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50 YEARS NON-STOP - AN APPRECIATION

TO have contributed a weekly article for a newspaper for 50 years - from home and abroad, in peace and in health and sickness, with not a single break - is an outstanding achievement; (probably a world record). To have done so within the confines of natural history alone seems even more so. But that is what Michael Sharland, under the pen-name of 'Peregrine', has done, starting in 1921 in "The Illustrated Tasmanian Mail", a weekly paper formerly published by "The Mercury" and subsequently in "The Mercury" itself. Besides writing scientific articles for ornithological publications, and books on natural history and the history of Tasmanian architecture he has travelled extensively throughout Australia, America and Europe. He was the scientific and practical mainstay of all the Club's Easter Camps that he attended. But his love of the Australian 'bush' and its fauna and flora shines predominantly through all his life and work. To share his camp-fire in the evening is an education and a privilege.

When I asked him once how he thought up subjects for his articles he said that people were always writing letters and queries and this opened many avenues. But most of his articles are inspired by his own field observations and he has the gift of Richard Jefferies and W. H. Hudson to stimulate the interest of the ordinary person and open his eyes and ears to the wonders of natural history that are happening all around - even in a tiny back-yard. Hence the readers' letters to him and the sustained interest over 50 years. It is also to the credit of "The Mercury" that it has retained this feature for so long.

I first heard Michael Sharland speak to the Club during the War when he was in Hobart in R. A. A. F. uniform on brief leave. I remember that he said then that if one really learnt the song of one bird in a day, one had had a good day. As a raw tenderfoot, I found that very cheering.

Neither coldly scientific nor anthropomorphic his weekly articles have sustained the attention of the naturalist of wide interest, the man in the street, and the expert ornithologist - for this is Michael Sharland - a quiet and patient observer, an outstanding photographer, conservationist and journalist who sees into the hearts of men and nature.

Long may he continue his articles.

- Kelsey Aves

COLLECTING THE KENT'S GROUP ENDEMIC

J. S. Whinray

Robert Brown, 1773-1858, was the botanist on The Investigator during Matthew Flinders' circumnavigation of Australia in 1802-1803. He spent some time in Australia after this voyage and collected plants in New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land. On his way to the Tamar in late 1803 he spent three weeks at Kent's Group when the Lady Nelson, in which he was a passenger, was forced to shelter there by bad weather. Brown collected plants and marine algae in the Group. At least 45 species of plants were obtained on Deal Island. Four of these were type specimens, viz - Boobyalla Myoporum insulare, Pepper Cress Lepidium praetervisum, Tiny Pratia Pratia irrigua, and Brown's Centrolepis Centrolepis pulvinata. The latter two species appear still in Floras as endemic to Kent's Group. Brown's specimens are held at Kew.

Various later collectors like Johnstone in 1883 (Von Mueller, 1884) Gabriel in 1890 (Le Souef, 1891) and, in 1957, Garreau (1958) did not find the endemics.

I visited Deal Island on 29 December 1968 with some friends who were taking a spare radio set to a seismic survey base station on the island. It was a hurried visit and there was time to collect plants only beside the road to the Lighthouse. This road starts at East Cove and passes through the three major vegetation types of the island viz. tussock grassland, Sheoak woodland and eucalyptus woodland. I started collecting in the small clearing around the Upper Quarters in Lighthouse Valley about 5/8 of one mile North of the Light. There were many introduced and native herbs here. They included Lesser Swine's Cress *Coronopus didymus, Soft Cranesbill *Geranium molle, Barley Grass *Hordeum leporinum, Toad Rush Juncus bufonius, and Annual Meadow-grass *Poa annua. Most of the forty-eight herb species recorded here had not been collected before on the island. Some new herb records were added to my list in the Shiny-leaved Peppermint Eucalyptus nitida woodland between the Upper Quarters and the Light. Sand-hill Sword-sedge Lepidosperma concavum and Forked Comb-fern Schizaea bifida were two of them. A number of new herb records came from the small area of Coast Sheoak Casuarina stricta woodland near the head of the valley. They included Sprawling Bluebell Wahlenbergia quadrifida, Common Wheat-grass Agropyron scabrum and Slender Wallaby-grass Danthonia penicillata. The most exciting discovery was a few plants of the endemic Brown's Centrolepis in a road-verge drain about 200 yards from the summit of Lighthouse Hill. Of course I did not recognize it as the endemic at the time but it was obviously different from the common Hairy Centrolepis Centrolepis strigosa. One of the herbs growing with it was Bent-grass Deyeuxia densa.

