

Lucy Cranwell Lecture - Introduction, and Allan Mere Award, October 2000

Ross Beaver

Auckland Botanical Society hosted two significant botanical events on 3 October 2000: the Society's 16th Lucy Cranwell Lecture and the presentation of the Allan Mere for 2000. I chaired the meeting in Ewen Cameron's absence at a herbarium curators' meeting (CHAH) in Perth.

The Allan Mere was given to Botany Division, DSIR by Dr Lucy Moore in 1982 to commemorate the outstanding contributions to New Zealand botany by Dr H. H. Allan, first Director of Botany Division, DSIR. The mere was awarded to deserving members of the staff of Botany Division until the demise of DSIR in 1992. In 1999 the administration of the award was handed over to the New Zealand Botanical Society, and eligibility widened to include any person who has made outstanding contributions to botany in New Zealand. Dr Jessica Beaver, in her capacity as President of the New Zealand Botanical Society presented the mere to James Bruce Irwin. She noted that Bruce had been nominated by Ian St George and Eric Scanlen, with support of the New Zealand Native Orchid Group. In speaking of Bruce's contributions to New Zealand botany, she emphasised his reputation both as a fine botanical artist with 'exceptional skills in observing and portraying the intricate 3-dimensional structure of plant parts' and as an orchidologist with outstanding field skills. She quoted Dan Hatch commenting that Bruce has 'a yen for finding things... an eye for discovery, even from the car window'. Bruce has been 'chasing' orchids for over 50 years. Dan Hatch named *Pterostylis irsoniana* in 1950 in recognition of 'the labours and enthusiasm of Messrs J.B. Irwin and O.E. Gibson [hence '*irsoniana*'], who between them have done much to elucidate the orchid flora of

Mount Egmont'.

Rather more recently, in 1997, Brian Molloy with D.L. Jones and M.A. Clements named *Pterostylis irwinii* for Bruce. It is particularly fitting that Bruce was awarded the mere, as he worked closely with Lucy Moore notably in the production of the magnificent "Oxford Book of New Zealand Plants." Jessica related that 'Lucy would not tell him certain things she thought were new - she would wait until he had drawn them, then if his drawings agreed, her own observations would be reinforced.' In their supporting documentation, Bruce's nominators summarised his achievements 'Bruce Irwin has combined art and science with a skill and feeling rarely encountered.'

The Lucy Cranwell Lecture was initiated by the Society in 1985 in Lucy Cranwell's honour, as a special annual lecture to be given by a notable botanist. Thus the night's lecture was especially significant as it was the first since Lucy's death in June 2000 in her 93rd year. It is well known that Lucy's major contribution to New Zealand botany was the establishment of the science of palynology - the study of pollen and its use in reconstructing vegetation history. I outlined a little of her contributions to local botany and to the Auckland Botanical Society.

Lucy was born in Auckland in 1907. In 1929, she graduated MA from Auckland University College and was appointed botanist at the Auckland War Memorial Museum - some 3 months before the Domain building was opened. Over the next decade - the 1930s - she undertook a range of pioneering field work along with her close friend Lucy Moore. In 1933 Lucy instigated the Cheeseman Flower Shows to stimulate interest in native plants. In 1936 she published with Arnold Wall "The Botany of Auckland", based on a series of popular articles she wrote for the Auckland Star. The stated purpose of the book was 'to arouse and stimulate interest in the rich and beautiful flora of this district ... to reinforce the efforts of those who are endeavouring to save it from damage and destruction ... support the movement towards the reservation of the Waitakere Range and its noble forests as a public possession for all time.' The roots of the local conservation movement were well established at that time. In 1937 Lucy was instrumental in founding our society, and on 8 Dec, according to the records, she gave

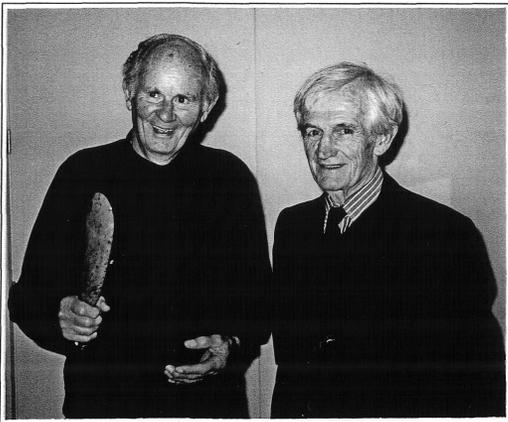


Fig 1. ABS member Bruce Irwin, wielding the Allan mere and Brian Molloy, Lucy Cranwell Lecturer, Auckland Museum, 3 October 2000.

