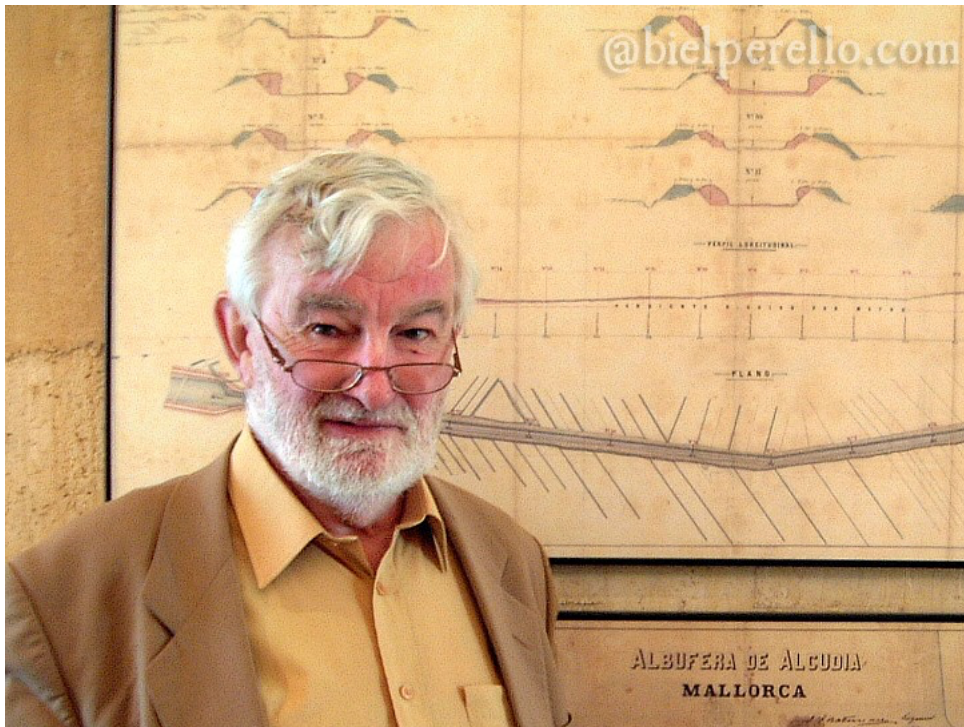




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Palmer Newbould obituary

Palmer Newbould's academic career began as a plant ecology lecturer at University College London in 1955.



David Wilcock - Nov 7, 2016

My former colleague Palmer Newbould, who has died aged 87, was a champion of scientific nature conservation, an innovative university teacher and a generous, warm-hearted man with broad interests.

His nature conservation work was based mainly in Northern Ireland, where wide-ranging conservation legislation was introduced only in 1965. Palmer served on two statutory committees in the 1970s – the Nature Reserves Committee and Ulster Countryside Committee – before becoming chairman of the [Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside](#) in 1989, for which he was appointed OBE. He was also a Northern Ireland representative on the UK's [Joint Nature Conservation Committee](#) and served on Ireland's Nuclear Energy Board.

Born in south-west London, he was the son of Dorothy (nee Pugh) and Alfred Newbould. His father played a significant role in the early cinema industry

and was a Liberal MP between 1919 and 1922. Palmer was educated at Charterhouse school, Surrey, and Balliol College, Oxford. His academic career began as a plant ecology lecturer at University College London in 1955, where he had earlier met Jo, his wife, while they were both botany PhD students. They were married in 1954.

Respect for his research on peat bogs and ecosystem productivity led to involvement with the International Biological Programme and appointment as vice-president of the [British Ecological Society](#).

At UCL he was convener of Europe's first MSc in conservation, which quickly became the model for similar courses elsewhere. In 1968 he was made a professor of biology at the New [University of Ulster](#) (NUU), helping to introduce undergraduate courses in ecology and environmental science, among the first of their kind. His horticultural skills were invaluable in beginning the transformation of the exposed Coleraine campus into today's wooded landscape.

At NUU his good humour, integrity, and interest in the arts as well as the sciences made him a successful, if reluctant, administrator. As acting vice-chancellor during the merger between NUU and the Ulster Polytechnic the trust he enjoyed among colleagues helped bring complex negotiations to a successful conclusion. The merged institution became the University of Ulster (UU) and Palmer became provost of UU's Coleraine campus.

In retirement, in Cirencester, Gloucestershire, he became a trustee of the [National Heritage Memorial Fund](#), which distributes some of the National Lottery funds, and, with Jo, worked on a project monitoring biodiversity in Mallorca's S'Albufera wetlands.

He is survived by Jo and their children, Elizabeth, Andrew and Susan.