

OBITUARY

DR E F WARBURG

When Dr E. F. Warburg died on 9th June, 1966 at the early age of 58 Britain lost a most distinguished botanist.

Dr Warburg, or Heff as he was nearly always known, will be sorely missed by those interested in field and taxonomic botany in this country. He was an unexcelled field botanist and the breadth of his knowledge of the British flora was often a source of wonder to students and friends. As a teacher he inspired many students with a lasting interest in field botany and even for the most knowledgeable excursions with Heff were stimulating and rewarding. He was patient with students, not minding how many times he named a plant for them and with more experienced botanists his manner of correcting errors of identification was such as never to give offence. There was always something to learn from his comments on plants submitted to him for identification. His commanding presence, sound taxonomic judgement and clarity of exposition won him a leading position amongst British botanists. He was perhaps best known as one of the joint authors of the *Flora of the British Isles* (by A. R. Clapham, T. G. Tutin & E. F. Warburg, Cambridge, 1952 & 1962), but in addition to his interest in and knowledge of higher plants he was also a leading authority on bryophytes. At the time of his death he was engaged in writing a British moss flora with A. C. Crundwell.

Edmund Frederic Warburg was born on the 22nd March, 1908. His father was Sir Oscar Warburg, a business man and former chairman of the London County Council and his mother was Catherine, daughter of Mr Justice Byrne. The family, of German-Jewish origin, has distinguished botanical connections, the best known being Otto Warburg the biochemist of Warburg manometer fame and Otto Warburg, taxonomist and author of *Monsunia*. For many years their home was Boidier at Headley in Surrey. Sir Oscar was a keen gardener and built up a large collection of plants including *Cistus*, *Berberis* and oaks. Heff inherited his father's interest in gardening and they published a joint paper on *Cistus* in the *Journal of the Royal Horticultural Society* in 1930. Heff himself built up a collection of interesting and unusual plants in his garden at Oxford and one of its features was the display of species *Crocus* in the late winter. Heff was responsible for the introduction into cultivation of *Daboecia azorica* following an expedition to the Azores in 1929.

Heff was educated at Marlborough College and went up to Trinity College, Cambridge as a Scholar in Mathematics in 1927. He obtained a double first in the Natural Sciences Tripos taking Botany as his Part II subject and later obtained a Ph.D. for a cytotaxonomic study of the Geraniales under the direction of Miss E. R. Saunders. He was elected a research fellow of Trinity College in 1933.

He went to Bedford College, London as an assistant lecturer in 1938 and in 1941 joined the R.A.F. He was attached to a photographic interpretation unit at Medmenham, Buckinghamshire and it was whilst here that he became interested in bryophytes. He returned to Bedford College after the war and in 1948 went to the Botany School, Oxford at the invitation of Professor Osborne as University Demonstrator in Botany and Curator of the Druce Herbarium. He was noted for his sound common sense concerning academic matters and his defence of some of the more traditional aspects of botany. In 1964 he was promoted to a readership in plant taxonomy and elected a Fellow of New College.

Heff was a very modest and unambitious man and published relatively little. It is

perhaps unfortunate that he limited his interests mainly to the British Flora as his taxonomic judgement would have been of inestimable value in a wider field. After the war he concentrated his spare time interests on bryophytes whilst, however, retaining his interest (particularly in *Sorbus*) and teaching in flowering plants: His contribution to the first edition of the *Flora of the British Isles* and the care and time he spent on revising this contribution to the second edition is noteworthy. He possessed the rare ability of being able to cope simultaneously with both bryophytes and higher plants in the field, an ability that many of his companions envied. He discovered many bryophytes new to Britain and in 1963 edited the third edition of *A Census Catalogue of British Mosses*, a very noteworthy publication which involved a great deal of careful investigation and research.

Heff joined the Botanical Society of the British Isles in 1946 and during the next 20 years served on many committees and was a member of the Council. He was editor of *Watsonia* from 1949 to 1960. He was elected an Honorary Member of the society in 1960 and President in 1965. He was also a Recorder of Mosses for the British Bryological Society from 1946 and President of the same society from 1962 to 1963.

His familiar figure will be very much missed at meetings of various botanical societies and for some of his closer friends part of the pleasure of such meetings will be lost.

In 1948 he married Primrose Barrett of Melton, Suffolk, who had been one of his students at London and they had two sons and a daughter.

I am grateful to Professor P. W. Richards for help with biographical details.

PUBLICATIONS BY DR E. F. WARBURG

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1932

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1933

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1938

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1947

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1949

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1950

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1951

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1952

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1956

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1958

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1959

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1960

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1961

- (with B. F. T. Ducker)—*Physcomitrium eurystomum* Sendt. in Britain. *Trans. Br. bryol. Soc.* 4, 95-97.

1962

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1965

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—A. J. E. SMITH.