

IN MEMORY OF ALLEN JAMES LOWRIE (1948 – 2021)

RICHARD NUNN • Sydney • NSW • Australia

My first correspondence with Allen Lowrie was in 1983, I was an over enthusiastic teenager who had well and truly been bitten by the CP bug. I wrote Allen a letter and enclosed a stamped self-addressed envelope (we did those type of polite things back then) and eagerly awaited his reply and plant price list. Two weeks later, it arrived and much to my surprise he wrote a few lines and thanked me for my correspondence, years later Allen told me that if someone took the time to write to him, he would always take the time to reply, especially the kids. Thus, began a near 40-year relationship with Allen, one which was initially as a very happy customer and consumer of his knowledge and after finally meeting Allen in Perth in 2002, became a friendship. My early memories of Allen were of someone who was a huge figure in the carnivorous plant community, yet who always had the time for a chat on the phone and was very generous and encouraging with his knowledge.

As the years passed, I was extremely fortunate to spend many days in the field with Allen, initially a few half-day trips around Perth, which over time became more expansive, and we saw a lot of Australia's carnivorous plants together and in the company of Denzel Murfet, Stuart McIlroy, Greg Bourke, John Yates, and Phill Mann. There are very fond memories of 3 trips to Darwin and Kakadu, another adventure to the northern most point of Australia to see the *Nepenthes*, *Drosera*, *Utricularia*, and *Byblis*, 2 ICPS conferences, and some extended field explorations of various parts of his beloved south-west corner of Western Australia. What stays with me was Allen's encyclopedic knowledge of locations, the flora, not just carnivorous plants, and his ability to find elusive plants in difficult sites. Allen was always great fun to travel with, never short of a story and equally enthusiastic about a cold beer at the end of a hard day in the field.

The last 10 years of Allen's life were punctuated by the publication of his epic 'Australian Carnivorous Plants Magnum Opus' and his lead authorship in the collaboration to produce 'Drosera of the World'. These were challenging projects and Allen's desire to see his work presented the way he wanted it, made for difficult moments as the publisher and commercial considerations often conflicted with Allen's standards and timelines. I was personally closely involved with these projects and often found myself caught in the middle of Allen and the publisher, it's fair to say we had some robust discussions, but I know he was immensely proud of the finished products. I mention this because no account of Allen would be complete without acknowledging his strong personality and his ability to defend his position.



Allen and wife Pauline in the field. Pauline was never far from Allen's side and was a constant companion on many of his fieldtrips.

Allen's contribution was enormous and his body of work on Australia's carnivorous plants unparalleled. I and many others in our community will miss him enormously and I feel privileged to have known Allen James Lowrie.

ROBERT GIBSON • Cardiff Heights • NSW • Australia

In 1987 I bought a copy of 'Carnivorous Plants of Australia: Volume 1.' I was so impressed by it, and the prospect of more volumes to come that I wrote to Allen and offered to help him, if possible, with future volumes. To my surprise he wrote back and was interested in the offer of help. This began a fruitful correspondence that developed into a friendship that had its ups and downs.

Between 1987 and 1993, when I was living in eastern Australia, Allen provided advice on cultivation, photography and sketching carnivorous plants. He also provided copies of his papers. Through frequent letters and phone calls we discussed the ecology, taxonomy, and distribution various plants. Allen described taxonomy as being like a big detective story, and how observations are they key to resolving many mysteries. He stressed the need for good herbarium specimens for taxonomic work and encouraged me to help fill this gap (under an appropriate licence). He also provided me with plants, particularly tuberous *Drosera*, which I treasured. I was able to help him with specimens and information about species in eastern Australia. In the early 1990s he was particularly interested in *Utricularia biloba*, and this gave me a fun project to work on.

I finally met Allen, and his wife Pauline on 20 June 1992 when they transited Sydney airport. It was great to finally meet them. We talked about carnivorous plants for hours; until they were called to board their flight to Perth.

In 1993 I moved to Western Australia for work. This changed the relationship with Allen. After a chance encounter with Allen in the Western Australian Herbarium, in Perth, on 3 September 1996 the friendship was placed on hold for many years.



Allen Lowrie with *Drosera barrettiorum* in the Kimberley, far northern Western Australia.

