

## ROBERT HUNT MELDRUM (1858-1933)

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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*

Meldrum was a keen mountaineer and linguist as well as bryologist, and published his bryological findings from expeditions to the hills of Perthshire in the *Proceedings of the Perthshire Society of Natural Science*. He found *Ctenidium procerrimum* on Ben Lawers in 1891, and *Anomodon attenuatus* at Elcho, Perthshire in 1900. He wrote 'A Preliminary list of Perthshire Mosses' (*Transactions of the Perthshire Society of Natural Science*, 1898, pages 227-239) and 'Additions and Corrections to the Perthshire List of Mosses' (*Transactions*, 1909, pages 13-17). He was a founding member of the Moss Exchange Club in 1896, a referee in 1899, and still served the Club in that capacity in 1914.

Meldrum bequeathed his Perthshire bryophytes to the Perthshire Society of Natural Science (which he had joined in 1884), and about 700 of his specimens collected between 1880 and 1920 are at Perth Museum and Art Gallery, along with related correspondence. He also made a herbarium of European species, which he bequeathed to the Royal Botanic Gardens, Edinburgh. Further of his plants are in the Department of Botany at Edinburgh University and at Cardiff, with 40 packets at Liverpool Museum.

### *Family background and biography*

Robert Hunt Meldrum was born on November 23<sup>rd</sup> 1858 at Tibbermore, Perthshire, a younger son of Thomas Meldrum (1828-1886) and Catherine (*née* Henderson, 1828-1896). A Meldrum was minister at Tibbermore in 1718, so the name was evidently longstanding in the parish, but Thomas (Robert's father) was born in Ceres, Fife. He worked as a ploughman at Rhynd, Perthshire in 1861, and as a domestic coachman in 1881. Catherine was born in Liff and Benvie, Forfarshire (Angus), and was a cook. Thomas and Catherine's eldest son, David, was born at Dunbarney, Perthshire in 1850/51. He became a stonemason/dresser, and moved to Glasgow. In 1861, the Meldrums lived at Elcho Cottage, Rhynd, Perthshire.

In 1892 Robert married Marjory Cowans Rodgie (born Sweden, 1865-1917). Marjory was a daughter and ninth child of Alexander Rodgie (1827-1899) of Dron, Perthshire and Anne (*née* Paton, 1834). Alexander Rodgie was a saw-trimmer in 1881, and worked for some years as a “woodforester”.

Robert and Marjory had six children: Robert Sydney (born Edinburgh, 1894-1955), Annie Paton (born in Perth, 1895-1970), Kate Henderson (born Perth, 1896; died 1915), Thomas (born 1898, Tibbermore; died 1914), Alexander Robert (Alec, 1904-1946), and David (1901-1927). David was a gifted artist and linguist, and a company secretary who died of septicaemia. David doubtless acquired his gift for and accomplishments in languages from his father, who could read at first hand seven European languages.

Robert trained as a teacher in Edinburgh. By 1881 he was an assistant teacher at Cherrybank School, and lived with his parents at Woodlands, near Perth. Subsequently he taught at several schools in Perth, including that at Balhousie. In the mid-1890s he returned to his home town of Tibbermore, where he became headmaster at the elementary school, and also acted as Registrar for the parish and Session Clerk to the Church. He retired in 1917, took up accountancy with Messrs Morrison, and lived in Perth. He married secondly Marjory Crombie White (1892-1946) in 1922. They had a son, Peter White Meldrum (born 1922).

Robert Meldrum died in June 1933.

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