

The Passing of Bill Perry

Bill Perry, a foundation member of the Bendigo Field Naturalists Club, passed away on Sunday 5 March 1995 at the age of 83.

Born on 22 August 1911 Bill was a widely respected authority on the flora and history of the Bendigo Whipstick, adjacent to and north of his beloved Eaglehawk.

Bill was proud of his Cornish heritage, and grew up in, and lived all his life in Eaglehawk with his wife Gwen.

He took a scholarly interest in the town's and the Whipstick's mining history which resulted in his highly regarded 'Tales of the Whipstick' first published in 1975 and reprinted in 1978. It was a detailed account of the various alluvial rushes to the Whipstick gullies, along with the pubs and shanties and personalities who frequented the Whipstick years ago. His grandfather, Samuel Bartlett, was the manager of the very rich South New Moon mine in Sailor's Gully.

As a young man Bill was a keen member of the Eaglehawk Rifle Club and it was here that he first developed his interest in botany. Between shoots he looked around the surrounding bush and was intrigued by the wide variety of plant life. Eventually his interest in plants totally supplanted his interest in shooting, and he was greatly influenced further by David Paton's list of Whipstick flora which appeared in 'The Victorian Naturalist' in 1924.

In those happy and far off days, Bill was particularly interested in the Spider Orchids of Central Victoria, and later on made an intensive study of Central Victoria's Acacias, publishing many articles and notes in 'The Victorian Naturalist'. In March 1938, Bill wrote a note in 'The Argus' enquiring if there were any other people interested in sharing his pursuits around Bendigo. Through this he met many people who were to become foundation members of the Bendigo Field Nats.

Through his interest in the wattles, Bill had a close association with the State Herbarium and the Royal Botanical Gardens and their botanists.

Naturalists visiting Bendigo were often shown through the Whipstick, in particular the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria of which he was a Life Member.

A Life Member too of the Bendigo Field Nats, Bill was the Club's first librarian.

In later years Bill Perry made a close study of grasses and spiders. Indeed, his photography of spiders was outstanding and included much microscopic work.

Bill Perry was always aware that beauty was as important as science, and he was able to enjoy it in good prose, poetry and the delicate beauty of a Spider Orchid. This simplicity in outlook, in the best sense of the word, is best summed up, in the words of that great old Australian writer Mary Grant Bruce:

"All through his life he kept his heart unchanged within him - the simple honest heart of a little child. And ever, throughout his life, the Bush called to him and he heard it."

Bill Perry is dead but his work shall live on.

We pay tribute and honour him.

John Ipsen and Ray Wallace

TABLE OF GRACE

My Lord, as I come to your table of grace,
I have often wondered, what it would have been like,
If you had called on me, Lord, to take your place?
Could I have knelt in the garden like you
And called on the Father, His will to do?

Could I have faced the enemy
The way you would have wanted me to?
These are the thoughts that are outlined,
As I come to your table, with you in mind.

Could I have taken the steps you had to take,
Or would I have stumbled in your place?
Could I have hung upon the cross
With the terrible pain you had to bear?
I know now, Lord, that I could never be there.

Today Lord, as I sit at your table of grace,
I realise now there was not one
To take your place.
For it was a divine calling
From the Father to the Son,
A divine calling from one to one.

No other to take your place, no other to run that race,
No other to receive that calling, that only you could do.
To bear all that grief and sorrow, that took that life from you.
My Lord, as you hung upon that cross
For all the world to see,
You released me from all my burdens and sickness,
And set my spirit free.

To worship at your table Lord, is something that must be,
To call you my Lord and Saviour, is a joy from you to me.
To speak the words you have given me, to set the captives free
Is just a small price to pay
For what you have done for me.

So Lord, I now know you forgive me, for the wrongs I do to you.
I now also know Lord, that I could never be you.
But the word tells me to keep trying,
And the Christlike image will shine
So I am believing in your word and I know that I will find
That all my faults are fading away
And you, the Christ, in me does shine.

So now my Lord, when I sit at your table of grace
I see, not an outline of my face
But the image of you, Lord,
At the table in my place.

D. A. Harris.