exeter University by then); ‘they’re a good crowd, and they always have a decent lunch’. How true.

Wyn’s other interests included a great love of Scandinavia in general and Denmark in particular.

A Welsh speaker, he added Danish to his array of languages. On holiday once in Norway for a change, he said everyone he tried to speak Norwegian to assumed, because of his limited success, that he was Danish - except for some visiting Danes, who assumed he was Norwegian.

Wyn was at home in the countryside, on walking and cycling holidays, in country hotels, in second-hand bookshops, in good tea-rooms. He had just opted for early retirement and some part-time re-employment in Exeter, where he had been Deputy Librarian for the last decade or so. (He confessed to me that when he was first

appointed to this post, his daughters had taken to calling him 'Deputy Dawg'). He and Joan had been looking forward to spending more time touring the West County and further afield in pursuit of the above goals. Sadly, this was not to be.

He lived long enough to enjoy the wedding day of his daughter Lynne in January, but rapidly escalating illness finally overcame him on 25 April 1996.

To Joan, Claire and Lynne, all his friends and colleagues in SCOLMA extend our deepest sympathy. At the funeral the Chairman and I were there to be moved by the playing of the fine old Welsh hymn tunes which saw him out. For myself I have lost a splendid colleague and friend .

Tom French