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George A.M. Scott
10. 3. 1933 - 23. 3. 1998

A Tribute - George Anderson Macdonald Scott
10 March 1933 - 23 March 1998

The Australasian bryological community was greatly saddened at the sudden death of George Scott on 23 March 1998 following a heart attack while on holiday with his wife in New Zealand.
This is not just a loss to bryology but to plant science and those groups and organizations to which George had freely given of his talents since emigrating to the southern hemisphere in 1961.

I first met George in 1979 when as a "budding protonema" I gathered, with similar motivated colleagues, to attend the first 5-day course on the taxonomy of mosses and liverworts that George convened at Monash University. There were a number of things that struck me about George on that occasion but three remain firmly in mind. Firstly, one could only be impressed by his scholarship. He brought to his subject matter those classic scholarly traits - an incisive scientific vocabulary expressed with great passion. Secondly, the hospitality of the Scott household was overwhelming. Guests were treated to a traditional dinner (prepared by George and Ann)) and the evening concluded with a wee dram of the finest single malt whisky. Finally George proudly (and at all times unashamedly) displayed his Scottish heritage - the kilt, the sporran and broad accent said it all. And why shouldn't he do so.

George Anderson Macdonald Scott was born in Glasgow on 10 March 1933. His talents and all round qualities were evident in his early life. He attended Glasgow High School where in his last year he was dux of the school with prizes in Greek, Classics and English - surprizingly not science. He gained Colours in rugby and cricket and was a champion athlete. In the footsteps of his father, George commenced tertiary studies in medicine at Glasgow University, however he developed tuberculosis about six months into his first student year. After spending two years recuperating in a sanatorium, he resumed studies in botany at Glasgow and what became a loss to medicine was a gain for plant science. He graduated in 1957 with first class honours and a gold medal in botany. He pursued postgraduate studies at the University College of North Wales, Bangor and in 1961 was awarded a Ph.D. for a thesis on the ecology of shingle beach plants.

Distinguished Academic Career

George met Royce Ann Sutton in 1957 when he commenced his Ph.D. at Bangor and they were married in 1960. In the following year the newly-wed Scotts set off for Dunedin, New Zealand where George had accepted a lectureship at the University of Otago. It was during these early days in the antipodes that his research in bryophytes was wetted with the rich flora of New Zealand. He had developed this interest in bryophytes during his student days with the encouragement and support of his supervisor Paul Richards, who as an ecologist had acquired considerable expertise in mosses and liverworts, both in Britain and overseas.
In 1970 George took up a senior research fellowship at Monash University, Melbourne, and Australia was to become his adopted home. At the expiry of the fellowship, he was appointed Senior Lecturer and after 14 years was promoted to a Readership at the same University.
In 1976 and again in 1983, he was Research Fellow of Corpus Christi, Cambridge University. He was elected a Fellow of the Linnean Society of London, a distinction only given to a botanist with an outstanding

scientific record. Not content with pursuing his academic responsibilities, George's interest in classic Greek and Roman records of the names of mosses, saw him embark in an Arts degree at Monash, graduating in 1985 with a major in Classics and the prize in Latin poetry. He left Monash in 1986 to accept the position of Master of Queens College in the University of Melbourne. In recognition of his outstanding contribution to teaching and research in ecology and bryology, he was awarded a Doctor of Science in 1990 by the University of Melbourne. After six years at Queens College ill health forced his early retirement in 1992 and thus his involvement in University life came to a close but not his collaboration with students and staff which he continued to maintain as a research fellow at the Botany School of Melbourne University.
After such a distinguished academic career there are many features which could be highlighted but there are probably two for which George is best remembered.

