

QUARTERLY NEWS LETTER

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AUCKLAND BOTANICAL SOCIETY

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Christmas is once more upon us and we take this opportunity of wishing members pleasant passages and "good hunting" during the holiday season. It is perhaps permissible to hope that those members who are journeying farther afield - and indeed all who encounter items of botanical interest, will not omit to put their observations on record, so that these may be shared with other members, per medium of the News Letter. Best wishes to all!

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The Botanical event of October was, needless to say, the Cheeseman Memorial Spring Show of Native Flowers. The Show was organised by the Museum Botanist, Miss Betty Molesworth, assisted by the Auckland Botanical Society. The Educational Section was under the direction of Miss Zoe O. Lloyd. The Museum showed its appreciation of the work done by the Botanical Society for the Cheeseman Memorial Flower Shows by asking its President, Miss Marguerite Crookes, to open the twelfth one. This was duly done on Saturday, October 4th at 2.30 p.m.

It seems to have been the universal opinion that this year's show was a particularly good one. One or two slight innovations were made. The show was held in October instead of September as in previous years. It was felt that the later date would ensure a greater number of native flowers, as in the past it has often been found that some particularly attractive specimens are not quite out. The general arrangement also differed from that of previous years. Instead of the long tables stretching right down the hall, small tables were placed on which various exhibits could be arranged to the best advantage. In this way plants were both more attractively set out and more readily studied.

The special exhibits engaged much attention. The City Council Exhibit forwarded by Mr. Macpherson, Parks Superintendent, and arranged by Mr. Jollie, assistant Parks Superintendent, was both tasteful and instructive. In addition Mr. Jollie also set up a very worth while exhibit dealing with the growing of native plants from seed. The Auckland Museum Conchology Club contributed a most lifelike exhibit on "High Tidal Communities" while the Levin Native Flora Club also gave us a fragment of natural seashore in their display "Flora Groups of Coastal Dunes and Environs," while plants below the tide were represented by Miss M. Ambler's presentation of "Rock Pools". Many who have never had the opportunity to travel so far south were delighted by the collection of Stewart Island Plants which arrived in excellent trim after their long journey. These were collected by the Traill brothers, and Miss Baker who has recently placed her home and grounds in Stewart Is. at the disposal of scientific workers. Our forests were represented by specimens from the beech forest sent by the Botany circle of the Tararua Tramping Club, by the Forest and Bird Protection Society's appealing exhibit of nectar eating birds, and by a representative collection of native ferns arranged by Miss Crookes.

Plant products were featured in the Native Plant Dyes as shown in the display case and in an informative timber exhibit.

The decorative side of the Show, organised by Mrs. Buddle, was particularly delightful. Apart from the beauty of the flowers, much use was made of coloured foliage. Horopito is well known for the beauty of its autumn colourings, but in addition the charm and grace of carefully chosen branches of such things as kauri, tanikaha, toro, Pseudopanax discolor, to mention only a few, must have come as something of a surprise to some of the visitors. It is also of interest that the most decorative foliage keeps well in water. Incidentally lovely autumn coloured fronds of Blechnum procerum, that usually wither on picking were collected by the Museum Botanist and her mother the day before the Show, and immersed flat all night in water. They were still beautifully fresh on closing day.

As regards the educational section, under the able direction of Miss Lloyd, this was as usual excellent as regards the quality of its exhibits. Unfortunately the same cannot be said of quantity. In spite of the strenuous efforts of Miss Lloyd, far fewer children than one could have wished sent in contributions. A feature of the children's display was the excellent work done by some of the small country schools. Members of the Committee were so impressed by the work sent by one small country school, Parua Bay, on the way to

Whangarei Heads, that they decided to denote a special prize for it, to be used for the purchase of books or equipment at the discretion of its enthusiastic headmaster, Mr. Francis.

The growing public interest in the Show is a matter for congratulation. This year, the attendance was 7000 as against 6000 last year although then the Show was open for a day longer. At the same time if any members have any suggestions to be made in regard to future shows, the Committee would be very pleased if they would make them while the present show is fresh in everyone's mind.

In conclusion, I would like to quote a very charming message sent by Dr. Archey to the Botanical Society in a letter to its President: "I am very happy too, to acknowledge the tremendous help that the Botanical Society members gave. In effect I should like to feel that the Show is the Botanical Society's own Flower Show and that the Museum is as it were just the place in which you hold it."

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LECTURES AND EXCURSIONS

On Wednesday, August 6th at 8 p.m. members listened to a highly instructive lecture on Ecology, by Professor Chapman. The lecture was practical in intent, Dr. Chapman giving precise details as to how various simple types of ecological investigation could be carried through. It is hoped that it may be possible in the future for the society to undertake some form of research in regard to one of our local native plant communities. Certainly with the many and varied associations in the vicinity of Auckland, there should be no shortages of material! Professor Chapman has kindly agreed to publish the substance of his lecture in Bulletin form. Members of the Society will thus be suitably equipped when they decide to commence making their records.

On Saturday, August 16th, our "outing" took the form of an afternoon at the Museum Library to become acquainted with the Museum's very valuable collection of Botanical works. The exhibition was organised by Miss Molesworth, assisted by the Museum Librarian, Miss E. Evans. Books were set out according to subject matter in an attractive manner. Of particular interest to members were some of the old historical works, and accounts of early botanical exploration. These included:

Accounts of the 3 voyages of Captain Cook.

Banks and Solander's Manuscript of New Zealand plants and Illustrations