

CANTERBURY BOTANICAL SOCIETY (NZ) INC.

FORTY-NINTH ANNUAL REPORT 2002

Officers and Committee (2000-2001)

President:	Peter Wardle
Vice-president:	vacant
Secretary:	Roger Keey
Treasurer:	Trevor Blogg
Committee:	Colin Burrows, Bryony Macmillan, Susan Wiser.
Newsletter Editor:	John Ward
Auditor:	Bob Abbott

Monthly Meeting Programme (2001-2002)

- June: AGM: After the formal business Geoff Walls (QEII Trust) gave an talk on the natural history of the Chatham Islands and human impact on their ecology.
- July: Plants and antiquities in Greece. Colin Burrows.
- August: Weed biological control agents as plant taxonomists? Pauline Syrett, Landcare Research, Lincoln.
- September: The inside of trees - a journey of exploration inside the trunks. Brian Butterfield.
- October: The potential for persistence of forest fragments on Tongatapu, a large island in Western Polynesia. Susan Wiser.
- November: Moa ghosts exorcised? New Zealand's divaricating shrubs avoid high-light photoinhibition. Matthew Turnbull, University of Canterbury.
- December: Talks by students who received Society grants: rare South Island species of *Carmichaelia* (Ingrid Grüner); the molecular biology and distribution pattern of native beech species (Terry Thomsen); the breeding biology and dispersal of the indigenous mistletoe *Ileostylus micranthus* (Manfred von Tippelkirsch).
- February: Show and Tell slide evening.
- March: Forests on fault lines: the history of disturbance and forest regeneration in Westland during the past 700 years. Richard Duncan, Lincoln University. -
- April: Alpine flora of Central Norway. Roger Keey
- May: Our 'Gondwanan' flora - dispersal or persistence? Matt McGlone.

Field Trips and Camps

- July: Wai-ora Trust to view their horticultural activities, including the native nursery. Rob Blakely and Peter Wardle.
- August: Otukaikino Reserve (Wilson's Swamp) near Belfast. Tony Woods and Peter Wardle.
- September: Otahuna Bush, Port Hills. Rob Blakely and Peter Wardle.
- October: Waterfall Track, between Ashley Gorge and Glentui. Allen Cookson.
- November: Spring camp at Glenburn Youth Camp, between Orari Gorge and Waihi Gorge, South Canterbury. Visits to Queen Elizabeth II covenants (South Te Moana River, Lynn wetland, podocarp-hardwood forest on Woods property; Waihi Bush); Orari Gorge Scenic Reserve; native nursery of Ines Stäger and Peter Keller. Bryony Macmillan, Ines Stäger, and Fraser Ross.
- December: Rockwood Range, near the southern end of the central Canterbury foothills. Graeme McArthur.

January: Summer camp at Victoria University Geology Department field station, Onekaka, Golden Bay. Trips to Puponga Farm Park, Farewell Spit and Wharariki Beach; Westhaven Inlet and Knuckle Hill; forest on limestone at the Grove and Pohara; Upper Takaka River including Chaffey's Hut; Wainui Falls; Pupu Springs; Rawhiti Cave, Rameka Track. Colin Burrows and Peter Wardle.

February: Boundary Creek Scenic Reserve, North Canterbury. Bryony Macmillan.

March: Flagpole Hill in the Lady Barker Range, northwest of Glentunnel and Whitecliffs. Graeme and Jill McArthur.

April: Te Waihora (Lake Ellesmere). Colin Burrows.

May: plants with putative Gondwanan affinities in Christchurch Botanic Gardens. Max Visch.

The Programme: The monthly talks have been mostly well attended. Three, on divaricating plants, Gondwanan relationships, and the age structures of Westland forests, covered the most recent research on often-controversial aspects of our native flora. Aspects of management were raised in talks on biological control of weeds and protection of native vegetation in the Chatham Islands and in Tonga. Finally, we enjoyed accounts of floras in the settings of classical Greece and the mountains of Norway.

