

HARRY TALBOT.

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Harry Talbot died in Nelson, where he spent his retirement years, on 5th January 1982. Although he did not have a close association with the Canterbury Botanical Society he was well known to many members and his contribution to our knowledge of the flora of Canterbury was recognised by the Society with the award of the Senior Bledisloe Trophy in 1979.

Harry was in his later thirties before his interest in botany was kindled - he recalled that it was on a visit to Lake Taylor with friends, about 1935, that his interest changed "from fish to plants".

And plants held his attention and provided his major recreation for the rest of his life. He applied himself to the task of learning about them by dissecting and drawing, in fine detail, their floral and vegetative parts until he was able to name and classify his collection. He liked growing plants too and at one time had, in his vegetable patch, a large collection of Carex, a genus in which he had a particular interest. He was headmaster of Springfield School for some twenty years with the wonderful and practically unbotanised "backyard" of the Canterbury foothills. The flora of the Mt Torlesse area became his first long term project and his comprehensive unpublished species list was later incorporated in "The Flora of the Waimakariri Basin" (Burrows 1962).

At the suggestion of Dr. L. McCaskill, Harry contacted Mr. W.B. Brockie, then in charge of the New Zealand native section of the Christchurch Botanic Gardens and so began a lasting friendship and highly successful botanical association which was to continue until the death of Mr. Brockie in 1972. Together they made many botanical forays to areas in Canterbury and later further afield,

often to places until then unvisited by botanists. They made a good team with Harry collecting and preparing specimens while Wattie kept records and made notes. Both were strong personalities and their camps must have been the scene of much lively discussion and spirited argument.

Harry's memory for places where he had seen or collected his plants was infallible and many of us have reason to be grateful to him for directions to plants of our interests. Dr Lucy Moore, Linda Stemmer and I had one fine day travelling along the railway line from Cass, opening some thirteen gates on the way, to see a colony of Myosotis goyenii he knew about at Slovens Creek. Just a few days before he died he gave directions leading to the relocation of Scutellaria novae-zelandiae in Aniseed Valley near Nelson. We still have to find Sebaea ovata and Spiranthes sinensis seen by him on the Canterbury coast in the 1940's and checking a location for Teucrium parviflorum near Porters Pass is waiting for a spare day.

Harry was a great raconteur and good company in the field. Those who knew him were enriched by his friendship and knowledge. His extensive private herbarium of c 4000 specimens was donated to Botany Division and has been catalogued by L.R. Stemmer. His name is commemorated in Bulbinella talbotii and with Mr. W.B. Brockie in their joint discovery, Coprosma talbrockiei, both from Goulard Downs, N.W. Nelson. [See Burrows, C.J. 1962].