

THOMAS DRUMMOND (1793 – 1835)

The Friends of the Forfar Botanists
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Thomas Drummond

Thomas Drummond was baptised on 8th April 1793 at Inverarity, near Forfar, Angus Scotland. He died in Cuba early in 1835.

Biography

Thomas' father, also called Thomas, was head gardener at Fotheringham estate in Inverarity and Thomas was the younger son of the four children of Thomas and his wife, Elizabeth Nicol. The other children were James (b. 1787/8), Margaret (b. 1788), Euphemia (b. 1790) and Thomas (b. 1793). Thomas and Elizabeth had married at Inverarity on 18th March 1786.

Initially, with his older brother James, Thomas would have worked with their father on the Fotheringham estate four miles south of Forfar. Aged twenty, Thomas took over the management of the late George Don's nursery and Botanic garden at Doo Hillock, Forfar. Thomas Drummond senior would almost certainly have known George Don and it is entirely possible that young Thomas may have been one of Don's apprentices. Thomas may have taken over the running of Doo Hillock in 1814 when George Don died although there must have been a period of transition as David Don was sending some of his late father's plant material to Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh in 1816.

Thomas Drummond managed Doohillock for ten years, during which time he married Isobel Mungo (born 1795/6 in Arbroath) at Forfar in 1820. Isobel was a daughter of Ann Anderson and John Mungo, a gardener at Glamis, about four miles west of Fotheringham and south-west of Forfar. Thomas and Isobel had three children – Ann, James and Isabella.

Drummond met William Jackson Hooker in 1822 when Hooker visited Forfar, although Drummond must have corresponded previously with Hooker as he contributed to Hooker's *Flora Scotica* (1821). Hooker at the time was Regius Professor of Botany at the University of Glasgow; he was knighted in 1836 and went on to become the first Director of the Royal Botanic Garden Kew.

Drummond found many uncommon or rare bryophytes in his native county of Angus (Forfarshire), supplementing the discoveries of George Don (1764-1814) who had preceded him. Among his finds of mosses were *Grimmia unicolor* at Bachnagairn, Clova in 1823, several records of *Stegonia latifolia*, *Timmia austriaca* near Airlie Castle, and *Neckera pennata* at Fotheringham.

In one of Hooker's correspondence dated July 1822, he writes to his father-in-law Dawson Turner, an authority on bryophytes who corresponded and exchanged specimens with George Don, to tell of the meeting with Thomas Drummond and describes him as an able practical botanist, also saying he

intended to do something with native mosses. This culminated in Thomas Drummond's *Musci Scotici* in 1824/5. This publication was an exsiccata of mosses found in Scotland, much like George Don's *Herbarium Britannicum*. Ulster Museum, Belfast has three volumes of *Musci Scotici*, which include specimens from the north of Ireland. Drummond prepared this collection for the Belfast Natural History and Philosophical Society. Drummond's plants are at the Natural History Museum in London, at Kew, and Oxford and his letters are at Kew.

In 1824 he acted as guide on an excursion into the Angus Glens for Sir William Jackson Hooker, Robert Kaye Greville and George Walker-Arnott. It was probably on this trip that Drummond found the liverwort, *Pleurocladula albescens*.

Thomas must have made an impression on Hooker as he recommended him for the post of assistant naturalist to Dr. Richardson on a two-year expedition to the Arctic. This was Sir John Franklin's second arctic expedition as part of the Royal Navy's attempt to find and map the Northwest Passage. His wife and children remained in Scotland and he subsequently returned to Britain in October 1827. The expedition party split up in Saskatchewan with Drummond being sent on a separate trip to the Rocky Mountains. Travelling by canoe and horseback with only one Native American hunter, he explored the mountains for six months and made extensive collections. Early on, and in severe weather, his companion left him totally alone to fend for himself for some months. He built a brushwood hut formed of white spruce built by himself on the Baptiste River. The extreme winter saw him almost entirely dependent for food on what he could shoot from his own gun. Six feet of snow fell outside his hut and it kept snowing until the end of March. After running into a bear with cubs, he narrowly escaped a mauling, but he was nearly dying of starvation when he made it back to his party in Saskatchewan. Excursions over the plains were unsafe with large circuits made to avoid hostile Indian tribes. At the end of the expedition, while walking back to the main party, which was a journey of 200 miles on snowshoes, he had a chance meeting with a botanical acquaintance, David Douglas from Scone. Douglas was impressed with the magnitude of Drummond's specimens. Drummond's collections were the basis for Hooker's book about the plants of America, *Flora Boreali Americana*. Over 80 North American plants have been named after him, including *Acer rubrum drummondii*, *Opuntia drummondii*, and *Anemone drummondii*.

In 1828, Drummond moved with his family to become the first curator of the Belfast Botanic and Horticultural Society's new botanical garden. However, he fell out with the management there and returned to Scotland in 1830.

