

was adopted. The first committees had some well known old Canterbury identities on them such as Sir Heaton Rhodes, President, Dr. T. Fletcher Telford, Chairman, Miss M.E. Anderton, Secretary /Treasurer, Mrs. E. L King, Mrs. Stanley Foster and Miss L.Wilson.

The working committee comprised Messrs F.J.Shanks, H.E. Otley, M.J. Barnett (Director of Parks and Reserves, Christchurch City Council), G. Skellerup (Skellerup Industries Ltd.) and W.S. Young. The executive committee adopted the following rules and objectives with the view to encouraging the culture of lilies, the acquisition of bulbs and seed, plus assisting members with identification.

1. Charge a nominal membership subscription not exceeding five shillings to defray the costs of importing bulbs and seed from other countries.
2. To import seed of new species and cultivars from overseas.
3. Arrange for an exchange of bulbs and seeds between members. Assist each other with the exchange of pollen for hybridization purposes. Provide advice for those not familiar with hybridisation techniques.
4. Exchange cultural experiences in regard to the same *Lilium* species grown under varying situations.
5. Generally, to promote interest in the cultivation of Liliums for commercial purposes, as well as for the amateur grower as New Zealand (referred to as the Dominion at that time) was considered to have special climatic conditions for lily culture, particularly in the ability with which seeds will ripen upon these plants.

September 1932

At this meeting of the Lily Circle membership had risen to 43, but unfortunately there is no record of names. Meetings were being held monthly and members were asked to bring a list of lilies growing in their gardens so that the Secretary could to enter these in to a 'register' - unfortunately these records have also been lost.

A sub-committee was formed at this time to deal with importing seed. Commendable caution was shown here when it was decided not to import any bulbs at this stage owing to the prevalence of disease overseas. In September 1932 the group had four pounds fifteen shillings in hand and it was decided to use these funds to obtain seed from England.

October 1932

At the October meeting a resolution was passed to change the name 'Lily Circle' to the New Zealand Lily Society and to have the name registered. But for some reason this was held in abeyance. At this meeting Dr. A.C.

McKillop's name is mentioned, who later went on to become a very active and dedicated member of the Society. This meeting also recorded various species and varieties brought along by members such as *L. x hollandicum* (grown in sand), *L. buliferum var. croceum*, *L. monadelphum*, and *L. pyrenaicum*.

Due to problems with botrytis disease it was interesting to note that the Secretary was instructed to correspond with the Royal Horticultural Society of England and the New Zealand Department of Agriculture asking for information about botrytis, a fungus disease that can often badly affect the foliage. Mr. G. Skellerup also roused interest at this particular meeting by showing a garden hybrid *L. x Burbanki* (Parentage: *L. pardalinum* x *L. parryi*) raised by Luther Burbank, a well-known earlier American plant breeder.

January 1933

Mr M.J. Barnett a member of the committee reported he had grown imported seeds of *L. pumilum*, *L. wardii*, *L. leichtlinii* var. *maximowiczii*, *L. amabile* and *L. imperiale* hybrids (*L. regale* x *L. sargentiae*), commenting the seedlings of all these species were thriving. Mr. G. Skellerup also presented two rare lilies to members, *L. duchartrei*, and *L. pardalinum* var. *angustifolium*. At the January meeting the group was advised that the Lily Circle had been awarded a 'Certificate of Merit' by the Canterbury Horticultural Society for a display of lilies at a recent Floral Pageant.

Later in that year the Curator of the Edinburgh Botanic Gardens asked Mr F.J. Shanks, committee member, for his assistance with sending seed of our native flax, *Phormium* (the particular species required was not recorded), in the hope of exchanging it for lily seed. Mr Shanks was also requested to write an article for the Royal Horticultural Society's 1933 Lily yearbook about *L. philippinense*.

At the AGM in 1933 it was decided to order 25 copies of a small book titled 'The Production of Lilies' published by the USA Agricultural Department. A discussion also took place about this time concerning the advisability of importing bulbs from England using cool storage facilities now available on board steamboats. Members reported that a method of propagating lilies by removing individual bulb scales (vegetative propagation) could save one or two years to achieve a flowering plant compared with raising them from seed.

