

OBITUARIES

CLARENCE LESLIE LANG

Clarence Lang was born in Melbourne in July 1889. He spent several years working in the printing trade before joining the Church of Christ ministry in 1921. He served in many districts during his long association with the church: Carnegie, Echuca, Shepparton, Doncaster, Ararat, Ascot Vale, Ormond, Hampton and finally Red Cliffs, where he remained from 1949 until his retirement in 1960. He returned to Melbourne to live in 1966. He died on 26 July 1971, a few days after his eighty-second birthday.

He was always interested in natural history, but perhaps birds and trees were his greatest interest. He joined the Union in 1925, became Treasurer in 1935 and remained in that position until 1941. During the years of the war he spent much of his spare times acting as guide at the Sir Colin McKenzie Sanctuary at Healesville, when VIPs were in need of special advice. Before he moved to Red Cliffs he was a member of the Committee for revising the Articles of Association of the Union. He attended the Fiftieth Anniversary Camp at Hattah Lakes in 1951. He was an excellent photographer and wrote several articles for EMU. Perhaps his best was in Volume 45 (4) of April 1946, 'Notes on

the Rufous Bristle-bird' with excellent photographs.

He was a master at tinting the glass slides which were used for illustrating lectures before the advent of kodachrome, and his services were in demand by many of the ornithologists of that time. He was associated with the original Sunraysia Field Naturalists' Club of Mildura and was its first President. He was later elected an Honorary Life Member in recognition for his services to the Club, which later became the Sunraysia Naturalists' Research Trust.

My acquaintance with him and his family was in the late 1930s and during the Second World War. An annual event was a family picnic down the Bay on the *Weeroona*. Petrol being scarce, most of our visits to our favourite areas were by train and foot, such places as the Werribee Gorge, the Yan Yean Reservoir, Cheltenham-Beaumaris district, Frankston and the Dandenong Ranges. He was one of nature's gentlemen, with a great sense of humour and an ideal companion on birding outings. Our deepest sympathy is extended to his widow, his son Ron and his daughter Mrs Tinkler, and their families.

W.R.W.

JOHN BURTON CLELAND

Emeritus Professor Sir John Burton Cleland, Kt, CBE, Ch.M, MD, FRACP, who died on 11 August 1971 in the city of his birth, aged 93, was born in Adelaide on 22 June 1878. The elder son of a well-known medical practitioner, Dr W. L. Cleland, he was educated at Prince Alfred College, Adelaide, and at the Universities of Adelaide and Sydney. He graduated in medicine in February 1900 and soon after turned to medical research, in which field he was aided by an unusual diversity of recreational interests, including botany and ornithology.

Sir John was fond of relating how, because of a strike in 1897 by the honorary teaching staff at the Adelaide Hospital, senior medical students were forced to complete their studies at other universities; he chose Sydney because he had heard that opportunities for 'birding' were most favourable in that city. He joined the Union in 1902 and eventually became a member of Council and President in 1935-6. A regular contributor to EMU from 1906 until 1943, he was elected an Honorary Life Member in 1949.

During his distinguished career as a pathologist and in public health Dr Cleland held a number of important appointments in New South Wales, England, Western Australia and finally South Australia where he occupied the Marks Chair of Pathology, University of Adelaide, from 1920 until his retirement in 1948. Professor Cleland is remembered with affection by his old students as a teacher whose classes were characterized by informality, friendliness and humour; and these attributes, an expression of his serene and unruffled disposition, were present in all his associations with others.

In the course of his long active life Sir John became well known within and outside Australia by reason of his prolific writings, usually under the name of 'J. Burton Cleland', not only in the field of medical research and anthropology but also systematic botany, mycology and a wide variety of other themes, including local history and ornithology. H. M. Whittell, in *The Literature of Australian Birds*, lists over one hundred titles relating to birds; further items are given by Kraehenbuehl

(1971, *S. Aust. Orn.* 26: 4), who appends the names of 17 journals in which articles and papers may be found. The last bird note in EMU appeared in 1969.

