

Obituary

MR. HARRY WOLSTENHOLME.

Ornithology in Australia lost one of its ablest adherents when Mr. Harry Wolstenholme, B.A., died at Wahroonga, Sydney, on October 14, 1930, at the age of 62 years.

A native of Maitland, N.S.W., Mr. Wolstenholme had a brilliant career at Sydney University. He entered the legal profession, but failing health caused his retirement from professional activity some years ago. By a curious paradox, it was illness that both stimulated and handicapped him in the study of birds, since the enforced leisure caused him to cultivate a latent fondness for natural history, and physical weakness prevented him from extending his field studies.

The last considerable outing undertaken in Australia by Mr. Wolstenholme was the R.A.O.U. expedition to Yeppoon, Queensland, in 1924. He wrote for *The Emu* the detailed list of species noted on that trip, and his articles, packed with informative observations, stand as models of their kind. During 1925 he went with his wife and daughter on a tour of the Old Country, and there he enjoyed himself in making the acquaintance of British birds and bird students with all the gusto of a hearty man of half his years, a fact which became manifest in a zestful and scholarly article comparing British and Australian birds. (*The Emu*, Vol. 26, pp. 122-134). Less ambitious, but no less interesting, articles by Mr. Wolstenholme are freely distributed throughout the pages of this journal during the last ten years or so, perhaps the most important of them being the notes upon native birds found about his home at Wahroonga.

It was a happy chance that such a man settled in such an area; for by this chance the bird-haunted suburb became another Selborne, with Harry Wolstenholme as its Gilbert White. Not only did he keep faithful watch upon all bird happenings of the neighbourhood, and promptly share the pleasure of his discoveries with younger men, so that many of the best bird photographs in Sydney were taken at Wahroonga, but he encouraged birds about his home to such an extent that the garden and paddock adjoining were by way of being natural aviaries. During the last five years twenty-six species of birds (twenty-one natives and five immigrants) nested on the property, and no fewer than forty-five species accepted the hospitality of a small drinking and bathing pool only ten yards from the rear door of the house. Furthermore, the Birdman of Wahroonga had four species of wild birds perch voluntarily on his hands from time to time, and at least four other kinds approach to "ask" for food. So complete, indeed, was the confidence of certain birds that it was no uncommon circumstance, when walking

in the forest with Mr. Wolstenholme (out of sight of the house) to see Brown Flycatchers skim down from lofty trees and flutter a few yards away until cheese-crumbs were thrown for them to catch. Surely there has never been a happier or more thorough alliance between birds and man than in this Wahroonga idyll!

The name of Wolstenholme will endure in popular bird-lore because of the scholar-naturalist, warm in sympathies, mellow in wisdom, who studied birds about his home. It will live also in scientific ornithology, and that because of the remarkable Appendix to the *Official Checklist of Australian Birds* (Second Edition). Although not a member of the Checklist Committee, Mr. Wolstenholme generously devoted many months to studying the technical names of Australian birds, and finally presented the Committee with a complete list, embracing derivations, vocabularies, and pronunciations of the accepted names, together with a mass of informative notes thereon. It was a unique and valuable work, possible only in the case of a bird-student possessing high classical scholarship.

At the time of his death Mr. Wolstenholme was a member of the Council of the R.A.O.U. He was also a trustee of the N.S.W. National Park, known as Kurin-gai Chase. Previously, when able to attend meetings, he had been a councillor of the N.S.W. branch of the R.A.O.U. He was not at any time, however, fond of public or even semi-public positions. When *The Emu* was published in Sydney he gave constant and valuable assistance to the Editor, but never desired to have this fact acknowledged. Modest, kindly, and as gentle as the birds he loved, for him the pleasures of natural history were sufficient in themselves; he sought no further reward. Nevertheless, he was not in any sense a hermit; he thoroughly enjoyed short trips in the Sydney region with kindred spirits, and his home was (as many ornithologists in other States can testify) always open to lovers of birds. If any further indication of the kindly nature of the man is needed, it lies in the fact that he left his bird-books to the younger naturalists of Sydney, who had frequently visited him during his illness.

It had been arranged by several bird-photographers to take a lantern to Wahroonga during October in order to show Mr. Wolstenholme slides of all recent pictures. Alas, he did not live to enjoy this pleasure other than in anticipation. A month or so later, however, the slides were screened for Mrs. Wolstenholme and interested friends of the neighbourhood. We felt, then, that the Birdman of Wahroonga was present in spirit.

