

Obituaries

ELIZABETH WINSOME WOODWARD (NÉE DAVIES) (1924–2002)

Elizabeth Woodward died at the age of 77 after a long battle with cancer. She was born at Woodville, Bristol. After attending Badminton House School in Bristol and Downe House in Berkshire, she studied Horticulture at Studley Agricultural College, Warwickshire, followed by a degree in Botanical Genetics at Newnham College, Cambridge. She then undertook postgraduate work on *Polypodium* and Madeiran ferns at the University of Leeds under Professor Irene Manton and contributed numerous chromosome counts for Manton's *Problems of Cytology and Evolution in the Pteridophytes* (1950). However, she left Leeds after two years, not agreeing to take on additional teaching on Saturdays as required by Professor Manton. Her first paper, the only one on ferns, was on hybrid vigour in *Asplenium adiantum-nigrum*. Another early paper (1953) in *Nature* concerns an unexpected tetraploid form of *Primula farinosa* found in 1950 on the Baltic island of Gotland.

After leaving Leeds 'Liza' Davies, following advice from her Cambridge mentor, Humphrey Gilbert-Carter, began research at University College, Leicester, to study *Carex flava* agg. under Professor T. G. Tutin; she was awarded her Ph.D. from the University of London (1953) on this research. Her publications on this aggregate, mainly in *Watsonia* from 1953 to 1956, are substantial contributions to the taxonomy of the group. She described *Carex scandinavica* E. W. Davies as new to the British Isles (1953), this typically coastal plant occurring mainly in N. W. Scotland. This sedge is now known as var. *pulchella* (Lönnr.) B. Schmid of *C. viridula* Michx. ssp. *viridula*. At a research post in the University of Lund, Elizabeth Davies worked further on sedges, her papers covering the cytogenetics of the *C. flava* group (1955), new chromosome numbers in the Cyperaceae (1956) and features of the aneuploid series in *Carex* (1956). She also spent a year at University College London working with Peter Bell.

While at Leicester she was able to follow her other major interest, riding; she fitted her botanical research round days with the Fernie and the Quorn. By this time she was an accomplished horsewoman; indeed, she reported on the equestrian Olympics for the *Daily Telegraph* in Helsinki in 1952. Subsequently she was much involved with point-to-pointing and the then new sport of Eventing.

On returning to the Cotswolds in the mid-50s, she joined the University of Bristol, funded by a scholarship from the Bristol Zoological Garden. As well as teaching pharmacy to dental students she turned her attention to interesting cytological and taxonomic problems in the Lusitanian element of the British flora, amongst which was a study of *Asparagus officinalis* ssp. *prostratus*, resulting in contributions concerning polyploidy (1959), its ecology and distribution (1961) and, after many years, taxonomy (2001); it was hoped that this study would ultimately lead to an account in the *Biological Flora of the British Isles*. In 1957 *Juncus subulatus*, now called the Somerset rush, was found new to Britain in the salt marsh at Berrow and she collaborated in a publication on this plant (1960).

On marrying the University of Bristol chemist Peter Woodward in 1958 (whom she got to know after persuading him to drive her to the Lizard to collect plants), and settling near Chewton Mendip, there they brought up their two sons, with Elizabeth continuing to follow her equestrian interests. Most unfortunately, while competing in a cross-country event in 1968, her horse, tripping on parallel bars, fell on her, causing spinal injuries which confined her to a wheelchair for the rest of her life. She bore this adversity with enormous fortitude, never complaining. Despite her accident she continued to teach biology at Millfield School, Street and Sunnyhill Girls' School, Bruton; she also served as Chairman of the Community Health Council in Bristol, was on the Somerset County Council and the committee of the Axbridge Cheshire Home. She became chief instructor for the Mendip Pony Club and in 1996 qualified as a List I Dressage judge, being due this year to receive an award from British Dressage for her 'outstanding contribution' to the sport.

Elizabeth had a very discerning eye for plants and made many field records in the 1950s. She had a formidable intellect and, had she stayed in research, would have made a major contribution

to British botany. No doubt she would also have made valuable records for *The Flora of the Bristol Region* (2000) had she been able to leave her wheelchair.

I am grateful to Elizabeth's younger son Anthony for much information and to Dr Tim Rich for a literature search and many helpful suggestions.

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ARTHUR J. WILLIS

KNUT FÆGRI
(1909–2001)

Knut Fægri, an honorary member of the B.S.B.I. since 1968, died early on 10 December 2001 after a few days in hospital. He will long be remembered internationally as one of the great pioneers of Quaternary pollen analysis and palaeoecology, as author of the main textbooks on pollen analysis and on pollination ecology and of two volumes of *Maps of the Distribution of Norwegian Vascular Plants*, as an active member of many committees concerned with the International Code of Botanical Nomenclature, as secretary and then president of the International Union of Biological Sciences, and as Norway's leading botanist for over half a century.

