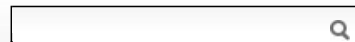


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Frank Kingdon-Ward

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Francis Kingdon-Ward, born **Francis Kingdon Ward** (6 November 1885 in [Manchester](#) - 8 April 1958) was an [English botanist](#), [explorer](#), plant collector and author. He published most of his books as **Frank Kingdon-Ward** and this hyphenated form of his name stuck, becoming the surname of his wives and two daughters. It also became a *[nom-de-plume](#)* for his sister [Winifred Mary Ward](#) by default.

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Biography

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He went on around 25 expeditions over a period of nearly fifty years, exploring [Tibet](#), North Western [China](#), [Burma \(Myanmar\)](#) and [Assam](#) (now part of North Eastern [India](#)).^[1] In Burma he met and conducted some research into forestry and plants in the country with native botanist [Chit Ko Ko](#).

Among his collections were the first viable seed of *[Meconopsis betonicifolia](#)* ([Himalayan blue poppy](#), first discovered by [Père Delavay](#)),^[2] *[Primula florindae](#)* (giant cowslip, named after his first wife Florinda, *née* Norman-Thompson)^[3] and *[Rhododendron wardii](#)*, a yellow flowered species.^[3]

He is also commemorated in [Ward's Trogon](#), *[Harpactes wardi](#)*.

He survived many accidents on his expeditions including being impaled on a bamboo spike, falling off a cliff (stopped by a tree growing from the cliff), lost for two days with no food, tent crushed by a tree in a storm, and he was close to the epicentre of an [earthquake](#) (registering 9.6 on the [Richter scale](#)) on 15 August 1950 during an expedition in Assam.^[3]

In addition to his professional activities as a botanist, in the 1930s Kingdon-Ward also served as a spy for the British India Office. In 1935, Kingdon-Ward was arrested by [Tibetans](#) after he crossed the [Sela pass](#) into the Tawang tract (now [Tawang District of Arunachal Pradesh](#),India) despite being refused permission to do so by the Tibetan authorities who were then administering Tawang. Tibetans protested this violation of their border to the British mission then visiting [Lhasa](#). Kingdon-Ward was quickly released, but this incident led the British to investigate the status of the border, and it was discovered that the entire Tawang tract had been ceded to British India by Tibet by the [Simla Convention](#) negotiated by Sir Henry McMahon with the Tibetans in 1914. ^[4]

In 1923 he moved to [Hatton Gore](#), a big house on the east side of Hatton Road, [Hatton, London](#); the site of the house is now under the east end of [London Heathrow Airport](#). He built there a big [rockery](#) looking like a bend in a river ravine in the Himalayas.^[5] He sold the house due to a loss that he made running a [plant nursery](#) business.^[6]

He was married twice, first to Florinda Norman-Thompson on 11 April 1923; later, to Jean Macklin, on 12 November 1947,^[7] to whom he remained married until his death.

Florinda Kingdon-Ward had a brief political career which included standing as a [Liberal Party](#) candidate for Parliament at the 1950 UK General Election in Lewes.^[8]

Even towards the end of his career he was still active, his greatest "swansong" plant was probably *[Lilium mackliniae](#)*, found jointly with his second wife after whom it is named. At age 68 he climbed to over 11,000 feet in Myanmar (Burma) and was still discovering new species of plants on his last expedition in 1956,^[3] including *[Roscoea australis](#)*, the most southerly representative of its genus.^[9]

Frank Kingdon-Ward died on 8 April 1958 aged 72. He had suffered a stroke and went into a coma from which he never recovered.^[7] He was buried in the [churchyard](#) at [Grantchester](#).

