

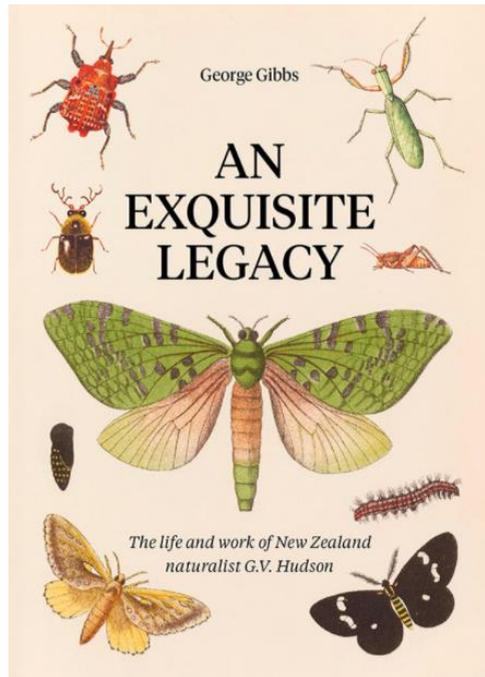
**BOOK REVIEW: *An Exquisite Legacy. The life and work of New Zealand naturalist G.V. Hudson* by George Gibbs. Published by Pottan & Burton, Nelson, New Zealand. ISBN: 9781988550176.**

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Early in my entomological career I discovered a copy of George Vernon Hudson's *Fragments of Entomology* in a second-hand bookshop and managed to convince my father to buy it for me. Inside I found the plates of the weevil *Pactola variabilis* and the lacewing *Drepanacra binocula*, laying out in glorious colour the many forms of these highly variable species.

The plate of *Pactola* is reproduced in the endpapers of *An Exquisite Legacy*, a new book on George Vernon Hudson



by George Gibbs, which is a combination of a biography, a portfolio and a tribute to an influential grandfather from an admiring grandson. The book describes Hudson's childhood in England and his travel and arrival in New

Zealand. It then examines Hudson's early life in New Zealand and discusses the huge impact that Edward Meyrick had on his thoughts and studies. Chapters are dedicated to Hudson's artwork, his collection, and the major books which established his reputation and lasting influence on New Zealand entomology. The latter part of the book considers Hudson's astronomical and meteorological interests, including his pioneering efforts to introduce the concept of daylight savings time to an initially sceptical audience, before contrasting Hudson the outspoken critic of institutional science and entomological practice with the gentle and loving man remembered by the family. A picture emerges of a dedicated, passionate and driven man who, from an early age, made it his life's work to not only learn about insects for himself, but also to pass on this information and understanding to the wider public.

Throughout it all, Hudson's artworks provide the focal point and background to the text. Examples of plates from Hudson's books are reproduced in higher quality than was possible when they were originally published, and are joined by other previously unpublished works. We learn that his artworks were prepared at the scale they were finally published, and some of his finest examples are enlarged to allow appreciation of the detail of his paintings.

Hudson was never employed as a scientist, working for the postal service for the entirety of his employed life. Although he was critic of many aspects of professional science, he maintained a wide connection with other scientists, both professional and amateurs, in the fields that he was most interested. Two of these relationships - with Edward Meyrick and Alfred Philpott - are examined in some detail and provide insights into Hudson's outlook on entomological research. Other colleagues of Hudson are only mentioned in passing, and I should have enjoyed it had their backgrounds and interactions with Hudson been elaborated upon further. People such as Enys, Helms and Clarke have left their mark upon New Zealand entomology, but little information on their lives are available elsewhere and nothing additional is offered here. Likewise, the relationship between

Hudson and the other great New Zealand entomologist Thomas Broun is only briefly alluded to. Hudson and Broun certainly corresponded and exchanged specimens; Hudson having collected 66 of the species described by Broun. I would have been very interested to read further details of the relationship between these two entomologists. Other than Meyrick, no mention is made of Hudson's correspondence with European entomologists such as Sir Guy Marshall and F.W. Edwards, to whom Hudson sent specimens and who, as a result, made valuable contributions to New Zealand entomology. Although it is a shame that the opportunity to explore these relationships was not taken, I recognise that greater inclusion of these details may have made the book less accessible to some.

The book has an index of the scientific names of insects discussed within it, but not to people, places or other topics. This makes it difficult to quickly locate the parts of the book which describe how Hudson's life intersected with others.

Included in the end matter are lists of the species named by and after Hudson. I am glad that these were considered worthy of inclusion, and I consider them to be a tangible measure of Hudson's impact and influence. It seems that these lists did not receive as much editorial attention as the rest of the book, and they contain some spelling errors and apparent marginalia which have been inadvertently included. In the weevils, for example, *Hatasu hudsoni* Marshall, 1926 is currently combined in *Tychanopais* Broun and *Rystheus hudsoni* Marshall, 1926 has been synonymised with *R. notabilis* Broun, 1917. In addition, these lists have missed several species which are included below in Appendices 1 & 2. *Hyspithocus hudsonae* Bergroth, 1927 (Hemiptera: Pentatomidae) is included in the list, though this species and *Lyperopais stellae* Marshall, 1926 were actually named after Hudson's daughter, Stella. With George Gibbs also having many species named after him, it is probably a unique situation in New Zealand entomology that three generations of the same family have had their contributions to the field honoured with species being named after them.

