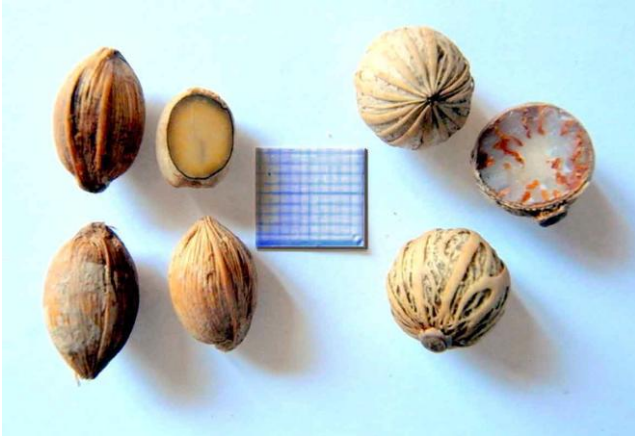


# Bangalow palm seeds in my Auckland garden

Rhys Gardner

One day in April 2012 I noticed a scattering of palm seeds underneath the large pohutukawa (*Metrosideros excelsa*) in front of my home at 5 Ward Terrace, Sandringham. It did not take much to decide that they belonged to the bangalow palm, *Archontophoenix cunninghamiana*.

There are several groups of these Australian palms planted in properties within the immediate few



**Fig. 1. "Seeds" of nikau (left) and bangalow (right). Note especially the dark (reddish brown) channels through the latter's endosperm. Unvouchered (nikau from Little Barrier Island; bangalow from planting at Epsom Library, Manukau Road). Scale (central) 1 cm square.**

## References

- Cameron, E. K. 2000: Bangalow palm (*Archontophoenix cunninghamiana*) begins to naturalise. *New Zealand Botanical Society Newsletter* 60: 12-16.
- Orr, A.; Kitching, R. 2010: *The butterflies of Australia*. Allen & Unwin, New South Wales.

hundred metres. The globose seeds (actually, the fruit stone plus fibrous remains of the fleshy mesocarp) are almost 1.5 cm in diameter, too large I think to be handled by any of the common local birds except the blackbird (*Turdus merula*).

The 'seeds' of the bangalow, with those of the nikau for comparison, are shown in Fig. 1. They are easily distinguished. Those of the nikau are elliptic-oblong (almost 1 cm in the offshore island form shown here), with mesocarp fibres that are relatively narrow and mostly unbranched. Those of the bangalow have notably flattened and branched mesocarp fibres, and their endosperm is ruminant; that is, invaginations of the endocarp, like rusty veins, run haphazardly through the pale hard endosperm.

In accordance with the greater size of the bangalow seed, its first-formed seedling leaves are considerably wider than those of nikau. Perhaps this can give it a competitive advantage when the two species germinate together.

The spread of bangalow into native forest, which has already begun (Cameron 2000), might be reduced or even halted if we introduced to the country two "palm dart" species of butterfly, whose caterpillars feed on its leaves (Orr & Kitching 2010).

# A tale of Shakespearian pioneers

Maureen Young

While researching for the Auckland Botanical Society's Bulletin No. 30, *A checklist of vascular plants recorded from Hauturu, Little Barrier Island* (Beever et al. 2012), it became obvious that many of the plant specimens from Hauturu that have been lodged in the Auckland War Memorial Museum herbarium (AK) were collected in the period 1897-1910 by two women, E.M. Smith and Miss F.I. Shakespear. R.H.

Shakespear was the first ranger on Hauturu, so the connection of Miss Shakespear to the island was obvious, but the identity of E.M. Smith was unknown. Some detective work has revealed the following story.

Robert Henry Anson Shakespear arrived in Auckland in the mid 1870s and in 1878 he eloped with 18 year-

old Blanche Smith. Blanche was born in the Bay of Islands in 1860, and her sister, Edith Mabel Smith, was born there two years earlier. Robert, with help from his grandfather, Sir Robert North Collie Hamilton, Baronet of Stratford-on-Avon, bought land on the eastern end of the Whangaparaoa Peninsula. Eventually 2388 acres were in the family's ownership. Robert and Blanche had six children, one son also named Robert (Bob), and five daughters. Frances Isabella Blanche (Cis), the oldest child, was born in 1879. She was named after her paternal grandmother, Isabella Frances (in later records, Frances Isabella) Shakespear.

By 1897 the government purchase of Hauturu from Ngatiwai had been finalised. The bird sanctuary was placed under the administration of the Auckland Institute and Museum and R.H. Shakespear was appointed caretaker. He and Blanche set up home there, living in a couple of large tents until a house was built (Fig. 1). They were accompanied by their six children, and a seventh child, another daughter, was born in 1898. Blanche's spinster school teacher sister, Edith, accompanied them and taught the children "in strict school fashion".

The Shakespear family's residence on the island lasted thirteen years. Robert must have been unwell when they departed from Hauturu in 1910, as he died two days later at the age of 54, and was buried at Leigh. Bob then took over the building of the homestead on the Whangaparaoa property and farmed there with his sisters. Part of the farm is now the Shakespear Regional Park, and the house is run as an outdoor education centre (Olsen 2012).

The years 1897-1910 covered 39-52 years of age for Edith, and 18-31 years for her niece, Frances. These two women, no doubt fit from the active pioneering life they lived, would have clambered over many of the ravines, ridges and heights of the island. The lower ridges had recently been cleared of kauri (*Agathis australis*), then burnt and grazed by wandering cattle. But the higher, steeper interior would have been largely untracked. One wonders at their climbing garb. Did they explore while clad in corsets, long petticoats and skirts? Or did they, where there was nobody to see them, daringly borrow some old trousers from the men? In family photographs Edith Smith had a ramrod deportment and severe expression, and one finds it hard to imagine that she would lower her Victorian standards to such an extent.

