

GUEST EDITORIAL

When Ross Elder asked me for an editorial I was in the middle of writing an obituary of Dr. Amy Hodgson who died this year at the age of 94; and it seemed appropriate to tell you something about her, because she was one of New Zealand's most distinguished amateur botanists. She was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of New Zealand in 1961, at the age of 72, for her work on our native liverworts, and in 1976, at the age of 87, she was awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Science by Massey University.

Amy Campbell was taught elementary botany at Napier Girls High School as well as by the Rev. Alexander Whyte F.L.S., the Presbyterian minister at Havelock North. But she did not seem to become seriously interested in plants (or had the time to be so) until after the last of her four children had been born to her and Frederick John Hodgson whom she had married in 1912. By then in the early 1920's, her husband was managing the Hendley Station at Patoka, in the hills some 45km to the north-west of Napier. Here Mrs. Hodgson began to gather the ferns and flowering plants. I have seen a snap of her and her three elder children walking along a stream bed at Hendley, with her youngest on her hip and collecting bag in her free hand. She began to learn the names of the plants with the help of one or two local enthusiasts, but - as the letters show - they were often unable to identify what she found.

1924 was an important year for Mrs. Hodgson. Her husband bought a farm in the Kiwi Valley near the northern coast of Hawkes Bay; and she began corresponding with H.B. Matthews, the Auckland orchidologist, and with his friend Harry Carse, a retired school-teacher with an extensive knowledge of the plants of northern New Zealand. Then, in 1925, Carse mentioned Mrs. Hodgson to another of his correspondents, Mr. G.O.K. Sainsbury, barrister and solicitor at Wairoa not far from where she lived; and on 17th June, 1925, Sainsbury wrote and introduced himself. At first they corresponded about higher plants, but soon Sainsbury mentioned his relatively new interest in mosses, and Mrs. Hodgson began to collect for him and learn them herself. In 1928 she purchased a second-hand microscope from England, on Sainsbury's advice, and in 1930, encouraged by Sainsbury and Carse, she published her first paper - on the apical gemma of the moss Tortula abruptinervis. Mrs. Hodgson was then aged 41, and one is reminded of Leonard Cockayne who did not publish his first paper until he was 43.

Already, in July, 1925, Mrs. Hodgson had asked Mr. Sainsbury whether anyone in New Zealand was working on liverworts. In October, 1928, he told her that he had suggested to another of his correspondents, Mr. K.W.

Allison, that he should take up this neglected group, and said she could work at them too, as long as mosses still received her 'full care and attention'. In the end Allison concentrated more on the mosses and it was Mrs. Hodgson who became the authority on liverworts. In 1930 she began corresponding with various authorities and went on to write, or be associated with, 28 papers on liverworts, the last in 1974. Among these is her description of a new family, the Phyllothalliaceae.

In addition to being a wife, mother and research worker, Dr. Hodgson was a keen horticulturalist. She began exhibiting in the first spring show of the Wairoa District Horticultural Society in 1923, and in 1977 was elected a Life Member for outstanding service to the community in the field of horticulture. She was also active in the Wairoa section of the Royal N.Z. Forest and Bird Protection Society. Her dedication is an example to us all.

Dr. Eric Godley,
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6th June, 1984.

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WAIMAIRI WALKWAY

JOHN THOMPSON

When we set out to walk the Waimairi Walkway on the 23rd March 1983 shortly after it had been officially opened, we did not expect to find native plants of special interest. We were, however, pleasantly surprised to notice two plants that were new to us, Carex flaviformis and Scirpus sulcatus var. distigmatosus. For our added enjoyment were numerous patches of the blue flowered Urticularia monanthos and more flowers of Limosella lineata than we had previously seen during the whole of our plant observing years.

It is a pleasant track. Commencing at the Groynes, it follows the banks of the South Branch of the Waimakariri River and then runs across farm land to Belfast. Since our first walk a new track has been formed from the Belfast end back towards the Groynes.

The most interesting portions botanically are the swamps at the Twin Culverts and the banks of the river, especially the stretch where the track follows close to the river and is distinguished by having a large willow log partly submerged in the water.