

OBITUARY

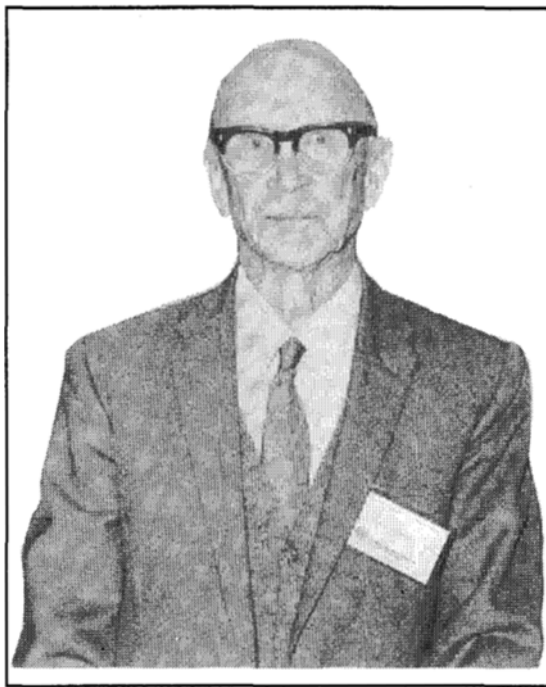
John Howard (Jack) Simmonds MBE, Hon. D Sc, M Sc, 1901–1992

Dr J.H. Simmonds, founder of the Plant Pathology Section of the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Stock in 1926, died after a short illness, on 3 November 1992, aged 91 years. A tribute to Dr Simmonds was published previously in *Australasian Plant Pathology* (Volume 21 pp. 91-94 1992). Recently, Dr Simmonds was elected an Honorary Member of the Australasian Plant Pathology Society. Dr Simmonds had been advised of his election a few weeks earlier, and his expression of thanks for the honour was one of his last deeds.

At the funeral ceremony, tributes were paid by Mrs Joan Cribb to his involvement with the Queensland Naturalists' Club, and by Mr Gordon Purss to his career in plant pathology. The ceremony was concluded with coverage of Dr Simmonds' family life, the citation that accompanied the MBE (Military Division) award for his contributions to the malaria eradication campaign in Papua New Guinea during World War II, and recitation of verses from the poem 'Crossing the Bar' by Alfred Tennyson.

J.H. Simmonds was the last link with the founding members of the Queensland Naturalists' Club. His father was a foundation member, and six-year-old Jack accompanied him on the early excursions, inspiring a life-long interest in natural history. Having commenced his career in plant pathology in 1922 during the latter part of the time of Henry Tryon (1856-1943), the first vegetable pathologist in Queensland, Dr Simmonds was also our last link with the beginnings of plant pathology in Queensland.

Simmonds himself pioneered research on the quiescence of *Colletotrichum* spp. affecting tropical fruit. In his eulogy, Mr Purss recalled his own early days in plant pathology in the 1950s, when Simmonds would deal with administrative matters as quickly as possible, to return to his beloved bell-jars of bananas. Although other workers had reported the detection of



symptomless infections caused by *Colletotrichum* spp. on tropical fruit, Simmonds demonstrated that infections of *Colletotrichum musae* (Berk. & Curt.) Arx remained quiescent for five months when inoculated onto immature banana fruit in the field, and resumed activity to produce typical anthracnose lesions as the fruit ripened. He also presented histological evidence of the quiescent structures produced by *Colletotrichum* spp., and discussed possible mechanisms for the regulation of quiescence. Later work on the taxonomy of *Colletotrichum* spp. causing ripe fruit rots, laid the foundations for modern species concepts in these taxa and underpinned the significant achievements of subsequent Australian research on anthracnose of tropical fruits.

Dr Simmonds leaves two daughters, Rosemary and Margaret, and grandchildren, to whom we extend our deepest sympathy.