

Obituaries

MARJORIE DEVEREAU (1915–1994)

Majorie Devereau, whose sudden death occurred on 19 December 1994, was one of the two assistant authors of the *Flora of the Isle of Man*, published in 1984 (though bearing a date two years earlier). Together with her friend and principal field companion, Dr Larch Garrad, she was responsible for the culminating impetus that carried the long-deferred work to its conclusion, taking upon herself the onerous task of typing the greater part of the manuscript.

Born on 28 May 1915 and brought up in Douglas, one of four children of a senior official in the Island's Board of Education, Miss Devereau spent her entire career as a primary schoolteacher. Though her first post was 'across' (as the Manx say), in Bootle, and she returned to take up further ones in England during and after the Second World War, her heart always remained in the Isle of Man and it was with relief that she was able to spend her final 23 years of teaching there.

After a chance meeting with Dr Garrad at an evening class in marine biology in 1965, she took up in earnest the interest in botany that she had had from an early age, an interest which nevertheless had to compete with amateur dramatics, gardening, garden history and learning the Manx language. Quickly developing impressive proficiency as a field botanist, she was soon making many notable finds, especially in *Carex*, a genus she was particularly proud of having mastered. *C. dioica* and *C. diandra* were both added to the Manx list through her acumen.

Retirement in 1975 brought her more leisure and allowed her at last to attend B.S.B.I. field meetings elsewhere in the British Isles, as well as to visit choice botanical areas on the Continent. She also undertook most of the Isle of Man coverage for the B.S.B.I.'s Monitoring Scheme and was compiling the records for two of its 10-km squares for the new *Atlas* at the time of her death. Retaining a sharp eye to the end, she celebrated her penultimate field season in fitting style by detecting two new county records of *Trifolium* species in a stretch of ground repeatedly worked over by botanists from John Ray onwards.

Though she formed no herbarium (her vouchers were pressed under her living-room carpet) and was too diffident ever to publish on her own account, the size of her contribution to knowledge of the vascular flora of her native island will fortunately be abundantly apparent to posterity through the great number of records that stand to her name in print.

D. E. ALLEN

DOROTHY MARY GREENE (1928–1994)

Mrs Dorothy Greene died on 31 October 1994. Although few B.S.B.I. members will have known her, she played a crucial rôle behind the scenes as database manager at the Biological Records Centre, Monks Wood, in the 1980s. Those who use the animal and plant distribution maps and atlases produced by B.R.C. owe a great deal to her dedicated work as a pioneer manager of biological databases.

Dorothy Douglas was born in Coleraine, Northern Ireland, on 6 June 1928, the daughter of a schoolteacher. After attending Coleraine High School, she entered Trinity College, Dublin, graduating with a B.Sc. in Natural Science in 1951. At a Trinity College Bible-reading she met Stanley Greene, the son of a Co. Cork landowner, who she married at a teetotal wedding in 1953. (Their presence at a Bible-reading and at any teetotal event will astonish those who knew them only in later life!) After her marriage Dorothy initially worked as a medical technician, but she was employed as a part-time demonstrator in Botany at the University of Birmingham after Stanley obtained a post there in 1955. In 1959 she obtained an M.Sc. for a thesis on British bryophytes, and

in 1961 she began to study Antarctic bryophytes, the main research interest of her husband. She was probably the first British woman scientist to 'go south' with the British Antarctic Survey, and her visit to South Georgia in the summer of 1967-68 was one of the highlights of her life. She retained vivid memories of hazardous transfers from ship to ship in rough weather, of the wonderful landscape of South Georgia and of the superb seafood available from the Antarctic waters. She was officially taken on to the staff of B.A.S. in 1969, and transferred to the Institute of Terrestrial Ecology's research station at Penicuik, Midlothian, with the rest of the Birmingham team in 1974. During this period she was the co-author of a number of papers on polar bryophytes, and she began work on *A conspectus of the mosses of Antarctica, South Georgia, the Falkland Islands and Southern South America*. This detailed checklist of 1,959 taxa, with relevant synonyms and a detailed and meticulously compiled bibliography, was eventually published in 1986. She also set up a database of Antarctic botanical records, based on specimens in the B.A.S. herbarium. This database, which was fully operational by 1971, was one of the first of its kind.