On our summer and spring camps and seven of our Saturday trips we visited a diversity of native vegetation, ranging from sand dune and swamp to hill-country forests, shrubland and grassland. We found great interest and satisfaction in seeing so many native species and vegetation types surviving in reserves, but at the same time were made well aware of the management problems in maintaining the native quality in the face of competition from introduced plants and competing land uses, especially plantation forestry. In some small reserves in rural or suburban settings Herculean effort is being put into maintenance and restoration, notable examples being the covenants that protect the Musgroves' lowland podocarp forest at Waihi Bush and Shannel Courtney's coastal forest on limestone at Pohara.

Newsletter: The Society continues to be indebted to John Ward who compiles and edits the newsletter (members of the committee discovered just how indebted when they had to carry out these tasks while John was unable to do it for two months!). Copy Bureau prints the newsletters, and Bryony Macmillan mails them out, using address labels provided by Fiona Lees. Of the over 200 newsletters sent out each month, 37 are sent by e-mail, which is a saving to the Society.

Publications: Journal No. 35 is the first to be edited by Warwick Harris. With 112 pages, it is the largest so far, and indeed, the largest that can be bound by relatively inexpensive stapling along the spine. Nearly all of the 18 botanical contributions are by members of the Society, and 11 have rare and threatened plants of Canterbury as their theme. Three of the latter discuss and list, respectively, the rare and threatened vascular plants of Canterbury as a whole, of Banks Peninsula, and of montane rock outcrops on Banks Peninsula. Rare mosses and liverworts are also the subjects of two papers. The remaining six deal with individual threatened species.

Five papers, including one arising from the summer camp at Aoraki/Mt Cook National Park, list plants in specific localities within Canterbury. There is also an

account of mountain flowers in Norway, and a list of 342 native species that have been successfully established in a private Christchurch garden. The latter contribution also lists those tried unsuccessfully, and suggests reasons for success or failure. Finally, there is an obituary for Yvonne Elder who, with her late husband Ross, had been an active member of the Botanical Society from its earliest days. As has become a tradition, the cover illustration is by Hugh Wilson, and the work of a new illustrator, Emily Harris, appears on the pages within. Rebecca Wagstaff also contributed a drawing that will appear in Alan Fife's forthcoming moss flora. As a follow up to the theme of the present number, the editor suggests that the theme for Journal 36 could be "Threats to native Plants in Canterbury", and is now ready to accept contributions.

In respect of special publications by the Society, we draw attention to that 28 copies of the Raoul Symposium volume and four of Naturalised Vascular Plants of Banks Peninsula are still to be sold.

Other Acknowledgements: Once again, Miles and Daphne Banks provided supper after every evening meeting, and Ann McMillan managed the sales table. We continue to be indebted to Derek Cook for advice on our financial report, and to Bob Abbott for auditing it.

As President for the past year, I thank the secretary, treasurer and committee members, and all other members of the Society who, through their help and support for the Society's activities, made 2001-2002 botanically interesting and varied. I am particularly grateful for the regular attendance at committee meetings, which enabled us to achieve quorums despite the committee operating under strength because of insufficient nominations having been received at the previous AGM.

Thanks are due to Rob Blakeley, Shannel Courtney, Richard Duncan, Derek Rooney, Pauline Syrett, Matthew Turnbull and Geoff Walls who, although not members of the Society, have given talks or led field trips. We are also grateful to landowners for allowing access to or across their properties.

Membership: The Society receives 140 individual and 36 joint membership subscriptions; and we have 9 life members. We also send our newsletters and journals gratis or in exchange to 18 institutions, including libraries, university departments, and other botanical societies. Although six new members have joined this year, membership decreased by 13. Dilatory payment of subscriptions continues to be an administrative problem for the Society.

Submissions: Jointly with the Wai-ora Trust to the Selwyn District Council concerning the need for a drastic reduction in feral goats in Otahuna Bush; to the Selwyn Plantation Board and the Forest Heritage Fund pointing out the high botanical and ecological values in the Rockwood Range, that are under threat from exotic plantings; to the Department of Conservation concerning the Korowai/Torlesse Tussocklands Park and the draft management plan review for Aoraki/Mt Cook National Park; to Environment Canterbury concerning possible conflicts between dairying and conservation values on Rakaia Island and the use of inappropriate *Hoheria* species in native plantings on the north bank of the Waimakariri River; on the 2002 Draft Financial Plan of the Christchurch City Council in support of a

recommendation by Dr Colin Meurk for protection of indigenous dryland vegetation on McLeans Island.

