

JAMES EUSTACE BAGNALL (1830-1918)

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This is one in a series of articles about prominent British and Irish field-bryologists of the past. The author would be very pleased to learn of any information which supplements its content.

A Social and Biographical History of British and Irish Field-bryologists is also available on-line at <http://britishbryologicalsociety.org.uk/>

Family background

James Eustace Bagnall was born in Birmingham on November 7th, 1830, the eldest son and second of ten children born to James Bagnall (1804-1874) and his wife Jane Amelia (*née* Wall, 1806-1888). James Bagnall Sr. married Amelia Wall (daughter of William Wall) in Harborne, Birmingham in 1826. Jane was a confectioner in 1841, and James Bagnall Sr. was a brass-founder in 1851 and 1861, and a bell-founder in 1871.

James Eustace's siblings were Mary Sophia (1828-1880, who married John Barrow, a small-ware traveller), Jane Amelia (1832/3-1891, who married George Old, haberdasher in 1856), Emily (b. 1834/5), Fanny Katherine (1837/8-1901), William Bernard (b. 1839), Edith (b. 1842), Edward (b. 1844), Alice (1847-1872) and Frederick (b. 1851). Like James, Edward and Frederick both became clerks. William worked in a brass-foundry in 1861. Jane Amelia and Emily were milliners in 1851, and Alice was a dressmaker in 1871.

Biography

In 1841, the family lived in New Street, Birmingham. In 1851 they were at 376 Summer Lane, Birmingham, and in 1861 at 107 New John Street West, Birmingham. In 1871 they were at 102 New John Street West.

James never married, and passed all his life in Birmingham, living at the family home until his parents until died. At the times of the 1881, 1891 and 1901 Census Returns, he lived at 84 Witton Road, Aston, Birmingham with his sister Fanny.

James Eustace was educated at Singers' Hill School, and in about 1845 started work at his father's warehouse, where he was a brass-founder in 1851. Around 1854 he became a clerk at Hinks and Wells, manufacturers of steel pen-nibs in Buckingham Street, Birmingham, and remained there until he retired in 1897.

Botanical career

He took up the study of botany in his mid-thirties, about 1865, and in 1874 published an article 'The Moss Flora of Warwickshire' in the *Journal of Botany*. In 1886 his popular guide *Handbook of Mosses* appeared, followed in 1891 by *Flora of Warwickshire*.

In retirement, he published a paper on 'The Flora of Staffordshire' in the 1901 issue of *Journal of Botany*, and contributed sections on bryophytes to the *Victoria County History of Warwickshire* (1904) and *Victoria County History of Staffordshire* (1910), as well as *Botany of Worcestershire* (1909).

Bagnall was elected an honorary member of the Moss Exchange Club in 1909, and died in Birmingham on September 3rd 1918. His herbarium and papers are at Birmingham Reference Library, and the Druce Papers at Oxford contain some of his letters. The National Museum and Gallery of Wales, Cardiff has 125 of his bryological gatherings.

Reference

Badger, E.W., (1897). *A Sketch of the Botanical Work of James E. Bagnall*.