He was born in Bergen on 17 July 1909 and he always said that his study of botany started at the age of 3 in the garden and never stopped. He was educated in Bergen and obtained his first degree in 1933 and unbelievably his doctorate a year later in 1934. He was a free-lance researcher until 1945 when he was appointed Professor of Systematic Botany and Plant Geography at Bergen's Museum, which became the University of Bergen in 1948. He subsequently transferred to a new chair, Professor of Systematic Botany and became director of the Norwegian Arboretum at Milde near Bergen in 1975. He was also Dean of the Faculty of Science (1959–1965) and Pro-Rector (1961–1965) of the University of Bergen. He formally retired in 1979 but he remained extremely active and was usually working in the Botanical Institute in Bergen, even on Saturday mornings, until about two months before his death.

Knut Fægri's botanical interests were very wide: floristics, ecology, vegetation dynamics, algae, fungi, lichens, aquatic plants, orchids, trees, plant geography, plant systematics and nomenclature, then also pollen analysis, vegetation history, pollen morphology, pollination ecology, culinary plants, garden history, and plant dispersal. He also published on glaciology, local history, and Norwegian cultural history. His breadth and scientific energy are reflected in his 600+ publications, the first of which appeared in 1929. A list of all his known publications, *Bibliographia Fægriana*, has been prepared by Dagfinn Moe and will soon appear in the Norwegian botanical journal *Blyttia*. Fægri travelled widely and had a remarkable knowledge of the flora, not only of Scandinavia, but also of Mediterranean Europe, western North America, southern Africa, and Australia. He regularly attended the evening meetings of the Norwegian Botanical Society in Bergen and he invariably had some difficult and penetrating questions to ask after the talk.

Knut Fægri's first major botanical studies were on the re-vegetation and succession on four glacial forelands in the Jostedal area of western Norway following the glacial retreat over the last two centuries. In this work, which formed the basis of his 1934 doctoral thesis, he presented

many novel ideas in primary successional studies, such as using lichen size as an index of moraine age, the near-random accidental immigration of species in the initial pioneer stages, and the role of the initial colonisers in determining the subsequent successional stage. This work, published as 255 pages in German and in the obscure *Bergens Museum Årbok*, never received the scientific attention it deserved. His interests in short-term plant succession and vegetation dynamics quickly changed to long-term vegetation dynamics and Quaternary vegetation history after he learned about the newly developing subject of pollen analysis. In the autumn of 1933 he attended a so-called Baltic Course on pollen analysis led by the Swedish geologist and father of pollen analysis, Lennart von Post. Fægri rapidly started pollen-analytical studies in Norway and published major monographs on the late-glacial and post-glacial vegetational history of western Norway in 1935, 1940, 1943, 1944, and 1950. As a result of the 1933 Baltic Course, Fægri developed a life-long friendship with the Danish ecologist and pollen analyst Johannes Iversen, and between them they published their *Textbook of Modern Pollen Analysis* in 1950. This has been revised and updated in three subsequent editions as *Textbook of Pollen Analysis* (1964, 1975, 1989). This textbook remains the “bible” for Quaternary pollen analysts worldwide. Another of Fægri’s long-standing interests was pollination ecology and, in conjunction with L. van der Pijl, he published three editions of *Principles of Pollination Ecology* (1966, 1971, 1979).

Throughout his life, Knut Fægri had a great love for plants in the field, the herbarium, and the garden. He compiled two of the three volumes of *Maps of the Distribution of Norwegian Vascular Plants* – the Coast Plants (1960) and the South-east Element (1996 with Anders Danielsen). These volumes present not only detailed “dot” maps of the known distribution of the species based largely on herbarium material but also critical notes about their distribution, ecology, and history. Fægri served as one of the regional advisers for Norway for *Atlas Flora Europaeae*, and he always enjoyed searching the Bergen Herbarium for obscure plant records that other people had missed. He also published in Norwegian a very successful and popular 2-volume account of Norwegian plants (1958) and several books on spice plants and on garden history.

Knut Fægri served as general secretary (1968–1969) and president (1970–1973) of the International Union of Biological Sciences. He attended all the International Botanical Congresses from 1935 (Amsterdam) to 2000 (St. Louis) where he was honoured as one of the “Millennium Botanists”, an honour that he greatly appreciated. He received many other honours including Commander of the Royal Order of St. Olav (1980), an honorary doctorate from the University of Uppsala (1977), honorary membership of many botanical and biological societies including the B.S.B.I., and many prizes, awards, and medals from different organisations in several countries including Norway, India, Finland, Japan, Sweden, Russia, USA, and Germany.

