doi: 10.1255/tosf.8

Allen Graham ("Bon") Royle

Peter Dowd
Faculty of Engineering, Computer and Mathematical Sciences, The University of Adelaide, Australia

Allen Graham ("Bon") Royle died in Moreton-in-Marsh on 16 August 2013 aged 89. By any measure, he was a remarkable man with a remarkable life story, some of which, relating to WWII, has only recently come to light in its full detail.

As Bon told it, in his inimitable style, according to his birth certificate he was born on 1 March 1924, whereas according to his father he was born on 29 February but his father was "not having any of that leap-year nonsense".

Bon was born in Manchester in modest circumstances, even for those times. He attended Gorse Park Secondary School before winning a scholarship to attend Stretford Grammar School in 1935. He matriculated but the family could not afford the further cost for him to enter the sixth form and, just after war broke out, he left school at sixteen. Throughout his secondary schooling Bon's main academic interest had been Chemistry and he determined to make it his career. However, his parents had other ideas and he was sent to Loreburn College to be trained for a career in commerce. Financial constraints intervened and he left the College to take employment in the Sales Department of Turner's Asbestos Company in Trafford Park, Manchester. Deliverance from commerce finally arrived in the form of a job from Courtaulds Ltd as a laboratory assistant.

The chemical manufacturing plant at Courtaulds turned Bon's interest to a career in Chemical Engineering. In the autumn of 1940, to further his intended career, he enrolled at Manchester College of Technology to begin evening classes in mathematics, physics and chemistry. In the meantime, France had fallen, the Battle of Britain had been won and the nightly air raids had started.

In 1942, at the age of 18, Bon enlisted in the Royal Marines. In November of the same year, he was one of six newly recruited Royal Marines selected to join Ian Fleming's 30 Commando Intelligence Assault Unit. The legendary exploits of this unit were the inspiration for the James Bond novels and their story, including Bon's role, was published in Nicholas Rankin's 2011 book *Ian Fleming's Commandos* (Faber and Faber). A reviewer of the book noted that "as well as being intrepid fighters it seemed as much a requisite of joining 30AU that the soldiers possessed strong, not to say eccentric, personalities". Whilst perhaps not quite eccentric, Bon was certainly unique and characterised by wit, warm-hearted humour, and the generosity and graciousness of someone completely at ease with himself.

The role of the unit was essentially to steal German intelligence and its notable successes are widely credited with significant contributions to code-breaking and, as a consequence, of shortening the war. As a member of the unit, Bon took part in the landings in North Africa, Sicily and Normandy and in the liberation of Paris and thereafter in Yugoslavia, Belgium, Netherlands, Denmark and Germany.

Demobbed on 8 May 1946, Bon took advantage of a Further Education Training Scheme grant to enrol in Mining Engineering at the University of Leeds. In May 1948 Bon married Margaret Taylor whom he had known since childhood in Stretford and who had also recently been demobbed from the Women's Royal Naval Service. He graduated in 1950 with a First Class Honours degree in Mining Engineering.

Immediately after graduation Bon joined the Colonial Development Corporation (CDC) for a position at Macalder Nyasa Mines Ltd in Kenya. Thus began a 12-year sojourn in Africa, interrupted only by one year in Canada. His three-year appointment with CDC included 14 months in charge of a gold prospect in the Msoma district of Tanganyika and two months in charge of sulphur investigations in British Somaliland.

Following a less than satisfying year at Falconbridge Nickel Mines in Sudbury, Canada, Bon and Margaret returned to Africa in October 1954 where, until February 1958, Bon was Inspector of Mines for the Government of Tanganyika. His final appointment in Africa was from 1958 to 1962 as

Bon Royle

Assistant Chief Inspector of Mines for the Government of Sierra Leone.

Africa was obviously a source of inspiration for Bon. The many stories he told of his time in Africa are reminiscent of those of Alexander McCall Smith's novels of Botswana, and Bon told them with the same humour and affection for the people of those countries. Africa was also where Bon developed his interest in mineral resource and reserve estimation and in the theory and practice of sampling, which were later to become his primary research and teaching interests as an academic.

By 1962 with two very young children (Graham and Nicholas) it was time to return to the UK. The family moved to Lichfield and from 1963 to 1969 Bon was a Lecturer in Mathematics and Physics at Tamworth College of Further Education. In 1970 he was appointed Lecturer in the Department of Mining at the University of Leeds and this gave him the opportunity to formalise the practical aspects of mineral resource estimation and sampling and to begin his significant contribution to their academic development.

