

MISCELLANEOUS NEWS

The official opening of the Van Steenis Building which houses the Rijksherbarium was reported in *Taxon* 46 (1997) 125–127, with a photograph of HM Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands and Dr. P. Baas inserting the types of species named for the occasion; see *Flora Malesian Bulletin* 11 (1996) 491–492. Apparently it was a highly amusing episode, viz. the huge smiles.

Related Flora Projects

A *Flora of Thailand Meeting* was held in Phuket, Thailand, 9–12 September, 1996. 124 participants were present, more than 40 from countries outside Thailand. A status of the Flora work showed good progress. The *Flora of Thailand* 6/2 including the family *Myrsinaceae* has been issued. Volume 5/3 is in print and includes the *Cruciferae*, *Linaceae*, *Loganiaceae*, and *Thymelaeaceae*. The *Melastomataceae* are also ready for the press in 1997. Manuscripts of the *Apocynaceae*, *Cyperaceae*, *Myrtaceae*, *Primulaceae*, and *Sterculiaceae* and some minor families have been received and are being edited. The next *Flora of Thailand* meeting will be held in Leiden in the summer 1999.

Personal news

Dr. M.M.J. van Balgooy (L) paid a short visit to Indonesia from 4 to 12 March, 1997. He discussed the possibility of an advisorship to the botanical gardens of Indonesia with its director, Dr. Suhirman. They agreed on principle that Van Balgooy would come over in October and November this year. His main function should be to help the staff of the botanical gardens in Bogor, Cibodas, Purwodadi, and Bali to identify the many

nameless plants growing there. These include 'old' plants of which the name plates have been lost, and the many new acquisitions.

Dr. L.S.L. Chua (KEP) has completed her Ph.D. program on the 'Ecology, biology & conservation of *Nepenthes macforlanei*' at the University of Bath, U.K.

Dr. D.J. Mabberley is now based in L (e-mail: mabberley@rulrhb.leidenuniv.nl) and NSW (david_mabberley@rbgsyd.gov.au). The new edition of 'The plant-book' (May 1997) is completely revised and some 20% bigger than the first one.

Dr. F.S.P. Ng has taken up a new job as Scientific Director of a biotechnology company to manage a new biotechnology laboratory specializing in tissue culture and molecular biology: TropBio Research, Technology Park Malaysia, 57000 Bukit Jalil, Kuala Lumpur.

Dr. Ng is succeeded at CIFOR by Mr. M. Ibach, e-mail: m.ibach@cgnet.com. His 'Manual of forest fruits, seeds and seedlings, vol. 1 & 2 (1991–1992)' is now also available on CD-ROM, whereby identification and information is much more readily available. Order from CIFOR, POB 6596, JKPWB, Jakarta 10065, Indonesia, e-mail cifor@cgnet.com, or fax +62 251 32 6433. Price US\$ 15.00, incl. mailing.

Dr. L.G. Saw (KEP) was at Kew and Leiden between 23 March and 3 May 1997 as Liaison Officer for the Tree Flora of Sabah & Sarawak Project.

Ms. J. Schneidt (ABD) was awarded a NERC Grant for Taxonomic Publication of the Linnean Society for her 'A taxonomic revision of the genus *Tylophora* (*Asclepiadaceae*) for Flora Malesiana' (The Linnean 12, 1997, 4, with list of other sources for grants!).

Obituaries

Armstrong, John W. (? Belize, Honduras. — 21 January 1847, Kupang).

Plant collector in Australia, who moved to Timor in 1840, from where he sent plants to Kew, but which were apparently labelled as Australian (T. Bean, Austr. Syst. Bot. Soc. Newsl. 89, 1996, 13–15).

Beccari, O. — J.H. Walker, A Florentine source for nineteenth century Sarawak history. Borneo Res. Bull. 27 (1996) 39–43: photographs and letters from the Brooke family.

Corner, Edred John Henry (12 January 1906, London, England — 14 September 1996, Cambridge, England).

Many entries in Flora Malesiana Bulletin, see the indices; e.g. M. Jacobs, Fl. Males. Bull. 7/29 (1976) 2536–2538 (biogr.); 7/31 (1978) 2970, 2974; 33 (1980) 3449; J.F. Veldkamp, Fl. Males. Bull. 9/3 (39) (1985) 258.

