

Obituary

John C. Alldred 1941-2002

John Alldred died in March this year aged 61, shortly after being diagnosed with lung cancer (not unexpected to those of us who knew him as a chain smoker).

John was at the Research Laboratory for Archaeology at 6 Keble Road, Oxford when I arrived there in 1969. He was employed as a research engineer and was responsible for electronic developments, principally for the thermoluminescence group. Particularly in those days, success in research was highly dependent upon a laboratory's expertise in equipment development, appropriate commercial products not usually being available. A critical advance in utilizing the generally low levels of thermoluminescence involved in the dating of pottery was development by John of the photon counting system now widely used in luminescence studies; this was presented at the Second International Conference on Luminescence Dosimetry held in Gatlinburg, Tennessee in 1968. Among his other developments was the fluxgate gradiometer, the forerunner of one of the two types of equipment presently used in the magnetic location of buried remains.

John had studied Physics at Brasenose College, Oxford (subsequently completing an M.Phil.) and this enabled him to be much more than an electronic boffin; he was patient with the electronically ignorant and he gave freely of his time to other researchers. He was a valued member of a number of fieldwork expeditions. His publications include one which became a basic reference paper in luminescence dating:- Aitken, M.J. and Alldred, J.C. (1972) The assessment of error limits in thermoluminescent dating. *Archaeometry*, 14, 257-267.

After a number of years in the Research Laboratory for Archaeology, John joined Protovale Oxford Ltd, designers and manufacturers of Industrial Metal Detectors and Instruments for Non-destructive Testing in Civil Engineering. He was also well known as a writer of a web site that helped people create their own web sites. At a personal level, he was self-effacing, quietly supportive of those around him; outside the laboratory he helped many people who, like him, had an addiction to alcohol. In his case, he gained an extra 23 years by giving it up completely. Fortunately, his other great love, Indian

Cuisine, was indulged in every night without affecting his health.

Ann Wintle