Obituary Jan Bergström 1938-2012

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——OBITUARIES——

Jan Bergström 1938 – 2012

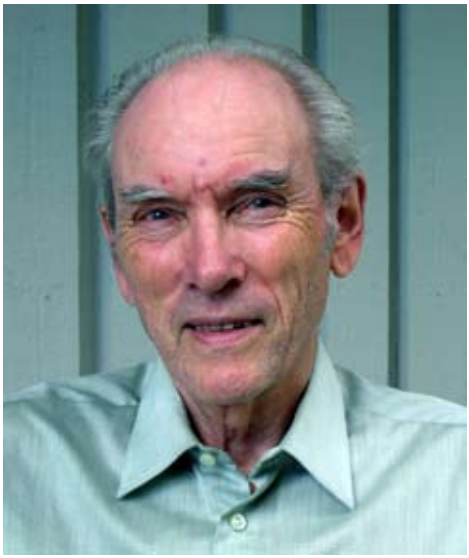

Figure 1. Jan Bergström in 2010.
Photo courtesy Karna Lidmar-Bergström.

After a nearly two-year-long and bravely-fought battle with cancer, Professor Jan Bergström died peacefully on 17th November 2012, aged 73. Having published more than 90 articles and monographs on early arthropods and on Cambrian aspects of geology, he was one of the scientific leaders internationally, in both the Cambrian and the arthropod research communities. However, this was only a portion of his exceptionally diverse research that extended from the Precambrian to the Pleistocene and dealt with palaeontological topics ranging from trace fossils to hominids and even the evolution of photosynthesis. He also published important papers on metazoan evolution and systematics, the Mesozoic and Cenozoic tectonic evolution of southern Scandinavia with special regard to the Tornquist Zone, and biostratigraphy and biogeography.

His deep interest in archaeology and Norse mythology is documented in more than a dozen papers. His prolific publication list includes about 165 scientific articles and monographs, approximately 35 conference abstracts, close to 100 popular and educational articles, and more than 100 encyclopaedia contributions, not counting newspaper articles. His work made him widely known nationally and internationally, and he carried out extensive joint work with leading palaeontologists around the world. He received several major honorary awards and was elected a member of the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences in 1990.

Jan Bergström was born in the city of Halmstad on the south-west coast of Sweden, where he attended public schools before starting his academic studies at Lund University in 1958. Here he gained a comprehensive background in botany, geography, zoology, and geology, and also met his future wife Karna. During his geology study years in the late 1960s, he was a member of a close-knit and illustrious group of graduate students in palaeontology that included, among others, Sven Laufeld, Gonzalo Vidal, Anita Löfgren, Lennart Jeppsson, and Stig Bergström. Jan Bergström's university studies culminated in 1973 with a Ph. D. dissertation on the morphology, taxonomy, and mode of life of trilobites. This book, which was published in the monograph series *Fossils and Strata*, contained a great deal of new ideas and interpretations, and made him internationally known. It received the highest academic grade and resulted in the offer of a position as docent

(lecturer) at the Geology Department in Lund. He taught there up to 1978, when he accepted a position as State Geologist (and later Senior State Geologist and Head) of the Scanian Division of the Geological Survey of Sweden, which is located in Lund. He worked there for 11 years with various projects on mainly Scanian geology and his own arthropod research until 1989, when he became Professor and Head of the Palaeozoology Department at the Swedish National Museum of Natural History in Stockholm. He formally retired from this position in 2005 but continued vigorous and wide-ranging research until the last weeks before his death.

Although his topically and geographically very wide-ranging research makes it difficult to adequately identify his most significant contributions, we will note a few of his major areas of research. His early work dealt with brachiopods from the Upper Ordovician of Sweden, and his monograph on the *Hirnantia* fauna from Västergötland (1968) still remains an international standard reference. He maintained an active interest in this group and was one of the co-authors of a recent *GFF* article on Upper Ordovician brachiopods from southern Sweden. He was one of the internationally leading specialists on Palaeozoic trilobites, and through the years, he published more than 25 articles on this group, including his Ph. D. dissertation. In the 1970s and early 1980s, he carried out very extensive arthropod work in cooperation with Wilhelm Stürmer in Germany, who had developed a novel X-ray technique, the use of which made it possible to study previously unrecognized but important morphological structures in the remarkably well-preserved arthropods from the Devonian Hunsrück Shale in Germany. This cooperation resulted in more than a dozen papers that revolutionized our understanding of the morphology of these unique fossils.

The discovery of another, and scientifically probably even more important, fossil Lagerstätte at Chengjiang in the Yunnan Province of southern China resulted in a new, and highly productive, research phase for Jan Bergström. The cooperation with Hou Xianguang, the discoverer of the Early Cambrian Chengjiang fauna, and others resulted in the publication of more than 25 articles and two books that greatly added to the previously very incomplete knowledge about the morphology of Early Cambrian marine soft-body organisms and the composition of their ecosystems.

Figure 2. Jan Bergström in the Drum Mountains, western Utah, 5th August 1981.
Photo by Per Ahlberg.

As a researcher, Jan Bergström had not only a very wide range of interests but he also possessed an exceptional power of observation and unusual ability to interpret the morphology and function of anatomical structures. He had great scientific curiosity, and a remarkable analytical ability that was supported by his solid background knowledge in geology and zoology. Although he was not a dominating personality, he stood firm in his interpretations and conclusions, some of which, although as a rule sound, were at

least initially not accepted by everybody. Personally, he was very kind and helpful to colleagues, had a good sense of humour, was always willing to discuss scientific matters, and was generous with advice. His many collaborators and other friends around the world will sorely miss him, and it is sad that a very productive career in geological research has come to a premature end.

A dedicated family man, Jan Bergström is survived by his wife, their two children, and two grandchildren.

Stig M. Bergström
The Ohio State University

Per Ahlberg
Lund University

Alec Leonard Panchen
4 October 1930 – 17 January 2013

An Appreciation

In the nineteenth century the coal fields of Great Britain provided the first glimpse of the extraordinary variety of animals and plants that lived among the equatorial waterways 330 million years ago. This rich fauna and flora includes the Carboniferous tetrapods, amongst which are the antecedents of all amphibians and amniotes alive today. In a career spanning more than 40 years, Alec Panchen did more than anyone in the UK to help us understand their diversity and evolutionary history.

After completing his PhD in 1956 with Rex Parrington at the University of Cambridge, Alec joined the staff of the Department of Zoology at the University of Newcastle upon Tyne. It took him a while to identify a research area that he could make his own, but eventually he settled on the collection of Coal Measures amphibians in the Hancock Museum in Newcastle, which had been neglected since D. M. S. Watson's work in the 1920s. In 1964 Alec published the first of a series of monographs in the *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London*, on a group of early tetrapods which at the time were considered to be close to the origin of amniotes, the anthracosaurs. Using modern preparatory techniques, most notably the industrial airbrasive machine, Alec revealed anatomical details never seen before, and in his beautifully illustrated descriptions he set a benchmark that his research students have since struggled to match.

Ironically, as Alec became the established authority on Carboniferous anthracosaurs he began to doubt their close affinity to amniotes. He set out his concerns in his contribution to the Parrington *Festchrift* published in 1972, and came very near to suggesting that microsaurs were as likely to be the closest amphibian relatives of amniotes as the anthracosaurs. Today, no one would be too