An important national side to Knut Fægri was his devotion to the popularisation of science for the Norwegian public. He edited the Norwegian popular science magazine *Naturen* for 30 years and published over 300 articles in there on a wide range of scientific topics. He frequently appeared on radio and television and in the newspapers discussing many topics including Norwegian plants and their ecology and history, cultural history of gardens and ornamental plants, and culinary plants. He received several prizes within Norway for his contributions to the popularisation of science. He was a well-known public figure in the media, prominent in nature conservation and education matters, and an active and lively participant in many general debates. Fægri seemed to enjoy being in a minority of one and he often expressed rather radical and controversial views about sex, drugs, and naturism. One of his main hobbies was cooking and he published over a dozen books and papers on culinary topics and he won two prizes in national cooking competitions.

Although he did little plant systematics research himself, Knut Fægri loved all things systematic, not only plants and nomenclatural codes, but also books, journals, offprints, colour slides, identification keys, pollen morphology, all forms of terminology and nomenclature, cooking recipes, wines, diaries, and notebooks. He often seemed his happiest in later years re-classifying and re-arranging the books and journals in the Bergen Botanical Institute library. His ideas on how books should be classified and arranged never agreed with anybody else’s ideas, and he thrived on devising new classification schemes.

Knut Fægri was a great botanist, a famous public figure both nationally and internationally, a very generous person, an inspiring colleague, and a wonderful friend. He loved helping people and when we moved to Bergen he was among the very first to help us, to provide support, to make us feel welcome, and to encourage and stimulate new botanical studies. When it was obvious that he

did not have long to live, the Norwegian Broadcast Corporation recorded what Fægri himself knew were his last interviews. The resulting television programme was broadcast in January 2002 and it included the final part of his funeral in which, at Fægri's request, the first movement of Paganini's Violin Concerto No. 1 was played as "a tribute to the joys of life."

H. J. B. BIRKS and HILARY H. BIRKS

ANNE BEATRICE MARY BREWIS
(1911–2002)

Lady Anne Brewis, who died on 31 March 2002, had a lifelong attachment to Hampshire and its natural history, and more especially to the area round Selborne which she came to know well in youth and to which she returned to live for the second half of her long life. The many years she then devoted to the recording and conservation of the county's vascular plants culminated in the publication in 1996 of the widely-admired *Flora of Hampshire*, of which she was one of the three editors.

Born on 26 March 1911, the Hon. Anne Palmer, as she was until her father's succession to the Earldom of Selborne in 1942, was the eldest of five children of Viscount Wolmer and the Hon. Grace Ridley. On both sides of the family there was a strong tradition of public and political service, and among her more immediate forbears were a Prime Minister, a Lord Chancellor, a Lord Lieutenant of Ireland and a bishop sufficiently esteemed as a mathematician to be elected Secretary of the Royal Society. Her paternal great-grandfather, the Lord Chancellor, had been a keen botanist and entomologist in youth, an interest he could trace back to an early 18th Century ancestor, the famous Yorkshire naturalist Dr. Richard Richardson, whose published correspondence with Sherard and other leading figures has long been a mine for historians of the subject. Richardson was a cousin by marriage of Gilbert White's boyhood tutor, so it was highly appropriate, and probably no coincidence, that it was in the vicinity of Selborne that the Lord Chancellor acquired a small estate and from that village took his title on his subsequent elevation to the peerage. It was on that estate, at Blackmoor, by then the home of her grandfather, that Anne was able to roam at will on childhood holidays from a London home and upbringing, and imbibe in turn that family fondness for natural history. A plantsman uncle, the Hon W. J. L. Palmer, did much to turn that in a more particularly botanical direction.

A compensation for two London 'seasons' as a debutante, otherwise a distasteful endurance test for her, must have been meeting many another in that circle caught up in the then fashionable enthusiasm for 'painting one's Bentham' – that is, trying to find as many as possible of the species in Bentham and Hooker's *Handbook of the British Flora* and marking the discovery of each new one by colouring its figure in Fitch's companion volume of illustrations, with the date and place added: the botanical equivalent of the birdwatchers' 'life list'. Later, at Oxford University, where she was at Somerville College and read zoology, dances continued to come a poor second to natural history: sent some money by her parents with orders to put it towards the cost of a dress for one, she spent the sum instead, to their intense annoyance, on a copy of Gerard's *Herball* that she came across on offer at a price too tempting to resist. It was to be the source of the several quotations from that work that appear in the pages of the *Flora of Hampshire*.

