

## MEDIA RELEASE

# Remarkable biography of foremost New Zealand naturalist and artist

## AN EXQUISITE LEGACY

The life and work of New Zealand naturalist G.V. Hudson

**George Gibbs**

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George Hudson (1867–1946) was a pioneering New Zealand naturalist who devoted his life to collecting and describing our insect fauna. He wrote and illustrated seven books in his lifetime and amassed what is arguably the largest collection of our insects, now housed at Te Papa.

Hudson's biography *An Exquisite Legacy* has been written by his grandson Dr George Gibbs, himself a prominent entomologist, whose lively writing style brings his grandfather to life. Home schooled and something of a child prodigy, Hudson was already a prodigious collector of insects and published author by the time he turned 14. He wrote seven books on insect fauna between 1898 and 1946, each illustrated in colour with immaculate paintings of the specimens, a total of over 3100 paintings, mainly focused on moths and butterflies.

Hudson's two great passions were insects and telescopes. When not collecting, he was gazing at the night sky and encouraging others to do the same. Hudson built an observatory on Messines Road in Karori and from there, discovered new star *Nova Aquilae* in 1918. He was also the original proponent of daylight saving. Hudson presented his views on this concept of summer-time adjustment to a meeting of the Wellington Philosophical Society on October 6, 1895. The idea was met with howls of derision!

Hudson remained an amateur naturalist his whole life, but his contribution to our knowledge about the New Zealand insect world is of enduring significance, while his artistic legacy, built up over nearly seven decades, is truly remarkable. This extensive collection of exquisite illustrations is without parallel in New Zealand.

"The power of the Hudson Collection is that it now transcends time – it will forever be available to researchers and people who wish to bring their own knowledge and perspectives to make meaning from it," says **Courtney Johnston, CE, Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, in the Foreword, *An Exquisite Legacy*.**

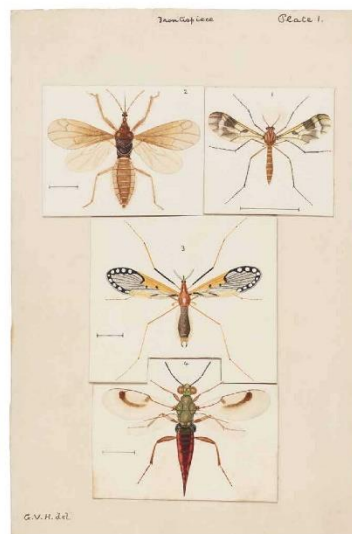
*An Exquisite Legacy* pays homage to a remarkable man, whose legacy lives on in the Hudson Collection at Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, to inspire future generations of naturalists.



**Dr George Gibbs** is a retired university lecturer, from the School of Biological Sciences at Victoria University. He obtained a PhD in insect ecology from the University of Sydney and pursued a career researching butterflies, moths and wētā. He has also researched, written and lectured extensively about New Zealand's historical biogeography. He has published four books on New Zealand insects, numerous scientific papers, and the now classic volume on New Zealand biogeography, *Ghosts of Gondwana* (Potton & Burton, 2006, revised and expanded in 2016).

**GEORGE GIBBS IS AVAILABLE FOR INTERVIEW / EXTRACTS & IMAGES ARE AVAILABLE ON REQUEST**

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GEORGE GIBBS: THE ARTIST  
 GEORGE GIBBS' 'TANAOSAGA' (1960) IS A SCIENTIFIC ILLUSTRATION OF FOUR SPECIES OF MOTHS. THE ILLUSTRATION IS A MASTERPIECE OF SCIENTIFIC ART, SHOWING THE MOTHS IN GREAT DETAIL. THE MOTHS ARE SHOWN IN VARIOUS POSITIONS, INCLUDING DORSAL AND VENTRAL VIEWS, AND A DETAILED VIEW OF THE WING PATTERN. THE ILLUSTRATION IS A TESTAMENT TO GIBBS' SKILL AS AN ARTIST AND SCIENTIST.



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**AN INSECT COLLECTOR'S**



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**THE ILLUSTRATION**

Historical data is being collected for many butterfly species. The most important is the 'Tanaosaga' collection, which is a collection of butterflies and moths. The collection is a testament to Gibbs' skill as an artist and scientist. The collection is a testament to Gibbs' skill as an artist and scientist.

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