

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

orchid associated with nikau and taraire trees. This story had a sequel in 1995 when L. A. Garay and E. A. Christenson renamed the plant *Danhatchia australis*.



Fig. 1. Ross Beever, 17 Ambury Avenue, Royal Oak, January 2005 (Jessica Beever)

Ross's contributions to Botany continued from his youth through his student years, blossoming in the Field Club, the Offshore Islands Research Group and ABS, and thence to his professional career as a scientist with the DSIR at Mt Albert, and later Landcare Research, now at the University of Auckland Tamaki campus. His published papers and articles reflect his wide botanical interests and keen powers of observation. Pollination of *Rhabdothamnus solandri*, holes in kawakawa leaves, frost damage to native plants, the ancestry of puka on the Chickens Islands, phytoplasmas, variation in the cabbage tree, and splendid accounts of the vegetation of Cuvier Island, North Cape, the Bay of Islands, and our local gumlands to mention just a few. He has been working on *Cordyline* for a long time, in fact, so long that he has seen at least six changes in the family to which this genus has been assigned: Liliaceae, Agavaceae, Draceneae, Asteliaceae, Lomandraceae, and currently Laxmanniaceae.

Stemming from his knowledge and interest in the plants of the northern offshore islands Ross helped to build up and care for a valuable living collection of these at the Mt Albert campus. Among these is the Three Kings kaikomako (*Pennantia baylisiana* (W.R.B. Oliv.) Baylis) of the family Pennantiaceae, a rare tree (only one, in fact, a female) discovered on Great Island, Three Kings, in 1945 by Dr Geoff Baylis. It was originally assigned to Anacardiaceae as *Plectomirtha baylisiana*. [see articles by H. Sleumer, *Blumea* 18: 217-218 (1970), and G. T. S. Baylis *N.Z. J. Bot.* 15:511-512 (1977)]. Once regarded as the rarest tree in the world *Pennantia baylisiana* was saved from possible extinction by Ross Beever. Knowing other members of the genus were generally dioecious, requiring two plants to cross pollinate, he managed to induce a DSIR cutting-grown plant that had flowered to develop a pollen tube, resulting in the setting of viable seed. These were then grown on and one of the first crop of seedlings proved to be functionally

hermaphrodite (leading to Geoff Davidson to remark that it did not know whether it was Arthur or Martha). Because of the trees initial rarity, Oratia Native Plant Nursery began selling the plants for \$100.00 each. Some \$25,000 was raised with all the proceeds being given to conservation groups to help protect native species, including \$5,000 to the ABS Lucy Cranwell Fund and \$10,000 to the New Zealand Plant Conservation Network. What a great piece of *ex situ* conservation work, combining the skills and enthusiasm of Ross Beever and Geoff Davidson!



Fig. 2. To mark the occasion Ross was presented with a painting of ngaio by Shirley Tomlinson, drawn on Rangitoto Island.

Turning now from the plants to ABS itself, we are grateful to Ross for his many contributions to our Society. Active membership is worthy in itself, but Ross went much further, especially during his tenure as President from 1983 to 1987. In 1987 he organised the 50th Jubilee, which from all accounts was a most successful and enjoyable event. On 3 October 1987 at the Symposium, Ross's father Jim was elected an Honorary Life Member (and so was Jack Rattenbury), on the nomination of Jack Mackinder, who commented that "ABS blossoms under Beever's!". The Lucy Cranwell Lecture was instituted during Ross's presidency, with the first lecture delivered in September 1988 by Lucy Moore. He was also instrumental in making well-researched submissions on behalf of ABS on the botanical aspects of management proposals for some local reserves, namely the proposed Forest Park at Cornwallis (1982), Kirk's Bush

at Papakura (1983) and the Mt Roskill Borough Reserve (1983). Another worthy thing he did was to initiate the "From the Journals" excerpts in the Newsletters, bringing people up to date with the latest taxonomic name changes. It is good that Ewen Cameron has continued this service, which is much appreciated by members.

Ross remains very involved with ABS, as a vice President, wise counselor, regular presenter of talks (recent ones being on Western Australia, Hawaii, phytoplasmas, and dieback of kauri), and enthusiast on field trips and expeditions where he is one of the keenest photographers (specialising in taking the group photo on camps) and often seen at work grubbing for truffles on the forest floor.

