

VI. MISCELLANEOUS

(Obituaries, personal news, etc. — continued from vol. 12 page 24)

M.M.J. VAN BALGOOY — *A farewell to the Rijksherbarium* (Summary of the farewell speech by Van Balgooy):

I grew up on a farm in Central Java, adjacent to rain forest, where wild boars and leopards were our next-door neighbours. When still a toddler I started observing plants and animals and carried out lots of experiments of which I shall spare you the gruesome details.

The Japanese occupation was a blessing in disguise for my brother and myself: no school and ample time to roam the forest. The Indonesian struggle for independence after the capitulation of Japan was a perilous time for our family. We escaped unscathed but lost all our properties. We moved to Bandung, West Java, where I finished the Dutch secondary school in 1952. My family urged me to take up medicine but thanks to Dr. Van der Pijl, who was Professor of botany at the University of Indonesia, I changed my mind. My main interest, however, was zoology and not botany. All of my spare time went into the study of birds in the field.

In 1958 I moved to the Netherlands and was admitted to the University of Leiden. My first assignment was with Prof. Van Steenis. It was a tough time getting used to the Professor but our relationship soon improved. When I took my 'Doctoraal' (M.Sc.) in 1961 he offered me a job at the Rijksherbarium to edit the series 'Pacific Plant Areas' and prepare my PhD thesis on the Plant geography of the Pacific.

I was fascinated by an activity that Prof. Van Steenis and Dr. Rein Bakhuizen van den Brink called 'voordetermineren' (pre-identification). The two would go through piles and piles of plants, sent to the Rijksherbarium from various parts of Malesia, putting names to the collections at great speed. I was allowed to watch if I was prepared to write down the identifications. In the beginning I did not learn very much, but kept on watching, asking questions, making notes, consulting the herbarium, until after many years I mastered the tricks of the trade. One incident helped me to become accepted by the grandmasters. They were studying a collection of plants from Vienna and were greatly puzzled by one specimen in particular. I happened to pass by, looked over their shoulders and said: "Oh, that is *Pimia rhamnoides*, an endemic from Fiji." Van Steenis was completely flabbergasted and could not believe that I had seen a drawing of the plant 20 years previously.

Pre-identification is an essential part of the work at the Rijksherbarium and has become an almost full-time job for me, although it all started as a hobby. This really is the story of my life. In Indonesia I was involved in various sports. In Holland I took up badminton just to have some exercise, but then I met Helga (my wife). Together we became very successful players. I was often at loggerheads with umpires; out of spite I joined their ranks and soon was promoted to the status of international umpire myself. As a kid I was always ousted from the kitchen, but now cooking is one of my favourite pastimes. My mixed parentage (father Dutch, mother Javanese) has never been much of an obstacle. On the contrary, it has helped me to react to certain situations in either a western way (direct, business-like) or in an eastern way (patient, hiding feelings) as need be. I am dualistic in a physical sense as well, writing and playing badminton right-handed and shooting the catapult and playing golf left-handed.

Adapting to new situations has never been much of a problem but there are a few things I will never get used to; rudeness is one of them. On the other hand I have learned to appreciate a good glass of wine, whereas I never used to drink alcohol.

Working at the Rijksherbarium has always been a pleasure and I am grateful that pensioners are treasured at this institute. In all the 35 years at the Rijksherbarium, trips to the tropics have been highlights. I have visited various parts of Indonesia, Malaysia, Australia, and the Pacific and have thoroughly enjoyed every trip, each time returning completely invigorated.

I am convinced the Rijksherbarium is doing a very important and useful job. We must do even better to earn the respect and appreciation from those who have the future of our institute in their hands. Our Director needs and deserves all the support he can get.

(*Editorial note:* In fact this was not a farewell at all, for Max is working more than ever, so much that he has no time anymore to play bridge during lunch break, as he used to do when he was still paid for his work.)

Dr. H. BALSLEV (AAU) has been appointed Professor of Botany at the Department of Systematic Botany, University of Aarhus. He is a specialist on neotropic *Palmae* and *Juncaceae*, and vegetation analysis.

Mr. M.J.E. COODE (K) retired on 3 September 1997. He plans to divide his time between his new home in the southern Welsh Marches, near Monmouth, and completing the *Elaeocarpaceae* for the Tree Flora of Sabah and Sarawak and the Flora Malesiana.

CORNER, E.J.H. (12 January 1906, London — 14 September 1966, Cambridge, UK)

R. Watling: E.J.H. Corner — a personal appreciation. *Mycologist* 11 (1997) 96–97, portr.

CUMING, H. (1791–1865)

A.R. Bean [*Austr. Syst. Bot. Soc. Newsl.* 91 (1997) 8] reports on the discovery of 65 specimens of *Myrtaceae* from Australia. It was unknown that Cuming had been there. The specimens are deposited in G.

JOHNSON, LAWRENCE ALEXANDER SIDNEY (26 June 1925, Sydney — 1 August 1997, Sydney, Australia)

B.G. Briggs: Dr. Lawrie Johnson AM, *Sydney Morning Herald* 9 Aug. 1997, portr.

Famous botanist at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney (NSW). Specialist among others in *Eucalyptus*, other *Myrtaceae*, *Casuarinaceae*, *Juncaceae*, *Proteaceae*, *Restionaceae*, etc. See *Festschrift* for his 70th birthday in *Telopea* 6/4 (1996) with portr., bibliography and biographies.

STEWART, RALPH RANGLES (15 April 1890, West Hebron, NY, USA — 6 November 1993, Duarte, CA, USA)

Dr. Stewart, at the age of 103 years plus 6 months, surpassed H.N. Ridley's previous record as the oldest botanist (100 years plus 10 months).

Mr. C.J. STROO (L) is studying the relationships between bats and flowers in the Mallesian area for his Ph.D.

Dr. B.C. TAN (formerly of FH) will be joining the School of Biological Sciences, The National University of Singapore (SINU) with effect from 12 September 1997, as a Senior Lecturer in cryptogamic botany.