

A 1927 RECORD OF THE LAUGHING OWL

During Easter 1927 I was camped at a spot called Ormond's Camp, which is at the head of the first inlet on the right hand, after passing through the Narrows from Waikaremoana to Wairaumoana. Some 300 metres distant, on the eastern side of the inlet, is a high, sheer limestone outcrop with its base surrounded by heavy bush.

For five successive evenings, when full darkness set in, several extremely loud piercing calls came from the face of the bluff, calls which can be described as prolonged *kee-wee*, both syllables being of equal length and intensity. At the time I could only think of the calls as coming from a Laughing Owl (*Sceloglaux albifacies*) but did not realise the import of the record.

In his excellent article on the Laughing Owl in the November 1981 issue of *Forest and Bird*, M. H. Douglas quotes W. W. Smith (1884) in the *NZ Journal of Science* 2: 86-88 as saying "The call of the adults on waking up in the evening is precisely the same as two men cooeing to each other from a distance."

Unfortunately there were no answering calls in 1927 to what I presume was a lone male.

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OBITUARY

AVERIL MARGARET LYSAGHT (1905-1981) AND THE NATURAL HISTORY RECORDS FROM COOK'S VOYAGES

When Captain James Cook took a series of cargoes of naturalists to the Pacific in the 1770s they were so overwhelmed by the number of new things that they found that all their successors have been trying to sort them out ever since. One of the more distinguished recent contributions has been made by a New Zealand scholar little known in her own country, Averil Lysaght.

Dr Lysaght was brought up below Mount Egmont, where she first distinguished herself by finding a new noctuid moth named after her, *Melanchnra averilla*, at the age of fifteen. In due course she headed the pass list in botany and zoology for all the New Zealand universities at her first degree examination, and went on to hold lecturing posts at her own college, Victoria College, and at London, Hull and Nottingham Universities in England, where she also worked at Rothamsted (Agricultural) Experimental Station and the Plymouth Marine Lab-