I met Allen again in September 2008, at the ICPS conference in Sydney. It was good to see Allen again. We had both mellowed, and I had a clearer perspective of his reaction at our previous meeting. Allen had a profound knowledge of carnivorous plants in Australia, thanks to his time in the field and the astute observations made by photographing and sketching plants.

The last time I saw Allen was the ICPS conference in July 2014 in Cairns. He again talked from his wealth of experience. At this conference his Magnum Opus book series on Australian carnivorous plants was launched. It is an impressive publication which provided Allen with a chance to provide more details about carnivorous plants than he had been able to in previous publications.

Allen made a huge contribution to the knowledge of carnivorous plants in Australia. Not only did he describe many species, but he provided insights into different interactions of the plants with each other and a wide range of animals. He presented his work with wonderful illustrations and photos. I am grateful for the advice that he gave me in my early years of researching and writing about carnivorous plants; many aspects of which I use to this day.

Allen has left his mark in the world of carnivorous plants. He set a high standard for presenting information and his work continues to be referenced. Thanks Allen.

MARCEL VAN DEN BROEK • Mijdrecht • Netherlands

I was very sad to hear that Allen has passed away and all the reactions from the carnivorous plant community brought back many memories.

Most people talk about their first book on our beloved plants, but it was the third book that I bought that changed my hobby and to some extent my life, forever. In 1987, I bought Allen's "Carnivorous Plants of Australia", Volume 1 (University of Western Australia Press). This stunning book turned this then young hobbyist forever away from distracting Asian and North American pitcher plants and firmly into Dewy country. It also started a lifelong fascination with the Australian flora (and fauna). I can remember seeing the pictures of plants like *Drosera microphylla* and wanting that plant really bad (still didn't manage to get it, by the way). Two years later, I bought Volume 2 when it came out.

About two years after this book my bookdealer developed a healthy dislike of me, for every time I walked in the store I asked if he heard anything about Volume 3. It took Allen until 1998(!) to produce this final book of what at that time was the most complete work on available on Australian CP's.

It wasn't until 2008 that I actually had the privilege to meet the great man himself. Carnivorous plants had become a bit more than a hobby and after attending a couple of European meetings (EEE) I decided to go to Australia and an ICPS conference. What better place to visit than Sydney? It was here that I was to finally meet Allen. I went with my friend John who also had a bad case of the "Down Under Dews" and this was thoroughly a wonderful trip. We decided to visit Tasmania before the conference and my now good friend Spot Cullen dragged us all over his native island on nothing more than the recommendation of a mutual friend.

Spot was also how I met Allen even before the conference. Spot had an earlier flight to Sydney than we did, so he was waiting for us at the airport. "Put your stuff in your room and come on, we are going to meet some people" he said.

Just over an hour later we stepped out of the car and asked a man with a bunch of paintings for directions. A little later we were sitting at the kitchen table of Richard Nunn, hoisting a beer with Richard, Greg Bourke, and Allen Lowrie! Allen was very friendly and generous with his knowledge and genuinely interested in how our trip went. We showed and discussed some pictures of



Allen Lowrie showing the size of *Drosera erythroyne*. Photo by Marcel van den Broek.

“something in the *auriculata*-complex” that was unusually short stemmed, that we had found near some military housing area. The size was probably because of the mowed lawn, but Allen was interested and asked about the exact location. Next day the conference would start. (Oh, and the man with the paintings also walked in, it was Phill Mann whom none of us even had seen a picture of before).

After a great conference, Allen and Phill were kind enough to drag a dozen of us all over Western Australia and again they were incredibly generous with their knowledge. We saw over 80 species on multiple locations in a week! All thanks to Allen and Phill looking at their GPS and telling us to “stop and walk 100 meters that way”.

It was here that Allen’s humor also showed. I remember his dry comment when Phill was taking a picture of *Drosera mannii*: “Well there you have it. *Drosera mannii*, the guy that found it (points at himself) and the thing it was named after (points at Phill)”.

The next time I met Allen was in 2010 when he and his grandson Lochlan visited the 2010 ICPS conference in Leiden (two board members, John, and I, had enjoyed the conference so much that Carnivora, the Dutch CPS wanted to host the next conference in the Hortus Botanicus Leiden).

