

Anthony E. Wright

Honorary Life Member, 9 December 2006

Ewen Cameron & Maureen Young

Ewen Cameron (proposer)

In February 1996 Auckland Botanical Society (ABS) held a pot-luck dinner at Anthony Wright's home for the members to farewell him before he left to take up a new position in Christchurch as Director of the Canterbury Museum. At our annual end-of-year botanical event and pot-luck dinner, at Ambury Park on 9 December 2006, we recognised his contribution to the Society by electing him as an Honorary Life Member – our Society's highest honour.

Some of his credentials for this honour: he has been a very active member since first joining the Society in 1981, especially while he was in Auckland, and is now also an integral part of the more recent 2-yearly South Island field trips (Molesworth, Lake Ohau, and NW Nelson (Fig. 1)).



Fig. 1. Anthony Wright reaching for a different fern, Pupū Walkway, NW Nelson field trip, 5 Jan 2006 (Ewen Cameron's camera).

Anthony was a Committee Member for six years (1982-88), President for five years (1988-1993), and Vice-President for three years (1993-96). During that time he was instrumental in updating the Society rules (1989); giving talks; leading field trips, including adventurous camps (see below and the Appendix); together with Ross Beaver, the Kauaeranga Valley camp (Feb 1983) was the first ABS camping field trip

of the modern era; instigated field trip "G&Ts"; instigated the Society pot-luck dinners (Dec 1989) which then moved to his Greenlane house (Dec 1990) and then became mid-winter ones (Jul 1991-Jul 1996);



Fig. 2. The 'leading light' Waipoua field trip, near Kawerua, Jan 1989 (Ross Beaver)

successfully canvassed and set up the New Zealand Botanical Society to be the umbrella body for all the New Zealand Botanical Societies (their first *Newsletter* Aug 1985); organised the Lottery grant for *Index to ABS Newsletters* (1991); together with Ross Beaver organised the field trips and "Kiwi Fare" dinner for joint Australian Systematic Botany/NZ Botanical Society conference (Nov 1991) and as part of that conference the Society's Trading Table was instigated; returned the Society's monthly meetings to the Auckland Museum (Oct 1992); set up the Lucy Cranwell Student Field Grants (first awarded 1994); 1 of 6 posteriors used in the famous ABS T-shirt while "tickling the irritable stigmas of *Glossostigma elatinoide*s" (Rotokawau, Karikari Peninsula, Jan 1995); had a natural flare for organising; and overall a real love of remote places, plants (especially ferns,

herbs and lichens), and collecting plants (15,000 specimens in the AK herbarium are testimony to this).

Publications, meeting and field trip attendances all increased while he was president, and from his own 1992 Annual Report:

"The camaraderie engendered on these trips flows through to other activities, and is fostered by the now regular social events which dot the Boc Soc calendar"

To mark the Honorary Life Membership Anthony was presented with a copy of *Pohutukawa and Rata: New Zealand's Iron-Hearted Trees* written by Philip Simpson.

Maureen Young (second)

As an Auckland University student Anthony had been an enthusiastic member of the then very active Field Club, which had a base at the old hotel on the Northland coast at Kawerua. When I joined ABS in 1984, Anthony was carrying on the ethos of carefree exploration that had been established by the Field Clubbers. He took us to exciting, out-of-the-way places in Northland, where we camped and botanised and had a lot of fun.

It was at a camp at Kawerua that he led one of the most memorable of ABS walks (Jan 1990) – the "Great Wairau Massacre". After a start rather too late in the morning, the party descended down a steep slope (lots of lovely *Pittosporum pimeleoides*) into the bed of the Wairau River, with the aim of following the river to the coast, then walking southwards back to the field hut. After a few hours it became obvious that we were running out of time to complete the walk before dark. By this time the party had split into two and Anthony's group managed to scramble up out of the river and find their way back to the vehicles. The others carried on, and after a series of misadventures, including one member breaking a rib, and another getting lost on a reef, we finally arrived back at the hut at 10.30 pm, much to Anthony's relief.

It was also at Kawerua that I was first introduced to the fine old Field Club tradition of prune stone spitting.

Appendix: Anthony's Society Field Trips, Talks, and Publications

Field Trips

Jul 1982: Coatsville Scenic Reserves
18-20 Feb 1983: Kauaeranga Valley, Coromandel (with Ross Beever)
Sep 1983: New Government House grounds
18-19 Feb 1984: Mt Pirongia
15-17 Mar 1985: Mt Kakepuku, near Te Awamutu
Aug 1985: Lichen field trip am, workshop pm (with John Braggins)
Sep 1988: Maungaroa Ridge Track, Piha (lichen foray) (with Jack Mackinder)
13-17 Jan 1989: Waima-Waipoua-Mataraua Forests (with Ewen Cameron) (Fig. 2)
Apr 1989: Private forest at Waiwera/Hatfields
Aug 1989: Moturemu Island, Kaipara Harbour
12-17 Jan 1990: Waipoua, based at Kawerua ("Wairoa Massacre")
25-31 Aug 1990: Moturoa Island, Bay of Islands
25-31 May 1991: Pouto
24-29 Nov 1992: Mayor Island
20-25 Oct 1995: North Cape (with Maureen Young)
3-10 Jan 2004: Lake Ohau, central Otago (with Sandra Jones)

My partner, Frank Hudson, and I were amazed, as we ate our dessert of prunes and custard, to find that missiles were flying through the air, to be skilfully deflected by the dinner plates of those in the know. Enamel plates were much to be desired, as they made a satisfying "ping" as the stones hit. Prune stone spitting came in three grades:

Ordinary – taking care not to inhale the stone along with the intake of air;

rapid fire – to achieve this one had to accumulate a mouthful of stones;

shrapnel – for this, one needed strong teeth to process the ammunition.