Recent obituaries: Anonymous, Professor John Corner, The Times, 2 October 1996; D.G. Frodin, Professor E.J.H. Corner. The Independent, 16 October 1996; T.C. Whit-

more, Professor E.J.H. Corner. *The Independent*, 21 September 1996; R. Kiew, John Corner – Naturalist par excellence. *Malayan Naturalist* 50/3 (April 1997) 8–12; for this biography, see the following reprint:

John Corner – Naturalist Par Excellence

John Corner, an honorary and founder member of the Malayan Nature Society and indeed perhaps the most distinguished member the Society has ever had, passed away on 14 September 1996. In Malaysia, he is best known as the author of the remarkable book *The Wayside Trees of Malaya* (Corner, 1988). Remarkable, because it is not only packed with accurate, original, and interesting observations but they are recounted in a vivid style that captures the interest of the amateur and professional naturalist alike. Many times have I been impressed on comparing a living specimen with a description in *Wayside Trees* at how accurately Corner has caught the idiosyncrasies of the plant. It is as though he made his description from the plant I hold in my hand! He coined English names to make Malaysian plants more accessible to the naturalist. One that has stuck is the Midnight Horror (*Oroxylum indicum*), which he describes as follows: "This grotesque tree fills us with astonishment ... aesthetically, it is monstrous. The corolla begins to open about 10 p.m., when the tumid, wrinkled lips part and the harsh odour escapes from them. By midnight, the lurid mouth gapes widely and is filled with stink." He told me he coined the name after staying at a rest house where he was unable to sleep because of a terrible stench, which when he got up to investigate discovered was caused by this night-flowering tree, which grew just behind the rest house.

Not only did his vivid and lucid style set him apart, but also his characteristic line drawings. He always prepared his own illustrations as he believed that it required accurate observation and that in addition illustrations clearly show important features where a photograph in comparison can be just a mindless representation. He was therefore extremely annoyed when a reviewer criticized an illustration in his *Natural History of Palms* (Corner, 1966) as incorrect, when, as he indignantly said, it had been drawn from life. However, he was vindicated later when field observations in India proved him right.

Readers of *Wayside Trees* will be surprised to learn that John Corner was first and foremost a mycologist and indeed on retirement announced that from then on he would be working exclusively on his mycological collections and proceeded in the next twenty years to produce a series of substantial monographs, the last of which was in print a few months before he died. [Watling, *Taxon* 46 (1997) 366, reports that his mycological collections with the exception of types already in CGE, have been transferred to E; JFV).

In his book *Botanical Monkeys* (Corner, 1992), he describes how between the toadstool fruiting seasons he "turned his attention to the general flora of the tropical forest" and in particular to the study of trees, from which he collected specimens as they were being felled in Singapore. From this first-hand study in the 1920's, he became acutely aware of how many rare species were being exterminated and so he became one of the first conservationists in Malaysia. Indeed, he was instrumental in getting the Bukit Timah Forest Reserve in Singapore legally protected, albeit in an unorthodox way. He was not only a founder member of the Malayan Nature Society, but the first meeting of the Society was held in his house in the Botanic Garden in Singapore.

Not finding the tennis parties of colonial days to his taste, he would take off to the swamp forests of Johore where he spent many weekends collecting and observing the forests through the passing seasons, eventually producing a fascinating and detailed account in his retirement (Corner, 1978-a). Today very little remains of that forest and swamp forest in general has become one of the most endangered ecosystems in Peninsular Malaysia.

As a mycologist his interest in forest trees was an unofficial one, he had no opportunity to employ tree climbers as is the practice for collecting tree specimens for forest department herbaria. To overcome this deficiency, he hit on the idea of employing beruk (pig-tailed macaques) and adapting their training of plucking coconuts to that of collecting specimens from tall trees and liana. "For the first time after eight years in Malaya, I was able to botanize freely in the forest ... and collect almost anything from high up in the forest", he wrote (Corner, 1992). From observing the beruk, he was able to gain a new dimension for observing the diversity of tropical forest (Corner, 1941).

