IN MEMORIAM

On 26 April 2005 we were saddened to hear of the death of Michael John Hall, Emeritus Professor of Hydrology at UNESCO-IHE. Mike will be remembered by many in the Hydroinformatics community through his groundbreaking work together with Tony Minns in the field of neural networks and rainfall-runoff modelling. Mike started his career in hydrology with his PhD from Imperial College in 1967 entitled *Artificial Rainfall in Laboratory Hydrology*. He joined Sir William Halcrow & Partners in 1976 as Principal Hydrologist until his return to academia in 1986 as Professor and Head of School of Civil Engineering at Middlesex Polytechnic (now Middlesex University). Mike joined IHE-Delft (now UNESCO-IHE) in 1992 as Professor of Hydrology and remained in Delft until his retirement in December 2003. It was devastating that at this same moment Mike's long and unfortunately unsuccessful battle against cancer began. Mike returned to the UK in March 2005. He was 63 years old.

The introduction of Hydroinformatics in the early 1990s brought the promise of new techniques to hydraulics and hydrology with new opportunities for modelling certain physical relations that had, to date, been considered too difficult to model using traditional methods. Through their interaction at IHE, Mike and Tony began exploring the application of neural networks to the problem of rainfall-runoff modelling. Their first joint paper in 1993 for the British Hydrological Society introduced some of the basic concepts needed to be addressed and it served to "test the waters" of the hydrology world for this new concept. It was probably only because of the great respect and admiration that Mike had amongst his colleagues in this society that he

was given the chance to challenge the audience with some controversial findings. Mike's immense knowledge and familiarity with the most basic hydrological processes made it possible to address the criticisms much to the satisfaction of the early sceptics. The early experiments involved the use of the artificial laboratory catchment data that Mike had collected so many years before. After much debate, discussion and letter writing, Mike and Tony finally succeeded in getting a paper published in a refereed hydrology journal in 1996, and this is still serves as one of the fundamental papers on this subject.

In later years, Mike continued to work on some of the more illusive problems such as flood frequency analysis on ungauged catchments and the inscrutable problem of extrapolation using neural networks. Much of this latter work was carried out by MSc and PhD students at IHE. Mike's immense knowledge of hydrology and hydrological processes has meant that this research has always been founded upon fundamental hydrological principals and the results are not just presented as just another "black-box" approach. This current edition of the Journal of Hydro-informatics contains one of the last Mike's works entitled "The extrapolation of artificial neural networks for the modelling of rainfall-runoff relationships", which is also co-authored by Hettiaracchi and Tony Minns.

Mike will be dearly missed by the Hydroinformatics community. He was a regular delegate at the biennial Hydroinformatics conferences and was always keen to promote the opportunities and insights gained through Hydroinformatics to his fellow hydrologists around the world.