Awards and appointments: At the 2001 A.G.M. the Senior Bledisloe Trophy was presented to Colin Burrows in recognition of his long service to botany and conservation, and the Junior Award was presented in absentia to Jessie Wells for her talk on photosynthesis in Okarito Forest. Prizes of books on New Zealand botany were presented to Zoe Carson of St Margaret's College and Rachel Melrose of Lincoln High School, who were the successful contestants in the Canterbury-Westland Science Fair. Neil O'Brien and Pat Morris served as judges.

The Allan Mere for 2002 was awarded to Neill Simpson of Queenstown, who was nominated by the Canterbury and Otago Botanical Societies, with a supporting statement from the Nelson Botanical Society. The award was held in conjunction with the naming of the herbarium at Landcare Research as the Allan Herbarium.

We congratulate Miles Giller on his appointment as the regional QEII Trust representative for lowland Canterbury, succeeding David Webster. This appointment also means that he also represents the Trust at DOC/NGO liaison meetings, and in this capacity he has undertaken to represent the Botanical Society when relevant matters of botanical concern arise. Roger Keey was one of the settlers for the Hamner Heritage Forest Trust.

Student support: Christopher Berry (Lincoln University) was awarded \$500 for a time-lapse video analysis of seed predation after dispersal in podocarp-broadleaved forest.

Donations, etc: The Society donated \$50 worth of books for awards at the Canterbury-Westland Schools Science and Technology Fair, and pays a \$50 subscription to The QEII Trust.

General: Members of the Society participated in voluntary environmental activities conducted under the auspices of other organizations, including planting programmes in Travis Swamp and on Quail Island, and removal of wilding pines from the Waimakariri basin.

During excursions, the Society continues to prepare species lists, usually annotated with habitat information. These are archived at Landcare Research, as hard copy in the library collection and electronically in the National Vegetation Survey databank. Older Botanical Society species lists existing as hard copy and as computer files created by Philippa Horn have been passed to Susan Wisser so that they can also be transferred to the Landcare database.

The President's comment on the year past and the year to come: As usual we have enjoyed monthly talks of high quality and widely ranging subject matter. Meetings and field trips alike seem to have been better attended than during recent years, though no exact records have been kept. Most of the Saturday field trips have also been well attended; the presence of a contingent from north of the Waimakariri has been especially welcome. Both the spring and summer camps had capacity attendance, and an extra weekend trip to Hamner forest also drew a good number. It has also been

gratifying that change of editorship of the Journal from Colin Burrows to Warwick Harris proceeded seamlessly.

A greater number of people have presented themselves for election to the committee this year (though still not enough to necessitate an election!). The nominees include people who are relative newcomers to the Society, and can therefore be expected to bring new ideas to programme planning.

Nevertheless it is disappointing that our society continues to experience diminishing and greying membership, a problem shared by many other smallish societies and clubs. People have expressed a view that Friday is no longer the preferred night for meetings, but a questionnaire conducted in 2000 on this was inconclusive because of a low degree of response. Therefore we are repeating the exercise and expect to receive the responses by the time of the AGM.

More generally, the solution must be to get the Society and the advantages of membership more widely known, and the present members are the best agents for achieving this. The committee has been exploring other avenues, including sending notices to the Christchurch Press for inclusion in the Community Events column. We have almost completely arranged our programme of talks and field trips through to February 2003. We are therefore in a good position to notify kindred organizations of our coming activities, as well as reciprocally notifying our memberships of events in these organizations through our newsletter, although a practical difficulty is that we often learn of such events after our newsletter has gone to press.

Finally, as out-going president, I thank everyone for all the hard work that makes it possible to have a botanical society and a programme to match, and wish the incoming president and council success for 2003–4.

Peter Wardle
May 2002