

OBITUARY

KEITH ALFRED HINDWOOD

Australian ornithology has suffered a severe loss through the death of Keith Hindwood, which occurred in the Royal National Park, just south of Sydney, on 18 March 1971. With two companions, he was visiting Wattamolla (the Providential Cove of Bass and Flinders) when he sustained a cerebral haemorrhage and died within a few minutes. Such might be assumed was the way he would have wished it and in just such a place, which he frequently visited over the years; but inevitably the sudden death of one who, at the age of 66, apparently had years of valuable work ahead of him came as a drastic shock throughout a wide circle.

Keith Hindwood was born at Willoughby, NSW, on 3 July 1904, and lived near that suburb all his life. He was devoted to the general area of Sydney and did not travel much in or near Australia until recent years. His one journey overseas, undertaken in his early twenties, was a working trip to England, and from that arduous adventure he was glad to be back. In 1928 he began a business devoted to printing, wholesale stationery and office supplies. In that occupation he remained until 1970, when he retired, although he continued to pay regular brief visits there and to the Australian Museum to continue his ornithological work. His intentions were to extend his writings—a handbook on the birds of New South Wales was partly written—and to visit various parts of Australia, notably Cape York, which he had not seen earlier. It is much regretted that these intentions remained unfulfilled.

Here it must be said that although the Sydney area claimed most of his attention he paid at times visits to inland areas and did considerable work on islands off the east coast. Such insular activities no doubt developed when, following his marriage to Marjorie Goddard in late October 1936, the honeymoon was spent on Lord Howe Island. The interest aroused in the birds there extended into historical study (embracing extinct species) and thus he wrote for the EMU (40: 1–86) a highly informative paper on the subject; this was re-issued in 1940 as a hard-cover book, and as the edition was limited it has now become rare.

Much more recently his study of island birds took wider range: he was persuaded in 1960 to serve as ornithologist, with two colleagues, on the survey vessel HMAS *Gascoyne* on an expedition to the Coral Sea, and that experience induced him to go again on the same ship to another part of the same

general area in 1961. The consequential report, *Birds of the South-west Coral Sea*, by K. A. Hindwood, K. Keith and D. L. Serventy, was published by the CSIRO in 1963.

Returning to earlier days, one may note that Keith Hindwood's interest in birds began in boyhood and swelled steadily. He joined the RAOU in 1924 and soon contributed to the EMU on two subjects that were to remain his special interests, the first a note and an admirable photograph of a sea-bird, the Pomarine Skua (a basic record of the presence of this species in Australia), and the second a monograph on *Origma*, the Rock Warbler. This monograph so impressed the then Editor, A. H. Chisholm—later to be associated with many of Hindwood's writings—that he introduced a footnote mentioning that the article was the first detailed life-study of a very distinctive little bird and that it was 'submitted by one of the youngest members of the Union'. The Editor added that another illuminating article, 'Photographing the Rock Warbler', in the same issue (EMU 26, part 1) had been sent by another young member; this was Norman Chaffer, later to become known as one of Australia's premier bird-photographers.

For more than forty years afterwards Keith Hindwood wrote consistently in the journals of the RAOU (he probably contributed more to the EMU, page for page, than anyone else)*, the Royal Zoological Society of NSW, the Australian Museum, the Gould League of NSW and the like. These writings, to 1950, are the subject of several pages of references in H. M. Whittell's *Literature of Australian Birds* (1954). They cover a wide variety of topics relating to birds, and of course the same point obtains regarding material of later years.

Possibly it was the interest in historical ornithology engendered by experience at Lord Howe Island that caused this wide-ranging writer to pay special attention, in later years, to the pioneer naturalists and artists of the Sydney scene. He wrote several important papers on the work and personalities of such

* In fact, if we take only what would now be classed as main articles and short communications, he contributed almost exactly 600 pages to EMU since his first major paper in 1926. This represents over four per cent of such space since the start of the journal and makes him easily the largest contributor the journal has ever had. He dominated it from 1930 to 1960, during which period his contribution was of course far higher than four per cent. His nearest rival, A. H. Chisholm, has to date contributed rather over 400 pages—and there have been at least 540 other contributors over the years! Ed.

men, one of the most important of these being 'George Raper: an artist of the First Fleet', published in the *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society* in June 1964 (50: 32-57). The cost of the valuable illustrations in this article was met by the NSW Gould League.

