

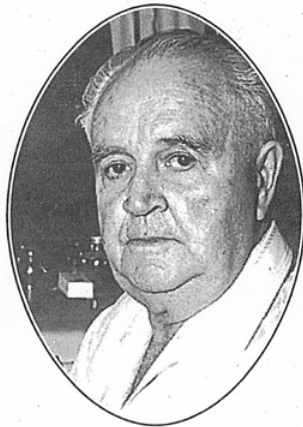
A natural conservationist

Hans Mincham, AM

Educator, naturalist, writer, historian,
conservationist, musician

Born: January 9, 1912; Meningie

Died: May 10, 2007; Hope Valley



nations, soon put him in high demand by students, teachers, naturalists, professionals in many fields and to the public. He also wrote *Hawker Centenary*, a book on the Coorong and various books on present and extinct animals of Australia.

He contributed articles on notable Australians for the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* and wrote forewords to major photographic texts on the Flinders.

He engaged in many expeditions into the inland, one in 1956-57 to the Ediacara area, yielding significant finds of pre-Cambrian fossils, one of which was named after him – *Parvancorina minchami*.

Two bugs and a beetle also carry his name and his interest in orchids resulted in his records being all that remains of some lost flora. His perseverance over several trips to Mt Remarkable led to his procuring a rare orchid which appears in W.H. Nicholls' *Orchids of Australia*.

He received three major awards: the Order of Australia, in 1988; silver medal for services and achievement from the Field Naturalists Society of SA in 1993; and the John Lewis Gold Medal award through the Royal Geographical Society of SA, for achievement in geographical research and literary work in geography in 2001.

Hans' wife, Claire, a bush district nurse whom he met in the inland, died in February.

He will be remembered by his three children – Julian Mincham, Josephine Croser and Bronwen Ackland – and their families, including nine grandchildren and 14 great-grandchildren; his sister Joyce McRae and brother Jack Mincham and their families.

During his early years in the north he developed a passionate interest in the natural and human history of the Flinders Ranges. His seminal work, *The Story of the Flinders Ranges*, published by Rigby in 1964, remains the definitive work on the subject.

In 1964, Hans was appointed the SA Museum's first information officer, a post he held for 12 years. His wide and intimate knowledge of native wildlife and familiarity with literature, combined with his gift for clear expla-

HANS Mincham was raised on the family farm near the shores of Lake Albert in South Australia. From an early age his meticulous observations of nature led him to a lifelong interest in the natural sciences and in conservation of the natural environment.

At the age of 12, for example, his observations of a rare insect, the mantispid, launched him on a 60-year journey of research and discovery, culminating in the publication of a scientific article in *The Naturalist* in his 81st year.

His concern for conservation began in early boyhood when he saved a nest of bull ants from destruction and argued against clearing of native bush.

While still in his teens, in 1931, he wrote the first of many letters to the press on conservation issues, pleading for the whales. He was concerned their annihilation in the Arctic would be repeated in the Antarctic.

During the Great Depression he worked at a variety of jobs including salt digging, fencing and as an apiarist's assistant.

He saved enough to put himself through teacher's college in 1935. His career as a teacher took him to Lyndhurst, Beltana, Willalow, Hammond, Whyalla in the north and later a metropolitan appointment at Henley Beach Primary School.