

**CLIVE LORD (1889 – 1933): NATURALIST, MUSEUM
CURATOR, ORNITHOLOGIST**

Janet Fenton

*102 Wiggins Road, Longley, Tasmania 7150; email:
fenton@southcom.com.au*

Charles Barratt, in a book titled *Isle of Mountains* published in 1944, wrote of his friend: “Clive Lord was a gifted and lovable man. From boyhood a naturalist, he lived to become one of Tasmania’s leading scientific workers, Director of the Museum of Hobart and secretary of the Royal Society of Tasmania. His knowledge of the island’s early history was profound; while he had roamed over the wildest country and made adventurous trips by sea to Port Davey and other parts...” (Barratt 1944)

Clive Lord joined the Tasmanian Field Naturalists Club as a founding member in 1904 at the age of 15. When the first secretary, E.A. Elliott, left for Sydney, Clive Lord took over the secretarial role (he was then twenty-one) a position he held for eighteen years! He then became president from 1929-1932 (Fenton 2004).



Lord studied architecture, served his ‘articles’ and practised as an architect, but his first love was the natural world. In 1917 he was appointed Assistant Curator of a then somewhat neglected museum in Hobart. Four years later he became Curator, then in 1923, Director, a position he held for the rest of his all too short life. Jack Thwaites described Lord as “tall and erect, a man of energy and enthusiasm with the skills of a great organiser...” adding that he had a “...genial disposition and a sense of humour” (Thwaites 1986).

Plate 1. Clive Lord. (Archives Office of Tasmania. NS 1013/1841. Collection of glass plates and photographs, E.R. Pretyman.)

Lord was a devoted conservationist, something all too rare in those times. He worked tirelessly for the Mt Field National Park as secretary of the Park Board, and he was there at the gala celebrations for the opening of Mt Field National Park in October 1917 when the Governor, His Excellency Sir Francis Newdegate, unlocked the gate with a silver key in the shape of a gum-leaf, made by Clive Lord himself (*The Mercury* 1917). Three hearty cheers went up, *The Mercury* newspaper reported, followed by equally hearty singing of the National Anthem. Patriotic stuff!

But Lord and his associates had a lot of work ahead of them. Gustav Weindorfer, E.T. Emmett and Clive Lord submitted a successful proposal for a Scenic Reserve and Wildlife Sanctuary encompassing Cradle Mt–Lake St Clair. Lord worked to protect fauna on Macquarie Island, and he was a foundation member of the Animals & Birds Protection Board, Secretary of the Royal Botanical Gardens, and had the gardens reorganised following what was for him an inspirational visit to England in 1931. On that trip, Lord was representing Tasmania at the British Association for the Advancement of Science, being, at the time, secretary for the Australasian Association. As if that was not enough, he was also Secretary of the Royal Society of Tasmania, a position he held for fifteen years. (Fenton 2004).

Another position he held was on the Sea Fisheries Board (once again, a foundation member). On that Board he and T.T. Flynn, Professor of Biology and also a fellow member of Tasmanian Field Naturalists Club and the Royal Society, took opposing views on the introduction of pots into the rock lobster fishery in southern Tasmania. The debate went on for decades. After four inquiries Premier Joseph Lyons and Albert Ogilvie replaced the Commission with a new body and reformed the industry, legalising pots in 1926 (Fenton 2004).

On top of his secretarial work for a number of organisations, and his job as museum director, Lord was quite a prolific writer, penning many articles for The Royal Society of Tasmania on diverse subjects, mainly Tasmanian history and mammals, birds, fish fauna, archaeology, reptiles and parks and reserves (Fenton 2004). A major work in collaboration with H.H. Scott, (Director of the Queen Victoria Museum in Launceston) was *A Synopsis of the Vertebrate Animals of Tasmania*, published in 1924.

He also wrote general reports and ornithological reports for Tasmanian Field Naturalists Club Easter Camps, in which he was prone to philosophise. He began his general report for the 1920 Easter Camp to Safety Cove: “The term naturalist in its widest sense means a lover of nature. Not only the collector who goes forth to gather specimens for his collection but also those who delight in the innumerable glories of the open way. The bold scenery of seashore and mountain are sufficient for some, but others prefer to examine more critically, with the result that every

inch of country yields examples of its flora and fauna to those who seek” (Lord 1920).