In 1978 Dorothy's marriage to Stanley broke up, and she transferred to Monks Wood. In 1979 she became database manager at the Biological Records Centre. The ten years she spent at B.R.C. were marked by major changes in the structure of the database. Dorothy did not write computer programs herself, but her knowledge of the needs of biologists and the strengths and limitations of databases allowed her to develop the B.R.C. system in collaboration with computer specialists. When she arrived at Monks Wood only the minimum details of a record were routinely placed on computer file. In 1981 the database was radically revised so that full details were added for new records. Programs were developed to check the records for geographical inconsistencies, and new software enabled maps to be plotted by computer rather than mechanically or by hand.

The first task Dorothy tackled at B.R.C. was the preparation of maps for the new edition of the B.S.B.I. *Sedges* handbook. This began with a major trauma, when the first set of maps lacked many of the significant records plotted in the *Atlas of the British flora* but which, it turned out, had never been computerized. However, Dick David stepped in to work with Dorothy and revised maps were produced. At the same time she and Jenny Moore set up a database of Charophyte records, from which distribution maps and a catalogue of the Natural History Museum collection were published. The days working with Jenny Moore in London provided a welcome break from the Monks Wood routine, and the resulting publications revived interest in these neglected plants. Experience with these data sets enabled her to tackle some large data sets built up by recording schemes which had been set up after the successful completion of the *Atlas of the British flora*. She was responsible for computerizing the records for the atlases of bryophytes, butterflies, mammals, marine algae, myxomycetes and woodlice, and for other publications currently in press.

Dorothy brought a formidable energy and determination to her work at B.R.C. She would regularly start work at 6.30 or 7 a.m., taking advantage of the more rapid performance of the computer before it was slowed down by other users. Sustained by cigarettes and frequent cups of almost black coffee, she worked from Monday to Friday and sometimes through the weekend as well. She affected a cynical attitude to recorders and recording, and frequently expressed her frustration at the tendency of records to 'multiply in captivity', as she put it, or to emerge 'from under the bed' after she had been told that the database was complete. Much of her work involved labour-intensive manipulation of computer files, using software which was less sophisticated than it is now. She took a pride in the speed with which she could deal with mountainous piles of computer print-out. If she was given a large job she would often put it aside, saying that she could not possibly deal with it now, but by the next morning it would be dumped unceremoniously in the centre of your desk with a curt note 'Please check by lunchtime, D.'. The permanent employees at B.R.C. found that working with her was both enjoyable and rewarding, and she was always at hand to help in a crisis. However, sometimes she could be caustic to those who, in her opinion, were not pulling their weight. Anyone complaining that they could not complete a task in time was likely to be advised to cut down on the excessive number of hours they spent sleeping. Sadly, a few of those she attempted to goad into action failed to see the human being behind the ruthless front she presented to them. She resented anything that interfered with the job in hand, avoiding administrative chores, internal seminars and meetings outside Monks Wood whenever she could. In the evenings she returned home to relax with her long-haired cat, Sheba, and a stiff drink. When not working over the weekend she cajoled Sheba into her travelling basket and drove off on Friday afternoon in her MG Midget to Herefordshire, where she was restoring and modernizing a decrepit old cottage with two

friends. After a weekend of strenuous labour on the cottage, she would be back at work at 9 a.m. on Monday, proudly displaying her work-torn hands.

Dorothy's last task at B.R.C. was to manage the migration of the database to ORACLE, a far more efficient database management system than had hitherto been available to B.R.C. During the period between her appointment in 1979 and her retirement in 1989 the database had nearly doubled in size, from 2.5 to 4.5 million records. She retired to her Herefordshire cottage, the modernization of which had been completed with her characteristically good taste and eye for detail. She died of cancer, after a short illness. Her friends will cherish memories of her forthright and vigorous personality.

J. M. CROFT & C. D. PRESTON

LEONARD ALBERT LIVERMORE
(1919—1994)

When Len Livermore died of cancer on 5 August 1994, Lancashire lost one of its best and most independent botanists.

