

Obituary

Brian J. Millard

(1937-2009)



To the older members of BMSS Brian's name will be linked to his notable book on "Quantitative Mass Spectrometry", published by Heyden in 1978. Brian was born in Crosskeys, South Wales in 1937 and gained a PhD in Chemistry at the University of Sheffield in 1962 for his studies on the "Retention of optical activity in migrating groups and 1,2 migration of allyl groups". He went on to lecture at John Moores Technical College (now John Moores University) in Liverpool and then moved to the School of Pharmacy, University of London where he was responsible for the mass spectrometry service using an AEI MS-9. He was active in the development of GC-MS but the early experiments using a Pye 104 gas chromatograph, a STEEL Ryhage jet separator and a heated glass inlet showed mainly how fragile drug molecules could be when exposed to hot surfaces. Nonetheless, from this work Brian developed the use of quantitative analysis for pharmaceutical and environmental applications. Later he moved to the National Institute of Child Health (NICH), part of the Great Ormond Street Hospital. The highlight here was the delivery of his new magnetic sector mass spectrometer which was craned up and over a five storey building before being deposited gently in an internal courtyard next to his new lab. After that, Brian's lectures usually started with a picture of an MS-9 swinging gently above the streets of London. Also during the 1970s Brian spent a year working for the US government in Washington, DC. Brian published widely on his research on cyclic peptides, drug metabolism and fragmentation mechanisms of ions using mass spectrometry during the period 1965 to 1980. In the 1980s he worked for two mass spectrometer manufacturers, firstly VG and then Kratos Analytical, and subsequently remained in the north west of England for the rest of his life.

In 1973, Brian, Dai Games and Neville Haskins founded the Biomedical Mass Spectrometry Group. Initially one day meetings were held at the NICH, but the Group expanded quickly and moved to holding three day meetings at Cardiff University, commonly held in December and known as 'Christmas at Cardiff'. They were exciting days with the development of chemical ionization, capillary GC-MS and early experiments with LC-MS all happening at that time. Later reorganization of the BMSS reduced the need for a separate group devoted to practical applications and the two groups merged. In addition to his interest in mass spectrometry, Brian had much knowledge of the global business world and Wiley published his first book on this subject entitled "Stocks and Shares Simplified: A Guide for the Small Investor" in 1981. He followed the book with a stock market charting computer program named "Microvest" and on leaving the field of mass spectrometry Brian set up his own company, Qudos Publications, in 1991 and published a further five books on stock market investments.

Brian had a keen sense of public duty and was a highly committed councillor on Stockport Council from 1984 onwards, which culminated in being Leader of the Council from 2005 to 2007. He was also Deputy Chairman of the Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Authority.

From Alison Ashcroft's article in BMSS Mass Matters November 2009