

Elizabeth A. Brown, a splendid tour guide, friendly companion and excellent collector

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Abstract

Elizabeth Anne Brown accompanied Tamás Pócs and other colleagues on several long field trips in Australia and Fiji from 2000–2011.

Introduction

I first heard the name of Elizabeth Anne Brown, when in 1999 we were collecting *Frullania* samples for the Flora of Australia Project, supported by the *Australian Biological Resources Study* (ABRS). The late Heinar Streimann (CBG/CANB) took me to the good localities of the east coast of Australia from Queensland to Victoria, and told me that Elizabeth had called him, to say that she could take me to places where we are sure to collect novelties. We agreed that this should happen the next year, when I was to be in Australia again for the same purpose. This visit was realised, together with my wife Sarolta Pócs, in the February of 2000. We first met in the National Herbarium of New South Wales, Sydney (NSW). I was examining her recent collections when I found a peculiar, tiny, papillose *Radula* from Bellenden Ker area of Queensland, from the bark of the endemic *Agathis atropurpurea* B.Hyland. This new species we soon described as *Radula ornata* E.A.Br. & Pócs (2001).

Elizabeth was a wonderful organiser and prepared a collecting trip in New South Wales, from Dorrigo National Park, through Mount Hyland Nature Reserve, the Gibraltar Range and Washpool National Parks, Iluka Nature Reserve, Bundjalung National Park, Victoria Park Nature Reserve in the ‘Big Scrub’, Nightcap National Park, Mt. Warning National Park, Border Ranges National Park, Bellangry State Forest, Wilson River Flora Reserve and Gloucester Tops National Park. She shared both driving and collecting with the accompanying colleague Robert [Bob] G. Coveny and Sarolta. Elizabeth was a really enthusiastic collector, for example in the Victoria Park Nature Reserve I observed an unusual tiny Lejeuneaceae among the prop roots of *Linospadix monostachyos* (Mart.) H.Wendl. palms. After telling her that I had never seen this before and I had only picked a few stems she spent more than half an hour kneeling to collect from the different palm bases a specimen good enough for NSW. Our suspicion was right, as the plant proved to be the very rare *Microlejeunea ocellata* (Herz.) Grolle, described from New Zealand under the name of *Rectolejeunea ocellata* Herz. and only found once before in Australia (Thiers 1990). She had very good eyes for discovering similarly tiny things (like *Radula ornata*). The next year, we revisited the summit of Bellenden Ker (Queensland) during a rain downpour. When we returned to the safe warmth of the telecommunication station, I told her that I had seen the northern temperate *Nowellia curvifolia* (Dicks.) Mitt. and a glaucous, waxy *Bazzania* on a rotting log. Although she had already gotten soaked to the skin, she immediately went out in the indicated direction and did not come back until she had seen both plants. The *Nowellia* specimen was a new record for Australia and was subsequently published (Pócs et al. 2012).

In June 2001, after a visit to the Northern Territory (from Darwin to Alice Springs area), we met again in Queensland, on a trip organized by Andi Cairns from the James Cook University, Townsville. Elizabeth took part in this collecting trip with Christine Cargill from the Australian National Herbarium, Canberra (CANB) (Fig. 1). We started at the Atherton Tableland and visited the Hugh Nelson Range, Crater Lakes National Park, the Wongabel State Forest, Mt. Lewis in the Main Coast Range, Malanga Malanga Creek, Palmerston National Park, Russell River National Park, and the Bellenden Ker National Park, where Elizabeth guided us to the type locality of *Radula ornata*. This location is an almost pure stand of mature *Agathis atropurpurea* trees with relatively open canopy, on the NW ridge of the central peak of Bellenden Ker summit, at an altitude of 1370–1420 m, grids 17°15.6'N and 145°51.1'E. On the beautiful red peeling bark of *Agathis*, this minuscule *Radula*, almost invisible to the naked eye, is quite rare and therefore its discovery was of great merit to Elizabeth. We made intensive collections in the same corticolous community from which I have identified the following species:

- Cheilolejeunea trapezia* (Nees) Kachroo & R.M. Schust.
Cololejeunea falcata (Horik.)Benedix
C. ocelloides (Horik.) Mizut.
Drepanolejeunea dactylophora (Nees et al.) Schiffn.
D. pleiodactyla Herz. (new to Australia!)
D. vesiculosa (Mitt.) Steph. subsp. *affinis* Schiffn. ex Herz.
Frullania hodgsoniae von Konrat et al. (new to Australia!)
F. monocera (Hook.f. et Tayl.) Tayl. and two other *Frullania* species
Harpalejeunea filicuspis (Steph.) Mizut.
Lejeunea exilis (Reinw. et al.) Grolle
Metalejeunea cucullata (Reinw. et al.) Grolle
Radula ornata (occurs only on *Agathis* bark).

