



H. N. Cotton Banks

HORACE NEWTON BARBER

Died 16 April 1971

Elected to Fellowship 1958

H. Newton Barber was born on 26 May 1914 at Warburton, Cheshire, England. He was educated at Manchester Grammar School and then at Emmanuel College, University of Cambridge (MA 1941, ScD 1963). From 1936 to 1940 he was Research Cytologist of the John Innes Horticultural Institute, London (PhD 1942). He worked during the war years as a Scientific Officer with the Telecommunications Research Establishment of the Ministry of Aircraft Production and served as a Flight Lieutenant (Hon.) with the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve (1943-5) in the Mediterranean and South East Asia Commands. In 1946 he was appointed Lecturer in Botany in the University of Sydney. In 1947 he became Professor of Botany in the University of Tasmania, where he remained until 1963 when he was appointed Foundation Professor of Botany in the University of New South Wales. He was planning to move in the year of his death to the University of Newcastle as Foundation Professor of Biological Sciences.

Barber brought with him to Australia his pre-war interests in cytology and genetics. He helped stimulate important research work in these areas after reaching Sydney. Because of the necessarily broad nature of his interests, his published papers include contributions to experimental cytology, experimental taxonomy, physiological genetics, protein genetics and the genetics of natural selection. He made especially important contributions to the studies of plant cytogenetics and extended the knowledge of chromosome behaviour. He was elected FRS in 1963.

As a teacher he was actively interested in new techniques in instruction for the biological sciences. He was first Dean of the Faculty of Science (1951-55) and Chairman of the Professorial Board (1956-59) in the University of Tasmania. In 1966 he became Head of the School of Biological Sciences in the University of New South Wales.

Barber was a Rockefeller Foundation Special Fellow at the California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, 1953-54, and Royal Society Visiting Professor in the University of Ibadan, Nigeria, in 1967. He was President of Section M of ANZAAS in 1956.