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OBITUARY

C. F. PARKIN

1903-1988

Many who were lucky enough to stay on Little Barrier Island between 1943 and 1958 will remember with affection Charlie Parkin and his wife, May.

A Geordie from Sunderland, Charlie left England as a seaman-boy and fell in love with New Zealand, where he could always be near the sea. In 1932 he and May were married. During many adventures together, they rode pushbikes from Auckland to Wellington and back. (Just imagine the state of the roads at that time.) They also lived for 5 years on an old oil hulk in the Hauraki Gulf.

On Little Barrier Island Charlie and May were dedicated custodians for 15 years, waging war on the cats as best they could and steadily amassing a wealth of information about their unique island.

One of Charlie's most notable contributions to ornithology was the study of a pair of Stitchbirds at a nest which K. V. Bigwood had found. The nest was 7 metres above ground in a position awkward for photography. With the skill of a sailor-bushman, Charlie erected scaffolding without causing undue interference and built a hide on top. One of Bigwood's resulting colour photographs may be seen as plate 47 in Gordon Williams's *Birds of New Zealand* (Reed 1963). When Bigwood had to depart, Charlie carried on with the observation of the nest. Some of the photographs which he took appeared in *Notornis* 6 pp. 233-236.

King's College boys who took part in trips of exploration to Little Barrier in 1946, 1947, 1948 and 1952 happily recall the warmth of the welcome they received from the Parkins, and especially May's sumptuous cooking as a change from their Spartan camp-tucker.

The Ornithological Society extends sympathy to May, who now lives at Hector, near Westport. Our precious offshore islands need resident guardians such as Charles and May Parkin.

R. B. Sibson