

Obituary - **Paul Wenning Sowan** Bsc FRGS FGS FLS 1940-2021
From Croydon Natural History & Scientific Society (CNHSS)



Paul at the Museum of Croydon. © CNHSS



At Reigate Castle. © Celia E Bailey

It is with the greatest regret that we announce that Paul Wenning Sowan passed away on 4th June 2021, aged 81.

Paul attended five schools including Selhurst Grammar School for Boys. He was a retired teacher, having taught geography and science, especially chemistry and physics, in Croydon at Norbury Manor High School for Boys and Shirley High School, and careers education at the latter school.

With a degree from University of London in geology, chemistry and physics, and with his other interests including industrial archaeology and local history, Paul was a major part of CNHSS which he joined in 1960. He was elected Secretary in 1963, a director from its incorporation in 1967 and later served as President twice, Honorary General Secretary, Company Secretary and as Honorary Librarian & Archivist, in which post he remained. Paul also ran an active Junior Section for many years.

With a lifelong interest in subterranean history, he was an early member of Subterranea Britannica and their Chairman for many years. He was also a valued member of many other societies throughout England whether as officer, researcher, writer, depositor or supporter.

Paul made a particular study of Croham Hurst in South Croydon over many years and was instrumental in it becoming a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). He was never happier than when leading walks to visit disused industrial and mining sites in Surrey. He had a particular penchant for Reigate Stone, regularly pointing out examples and being a consultant to its use in major historic buildings, and led tours of the Reigate Caves.

Many of our members and others remember Paul for his enthusiasm, his many talks and walks, his environmentalism, his generosity with his time and with his immense knowledge, as an interesting raconteur and as a convivial and genial companion. He was a lifelong vegetarian, never had a television, and to the end rejected email and insisted on the telephone and letter writing.

Paul's passing is an immense loss to us all.

Paul is survived by his brother Adam.

