

**CANTERBURY BOTANICAL SOCIETY (NZ) INC.
FORTY-SEVENTH ANNUAL REPORT 2000**

Officers and Committee (1999-2000)

President: Peter Wardle

Vice-president: Bryony Macmillan

Secretary: Roger Keye

Treasurer: Mary Korver

Committee: Officers and Colin Burrows, Fiona Lees, Clairee Newell (co-opted)

Newsletter Editor: John Ward

Auditor: Bob Abbott

Monthly Meeting Programme (1999-2000)

June: AGM and lunch

“Probing a peaty paradise on New Zealand subantarctic Islands” Janet Wilmshurst

July: “Wildflowers of the Northern Hemisphere” Max Visch

September: “Insect seed predators on *Chionochloa*” Andrew McColl (student presentation); “Mountain flower photographs of the Southern Andes” Edith Mitchell

October: “Use of fractal analysis to measure leaf shape and venation in native plants” Olga Nikora (student presentation); “Genetic engineering” Tony Conner

November: “Antarctic terrestrial and freshwater algae” Paul Broady

December: “Botanical Hats”; “Quiz on native tree seedlings” (Colin Burrows); “Native Flora Society” Basil O’Connor; “Copland Pass – a 1950s crossing” Mary Wallis; “The Society after 2000” Peter Wardle

March: Members: “show-and-tell”: contributors were Roger Keye (former recreation reserve in Hanmer Forest), Basil O’Connor (plants and people); Miles Banks (Arthurs Pass camp); Peter Wardle (tropical alpine plants); Colin Burrows (podocarp seedlings in cultivation)

April: “Traditional use of native plants” Sue Scheele

May: “Vegetation of the Southern Appalachian Mountains, USA” Claire Newell

Field Trips and Camps

July: Christchurch Botanic Gardens propagation area and cactus house: Max Visch

August: Visit to the City Council plant nursery at Harewood: Joe Cartman

September: Sand vegetation on Kaitorete Spit: Trevor Partridge

October: Kowhai-dominated bush on property of Martin Satterthwaite, Mt Stewart, Leader Valley: David Webster

November: Travis Wetland, including planting *Urtica linearifolia*: Eleanor Bissell

Camp at Outdoor Recreation Centre, Arthurs Pass, including walks to Upper Otira and Temple Basin. Roger Keye (camp), Derek Cook (field)

February: University of Canterbury Field Station, Cass, including visits to Poulter River Bridge, Craigieburn Range, Temple Basin, Lake Lyndon: Peter & Margaret Wardle

March: Protected forest remnants on Hillary and Heuston properties (above Pigeon and Hickory Bays): David Webster

April: Whakaraupo Reserve on the harbour side of Port Hills: Colin Burrows

May: Protected forest at Manor Park, Coopers Creek: David Rossiter

The Programme

During evening meetings, members and visitors have been presented with a wide range of botanical topics, dealing with how native plants function, and their uses in the past and at present. Several speakers talked about interesting plants and vegetation in other parts of the world, while talks on genetic engineering and algae explored quite different facets of the plant kingdom. Field trips to National and Forest Parks, reserves of various categories, areas protected through the enthusiasm of private owners, and a City Council nursery provided opportunities to see native plants from the Canterbury coast to the mountain tops, and there have been opportunities to see native and introduced plants under cultivation. Travis Swamp provided an exercise in hands-on conservation.

Newsletter: The Society is indebted to John Ward who continues to compile and edit the newsletter, Claire Newell who arranges its printing, and Fiona Lees and Claire who arrange its delivery to members. Mary Korver has found that some 16 members are happy to receive their newsletters by e-mail, and it is planned to begin this in the coming financial year, at a saving to the Society.

Publication: Within 111 pages, Journal No. 33 contains eight botanical papers, two biographical papers, and four shorter notes, all having been contributed by members of the Society. It was distributed by Fay Jackson. The Society also published 'Naturalised Vascular Plants of Banks Peninsula' by Hugh Wilson. Journal No. 34 will be the last number to be edited by Colin Burrows, and we thank him for his sterling work.