Len was born on 7 January 1919 at Lancaster, the son of Frederick Charles and Rachael Livermore. He was educated at local schools and in 1935 joined Lansil Ltd of Lancaster as a laboratory technician working on textiles. In 1939 he joined the Territorial Army and was called up two days before the Second World War began. After brief training he was sent to France as an artillery signaller, saw action in 1940, and was lucky enough to escape home from Dunkirk. In 1941 he transferred to the Royal Army Ordnance Corps and was sent to North Africa to destroy dangerous captured ammunition as the Allies pushed west. He rose to the rank of Staff Sergeant before being demobilized in 1946. He returned to Lancaster and Lansil, and obtained qualifications as an industrial chemist at night school, ultimately gaining Fellowship of the Royal Institute of Chemistry in 1956. He retired in 1980 as Works Chief Chemist when Courtaulds Ltd closed their Lancaster factory.

In 1947 Len met his future wife, Pat, through a mutual friend. Together they discovered the pleasures of fell-walking and photography in the Lake District. They were married in 1949, thus beginning a happy marriage and a lifelong partnership. Their only child, David, was born in 1958.

Len's interest in botany came via horticulture. He grew orchids and other tropical plants (he was a founder member of the Bromeliad Society) and, later, alpinists, with a special fondness for *Primula* and *Cyclamen*. He won many prizes at horticultural shows in the North-West for his displays of greenhouse plants and cut flowers. Gradually, through Pat's interest in photographing wild flowers using a camera Len had bought her after winning an *Amateur Gardening* competition, he became interested in wild plants. They joined the B.S.B.I. in 1974, and in 1980 retirement allowed him to take up botany full-time.

Botany was treated with the same care and dedication as explosives, chemistry and horticulture. Len's most important contribution to botany, *Flowering plants and ferns of North Lancashire*, was jointly written with Pat. This local Flora (using the term in its best sense) was the first for the area since Wheldon & Wilson's *Flora of West Lancashire* (which covered all v.c. 60) in 1907. It was recorded between 1976 and 1986, almost exclusively by Len and Pat. They complemented each other, Len seeking out the more critical groups, ferns and aquatics, leaving Pat to look for the commoner plants and the grasses, rushes and sedges.

Len would always ask permission to record on private land. He would knock on a farm door, and spend ten minutes or more chatting about the farming and explaining what he was doing, whilst establishing his local credentials. This exemplary approach paid off, and Len and Pat were never once met with refusal, allowing them into places never botanized previously. Some sites off the beaten track were absolute gems; I accompanied them on one recording trip in 1982 to the Greta Gorge, where sunlight dappled through the alder woods on to the white sheets of large bittercress (*Cardamine amara*), still the most extensive and beautiful stand I have ever seen.

The Flora was carefully planned, and Len's determination to get proper coverage of all groups and tetrads was influenced by an unfair *Watsonia* review of another local Flora. The Flora was

concisely presented with tetrad maps in the current fashion, each dot coloured by hand. He carefully costed it (even down to complimentary copies, but he forgot all his family would want one too!), and kept the price down so that people would buy it. The Flora was very well received.

Len was not daunted by critical species, and he particularly enjoyed pottering in the meadows around Lancaster looking for *Taraxacum*, amassing a very respectable number of species (Livermore & Livermore 1991b). In May, the conservatory had row after row of carefully labelled yoghurt pots with clocking dandelion heads. He retained many critically-determined voucher specimens for reference; the collections have now been deposited at Lancaster University (LANC) and Liverpool Museum (LIV). Each autumn as the botanical season came to a close, Len and Pat would switch attention to fungi, this time Pat providing the expertise and Len the support.

With the bit between his teeth Len was not one to stop, and detailed accounts of the canals, coast, dismantled railways and the City of Lancaster were produced in rapid succession, again with Pat. These reports were published by persuading companies to type and print them as a public relations exercise. Len would carefully negotiate with the senior executives and then encourage the typists often with garden produce; after many years in management in the private sector, he knew how to get what he wanted. As the reports were not for sale, he deposited copies in libraries, and put notes in *B.S.B.I. News* so that others knew they were available.

