

The Brains Behind BIOTIC...

Each week we'll take you behind the scenes and introduce you to a member of the BIOTIC staff.

This week we're checking in with Ron Bishop, an imaging technologist in the Laboratory for Clinical Magnetoencephalography (MEG Lab). Ron hails from Paradise, Newfoundland where he grew up before eventually graduating from Memorial University with a Bachelor of Science (Hons.) in behavioural neuroscience. Ron moved to Halifax where he graduated from Dalhousie University with a Master's of Science in rehabilitation research, completing his master's project under the supervision of BIOTIC collaborator Dr. Shaun Boe and BIOTIC Researcher Dr. Tim Bardouille. Ron joined BIOTIC in August, 2014.

So how does the day of an Imaging Technician usually unfold?

Usually the first thing I do is check work emails and our project calendar, as my day is usually based around scans. Some days there's scans all the way through so I spend most of the day tuning the machine, prepping materials and recording data. If there aren't any scans, usually I'll work on data processing – I do analysis for our Mild Traumatic Brain Injury study, which mostly consists of pre-processing for Dr. Lauren Petley. I'll also be starting up a language mapping study comparing the accuracy of the MEG and our 3T MRI using epilepsy patients. The goal is to prove that the MEG is a useful tool for clinical pre-surgical mapping.

Can you tell us a little about your drumming career?

I started drumming when I was in grade seven! My biggest influences were Dave Lombardo (Slayer), Tim Alexander (Primus) and John Bonham (Led Zeppelin) so naturally I ended up playing in a local heavy metal band named Apollyon. We played shows all over St. Johns and Conception Bay. When I couldn't bring my drums to Halifax I ended up learning the acoustic guitar. Now I listen to anything from Iron and Wine to Opeth and Pantera.

Favorite spot in Halifax to unwind after a day in the lab?

Definitely Stillwell. I'm a huge fan of high quality beer (**editors note: he groaned when I said 'craft beer'**). If I hadn't gone into Neuroscience I probably would've ended up in the Brewmaster and Brewery Operations Management diploma program at Niagara College.

What's the most fascinating part about working in a research lab?

I'd say being able to continuously learn about the brain and how it works or doesn't work. I love learning about abnormalities and diseases, because you're trying to find out what's wrong or what processes are contributing to things going wrong. I hope to eventually enroll in medical school and work in a brain-related field. All the surgeries I do in my basement turn out okay!

Which BIOTIC project are you most proud to have worked on?

Dr. Steve Patterson's MEG study on Alzheimer's and Dementia, just because it affects so many people and I've dealt with it in my own family. To be a part of anything that is going to help families in the future is an amazing experience.



“My favorite day trip in Nova Scotia would have to be seeing the boats and wandering around Mahone Bay. Either that or head to Stillwell and stay for eight hours.”

Ron is currently assisting with projects on mild traumatic brain injury (concussions), Alzheimer's, and pre-surgical functional brain mapping.

