

## Introduction to the Lucy Cranwell lecture — 6 October 1999

Ewen Cameron, President

Welcome to the 15th Lucy Cranwell lecture. This is our Society's special lecture and is held in honour of our patron, Dr Lucy Cranwell who resides in Tucson, Arizona\*. Eleanor Percy, Lucy's niece, last night rang Lucy who sends her best wishes to everyone and was touched by the birthday card sent by Bot Soc last month.

Our speaker tonight, Matt McGlone, is from Christchurch, where he works as a palaeoecologist at Landcare Research. Matt spent his early years in Hamilton, but his family moved to Wellington when he was nine. He gained a BSc and MSc (1972) from the University of Victoria, and a PhD on 'Climate and vegetation history of the central North Island' in 1980 from the University of Canterbury. In 1972 he took up a position working as a palynologist with Neville Moar in Botany Division, DSIR, Lincoln. He thus overlapped with the earlier generation of botanical workers including Lucy Moore, John Hair, and Vic Zotov.

Matt's early work was largely concerned with the vegetation history of the central North Island and the impact of human settlement on the vegetation. In the mid 1980s he began exploring the interaction of climate change and vegetation. For some years he was a member of an international research programme, COHMAP, which used large-scale computer models of the climate and palaeodata sets to follow the course of climate change at a global level. Also around this time he took an interest in biogeography

and functional attributes of the flora, entering the debate on the origin and significance of the divaricating plant form and the ultimate cause for disjunct distributions of higher plants in New Zealand.

His main interest now is in vegetation and climate change over the last few thousand years, and the impact of disturbance and human settlement. He has three major research programmes at present. One, which he will speak about tonight, is focused on vegetation change in the southern South Island, particularly at treeline and on the subantarctic islands. The second, is mapping the natural vegetation cover of New Zealand, a project which is just getting underway. The third, is a Marsden-funded project looking at the significance of deciduous trees and shrubs in the New Zealand context.

Matt has over 27 years experience in his field that has involved him in many aspects of botany. He is the leading New Zealand light in this field. We are very fortunate to have Matt as our Lucy Cranwell speaker for 1999. As you can gather from the title of tonight's lecture it closely follows Lucy Cranwell's own research: 'In the footsteps of Lucy Cranwell: vegetation history, investigations of far southern New Zealand'. We look forward to hearing about his latest research and I ask you to give Matt a very warm welcome.

\* sadly Lucy Cranwell died on 8 June 2000 at Tucson.

