

PAT MARKS

Elizabeth Nesta Marks, AO, always known as Pat, was born in Dublin, Ireland, in 1918. Her father, Charles Oswald Marks, was both a geologist and an entomologist. The family returned to their home in Brisbane in 1920. The Marks family provided a solid background of scientific curiosity, community service and love of the outdoors. All these elements became important aspects of Pat's life.

After education in schools in Brisbane and Toowoomba, Pat started studying zoology at the University of Queensland in 1935. She graduated with her Bachelor of Science degree in 1938, and an honours degree in 1939. She completed her Master of Science degree in 1940. Dr Ronald Hamlyn-Harris, her postgraduate supervisor, guided her towards the study of mosquitoes and mosquito-borne diseases. This was important for Australia during the Second World War, particularly with thousands of Australians deployed in the Pacific during the campaigns against Japan.

Pat Marks was appointed researcher for the Queensland Government's Mosquito Control Committee in 1943. The Committee recognized the deficiency of information the identity and breeding biology of Queensland mosquitoes, critical information for the development of control measures. During the War, Pat Marks uncovered the breeding behaviour of many mosquitoes, including the *Aedes culiciformis* using specimens from Cape York.

In 1949, Pat Marks continued her research and studies in Europe and completed her doctorate at Cambridge University. She returned to Queensland in 1951 and undertook wide-ranging fieldwork in Mildura and Townsville where outbreaks of Murray Valley encephalitis had occurred. The Torres Strait islands were included in research expeditions made in collaboration with the Queensland Institute of Medical Research.

In 1954, Pat made substantial collections of marine insects at Low Isles, off the far North Queensland coast, and discovered a tiny marine insect on the reef near Heron Island. It was named *Corallocooris marksae* in her honour. With funding from the Bishop Museum in Hawaii, Pat traveled to New Guinea for three months in 1958 and traveled high up the remote Mamberamo River. Other trips to New Guinea followed in 1959, 1961, 1966, and 1979.

Pat Marks used an enormous Army metal soup ladle on her collecting expeditions. She dipped the ladle into murky water to capture the mosquito wrigglers. With her immensely practical streak to the fore, she used the ladle as an emergency paddle when the outboard motor on her dinghy broke down on the Mitchell River, and to sprinkle sand onto the railway track when the Georgetown to Laura rail motor lost traction.

During her long career, Pat Marks described 38 new mosquito species and published more than 110 papers. Pat transferred to the QIMR when the mosquito control committee was disbanded in 1973, and retired in 1983. Her retirement provided her with the opportunity to devote more time to her interest in history. Her contribution to the history of science, scientists and their professional societies led to the publication of *Insects of Australia*, a history of Australian entomology.

Dr Marks' interest in history extended more generally to local history and Queensland history. She became a familiar figure at Brisbane History Group seminars and functions, and was a stalwart of the Samford Historical Society. Her work on the identification and conservation of bora grounds was a feature of her work during the 1970s¹.

¹ G B Monteith, 'Pat Marks' in J McKay, comp., *Brilliant Careers. Women collectors and illustrators in Queensland*, Brisbane, Queensland Museum, 1997 ; interview with Dr Marks