# Obituaries

## Heber Longman

Heber Albert Longman, who died at Brisbane on February 16, 1954, at the age of 73 years, was a former Director of the Queensland Museum and a former representative of Queensland on the Council of the R.A.O.U. English-born, the son of a clergyman, he came to Australia at the age of 22 and, after spending a few years in journalism, joined the staff of the Queensland Museum. With that institution he spent more than 30 years.

Longman was a competent all-round naturalist. He acquired a sound working knowledge of plants, birds, fish, insects and spiders, and he became an Australian authority on reptiles and on mammalian and reptilian fossils. From time to time he spent many months in piecing together the jigsaw puzzles created by large numbers of disinterred bone-fragments, and from them he reconstructed the skeletons of creatures of past ages.

Between whiles he served as president of the Royal Society of Queensland (twice) and as an officer of similar bodies. After retiring, in 1945, he devoted his time to quiet observation of native fauna and to the writing of popular nature articles. In this period he was awarded the Australian Natural History Medal (1946) and the Mueller Medal (1952); he had previously been honoured by the Linnean and Zoological societies of London.

Mrs. Longman, who survives her husband, was the first woman member of the Queensland Parliament (1929-32), and her two brothers, J. G. and P. Bayley, were both parliamentarians.—A.H.C.

## Samuel Albert White

The passing of Captain S. A. White, on January 26, 1954, has removed from our ranks one who was perhaps better known to a former generation but whose name will live forever in the annals of Australian ornithology. The name of S. A. White in South Australia was almost synonymous with birds, and his enthusiasm and interest, which were maintained to the last despite failing health, had made him almost a legendary figure to the lay public and always commanded respect in ornithological circles.

Samuel Albert White, the son of Samuel and Martha Elsie (Taylor), was born at Adelaide on December 20, 1870. His home, 'Wetunga', at the Reedbeds, Fulham, near Adelaide, was an old property which had been taken up by his grandfather, John White, when he arrived in South Australia in 1836.

S. A. White's father, Samuel, and his uncle William arrived together in the colony in 1842 as small boys. Both had a keen interest in all phases of natural history, and they learned to skin and stuff birds from an employe of

their father's named Lord. By the age of eighteen Samuel was an accomplished bird artist, and the two brothers made extensive collections of local birds and their eggs. Samuel supplied Gould with numerous specimens, and William White's collection eventually found its way to the South Australian Museum many years ago.

S. A. White made his first ornithological trip—to the River Murray—in 1887, and this was followed by other expeditions to Western Australia (1888), Eyre Peninsula (1891), and north Queensland. In the year 1900 he enlisted for service as a Lieutenant in the South African War, and was on active service for three years, attaining the rank of Captain. In 1903 he made a big-game hunting expedition to Central and East Africa, and on his return visited Tasmania (1906) and the Tweed River district of New South Wales (1907). In the year 1906 he married Ethel Rosina Toms (1876-1926), who accompanied him on about 27 major journeys, mostly with camels and often in wild and waterless country. The late G. M. Mathews named many birds in honour of Mrs. White to whom the following names refer—*'Ethelornis'*, *'ethelae'*, *'Rosina'*, *'rosinae'*, and *'whiteae'*. White, not to be outdone, responded with the name *'marianae'* in honour of Mrs. Mathews. Mathews has recorded the immense amount of help which Captain White had given him in the way of specimens and notes during the preparation of *The Birds of Australia*, and applied the name *'whitei'* on sixteen occasions to birds mostly taken in South Australia, whilst *'samueli'* was used seven times, and *'Samuela'*, *'Whiteornis'* and *'whiteorum'* were introduced also. On a few occasions Mathews' introduction of the name *'whitei'* referred to H. L. White.

Between the years 1909 and 1916 White was vigorously engaged in numerous trips to various parts of South Australia, including Kangaroo Island and the far north, and he also visited the Capricorn islands, Queensland (1910), and Flinders Island, Bass Strait (1912). In 1916 he accompanied the South Australian Museum expedition to Cooper's Creek under the leadership of Edgar R. Waite. On all these expeditions numerous specimens were collected, and, considering handicaps met with, his skins were good.

S. A. White was keenly interested in conservation and his efforts in that direction were untiring; he gave innumerable lectures on the value of birds in city and country before large and appreciative audiences. At various times he was a member or chairman of the Advisory Board of Agriculture, the Commonwealth Fauna Advisory Board, and the Fauna and Flora Protection Committee. He abhorred Zoological Gardens. He also carried his mission to the South Australian schools and, in order to encourage budding young ornithologists, awarded a medal annually for many years for the best essay or notes and observations on birds in a State-wide competition. From 1923 until

1932 he was Chief Commissioner of Boy Scouts, a position for which he was well suited.

