

Stan Hughes - Order of Canada



Dr Stan Hughes with MCpl Dany Veillette, Rideau Hall. Photograph © 2010 Office of the Secretary to the Governor General of Canada

It was with immense pleasure that we learned in July 2010 of the award of the Order of Canada to Dr. Stan Hughes, and particularly gratifying that the BMS President Lynne Boddy highlighted this award in the opening ceremony of IMC9 in Edinburgh. He was presented with his medal by the Governor General of Canada, her excellency Micheal Jean, the Queen's immensely personable and popular representative, in one of the last official acts of her tenure.

Stan was born and raised in Llanelli. In 1938 he went to the University College of Wales Aberystwyth. He initially intended to study Zoology but, having been sent by the eminent parasitologist Gwendoline Rees FRS to study the intestinal parasites of fish caught by a trawler on the Porcupine Bank (+ attendant U-boat risk), he decided to study for Honours Botany. His Honours dissertation dealt with coprophilous fungi and, having discovered this covered in a thick layer of dust in the basement store off the Biology building at Aberystwyth, I (GWG) used to routinely show it to Honours students as an example of the quality of dissertation that I expected them to produce. Their worried faces would eventually soften once they noticed the date (1941) on the front cover. Sadly for me, during a recent visit to Aberystwyth in 2009, Stan asked if he could have his dissertation back, so not quite in line with our current procedures for return of coursework within three weeks, our vice-Chancellor Prof. Noel Lloyd was kind enough to organise a small ceremony where we reunited Stan with his dissertation. Upon return to Ottawa, Stan proudly displayed the bound manuscript to his

colleagues, who marvelled at the scope of the study and the professional quality of the drawings.

Following his BSc studies, Stan was exempted from military service and spent three years with the 'WarAg' department, acting as a plant pathologist, resulting in an MSc. 1945 and the end of WWII allowed him to continue his mycological studies at the Commonwealth Mycological Institute before a position became available in Ottawa. Hughes '53 followed and the rest is history.

Throughout his period of exile in Canada, Stan and his Canadian wife Lyndell have made frequent pilgrimages to the home country, usually at Easter to attend the Old Students' Reunion at Aberystwyth, as well as visiting his siblings. Gareth's father knew Stan through the OSA, and he was aware of Stan's existence from an early age but we have corresponded regularly in the past 10-15 years since I (GWG) was appointed at Aberystwyth. One focus of our discussions was Stan's strong desire to donate his collection of taxonomic books and papers to Aberystwyth University. I was equally keen that this collection should not languish in the basement of a library but rather be located near an active laboratory undertaking taxonomic research with fungi. Sadly I am no taxonomist but the opening of the National Botanic Garden of Wales in 2000, sited only a few miles from Stan's birthplace, was a much better prospect and despite a few initial hiccups and in large part thanks to the efforts of Margot Greer, Nigel Stringer and others, the Stan Hughes collection now takes pride of place in its library. The opening of this collection was reported in *Mycologist News* issue 2, 2009.

In Ottawa, Stan continues to spend most mornings in the classic (by Canadian standards) ambience of the William Saunders Building, named after the entomologist who founded the Central Experimental Farm in Ottawa, and whose son brought Marquis wheat to the world. Herbarium cabinets with Stan's specimens, many collected during his sabbatical in the 1960's in that other country of his heart, New Zealand, overflow his office into the hallway. The sooty moulds continue to absorb him, and the piles of herbarium folders shift around his office like the snow drifts outside his window. He continues to share his knowledge with colleagues and visitors, frequently using his office sink to demonstrate the use of sooty mould colonies as tinder.

Gareth Griffith and Keith Seifert