Together with Pat and other friends, including Margret Baecker, Ruth Berry, John Leedal and Neil Robinson, he also spent many happy botanical holidays abroad in Canada, Turkey and Europe. On occasions, with the aid of some wild horses, Margret and I even managed to drag him over the Lancashire border into Cumbria to look for *Sorbus lancastriensis*!

Len was committed to conservation. For many years he was on the Northern Regional Committee and the Scientific and Conservation Committee of the Lancashire Naturalists' Trust (now the Lancashire Wildlife Trust). He had strong views on nature conservation, and had little hesitation in letting people know when he thought they were doing nothing or doing the wrong thing. Rightly, he felt that conservation policies should be based on sound information, and the initial objective of the Flora was to gather systematic data to determine priorities for conservation in North Lancashire. He felt too little attention was paid to groups like lower plants, fungi and invertebrates, which were largely ignored by the statutory nature conservation bodies in selecting sites, simply because they rarely collected the information. He and Pat made the point to the Nature Conservancy Council with the outstanding list of fungi from Gait Barrows National Nature Reserve, which is unique for its detail and coverage. Len was of the non-intervention school for site management, and thought that some sites would be better left to look after themselves.

Len was a shrewd, tough, independent northerner who knew his own mind. He preferred action to words, and had little time for committees or people who just talked. He held forthright views on the Civil Service, the state of the manufacturing industry and botanical referees who did not answer letters. He would fervently argue his corner over a cup of tea and a cigarette, and would usually give better than he got. He was always very cagey with his information, and most of us rapidly learnt not to pass on his records to third parties; he was upset if people re-used his records without taking the courtesy to ask him first. He taught me, a mere southerner, a lot both about botany and handling people, and I remember with pleasure botanizing with him in the field.

When he was diagnosed as having cancer in 1992, true to form he would not give in and carried on as normal, researching his family history and caring for his garden. He is survived by Pat and their son David.

PUBLICATIONS OF LEN AND PAT LIVERMORE

Livermore, L. A. & Livermore, P. D. (1987). *Flowering plants and ferns of North Lancashire*. Privately published, Lancaster.

Livermore, P. D. & Livermore, L. A. (1987). *Fungi of Gait Barrows National Nature Reserve*. Nature Conservancy Council, Blackwell.

Livermore, L. A. & Livermore, P. D. (1989). *Flowering plants, ferns and rusts of the Lancaster Canal in the Lancaster District*. Privately published, Lancaster.

Livermore, L. A. & Livermore, P. D. (1990). *Coastal plants and rust fungi of the North Lancashire coast*. Privately published, Lancaster.

Livermore, L. A. & Livermore, P. D. (1990). *Plants and rust fungi of the dismantled railway lines in the Lancaster District*. Privately published, Lancaster.

Livermore, L. A. & Livermore, P. D. (1991a). *Lancaster's plantlife – a botanical survey*. Privately published, Lancaster.

Livermore, L. A. & Livermore, P. D. (1991b). *Taraxacum* flora of north Lancashire. *B.S.B.I. News* 57: 9–10.

T. C. G. RICH

PETER JAMES WANSTALL
(1924–1993)

Peter Wanstall died suddenly at his home in Thrandeston, Suffolk, on 29 January 1993. He had been a member of the B.S.B.I. since 1949 and had served as a member of the Council for two terms (1955–59, 1965–69), as the Society's representative on the Biological Council and as a member of the Conservation Committee. Perhaps his chief contribution, however, was as Honorary Secretary to the Publications Committee, a post that he held from 1954 to 1968. During this period he edited two of the Society's conference reports, *A Darwin centenary* (1961) and *Local Floras* (1963). He was elected an Honorary Member in 1968.

Peter was born on 21 March 1924 in Guildford, a town for which he retained a lasting attachment. However, the family moved to Brighton when he was 12, and it was in the Sussex downland that his love of nature was nurtured and grew. He attended Varndean School, Brighton, where he ran the Field Club, and Queen Mary College, University of London. The College had been evacuated to King's College, Cambridge at the outbreak of war and this was to have a profound influence on Peter's educational development, for, as he once told me, the 'Cambridge years' were among the most stimulating and formative of his life.

