

# OBITUARIES

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## Dr. William Wight

HERBERT SHORT, U.K.

Dr. William Wight, one of the original Directors and a life member of the International Camellia Society passed away on 20 December 1990. He was 84 years old and had been ill since March 1989.

Dr. Wight spent 31 years working on Tea Research as Plant Physiologist at the Tocklai experimental station, Cinnamara, Assam, India. He retired in August 1962 and resided with his wife, Jesse, at Greeba House, St. Georges Crescent, Port Erin, Isle of Man.

The Tocklai Experimental Station, operated by the Indian Tea Association, was the principal center for the study of the Tea Plant in the subcontinent. Even during World War II, from which he emerged an acting staff Major after serving in the Middle East and India. He managed to keep his research work going through correspondence with his wife, who was also a member of the scientific staff at the station. They had met at Leeds University in England, where he had received a BS and then obtained a PHD for work on the Physiology of tree growth and she studied for a degree in Botany.

His first job on returning from the army was to rebuild the Tocklai Experimental Station's Bungalow, which had been badly damaged by the U.S. Army. By the time he retired, he had published more than 45 scientific papers and was an acknowledged world authority on his subject.

He wrote two articles for the

International Camellia Journal - "Tea Seed and the Tea Industry of Assam: in Vol. 1, No. 1, December 1962 and "Tea for Camellias" in Vol. 1, No. 2, March 1964.

During his retirement in Port Erin, Dr. Wight created a wild garden in 1968 and he and his wife presented the garden, as the Breagle Glen Nature Reserve. To the Manx Nature Conservation Trust, of which he had been a life member.

Tony Hopson, secretary of the Manx Nature Conservation Trust, wrote - "We miss his ready wit, his deep knowledge of plant life and his boundless enthusiasm."

## Alexander William Jessep

BY DR. R. M. WITHERS, Australia

On 20 March 1991, Mr. Jessep passed away peacefully at the age of 98 years, only seven days before his 99th birthday. Alex, as he was known to all his friends, had a long and distinguished career in Horticulture.

Following four years of distinguished service with the A.I.F. in France, he completed his University Studies obtaining the degrees of Bachelor of Agricultural Science, Bachelor of Science, Diploma of Education and Master of Agricultural Science. Mr. Jessep was Principal of Burnley Horticultural College from 1925 to 1931, when he was appointed Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne, a position he held until he retired in 1957.

Mr. Jessep had many horticultural interests but it was in the field of genus

camellia that he became a world authority. In 1952 along with the late Professor E. G. Waterhouse, the late Mr. Walter Hazlewood and the late Dr. Merrillees, Mr. Jessep founded the Australian Camellia Research Society, which now has twelve branches throughout Australia and more than 1000 members. Mr. Jessep was elected Foundation President, a position he held for ten years from 1952 to 1962. He became the first Australian Registrar of New Australian raised camellia cultivars in 1954. He remained as Registrar until he retired from the position in 1986.

Mr. Jessep was awarded the highest honors of the Australian Camellia Research Society. In 1963, he was awarded the title of President Emeritus. In 1963, he was also appointed a fellow of the Society. In 1967, he was awarded the E. G. Waterhouse Medal by the Society for his notable contribution to the development of camellias in Australia and his research into the nomenclature of camellias. In 1972, he was awarded the Merrillees Gold Medal by the Victorian Branch of the Society, also for his distinguished work with the genus camellia in Australia. In 1976 he was invited to accept the position of Patron of the Australian Camellia Research Society and being agreeable, was elected to such office.

Mr. Jessep was a member of five overseas Camellia Societies. In the United States of America, England, Italy and Japan, he was regarded as one of the leading authorities on camellias in the world. He judged at Camellia Shows in every Australian state except Western Australia as well as in New Zealand, the U.S.A. and in Europe. He also wrote numerous articles for Horticultural Journals both in Australia and overseas. He was prominent in importing new camellia cultivars into Australia, having imported the first camellia granthamiana from Hong Kong and some of the famous Kuming Reticulata Camellias from Ralph Peer, U.S.A.

