

Hamlyn-Harris, Ronald (1874-1953). Aust. Diet. Biog. 9:177-178.

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HAMLIN-HARRIS, RONALD (1874-1953), entomologist, was born on 1 September 1874 at Eastbourne, Sussex, England, son of Hamlyn Huntingdon Harris, retired lieutenant of the 18th Hussars, and his wife Sarah Wheeler, née Smith. Educated in Germany and England, he trained in estate management and, while managing his father's Gloucestershire orchard, became an expert apiarist. Research in Naples, Italy, in 1901, won him a D.Sc. from the Eberhard Karl University, Tübingen, Germany, in 1902 for a thesis on 'The Statocysts of Cephalopoda'.

Hamlyn-Harris arrived in Sydney in May 1903 and next month became science and German master at Toowoomba Grammar School, Queensland. He revitalized science teaching, raised funds for a new laboratory, gave popular lectures at the technical college and in 1908 became foundation president of the Toowoomba Field Naturalists' Club.

In October 1910 he became director of the run-down Queensland Museum. Reorganizing its scientific work and the presentation of collections, he expanded its publications and arranged an extensive programme of public lectures. His exhibition of Sir William MacGregor's [q.v.5] New Guinea artefacts won the governor's praise. In 1911 Hamlyn-Harris gave the first lectures in biology at the University of Queensland and in 1912-18 published twenty anthropological papers. President of the Royal Society of Queensland in 1916, he accomplished much, but overwork and problems at the museum affected his health. In August 1917 he resigned to grow fruit at Stanthorpe. As foundation president in 1919-21 of the Stanthorpe Entomological Society he urged the need for an experimental field station. In 1922 he took charge of the Australian Hookworm Campaign's central laboratory in Brisbane, undertaking malaria/filaria and mosquito field-surveys. After the campaign was discontinued in 1924 he taught at The Southport School.

The first city council under the City of Brisbane Act, 1924, opened a department of health and created an entomological section in 1926 to control mosquitoes. Hamlyn-Harris's appointment as city entomologist with a staff of fourteen remains the only such appointment ever made in Australia. Organizing laboratories and field teams, he advised on engineering measures and carried out an intensive educational campaign and published twenty papers. His pioneering investigations of biological control are again relevant since residual insecticides have become unpopular. By 1934 when the council abolished his office dengue had not recurred since 1926 and filariasis had almost disappeared from Brisbane, largely

## Hamlyn-Harris

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due to his work. He concluded his scientific career as a full-time lecturer in zoology at the university in 1936-43.

Hamlyn-Harris died in Brisbane on 26 June 1953 and was cremated. He was survived by his wife Bertha Hamlyn, née Harris, whom he had married at Tumut, New South Wales, on 30 December 1908, and by three sons and three daughters.

Of medium height and fair complexion with a shiny bald pate from middle age, Hamlyn-Harris was kindly, courteous, hospitable and a versatile practical scientist. His infectious enthusiasm inspired many young people with a love for science. He especially enjoyed playing the role of Charles Dickens at gatherings of the Brisbane Dickens Fellowship, of which he was president.

R. D. Goodman, *Toowoomba Grammar School 1875-1975* (Toowoomba, Qld, 1976); *Toowoomba Grammar School Mag*, 1 (1904), 2 (1905), 3 (1906), 4 (1907); Qld Museum, *Memoirs*, 13 (1956); Entomological Soc of Qld, *News Bulletin*, 9 (1982).

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