Alan Jones

Alan G. Jones, a Manchester lad (Mancunian) and a Manchester United supporter for life, took Physics as his first degree at the University of Nottingham from 1969-1972. At the end of those 3 years, not finding jobs in physics very attractive (which perhaps he should of thought of before), Jones decided to go into geophysics and did the 1 year MSc in Applied Geophysics (1972-73) at the University of Birmingham run by the inspiring Don Griffiths and Roy King. His MSc thesis project was a DC resistivity survey, and to model the data he developed a Monte-Carlos inversion code for DC resistivity, which he called CRASH as it kept doing so. Still not enthralled by the idea of work, he then undertook a four year PhD in Geophysics at the University of Edinburgh (1973-77) in magnetotellurics under the pioneering and visionary Rosemary Hutton. One aspect of his PhD work was in developing a Monte-Carlos inversion code for MT data - he did get that one working.

Subsequently lured by German beer, Jones went to Muenster University in NW Germany for almost four years (1977-1981) where he studied induction in Scandinavi aand led Muenster's IMS geomagnetic array study. A short stint at the Geological Survey of Sweden rounded out 1981, after which he moved to the University of Toronto for two years (1982-83) where multiple lunches with luminaries Nigel Edwards, Dick Bailey, Chris Chapman, Gordon West and George Garland broadened his perspectives tremendously.

An unexpected job offer from the-then Earth Physics Branch (EPB) of Natural Resources Canada took him to Ottawa in 1984, and he subsequently experienced the subduction (aka "amalgamation") of the EPB into the Geological Survey of Canada in 1986. The leadership and mentorship of Alan Green during the 1980s at EPB/GSC was a tough trial-by-fire education into the necessity of explaining and justifying electrical conductivity studies, and he learned a lot under Alan Green's mentorship.

Becoming Section Head of the group in 1987 was Jones's first taste of management, and a stint as Acting Director in 1989 of the Continental Geoscience Division of the GSC cured him for life of any managerial aspirations in government.

Jones was very fortunate to be in Canada during the tremendous heydays of the Lithoprobe programme, and he led the EM aspects on most of the transects and had a stint as Chair of the Scientific Committee. Lithoprobe was outstanding not only in the science undertaken but in bringing together Earth scientists of all disciplines at transect workshops.

In a post-Lithoprobe world, Jones found the GSC to be too limiting in its vision and outlook (an attempt to convince a manager to allow Jones to be involved in the INDEPTH project in Tibet elicited the response "which province of Canada is Tibet in?") and he eventually managed to escape in 2004 to Ireland, where he became a Senior Professor (appointed by then Irish President Bertie Ahern no less) and Head of Geophysics at the Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies (DIAS), a research institute modelled on Einstein's Princeton Institute for Advanced Studies.
Jones stayed 11 years at DIAS undertaking studies on three continents including the largest academic MT study to date in southern Africa (SAMTEX), before the call of Canada brought him home in February 2015. He built up the Geophysics Section from 7 to over 35 during his tenure and oversaw the initiation of the Irish National Seismic Network (INSN) and the initiation of the Seismology in Schools programme. He also formed and was Director of the Irish Geoscience Graduate Programme (IGGP), which brought broad teaching to geoscience graduate students across the whole of the island of Ireland. And the MT work he pioneered in Tibet led to fundamentally new understanding of the processes of continental convergence, and in Southern Africa to a better understanding of lithospheric-scale structures.

Jones took early retirement in January 2015 to return to Canada.

He is currently Senior Professor Emeritus at the Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, a Specially-Appointed Professor at the China University of Geosciences Beijing, and Adjunct Professor at Macquarie University (Sydney, Australia) and at the University of Western Australia (Perth, Australia). In addition, upon his early retirement he formed an MT consulting company - Complete MT Solutions Inc. - with former students and a colleague in 2016. CMTS provides high-level MT contracting services to industry clients.

Jones was awarded the Tuzo Wilson medal of the Canadian Geophysical Union in 2006, was Appointed an International Member of the Geo-Electromagnetism Committee, Chinese Geophysical Society in 2009, was elected to Academia Europaea also in 2009 and was made a Member of the Royal Irish Academy in 2010. He was a Blaustein Visiting Professor at Stanford University for the Winter Term of 2016, and was appointed a Life Affiliate Member of the Geological Society of South Africa in 2016. In 2019 he was elected a Fellow of the American Geophysical Union.

Jones is the most published (almost 200 papers) and most cited (over 13,000 citations) scientist in his chosen field of magnetotellurics. Together with Alan Chave, he published the most authoritative textbook to date on MT - The Magnetotelluric Method: Theory and Practice (Cambridge University Press).

He is a qualified Professional Geoscientist accredited by the Professional Geoscientists Ontario (PGO).

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