Hudson's life and work remains highly relevant today. His enjoyment of sharing his discoveries with the wider public foreshadows the current emphasis on "science communication". His drive to locate larvae and find out their foods and habits, which still remains rarely followed, allows us to understand their "ecosystem services" and to have a "holistic" view of the environment they inhabit. There is currently a renewed recognition of scientific illustration as an artform, shown by the rise of #sciart as a hashtag on social media. And the care that he took of his insect collection, and the obvious joy he obtained from it, should be a reminder that their importance extends beyond their scientific value.

*An Exquisite Legacy* is a beautiful and informative volume, which brings the life, entomology and artworks of George Vernon Hudson to a modern audience. It should be an easily justifiable purchase for most readers of *The Weta*, but the book's scope and aesthetic appeals should also make it attractive and interesting to those without a prior special interest in insects. Hudson has been an inspiration and a guide for me in my pursuit of entomology as a career and hobby, as he has been to Gibbs and many other entomologists of my acquaintance. *An Exquisite Legacy* is well-positioned to ensure he acts as an inspiration and a guide to another generation to enjoy insects for their ingenuity and beauty.

*An Exquisite Legacy. The Life and Word of New Zealand Naturalist G.V. Hudson* by George Gibbs is available from [www.pottonandburton.co.nz](http://www.pottonandburton.co.nz) and all good book shops throughout the country. Members of the Entomological Society of New Zealand are eligible for a 10% discount when purchased from Potton & Burton's website by using the code HUDSON during checkout. This offer expires 31 Dec 2021.

## **Appendix 1. Addenda to the list of species named after George Vernon Hudson**

*Pactola hudsoni* Marshall, 1937 (Coleoptera: Curculionidae)  
*Aneugnomus hudsoni* Marshall, 1937 (Coleoptera: Curculionidae)  
*Nestrius hudsoni* Marshall, 1953 (Coleoptera: Curculionidae)  
*Holcaspis hudsoni* Britton, 1940 (Coleoptera: Carabidae)  
*Makara hudsoni* (Cameron, 1945) (Coleoptera: Staphylinidae)  
*Ocalea hudsoni* Cameron, 1945 (Coleoptera: Staphylinidae)  
*Oligota hudsoni* Williams, 1976 (Coleoptera: Staphylinidae)  
*Parasiagonum hudsoni* (Cameron, 1927) (Coleoptera: Staphylinidae)  
*Sepedophilus hudsoni* (Cameron, 1945) (Coleoptera: Staphylinidae)  
*Phymatophaea hudsoni* Broun, 1923 (Coleoptera: Cleridae)  
*Zeadelium hudsoni* (Broun, 1908) (Coleoptera: Tenebrionidae)  
*Brounopsis hudsoni* Blair, 1937 (Coleoptera: Cerambycidae)  
*Salpingus hudsoni* Blair, 1925 (Coleoptera: Salpingidae)  
*Eucolaspis hudsoni* Shaw, 1957 (Coleoptera: Chrysomelidae)  
*Aspicolpus hudsoni* Turner, 1922 (Hymenoptera: Braconidae)  
*Pseudocoremia hudsoni* Stephens, Gibbs & Patrick, 2007 (Lepidoptera: Geometridae)

## **Appendix 2. Addenda to the list of available names published by George Vernon Hudson**

*Helle longirostris* (Hudson, 1913) (Diptera: Acroceridae)  
*Xanthorhoe orophylloides* Hudson, 1909 (Lepidoptera: Geometridae)  
*Ichneutica empyrea* (Hudson, 1918) (Lepidoptera: Noctuidae)  
*Acanthophlebia cruentata* (Hudson, 1904) (Ephemeroptera: Leptophlebiidae)  
*Megaleptoperla grandis* (Hudson, 1904) (Plecoptera: Gripopterygidae)  
*Kikihia muta pallida* (Hudson, 1950) (Hemiptera: Cicadidae)  
*Pactola nigra* (Hudson, 1950) (Coleoptera: Curculionidae)  
*Pactola bicolor* Hudson, 1950 (Coleoptera: Curculionidae)  
*Pactola triangularis* Hudson, 1950 (Coleoptera: Curculionidae)  
*Pactola callista* Hudson, 1950 (Coleoptera: Curculionidae)  
*Pactola dispar* Hudson, 1950 (Coleoptera: Curculionidae)  
*Pactola galactalis* Hudson, 1950 (Coleoptera: Curculionidae)  
*Pactola lineata* Hudson, 1950 (Coleoptera: Curculionidae)  
*Pactola rubronotata* Hudson, 1950 (Coleoptera: Curculionidae)  
*Pactola vittata* Hudson, 1950 (Coleoptera: Curculionidae)