I was honored to introduce the various speakers and Allen was good enough to give two lectures and to join a discussion panel on conservation at this conference. Besides getting him to sign my copies of his books, and a lot of beer, I mostly remember two things about this conference. First, the trouble we had with projecting his pictures as the memory of the university laptop couldn’t handle the huge number of full file size pictures he was using. Granted, they presentations were stunning, and the room was packed to capacity (we did use a LARGE room, that was usually used for ceremonies and presentations), but I think each picture was at least 10 megabytes! This also promoted the speech that anyone who has spent some time with Allen would have heard about “the best camera ever made” and him buying extra ones of it online because they didn’t make the anymore. In all honesty this is probably the only major point I disagree with him on as the camera was an antique to say the least.

The second thing was his outspoken opinion during the conservation debate that, besides Allen, included people like Madeleine Groves (CITES specialist) and Rob Cantley. Again, Allen was being Allen. As he put it “The only way to protect a species is to make it as common as muck in cultivation”. It was the first time I heard that expression, but he got a lot of support from the audience with that statement as you can imagine.

Last time I saw Allen was again during a conference, the 2014 Cairns ICPS conference. Here he was the shining centerpiece of all speakers, presenting his latest work to replace the (still prized) original books with ‘Carnivorous Plants of Australia Magnus Opus – Volumes 1-3’ (Redfern Natural History Productions).

I will always be grateful for the knowledge he shared and his great company.

I have known Allen for over 30 years. It was Allen's passion for carnivorous and trigger plants that helped me continue learning about our fascinating flora. I sent over 650 plant collections from across Australia to Allen to help with his research. He always sent back very encouraging letters with the identification of my specimens.

Allen and I accomplished some great field trips together. Several to Darwin and Northwest Australia, mainly near the end of the wet season. We did three trips to Tasmania, two in mid-January and one in the last week of December. I also did numerous trips to Western Australia to help Allen with his research on local species. During December 2009, I helped Allen achieve one of his dreams, of climbing to the top of Bluff Knoll, this took us most of the day. His health was already quite poor by then.

During my times with Allen, I was always in awe of his amazing memory of where to stop for certain species and his great knowledge of the very fine details needed for identification.

GREG BOURKE • Berambing • NSW • Australia

Allen wasn't just a world authority on carnivorous plants, writing books and discovering new species, he influenced many young enthusiasts in developing their passion for plants, spending many hours answering questions and inspiring inquisitive minds. Many of the great researchers around the world have shared their stories in recent days, of how their careers in plant sciences were inspired by Allen's passion, and his Australian attitude, to just have a go!

Allen was entertaining to travel with. Despite his obvious wonder of the natural world, he could often be heard verbally abusing that kangaroo or march fly that wouldn't leave him alone, and took



Allen Lowrie pictured with camera and notebook. Allen was meticulous in recording his field observations.

great pleasure in the occasional win, when he slammed his collecting book shut with one trapped in the pages. “Gotcha, you little shit” he’d say.

While he was also well travelled, he was not overly keen on big hikes. If we stopped at a plant site and the plant was on the opposite side of the road, he was not opposed to turning the car around, just to get 5 m closer. This disinterest in hiking did have its upside, however. On a trip crossing the East Alligator River from Arnhem Land, the river was high and flowing. The depth indicator read 0.9 m and the hire car manual stated it was rated to a depth of 0.7 m. Like several others, we waited but it was getting late so as soon as the level reached 0.7 m, “Let’s go”. Of course, anyone who has crossed a flowing river knows, as soon as you enter, the level on the high side of the car rises! The car began to slide sideways, and the crowd of onlookers gasped as we struggled across, maintaining just enough grip to avoid the drop into the crocodile infested waters below. If we hadn’t turned the car around at all those roadside stops, we just wouldn’t have had the weight to maintain traction!

His love of roadside food stops on field trips was also something to behold, I have memories of Allen getting into the car with a healthy packed lunch from Pauline, by the first roadhouse the packed lunch was discarded, and he would tuck into a pie, chips, and ice coffee. Fuel for the day of roadside stops, that generally culminated in another roadhouse or Burger King stopover before returning home, to no doubt recount tales of long healthy walks and enjoying his low-calorie packed lunch.

Allen has left his mark on the world of carnivorous plants. His papers and books have been and will continue to be a vital resource for researchers and hobbyists for generations to come and he is certainly missed by the entire community. We’ll miss you in the field Al.