In 1950, Mr. Jessep visited London with Professor Waterhouse and attended the Camellia and Magnolia Conference held by the Royal Horticultural Society. At the conference, he met the late Dr. Harold Hume and the late Mr. Ralph Peer

from the U.S.A., Mrs. Violet Lort-Phillips from Jersey - a future President of the ICS and Mr. Charles Puddle. Later to become Foundation Secretary, Treasurer and Editor of the ICS. Following the Conference in London, Mr. Jessep represented Australia at an International Botanical Conference in Sweden.

Mr. Jessep visited Japan in 1954 to study Japanese methods of culture and propagation with special reference to camellias. On his visit he developed a friendship with Mr. Kiyoshi Ishikawa later to become a Director of the ICS. He visited England again in 1960 and also the U.S.A. where he attended Camellia Conferences and lectured.

When the International Camellia Society was founded in 1962, Mr. Jessep became a Foundation member and he maintained a close association with the Society until his death. He was an Australian Director of the Society in 1975-76.

In 1966, Mr. Jessep visited England, France, Spain, Portugal and Italy for the rather late Camellia Flowering season. Later in 1966 and early 1967, he visited the West Coast of the U.S.A. for the Camellia season. On this tour, he met Dr. Ralph Philbrick and held discussions with him on Camellia Nomenclature.

In 1972 he attended the ICS Conference in Stresa, Italy. He delivered messages to the delegates at the conference from the Australian Camellia Research Society and from the ICS President, Professor Waterhouse who was unable to attend. Mr. Jessep presented a paper at the conference on "Camellias in Australia." At the conference began a friendship with Dr. Antonio Sevesi. After the conference he visited Brighton in England, Israel, Kenya, Rhodesia and South Africa, observing Camellias where possible but also Roses, his other love.

The last conference of ICS Mr. Jessep attended was held in Australia in 1973 in Sydney and Melbourne. This was the first ICS Conference held outside of Europe.

Mr. Jessep was also known as a Rosarian and received a number of prestigious awards for outstanding service in the interests of the rose. He visited New Zealand on three occasions, mainly to attend rose conferences but also visited

Col. T. Durrant to discuss Camellias.

Until recent years, Mr. Jessep remained actively associated with Horticulture, regularly attending monthly meetings of the Victorian Branch of the Australian Camellia Research Society and Committee Meetings both at a State and National level.

To his beloved wife, Dorothy, to whom he had been married for 64 years, members of his family and all his friends, the members of the International Camellia Society extend their deepest sympathy and mourn the passing of one of the really great men in the Camellia world.

## **Ken Hallstone**

MARCH 4, 1912 - MARCH 27, 1991

HOUGHTON HALL, U.S.A.

Ken Hallstone's dedication to the Camellia and Camellia people was legendary, both in the U.S.A. and Internationally. His unforeseen and sudden loss is a devastating blow to all who knew him and to the Camellia

world, in particular.

He was struck down literally in the middle of his marvelous Camellia garden, just the way he probably would have wished it.

As a hybridizer, Ken was unsurpassed and known world-wide for his work with fragrance. He was instrumental in establishing a fragrant section in many shows in California and elsewhere which will continue to endure in his memory.

Ken served as ICS Director for the U.S. from 1978 through 1981, and continued to support all ICS activities with all of his inherent enthusiasm and tireless energy.

From a purely personal viewpoint, he was my closest camellia friend over a period of about 25 years. As a co-member of the Northern California Camellia Society Research Committee. I (and my wife, Ariana) would always spend the Research Meeting night at Ken and Kay's home in Lafayette - a standing invitation which went on for about 20 years and a treasured memory of the many times spent with him in his home and garden.

Requiescat in peace Ken - from all of the Camellia world.