

1908 to 1914. At about that time K.P. became increasingly aware of the lack of medical expertise in the Galton Laboratory, and it was at his suggestion that Julia Bell qualified as a doctor. Applied statistics and medicine formed the basis of the work for which she is famous, the collections of human pedigrees published under the general title of the *Treasury of Human Inheritance*. This was the first systematic attempt to document the distribution of human disease within families, and so anxious was Karl Pearson that these pedigrees should be most scrupulously recorded that in his 1912 preface he promised that the 'Treasury' would contain 'no reference to theoretical opinions.' In Julia Bell he found a fellow perfectionist with regard to the data, but by the 1920s a few mild opinions were obviously more acceptable. Subsequently Dr Bell wrote analytical articles which are among the classic papers of the subject. Perhaps the most notable are her 1940 paper on consanguinity rates and her 1937 paper with J.B.S. Haldane on the linkage between the genes for colour-blindness and haemophilia. This was the first demonstration 'that the principles of linkage which have been worked out for other animals also hold good for man.'

Dr Bell was on the staff of the Galton Laboratory until 1965 when she officially retired, at the age of 86! Although never Galton Professor of Human genetics herself she outlived the first three, Pearson, Fisher and Penrose, and in her 90s was still sufficiently concerned with the Laboratory to remonstrate with the Galton Professor when she felt it to be necessary! She was a supporter of the Women's Suffrage Movement, but never a militant. She was something rarer, one of the first generation of women to engage in professional scientific research, and to do it supremely well.

Elizabeth B. Robson

N.D. Riley

NORMAN DENBIGH RILEY, CBE, who died on 26 May 1979 at the age of 88 was an eminent British entomologist with a high reputation as a lepidopterist and as a tireless and effective worker in the interests of international entomology.

For nearly a quarter of a century he was head (Keeper) of the Department of Entomology in the British Museum (Natural History), and between the 1930s and 1950s saw it transformed from a dusty insect storehouse into a modern research institution. We may claim for him, as such a modest man would never claim for himself, that he was largely responsible for the high regard in which the Department of Entomology is still undoubtedly held internationally.

Fifty years ago service to one's country

was more esteemed than it is today, and in 1932 when E.E. Austen (a military man himself) retired as Keeper of Entomology he was instrumental in securing Riley's appointment as his successor in preference to F.W. Edwards. Riley had served in the army with distinction for the whole length of the Great War, rising to the rank of Captain, whereas Edwards — the scientifically more qualified man — had been a non-combatant pacifist through his Quaker convictions.

While Riley might have been fortunate at this juncture in his life, his promotion to Keeper was to prove amply justified. He had a taste for administration unusual in entomologists and soon became the architect both figuratively and almost literally (as he did much to plan the present departmental building) of an expanding Department of Entomology. During his Keepership the insect collections grew enormously, often through purchase of specialized collections negotiated by Riley and there were comparable increases in the department staff. Riley himself was a gregarious man, and when his staff became large enough he encouraged more contact amongst them by organizing annual staff dinner dances, which proved a popular innovation in an otherwise rather stuffy museum. During the Second World War he organised the evacuation of large parts of the collection and the library to safe quarters, and their return after the war, although he remained in South Kensington. The CBE was conferred on Riley in 1952.

In his Presidential Address to the Royal Entomological Society, Riley amused his audience by recalling when his small daughter was overhead to say "My daddy doesn't work — he goes to the Museum." In this she had caught Riley's character to a nicety, for to him work and pleasure were synonymous, and long after his official retirement in 1955, until his death in fact, he was a regular visitor to his beloved collection of butterflies in the Museum.

Butterflies were Riley's life-long scientific interest, and one that he was able to indulge professionally from the time of his appointment to the Museum staff as an Assistant in 1911 (which followed on the heels of a short period learning entomology while a demonstrator at the nearby Imperial College). It was not until his return from the war in 1919, however, that Riley published his first modest paper, describing some new Brazilian species of butterflies, but from then on he published regularly for over half a century, his bibliography of about 400 works including books, editorials and reviews as well as scientific papers. His scientific contributions to lepidopterology will be assessed in specialist journals, but mention should be made of his book written in collaboration with his friend Lionel Higgins entitled *A Field Guide to the Butterflies of Britain and Europe*: although only published in 1970 this has

already run through several editions and has been issued in nine languages.

Riley lived as a boy in South London, where he was born in the suburb of Tooting on 20 September 1890 and where he was educated at Harlington School, Balham and Dulwich College. A neighbour was Richard South, doyen amongst British Lepidopterists, and it was he who stimulated Riley's childhood interest in butterflies — so effectively as it turned out that Riley even on the eve of his death was discussing butterfly nomenclature with a friend.

Butterflies in spite of, or perhaps because of, their popularity have always had their problems with scientific names, and Riley was inexorably drawn into the intricacies of nomenclature, with the result that he served for 15 years (from 1950 to 1965) on the International Commission for Zoological Nomenclature. As Commission Secretary and member of its editorial Committee he was the mastermind behind the current edition of the International Code of Zoological Nomenclature and bore much of the burden of its production.

He was prominent also in international biology through his election to the International Entomological Congresses and his long connection with Congress organization. For a time Riley served as Chairman of the Entomological Section of the International Union of Biological Sciences. Responsibilities of this kind involved him in occasional distant travel, but most of his collecting was done in Europe. At home Riley's energies were poured into Society affairs. He was a Fellow of the Royal Entomological Society for 67 years (elected in 1912). For the last twenty of these, until his death he held the rare distinction of a Life Fellowship. Riley served on the Society's council (1921–23, 1929–30), and as its Secretary (1926–29, 1941–51), Treasurer (1939–40) and President (1951–52).

He belonged to the British Entomological and Natural History Society for an even longer period, having joined as a boy in 1902, and was its President in 1923–24. This Society gave him special links with many amateur specialists who were keen readers of *The Entomologist* a monthly journal largely devoted to Lepidoptera that Riley owned and edited for thirty-six years (1923–1959). A position he relished was that of organizer over many years of the Verrall Supper, an annual gathering of professional and amateur entomologists; in a long life he missed only two of these occasions and was present at the very first in 1912.

Norman Riley enjoyed every moment of a hard-working life and was the perfect exemplar of those qualities that in a more gentlemanly age were laid down for the conduct of British Museum staff — that they should be "persons of honour, integrity and liberality." He is survived by his widow, a son and daughter.

Pamela Gilbert