Edith collected 281 vascular plant specimens from Hauturu and lodged them in AK. Frances added another 196, with 32 in Landcare Research, Lincoln



**Fig. 1. The Shakespear homestead on Little Barrier Island, c. 1899, seen from the hill behind the house. Auckland Museum Neg. B 4485. (All photographs from the Photograph Collection of Auckland Institute and Museum Library, Class No. DU 436.1182, courtesy of the Auckland War Memorial Museum).**

(CHR) and at least 16 in the Dominion Museum (now Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa) herbarium (WELT), and they also collected bryophytes. No doubt they were encouraged in their collecting by Thomas Cheeseman, curator of the Auckland Museum, who visited the island at least twice, with most of his collecting there being done in 1898 and 1901. Few collecting details were included with the women's specimens; even the date given in most cases was the all inclusive 1897-1910. A number of plants that they collected have not been seen there since. They are *Leptolepia novae-zelandiae*, parsley fern (*Botrychium australe*), Prince of Wales' feathers (*Leptopteris superba*), rock fern (*Cheilanthes sieberi*), native carrot (*Daucus glochidiatus*), a possible hybrid clematis (*Clematis ?cunninghamii* × *C. paniculata*), sea grass (*Zostera muelleri*) and cabbage tree (*Cordyline australis*) - the one tree of the latter, while not seen since, was also recorded by Thomas Kirk in 1867. Two species, *Hypolepis distans* and *Olearia albida*, were not seen for over one hundred years, but have been rediscovered on recent explorations.

Frances, like all her sisters, became an expert sailor, and she was also a keen photographer. This was another rather unusual interest for a woman in those days, and her photographs show features of the family's life (Figs. 2 & 3) and views of the island. A number of them are preserved in the Auckland Museum library. She also visited the Kermadec Islands in 1900, as some of her collections in AK are from Sunday (Raoul) Island. This visit would no doubt have been facilitated by her acquaintance with

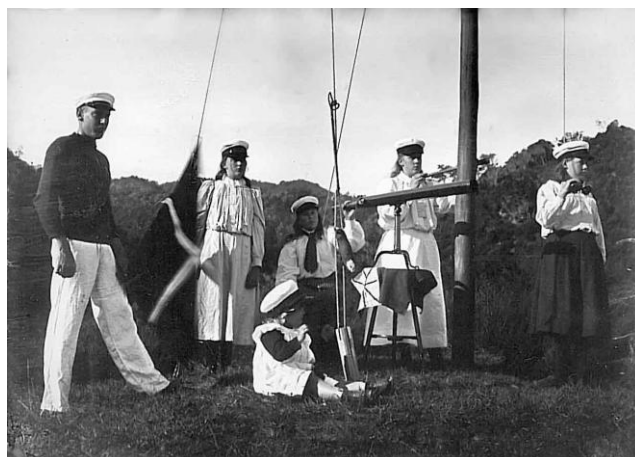


**Fig. 2. Shakespear family picnic at Pohutukawa Flat, Little Barrier Island, looking south. Date unknown. Auckland Museum Neg. B 4518.**

Thomas Cheeseman, and also with the skipper, Captain Bollons, of the government steamer, *S.S. Hinemoa*. She never married, and this adventurous woman died at the age of 85 in 1964. Her Aunt Edith died in 1936, both women living out their lives on the Whangaparaoa farm.

#### References

Beever, R.E.; Esler, A.E.; Young, M.E.; Cameron, E.K. 2012: Checklist of vascular plants recorded from Hauturu, Little Barrier Island, Auckland, New Zealand. *Auckland Botanical Society Bulletin* No. 30.  
 Olsen, Ruth 2012: A Shakespearian Tale. Silverdale & Districts Historical Society. *Local Matters* 2005 Ltd.



**Fig. 3. The Shakespear children around the flagpole, Little Barrier island, c. 1899. Auckland Museum Neg. B 4511.**

#### Acknowledgements

My thanks to Auckland Museum herbarium and Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa herbarium for access to records; Auckland Museum library for copies of Shakespear photographs; Alison Wesley for sharing some of the detective work; Lyn Wade for access to her Hamilton family archives.

## Obituary: Sir John Smith-Dodsworth, Bt (1935-2012)

Mike Wilcox

Sir John Christopher Smith-Dodsworth, eighth baronet Smith-Dodsworth of Newland Park, North Yorkshire, in the baronetage of Great Britain, was born in 1935. He succeeded in 1940 to the baronetcy. He was educated at Ampleforth College, Yorkshire, and early developed a deep love of natural history. He came out to New Zealand in 1956, at first working as a deer culler, giving him opportunities to study the New Zealand subalpine flora. In 1968 Sir John eventually settled in Coromandel, working for a time as a crayfisherman, and furthering his knowledge of the native flora and his skills as a photographer. Sir John died on 21 September 2012, in Thames.

During his life in Coromandel, at Driving Creek, he continued to maintain the family seat of Thornton Watlass Hall, Ripon, in Yorkshire, where there is still an estate of 1,000 acres. His eldest son and heir, David John Smith-Dodsworth, lives with the first Lady



**Fig. 1. John Smith-Dodsworth at Kennedy Bay, Coromandel, during an Auckland Bot Soc field trip. L to R standing: Sandra Jones, Frank Hudson, Anne Grace, Nigel Hudson, Maureen Young. Front: John Smith-Dodsworth, Helen Cogle. Photo: Anthony Wright, 18 March 1989.**