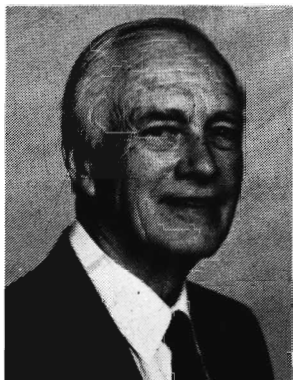


## CHARLES GEOFFREY ADAMS



(1926-1995)

Geoff Adams, the elder son of a local government official, was born in Nottingham on 29th May, 1926. Educated at Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School, Mansfield, he was admitted to Queen's University, Belfast on a Royal Air Force Pre-Entry Short Course in 1944, to read Physics and Engineering. As part of his course he was fortunate to enjoy a brief introduction to Geology, little knowing how important it would become to him in later years. Full-time navigator training commenced in April 1945 but was terminated soon afterwards when the Pacific War ended. The next three years were occupied by Personnel Selection duties throughout Flying Training Command.

On demobilisation in October 1948 Geoff returned to Queen's University, graduating in Zoology (1951) and with First Class Honours in Geology a year later. On the advice of the Shell Petroleum Company (and in receipt of a Shell Research Studentship) he went to Nottingham University to undertake research on Liasic foraminifera under the supervision of Dr W.D. Gill. Unfortunately, Gill left soon afterwards leaving Geoff without specialist supervision.

In 1953, he accepted a post as Assistant Lecturer in Geology at King's College, London, where he completed his PhD (1955) and began a study of Jurassic corals. University teaching was at the time too poorly paid to enable him to support a family and he was only too pleased to accept a post with a much higher salary at the British Museum (Natural History), now the Natural History Museum, joining the staff in November 1956.

Although appointed to take charge of the fossil Protozoa collections in the Zoology Department (both fossil and recent foraminifera had traditionally been curated there), he found that the Palaeontology Department was at that time receiving many enquiries relating to the dating of Tertiary foraminiferal limestones from various parts of the Indo-Pacific region. Through his recommendation, the Museum came to a formal agreement with the Directorate of the British Overseas Geological Survey, and other surveys (notably the predecessors of the Malaysian Geological Survey), whereby the Palaeontology Department would examine and report on fossil material sent in by them in return for allowing its incorporation in the National Collection. This brought in much new and valuable material as well as financial support. Geoff produced numerous internal reports, only a fraction of which were ever formally published. This was the origin of his life-long interest in the taxonomy, biostratigraphy and biogeography of the Cenozoic larger foraminifera of the Indo-Pacific, in which he was destined to make such a significant contribution.

An invitation to spend several months working with the Geological Survey of Sarawak and North Borneo in 1960 enabled Geoff to make collections from almost every known major outcrop of Tertiary limestone in these territories, and resulted in the publication of several papers including the classic *Foraminifera and Stratigraphy of the Melinau Limestone, Sarawak* published in the *Quarterly journal of the Geological Society* in 1965. The continued preparation of reports, another long collecting trip to Borneo

in 1966, work on the Bikini and Eniwetok boreholes in conjunction with the Smithsonian Institution, and study of numerous collections held by other institutions worldwide prompted a consideration of the effects of provincialism on inter-regional correlation, and of the distributional strategies adopted by the larger foraminifera (1967, 1971 and 1983). By 1992, following publication of the paper "The occurrence and palaeobiogeographical significance of the foraminiferid *Yaberinella* from the Eocene of Oman" (co-authored with Andrew Racey), he had, however, realized that new evidence indicated that some earlier conclusions had been premature.

In 1970, an attempt was made to place the Letter Classification of the Tertiary strata of the East Indies on a firmer footing. Subsequently (1984, "Neogene larger foraminifera, evolutionary and geological events in the context of datum planes"), the late Palaeogene and Neogene parts of the classification were modified in light of the published planktic evidence. This work has led to the development of a detailed zonal scheme, which is now almost complete. In the 1970's and 80's he published not only important contributions to our knowledge of the taxonomy, stratigraphic and geographic distribution of Tertiary larger foraminifera of the Indo-Pacific, but still found time to become involved in projects such as the Messinian Salinity Crisis, dating the terminal Tethyan event, setting a correlation standard for the Tertiary rocks of the British Isles (*Geological Society Special Report* no. 12), the principles of foraminiferal evolution, the biography of several eminent foraminiferologists and the editing (with his friend and then Director of The Natural History Museum, Dr. R.H. Hedley) of three important volumes of invited review papers, entitled *Foraminifera* (1974; 1976; 1978). In this time he also contributed to several IGGP projects and read papers at many international colloquia.

In recognition of his contribution to science, his long service to the Museum, and his geological advisory work to the former British overseas territories, Geoff was awarded the Civil Honour of

O.B.E. in 1985. Since his retirement in 1988, he continued to work on the foraminifera, coming into the Museum two or three days per week. Every new thin section continued to be a scientific exploration for him, an opportunity to learn something new. He had almost completed his magnum opus shortly before his death, "a new larger foraminiferal biozonation of the Cenozoic carbonates of the Indo-Pacific" to replace the outdated East Indian Letter Classification. Much time and effort was put into refereeing papers for scientific journals and individual authors, in the belief that thoughtful criticism and commentaries not only improve some papers but help younger authors to develop a better scientific style.

Geoff Adams' contribution to foraminiferal studies has been an impressive one in terms of its quality and significance. A perfectionist by nature, his thoroughness and attention to detail has shown through all he has produced. Fittingly in 1991, he was given the Joseph A. Cushman Award (by the Cushman Foundation of Washington, D.C.) for, as the citation reads, his excellence in foraminiferal research, particularly in the field of Tertiary larger foraminifera.

Geoff was a quiet, unassuming person who never deliberately drew attention to himself or his work. He was, above all, a man of great moral and scientific integrity, setting the very highest standards for himself, and expecting the same from others. But he showed great generosity to his colleagues and was greatly admired for his humane qualities. In October 1994, he suffered a severe heart attack in Canada and never recovered from it. He died on February 6, 1995. The world has lost a great scientist and a real gentleman who will be long remembered for his noble qualities and valuable contribution to science.

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