—A.H.C.

MR. HENRY BREW.

On September 21, 1930, Major Henry Brew, member of the Union since 1910, died at Ballarat. Mr. Brew appears to have been associated with many societies, the members of which, especially of those that were located in his home city, feel deeply the loss of their fellow-member.

Mr. Brew was born in Liverpool in 1863. He arrived in Australia in 1885, and after a short sojourn in South Australia moved on to Ballarat, where the remainder of his life was spent. His interests were many and diversified, and he devoted himself with zeal to the acquisition of knowledge of which he had the natural ability to make the best use. He was associated with the military for many years, and rose to be Commanding Officer of the 70th Infantry Battalion in 1915.

Interested in nature, in art, in literature; associated with various public movements in his district and with various other societies and recognised philanthropic institutions, Mr. Brew was revered and esteemed. His loss was widely regretted, and the R.A.O.U. is one of the bodies on which his passing has left its mark.

—C.E.B.

MR. G. A. HEUMANN.

Ornithologists and aviculturalists throughout the world are lamenting the untimely demise of Gustav Adolf Heumann, which took place at his late residence "Ramona," Beecroft, on August 9, 1930. The late Mr. Heumann's whole life seems to have been influenced by his passion for birds.

Born at Saafeld, in Germany, in 1867, at an early age he went to Leipzig, where he was educated, and when 17, embarked for Australia, which thereafter became his home. He married Miss Alice Maud Foster, and settled down to establish himself as a merchant in Sydney, where success crowned his efforts to such an extent that in 1925, his health failing, he was able to retire from active business and devote himself wholeheartedly to the study and care of his birds. During his business career Mr. Heumann travelled much, making, in all, fourteen trips to America, Britain and Europe, where he was always well received by leading ornithologists and aviculturalists. During these trips he frequently carried with him specimens of Australian fauna for presentation and exchange purposes. One of his notable successes was the safe delivery to the Zoological Society of London of a hive of native bees, which he secured in a hollow log by first covering the log with mosquito netting. Other notable successes were obtained with Robins, Wrens and Mistletoe Birds.

Some years ago the late Mr. Heumann accompanied Mr. Macpherson on an exploration trip through Northern Aus-

tralia. Later he crossed Central Australia, where he collected specimens of the Stump-tailed Lizard (*Prathysaurus spurius*), which he retained until his death, and which bred whilst in captivity. Mr. Heumann always enjoyed telling a story against himself connected with that trip. Natives conducted him to a place where lizards were in plenty. On the way the Blacks gave an exhibition of spear-throwing. He in return took out his revolver to impress them that he was well-armed and that he could always hit his target. He pulled the trigger, but, to his dismay, the gun misfired, and jamming, was useless. The natives laughed at the weapon, and thereafter made Mr. Heumann extremely nervous, as he had yet to go 15 miles on foot. Eight years ago, the late Mr. Heumann visited Charley Island, off Esperence Bay, his principal object being to study the habits of the Red-capped Parrot (*Purpureicephalus spurius*).

Many of his observations are preserved in our journals, notable among which are "Parrot Finches (*Erythrura*)," vide *The Emu*, Vol. XXV; "Birds in the Northern Territory and the New Finch," *The Emu*, Vol. XXV (which gives an interesting account of the enormous number of Finches that congregate at the water-holes, and the toll taken by predacious birds); "Fragmentary Bird Notes and Breeding of Cape Barren Geese," *The Emu*, Vol. XXVI. A careful and accurate observer, he conducted many experiments in the cross-breeding of Finches, and studied also the colour changes of birds due to avicultural conditions and food, vide "Australian Zoologist, 1922."

One great regret he often referred to was that Zoological Societies and ornithologists were generally hostile to aviculturalists. Quite recently he asked the writer to endeavour to have some amendment added to the Bird and Animals Protection Act then before Parliament, and was much gratified to learn just before his death that some of his suggestions were likely to be incorporated in the Bill.

He died in the presence of his family five minutes after he had been planning an aviary for the writer. His widow, one son and three daughters survive him. His memory is cherished by all those who intimately knew him, and his work will remain as a monument long after those friends follow the same long trail.—C.C.