After Bellenden Ker, we visited the Cardwell Range and Kirrama State Forest, where in a relatively dry evergreen lowland rainforest Elizabeth collected epiphyllous liverworts. The material included:

- Cheilolejeunea vittata* (Steph. ex G. Hoffm.) R.M. Schust. & Kachroo
C. trapezia (Nees) R.M. Schust. & Kachroo
Cololejeunea appressa (A. Evans) Benedix
C. floccosa (Lehm. et Lindenb.) Steph.
Lopholejeunea eulopha (Taylor) Schiffn.
Frullania sp.

After we visited the montane rainforest along Douglas Creek at the N side of Mt. Pershouse, where Elizabeth collected another species of *Nowellia* new to Australia, (*Nowellia langii* Pears. of Malesian distribution), we continued to Lumholtz National Park, Crystal Creek National Park and Paluma Range State Forest where we found the first Australian record for *Jubula hutchinsiae* (Hook.) Dum., again new to Australia (Pócs and Cairns 2008).

Our third opportunity to work together was in Fiji in April 2008. The aim of this expedition led by Marika Tuiwana was to explore the cryptogamic diversity of the islands and to educate Fijian specialists. It was organised by Matt von Konrat of the Field Museum, Chicago, (F) and hosted by the South Pacific Regional Herbarium (SUVA)* at the University of South Pacific in Suva (Figs 2, 3). Other participants included botanists Alifereti Naikatini and Marika Tuiwawa (SUVA), hepaticologist John Braggins of the Auckland War Memorial Museum (AK), hepaticologists Elizabeth A. Brown and Matt Renner (NSW), bryologist Allan Fife of the Allan Herbarium (CHR), lichenologist H. Thorsten Lumbsch (F) and bryologist Tamás Pócs (EGR).

During this expedition we visited and collected in the forests of Viti Levu and on the Taveuni Islands and Elizabeth's task was to deal with members of families Aneuraceae and Lepidoziaceae. The results from this expedition were summarized by many authors in *Telopea*, volume 13, part 3 (edited by Elizabeth A. Brown) and a brief history of bryophyte research in Fiji was described in this volume by all participants (von Konrat et al. 2011).

* This Herbarium is also referred to by the informal acronym (SPRH) (http://www.usp.ac.fj/index.php?id=ias_herbarium)



Fig. 1. (above). Daily budget. 11 June 2001 Babinda, Queensland (Andi Cairns, Elizabeth Brown, Christine Cargill).



Fig. 2. (right). Elizabeth chatting with Thorsten Lumsch at Nadiravatu Forest Reserve, Viti Levu, Fiji, 17 April 2008.



Fig. 3. Preparation of specimens in the Fiji Electricity Authority (FEA) Resthouse at Monasavu Lake, Viti Levu, Fiji 13 April 2008 (Clockwise left to front right: Matt Renner, Elizabeth Brown, Thorsten Lumsch, John Braggins).



Fig. 4. (left). Elizabeth taking a picture of bryophytes along the Namosi road, Viti Levu, Fiji, 30 August 2011.

Fig. 5. (right). Farewell from Kadavu Island. Elizabeth Brown and Andrea Sass-Gyarmati with our lady hosts in Nabukalevu-Ira village, Kadavu Island, Fiji, 10 September 2011.



Fig. 6. Our research group with our hosts in Nuku village, Kadavu Island, Fiji, 11 September 2011 (seated front left to right): Elizabeth Brown, John Braggins, Tamás Pócs, Matt von Konrat, Allan Fife and Lars Söderström; (standing back row left to right): Nina (a local girl), Mereia Katafona, local Fijian guide, Matt Renner, Laura Briscoe, Leon Perrie, Johny (Fijian Forestry), Fijian tour operator (partial visible at rear), Andrea Sass-Gyarmati, and Senilolia Heilala).

During August–September 2011 (Figs 4–6), my wife and I went again together with Elizabeth to continue the Fiji Project. This time we visited the newly established Savi Basin Natural Reserve on Viti Levu Island and the western half of the much smaller but still under-collected Kadavu Island. The participants were more or less the same as that of the previous Fijian trip, with the addition of Laura Briscoe (F), pteridologists Patrick Brownsey and Leon Perrie of the Museum of New Zealand - Te Papa Tongarewa (WELT), botanist Kwanruan Papong, (Thailand), hepaticologist Andrea Sass-Gyarmati (EGR), bryologists Ana Séneca and Lars Söderström of the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (TRH). In addition, Fijian botanists also joined us, among others Senilolia Heilala and Mereia Katafono (SUVA).

During these four long field trips I had the opportunity to make acquaintance with the very kind personality of Elizabeth. She always had a modest manner, was always helpful, very diligent at work and very competent in recognizing genera and species of her groups. In Fiji, when she was not busy with preparation of specimens or investigating the oil bodies of different hepatics, she helped in cooking and other necessary tasks. She was always friendly to local people and tried to maintain good relations with them. She never complained even in the hardest circumstances, but was always cheerful and understanding. Her passing away is a great loss for the bryologist community and for bryology. We keep her warm memory forever.

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