



In Memoriam: Beryl Patricia Hall, 1917–2010

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AOU COMMITTEE ON MEMORIALS

Beryl Patricia Hall, a Corresponding Fellow (1963) of the AOU, died on 26 August 2010 at age 93. Born Beryl Patricia Woodhouse on 13 June 1917, she grew up in Epsom, Surrey, and attended Eastbourne and Godolphin schools but was discouraged by her parents from studying mathematics at Cambridge. The summer time that she spent in Cornwall kindled an interest in birds. In 1939, as war loomed in Europe, she entered the Women's League and taught ambulance drivers in the local Air Raid Precautions.

During World War II, following her engagement to John Hall, Pat joined the Mechanical Transport Corps and served (1941–1944) in South Africa and Egypt. During her service, she and John married and she finished the war in Italy.

Pat's service in Africa focused her interest in birds. After the war, she declined a position at the BBC, her marriage failed, but in 1947 she was offered a full-time Associate Scientific Worker position (at 4 shillings an hour, up to £100 per year!) in the Bird Room at the Natural History Museum. Within two years, she returned to Africa on the first of what would become many successful collecting trips. In addition to her field adventures, massive amounts of curatorial work were generated.

Pat's subsequent collecting trips to Africa for the British Museum resulted in many months spent in the field. Over the years, her work yielded thousands of specimens and hundreds of new species. These expeditions were successful by all measures

and were often self-funded. In addition, her work yielded numerous papers and the monumental *An Atlas of Speciation in African Passerine Birds* (with R. E. Moreau, 1970). Her *What a Way to Win a War* and *A Hawk From Handshaw* (1993) were semi-autobiographical, and *Bird Room Ballads* with Derek Goodwin (1969) was a collection of light-hearted comments on ornithological research at the British Museum.

In the course of her time at the Bird Room, Pat's contributions and publications led to further service and honors. She served on the Committee of the British Ornithologists' Club, was assistant editor of *Ibis*, and was vice president of the British Ornithologists' Union. She was presented the Gill Memorial Medal (1971) by the South African Ornithological Society and gave a Plenary Lecture at the 15th IOC (1970, The Hague) and the Witherby Memorial Lecture (1974) for the British Trust for Ornithology. She served as president of the Fourth Pan-African Ornithological Congress. The Zoological Society of London honored her with the Stamford Raffles Award (1971) to recognize her "distinguished contributions to zoology," an honor designed to acknowledge the work of amateurs. It was presented by Prince Phillip, Duke of Edinburgh.

Robert Prys-Jones generously provided many of the vital statistics and shared his admiration for Pat and his appreciation of her accomplishments. A longer obituary appeared in *Ibis* (155:193–914, 2011).