Wallaby-grass Danthonia semiannularis was found in a crevice in granite a few yards from the summit and there were a number of orchids here under mature scrub. One of them, the Banded Greenhood Pterostylis vittata, had not been seen on Deal since it was collected there in 1883 (Von Mueller, 1884). In Tasmania it is known only from the Bass Strait islands.

The walk back to East Cove yielded a number of new records from the damp road verge between the Upper Quarters and the start of the tussock grassland in the

lower part of Lighthouse Valley. Swamp Club-rush Scirpus inundatus, Club-rush S. platycarpus, Pale Twig-rush Baumea acuta and Bare Twig-rush B. juncea were some of the species here. Most of the other new records came from the tussock grassland in the lower part of Lighthouse Valley. Many of them were introduced grasses and herbs. They form a dense ground cover in this vegetation type that was caused by, and is maintained by, periodic burning (Whinray, 1971). French Catchfly *Silene gallica, Black Medic *Medicago lupulina, Barren Brome *Bromus sterilis, Small Redstraw *Galium murale and Knotted Parsley *Torilis nodosa were a few of these herbs. The latter two species had not been recorded previously from Bass Strait islands. A list is given below of the seventy seven plants first recorded for Deal Island during this visit. Dr. Curtis, then at the University of Tasmania, identified the Kent's Group Centrolepis for me. She asked me if I could try to obtain live plants of it, and of the other endemic, to be sent to the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, for inclusion in The Endemic Flora of Tasmania. I tried, without avail, to obtain a lift by fishing boat to Kent's Group (I live on Flinders Island). Finally I offered to go to Kent's Group, via Melbourne and Port Albert, if my fares could be paid. This offer was accepted but it took some time, and a number of letters, before I obtained permission to visit Deal Island,

Eventually I reached Deal Island in November last year and camped in Lighthouse Valley. When I explained to the Head Lightkeeper where I expected to find more plants of Brown's Centrolepis he told me that he and his assistant had cleaned the drain recently. This was worrying as I was not sure that the plant could be found elsewhere on the island. However, during the next few days I found hundreds of plants of it in the road-verge drain about half a mile North of Lighthouse Hill summit. It was, in fact, widespread in Lighthouse Valley.

This left only Tiny Pratia to be found. The only Pratia I knew — Pratia platycalyx — occurred along streams and in swamps on Flinders and Cape Barren Islands. It seemed likely that, if Tiny Pratia was not extinct, it would be found in one of the stream beds. So I planned to walk along all the major stream beds of the island. It was a daunting task as there were between three and four miles of them and many of them were wide and swampy.

I decided to start with the Lighthouse Valley stream because it was the nearest. I started where its East Branch crosses the road to the Light. I followed this down and soon realized that the Pratia was not likely to be found in the dense large patches of Tall Sedge Carex appressa that covered much of the bed. The only plant growing with the sedge was Scrub Nettle Urtica incisa which could grow tall enough to reach the light above the sedge. The branch joined the main stream about two hundred yards below the bridge. The bed of the main stream was wide and swampy. There were dense patches of Tall Sedge and equally dense patches of Coast Saw-sedge Gahnia trifida. The rest of the bed carried Sea Rush Juncus maritimus, Water Cress *Nasturtium officinale and a moss. I started to walk downstream but had to go back and forth across the bed so as to see every part of it. There was no sign of a Pratia anywhere and I had nearly given up hope when I reached the start of the steep-sided lowest part of the Valley. At the head of the series of cascades here I noticed a small low patch of white flowers. I looked very

carefully at it to make sure that it was not a plant like Swamp Weed Selliera radicans. But it was a Pratia so, feeling very excited, I took some clumps of it. It was later identified as Pratia irrigua. Small patches of it grew beside the stream to the bottom of the series of cascades. Later in the afternoon I found a small patch of it at the head of the first small dry gully west of the mouth of the main stream.