Published works

[\[edit\]](#)

He wrote 25 books, mostly accounts of his expeditions. The titles, dates and publishers are as follows:

- On the Road to Tibet* (1910) Shanghai Mercury Ltd. Shanghai
- Land of the Blue Poppy* (1913) Cambridge University Press
- In Farthest Burma* (1921) Seeley Service and Co (reprinted by Orchid Press, Thailand; 2nd rev edition (Jan 2005) [ISBN 978-974-524-062-9](#))
- Mystery Rivers of Tibet* (1923) Seeley Service and Co (reprinted by Cadogan Books, 1986 [ISBN 0-946313-52-0](#))
- From China to Hkamti Long* (1924) Edward Arnold and Co
- The Romance of Plant Hunting* (1924) Edward Arnold and Co
- Riddle of the Tsangpo Gorges* (1926) Edward Arnold and Co
- Rhododendrons for Everyone* (1926) The Gardener's Chronicle Ltd
- Plant Hunting on the Edge of the World* (1930) Victor Gollancz (reprinted 1974, Theophrastus)
- Plant Hunting in the Wilds* (1931) Figurehead (Pioneer series)
- The Loom of the East* (1932) Martin Hopkinson Ltd



Rhododendron wardii var. *puralbum*, a naturally-occurring white-flowered variety of the yellow-flowered species named for Frank Kingdon-Ward



Siroi lily, *Lilium macklinii*

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- *A Plant Hunter in Tibet* (1934) Jonathan Cape (reprinted by White Orchid, Thailand (2006) ISBN 978-974-524-087-2)
- *The Romance of Gardening* (1935) Jonathan Cape
- *Plant Hunter's Paradise* (1937) Jonathan Cape
- *Assam Adventure* (1941) Jonathan Cape
- *Modern Exploration* (1945) Jonathan Cape
- *About This Earth* (1946) Jonathan Cape
- *Commonsense Rock Gardening* (1948) Jonathan Cape
- *Burma's Icy Mountains* (1949) Jonathan Cape (reprinted by White Orchid, Thailand; 2nd edition (2006) ISBN 978-974-524-084-1)
- *Rhododendrons* (1949) Latimer House
- *Footsteps in Civilization* (1950) Jonathan Cape
- *Plant Hunter in Manipur* (1952) Jonathan Cape
- *Berried Treasure* (1954) **Ward Lock and Co. Ltd.** London and Melbourne
- *Return to the Irrawaddy* (1956) Andrew Melrose
- *Pilgrimage for Plants* (1960) George C. Harrap and Co. Ltd

Famous relatives

[[edit](#)]

His sister, **Winifred Mary Ward**, was a founder of the Royal college of speech and language therapists and wrote several books on speech therapy.

The standard **author abbreviation** **Kingdon-Ward** is used to indicate this individual as the author when **citing a botanical name**.^[10]

References

[[edit](#)]

- ↑ Based on his 25 published books. Some expeditions blurred into each other, hence the ambiguity about the exact number of expeditions.
- ↑ *Land of the Blue Poppy*
- ↑ ^{*a*} ^{*b*} ^{*c*} ^{*d*} His published works, as listed above
- ↑ Lamb, Alister (1986). *British India and Tibet, 1766-1910*. Routledge. p. 418ff. ISBN 0-7102-0872-3.
- ↑ page 52, Sherwood, Philip. (2009) *Heathrow: 2000 Years of History*. Stroud: The History Press. ISBN 978-0-7509-5086-2
- ↑ http://www.french4tots.co.uk/kingdon-ward/fkw-timeline.html
- ↑ ^{*a*} ^{*b*} *Frank Kingdon-Ward, Last of the Great Plant Hunters*, Charles Lyte (1989)
- ↑ http://www.politicsresources.net/area/uk/ge50/i13.htm
- ↑ Cowley, E.J. (1982), "A revision of *Roscoea* (*Zingiberaceae*)", *Kew Bulletin* **36** (4): 747–777, JSTOR 4117918
- ↑ "Author Query" . *International Plant Names Index*.

Sources

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- Frank Kingdon-Ward's own works, as listed above
- *Frank Kingdon-Ward - Last of the Great Plant Hunters*, Charles Lyte (1989), John Murray Publishers Ltd, ISBN 978-0-7195-4735-5

External links

[[edit](#)]

- Biography of Frank Kingdon-Ward (by the author of this wikipedia article)
- Forgotten Travellers: In the Land of the Blue Poppy Essay on F. Kingdon Ward
- In the Footsteps of Kingdon Ward: photos of the Salween river, Tibet
- Timeline of Frank Kingdon-Ward's life

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