

**Adam Fleck, MB, ChB, PhD(Glas), FRSC, FRCPATH, FRCPG**  
**19 October 1932 - 31 July 2015**

Adam Fleck was a major contributor to the understanding of plasma protein metabolism. From 1979 to 1996 he was Professor of Chemical Pathology at Charing Cross and Westminster Medical School and Head of the NHS Department of Riverside Health District.

Adam was brought up and studied in Glasgow, where his family owned Fleck's Vienna Bakery – a good source of nutrition for some of his fellow medical students. After a First Class Honours degree in biochemistry he qualified in medicine in 1958 and then joined the Biochemistry Department of Glasgow University, working with H N Munro. The main focus of research there was on various aspects of the effects of nutritional changes on protein metabolism. Adam developed methods of measuring both synthesis and degradation rates of albumin in health and disease, the results of which made him a life-long critic of the use of serum albumin concentrations as a measure of nutritional status, stating they indicated only the severity of any concurrent illness by reflecting redistribution of the protein from the vascular to the extravascular compartment. He obtained a PHD on Plasma Protein Metabolism in 1964 and was delighted when the work was recognised by the award of FRSE in 1973.

His other long-term interest was automation of laboratory analyses, at one time bringing back from an exhibition a very large new instrument for evaluation in the emergency lab at the Western Infirmary, Glasgow – the Greiner, made by a Swiss clock manufacturer! He was a polymath, with tremendous interest and insight into many areas, not the least of which was mathematical modelling, and could often be seen making his way up to the University's computing department with his bundle of "punched cards" to try out his latest model of compartmental analysis for albumin kinetics. His desk, unlike his mind, was organised chaos - like a volcano of mounting paper waiting to explode. It never did and he always knew exactly where, on this desk, a specific piece of correspondence or note was – a trick never mastered by his secretaries!

He always supported his staff – clinical, scientific and technical- encouraging them to study for higher degrees and for his clinical staff to develop a ward-based clinical interest - indeed he could be described as a forebear of the speciality of metabolic medicine.

When Sir David Cuthbertson retired from the Rowett Research Institute to Glasgow, Adam worked closely with him on the metabolic response to trauma and nutrition support and became a co-founder of the UK Surgical Metabolic Group, later the British Association for Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition, and the MRC "Paper Institute" on Trauma.

Adam and his much loved wife Betty had three children and they had many outside interests. In 1972 he acquired a bright pink/orange Alfa Romeo GT, the sound of whose engine always delighted him. In moving to London he changed his mode of transport to work, and bought a motorbike. He studied several languages because he was keen to speak them when abroad. He was a great companion on the ski slopes (with Betty) and golf course, where he was often in a field of his own. His quote in his final year book was "*Adam was a gardener - especially on the golf course*", which of course he denied vigorously.

**Iain Broom and Elizabeth Russell.**

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