Plants of both the endemics were sent to Kew, reached there in good condition, and were painted for The Endemic Flora of Tasmania. I did not see Tiny Pratia anywhere else in the Group during my visit. Most of the plant species collected by Robert Brown still occur beside, or near, the lower part of the Lighthouse Valley stream. It seems appropriate to call this stream Brown's Creek.

After my return to Flinders Island I visited Long Island, Fumeaux Group, unexpectedly on New Year's Day. In a small damp depression about 250 yards east of the of the highest point of the island I found a few clumps of a small Pratia. It was growing with a number of water-tolerant plants that included Water-buttons Cotula coronopifolia, Tiny Flat-sedge Cyperus tenellus and Annual Beard-grass *Poyl-pogon monspeliensis. The damp area was about 10 feet by 20 feet and a few inches lower than the surrounding flat ground. This Pratia did not seem to occur around the lagoons on the island and its possible that this is its only occurrence here. I took a clump of the live plants and later dried some of them. Mr. J. H. Willis, National Herbarium, Melbourne, identified them as female plants of Tiny Pratia. (All the Pratia plants collected on Deal Island were male plants). The remaining live Long Island plants were sent to Kew.

So, Tiny Pratia is now endemic to two Eastern Bass Strait islands. Surely it could occur in North-eastern Tasmania as well. Tiny Pratia is described on page 412 of Curtis (1963) and Brown's Centrolepis is described on page 232 of Rodway(1903).

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List of New Plant Records for Deal Island - 29 December 1968

An asterisk indicates an introduced species.

Ferns

Schizaeaceae

Schizaea bifida Forked Comb-fern

Monocotyledons

Gramineae

Agropyron scabrum Common Wheat Grass

*Pennisetum clandestinum Kikuyu Grass

*Cynosurus echinatus Rough Dog's-tail

*Stenotaphrum secundatum Buffalo Grass

*Vulpia bromoides Squirrel-tail Fescue

- Cynodon dactylon* Couch
 **Bromus sterilis* Barren Brome
 **Bromus mollis* Soft Brome
 **Briza minor* Lesser Quaking-grass
 **Poa pratensis* English Meadow-grass
 **Poa annua* Annual Meadow-grass
Agrostis avenacea Blown Grass
Deyeuxia densa Bent-grass
Stipa compacta Spear-grass
 **Holcus lanatus* Yorkshire Fog
Danthonia racemosa Wallaby-grass
Danthonia penicillata Slender Wallaby-grass
Danthonia semiannularis Wallaby-Grass
 **Lolium parenne* Parnennial Rye-grass
 **Hordeum leporinum* Barley-grass
 Cyperaceae
Scirpus platycarpus Club-rush
Scirpus inundatus Swamp Club-rush
Lepidosperma concavum Sand-hill
 Sword-sedge
Baumea acuta Pale Twig-rush
Baumea juncea Bare Twig-rush
 Juncaceae
Juncus maritimus Sea Rush
Juncus pauciflorus Loose-flower Rush
Juncus bufonius Toad Rush
 Orchidaceae
Acianthus caudatus Mayfly Orchid
Pterostylis pedunculata Maroonhood
Caladenia camea var. *pygmaea* Pink Fingers
- Dioctyledons
 Urticaceae
 **Urtica urens* Garden Nettle
 Polygonaceae
 **Rumex acetosella* Sheep's Sorrel
 Chenopodiaceae
Atriplex cinerea Coast Saltbush
 Caryophyllaceae
 **Cerastium fontanum* Sticky Mouse-ear
 Chickweed
Sagina apetala Annual Pearlwort
 **Spergularia rubra* Sand Spurrey
 **Polycarpon tetraphyllum* Four-leaved
 Allseed
 **Silene gallica* French Catchfly
- Ranunculaceae
 **Ranunculus muricatus* Buttercup
 Cruciferae
 **Coronopus didymus* Lesser Swine's Cress
 Papilionaceae
 **Trifolium procumbens* Hop Clover
 **Trifolium dubium* Yellow Suckling
 **Trifolium glomeratum* Cluster Clover
 **Trifolium fragiferum* Strawberry Clover
 **Medicago lupulina* Black Medic
 **Melilotus indica* King Island Melilot
 **Vicia sativa* Common Vetch
 Geraniaceae
 **Geranium molle* Soft Cranesbill
 **Erodium cicutarium* Common Storkbill
 Lythraceae
Lythrum hyssopifolia Small Loosestrife
 Oxalidaceae
Oxalis comiculata Creeping Wood-sorrel
 Umbelliferae
 **Torilis nodosa* Knotted Parsley
 Primulaceae
 **Anagallis arvensis* Scarlet Pimpernel
 Scrophulariaceae
 **Veronica arvensis* Wall Speedwell
 Plantaginaceae
 **Plantago coronopus* Buckshorn Plantain
 **Plantago lanceolata* Ribwort
 Rubiaceae
 **Sherardia arvensis* Field Madder
 **Galium murale* Small Bedstraw
 Campanulaceae
Wahlenbergia quadrifida Sprawling
 Bluebell
 Lobeliaceae
Lobelia alata Angled Lobelia
 Compositae
 **Bellis perennis* Daisy
Gnaphalium involucreatum Common
 Cudweed
 **Gnaphalium candidissimum* Silver
 Cudweed
Gnaphalium purpureum Purple Cudweed
Cotula australis Common Cotula
Senecio linearifolius Fireweed Groundsel
Senecio glomeratus Cluster Fireweed

