

OBITUARY

JOHN HERIOT SEDDON 1927-1984

John Seddon was killed at Tauranga on 19 February, when the microlight aircraft which he was piloting crashed suddenly. Flying had long been one of his great loves. He had held a Private Pilot's licence for the last ten years.

Graduating from the Otago Medical School in 1952, he became an esteemed and much loved General Practitioner, first at Te Puke and Mangakino, and then in 1962 at Cambridge. He was a distinguished member of the NZ College of General Practitioners, being made a Fellow of the College in 1982 and earning their gold medal for his research work and services to general practice. He also served a term as president of the Waikato Division of the NZ Medical Association.

John lived with zest and devoted such leisure as the demands of a busy practice allowed to outdoor pursuits, especially watching birds, if possible in remote places. He also loved boating, scuba-diving and mountain walking with a special interest in native trees and alpine plants. His notebooks were illustrated with charming sketches and skilful photographs. In all things he was a perfectionist.

John and Betty were a wonderful team who inspired others. Over some years in early summer they used to escape for a few precious days to the wide open spaces of the Far North. Locally they organised regular censuses of Kawhia and Aotea harbours. John had scoured from the air every swamp and waterway in the Waikato and Bay of Plenty in search of Cattle Egrets and in the hope of pin-pointing a breeding colony. John and Betty accompanied several expeditions to Farewell Spit, where they became very much at home as, telescope and tripod on shoulder, their long raking stride carried them over the miles of dunes and salicornia. Among the great flocks of resting waders, few rarities escaped their discerning eyes. On the Chathams the Wildlife Service was happy to have John as MO; and both, as first-class naturalists. They are among the privileged few who have bedded down in the ghostly woolshed on South East Island.

The Ornithological Society remembers John with affection and gratitude. New Zealand can ill afford the untimely loss of a man so wise, so gifted and so kindly, at the peak of his powers. The many who have enjoyed the privilege of the stimulating companionship and lively hospitality of an outstanding couple mourn with Betty and her family in their sudden bereavement.

— R. B. Sibson