

FRANCIS ERIC MILSOM (1889-1945)

Mark Lawley
email: mrbyology@gmail.com

This is one in a series of articles about prominent British and Irish field-bryologists of the past. The author would be very pleased to learn of any information which supplements its content.

A Social and Biographical History of British and Irish Field-bryologists is also available on-line at <http://britishbryologicalsociety.org.uk/>

Bryological career

Milsom joined the Yorkshire Naturalists' Union in 1918 and soon became recorder for the bryological section. He joined the BBS in 1923, and developed a particular expertise for identifying liverworts. He became distributor of hepatics from 1925 until 1933, the Society's referee for liverworts in 1934, and compiled a list of Yorkshire liverworts which was published posthumously in 1946. He was President-elect of the BBS at the time of his death.

His herbarium is at Leicester University.

Family background and biography

Francis Milsom was a son of William Dean Milsom (1858-1931) and Kate (*née* Midwinter, 1862/3). William was a journalist in 1901. Kate was a daughter of Charles Midwinter (1821/2-1891), a corn merchant, and Emily Sophia Mary (*née* Allen, 1821/2-1891). Kate Midwinter's elder sister, Emily Sophia (born 1860/1) married the bryologist William Holmes Burrell (1865-1945); thus W.H. Burrell was Francis Milsom's maternal uncle.

Francis was born in 1889 (not 1886, as has been published) in the Edmonton district of London, and graduated B.Sc. from London in 1908. He followed his uncle William Burrell into the pharmaceutical profession, registering as a chemist and druggist and becoming a member of the Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain in 1911. He worked for two firms of manufacturing chemists in London, and in 1917 joined British Dyestuffs Corporation, Ltd, (later merged with Imperial Chemical Industries (ICI)) at Huddersfield, and remained on their staff for the remaining 28 years of his life.

He married at Huddersfield in 1926 Annie Gladys Jenkinson (1882-1958), daughter of Annie and William, a tobacconist in London.

Milsom died at High Cross, Kirkburton, Yorkshire on December 5th 1945, and was buried in the graveyard there, having bequeathed his herbarium of bryophytes to the BBS.