

OBITUARY
GRACE MARIE TAYLOR, NÉE BULMER (1930–1999)

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New Zealand mycology and botany lost one of its most notable teachers, authors, and enthusiasts when Marie died after a struggle with lymphoma. In professional and amateur mycological circles, Marie's name is synonymous with popular publications on New Zealand fungi, illustrated with her beautiful water colour paintings of mushrooms and other macrofungi. In personal contact she was a very warm and caring person, ever ready to share of herself and to willingly pass on to her colleagues and students her knowledge, love, and passion for the fungi, and for the botanical world in general.

Marie pursued her early interests in botany to tertiary level, completing her BSc and MSc in botany at Victoria University, Wellington. Her Master's thesis was on the life history of a species of *Ourisia* (Bulmer 1951). She then trained to become a teacher at Auckland Teachers' College and held a teaching position at Wellington Girls High School, before becoming laboratory demonstrator and then lecturer in botany at Victoria University. During this time she wrote several taxonomic papers as well as highly practical illustrated keys to New Zealand native plants (e.g. Bulmer 1958, Taylor 1961).

Marie married Lawre in 1958, and the first of two sons was born in 1962. Parenting saw an interruption to lecturing although Marie undertook some teaching in Oamaru, in the South Island, where the family lived for 10 years. In 1971, they moved to Auckland. For 20 years Marie was senior tutor in the Botany Department of Auckland University, very much hands-on in running student practical courses, such as those catering for over 700 students in the Stage One biology course. Her enthusiasm, meticulous organisation, and high standards motivated large numbers of students in the pursuit of botany.

It was in Oamaru that Marie began her love affair with the fungi (Braxton 1968) motivated by earlier encouragement from Dr Greta Cone. As she was already proficient in pen and ink illustration and had a keen eye for detail, Marie soon developed the necessary skills to paint the fungi she collected, until even she was satisfied with the results! As each specimen was painted it was given a description including, where possible, microscopic details, and the specimen was dried for further study. Marie's specimens are today housed in the New Zealand Fungal Herbarium (PDD), Auckland.

The first book of Marie's paintings was published in 1970 (Taylor 1970), followed by an expanded version (Taylor 1981). This impressive book is without doubt the best known publication on New Zealand mushrooms, renowned for its insightful and beautifully crafted paintings and descriptive text of 180 of the most frequently encountered larger fungi. It is a tribute to Marie's accurate illustrations and careful selection from among the many hundreds of species that a user of her book can so readily identify many fungi to species level, or if not, at least spot a probable relative. Marie also fashioned easily remembered common names, such as 'fungus icicles' for *Hericium clathroides*. With the initial and subsequent printings of the book no longer available, publishers are considering a posthumous publication incorporating a larger selection of species and additional unpublished paintings.

National fungal forays began in 1986, and Marie and Lawre were committed participants and leaders each year, Marie, along with Barbara Segedin and later Geoff Ridley, as key identifiers of the mushrooms, and Lawre famous for his culinary skills and lavish menus. Marie was always keen to get into the forest each morning, constantly ready to stimulate others to spot those illusive fungi, and as a born teacher to instruct in their identification. Back at the lodge after a day in the field, Marie continued working with co-forayers to explain microscopic details and other features of importance in identification, and to prepare paintings of selected specimens.

Among her taxonomic studies, Marie worked for five months in Edinburgh with Professor Roy Watling, Edinburgh Botanic Gardens, and published jointly a major work on the mushrooms of the family Bolbitiaceae (Watling & Taylor 1987). Marie described the following new species of mushrooms in conjunction with Dr Egon Horak, Dr Greta Stevenson, and Roy Watling (Horak & Taylor 1981; Stevenson 1964; Watling & Taylor

1987): *Agrocybe olivacea* Watling & G.M. Taylor, *Clitocybe wellingtonensis* G.M. Taylor & G. Stev., *Conocybe gracilentata* Watling & G.M. Taylor, *C. horakii* Watling & G.M. Taylor, *C. novaezelandiae* Watling & G.M. Taylor, *Fayodia grisella* G. Stev. & G.M. Taylor (*Clitocybula grisella* (G. Stev. & G.M. Taylor) E. Horak), *Leucopaxillus ardesiacus* G. Stev. & G.M. Taylor (*Hydropus ardesiacus* (G. Stev. & G.M. Taylor) Singer), *Marasmius fishii* G. Stev. & G.M. Taylor, *Mycena minirubra* G. Stev. & G.M. Taylor, *Oudemansiella australis* G. Stev. & G.M. Taylor, *Phaeomyccena fusca* G. Stev. & G.M. Taylor, *Rozites castanellus* E. Horak & G.M. Taylor, *R. fusipes* E. Horak & G.M. Taylor, *R. meleagris* E. Horak & G.M. Taylor, *R. pallidus* E. Horak & G.M. Taylor, *R. rugosiceps* E. Horak & G.M. Taylor, *Tricholoma murinum* G.M. Taylor & G. Stev. (*Dermoloma murinum* (G.M. Taylor & G. Stev.) E. Horak), and *Xeromphalina racemosa* G. Stev. & G.M. Taylor.

At least three fungi have been named in Marie's honour: *Cortinarius taylorianus* E. Horak, *Sydowia* 42: 122 (1990); *Entoloma mariae* G. Stev., *Kew Bull.* 16: 230 (1962); and, *Mycena mariae* G. Stev., *Kew Bull.* 19: 54 (1964).

Marie was in demand for presenting talks and organising fungal forays for other botanical and naturalist groups. She was also often the first port of call in New Zealand for visiting mycologists from overseas, and collected with several including Professors Tsuguo Hongo, Bryce Kendrick, Orson Miller, Ron Peterson, and Kazumasa Yokoyama. Marie was invited to act as hands-on scientific adviser leading the first two Smithsonian Institution Museum groups to tour New Zealand in 1977 and 1978, and made many friends in the process.

Marie's last major project was the updating and expanding of the 'Botanical names of the flora of New Zealand' (Wall & Allan 1950). The manuscript provides an updated list of the New Zealand flora with the addition of names of many lower plants and fungi. Sadly, Marie could not see the project through to publication but this is being undertaken by the Auckland Botanical Society (Cameron 1999).

Marie was my laboratory tutor at Auckland University and I owe a considerable debt to her as a dedicated and patient instructor of the fungi, and later as a supportive mycological colleague and friend.

Marie's Publications:

- Bulmer, G.M. (1951). A Study of the Life-History of *Ourisia macrophylla* (Hook.). (MSc. Thesis, Victoria University of Wellington.)
- Bulmer, G.M. (1958). A key to the divaricating shrubs of New Zealand. *Tuatara* 7, 48–61.
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Acknowledgments

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