Some Tasmanian Days is a charming descriptive narrative that Lord wrote in the late 1920s. In the narrative, Lord appeared to be leading a survey party, possibly the 1922 Public Works Department party that surveyed the National Park as a source of fresh water for Hobart and towns between. (A dam was constructed about 1937, after the road was completed to Lake Fenton.) The survey party camped in an upland valley in Mt Field National Park. A boundary line had to be cut, and in the path stood a kingly *Telopea*. The leader of the team (Lord) regretted having to cut down the stately tree, and carried a log from its trunk back to camp. Subsequently he shaped the log and fitted it to replace a leg of his theodolite. In the narrative the “tree spirit” of that waratah lived on as the “Watcher from Afar”, taking in impressions of subsequent journeys (Lord 1926?). Lord used this literary device to describe trips to Mt Field; Cradle and Barn Bluff; Lake St Clair; Mt Olympus. Lord’s legacy is apparent in nomenclature in the Mt Field area – notably Mount Lord and The Watcher.

After much use, the other two legs on Lord’s theodolite needed replacing. The *Telopea* trunk, “the Watcher”, was remodelled to become the tiller of Lord’s yacht, which he named *Telopea*. It means: “seen from afar” (Lord 1926?). In this yacht Lord made trips tracing the landfalls of early explorers, to places including Bruny Island, Tasman Peninsula, Maria Island and The Schoutens (Freycinet). Broadcasts of lectures on the landfalls of early explorers were later printed as a memorial publication, *Voyages of the Early Explorers of Tasmania* (Lord 1933).



Plate 2. Clive Lord (left) with Leonard Rodway (centre) and Dr Pulleine, in the Broad River Valley. (Archives Office of Tasmania. TFNC collection; Michael Sharland photo.)

Lord made three trips around Tasmania's South Coast. The first, in 1926, was in his own yacht – adventurous for the times! After several attempts, he managed to reach a point just west of New Harbour before freshening westerlies forced him to turn back and anchor in Cox Bight. Lord made two more journeys by sea to the South West. In the summer of 1927 he accompanied a mineral exploration expedition to Cox Bight where tin ore (cassiterite) had been mined spasmodically since the 1890s. The following summer he joined a geological survey to Port Davey (Freney 1928). On these trips they travelled in a much larger ketch called the *Lenna*. While at Cox Bight, Lord and F. Blake from the Mines Department made a rough compass survey of the Bight – remarking “its correct outline is very much different from that on any previously published map”. Lord proposed nomenclature of a number of features, including Telopea Point, which he had seen from his yacht the year before. He named Melaleuca Inlet both for the shrub that grows there in profusion, and for the white quartzite and black schist on the rocky shores (Lord 1927).

Tragically, Lord died from a stroke in 1933, aged only 43. The Clive Lord Memorial medal was established in the year following his death and is awarded irregularly by the Royal Society to a lecturer chosen to deliver a “Clive Lord Memorial Lecture” on Tasmanian history or science (Thwaites 1986). A cairn was unveiled in 1936 in his honour, near the shores of Lake Fenton in the Mt Field National Park that he so loved. The plaque reads: “This cairn was raised by the hands of members of The National Park Board to honour the memory of Clive Errol Lord, Secretary to the Board 1917–1933 and to commemorate his devoted and unceasing labour for the development of this Park”.

Even now, 75 years on, Clive Lord's efforts and achievements are still impressive.

REFERENCES

- Barrett, C. (1944). *Isle of Mountains: Roaming through Tasmania*. Brown, Prior and Anderson, Melbourne.
- Fenton J. (2004). *A Century Afield: A History of the Tasmanian Field Naturalists Club*. Tasmanian Field Naturalists Club, Hobart.
- Freney, M.R. (1928). In *Unexplored Tasmania*. *The Home* July 2 1928: 28-32.
- Lord, C.E. (1920). *General Report. Easter Camp-Out, 1920 to Safety Cove (Port Arthur)*. Tasmanian Field Naturalists Club, Hobart.
- Lord, C.E. & Scott, H.H. (1924). *A Synopsis of the Vertebrate Animals of Tasmania*. Oldham, Beddome and Meredith, Hobart.
- Lord, C.E. (1926?). *Some Tasmanian Days*. Examiner, Launceston.
- Lord, C.E. (1927). The South Coast and Port Davey. *Papers and Proceedings of the Royal Society of Tasmania* 1927: 1-16.

Lord, C. (1933). *Voyages of the Early Explorers of Tasmania*. John Sands, Sydney. *The Mercury*, Hobart. 15 Oct. 1917, p.2.

Thwaites, J.B. (1986). Lord, Clive Errol (1819-1933). *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Vol. 10. Melbourne University Press.