Anthony had a long love affair with Landrovers (also see *Oct 1989 News-sheet* for one of his Subaru adventures), and I recall one hair-raising adventure on the dunes of the Pouto Peninsula, where Anthony was driving Geoff Davidson's rather ancient Landrover in such a fashion that I had to visit a chiropractor the following week. On the unforgettable trip to North Cape (Oct 1995) when Geoff rediscovered a flowering specimen of the long lost orchid, *Thelymitra matthewsii*, another member accidentally stepped back onto another rare orchid, *Plumatichilos tasmanicum*. Anthony set off along the cliff, saying, "Here's another one. Stomp!" "Here's another one. Stomp!"

When Anthony left Auckland to take up his position at Canterbury Museum, and with our then president, Ewen, being occupied with his young family, I realised there was nobody available to organise these camps that had become such a happy ABS tradition. Anthony kindly passed on copies of his shopping lists and menus, and I have endeavoured to carry on in like fashion, though I know of none who could emulate his flair and sagacity.

I always think of Anthony's personality as being like two sides to a coin – the absolute professional at work, and the man who never grew up when he is out in the field. Fortunately, we meet up with him now and again on our ventures to the South Island, and we can benefit once again from the joy of his company.

Talks/visits

Aug 1981: Auckland Museum (AK) visit
Apr 1982: Auckland Museum (AK) visit
Sep 1983: New Government House grounds
Jul 1983: The vegetation of Three Kings Islands
Oct 1988: Lichen workshop (with Barbara Segedin)
Apr 1989: Three Kings revisited
Jul 1989: Auckland Museum (AK) visit
Aug 1990: Rare Plant Symposium (convenor)
Nov 1990: Dicot workshop (participated)
Mar 1991: Eight Days in Spring (botanising in Northland)
May 1992: Tonga
Nov 1995: Four plant families (participated)
Mar 1996: Raoul Island (with Ewen Cameron)

Publications (Newsletter/Journal)

1982: Ngataurua Islets, Mimiwhangata. 37: 8-10.
1982: Out-of-place orchid. 37: 21.
1985: Vascular Flora of Kakepuku Historic Reserve Te Awamutu. 40: 28-30.
1987: Matuku Reserve. 42: 30.
1988: Plants of northern offshore islands. 43: 21-22.
1989: Vascular plants of private forest Waiwera-Hatfields. 44: 32-35.
1990: Hukatere Scenic Reserve, 17 Feb 1990. 45: 47-49 (with Ross Beever).
1991: Moturemu Island revisited. 46: 9.
1991: Vascular plants of Tapu Bush, North Kaipara Barrier. 46: 70-72 (with Maureen Young).
1993: Book Review: New Zealand's Economic Native Plants by RC Cooper & RC Cambie. 48: 13.
1993: Moturemu, Kaipara Harbour – another visit. 48: 14-16 (with Ewen Cameron).
1994: New Zealand Herbarium Resources 1993. 49: 20.
1996: Murimotu, North Cape. 51: 1-7 (with Ewen Cameron).
2006: Takaka Hill. *M*: M Wilcox (ed.) Golden Bay, North-west Nelson, 2-10 Jan 2006. 61: 26-27 (with Ewen Cameron).

Ross E. Beever FRSNZ Honorary Life Member 2 May 2007

Mike Wilcox, Sandra Jones & Jack Rattenbury

It is with great pleasure that we tonight elect Ross Beever to be our next Honorary Life Member. He readily qualifies in numerous ways for this honour — as an active member, past president, current vice president, observant naturalist of wide interests, generous and knowledgeable mentor, expert presenter of talks and leader of field trips, ABS historian and “people person”, as well as being a leading scientist in the field of mycology, plant pathology, and on the genus *Cordyline*. He has a special presence in ABS that always reminds us what a good club this is to belong to, and that traditions are important — people and plants, in that order. We are ever conscious that our present-day ABS has high standards to maintain in camaraderie, administration, enthusiastic botanising, News-sheets, Journals and bulletins — all aspects in which Ross has been involved.

Ross's professional qualifications are BSc Botany and Chemistry, Auckland University. MSc (1st Class Hons) Botany, Auckland University, PhD Botany, Leeds University UK, to which should be added Fellow of the Royal Society of New Zealand on 17 November 2004, the formal citation of which reads:

“Dr Ross E. Beever, Senior Scientist, Landcare Research, Auckland, has made outstanding contributions to mycology, plant pathology and New Zealand botany over 33 years of active research. In his

painstaking and innovative research on fungi from the sub cellular level through to the ecosystem level he has collaborated widely with colleagues having complementary skills, and combined applied work with more fundamental studies.

In this way, his research has significantly advanced our knowledge of fungal behaviour and the physiology of plant diseases. He has developed methods to manage the problems of fungicide resistance in economically important fungi such as *Botrytis*, and he led the team that identified flax yellow leaf phytoplasma as the organism responsible for the widespread death of cabbage trees throughout northern New Zealand.

Dr Beever is a skilled field observer with an extensive knowledge of native plants and fungi, and an inspiring leader of his younger colleagues.”

Let us go back to 1962, when on 24 December of that year Jim Beever and his young son Ross ventured on to the slopes of Mt Auckland on the eastern shores of the Kaipara Harbour. Here they discovered a new plant, the type collection of which resides in the Auckland Museum, (AK 108769). The following year, in the Transactions of the Royal Society of New Zealand, local botanist and New Zealand orchid authority Dan Hatch described *Yuania australis*, a peculiar parasitic