There are many touching stories in his little book *Botanical Monkeys* (Corner, 1992) from the death of Merah I from handling the Giant Mountain Fishtail Palm and whom Corner calls "a little martyr to botany" to the rescue of Merah II from drowning in the Rochor Canal during the Japanese Occupation. His attachment to his botanical monkeys is shown by his insisting that the illustration of the original dustjacket be included in the Malayan Natural Society edition of *Wayside Trees* together with the doggerel:

"Malayan Trees Who Cares to Know
Upon his Shoulders sits a Berok"

The complexity of the tropical rain forest was a source of fascination and a challenge to his inquiring mind, which led him to develop a theory of evolution based on the biodiversity of tropical plants, which included many neglected areas of study, such as the evolution of plant habit, buds, leaves, fruits, and seeds. This theory came to be called 'The Durian Theory' at the suggestion of Sir Harry Godwin, Professor of Botany at Cambridge, who thought that without a catchy name the theory would not engage the attention of botanists, though as Corner remarked, it was not a very good name as the durian with its slender twigs and small, simple leaves was a poor example of his concept of the pachycaul, the primitive flowering plant (see 'Model de Corner' below).

Corner's tropical experience was unparalleled, for not only did he work for 16 years in Malaya, but after the war he worked for two years in Brazil and also organized in 1961 and 1964 two Royal Society Expeditions to Kinabalu and another in 1965 to the Solomon Islands. Of Kinabalu he wrote: "The people of Sabah possess on this famous mountain what I believe is the richest and most remarkable assemblage of plants in the world." His chapter in *Kinabalu: Roof of the World* (Corner, 1978-b) is full of interest.

It was while on the Solomon Islands Expedition, that one evening as he was sitting in camp in the pouring rain on a remote mountain several days from the nearest village, a runner appeared from the darkness and produced from his waterproof pouch a letter from the Vice Chancellor of Cambridge University, which announced his appointment as an Emeritus Professor of Tropical Botany.

Time has proved Sir Harry right and The Durian Theory has not passed into mainstream botany mainly because most botanists are only familiar with temperate plants, which correctly have been called "the threadbare edge of the world's flora." Indeed

K.R. Sporne, author of *The Morphology of Flowering Plants*, used to complain that he couldn't argue with John Corner, who would always confound him by citing as an example a plant he didn't know, though Corner would insist they were common plants of the tropics. However, in 1976 M. Jacobs wrote in the *Flora Malesiana Bulletin* that he considered The Durian Theory "still the only comprehensive theory about the origin and development of the tropical world as a whole."

Indeed for botanists working in the tropics, temperate botany often fails as it just does not reflect the great diversity of plant structures, as for example, in the system of classifying fruits or types of seed germination. For the latter, F.S.P. Ng (1991) has recognized durian germination, an additional though common type in the tropics, which unfortunately is unlikely ever to be included in textbooks although it is well known to every Malaysian schoolchild. Corner's general textbook *The Life of Plants* (Corner, 1964) remains one of the few botanical texts based on examples of tropical plants and Corner himself produced an encyclopedic two-volume monograph on the structure of seeds of the world (Corner, 1976).

His observations on tree structure and growth, outlined in *Wayside Trees*, gave rise to the field of tree architecture, which its authors, Hallé & Oldeman (1970), dedicated to John Corner "whose Durian Theory was a veritable catalyst ... to whom we owe our undertaking of this architectural study of tropical trees." One model of tree architecture they named 'modèle de Corner' and it exemplified the primitive pachycaul state as outlined in The Durian Theory by having a thick, unbranched trunk with a crown of enormous compound leaves at the top and producing massive fruits from the trunk.

Corner was an outstanding lecturer, not only in his ability to engage the attention of the audience but also in his originality. His series of lectures on palms formed the basis of his book *The Natural History of Palms* (Corner, 1966). I remember attending an afterdinner talk on 'Figs', one of his life-long interests. He began by asking the largely male audience if they had ever examined the back of a fig leaf and noticed the scratchy hairs, he remarked that a fig leaf would have been extremely uncomfortable for Adam to wear. This led to a consideration of where the Garden of Eden was, what its flora was like and the conclusion that if Adam had been sensible he would probably have used a banana leaf as a 'fig leaf'. By that time the audience was hooked and he led them deeper into the world of figs.

Corner also had an alarming reputation for unpredictable irascibility and indeed as a student in Cambridge there were many anecdotes in circulation. One was of a student who planned to do a Ph.D. under Corner's supervision but who on getting a third class degree asked Corner what he should do as he was no longer eligible for a scholarship. The reply, so the story goes, was "I don't care as long as I don't see you again." Perhaps this accounts for all his students, bar one, finishing their Ph. D.-s within three years!

