

Eliza Amy Hodgson (1888 – 1983)

Eliza Amy Campbell was born at Havelock North, Hawke's Bay, on 10 October 1888, the fourth child of station manager Hugh Campbell and his wife Amy Allott. After his wife died in 1890, Hugh married her younger sister Hannah, with whom he had five more children. He was a successful farmer, eventually owning several properties in the area. Amy (as she was known) attended Pukahu primary school and Napier Girls' High School, where she excelled in English literature, French and Latin, and her keen interest in botany was encouraged.

Hugh Campbell denied his daughter further education at university, and after leaving school she lived at home, learning practical domestic skills. However, she pursued her study of botany with a local enthusiast, and taught for a while at Havelock North School. In 1912 she married Frederick John Hodgson, who was working for her father; they were to have four children. Their first home was on a farm at Pakowhai, and in 1919 John became manager of remote Hendley Station, northwest of Napier. There, shortly after the birth of their fourth child, Amy began again to collect native plants. Specimens unable to be identified locally were referred to Northland orchidologist H B Matthews, and retired schoolteacher and botanist Harry Carse with whom, through personal connections, she was corresponding.

In the mid-1920s the Hodgsons took on their own farm at Kiwi Valley, south of Wairoa, where there were still remnants of coastal forest.

Osborne Sainsbury, a lawyer and amateur botanist, lived in Wairoa; he and by then Amy, were both interested in the lower plants. When Sainsbury made it clear that mosses were *his* particular interest, Amy found her niche in liverworts. She acquired key publications and textbooks, and with his encouragement, a second-hand microscope from London. In 1930 she published the first of more than thirty scientific papers, and most of the two new families of liverworts and nine new genera she described have stood the test of time. Sharing of specimens and information by mail was vital to her work, and the worldwide correspondence she received over 40 years is a historical record of hepaticology during that time.

Amy Hodgson was an honorary member of the British Bryological Society, a fellow of the Linnean Society of London and the Royal Society of New Zealand, and in 1976, aged 87, she was awarded an honorary doctorate by Massey University. In 1961 the first meeting of the Wairoa branch of the Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society was held in her home, and in 1977 she was made a life member of the Wairoa Horticultural Society. The names of two endemic liverworts, *Neohodgsonia mirabilis* and *Lepidolaena hodgsoniae* honour this largely self-taught New Zealand pioneer botanist. A firm believer in making the most of one's talents and opportunities, she pursued her interests with devotion and determination after fulfilling her duties as a farming wife and mother. She died in Hastings on 7 January 1983 at the age of 94.



Neohodgsonia mirabilis

Neohodgsonia (Greek *neos* 'new') in the family Marchantiaceae, is a New Zealand liverwort genus of only one species, described and named in 1954. *Neohodgsonia mirabilis* (Latin *mirabilis* 'amazing') is one of the thalloid hepatics, which are more easily recognised as liverworts than the leafy or foliose plants. It consists of a thallus, which is flat, more or less broad and sometimes branched, with a number of rounded lobes at the margin and tip, the upper surface with a characteristic texture of flecks and furrows. The plant is monoecious, both male and female organs being produced on the one thallus, and occurs in damp leaf litter in beech forest.

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