

Obituary

ARCHIBALD GEORGE CAMPBELL

When the death occurred near Bayswater on July 19, 1954, of Mr. A. G. Campbell, Australia lost one of its few remaining ornithologists whose recorded field work extended back into the closing years of last century. As a foundation member of the R.A.O.U. he had given splendid service to ornithology for over fifty years, and many members of the younger generation are greatly indebted to him for assistance in the field and for his extensive knowledge which he imparted readily.

Archibald George Campbell was the eldest son of Archibald James and Elizabeth Campbell and was born in South Yarra, near Melbourne, on May 2, 1880. He attended the Punt Road State School in South Yarra and for a time continued his studies at the Working Men's College, now the Royal Melbourne Technical College. In 1895 he became a student at the School of Horticulture, Burnley, where he remained until 1898, when he went to Rutherglen to gain practical experience as manager of an orchard.

His association with birds and birdmen began in childhood when his father, the late A. J. Campbell, was preparing for the press his notable book, *The Nests and Eggs of Australian Birds*. He made his first appearance in public on January 11, 1897, when as 'Master A. Campbell' he exhibited before a meeting of the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria the nest and eggs of a Rose-breasted Robin from the Dandenong Ranges. His first published article—on the birds of the Burnley Gardens and the surrounding parklands—appeared in the *Victorian Naturalist* in July 1899.

While still only a youth of seventeen he left Melbourne, in December 1897, for the 'Big Scrubs' on the Richmond River in New South Wales, where he remained for seven weeks. An interesting account of the bird life of that area was published in the *Victorian Naturalist* for September/December 1900.

In October 1898, in the company of Dr. Charles Ryan and C. French, Jnr., he visited the Lower Wimmera, where, under the guidance of Chas. McLennan, afterwards known as 'Mallee Bird', the party explored the country between Hopetoun and Pine Plains. A report of this excursion, together with a list of birds noted, appeared in the *Victorian Naturalist*, vol. 18, nos. 8 and 10.

After a residence of nearly three years at Rutherglen, he returned to Melbourne to fill a position as lecturer at the School of Horticulture, Burnley, where he remained for about six years. He was present at the first session of the R.A.O.U. held in Adelaide in 1901, and in November 1902 he visited King Island. In the same month of the following

year he was at the R.A.O.U. Congress in Hobart. As a result of these visits he published comparative lists of the birds of these islands with those of the mainland. Between the years 1902 and 1906 he travelled about Victoria extensively. He made visits to the haunts of the Rufous Bristle-bird at Anglesea and to the White-faced Storm-Petrel rookery on Mud Island. With his father, he went on a walking tour to the far Upper Yarra in December 1904. He was again in Adelaide at the Congress in October 1905 and went with the camping party to Kangaroo Island. Probably his most important work at this time was 'A Dichotomous Key of the Birds of Australia', which was published as a supplement to part 2 of volume 5 of *The Emu*. A considerable amount of work had been involved in examining specimens for this publication, and it proved a useful guide in the identification of species.

After his marriage to Miss Amy Dethridge, sister of Judge G. J. Dethridge, on June 29, 1907, he became an orchardist at Pomonal, near Stawell. His new occupation afforded him little time for bird study and for several years his only contributions to *The Emu* were in the form of short notes, though in 1908 he published an interesting paper on the Flame-breasted Robins, dealing with their movements, which at that time were somewhat uncertain.

In 1912 he left Pomonal and returned to Melbourne. Early in 1914 he acquired an orchard at Kilsyth, about 22 miles from Melbourne, which he continued to work until about five years ago when he subdivided the land for building allotments. Mr. Campbell, who was an excellent rifle shot, was awarded a medal for his marksmanship while competing in the King's Cup Prize. During the First World War he enlisted in the A.I.F. but did not leave Australia.

Owing to the war and work required on his orchard, he resigned from the R.A.O.U. in August 1915, but fortunately his absence from the ornithological field was not for many years. In 1922 he rejoined the R.A.O.U. and from then on he remained a most active worker in the field. He became a member of the Council in 1927, a vice-president in 1933 and president for the period 1934-35. His presidential address, 'Some Problems', accompanied by his photograph, appeared in *The Emu*, vol. 35, part 3.

In addition to publishing several important papers on various groups of birds, Mr. Campbell interested himself in the formation of branches of the Union and Bird Clubs. In October 1936 he introduced a system of charting bird movements in an effort to ascertain the movements of certain nomadic and migratory birds. For four years from 1933 he was the lecturer at the W.E.A. nature study group. For his outstanding services to ornithology he was elected a Fellow of the R.A.O.U. at the annual meeting held in

Melbourne in October 1941. In later years he devoted much time and study to Lyrebirds in the haunts around Olinda and in the Sherbrooke Forest. In 1940 he produced a booklet entitled *Photographs of the Lyrebird*. This was his only publication in book form. He always had a strong leaning towards the genus *Acanthiza* and had dealt with this genus in numerous articles over the years. His last contribution to *The Emu* was a letter in volume 46 protesting against the cancellation of seven names in this genus by the new Checklist Committee, of which he was a member for several years.

For many years prior to his death he had given much time to conservation and had made persistent, though unsuccessful, efforts to induce the Government to cancel all grazing leases in national parks at Mt. Buffalo and Wilson's Promontory. Of those who attended the inaugural meeting of the R.A.O.U. in Adelaide in 1901 he was the only one present at the fiftieth annual meeting held in Melbourne in 1951. He also attended the camp-out that year at the Hattah Lakes.

During his forty years' residence at Kilsyth he had worked unceasingly for the progress of the district, where he was associated with a number of local committees and clubs. His work as a naturalist cannot be praised too highly. He had an excellent knowledge of botany and was well informed on geology. Both as a field and a cabinet ornithologist he has left a very fine record. He had a deep appreciation of anything Australian and associated himself with a number of cultural movements in Melbourne. He was a foundation member of the Bird Observers Club, founded in 1905, and he was the only life member of the Leach Memorial Club. He would co-operate most willingly in any movement requiring manual labour and, being gifted with a retentive memory, he could always be depended upon to supply details of ornithological history. He was very closely associated with the Wattle League, founded by his father, and it was a fitting tribute to his appreciation of this national flower that, as the funeral passed along the bush roads through Montrose, on its way to the Lilydale cemetery, the wattle trees along the roadside were laden with golden blossom.

Mr. Campbell left a widow, three sons and eleven grandchildren. He had suffered a severe loss early in the Second World War when his eldest son, while serving with the R.A.F., was killed on February 1, 1942, over the north of Ireland.—D.J.D.