However, to tell Corner that his Durian Theory was not original and had already been published long ago was not a chance most people would have taken, but this Dr. G.C. Evans did and lived to tell the tale. As predicted, Corner bridled at the suggestion but on being shown the evidence, agreed that it was so and indeed quoted the reference in a later paper where he acknowledged the preeminence of its author (Corner, 1980):

"Hence the man of the large mind abides in the thick not in the thin, in the fruit not in the flower."

Lao-tzu (circa 6th century BC), *Tae Te Ching* XXXVIII 84a

The *Wayside Trees of Malaya* has gone through three editions, the last being produced by the Malayan Nature Society. The plates are now of historic interest as now that development proceeds faster than trees can grow, the ancient majestic trees which Corner photographed have not survived the rapid pace of development. It is currently out of print. It would certainly be a fitting memorial to the life and work of John Corner if the Society were to reissue it.

Edred John Henry Corner (12 January 1906–14 September 1996) was educated at Rugby School and Cambridge University. In 1929 after graduation, he took a post in Singapore as Assistant Director of the Straits Settlement Botanic Gardens, where he stayed for 16 years. Primarily a mycologist, he developed an interest in trees, especially figs and tropical rain forest in general, which inspired 'The Durian Theory', a theory of evolution of flowering plants, several books, and many significant scientific monographs and articles. He was interred in the Botanic Gardens during the duration of the Japanese occupation and an account of his experience during this time is recounted in his book *The Marquis: a tale of Syonan-to* (1981). After the war, he worked for UNESCO for two years in the Brazilian Amazon, before returning to Cambridge University in 1949 as a lecturer, becoming in 1959 a reader in plant taxonomy and in 1966 emeritus professor of tropical botany. In 1955 he was elected Fellow of the Royal Society and in 1972 was awarded the CBE. He won several scientific honours, both British and international, such as the Royal Society Darwin Medal in 1960 and the first Japanese International Prize for Biology in 1985 and the first De Bary Medal of the International Mycological Association. He was honoured by two commemorative volumes, the first on the occasion of his 70th birthday (*Gard. Bull.*, Singapore, vol. 29, 1977) and the second for his 85th birthday (*Bot. Jb.* vol. 113/2-3, 1991). He retired in 1973 and continued his mycological research in his laboratory in Great Shelford based on the specimen collections he had amassed while in Malaya. John Corner is survived by his devoted wife and a son and two daughters of his first marriage. — R. Kiew

- Corner, E. J. H. 1941. A naturalist's companion. *Malay Nat. J.* 2: 11–14.
 —. 1964. *The Life of Plants*. xii, 315 pp.
 —. 1966. *The Natural History of Palms*. 393 pp.
 —. 1976. *The Seeds of Dicotyledons*. 2 vols.: ix, 311 + vi, 552 pp.
 —. 1978-a. *The Freshwater Swamp-forest of South Johore and Singapore*. *Gard. Bull.*, Singapore, Suppl. 1: ix, 266 pp.
 —. 1978-b. *The Plant Life*. In: M. Luping, C. Wen & E. R. Dingley (eds.). *Kinabalu, Summit of Borneo*: 112–178.
 —. 1980. *The Palm*. P. E. P. Deraniyagala commemorative volume: 116–122.
 —. 1981 *The Marquis: a tale of Syonan-to*: x, 186 pp.
 —. 1988. *The Wayside Trees of Malaya*, ed. 3. Malayan Nature Society. 2 vols.: xxii, 1–476 + ix, 477–861 pp.
 —. 1992. *Botanical Monkeys*. xi, 55 pp.
 Hallé, F. & R. A. A. Oldeman. 1970. *Essai sur l'architecture et la dynamique de croissance des arbres tropicaux*: 21–26. [Translated by B. C. Stone (1975), *An essay on the architecture and dynamics of growth of tropical trees*: 10–16].
 Ng, F. S. P. 1991. *Manual of forest fruits, seeds and seedlings*. *Malay. For. Rec.* 34, Forest Research Institute Malaysia, Kepong: vii, 1–997 (now also on CD-ROM: CIFOR No. 1, 1996, POB 6596, JKPWB, Jakarta 10065).

Holtum, R.E. — R.J. Johns (Ed.). *Memorial volume. Published to commemorate the centenary of the birth of Professor R. E. Holtum, 1895–1995* (1997) viii + 272 pp., illus. With papers by W.T. Stearn; bibliography by P.J. Edwards et al.