Among his most valuable contributions to ornithology are his papers relating to examinations of contents of stomachs and crops of birds, the first of which appeared in 1910. He was also largely responsible for the publication of a long paper on the food of Australian birds which was printed in five parts in EMU 34 and 35, under the authorship of A. M. Lea and J. T. Gray. Lea had been Entomologist at the SA Museum from 1911–1932, and on his death his manuscripts and notes dealing with the stomach contents of birds were edited, collated and amplified by Gray and Cleland.

Sir John's connexion with a great number of advisory bodies, committees and societies, of which he was almost invariably the senior member, provided him with unique opportunities to further his ornithological investigations. For instance, he was a member of boards and committees concerned with aboriginal welfare, and was required to visit remote parts of South Australia regularly on inspection. Also, because of his knowledge of the outback and experience as a botanist, he often accompanied government pastoral and forestry experts on journeys to the interior of the State in a semi-official capacity. Without fail he would return from these trips with some skins prepared in the field together with lists of species and other records made as he moved from place to place. His bird-lists always included the number of individuals seen and were intended to be a crude census of the avifauna of the districts visited. The Professor expounded his views on the value of taking a bird census in several papers, e.g. EMU 22: 18–23.

He was the guiding spirit in the lavish anthropological expeditions to northern South Australia and the lower Northern Territory in the early and middle 1930s. These were conducted by the University of Adelaide in conjunction with the SA Museum, with the aid of Rockefeller finance, to various parts of the (then) often little-known and unspoiled interior of the continent. His reports on the birds seen and collected on these trips will be found in the pages of *S. Aust. Orn.* between the years 1931 and 1936.

Professor Cleland was for many years a member of the Board which controlled Flinders Chase, the flora and fauna reserve at the western end of Kangaroo Island. During his many visits to the Island he collected and kept records of all plants seen and consistently made known his ornithological observations. His earliest bird-note from the Island, and there were many, was published in EMU in 1906.

He had a long association with the Commissioners of the National Parks, being Deputy Chairman from

1931 to 1936 and Chairman from 1936 to 1965. Under his guidance much was done to preserve the parks in an unspoiled state at a time when the natural environment everywhere was being threatened as never before by bushfires and by increasing demands of population. Cleland National Park and Wildlife Reserve, which was opened at Mt Lofty in April 1967, was named after him.

When Gregory Mathews began his major work on the birds of Australia, he appealed to Australian ornithologists for specimens and other assistance. Dr Cleland became one of his loyal supporters and supplied him with many skins, some of which became the types of new subspecies; twelve of these will be found in the general index of the 1926 RAOU Checklist under the name '*clelandi*'. Sir John maintained a private collection of skins for over thirty years. Many of the specimens were hurriedly prepared in the field at the close of a strenuous day, but nearly all were distinguished by the very full data which were painstakingly recorded on the labels. In 1956 the collection of about 420 skins was presented to the SA Museum.

Sir John Cleland was often referred to as 'the last of the old gentlemen-naturalists of the Charles Darwin tradition'. He was also regarded as almost the last of the 'medical naturalists', a familiar phenomenon in this country in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Above all, he excelled as an observer, investigator and recorder. His many contributions to knowledge were due to his steadfast industry and enthusiasm; and he was inspired by an insatiable curiosity about everything around him.

He was knighted in 1964 and had previously been awarded the CBE for services to medicine in 1949. Other honours bestowed upon him included the Verco Medal for research (R. Soc. SA, 1933), Clive Lord Memorial Medal (R. Soc. Tas., 1939), and Australian Natural History Medallion (1952). He was elected an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Society of SA in 1949 and Honorary Life Member of the SA Ornithological Association in 1961.

Towards the end of his life Sir John suffered the loss of most of his sight because of glaucoma; but his mind remained unimpaired by time and he appeared in a television interview not long before his death. His portrait, as he looked in middle age, is reproduced in EMU 36: pl. 29.

Sir John Cleland is survived by his son, Dr W. P. Cleland, FRCS, of London and four daughters: Dr M. B. Horan (Melbourne), Mrs E. R. Simpson (Adelaide), Mrs B. LaNauze (Canberra) and Mrs J. B. Paton (Adelaide), widely known as an amateur ornithologist and an active RAOU member.

H.T.C.