The Academic Teacher

From his early teachings days at Otago up to and including his position as Master of Queens College, George considered one of his prime roles as an academic was to facilitate learning. He imparted to several generations of students his knowledge and experience with generosity, flair, stimulation and exemplary understanding. His commitment to fieldwork is considered legendary - George ran a bryological session as part of a second year excursion while at Monash and the exercise required lowering students downn rock faces while they assessed the percentage cover of bryophytes. The students learnt a lot about trust and confidence in themselves and to show that trust was not all one way, George would allow students to lower him down a shallow mine shaft using the same abseiling techniques, while he assessed *Fossombronia* population densities with decreasing illumination. There are many other anecdotes associated with his teaching but they would now not pass the bureaucrat's guidelines on occupational health and safety!
To encourage students to explore and discover he led by example, and would spend long hours in the field in conditions which would test the best of us. To discover a species not previously recorded or describe a new species can only be achieved by qualities of dedication and endurance. George considered that the basis of good taxonomy or population studies lay in the ability to carry out critical field work and this is no better illustratted than in his treatment of *Fossombronia* in Australia. He often lamented in his later years that his once youthful and energetic body could no longer respond to the ardous tasks that such field work demanded.
George believed that his knowledge of bryophytes should be shared with people from all walks of life who also held that same interest. To this end he initiated the course "Mosses and Liverworts - a five day bryophyte identification course" which brought together field naturalists, laboratory based professionals, beginners, experts, the young and the old who all sought to learn about this element of the cryptogamic flora and the need for their preservation. They were conducted as part of The Centre for Continuing Education at Monash University from 1979 through to 1985, and became the forerunner to the successful Australasian Bryological Workshops, the first of which was held in Hobart (1988), and since have been held at Canberra (1991), Kuranda (1994) and Brisbane (1996). George had been an integral part of these meetings and he approached with determination the task of convening the 1998 workshop in the Grampians, Victoria. Regrettably he never saw the fulfillment of his preparation for this workshop but in his honour it is to proceed and will owe much to the years he spent on fieldwork in this part of western Victoria.

Figure: George (at left) doing what he enjoyed most - fieldwork with a group of undergraduate students.

Scholarship

George brought his academic endeavours not only to Australian bryology but to botanical sciences, and in the space of just over 25 years left a wealth of scholarship to these disciplines. After his arrival at Monash he became acutely aware of the dearth of knowledge on the temperate bryoflora. Although Jim Willis at the State Herbarium had presented some preliminary results of his studies on Victorian mosses, it was the effort of George who was to publish two highly acclaimed books on bryophytes. The first in 1976, he published in collaboration with Dr. Ilma Stone "The Mosses of Southern Australia", and even though this is regrettably out of print, it will be noted as a watershed this century for studies in temperate Australian mosses. Then in 1985 he published "Southern Australian Liverworts" which was accompanied by an "Annotated List of Binomials and Check-list of Published Species with Bibliography".

These have not only had a considerable influence on revitalizing research and the study of Australian bryophytes but in the process George exposed the talents of two of Australia's finest illustrators - one a botanical artist, the other a photographer. The drawings of many species in George's book by Celia Rosser and the illuminating photographs by naturalist photographer Bruce Fuhrer, gave visual expression to a group of plants whose delicate and detailed structure often lie beyond the naked eye. What is not generally known is that George persuaded Celia Rosser to be the artist for a major Monash University venture that he

originated - to paint the known species of banksias in Australia. These have now been produced in a magnificent two volume set and George was involved at all stages in this ambitious project which included field trips to collect flowering material, supervision of the drawings and assist in the editing of the text.
George took his scholarship beyond the discipline of bryology, and the boundaries of Australasia. He was a strong advocate that bryological studies be included in the "new trends" in botanical sciences and was dismayed with developing curricula which became narrow in their focus. When he delivered the 1994 Nancy Burbidge Memorial Lecture, he pleaded that we retain a united botany with the theme "prosper with cryptogams, perish without". In that vein he was for many years an active contributor to the Ecological Society of Australia. He was a respected member of the international bryological community and served as a council member on the IAB for two terms. He had a constructive input into the meetings in Geneva (1979), Sydney (1981) and Budapest (1985). His wisdom and interpretation of sensitive "geo-bryo-political" issues were greatly valued by the international community.
Throughout his bryological career, George was very aware to promote preservation and conservation of a vulnerable cryptogamic flora. In the introduction to his book he stated unambigously "collectors in Australia, as elsewhere, must never forget the need to preserve their heritage unimpaired. Whether for serious research, for exchange, or merely for horticulture, indiscriminate or wasteful collecting is unethical, immoral, and altogether to be deplored". In retirement he was a key participant in "The Forgotten Flora: A Workshop on Conservation of Non-Vascular Plants" and it was perhaps fitting that his last publication was a coauthored document resulting from this workshop.