Kramer, Karl U. — M.J. Zink, *Karl U. Kramer (1928–1994)*. *Taxon* 46 (1997) 135–146, portr. (biography, bibliography, names published, eponymy).

Philipson, William Raymond (6 December 1911, Newcastle-on-Tyne, UK — 28 March 1997, New Zealand).

Fl. Males. I, 8 (1974) lxxv. Well-known specialist of Malesian *Araliaceae*, *Monimiaceae*, *Trimeniaceae*.

Richards, Paul Westmacott — W. Meijer, *In Memoriam*. *Nova Buxbaumia* 1 (1996) 2.

Sivarajan, V.V. (20 March 1944, Cherekunnu, Kerala, India — 18 December 1995, Tellicherry, India).

K.S. Manilal, V.V. *Sivarajan*. *Rheede* 5 (1996) 191–192, portr.

Well-known to participants of the Course in Angiosperm Taxonomy in Bogor. Author of 'Introduction to the principles of plant taxonomy', a very good guide in simple English. Founder of the Indian Association for Angiosperm Taxonomy and the journal *Rheede*.

Sleumer, H. — Wischel, M., *Hermann Sleumer 1906–1993*. *Mitt. Bad. Landesver. Naturkunde & Naturschutz* (1995).

Verheijen, Jilis Antonius Josephus (26 March 1908, Zevenaar, The Netherlands — 25 April 1997, Teteringen, The Netherlands).

Fl. Males. I, 8 (1974) 100, portr.; Fl. Males. Bull. 29 (1976) 2605–2609; 31 (1978) 3011–3012,

As a Roman Catholic Missionary of the Societas Verbi Divini (S.V.D.) Father Verheijen went to Flores, Indonesia, in 1935. From the beginning he took an interest in the Manggarai language of West Flores. In order to learn the language he collected myths, stories, and riddles. During the Second World War he was interned in Celebes, together with some prominent scholars, with whom he exchanged scientific knowledge. After the War he enlarged his interest. Beside the Manggarai culture and language he studied local ornithology and botany. He succeeded in combining his scientific interest with his missionary work until 1959. Since then he was released from pastoral duties so that he could concentrate more exclusively on writing and collecting. In the course of the years he built up extensive botanical and zoological collections for precise identification. Through his efforts and that of E. Schmutz S.V.D., the flora of West Flores and neighbouring islands like Komodo, Roti, Palu, and Sumba is perhaps the best known of Indonesia at present.

His collections (c. 5580 numbers) are at L. The remark that his personal set would have been acquired by the Airlangga University, Surabaya (Fl. Males. Bull. 10, 1990, 239) was based on a misunderstanding.

Since 1995 an anthropologist, Ms. M.A. Willemsen, is preparing her Ph.D. thesis on Verheijen and his work in the perspective of the SVD activities.

Patèr Jilis was a most amiable und unpretentious man of accurate knowledge. He dedicated his whole life to the task he once set. He returned to the Netherlands in 1993 at the age of 85. There he finished his last publications. He was author of many publications, mainly on linguistics and many on zoological and botanical subjects, e.g.:

- 1951. Het Hoogste Wezen bij de Manggaraiers. *Studia Instituti Anthropos* 4.
- 1967. *Kamus Manggarai*. I. Manggarai – Indonesia: xxviii, 721–736, illus.
- 1970. *Kamus Manggarai*. II. Indonesia – Manggarai.
- 1977. Logat nama-nama tumbuhan di Manggarai, a preliminary check-list of Manggarai plant names (mimeogr., 137 pp.; L).
- 1982. Dictionary to Manggarai plant names. *Pac. Ling. D*, 43: 140 + 19 pp.
- 1982. Komodo. Het eiland, het volk en de taal. *Verh. Kon. Inst. Taal- Land- & Volkenkunde, Leiden* 96: xiv, 260 pp., illus.
- 1984. Plant names in Austronesian linguistics. *Nusa* 20: x, 98 pp., illus.
- 1990. Dictionary of plant names in the Lesser Sunda Islands. *Pac. Ling. D*, 83: iv, 267 pp., illus.
- 1993. Glossary of taxonomic – Indonesian plant names. *Nusa* 35: viii, 58 pp.

Of course some plants were named after him: *Acacia verheijenii* Nielsen, *Elaeocarpus verheijenii* Weibel, *Saurauia verheijenii* Hoogl. — M.A. Willemsen & J.F. Veldkamp.