Several books, some produced in collaboration, were interspersed with writings in journals. As with the Lord Howe volume, *The Waders of Sydney*, by K. A. Hindwood and E. S. Hoskin, was a reprint from the EMU (54: 217-255). Then came an illustrated handbook, *The Birds of Sydney*, compiled with A. R. McGill; after that *Australian Birds in Colour* (1966), an admirable collection of photographs by various workers, with notes by Hindwood; and *A Portfolio of Australian Birds* (1968), a series of important observations supplementing paintings by W. T. Cooper. Earlier, Hindwood had given considerable assistance to Neville W. Cayley in the production of the first edition of *What Bird is That?* (1933), and later he was associated with Chisholm and McGill in revisions of that well-known book.

Keith Hindwood held important office in and was granted awards by many organizations. These include the following: President, Royal Zoological Society of NSW (1939) and Fellow (1950); President, Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union (1944-46) and Fellow (1951); Honorary Ornithologist (later Research Associate) to the Australian Museum (1930); Corresponding Fellow, American Ornithologists' Union (1938); Life Member, Gould

League, NSW (1931); Australian Natural History Medallion award (1959).

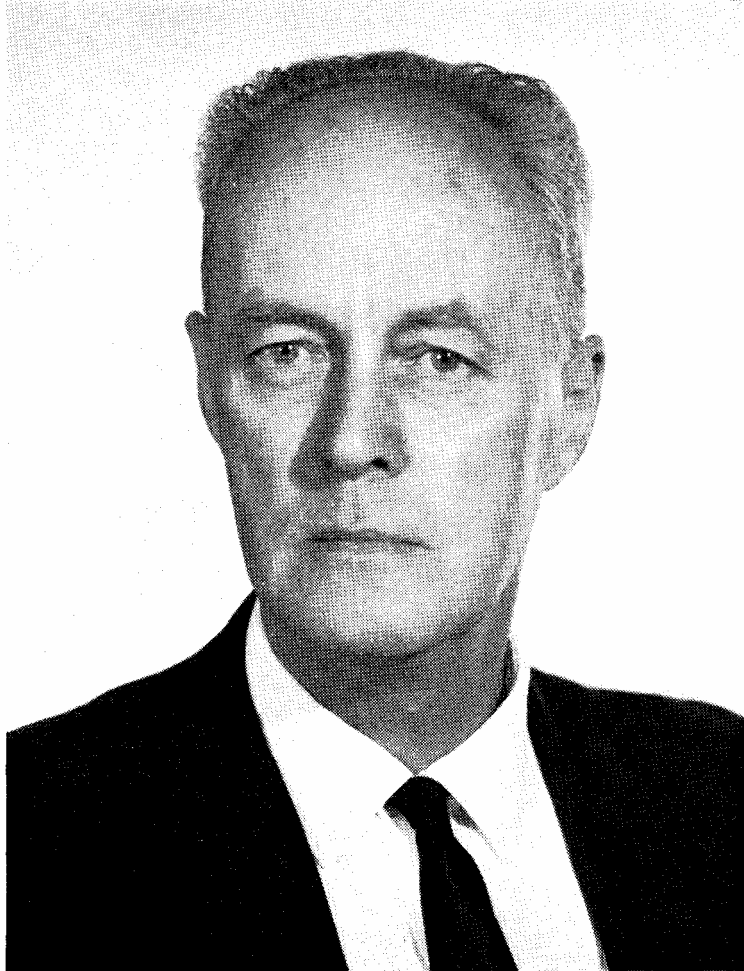
He worked constantly to further the cause of conservation. Recently he was a member of the Kuring-gai National Park Trust, and helped the National Trust and other organizations in an endeavour to retain much of the southern foreshore areas of Botany Bay, rich in historical associations with the landing of Captain Cook and his party 200 years ago, as a National Park and Wildlife Refuge.

Though the evidence of Keith Hindwood's ability as an ornithologist is perpetuated for all time by his numerous writings and published photographic work, these do not necessarily indicate so effectively his personal attributes. He was always happy to help even the youngest student of bird-life, and willingly passed on his extensive knowledge to everyone who fairly sought his help. As I have heard not uncommonly expressed, he stood as tall in the estimation of his ornithological associates as he did in physical stature.

His funeral service at the Northern Suburbs Crematorium on 22 March 1971 was attended by a large number of mourners, some of whom had travelled from distant centres. Widespread sympathy has been tendered to Mrs Marjorie Hindwood, his daughter Jan, who was on a visit to England at the time of her father's death, and his son Ross, who had taken over the management of the business in 1970.

A.R.McG.

PLATE 1



KEITH ALFRED HINDWOOD