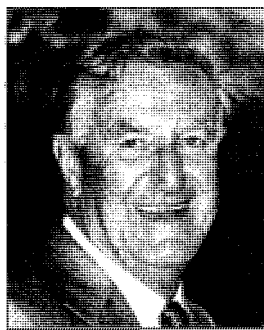


**MR GORDON HALE, 1921–2004  
HONORARY LIFE MEMBER, ROYAL SOCIETY OF TASMANIA:  
OBITUARY**

by M. R. Banks

(with one plate)

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*Mr Gordon Hale*

Gordon Hale was born in Hobart on 19 June 1921 and died in Hobart on 18 August 2004. During his lifetime he knew severe hardship but gave much to the Tasmanian community through his profession as engineering geologist, through active membership in professional societies, including the Royal Society of Tasmania, and in war veterans' bodies. He was widely known in Tasmania and beyond, and widely respected.

He completed his secondary education at Hobart High School in 1939, and attained, early in 1940, the rank of Sergeant in the Citizen Military Forces, with which he had served since 1937. A month after transferring to the A.I.F. in December 1941 he was sent to Singapore where he fought in the Battle for Singapore as a member of the 2/29th Battalion until the surrender in February 1942. As a prisoner of war, he was part of a wood-cutting gang but found time to further his education by taking courses in the P.O.W. camp and was subsequently awarded a scholarship based on these studies. Gordon was discharged from the Army in December 1945.

Early in 1946 he commenced studies in Engineering at the University of Tasmania under the Commonwealth Reconstruction and Training Scheme. In 1947 he transferred to Science and, under the influence of the late Professor S. W. Carey, developed a lifelong interest in geology. He graduated in Geology at the end of 1951 with first class honours for a research project based on field mapping and studies of clay deposits in the Dover area. This project was the basis of his first two papers, published in the *Papers and Proceedings of the Royal Society of Tasmania* in 1953.

For several months early in 1952 he worked as Demonstrator in Geology at the University of Tasmania. Then, in April, he joined the staff of the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery as the first Curator of Geology at that institution.

In that capacity he planned and supervised design and construction of exhibits for the Geology Gallery. He was also Honorary Part-time Lecturer in Geology at the University, teaching mineralogy and geological mapping, subjects he made interesting.

Several years later the Hydro Electric Commission moved to appoint their first engineering geologist. Gordon applied and was successful, commencing work with the Commission in March 1956. He subsequently became Geologist-in-Charge and then Chief Geologist. He retired from that position in 1982 and since then has devoted his time to, *inter alia*, hobbies such as fishing, gardening, wood carving and golf.

Gordon Hale was elected Honorary Treasurer of the Royal Society of Tasmania in 1953 and occupied that position for 24 years, seeing the Society through some lean years in the 1960s, and was a member of the Standing Committee for five years. He was elected Junior Vice-President for 1977 and, in the custom usual at that time, became Senior Vice-President in 1978. The Society conferred Honorary Life Membership on him in 1979. Between 1953 and 1970 he had eight papers published by the Society on a variety of Tasmanian geological topics. He also published material in the *Journal of the Geological Society of Australia*, and in engineering journals.

The Royal Society of Tasmania was not Gordon's only interest. He contributed in an executive capacity to the Geological Society of Australia, particularly to the Tasmania Division, and to several veterans' organisations. However, the Royal Society of Tasmania gained greatly from Gordon Hale's services and we salute and thank him for it.

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