Alfred Norman Cockcroft was born in Hebden Bridge in Yorkshire on 21 March 1930 and educated at Hebden Bridge Grammar School from 1941 to 1945.

He then went to Kingston-upon-Hull Nautical College from 1945-1946 before going to sea at the age of 16. In 1946 he joined the Shell Petroleum Company’s mv Latvia as an apprentice, sailing to the Caribbean and West Africa following which he joined mv Klam trading in the Pacific, to Singapore and China. In 1950 / 1951 he served in Silverbriar of Silver Line Limited, initially as 3rd Officer and then as 2nd Officer. Norman joined Highland as 2nd Mate in 1952 and this was followed by service in Weybank to 1954 in which ship his Master described him as a “capable and conscientious officer”.

Following this seetime, in 1956 Norman Cockcroft became a student at the Sir John Cass College where he obtained his Extra Master’s Certificate. He taught there from 1958 and, many years later, was appointed as Senior Lecturer and Course Organiser for the Extra Master Course at what is now the London Metropolitan University. He held this post until 1984, when he became a consultant specialising in maritime casualty investigation, particularly on collisions and strandings.

Captain Cockcroft became a Member of the Royal Institute of Navigation (RIN) in 1963 and was awarded a Fellowship in 1976 (FRIN). He was awarded the Institute’s Bronze Medal, for the Journal of Navigation’s best paper, as well as the Gold Medal in 1982. In the period until the late 1990s within RIN he became Chairman of the Marine Traffic and Navigation Group, was a member of Council and of the Technical Committee, served as Vice-President and represented the Institute on the UK Safety of Navigation Committee. He also represented the International Association of Institutes of Navigation (IAIN) at the International Maritime Organization (IMO), was a Visiting Professor at the IMO World Maritime University and became an IMO consultant on ship routeing projects.

He became a Fellow of the Nautical Institute in 1978 (FNI) and a US Institute of Navigation Honorary Member in 1986. In 2003 he was awarded Honorary Membership of the IAIN. On 13 October 2003 he was invited to a “Pioneers to the life of the Nation” reception at Buckingham Palace by the Queen and Duke of Edinburgh.
He was author of many papers and books, including what is regarded by many as a primary text, co-authored by Captain JNF Lameijer, *A Guide to the Collision Avoidance Rules*; this has been published in Chinese, Dutch, Japanese, Russian and Swedish. He was also revision author of *Nicholl's Seamanship and Nautical Knowledge* and *Magnetic Compass Deviation and Correction*.

Norman Cockcroft had Parkinson’s disease in his later years and passed away at the age of 85 on 8 December 2015. His wife Janice, with whom he had two sons and two daughters, predeceased him by six weeks.