Senecio biserratus	*Silybum marianum Milk Thistle
*Arctotheca calendula Cape Weed	*Hypochaeris radicata Cat's Ear
*Cirsium vulgare Spear Thistle	*Sonchus oleraceus Sow-thistle
*Carduus tenuiflorus Winged Slender Thistle	

A MOLLUSCAN MILESTONE

R. C. Kershaw,

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THE year 1971 marks the centenary of the publication of an important contribution to the study of Tasmanian Land Mollusca. This was the publication by William Legrand of a small paper back booklet containing descriptions of numerous species of Tasmanian Land Mollusca.

The booklet which measured 5½ inches by 9 inches, consisted of 42 printed white pages and two plates. Printing was done on one side only except for the index to the first edition when the opposite side of this sheet was used. The title page and preface to the first edition were printed on a double sheet which was folded for binding. All other pages appear to be single sheets, the whole being sewn and glued together. It was provided with a grey-blue paper cover on which the title page was reproduced with an ornamented surround.

The title reads: Collections for a Monograph of Tasmanian Land Shells by W. Legrand. Elizabeth Street, Hobart Town, Tasmania 1871.

The two plates were beautifully executed with each species illustrated by three drawings. Two of these displayed differing aspects while the third indicated the natural size. A list of the figures was given (14 in each case) on a separate page and the plate protected by a thin pale blue interleaved sheet. Plate I had in the bottom left hand corner the inscription - "From Nature and on Stone by Helena Forde" and Plate II, "From Nature and on Stone by Harriett Scott." Both plates bore in the bottom right hand corner the inscription S. T. Leigh and Co. imp. This was the only indication as to who may have printed the booklet. Tenison Woods wrote of the "Monograph" as follows. "What gave the work a greater value was that it was for the most part privately printed by the author, the whole of the work being done by his own hand." (Proc. Roy. Soc. Tasm. 1876 (1877), p. 33).

The work was produced in two editions. Some pages are labelled June 1870, additions to August 1871. The preface, however, was dated June 1871 and this has been taken as the publication date. A second preface dated Sept. 1871 was added with an additional index listing 15 further species for the second edition. This gave a total of 83 descriptions of indigenous and introduced land mollusca. A slip of paper was inserted within the second edition providing two new names for others preoccupied. All of these species are included by Iredale in his Basic List of the Land Mollusca of Australia, so need not be repeated.