A year after taking her degree in 1934 marriage to the Rev. John Salusbury Brewis, then Vice-Principal of St. Edmund Hall, took her successively to the City of Durham (where she did some teaching at the University during the war) and the neighbourhood of Doncaster before a return to London in 1954, following her husband's appointment as Rector of St. James's, Piccadilly. Renewed incarceration in the capital, with a demanding parish to assist with as well as four children, far from the countryside, might have led to the abandonment of botany by someone less keen; luckily, however, her husband had one day off each week in which to drive her out in summer in search of plants, while the weed flora of the nearby parks could also provide occasional excitements. By Park Lane, opposite the Dorchester Hotel she found an unknown grass which turned out to be an alien new to the British Isles list, and her discovery of a patch of hemp grass growing in Green Park was sufficiently embarrassing to the police to earn her a write-up in the newspapers.

It was close to the ancestral home in Hampshire, however, that she made a discovery that brought her to wider botanical notice. In 1959 she chanced upon an astonishing array of unfamiliar weeds in some fields on the Blackmoor fruit farm which turned out to have been manured with the

wool waste known as 'shoddy', that transient farming fashion of the early post-war years (though Gilbert White had recorded woollen rags in use for that same purpose on the light soils of this hop-growing district two centuries earlier). The find drew down to Blackmoor a stream of eminent botanical collectors including in particular J. E. Lousley, in whose eventual list of Britain's alien wool flora of 1946–60 that corner of Hampshire was to be credited as the sole source of no fewer than 29 of the taxa recorded. A recent recruit already to the Wild Flower Society, in which she was to become a long-serving Branch Secretary, Anne now joined the B.S.B.I. as well, in 1961, on the strength of this.

On her husband's retirement in 1967, Anne and he were at last able to make their home in Hampshire permanently, settling in a cottage on the family estate. Sadly, they were not to be allowed to enjoy that together for very long, for a lengthy illness led to his death in 1972. Providentially, just at that point the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Naturalists' Trust was looking for someone with the requisite standing as a field botanist, organising energy and freedom from competing commitments to take further forward the project to produce a new Flora, on a tetrad basis, of – as then still envisaged – those two counties together. Work had been in progress to that end for some twenty years by then, but following the early death of its original mainstay, A. W. Westrup, momentum had been lost. Had Westrup not bequeathed his data to the Trust, which consequently felt a responsibility to ensure the project's continuance, it might well have petered out entirely. An active participant in it since soon after settling in Hampshire and a member of the Flora Committee instituted by the Trust in the mid-1970s, Anne had the range of abilities that the task required and accepted the invitation to take over in 1974. Concurrently, she also agreed to act as B.S.B.I. Recorder for vice-county 12, the duties of which were broadly coterminous with co-ordinating the work on the Flora.

The thirty years that followed brought her, in her own words, "solace and stimulation" in what was to prove a widowhood as active as it was lengthy. She lost no time in fostering more intensive study of the critical groups, forming extensive collections of her own of both *Rubus* and her particular favourite, *Taraxacum*. Though her knowledge of the former never advanced to the point where she could put a name to the individual species, she had a sharp eye for any that looked distinctive. In that way she added *R. arrheniiformis* to the Hampshire list and restored *R. boraeanus* to it after an interval of a century. Her discoveries in *Taraxacum* were no less impressive, particularly in the ancient grassland bordering the Blackwater. Fieldwork was indeed her forte, the arduous processing of records and searching of the literature and herbaria inseparable from county Flora compiling less so – though she grappled with those with her customary conscientiousness.

Those who did not know Anne well were liable to be taken in by a superficial appearance of disorder and frailty, an impression accentuated by a lifelong habit of punctuating her speaking with long and seemingly anguished pauses, as if she had suffered a mild stroke and was making a fighting recovery. Her performance behind a wheel, which was not for passengers of a nervous disposition, was all of a piece with this. Yet behind that deceptive front was a steely determination and great acuteness. These came to the fore at the meetings of the Flora Committee, at which a certain ambiguity in her role vis-à-vis the Trust was a continuing source of tension.

On the Trust's orthodox territory of conservation, relations between the two were altogether more harmonious. Here all of Anne's strengths came fully into play, and her years of service in this cause, including acting as warden of the Trust's nearby Noar Hill reserve with its outstandingly rich orchid diversity, received due recognition in the shape of the MBE in 1998 and the Trust's Dutton Prize two years after.

All but two sections of her herbarium was donated shortly before her death to Hampshire County Museum Service (HCMS), which has made it available for study at its central store at Winchester, and has produced a catalogue that can be accessed on the Museum Service's website. Excluded were the nationally important collection of *Taraxacum*, which was given to **BM**, and the *Rubi*, which have been divided between **BM** and **NMW**.

A splendid colour photograph of Lady Anne in the field accompanied the obituary that appeared in *The Times* of 12 April, to which this account is indebted in part. Additional information has kindly been provided by Mrs Elizabeth Norman, who has also contributed an obituary to the *Wild Flower Magazine*.

D. E. ALLEN