Captain White joined the South Australian Ornithological Association in March 1899, and was made an honorary member of that body in 1941. He was elected to the Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union in 1900 and became its president in 1914. He was made a British Empire Member of the British Ornithologists Union in 1912 and a Corresponding Fellow of the American Ornithologists Union in 1919. Although for more than a decade he had taken little part in the activities of these bodies, owing to advancing years, his interest never waned and he entertained a large gathering at his home during the Adelaide Congress in 1952. He is survived by his second wife, Muriel Beatrice, daughter of G. G. Fisher of Back-te-Andra Station, New South Wales, and there is one daughter, Wanda, and one son, John, of the marriage.

Captain White's collection, which is probably unrivalled in the variety and number of specimens of birds from the interior of Australia, was considerably enlarged when he acquired the collection of his cousin, the late John White Mellor, and numbers approximately 4,000 specimens.

A full list of his published articles in *The Emu,* 65 in number, is contained in the recently-published Index of the first fifty volumes of that journal. He also contributed a lesser number of items to the *South Australian Ornithologist,* and there are numerous bird notes under his name in Mathews' *Birds of Australia.* Popular articles published in the South Australian newspaper, *The Register,* between the years 1914 and 1918, were reprinted in booklet form and include accounts of many of his ornithological journeyings. In 1915 he contributed a 72-page Appendix, under the title 'Flora of Country between Oodnadatta and the Musgrave Ranges' to R. L. Jack's *Geology and Prospects of the Region to the South of the Musgrave Ranges.* In 1920 was published an illustrated book, *The Life of Samuel White,* and later *The Life of John White* appeared. Contributions to the *Transactions and Proceedings of the Royal Society of South Australia* between the years 1914 and 1919 dealt with several expeditions and are as follows—volume 38, pp. 407, 419, 707, 725, 740; volume 41, p. 441; volume 42, p. 293; volume 43, p. 77.—H.T.C.

### Masauji, the Marquess Hachisuka

The Marquess Hachisuka, a life member of the Union, died on May 14, 1953, at Atami, Japan. He did not live to see his last book, *The Dodo and Kindred Birds,* reviewed in *The Emu,* vol. 53, p. 337.

Hachisuka's ornithological interests were wide—aviculture, field work, particularly in the Philippines, and museum study. His best-known book is his *The Birds of the Philippine Islands,* but he also wrote extensively on the birds of Egypt,

Iceland, Hainan and Formosa. A work on the birds of China was in preparation when he died. He also contributed to *The Ibis, Tori,* and other periodicals.

Hachisuka was educated at Cambridge and acquired western ideas and friends. Jean Delacour, writing in *The Auk,* says that his colleagues retained him in vivid and affectionate remembrance.—C.E.B.

MAJOR H. M. WHITTELL, O.B.E.

Major H. M. Whittell died on February 7, 1954. See biographical account in this part, by Dr. D. L. Serventy.

# Review

**Mechanics of Bird Flight.**—Ever since the days of Icarus the belief has been widely held that in the study of the flight of birds lay the keys to all the problems of human flight. It is a sober fact that, Mitchell (of Spitfire fame) and his seagulls notwithstanding, these problems so far have been solved along lines that have been remarkably independent of ornithology, pure or applied; and now comes Anthony Jack (*Feathered Wings: A Study of the Flight of Birds,* London, Methuen & Co. Ltd., Aust. price 25/-) to turn the tables and use the aeroplane and the principles involved in its operation to lead us to problems of bird flight hitherto unsolved.

This reviewer does not know the background of the author—whether he be airman turned ornithologist or ornithologist turned airman—but the internal evidence of the book shows him to be thoroughly competent in both fields, and, more, he has a faculty for easy exposition and friendly expression that makes this work the best we have seen on the subject.

The straightforward mechanical parallel between the bird's wing and the man-made aerofoil, and between the alula and the aircraft's 'slotted wing' have, of course, been presented and explained many times. Jack opens his book with these explanations, shows with abundant diagrams the development of 'resultant force' from airflow and angle of attack, and then proceeds to analyse and classify the various methods of flight employed by birds—flapless flight (gliding, diving, throwing up, and thermal soaring), and flapping flight, which he subdivides into sculling, hovering, rocketing, and winnowing.

Effects of wind on airspeed and ground speed, comparisons of wing-loadings, meteorology, navigation, and an excellent chapter on the anatomy of the bird's wing complete an excellent book, absorbing by virtue of the new things the author has been able to tell us about the flight of birds, and challenging because of the many problems which he states in direct terms and then confesses that he cannot as yet explain.

One would quarrel, perhaps, with his tentative assumption of the weights of the three flying muscles as an index of strength. Weight per unit length would be preferable as a rough practical index, since the strength of a muscle is directly proportional to its maximum area of cross-section and is independent of length. However, he makes the assumption with an expressed doubt which disarms criticism.

The author quotes a number of Australian birds as well as European and Asiatic species; two opposites of bird flight which he confesses are beyond his comprehension are those of the Albatrosses and of the Australian Grey Fantail.

His excellent notes on the resolving power of the bird's eye, on why a bird cannot get out of breath while it is flying (which is remarkable but true), and a number of other side-issues as well as his main theories, make a book which the bird student should not miss.—P.C.M.



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