

## Daphne Banks 01/10/1934 – 14/11/2019



Daphne Banks at Travis Wetland. Photo: Eleanor Bissell.

The Botanical Society lost one of its long standing members late last year. Daphne had been a Botsoc member for 56 years and a life member since 2000.

Daphne had a lifelong passion for plants, and the welfare of people in her community. She had a gentle way of sharing her knowledge and enjoying the company of others. One always felt at ease with her.

The amount of voluntary work that Daphne contributed was amazing. Botsoc was one of several groups to benefit from her efforts. She was also involved with filing specimens at the Allan Herbarium in Lincoln, planting on the Port Hills, the Friends of the Christchurch Botanic Gardens, planting and weeding at Travis Wetland, hosting neighbourhood playgroups, the St Albans Residents Group, and Plunket.

Daphne grew up in the Tai Tapu area and became a trainee at the Christchurch Botanic Gardens when she left school. She travelled overseas and worked for the Ministry of Works in London from 1960 to 1962. She regularly tended the gardens at Clarence House, where the Queen Mother would seek out Daphne for a chat. Apparently the Queen Mother had a good knowledge of the plants at Clarence House so Daphne had to be careful about the accuracy of what she said. The Queen Mother was interested to hear about Daphne's travels in Europe and suggested that Daphne could write to her. Daphne was too shy to do this. The Queen Mother sent a handbag to Daphne as a Christmas present, perhaps as a thank you for all the happy conversations that they had in the garden.

On her return to New Zealand in 1963 Daphne joined the Canterbury Native Flora Society, which was renamed the Canterbury Botanical Society in 1966. Daphne met and married Miles Banks who was also a member. They regularly participated in Society activities including summer camps when their three children accompanied them to some remote places. Her children have fond memories of her on all fours looking at botanical minutiae with other Society members. She was keen on photography and a camera was an essential part of her equipment.

Daphne wrote an article for the first Botanical Society Journal that was published in 1968. She was a committee member from 1987 to 1990 and secretary in 1988-1989. For many years Daphne and Miles organised the supper for the evening meetings. She would always bring something for the sales table at meetings. Daphne's love and talent for growing plants never left her.

*Gillian Giller*