

PETER GEOFFREY TAYLOR
1926-2011

Born the 16th of January 1926 in Dunstable – departed the 20th of October 2011 in Kirdford.

For many people the name Taylor is associated with an unpretentious blue book on remarkably beautiful plants—the monograph he wrote on the genus *Utricularia*. However, there is much more to this remarkable man.

Peter Taylor was largely self-taught in botany and entomology, his main scientific interests; originally he was trained as a cabinet maker. During World War II he worked in a factory that produced military vehicles. During this time he met several people, including a Kew botanist serving in the army. This resulted in an invitation to work at Kew, which he accepted in 1948.

Peter worked as an assistant at the herbarium and supplemented his income by doing all kinds of extra work, making some excellent illustrations among them. The Deputy Keeper of the Herbarium, Edgar Milne-Redhead, noticed these drawings and asked him to make drawing of *Utricularia* he had collected in 1937, in what is now Zambia. A lifelong fascination with these plants was born. He began his own studies of the genus, and in 1954 he named his first species (*Utricularia pentadactyla* P.Taylor).

Peter advanced in the Kew hierarchy and in 1972 was named head of the Orchid Section of the herbarium. He occupied this position until 1984, while continuing to work on *Utricularia*, often in his own time. For example, he published many regional treatments on the genus.

During the last years before his retirement in 1986 he finally got the opportunity to work full time on his beloved *Utricularia*. This resulted in the global monograph for which he is rightly famous (The Genus *Utricularia*: a Taxonomic Monograph, Kew Publishing, 1989, ISBN 0947643729), which he finished in his spare time in 1989. After more than 20 years, his magnificent work is still the best book on *Utricularia* around.

Even after all these achievements Peter didn't sit down in his retirement. He was still working on his plants, and produced more regional works. In 1991 the ICPS did a special issue focusing on *Utricularia* and *Gentlisea* (Carnivorous Plant Newsletter vol. 20, number 1&2). For this issue Peter produced not only a totally new key to the *Utricularia* of North America that could be used for both flowering and non-flowering specimens, but also a revised world list of *Gentlisea* accompanied by some of his excellent line drawings.

In 1994 he brought herbarium specimens of an undescribed member of the Scrophulariaceae family to Ray Harley. Peter had finally found time to describe specimens he and David Philcox received in 1966. Harley made the connection to specimens collected in Brazil and under study by Vinicius Souza at the University of São Paulo. In 2000, 34 years after the first collection, the genus *Philcoxia* was described in Kew Bulletin (Kew Bulletin 55, 155-163). Research on the possible carnivorous nature of this genus is ongoing.

Meanwhile, at home he paid attention to managing a woodland that he owned, producing wood for his woodworking that went from cabinet making to the building of high-end musical instruments, specifically harpsichords and clavichords.

On the entomological side of things, he managed his woodland so well that he was able to have about half of the British butterfly species on his own land, most notably the Purple Emperor (*Apatura iris*).

Peter died peacefully in his sleep at his home in Kirdford.

The International Carnivorous Plant Society offers its condolences to his wife Shirley and to his family.

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