After attending the 1970 summer school in the newly emerging discipline of Geostatistics at the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Mines de Paris in Fontainebleau he set up his own summer school in Geostatistics at

Bon in Cherbourg, France, in 1994.

Leeds, which ran for many years at Leeds and at the Mackey School of Mines in Reno, Nevada. In 1977 he established the MSc in Geostatistics at Leeds, which was offered continuously until 2003 and was the first such programme offered anywhere in English.

Bon was instrumental in the dissemination of Geostatistics in the English-speaking world and in translating it into a practical and meaningful language that contributed significantly to its understanding and implementation both in academe and in industry. His approach to the theory and practice of sampling followed the same path. Among his many achievements in this field Bon translated into English the entire French manuscript of Gy's book, *Sampling for Analytical Purposes* (1996). This was the deciding achievement in the selection of Bon as the first recipient of the Pierre Gy Sampling Gold Medal at the first World Conference on Sampling and Blending in 2003. The award is made for "distinguished service in disseminating the Theory of Sampling" and, on this first occasion, it was made on the insistence of the theory's founding father, in recognition of what Gy considered to be vital help at a crucial time in the development of the sampling theory.

Following retirement in 1989, Bon remained active in teaching and research as an Honorary Lecturer at the University of Leeds. He also completed a PhD on the *Sampling and evaluation of gold deposits*, awarded in 1995, and which stands as a major contribution to the field. He was still publishing papers and writing his own software for sampling up until a few months before he died.

Bon is survived by two sons, Graham and Nicholas, and their families. His wife, Margaret, died in 2006.

(No-one knows the origin of the nickname "Bon" and, if Bon knew, he never told anyone, including his family. He was, however, universally known as Bon.)

---

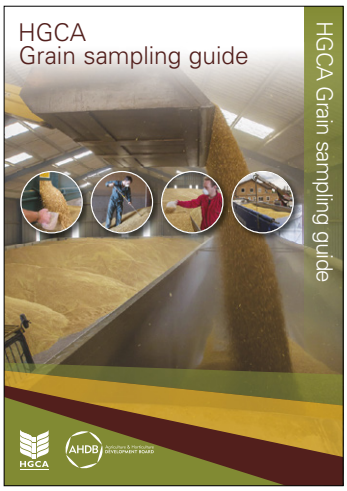
continued from page 2

The AgriQuant B8 uses Agritubes as the sampling container. The 60 mm diameter glass tube is filled with sample and inserted into the AgriQuant B8. The AgriTube is spun and moved forward during the analysis, providing a 375 cm^2 scanning area of the sample in less than 90 s. Agritubes are inexpensive, easy to fill, empty, clean and re-use, keeping the cost per analysis very low. The AgriQuant solution allows reference labs to rethink their work-flow. Previous technologies often worked with a single golden cuvette, however, the AgriQuant B8 concept allows many tubes to be filled prior to scanning in batches.

The AgriQuant B8 can be seen in action on the Q-Interline YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/user/qinterline

Grain sampling

HGCA have published their *Grain Sampling Guide 2013*. Understanding the quality and condition of grain is crucial. Accurate sampling at each stage of the grain chain is required to develop that understanding. It should help to reduce waste and minimise charges, claims and rejections. This guide brings together the key requirements for effective grain sampling for everyone involved, from growing to purchasing. It seeks to minimise duplication of effort, maximising efficiency. In this guide, sampling refers to the collection of physical grain and also sampling for moisture, temperature, pests and moulds. A PDF version can be downloaded from http://bit.ly/1f3MJNl. The HGCA guide will be evaluated from the perspective of TOS in the next issue of *TOS forum*.



DIARY

2014

11 February, Johannesburg, South Africa. **Domain Analysis in Isatis.** www.geovariances.com/en/mining-domain-analysis-in-isatis-co945

29–30 July, Perth, Western Australia. **Sampling 2014.** www.ausimm.com.au/sampling2014/, esanneman@ausimm.com.au

CONFERENCE ORGANISERS

Remember to let us know of any conferences or other events that you would like listed in the *TOS forum* Diary. Just e-mail the details to ian@impublications.com.