Other Acknowledgements: We are grateful to Ron Close who made his knowledge and experience freely available to the present committee, and to Fiona Lees who is retiring after many years on the committee. Miles and Daphne Banks have provided supper, and Ann McMillan has managed the sales table at the evening meetings.

As President for the past year, I thank the officers and committee members, and all the other members of the Society who, through their help and support for the Society's activities, have made 1999-2000 botanically interesting and varied.

Membership: The membership remains stable with 224 individual members and 17 institutional members. Fourteen new members have joined this year, and 11 members have resigned or allowed their membership to lapse. We regret having to point out that the Society carries a considerable number of members whose subscriptions are in arrears. Our modest subscription of up to \$25 per annum enables the Society to carry out its basic functions, as well as publishing its journal, supporting student research, and making donations towards conservation projects.

Submissions: The Society commented on the following documents from the Department of Conservation: Stewart Island/Rakiura National Park proposal (jointly with Hugh Wilson); Integrated Management Areas for maintaining and enhancing the ecological integrity of indigenous West Coast ecosystems; Mistletoe Recovery plan. The Society also wrote to the Department of Conservation, questioning whether track cutting at Arthurs Pass needed to have been so destructive of native plants.

Awards: At the June 1999 A.G.M. the Senior Bledisloe Trophy was presented to W. Brooke Dawson of Hanmer Springs for his environmental and educational work associated with the Hanmer Springs Forest Recreation Reserve and the other District Council reserves in the area. The Bledisloe Trophy was presented to Louise Cullen of Lincoln University for her paper presented to the November 1998 meeting of the Society, on the influence of climatic change and disturbance on a timber line of silver beech. Ron Close was elected an Honorary Life Member, in recognition of his years of service to the Society as a committee member, President, and Treasurer.

Student support: The Year 2000 recipients of students grants are Phil Novis and Jessie Wells, both of the Department of Plant and Microbial Sciences, University of Canterbury. Prizes of books on New Zealand botany were presented to the successful contestants in the Canterbury-Westland Science Fair, who were Olga Nikora (Christchurch Girls' High), and Julia Van Beek and Melanie Whitby (Amberley Primary).

Donation: The Maurice White Trust was granted \$1500 to purchase the Narbey back block adjoining Hinewai. Unfortunately the Trust's offer was not accepted, but your committee has agreed that the donated money should be held in the Trust's land acquisition fund.

The Society in 2000 and beyond: I was asked to present some ideas on the Society's future at the December meeting, and briefly summarise these here. I believe that the Society is functioning well, and in accordance with the excellent guidelines provided by its stated objectives. Our field excursions and talks are informative and enjoyable for both professional botanists and those for whom botany is a hobby. We encourage the study of botany through student grants and publications, and promote conservation, through comment on management proposals, participation in revegetation projects, and monetary support for deserving projects.

Attendance at evening meetings is generally good. Only a small proportion of members attend camps and field trips, and the committee is encouraging discussion about this, although we should bear in mind that laws of diminishing returns apply when numbers become large. Nevertheless, the Society must continue to maintain its membership, and ensure that young people continue to be recruited. It is also important that the work of running the Society continues to be shared among younger and older people, and professional and amateur botanists.

While interest in plants is the bond that maintains the Society, I suggest that developing our conservation role is the way forward. Wisely, the Society has kept at a considered distance from the politics of conservation, but we should continue to provide balanced comment on management issues, and not necessarily wait to be invited to do so. As I see it, the role that we could most fruitfully expand is that of providing botanical information. In the past, conservation managers could freely obtain available information from research organisations and other official sources, but in recent years the trend has been to redirect the decreasing support for botanical research away from inventory towards process-oriented studies. Yet information about where plants are is essential for conservation planning, and our Society in a position to become a major supplier of such information.

Collectively, our membership has a great deal of knowledge about the flora and vegetation of Canterbury and further afield in the South Island. We already compile species lists, Philippa Horn has been putting these on an electronic data base, and Landcare Research is willing to archive hard copy. We should now ensure that the information is accessible for users, and I suggest that future records of presence should be supplemented by basic ecological data.

Peter Wardle
May 2000