Greta Barbara Stevenson (1911 – 1990)

Greta Barbara Stevenson, the eldest of four children, was born in Auckland on 10 June 1911, the daughter of Grace Mary Scott and her husband William Stevenson, a clerk. In 1914 the family moved to Dunedin where William became managing director of the family's food processing company, Irvine and Stevenson. After being dux at Maori Hill School in 1924, and at Columba College in 1928, Greta went on to become an outstanding botany scholar at the University of Otago, graduating BSc in 1932 and MSc with first-class honours in 1933. Her thesis research on the parasitic genus *Korthalsella,,* supervised by the Reverend Dr J E Holloway, was published in *Transactions of the Royal Society of New Zealand* (1934). Her awards at university included the Sir George Grey and Duffus Lubecki Scholarships.

Greta had become interested in tramping during botany and geology field trips, and in 1933 embraced alpine activities, making several significant climbs of South Island peaks. Assertive and confident, she proved to be a strong, dependable leader. Employment was hard to obtain in the depression years, and in 1934 she went to England with her aunt Jean Stevenson, who worked for the YWCA. While holding a Shirtcliffe fellowship at the Imperial College of Science and Technology, she completed her PhD and the college's diploma in mycology and plant pathology. In London on 16 October 1936 she married Edgar Cone, a chemical engineer and post-graduate student at Imperial College, and she returned to New Zealand with him in 1938. While their two children were young, Greta worked as an analyst for Wellington City Council, a soil microbiologist for the DSIR, and teacher of science at several secondary schools. During the 1940s she was an enthusiastic committee member and president of the Wellington Botanical Society and a section committee member of the New Zealand Alpine Club.

Greta and Edgar Cone separated in the early 1950s and later divorced. Greta retained her married name but published under the name Stevenson, writing many articles and papers on mycology and three popular books on ferns and fungi, all with her own drawings. Her most significant publication was a series of five papers on the agaricales fungi (fleshy toadstools), with watercolour illustrations, published in the *Kew Bulletin* between 1962 and 1964 after her return to England in 1958. She worked for twelve years as a research assistant and teacher at tertiary institutes in London, Sussex and Winchester, before retiring and returning to Wellington in 1970. For ten years she was an unpaid research officer in botany at Victoria University, and from 1980 to 1981 she worked at the University of Canterbury's botany department, undertaking research and conducting workshops and courses on the larger fungi. She returned to England in 1986 and died on 18 December 1990 when visiting her daughter in London.

In 1995, when a new name was required for a waxgill fungus transferred to another genus, it was named *Hygrocybe stevensoniae* after its discoverer, Dr Greta Stevenson, but has now reverted to an earlier name.

Gliophorus viridis

Gliophorus, a genus of agaric fungi known in New Zealand as waxgills, was described by Czech mycologist Josef Herink in 1958, but is currently synonymised with *Hygrocybe*. Two of the many native *Gliophorus* species in New Zealand forests are green. *Gliophorus viridis (Hygrocybe stevensoniae)* has a dull pale green cap, 10–30 mm in diameter, at first hemispherical then becoming convex to flattened, covered in lumpy slime resembling frosted glass. The gills are green-white. The stem, 15–50 mm high, 2–3 mm diameter, is pale dull green in the upper part and dull orange to dull yellow near the base, and is also coated in bumpy slime. The colour of *Gliophorus graminicola* is a brighter grass green, and its slime quite smooth and clear.