Photo: Ross Beaver

the first lecture titled "*Xeronema*" our Rarest Lily.

The War years followed and Lucy continued her pollen studies. And in 1943 she married Captain (later Major) S. Watson Smith and moved permanently to the United States. However she visited New Zealand regularly over subsequent years, and wrote regularly to botanical friends. In the Newsletter of 1944 Marguerite Crookes wrote of Lucy's departure expressing disappointment that war conditions made the usual farewells impossible: one sentence strikes a particular chord 'We shall not forget her, and we are sure she will not forget us.' I think it can be said this prediction was borne out. Over the years Lucy provided generous financial support to the Society, and we established the Lucy Cranwell Fund to support botanical field work by students at Auckland University. For many years she was Patron of our Society. Lucy was awarded many botanical honours over the years including an Honorary DSc from Auckland University, but it was Lucy's ability to encourage others about botany that is in many ways her lasting legacy. As Ewen wrote in his obituary in the New Zealand Journal of Botany 'Lucy is remembered affectionately for her strong personality, love of New Zealand and the outdoors, and as an energetic and pioneering botanist with a readiness to share her knowledge.' In a small way the Lucy Cranwell Lecture series continues this tradition of sharing knowledge.

The evening's lecturer Dr Brian Molloy joined the Dept of Agriculture in 1956, but transferred to

Botany Division of DSIR early on in his career. He transferred briefly to Landcare Research when the DSIR was dis-established, and he retired in a formal sense in 1995.

Brian has diverse botanical interests. As an ecologist he has been interested in the history of vegetation - especially of the eastern South Island - where he has studied in particular the charcoal and macrofossils that resulted from widespread burning. As a taxonomist, he has taken a particular interest in the orchids and conifers. Brian has been very active in applying his skills to conservation problems, especially but by no means exclusively since his retirement. He was an elected Director of the Queen Elizabeth II Trust for 9 years (the maximum term allowed), and is now their representative with responsibility for the South Island High Country. Even from Auckland, we are aware that there are major management issues around the High Country - and Brian has been able to draw on his considerable knowledge and negotiation skills to ensure quality outcomes for conservation. For many years he has guided the management of Riccarton Bush, that small but very important forest remnant in the middle of Christchurch, and he serves on various Christchurch City Council environmental committees. Brian is also been interested in the management of rare plants, especially orchids. In 1995 Brian was awarded the Charles Fleming Award of the Royal Society of New Zealand, recognising his achievements in protection and management of the environment.

Brian Molloy's talk will appear in the next ABS Journal



A Study in Mauve: the use of some colour names in "Flora of New Zealand IV" - and a glossary

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Introduction

The plant descriptions of Flora NZ IV (Webb, Sykes & Garnock-Jones 1988) excel in their comparability, that is, if the size or shape or colour of some structure is noted for a species then almost always the corresponding information is given for all the other species treated in the genus. The objective character of the descriptions is in this way strengthened. Considering the many geographic origins of our weeds, and the amount of literature and specimens that would have to have been checked, we can see that achieving this uniformity must have been a giant task.

It occurred to me though that some subjectivity might still remain, in the actual judgements of colour, and in particular, the colours in the red-violet part of the spectrum. For example, what exactly is mauve, and how does it differ from

magenta, amethyst, lilac or lavender? Stearn's "Botanical Latin" (1973) has an invaluable account of colour terms but not, alas, any reproduction of the colours themselves. The Royal Horticultural Colour Chart (Wilson 1938) is not generally available, and its modern equivalent, the charts of the American firm of Munsell, are extremely expensive. Perhaps because of cost and copyright requirements, none of the big and otherwise authoritative gardening books — with the exception of Graf's "Exotica" (1963) — offer even the simplest of colour charts.

I looked through Flora NZ IV family by family, noting instances of the mention of red to violet colours, to analyze whether the three authors — Colin, Bill and Phil — favoured particular colour names. I am not saying that their use of any of these might be inaccurate but do suggest that "psychological tendencies" could be at work.