

Obituary

MR. ARTHUR W. SWINDELLS

Arthur W. Swindells, an honorary life member of the Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union, died at his home in Hobart on September 1, 1960, aged 83.

Born at Bothwell (Tas.) where he acquired a good field knowledge of birds, Mr. Swindells later studied accountancy and for many years was chief clerk and secretary in the produce firm of Murdoch Bros., Hobart. He served with the Army Medical Corps, A.I.F., in World War I. A keen gardener, he was for many years a member of the Hobart Horticultural Society and exhibited at many shows, winning awards for his daffodils. Another interest was that of collecting crystal and glassware. But his chief form of pleasure was ornithology, and as an egg collector he was a contemporary of the late Dr. W. W. Giblin, A. L. Butler and Malcolm Harrison.

He possessed a comprehensive collection of Tasmanian birds' eggs and for the most part this was attractively housed in blackwood cabinets. His library of ornithological literature also was well loved and maintained. Both his eggs and books were disposed of about two years before his death.

He was of kindly disposition and had many friends. In latter years his health failed, he retired from business, and lived mostly by himself, still tending his garden and watching birds that visited it.

Arthur Swindells was credited with the distinction of being the first in Tasmania to take the eggs of the Blue-Winged Parrot and Orange-breasted Parrot. These were reported to have been found on the same day and in the same locality, in the Bothwell district. Reference to the discovery may be found in "Notes on Two *Neophema* Parrots", *Emu*, 46: 258-64.—M.S.R.S.

MR. P. A. GILBERT

Percy Albert Gilbert, who died on July 7, 1960, at Lakemba, New South Wales, joined the Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union (then the Australasian Ornithologists Union) in 1909. Fifty years later, in recognition of his long association with the Union, he was elected an honorary member.

Mr. Gilbert was a versatile naturalist with wide interests. Many aspects of bird behaviour were studied by him to very good purpose, as shown by such contributions as "The Yellow-throated Scrub-Wren as a Mimic" (*Emu*, 22: 324-5); "Female Birds in Plumage-display and Song-mimicry" (*Australian Zoologist*, 5: 141-7); "The Preservation of

Useful Australian Birds" (*Emu*, 36: 226-8); and "The Bower-painting Habit of the Satin Bower-bird (*Emu*, 39: 18-20).

In his studies of the remarkable habits of the Satin Bower-bird he was associated for many years with the late Erwin Nubling, a close friend with whom he walked over much of the Royal National Park near Sydney. Another associate in field ornithology was Harry Keane, his co-author on papers dealing with the Black-eared Cuckoo (*Emu*, 13: 80-2), Cuckoo combinations (*Emu*, 17: 234), and the Chestnut-rumped Ground-Wren (*Emu*, 18: 292-5).

One of Gilbert's most interesting contributions was his paper on the Topknot Pigeon (*Emu*, 35: 301-12); his observations on that species were largely made in the Royal National Park, New South Wales.

Apart from papers in the *Emu*, Gilbert published articles, often illustrated with his excellent photographs, in the *Australian Zoologist*, the *Proceedings of the Royal Zoological Society of N.S.W.*, and the *Australian Museum Magazine*. Subjects treated ranged from the black snake and the vernaculars of *Melopsittacus undulatus* to the biology of North-west Islet, Capricorn Group. A bibliography of his ornithological writings appears in H. M. Whittell's *The Literature of Australian Birds*, 1954, 272-3.

Another interest of Percy Gilbert's was botany, of which subject he had an extensive knowledge. During the latter part of his life he specialized in both native and cultivated orchids, and contributed many informative articles to relevant journals. His two books, *The Charm of Growing Orchids* (two editions) and *Orchids, their Culture and Classification*, had a wide sale. He was editor of the *Australian Orchid Review* from 1938 to 1944 and again from 1950 to 1957, and was an honorary life member of the Orchid Society of New South Wales, the Sydney Orchid Society, and the Australian Orchid Society.

Mr. Gilbert was born in Sydney on May 20, 1883, and was, therefore, 77 years of age at the time of his death. He is survived by Mrs. Gilbert, to whom the sympathy of members of the R.A.O.U. is extended.—K.A.H.

MR. C. E. BRYANT

It is with regret that the death is announced of Charles E. Bryant, who passed away, after a long illness, on October 27, 1960. The Union is deeply indebted to Charlie Bryant for the yeoman service that he rendered on its behalf, and in particular for the 31 years in which he assiduously carried out the exacting and sometimes thankless task of editing *The Emu*.

A full obituary notice will appear in the next issue.