



Richard A. Reyment (1926–2016) – Ammonitologist *sensu latissimo* and founder of *Cretaceous Research*



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ABSTRACT

Richard Reyment was born in Australia in 1926 in a family with roots in England, Ireland, Sweden and Spain. At the age of 22 he emigrated to Sweden, where he married Eva Regina, with whom he had two daughters (and two stepchildren). His career as a geologist started with 6 years at the Geological Survey of Nigeria (1950–1956), followed by a Ph.D. and seven years as senior lecturer at Stockholm University (1956–1962), two years as professor at the University of Ibadan in Nigeria (1963–1965), and a further two years as associate professor at Stockholm University (1965–1967). In 1967 he was appointed to the Chair of Historical Geology and Palaeontology at Uppsala University, a position he held until his retirement at the end of 1991. As professor emeritus he continued his research, based at the Swedish Museum of Natural History in Stockholm, and enjoyed several visiting professorships at various universities around the world, notably in Japan. Richard is well known for his work on Cretaceous ammonites, ostracods and the history of the South Atlantic Ocean, but these research topics represent only a part of his wide scope of research, as shown by his 450 publications, including twelve books. His major field of research was mathematical geology, particularly quantitative and statistical methods and multivariate morphometrics, which he applied to a variety of material and topics in the Earth Sciences but also to biology, genetics, linguistics, Romanis and Spanish Moors. His interest in mathematical geology arose from early contacts with the Finnish palaeontologist Björn Kurtén and the Soviet mathematical geologist Andrei B. Vistelius. Richard was undoubtedly one of the pioneers in using multivariate techniques in palaeontology. He was the prime mover for the International Association for Mathematical Geology, founded in 1968, and co-founder of the journal *Computers & Geosciences*, in 1990. In 1974 Richard initiated the successful IGCP Project 'Mid-Cretaceous Events' (MCE), which counted around 350 participants during its eleven years of activity. As an outcome of the MCE project, in 1980 he founded the journal *Cretaceous Research*. Richard was elected a fellow of several learned societies, such as the Royal Statistical Society (London), the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, and the Brazilian Academy of Sciences. His numerous awards included the Swedish Order of the Polar Star, the Assar Hadding Prize of the Royal Physiographic Society of Lund, the Krumbein Medal and a Special Commendation of the International Association for Mathematical Geology, the State Medal in Silver of Israel, and the Björkén Prize of Uppsala University. Besides research, Richard also found time for his many hobbies, such as music, languages and genealogy. All in all, Richard's career, spanning nearly seven decades, can only be described as one of outstanding scope and productivity.

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1. Introduction

Any serious Cretaceous worker will sooner or later come across the name Richard Reyment. It belongs to the large group of names

in Cretaceous geology and palaeontology, whose prominent bearers, sadly, passed away in recent years – Gundolf Ernst (1930–2002), Walter Kegel Christensen (1942–2002), Ehrhard Voigt (1905–2004), Helen Tappan Loeblich (1917–2004), Keith Young (1918–2004), Jake Hancock (1928–2004), Jürgen Remane (1934–2004), Edwin Kemper (1927–2005), Annie Dhondt (1942–2006), Tatsuro Matsumoto (1913–2009), Dmitrij Pavlovich

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Naidin (1919–2009), Willy Wright (1917–2010), Ryszard Marciniowski (1946–2010), Jozef Salaj (1932–2011), Jean-Paul Colin (1948–2013), Frank Middlemiss (1920–2014), Gerd Westermann (1927–2014), Hiromichi Hirano (1945–2014), Fabrizio Cecca (1956–2014), Bill Cobban (1916–2015), Ikuwo Obata (1929–2015), Eliso Kotetishvili (1931–2015), Raymond Casey (1917–2016), Don Hattin (1928–2016), Erle Kauffman (1933–2016), Chris Wood (1939–2016), Jean-Pierre Thieuloy (1933–2017). After a long and successful life, Richard joined this group on 30 March 2016 at the age of 89. Richard was a foremost specialist in Cretaceous ammonites and the founder of *Cretaceous Research* – double reasons to dedicate this special volume to Cretaceous ammonites and to the memory of Richard Reymont.

