

EDITORIAL

ALFRED MARK MACKERETH

KNOWN to us all as "Mark" he died in Cape Town on January 25, 1976. His friendliness and sincerity will be missed by all who were privileged to know him.

Mark Mackereth joined the Cape Piscatorial Society in July 1961 and was elected to the General Committee in August 1963, continuing as an active member of that body until his illness in 1975.

He wrote an introductory article for PISCATOR No. 53 of Summer 1961/62 — "A Newcomer to the Smalblaar". He gave his impressions of his first season on a "delightful little river", which he considered to be a first class dry-fly river in a glorious setting. It reminded him of some of the beautiful little Austrian mountain streams which he had had the good fortune to fish in 1959 with his friend the Vienna Orchestra horn player, Ernst Müllbacher. On his first visit to the Smalblaar there was snow on the mountains and the river was running high, and although the water was clear, he had a blank day as a dry-fly addict.

On the next occasion, with the river in good order, he found the trout rising well and he was successful with his favourite dry fly from Yorkshire, a Wickham's Fancy, and he had a full bag of rainbows and returned many undersize. He spent a good deal of the day experimenting with other dry fly patterns, but came to rely on the Wickham.

This preference was continued on many other visits to the Smalblaar throughout the coming seasons to the Spring of 1964, by which time he had produced his own version of the dry Wickham, and other experienced anglers had found it to be the best taker. Thereafter, Mark's skill in fly tying became famous.

During the next ten years the PISCATOR records show that Mark Mackereth was a master of dry-fly fishing on the Smalblaar each season, often taking full legal bags of rainbow trout and including large fish for that river. In the evolution of his own dry-fly patterns, he fished his own Wickhams, tiny Black Spiders, Dry Grasshoppers and Parachutes, and in 1970 his famous "Caribou Spider" came into being. He had learnt that "pockets" in the runs at low water were more profitable than the large still pools. Parachute flies of various colours were used, but his beautifully bouyant Caribou Spider, tied with deer hair body and Old English Game hackles, was the most persistent and was much in demand.

He tied many, rapidly and skillfully, and he kindly made his patterns available to members in the Club Room. Greatly due to Mark's influence, fly tying became a cult widely practised amongst our members, particularly with junior members, many of whom have developed skill in the art and a pride in using their own productions. He was an outstanding and patient instructor of fly fishing, and many anglers, now proficient, owe their initiation to the willing advice and example of Mark Mackereth.

Other waters on which Mark Mackereth had good results included Vogelvlei for smallmouth bass, The Molenaars and Holsloot for rainbows, the Witte River for brown trout, the Steenbras and Wemmershoek reservoirs and other dams, and with large rainbows at Ceres in the years of good water. But the Smalblaar was his favourite.

At a general meeting of the General Committee held on February 11, 1976, respect was paid to a greatly esteemed colleague. Mr. G. H. Godley, Vice-President,

paid tribute to a much loved member, who had been a friend and advisor to so many anglers; a companion who had an aura of peace. He had been present when Mark's ashes had been placed in one of his favourite pools on the Smalblaar River. Contributions, in lieu of flowers, had been sent to the Cape Piscatorial Society.