Some of Ross's botanical articles and papers

- Beever, R.E.; Spragg, J.E.; Dickson, E.M. 1968: A species-area curve for a *Leptospermum* forest stand. *Tane* 14: 93-99.
- Beever, R.E.; Beever, J.E. 1969: Studies on the vegetation of Cuvier Island. II. Structure of the forest. *Tane* 15: 69-74.
- Beever, R.E.; Parris, B.S.; Beever, J.E. 1969: Studies on the vegetation of Cuvier Island. I. The plant communities and vascular plant list. *Tane* 15: 53-68.
- Beever, R.E.; Beever, J. (Jim) 1974: *Yuania australis* in the Waitakeres. *Auckland Botanical Society Newsletter* 31: 1-3.
- Beever, R.E.; Beever, J.E. 1974: Leaf size in *Aristotelia serrata*. *Auckland Botanical Society Newsletter* 31: 13-14.
- Beever, R.E.; Beever, J. (Jim) 1976: *Astelia grandis* is aptly named. *Auckland Botanical Society Newsletter* 33: 1.
- Beever, R.E. 1981: Self-incompatibility in *Cordyline kaspas* (Agavaceae). *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 19: 13-16.
- Beever, R.E. 1982: Submission on proposed forest park at Cornwallis. *Auckland Botanical Society Newsletter* 37: 1-10.
- Beever, R.E. 1983a: Self-incompatibility in *Cordyline pumilio* (Agavaceae). *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 21: 93-95.
- Beever, R.E. 1983b: Submission on management plans, Mt Roskill Borough reserves. *Auckland Botanical Society Newsletter* 38:1-2.
- Beever, R.E. 1983c: Submission on management of Kirk's Bush, Papakura. *Auckland Botanical Society Newsletter* 38: 6-8.
- Beever, R.E. 1983d: *Paspalum*. *Auckland Botanical Society Newsletter* 38: 9.
- Beever, R.E. 1983e: Paspalums – native or exotic? *Auckland Botanical Society Newsletter* 38: 11.
- Beever, R.E. 1983f: Pollination of *Rhabdothamnus solandri*: more observations needed. *Auckland Botanical Society Newsletter* 38: 24-25.
- Beever, R.; Beever, J. (Jim). 1983: Frost damage to native plants 1982. *Auckland Botanical Society Newsletter* 38: 1-3.
- Beever, R.E. 1984a: Observations on puka (*Meryta sinclairii*) on the Chickens Islands, with an assessment of the hypothesis that it was transferred there by the Maori. *Tane* 30: 77-92.
- Beever, R.E. 1984b: Fruit set and seed germination of *Rhabdothamnus solandri* (Gesneriaceae). *Auckland Botanical Society Newsletter* 39: 42-45.
- Beever, R.E.; Esler, A.E.; Wright, A.E. 1984: Botany of the large islands of the eastern Bay of Islands, northern New Zealand. *Tane* 30: 251-273.
- Beever, R.E. 1985: Pukemokemoke, a forest remnant in the Waikato. *Auckland Botanical Society Newsletter* 40: 8-12.
- Beever, R.E. 1986: A plant list for Pukekaroro Scenic Reserve, Kaiwaka, North Auckland. *Auckland Botanical Society Newsletter* 41: 43-45.
- Beever, R.E. 1986: Large-leaved plants of the northern offshore islands, New Zealand. in Wright, A.E.; Beever, R.E. (eds.). The offshore islands of northern New Zealand, Department of Lands and Survey information series, 16: 51-61.
- Beever, R.E. 1986. The species of *Cordyline* (Agavaceae) on the Poor Knights Islands, northern New Zealand. *Journal of the Royal Society of New Zealand* 16: 251-258.
- Beever, R.E. 1987a: The holes in the leaves of kawakawa (*Macropiper excelsum*). *Auckland Botanical Society Newsletter* 42: 9-11.
- Beever, R.E. 1987b: Obituary – Lucy Beatrice Moore, 1906-1987. *Auckland Botanical Society Newsletter* 42: 34-35.
- Beever, R.E. 1987c: Farthest north – botanical notes on the North Cape area. *Auckland Botanical Society Newsletter* 42: 49-52.
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- Beever, R. 1988. Gumland scrub. *Auckland Botanical Society Journal* 43: 12-16.
- Beever, R.E.; Beever, Jessica E. 1989. Report on Waima-Waipoua-Mataraua forests field trip January 1989. *Auckland Botanical Society Journal* 44: 29-30.
- Wright, A.; Beever, R. 1990. Hukatere Scenic Reserve, 17 February 1990. *Auckland Botanical Society Journal* 45: 47-49.
- Redgwell, R.J., Beever, R.E., Bieleski, R.L., Laracy, E.P., Benn, M.H. 1990. Isolation and characterisation of (E)-4-(hydroxy-2-(hydroxymethyl)but-2-enyl β -D-allopyranoside, the major soluble carbohydrate in leaves of the fern *Cardiomanes reniforme*. *Carbohydrate research* 198: 39-48.
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- Beever, R.; Davidson, G. 1999. *Pennantia baylisiana* project. *Auckland Botanical Society Journal* 54: 31.
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- Beever, R.E. 2001. Phytoplasmas, a new threat to New Zealand plants? *Auckland Botanical Society Journal* 56: 24-26.
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- Beever, R.E. 2005. Why are the cabbage trees dying? Research Briefs, 2005 *Annual Report of the Royal Society of New Zealand*
- Beever, R.E.; Johnston, P.R.; Buchanan, P.K.; McKenzie, E.H.C. 2006. The hidden kingdoms: fungi, lichens and some bacteria. In Waitakere Ranges. Ranges of inspiration. (B. & T. Harvey, eds.), pp. 102-113. Waitakere Ranges Protection Society, Auckland.
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