

DEATH OF PERCY SHEAFFE

A 59 year love affair with orchids came to an end in December 2008 when Percy Sheaffe, the founding president of Byron District Orchid Society died after a long illness. In 1949 Percy had travelled from Mullumbimby to Sydney to court June Paull, when a friend suggested that they go to the orchid show at the Town Hall. So began the second love of both of their lives.

Soon after their marriage they joined the Lismore Orchid Society, but it became obvious that there was enough interest to form the Byron District Orchid Society. Just how right they were, was borne out at the 50th show when June and Percy were honoured for 50 years of continuous membership. Such was his devotion to the society that he even went to a meeting on the night of his son's birth.

Percy's efforts were also rewarded by his being made a life member and society patron. However he will be best known as a judge. His friend Arthur Winter said that Percy had a natural eye for a good flower. He could sum up an orchid's qualities immediately and was respected by all for his natural honesty and fairness.

After growing many champion orchids, in later years Percy concentrated on growing epidendrums. His backyard in Brunswick Heads was given over to these delicate little gems and Sheaffe's Orchid Nursery became well known.

Percy's memorial service revealed what a valuable family and community member he was. He will be sadly missed.