

## In lasting memory of: David George Shirley

1947

Born in Hull,  
England

1972

appointed Lecturer  
in Physiology

1973

joined The  
Physiological Society

2009

diagnosed with  
acute myeloid  
leukaemia

2011

Dave died peacefully  
at home on 20  
October

### Obituary David George Shirley 1947-2011



*Written by*  
Steve Walter

Dave Shirley was born in Hull, which explains his lifelong devotion to Hull City FC. He obtained his degree in Physiology from Sheffield University and his PhD at Chelsea College under the supervision of Sebastian Dicker. In 1972 he was appointed Lecturer in Physiology at Charing Cross Hospital Medical School. His research thereafter was based on *in vivo* renal micropuncture and, in collaboration with Robert Unwin, micropertusion. These techniques allowed widespread investigations into segmental renal function, most notably, perhaps, clarification of the value (and shortcomings) of renal lithium clearance measurements as a non-invasive method for determining separately the function of the proximal and distal segments of the nephrons.

Dave was a perfectionist. His surgery was meticulous and great attention to detail was applied to everything. He was also a gifted, popular and enthusiastic teacher; whenever students were questioned about the merits of the teaching staff, he invariably came out on top. It is a measure of the esteem in which he was held that, on hearing of his illness and treatment, some 400 UCL students added their names to the register of bone marrow donors.

The merger of Imperial College and the Charing Cross and St Mary's Medical Schools was not to Dave's liking and, not being a man to compromise, he resigned his position as Senior Lecturer. However, he had just been awarded a grant to study the renal handling of aluminium. He got round this problem by arranging for the grant to be transferred to his fellow researchers and applying for a part-time post at a much reduced salary – nominally as a junior research assistant; however, there was little doubt who was driving the research.

Dave joined The Physiological Society in 1973. He was a founder member of the Renal Group that met following Society Meetings during the 80s and which was a forerunner to the Special Interest Groups and, more recently, Themed Meetings.

Dave continued his collaboration with Robert Unwin but now at the Royal Free and University College Medical School, investigating, in particular, the renal purinergic system, a field in which they made a widely acknowledged contribution. His efforts were rewarded by an Honorary Readership. Sadly, in 2009, he was diagnosed with acute myeloid leukaemia and, despite a bone marrow transplant, he died peacefully at home on 20 October. He will be greatly missed by all who knew him, worked with him or were taught by him.

The Society also regrets to  
announce the deaths of:

*Alan Chipperfield*

*Paul Richardson*

*and Rolf Niedergerke.*

Full obituaries for Alan Chipperfield,  
Brian Whipp and Dave Shirley can be  
found on The Society website at:  
[www.physoc.org/late-members](http://www.physoc.org/late-members)

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