In 1946 he joined the staff of the Botany Department of Queen Mary College, where he remained for his entire professional career, retiring in 1984. He taught courses on bryophytes, pteridophytes and gymnosperms, plant ecology and, latterly, plant geography. In the 1960s he also conducted the University extramural course for the Certificate in Field Biology. As a teacher, Peter came into his own in practical classes and tutorials, where he was much more at ease than in the lecture room. His research interests lay in the field of bryophyte ecology and, for some time, he worked on the structure and growth of populations of two mosses, *Polytrichum formosum* and *P. juniperinum*. Sadly, he published little, not through the lack of ability, for he possessed a good critical mind and wrote well, but mainly, I think, through lack of self-confidence.

For more than 40 years, Peter worked to further the cause of British natural history, giving generously of his time and expertise to the many organizations of which he was a member. With his background and interests, it is not surprising that he became involved in the conservation movement as it developed in the late 1950s and early 1960s. From its earliest days he played a prominent part in the affairs of the Essex Wildlife Trust and, on moving to Thrandeston, became active in the work of the Suffolk Wildlife Trust as Chairman of the Conservation Management Committee. Peter had an especially close relationship with the Field Studies Council, extending over most of the first 50 years of its existence. Apart from running courses at several of the Council's centres, he served in a variety of capacities but notably as a member of the Executive Committee from 1960. At the time of his death he was also Chairman of the Publications Committee, having held the office since 1987.

The British Bryological Society, the Linnean Society of London and the Suffolk Naturalists' Society were other organizations to benefit from Peter's membership. Joining the British Bryological Society in 1946, he served, inter alia, as referee for the moss families Andreaeaceae, Polytrichaceae and Buxbaumiaceae, as a member of the Council for four terms between 1952 and 1984, as Vice-President (1986–87) and as President (1988–89). In 1983 he performed an outstanding service for the Society as principal organizer of the Diamond Jubilee Meeting held at Bedford College, London and Box Hill. He was a staunch supporter of the Linnean Society, having been elected a Fellow in 1953. Serving as a member of Council (1975–80) and as a Vice-President (1976–77), he also played a large part in the organization of the Society's joint meeting with the British Bryological Society in 1987. On a social level he was Honorary Secretary-Treasurer of the Linnean Dining Club for eleven years, standing down in 1989. After retiring, he quickly became involved in

the activities of the Suffolk Naturalists' Society, as a Council member (1984–89) and as Botany Section Editor of *Suffolk natural history*, the Society's Transactions.

Peter greatly enjoyed foreign travel, having a keen interest in other cultures, both modern and ancient. Two countries in particular held a special place in his affection – France and Nigeria. France he came to love through his many visits to Provence and the eastern Pyrenees with student groups and, more recently, as leader of courses for the Field Studies Council. His first experience of Nigeria was in 1966 when he spent three months teaching at the University of Ife (Ibadan Campus) under the auspices of the 'VISTA' scheme. He made two shorter visits in 1971 and 1976–77 as an external examiner at the University of Ibadan. It was during the first of these that he and I travelled widely together, collecting and sightseeing in the north-east of the country. Our journey, of almost 5000 km, was not without its share of difficult and trying situations, but Peter's good humour and calm, positive approach to problems invariably helped us through. His bryophyte collections from 1966 and 1971 are now housed in the Cryptogamic Herbarium of the Natural History Museum, London (BM).

Lepidoptera were another passion dating back to his school-days. He had a considerable knowledge of the group and always included a moth trap with the equipment taken on field courses to France. I can see him now, deftly wielding his butterfly net wherever we stopped to collect on our travels through Nigeria.

Peter Wanstall's enthusiasm, sociability and courtesy never failed him. He was a wonderful companion in the field, a wise counsellor and a generous and loyal friend. At his funeral, the church was filled to capacity, a striking testimony to the affection and esteem in which he was held.

To his wife, Jane, and children, Sally, Ian and Giles, we extend our sincere condolences in their great loss.

A. J. HARRINGTON