

The Observer

Dick Hall, a passion for Africa



Dick Hall, who died on Friday aged 72, was one of the most original journalists of his time, whose quirky, inquisitive mind was constantly uncovering new facts, writes Anthony Sampson.

Brought up in Australia, he served during the war in the Navy before graduating at Keble College, Oxford. He began as a journalist on the *Daily Mail* but, impatient with England, edited house magazines for copper mines in Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia) and lived with his wife, Barbara, and five sons in a bleak mining town.

His rash plan of starting and editing a newspaper to champion Zambian independence was supported by David Astor, the editor of the Observer, and the African Mail was launched in 1959.

It brought Dick closely in touch with Kenneth Kaunda, who became president. After independence, the paper was sold to the government and Dick became editor of the Times of Zambia. This brought him into the lair of the entrepreneur Tiny Rowland, about whom he wrote a provocative book.

Returning to London, he worked for the Observer, as magazine editor and Commonwealth correspondent, and later wrote for the Financial Times.

In 1986 he founded the newsletter Africa Analysis. It became both a commercial success and an influential guide. He published several books, including *The High Price of Principles* and a biography of Henry Stanley.

He married again, to Carol Cattley, a former Observer journalist, with whom he lived in London and Oxfordshire. His energy, warmth and humour all seemed undiminished. His sudden death from pneumonia leaves a gap that will be felt in many parts of Africa as well as Britain.