ANDREAS FLEISCHMANN • Landsberg • Germany

I remember well a common 4-day field trip with Allen Lowrie to carnivorous plant habitats in the wider Perth area in 2008. Following the 7th ICPS Conference in Sydney, I first spent ten days exploring CP habitats in Western Australia with Thomas Carow and Jan Schlauer – during that time we have seen 72 CP species on a 3120 km long road trip from Perth to Walepole to Hyden to Esperance and back. However, Thomas and Jan had to fly back a few days earlier, so my initial plan was to visit the Western Australian Herbarium in Perth for the remaining days after our common field trip. Yet, when I first told Allen about my plans when I met him earlier at the ICPS Conference in Sydney, he said to me: “No way. If you are in Perth, you will have to come to my place for a visit. I can show you some nice plants in their habitats. You name it, I’ll show it to you.” Well, I could not reject this kind offer! Allen was a CP friend of mine for about 15 years at the time, and we have been talking about Australian carnivorous plants in lengthy discussions before (by letter, fax, and phone). However, finally seeing these plants AND my Australian CP hero together in their natural habitat in the Southwest of Western Australia for the first time, i.e., being guided to the plants I admired so much by the person who had the most intimate knowledge of their biology and taxonomy – that was the best reason to skip Perth herbarium! So, on the 10th of October, Thomas and Jan dropped me off at Allen’s place in Duncraig, where Allen first showed me his herbarium collection, as well as his greenhouse and indoor growing area. We were discussing plant taxonomy half day long. I was quite embarrassed when Allen told me by the end of that day that this was his 60th birthday! I thought that he should be celebrating his great day entirely with his family, but Allen said it was fine the way it was. Nevertheless, I felt deeply sorry for his family on that day (and still do today). On the next four days, Allen took me on a phantastic journey to many of his CP and triggerplant sites: first along Brookton Highway for pygmy and tuberous sundews and then to some *Byblis gigantea* sites. The next day we explored CP habitats

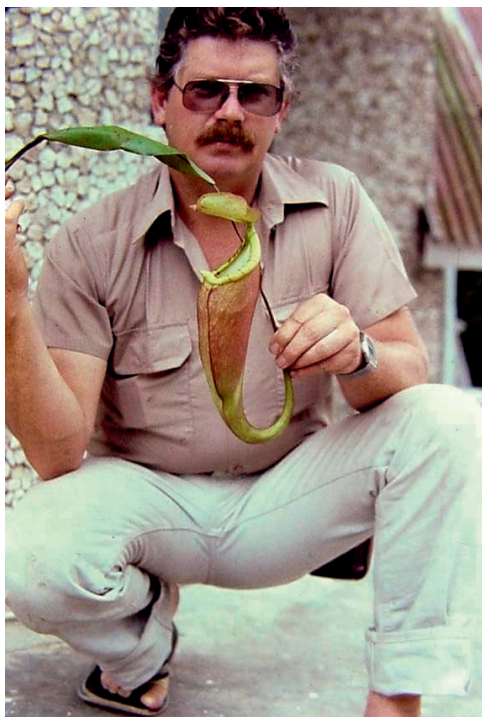
east of Perth from York to Walyunga National Park. On the 13th, Allen took me to sites north of Perth, again to many *Drosera* sites (especially pygmy *Drosera* were encountered that day, unforgettable some fields of *D. citrina* growing in yellow sand!), via Cataby, Badgin-garra and Coomallo, as far as Eneabba. Many of the species he showed me were still undescribed in 2008 and would not get named until his Magnum Opus was finally published by end of 2013 (distributed in early 2014). I felt quite honored that he showed me these treasures, and I promised him to keep all info on these plants confidential, which I did. During these four days with Allen, I saw 61 species of carnivorous plants and triggerplants! This was almost as many as I encountered on the ten preceding days exploring a much larger area of the Southwest. Allen also showed me what he considered the most important gear of his car: an electric cooler, filled to the top with bottles of cold beer – in his opinion, this was absolutely essential equipment during a field trip. And I did not mind a cold drink during lunch time in the field as well. I still have not adopted this Australian habit for my student's excursions back home, maybe I should do so one day. Besides that, I learnt a lot from Allen during my short stay with him, perhaps best illustrated when counting the pages filled in my field notebook from 2008: the ten-day field trip with Thomas and Jan covers 29 pages of botanical notes. The four days with Allen fill the last 20 pages of my notebook, densely covered with tightly written notes, including the inside and outside of the book cover, as I was running out of space... I wish I could have made another field trip with Allen later to fill another notebook or two. He certainly would have had enough stories to tell that were worth being written down!

