

Businessman and philanthropist Alastair Salvesen dies

Dr Alastair Salvesen, CBE, CA, MBA, Hon DSc, HRSA, FRSA, businessman and member of the well known Salvesen family has died aged 83.

Dr Salvesen first qualified as a chartered accountant and became a very successful businessman in his own right with forays into the fish and seafood business. He was chair of Dovecot Studios and was also a Trustee of The Salvesen Mindroom Centre to which he gave its name.

Dovecot Studios issued a statement saying “The news of Alastair Salvesen’s untimely death has been received at Dovecot as a devastating shock.

“Alastair Eric Hotson Salvesen (1941–2024) was a great man for Scotland and a steadfast and generous supporter of the arts and culture. As the Chair of The Dovecot Foundation, Alastair’s heart was in Scottish tapestry. He and his wife Elizabeth were determined to ensure the future of tapestry at Dovecot Studios through the training and nourishment of new generations of weavers.

“Our thoughts are with Elizabeth and the Salvesen family.”

The Christian Salvesen shipping company began in the 19th century and until it was acquired in 2007 by a French company it was a big Scottish success story. It was the company’s whaling ships which are said to have Brough penguins back to

Edinburgh Zoo for breeding purposes.

There are many links to the family in Edinburgh including several housing developments built for veterans, injured army personnel or retired lighthouse keepers who were instrumental in keeping their ships safe.



The Salvesen Mindroom Centre

The Trustees and staff of the Salvesen Mindroom Centre, along with the volunteers, supporters, professional and personal friends of the charity have expressed their “profound sadness” at the news.

A spokesperson explained his legacy: “Alastair was a larger-than-life character in all respects. His extensive business experience, his personal engagement with particular causes, his humanity, his amazing energy, his zest for life, his philanthropy, his enquiring mind and his physical stature marked him out as a special and unforgettable person. The irony of his passing is that he was always so active and so very much alive.

“Since 2014, the Salvesen Mindroom Centre has been the beneficiary of Alastair’s extraordinary commitment to helping people who are neurodivergent. He gave freely of his time and he was actively involved on our board and in pursuing our vision. His ideas, comments, questions and financial backing were all given thoughtfully, generously and with consideration and understanding.

“As a result of Alastair’s involvement and philanthropy,

Mindroom has grown capacity substantially in response to a deep and increasing need for our services. There are tens of thousands of children, young people, families, carers and professionals who did not know Alastair personally but who have been directly helped and supported by his dedication to our work.



Dr Alastair Salvesen who has died

“W
h
i
l
e
A
l
a
s
t
a
i
r
w
a
s
s
e
r
i
o
u
s
a
b
o
u
t
h
i
s
r
o
l
e
a
s
a
T
r
u
s
t
e
e,
i
t
w
a
s
a
l

wa
ys
fu
n
to
sp
en
d
ti
me
to
ge
th
er
an
d
a
pl
ea
su
re
to
co
ll
ab
or
at
e
wi
th
hi
m.

He
ha
d
a

mi
sc
hi
ev
ou
s
ge
ne
or
tw
o
in
hi
s
DN
A
an
d
kn
ew
ho
w
to
li
gh
te
n
th
e
mo
od
wi
th
a
qu
ip
or

a
co
mm
en
t
–
al
wa
ys
we
ll
in
te
nd
ed
bu
t
no
t
al
wa
ys
on
me
ss
ag
e!

“In addition to his pivotal role as Co-Founder of the Salvesen Mindroom Centre, it was due to Alastair’s initiative that the Salvesen Mindroom Research Centre was founded at the University of Edinburgh. His donation recognised the fundamental importance of linking scientific, medical and societal research with high quality outreach in delivering evidence-based support to those in need.”

The University of Edinburgh recognised Dr Salvesen with an

honorary doctorate in 2024, acknowledging his impact on Scotland, the arts, education and neurodiversity.

Sophie Dow, Founder of Mindroom, said of her Co-Founder: "Alastair's commitment to the importance of a neurodiverse society was personal, passionate and transformative. His strategic support of Mindroom enabled the Charity to take major steps towards our inclusive vision of a world in which no mind is left behind. Our responsibility to Alastair is to honour his commitment, build on his legacy and give it permanence."