Richard, or 'Dick', as he was known among friends and colleagues until later years when he preferred 'Richard', is well known for his work on ammonites and ostracods. But these two fields are only part of his wide research scope, as witnessed by his impressive list of 450 publications, including twelve books. Richard belonged to the today almost extinct category of multi-talented scientists – a true scientific polymath.

This article draws on Richard's autobiography, available online ([http://www.richardreymont.com/biographical résumé.html](http://www.richardreymont.com/biographical_résumé.html)), his own published works, the biographies by Merriam (2004) and Merriam and Howarth (2004), my own memories of Richard and not least on his research material placed at my disposal by his daughters Britt-Louise and Dordi. Britt-Louise also kindly checked my manuscript and patiently answered all my questions and removed my doubts.

2. Childhood and adolescence in Australia (1926–1948)

Richard Arthur Reymont was born on 4 December 1926 in Coburg, a suburb of Melbourne, Australia, in a family consisting of his father, hotel director Arthur Reymont, his mother Hilda Rowe, and his two-year-younger brother Newton. The Reymont family had roots in England, Ireland, Sweden and Spain. His paternal great-grandfather, Carl-Axel Fagberg, was born in Sweden, on the island of Orust near Gothenburg. His Swedish ancestry sparked young Richard's interest and, among other things, inspired him to take lessons in Swedish offered by the Swedish Lutheran Church in Melbourne. After secondary schooling at Coburg High School and the Presbyterian Scotch College in Melbourne (Fig. 1), in 1944–1945 he studied chemistry at Melbourne Technical College (now RMIT University), followed by studies in geology, zoology, chemistry, mathematics and physics at the University of Melbourne. Among his teachers were the palaeontologist Curt Teichert (1905–1996), who introduced him to the Cephalopoda, and the structural geologist Edwin Sherbon Hills (1906–1986). In 1947 Richard worked for three months as a student geologist on a Devonian project for the Bureau of Mineral Resources in Canberra, and in November 1948 he obtained his B.Sc. degree.

3. Emigration and first years in Sweden (1949–1950)

After graduating from university, Richard set out to see the world. In January 1949 he was taken on as an assistant steward on the Swedish cargo ship MS *Boolongena* (Fig. 2), which after four months at sea took him to Sweden. During six months he worked as a trainee geologist for the iron mining company Luossavaara-Kiirunavaara AB (LKAB) in Malmlberget, northernmost Sweden, mainly assisting in underground geological mapping. Here, the mining engineer Kauno Kangas introduced him to the technique of stereographic photography, a method that he would later use frequently in his palaeontological research.



Fig. 1. Young Richard in 1943 with his Scotch College cap carrying the motto "Deo Patriae Litteris".

In Sweden, Richard met his wife-to-be, Eva Regina Roos af Hjelmsäter (1919–2014), and in March 1950 they became engaged and married on 3 September 1950 (Fig. 3). Shortly after their marriage, they left for England, Richard having accepted an offer for a position as a geologist with the Colonial Geological Surveys for work in what was then British West Africa. In November of that year, Richard left for Nigeria and in the following February, Eva, still in England (Hastings), gave birth to the couple's first child, Britt-Louise, who joined Eva's two children Lena and Carl-Gustaf from a previous marriage. Lena was by then living with Richard's relatives in Australia. In May 1951, Eva, Carl-Gustaf and little Britt-Louise joined Richard in Nigeria for a stay that would last nearly six years.

4. Geological Survey of Nigeria (1950–1956)

In Nigeria, Richard was stationed at the Geological Survey Department in Kaduna Junction (Fig. 4) but spent most of the time in the field, carrying out geological mapping and detailed work on the then poorly known Cretaceous macrofaunas of Nigeria and Cameroun. His earliest activities are documented in four unpublished reports for the Geological Survey of Nigeria, the first three dealing with Paleocene nautiloids, Albian ammonites and biostratigraphy, and Campanian–Maastrichtian molluscs, respectively (Reymont, 1951a,b,c), and the last report summarizing available

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