RUSSELL L. BARRETT • Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney • Australia

In 1991, at the age of 14, I brought a mouldy bag of *Capparis umbonata* from the Kimberley to botanist Kevin Kenneally at the Western Australian herbarium in Perth for identification. After a cursory glance at my 'specimen', Kevin showed me how to press plants properly, and said he would be interested to see more specimens from our cattle station.

After the next holidays home from boarding school, I returned to Kevin with over 280 pressed and dried specimens, including species of *Byblis*, *Drosera*, *Utricularia*, and *Stylidium*, mostly from along the creek that ran past our homestead on Beverley Springs Station, in the north-west Kimberley.

Looking through my collections of *Drosera* and *Stylidium*, Kevin said, "You need to meet Allen Lowrie, he can identify these", and he then arranged a meeting. One of the collections turned out to be an unnamed triggerplant, now *Stylidium adenophorum* Lowrie & Kenneally. A career in botany, and a long-term association with Allen had begun.



Allen Lowrie made several trips to Southeast Asia to observe *Nepenthes* in the field.

Along with my older brother Matt, we started targeting collection of carnivorous plants and triggerplants from our station and surrounding areas. Several of our collections became type specimens of new species named by Allen; *Byblis rorida*, *Drosera caduca*, *D. glabriscapa*, and *Stylidium fimbriatum*. More recently, we co-authored a paper describing four new triggerplants from the Kimberley; *Stylidium latrodectus*, *S. pindanicum*, *S. saintpauliodes*, and *S. willingii*.

Allen was instrumental in our development of taxonomic methodology, piecing together all the different aspects of research required to recognise and name a new species. With over 150 new species described between my brother and I, Allen's early influence has made a much broader contribution to our understanding of the Australian flora.

Allen was always very generous with his time, in explaining his work, and in providing information on species that required more specimens before they could be named. It is with sadness that many new species we worked on together are yet to be named, particularly in Kimberley *Stylidium*, but efforts are underway to complete a number of Allen's unfinished projects.

It is not uncommon for taxonomic problems to take decades of work to resolve, and resolution of the *Drosera indica* complex was one such case. Fieldwork across northern Australia resulted in many additional taxa being proposed, but working out the correct names to apply remained a challenge. Fortunately, during my PhD research on Cyperaceae, I was able to visit key European herbaria and identify critical type specimens for available names in the *D. indica* complex, enabling Allen and I to write a paper typifying names. Importantly, the name *D. indica* was excluded from Australia. This then cleared the way for the description of many new species from this species group in his *Magnum Opus*.

Allen was a friend, colleague, and mentor to myself and many botanists and enthusiasts across Australia and around the world. He will be greatly missed, but his contributions to Australian botany will live on.

SPOT CULLEN • Hobart • TAS • Australia

Have you ever smelt the flower of *D. lowriei*? It is overwhelmingly sweet, delicate and one of the most beautiful things in the world, a stark contrast to the rough as guts persona of the man himself.

I am however very happy to say that Allen was my friend and his achievements and legacy have been well documented. There is nothing I can possibly add in a scientific sense, but I can speak on an emotional level and what springs to mind when I think about the old bastard... is regret.

We had many a conversation, many a beer and many a laugh, but not a single day in the field. That hurts me more than knowing he's gone. Sadly, I had the same experience with Phill Mann, that other grand old man from Western Australia. Phill's unexpected passing in 2014 ended many a plan we'd concocted to finally hit the road and go find some goodies.

Allen had spent his final years battling a series of health issues and his frustration at not getting out was evident every time I spoke to him. I will admit to even contemplating the thought of renting Allen's old VW kombi as a dubious way of finally sharing the highway with him... but only after a bloody good steam clean inside. Even I have my limits.

I saw him for the last time at his home in August of 2019. His health was finally improving, he was in fine spirits, and we once again discussed a road trip or two. Sadly, it was not to be, and his passing last year came as a great shock.

So, the moral of all this, is to make the most of opportunity. Nothing lasts forever. And Allen, thank you for your guidance and friendship, and whenever I hit the roads of W.A. I'll raise an ice-cold bottle of that weak dishwater you called a beer in your honour. Sleep well my friend.