

QUARTERLY NEWS LETTER

AUCKLAND BOTANICAL SOCIETY

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"The Cheeseman"

This annual show of native plants has again achieved an outstanding success and has been widely acclaimed for both the interest and variety of its exhibits. Individual exhibits showed plant associations of varying types such as fragments of marshland or sand dune area, while collections of characteristic plants and flowers were on display from Taupo and Tongariro and regions as far apart as Northland and Otago. The importance of trees for farms, city gardens and as food for birds was stressed in a number of attractive displays, while Maori food plants were also considered, and some skilful Maori women gave a demonstration of weaving and poi making.

A very striking feature of the show was an extremely large sized model of a plant molecule. This created much interest and comment.

Our Silver Jubilee

As our twenty-fifth birthday fell due this year, Dr. Cooper kindly agreed to hold the Cheeseman Flower Show a month later than usual so that we could celebrate our Silver Jubilee during show time, thus enabling some of our country members to see the show and attend our jubilee dinner during the same trip.

Our little function was a great success and we were very happy to welcome a number of country members - Mrs. T. Park (Te Kuiti) Miss Kate Stocker (Nelson) Mr. Gudex (Hamilton) and Mr. and Mrs. Ross McKenzie (Clevedon).

We were delighted to have telegrams of congratulation from Mrs. Duguid of Levin, Miss Lucy Moore (one of our foundation members), Mrs. Betty Allen (nee Miss Betty Molesworth, our first secretary) from Ipoh, Malaya, and last but not least, our good friend Lucy Cranwell-Smith who had so much to do with the founding of the Society, whose letter to us is published below.

After a very pleasant buffet dinner, brief speeches were made by Mr. John Seabrook (President, War Memorial Museum), Professor Chapman and our President, Mr. R. Lediard. The evening concluded with a showing of some very beautiful slides taken by Mr. A. Coyle during a recent trip taken by himself, his wife and son through Britain, the Continent and the Near East. Altogether our Silver Jubilee was voted a great success and the evening ended with a vote of thanks to all concerned with its organisation.

Letter from Lucy Cranwell-Smith:

October 19th 1962.

The Hon. Secretary,
Auckland Botanical Society,
Auckland, New Zealand

Dear Madam,

I am reminded that the 25th anniversary of the Auckland Botanical Society is already upon us. I can hardly believe it. It seems only yesterday that we met to consider such a Society. Perhaps, being away from Auckland I have thought that time stood still, and that I could come back some day and find things as I knew them.

We began the Society with high hopes, and I am sure that the present healthy membership indicates that growth has been steady, that much good work has been done, and that the life of each member has been enriched through contact with fellow enthusiasts.

I miss these New Zealand contacts more than I can say. And I miss the field trips, the lectures, the Flower Shows, and most of all the shared enthusiasm for a wild flora and a wild countryside. However, I meet a few here who are true nature-lovers, and I see remarkable plants and associations too. I know I shall never cease to wonder about plants wherever I go; if I were to go to the moon I should feel truly banished from the joys of earth.

If we wonder sometimes why we, individually or as a group, feel so strongly about animals or plants, we can remember how an American entomologist, William Morton Wheeler, summed up his own feelings about them. He wrote:

"that organisms are as they are," "is a perennial joy and consolation." "...apart from members of our own species they are our only companions in an infinite and unsympathetic waste of electrons, planets, nebulae and stars,..."