

Madeline Mary Ravenna Lewellin (1856 – 1944)

Madeline Mary Ravenna Lewellin was one of over 220 women in Ferdinand Mueller's vast network of botanical collectors in Australia during the second half of the 19th century.

Her paternal grandfather Henry Lewellin, a lieutenant in the 24th Light Dragoons, died at Calcutta, India, in 1820, aged 38, leaving his wife Anne Eliza Lambert (née Smith) a widow for the second time, with two young sons under the age of two: John Henry Hill Lewellin, who was to become Madeline's father, was born at Fort William garrison on 18 September 1818, and Edward George Lewellin was born posthumously in 1821. After a third marriage in 1829 to James Daniel King, a reporter for the *East Indian*, and his death three years later, the 1841 census records Anne and her two sons living in Kent, England. Anne died in 1843.

John Henry Hill Lewellin trained in London at St Bartholomew's Hospital, qualified MRCS in 1842 and did further studies in Paris and Heidelberg. On 26 June 1845 in the church of St Mary-at-Lambeth, Surrey, he married Grace Elizabeth Dannelly, daughter of the late John Feltham Dannelly, music teacher and writer of Ipswich. In December that year they moved to Glasgow, where Lewellin set up and promoted his dental practice; his successful use of ether as an anaesthetic on 18 December 1846 was the first in Glasgow and perhaps Scotland. He left Glasgow in June 1847 and seems to have spent some time in Middlesex. Emigrating for health reasons, he sailed from London as surgeon on the *Iris*, arriving in Natal with his wife and three children on 2 January 1852. Nine months later they left Durban on the *Hannah*, bound for Melbourne, Australia. The family settled in Prahran, on the outskirts of Melbourne, and practising as a dentist initially and then as a physician and surgeon,

Lewellin pioneered the use of ether in Australia. He took an active part in medical and community affairs, and became a patron of science and supporter of the Melbourne botanist Ferdinand Mueller, who named after him the purple sand-sage *Dicrastylis lewellinii*. Mueller gave Lewellin a signed copy of his *Fragmenta Phytographiae Australiae*, volume 8 (1872-74) in which the plant was described, and a later volume was dedicated "to my friend Henry Lewellin, a most generous promoter of my investigations".

Madeline was born in 1856 and grew up in Prahran with her four sisters and two brothers. Both sons were educated at the Church of England Grammar School in Melbourne and followed professional careers; the girls may have been home-tutored. In 1880, when Mueller appealed for assistance in his work on Australian fungi (or "fungi" as he called them), Madeline was already an accomplished water-colourist. She collected and painted fungi at remote Tarwin Meadows run in South Gippsland, hosted by George Black and his wife Isabella Emiy née Watson, a well-known flower painter. Mueller sent Madeline's specimens to Hungarian mycologist Károly Kalchbrenner (1807–1886), and from them seven type species were identified, including *Hygrophorus lewellinae* (now *Porpolomopsis lewellinae*), which was named after her. In 1885 Madeline was elected a member of the nascent Field Naturalist' Club of Victoria. She continued drawing and painting, mainly sea and landscapes, but there is no evidence of any further botanical work done by her. The last surviving member of her immediate family, Madeline died on 24 November 1944, aged 88, unmarried, at her home at 26 Alicia Street in the beach-side suburb of Hampton, Melbourne.

Porpolomopsis lewellinae

Commonly known as the mauve splitting wax-cap, *Porpolomopsis lewellinae* is a gilled fungus found in wet forests of eastern Australia and New Zealand. It is a small mushroom with a cap 3-6 cm in diameter, initially conical and later flattening to almost flat. It is smooth and lilac in colour, more intense in wet forest. The cap tends to split radially through the gill axis when expanded. The lilac stipe is 3-7 cm high and 0.4-0.8 cm thick. The lilac gills are adnexed or free, and thick or distant with even margins. The spore print is white. Initially described in 1882 as *Hygrophorus lewellinae* and in 1940 as *Hygrocybe lewellinae*, it was placed in the genus *Humidicutis* in 1997 and transferred to *Porpolomopsis* in 2003. *Humidicutis mavis* may be a white-coloured form of this species.

