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Transactions of the Botanical Society of Edinburgh

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/tped18>

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Published online: 01 Dec 2010.

To cite this article: Hugh Cleghorn LL.D. (1889) Dr Boswell of Balmuto, Transactions of the Botanical Society of Edinburgh, 17:1-4, 516-519, DOI: [10.1080/03746608909468381](https://doi.org/10.1080/03746608909468381)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03746608909468381>

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- On the Occurrence of Foliage-leaves in *Ruscus (Semele) androgynus*; with some Structural and Morphological Observations. *Gardeners' Chronicle*, 1883; *Trans. Bot. Soc. Edin.*, xvi., 1883.
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Dr BOSWELL of Balmuto. By Hugh Cleghorn, LL.D.

(Read 5th March 1889.)

John Thomas Irvine Boswell, né Syme and afterwards Boswell Syme, was born in 4 Queen Street, Edinburgh (now the Philosophical Institution), in 1822. His father was Patrick Syme, a well-known artist, who afterwards became drawing master at the Dollar Academy, where our friend received his early education. His mother was Miss Boswell, daughter of Lord Balmuto, for many years Sheriff of Fife, and afterwards a Lord of Session.

Both parents were artists, and the son from early years showed a decided taste for collecting plants, insects, and shells. He served an apprenticeship with the Stevensons of Edinburgh, attended the University, and was qualified as civil engineer. For some years he was engaged by Messrs Wyllie and Peddie in various surveys connected with the construction of railways and other great undertakings. Whilst travelling on duty, he seized every opportunity of prosecuting his favourite researches. The result of his early botanical explorations is recorded in Mr H. C. Watson's *Topographical*

Botany. He checked the lists of Fife, West Perth, Kincardine, and Orkney.

He became a member of this Society in 1843, and in 1850 undertook the Curatorship of the Herbarium, then located in the upper story of the University.

In February 1850, he read his first paper, on the plants collected during a visit to his relatives in Orkney in the summer of 1849. It is recorded in our *Transactions* (iv. p. 29), and attracted the attention of Hewett Watson, and a friendship began which led to his being offered the curatorship of the Botanical Society of London in 1851. Syme then gave up his profession, removed to town, and devoted all his energies to his favourite studies. He lived in Adelaide Road, Haverstock Hill, and his house was a rendezvous for metropolitan field botanists.

In 1852 and 1854 he explored the vicinity of London, and found many South England plants he had never seen before. Two papers on his Middlesex excursions will be found in the *Phytologist*, vol. iv. Mr Baker of Kew states (*Jour. Bot.*, xxvi. 83) that the parcels which the members of the London Botanical Society at this period received consisted largely of London and Scotch plants gathered by Watson and Syme. The London Botanical Society was broken up in 1857. The early editions of the "London Catalogue" were mainly the work of Mr Watson. Mr Syme shared the preparation of the 5th, 6th, and 7th editions.

In 1854 Mr Syme was elected a Fellow of the Linnean Society, and in the same year was appointed lecturer on botany in the Charing Cross School of Medicine, and also at Westminster Hospital, where he did duty for many years.

In 1860 he lectured on natural history at the New College, Edinburgh, after the death of Professor Fleming, and before the appointment of Professor Duns.

In 1863 the third edition of *English Botany* was begun, and upon this Syme's botanical reputation mainly rests. The eleven volumes appeared between 1863 and 1872.

The accuracy and carefulness of his descriptions are too well known to members of this Society and to British botanists from daily experience of their usefulness to need any commendation here.

Mr Baker has well observed (*loc.cit.*), "the power which Syme

shows in grasping the relationship of the types and the acute sense of proportion shown in their arrangement. I never cease when I use the book to admire the skill which is shown in dividing out the types into species, sub-species, and varieties, a task done so thoroughly well, that when Sir J. D. Hooker, with all his wide experience, went over the same ground in his *Student's Flora*, he found extremely little to change" (*Jour. Bot.*, xxvi. 83).