To say that we will miss George is an understatement. The absence of his academic counsel will surely be felt, but the person who also took great pleasure in life's entertainment, and with little encouragement would recite Burns' "Ode to the Haggis", will equally be missed. Australian botany is much the poorer with the passing of George Scott but to those of us who have known him in some way we feel privileged and say thank you to his wife Ann and four sons for allowing us to share and be enriched by his talents.

A Chronology of the Published works by George A.M. Scott

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Scott, G.A.M., Mark, A.F., Sanderson, F.R. 1964. Altitudinal variation in forest composition near Lake Hankinson, Fiordland. *N.Z. J. Bot.* **2**: 310-323.

Scott, G.A.M. 1965. The shingle succession at Dungeness. *J. Ecol.* **53**: 21-31.

Scott, G.A.M. and Mark, A.F. 1965. Quantitative data on forest composition. *N.Z. J. Bot.* **3**: 168-169.

Scott, G.A.M. 1966. The quantitative description of New Zealand bryophyte communities. *Proc. N.Z. Ecol. Soc.* **13**: 8-11.

Scott, G.A.M. and Armstrong, J.M. 1966. The altitudinal sequence of climax vegetation on Mt. Anglem, Stewart Island. Part 2. Ground and epiphytic vegetation. *N.Z. J. Bot.* **4**: 283-299.

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Scott, G.A.M. and Stone, I.G. 1979. In defence of *Dawsonia superba* Grev. *Lindbergia* **5**: 71-72.

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Scott, G.A.M. 1988. Studies in Ancient Bryology, II. Mosses to 1500 A.D. *J. Bryol.* **15**: 1-15.

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Scot, G.A.M. and Pike, D.C. 1988. A new species of *Fossombronia* from Australia. *Nova Hedwigia* **90**: 109-112.

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Paddy Dalton, School of Plant Science, University of Tasmania.

FORTHCOMING WORKSHOPS

At the end of 1998 there are various workshops being conducted in Dunedin, New Zealand as follows:

Lichen Workshop:
This will be conducted at Otago University, Dunedin, from 15 - 19 November.
Convenor: Jennifer Bannister. Email: jmb@clear.net.nz

14th John Child Bryophyte Workshop:
This year's workshop is to be held outside Dunedin at Mosgiel, South Island of New Zealand, from Thursday 19th to Tuesday 24th November. Accommodation will be in a youth camp.

Four days of field trips are planned to a range of habitats including: subalpine grassland, swamplands, coastal, beech forest and mixed broadleaf and podocarp forest. The evenings will be taken up with identification workshops and talks.

The workshop is immediately preceded by a lichen workshop and is followed by the conference of the combined Australian and New Zealand Ecological Societies.

Convenor: John Steel. Email baron@planta.otago.ac.nz

Ecological Society Meeting
This will be held at Dunedin from 24th to 27th November.

An Apology

I would like to sincerely apologize for the lengthy delay in the distribution of this issue of the newsletter. As you can appreciate it is an important one in that we pay tribute to one of our highly respected colleagues. I know that many of you have wondered patiently - where is the June issue? Well I don't wish to tire you with excuses suffice to say that it is partly my fault in addition to other circumstances which were beyond my control. Since I have been editor, this is the first occasion that I have failed to meet the deadline and I hope that you will accept my resolve to prevent it from being repeated in the future. To avoid too much overlap with this issue, then the December issue will be posted a little later than normal.

I am always in need of articles for the newsletter so if you have any matters of interest please feel free to send them to me by whatever means is suitable. I trust the coming Christmas/New Year break is a pleasant one for you all and that 1999 is a rewarding year for your bryological endeavours.

Paddy Dalton, Editor.