January 1934

The meeting of the 12th January saw members bring a fine collection of lilies including species such as *L. chalconicum*, *L. davidii*, *L. philippinense*, *L. formosanum*, *L. davidii* var. *willmottiae*, *L. x testaceum* (*L. candidum* x *L. chalconicum*), *L. humboldtii*, and *L. michauxii*.

A letter in February from Constables Nurseries, England, advised members that their first importation of lily bulbs had been shipped on the "S S Hororata". These bulbs apparently were not stored in the cooler 'vegetable chamber', which was a worry to members who hoped the bulbs would survive the journey. One of the outstanding liliiums in this shipment was *L. wardii* found by Captain Kingdom-Ward at the Tsangpo Gorge, China in 1924. Quite a number of others were imported, with a majority of them being Chinese species. Other bulbs imported included the following species: *L. amabile*, *L. auratum*, *L. bakerianum*, *L. brownii*, *L. canadense* var. *coccineum*, *L. cernum*, *L. dauricum*, *L. leucanthum* var. *centifolium*, *L. cernum*, *L. concolor*, *L. concolor* var. *puchellum*, *L. rubellum*, *L. sargentiae*, *L. pumilum*, and *L. washingtonianum*

Despite members concern about the imported bulbs from England not being stored in the cooler 'vegetable chamber' of the "S S Hororata" only a few bulbs of *L. pyrenaicum* var. *jankae* (Kerner) and *L. amabile* and several other species not named in the record had decayed in transit.

It is of interest to note from all the numerous species that were imported as either bulbs or seeds, there is one species that was not listed in any of the earlier records and how it was brought into the country is not definitely known. This particular species, *L. tigrinum*, commonly called the tiger or devil lily was found in many of the early Canterbury gardens and renamed a number of years ago as *L. lancifolium* and it's doubled flowered form, *L. lancifolium* var. 'Flore Pleno'. Today it can be found occasionally in some of the older gardens throughout Canterbury. The climatic conditions on the West Coast of the South Island obviously suit this species very well as it can be found growing wild in many areas of this region and also in parts of Central Otago. There is no clear evidence to support this claim but it has been suggested by some people that the early Chinese gold diggers working on the West Coast and in Central Otago may have brought bulbs into New Zealand. Woodcock and Stearn in their book "Lilies of the World" say that the Chinese, Japanese and Koreans have grown it for over a thousand years as a food item.

February 1935

Finally, in February the Lily Circle committee formally passed and adopted a motion "That the name of the Lily Circle be known in future as the New Zealand Lily Society" and at this time it applied for affiliation to the Canterbury Horticultural Society. Thus the New Zealand Lily Society (Inc.) was the first society specialising in lily culture to be established internationally. The Royal Horticultural Society of England did have a Lily Circle (later known as the RHS Lily Group) but did not become a separate

Society and has always remained under the umbrella of the Royal Horticultural Society.

The original Lily Circle has more than justified its existence by importing seeds and bulbs and some of the rare species and disseminating knowledge on the cultivation and management of these fascinating and beautiful plants. It had set out what it planned to do – to bring before the flower-loving community the garden value of these most interesting and noble plants.

Today, the New Zealand Lily Society continues to flourish with a membership of about 240, having members in both the North and South Island and internationally. There is also an active Lily group that was established in Timaru during 1995 and another in Dunedin (date to be checked). In the North Island there is the Auckland Lily Society and the Waikato Lily Society based in Hamilton.

References

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DESCENDENTS OF TANE MAHUTA

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On 18 February 1975, I visited the nationally important Kauri Forest Sanctuary at Waipoua with the eminent NZ Forest Service photographer, the late John Johns. Whilst preparing to photograph the iconic kauri, Tane Mahuta, a mature intact female cone fell to the ground from its canopy missing us by a mere inch or two. I placed this cone in a plastic bag to carry it back to Botany Division, DSIR, Lincoln. Upon arrival there on 25 February I noticed that the cone had shed its seed bearing scales from the cone axis, yielding many ripe seeds. A sample of these was sown that day in a trough of standard potting mix and placed in an unheated greenhouse. Many seedlings emerged the following week and were subsequently grown on and distributed to Lincoln colleagues and local institutions such as the Christchurch Botanic Gardens in 1979-80. I also planted one in our home garden in Riccarton. Here, I wish to report briefly on the growth and