James Gourlay Clunie, 1926–2013

James (Jim) Gourlay Clunie was born in 1926 in St. Andrews, Scotland and attended Madras College there, where he was awarded the prestigious Dux in Science in 1945. After completing his undergraduate studies at St.Andrews University, he moved to Aberdeen University where he was a student of Professor Archibald Macintyre, and received his Ph. D. in 1952. His first lectureship was at the University College of North Staffordshire, now Keele University. In 1956 he moved to Imperial College London, joining Walter Hayman in an internationally eminent analysis group. He was promoted to a Chair there at the age of 39, in 1964.

He retired early in 1981, moving first to a research fellowship at the Open University, and in 1986 to a research fellowship at York University, after which he retired properly.

In his broad complex analysis research Jim is well-known for the "Clunie constant", "Clunie's lemma", the "Tumura-Clunie theorem" for meromorphic functions, "Clunie-Jack" lemma, the result of "Clunie and Sheil-Small", "Clunie theorems" for difference and q-difference polynomials, for the establishment, together with Milne Anderson and Christian Pommerenke, of the theory of so-called Bloch functions, and for the theorem of "Clunie and Hayman".

At Imperial College he supervised (at least) ten research students, namely, Qazi Ibadur Rahman (1961), James Milne Anderson (1963), Terry Sheil-Small (1965), Derek K. Thomas (1966), David Alexander Brannan (1967), J. Brian Twomey (1967), Peter Oliver (1975), Steve T. Davies (1977 ?), Mrs Datta (1978 ?), and Dinesh Singh (1981).

At York, Jim's extensive knowledge of analysis and appetite for news, mathematical or otherwise, combined with his genial character, stories and experience, made him a great asset. He was a mainstay of Walter Hayman's renowned York Wednesday morning analysis seminar, which was founded by Walter (after he came to York from Imperial College) in 1985. It was regularly attended by Frank Bonsall (who lived in Harrogate after retiring from Edinburgh) and analysts from Leeds and further afield, including two of the authors, PLB and RLS, and made York the center of analysis in Britain at the time.

His close links with Ireland were recognized by an honorary Doctorate of Science from the National University of Ireland in 1988.

Jim married Nancy Tuff in 1955; they had a daughter, Fiona, and grandchildren Alex and Zack. Despite a growing loss of mobility in later life from poliomyelitis in childhood, he remained as cheerful and sociable as ever. He passed away peacefully on March 5th, 2013.

One author, PLB, experienced Jim's kindness already in 1973 during his lecture tour in Britain when at Imperial, and again in 1993 when Jim professionally organized a lecture tour under the auspices of the London Mathematical Society, covering Anglia Polytechnic University, Cambridge, the Universities at York, Edinburgh, Nottingham, and University College, London.

Maurice Dodson recalled the amusing long train–ferry–train trip which he took together with Jim from York to the Erasmus meeting at Aachen in 1991.

They both fell asleep and woke up just as the train was leaving Aachen; they returned back to Aachen from Cologne, just as the opening conference dinner was ending.

At a meeting conducted by Jim and David Brannan at the University of Durham in 1979, attended by GS, the consumption of alcohol reached a record level, thanks to Jim's love of beer.

This short biographical note on Jim is based on the LMS obituary, published online on 29 May 2013, that Maurice kindly sent the authors, along with some personal memories. There is also a Mactutor biography of October 2013.

P. L. Butzer (Aachen)
G. Schmeisser (Erlangen)
R. L. Stens (Aachen)