In 1831, funded by William Hooker, he was able to travel once again to America, this time to explore the southern states to collect specimens for his patron. For this expedition, Drummond had sent two tons of paper to New Orleans for preserving plants. Arriving in New York, Drummond travelled to Philadelphia, on to Baltimore and Washington before setting out across the Alleghenies on foot, finding the terrain easy in comparison to that of the Rockies. Crossing the Alleghenies, he was laid up with a fever for ten days when he reached Louisville on the Ohio River. He took a steam boat down the Ohio River to St. Louis but suffered a relapse there that left him skin and bone. Drummond collected a vast number of plants, seeds and birds, especially in Louisiana before visiting Texas in 1833 where he was one of the first to gather good specimens. In Texas, he was the earliest collector of insects for Thomas Kirby in Austin's colony during 1833-34. Unfortunately, in Velasco, Texas, he and his companions were struck down by cholera and he dosed himself on opium. Luckily, he

survived, many did not. He almost starved because no-one was able to supply food. When exploring the Brazos River in early 1834 he again fell ill with a bilious fever and was smitten with boils from head to foot which were so painful he could not lie down for seven nights. After visiting Florida, Drummond must have sailed to Cuba.

He died in Havana, Cuba in February or early March 1835, aged about 42. The circumstances of Drummond's death are unknown, as a letter to William Jackson Hooker from the Consul in Havana mentions particulars given in an earlier letter which has been lost.

Seed of a plant sent to Glasgow in February, 1835, was sown in the Glasgow Botanic Gardens. Professor Sir William Hooker called it *Phlox Drummondii* in honour of Thomas Drummond.

Thomas' brother James saw the plant seven years later growing in a garden in Western Australia pointing out that his brother had discovered it. James continued to keep in touch with Sir William Hooker and other leading lights of the botanical world, keeping them abreast with news of his own expeditions in Australia.

By 1841 and 1851, Isobel was living with her father at Glamis, and in 1841 a four-year old John Drummond was also living in the same house. Her son is reputed to be sired by a local married farmer. Isobel refused to meet the Parish council to explain her position and was labelled 'contumacious'.

Thomas Drummond was the ancestor of three further generations of Drummond Botanists making five generations in total if Thomas' father Thomas is included.

Thomas and Isobel's son James Drummond (1824/5 - ?) trained as a nurseryman. Charles Lyell (1767-1849) of Kinnordy, Kirriemuir, Angus paid for him to attend the Dundee Academy, and he subsequently entered the priesthood, serving at Pondicherry in the East Indies. A set of his extensive Indian herbarium collection is with J.R.Drummond.

James Drummond's son, James Ramsay Drummond (1851-1921) (Kew Bull. 1921:123 partial obit. Kew Bul..1923-301-302 Biblio.) joined the Indian civil service in 1872 and became a district judge and ultimately the Deputy Commissioner for the Punjab. He was also an amateur botanist and became acting Curator of Calcutta Herbarium just before his retiral. His retirement was spent working in the herbarium at Royal Botanic Garden Kew from 1905, chiefly on Agave and other plants.

James Ramsay Drummond's son, James Montagu Frank Drummond (1881- 1965) became Professor of Botany at Glasgow (1925-1930) and Manchester (1930-1946).

There is a portrait of Thomas Drummond by Sir Daniel MacNee PRSA at Hunt Institute and Royal Botanic Garden, Kew.

References and Further Reading

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<http://plants.jstor.org/person/bm000002190> (last viewed June 2013)

Associated Plants

A list of Type Specimens of over 500 plants collected by Thomas Drummond is shown at:

<http://plants.jstor.org/search?qtype=people&query=thomas+drummond&x=16&y=17>

Botanical Commemoration

Anemone drummondii

Orthotrichum drummondii = *Weissia drummondii*

Equisetum drummondii = *Equisteum pratense*

Acer rubrum drummondii

Acer saccharinum

Allium drummondii
Alophia drummondii
Arabis drummondii = *Boechea drummondii* = *Boechea stricta*
Aster Drummondii = *Aster sagittifolius* var. *drummondii*
Astragalus drummondii
Calylophus drummondii or *C. drummondianus*
Clematis drummondii
Cooperia drummondii (*Zephyranthes drummondii*)
Cornus asperifolia var. *drummondii*
Dryas drummondii
Froelichia drummondii
Hedeoma drummondii
Juncus drummondii
Malvaviscus arboreus var. *drummondii*
Oenothera drummondii
Opuntia drummondii
Phlox drummondii
Sapindus drummondii
Scutellaria drummondii
Sesbania drummondii
Solidago drummondii
Symphotrichum drummondii var. *texanum*

List of Plants that Thomas introduced into cultivation.

From Pitlochry Explorer's garden at <http://www.explorersgarden.com/> (last viewed June 2013)

Ceanothus americanus
Helianthemum scoparium

Hypericum micranthum

Hypericum nudiflorum

Hypericum paludosum

Hypericum punctatum

Hypericum virginicum

Ilex angustifoli

According to Mark Lawley of The British Bryological Society, Thomas Drummond's discovery of mosses in Angus include:

Grimmia decipiens

G. ovalis

Hylocomiastrum umbratum

Hypnum callichroum

Kiaeria glacialis

Meesia uliginosa

Neckera pumila

Oedipodium griffithianum

Orthotrichum speciosum

Polytrichastrum sexangulare

Pseudobryum cinclidioides

Pseudoleskeella catenulata

Pterygoneurum ovatum

Pterigynandrum filiforme

Pylaisia polyantha

Tayloria lingulat

Tayloria tenuis

Tortula viridifolia

From the text above:

Grimmia unicolor

Neckera pennata

Pleurocladula albescens

Stegonia latifolia

Timmia austriaca

Memorials

Mount Drummond and the Drummond icefield in Banff Park, Alberta are named after Thomas Drummond.