Boswell's very large British herbarium was purchased by Mr F. J. Hanbury, F.L.S., Upper Clapton, London, who generously allows any botanist to have access to it by applying to him. The collection contains many critical notes and some unique specimens, and is kept entirely distinct (*Jour. of Bot.*, xxvi. 157). Mr J. C. Melvill possesses the Foreign Collection, marked with distinctive labels, at Alkersal Cottage, Prestwich, Manchester.

From 1868 till his death (28th January 1888) Boswell lived at his ancestral home, Balmuto, near Kinghorn, a much respected country gentleman. He seldom appeared as a magistrate, but for many years arranged the distributions of the Botanical Exchange Club, and drew up the Annual Reports, which are all printed in the *Journal of Botany*.

In 1875 the University of St Andrews conferred on him the degree of LL.D., in recognition of his valuable contributions to science, and in 1884 he was elected an Honorary Fellow of our Society.

He is survived by his widow and by two sons, the elder of whom is at the Scottish Bar, and an only daughter.

A portrait will be found in *Illustrated London News*, 11th Feb. 1888.

Chronological List of Scientific Papers.

1. Syme, John T. Boswell. Notice of some of the rarer Plants observed in Orkney during the Summer of 1849, *Ann. Nat. Hist.*, v., 1850, pp. 266-269; *Edin. Bot. Soc. Trans.*, iv., 1853, pp. 47-50.
2. Notice of the Occurrence of *Eleocharis uniglumis*, Link, near Blackness Castle, Linlithgowshire, *Ann. Nat. Hist.*, vi., 1850, pp. 145-146.
3. On the *Sparganium natans*, L. Henfrey, *Bot. Gaz.*, iii., 1851, pp. 157-159.

4. Localities for Plants near London, in 1852, *Phytologist*, iv., 1853, pp. 859-862.
5. Remarks on *Gladiolus illyricus*, Koch, and its allies, Seeman, *Jour. Bot.*, i., 1863, pp. 130-134.
6. Observations on the Larva of *Deilephila*, *Entom. Month. Mag.*, ii., 1865-66, pp. 5-8.
7. Entomological Notes from Fifeshire, *Entomologist*, iv., 1868-69, pp. 115-117.
8. Note on the Fertilisation of Cereals, *Jour. of Bot.*, ix., 1871, pp. 373, 374.
9. *Acentropus niveus* in Scotland [1870], *Scottish Naturalist*, i., 1871-72, p. 20.
10. Notes on certain Scottish Plants [1871], *Scottish Naturalist*, i., 1871-72, pp. 92-93.
11. Fertilisation of Grasses, *Jour. of Bot.*, i., 1872, pp. 153, 154.
12. Sowerby's *English Botany*, 3rd edit., 1863-72, 11 vols.

The Rev. CHURCHILL BABINGTON, D.D., and JOHN PERCY,
M.D., F.R.S. By Andrew Taylor.

(Read 11th July 1889.)

The late Rev. Churchill Babington, D.D., was induced to join our fellowship through the influence of Professor Cardale Babington, his near relative. He for many years acted with great assiduity as one of our local Secretaries.

Churchill Babington was descended from a family for a long time well known in the counties of Derby and Leicestershire. His father, the Rev. Matthew Drake Babington, incumbent of Thringstone in Leicestershire, was a graduate of Trinity College, and an excellent scholar. He was, therefore, capable of directing the home education of the son, who gave early promise of future success, alike in classical study and in natural history, especially in botany and ornithology.

From the obituary contributed to the magazine of St John's College, Cambridge, the *Eagle*, by Professor Babington, and through whose courtesy I am privileged to quote this and most of the following particulars regarding our deceased Fellow, we learn that he joined that institution in 1839, and graduated as a Senior Optime and seventh in the first class of the Classical Tripos in 1843. He was elected a member of our Society in the same year, about the same time presenting to our Herbarium a large collection, prin-