

PETER EWING (1849-1913)

Mark Lawley

email: m.lawley@virgin.net

This is one in a series of articles about prominent British and Irish field-bryologists of the past. The author would be very pleased to learn of any information which supplements its content.

A Social and Biographical History of British and Irish Field-bryologists is also available on-line at <http://britishbryologicalsociety.org.uk/>

Bryological career

Ewing added the liverworts *Cephalozia ambigua*, *Odontoschisma macounii* (with William Young), and *Tritomaria polita* to the British list.

His herbarium is at Glasgow.

Family background and biography

Peter Ewing was born at Kinross, on July 13th, 1849, the eldest of seven children of Peter Ewing (1818/9-1900) and Agnes (*née* Blackwood). His father was a woollen-weaver in 1851, but subsequently sold books and stationery in Kinross, and later at Callander. He was also a keen photographer, and exhibited photographic slides at Edinburgh in 1861.

Of Peter's siblings, William (born 1854/5) was a sailor in 1871, Robert (born 1857/8) was a photographer in 1881, Catherine (born 1859/60) was a telegraphist in 1881, George (born 1861/2) was a tailor in 1881, Eliza was also born in 1861/2, and Alexander was born in 1865/6.

Peter left school at the age of nine, and became apprenticed to his father, who by that time had forsaken weaving for his new career of selling books and stationery. In 1867, aged 17, he became apprenticed to a joiner, and gave his occupation as a wright in 1871. Later, he became a surveyor for Phoenix Fire Insurance Company.

Peter's first wife is unknown. He married secondly Elizabeth Raymond Burden (1860-1951), a daughter of John Burden (1820/1-1867) of Glasgow and Marion (*née* Weir?). John Burden was a painter and paper-hanger in 1851, but subsequently became an oil and colour merchant. In 1881, at the age of 21, Elizabeth was head of her household in Glasgow, and worked as a clerk. Her younger sisters Jessie Weir Burden and Minnie Weir Burden worked as dressmaker and warehouse-girl respectively.

Ewing took up botany as a pastime at evening classes in Glasgow, and studied all plants except fungi.

He died at Glasgow on August 3rd, 1913.