The work is invaluable because it provided descriptions of all the known and recognised Tasmanian species to the time of publication. In addition descriptions of numerous new species were provided by Dr. Cox and John Brazier for inclusion. Consequently all the main forms were known and described. While

descriptions were adequate to establish the species, identifications from them in many cases have been very difficult. Nevertheless when this work is used in conjunction with the Monograph of Tasmanian Land Shells by W. F. Petterd (1879) and the Monograph of Australian Land Shells by Dr. Cox (1868) the task of research is greatly simplified.

Legrand used that all inclusive genus Helix for all except the few species which could be allocated to Bulimus, Vitrina, and Succinea. Fortunately Charles Hedley, Charles Gabriel, William May and finally Tom Iredale have all helped to clear the way to understanding.

Much work however remains to be done. There are many areas within the State from which systematic collections have not been made. Probably more species of tiny snails remain to be found. Although the early naturalists made a tremendous contribution it is not a difficult task compared with the almost insurmountable problems of 100 or more years ago.

BILL-CLATTERING BY ANTHOCHAERA

THERE appear to be few Australian species of birds reported to regularly include bill-clattering with their calls. Thomson 1964 "A New Dictionary of Birds" lists a dozen or so families which make various clattering noises in the course of bill-fencing and bill-sparring, and notes others which rattle the bill as an alarm note or as food entreaty by chicks. The well-known recognition bill-clattering of storks, and defensive bill-snapping by owls is also noted, together with a brief discussion of species which produce sounds when the beak contacts various objects.

Bill-clattering by Red Wattlebirds Anthochaera carunculata and Little Wattlebirds A. chrysoptera hardly fall into any of the above categories, and the family Meliphagidae is not included by Thomson. I can find no reference to bill-clattering by the Yellow Wattlebird A. paradoxa: indeed most observers when attempting to describe the indescribable vocal efforts of Anthochaera concentrate on uncomplimentary adjectives about the gargling calls produced.

Bill-clattering seems to be an integral addition to the vocal utterances of both Red and Little Wattlebirds. It often starts a call, sounding almost as a stutter before the actual voice is heard. It has been suggested that it is solely aggressive, but this is not certain. It is heard in most months of the year, well out of the breeding season, and may be uttered when several birds are calling in proximity, or when an individual arrives alone at a garden nectar-feeder. I cannot remember hearing a juvenile bird do it.

Detailed notes of the circumstances of bill-clattering by these three species would be of interest.

- Ellen M. McCulloch, 6 Bullen Avenue, Mitcham, Vic. 3132

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Subscriptions to the Tasmanian Naturalist are now due. Will subscribers who are not members of the Club please note that the annual subscription is now \$1.00.

BOOK REVIEW

STUDY OF THE KOOKABURRAS -

The southern Kookaburra is such a familiar bird that few of us would imagine there was still a good deal to know about it - enough at any rate to warrant the greater part of a fair-sized book. And perhaps now that such a book has been written about it, as well as about kookaburras in general - two species and one sub-species - there is little actually left for us to know. Lansdowne Press, Melbourne, has just published (and sent the Club a review copy) a most interesting and comprehensive account of Australian kookaburras written by Veronica A. Parry for a master's degree at Monash University. Under the title of "Kookaburras", the well written and lavishly illustrated book is priced at \$4.25.

The author gives us some idea of how kookaburras behave, the reasons for their calls, and a run down on their life-histories generally. And when we come to read it we are surprised to find that despite the familiarity of these birds, and the fact that we are now hearing and seeing the Laughing Kookaburra much more often in Tasmania (where it was introduced about 1900), there has been much concerning them that we did not know or suspect. Indeed, the book makes fascinating reading and fills a niche in bird literature that has been for a long time vacant. Veronica Parry has chosen a popular theme for her studies, and her book can be recommended for general reading.

- M. S.

Quotations from Jock Marshall's "The Great Extermination".

"As I have stressed before, it is by no means necessary actually to shoot an animal in order to exterminate it".

"In Australia, though we are rather good at swimming and knocking balls about, we still lag behind many countries (which have much less of worth to preserve) in our conservation policies."

T. F. N. C. OFFICE BEARERS, 1971

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