

Te Moehau Plaque

Maureen Young

Before her death on 9 June 1987, botanist Lucy B. Moore had arranged that her niece, Frances Hintz, would handle the winding-up of her affairs on that occasion. As I had also received instructions from Lucy on post-mortem favours, Fran and I interacted somewhat, and this resulted in my receiving two gifts from Lucy's estate – one was a watercolour painting by Nancy M. Adams of the alpine buttercups, *Ranunculus lyallii*, *R. sericophyllus* and *R. buchananii* (published in her book, *Mountain Flowers of New Zealand*), and the other was "The Moehau Plaque".

The Moehau Plaque is made of wood, 290 x 115 mm, with the front worked in marquetry (Fig. 1). There is an intricate border patterned in various native timbers, the background, I suspect, of burr kauri, and the words "TE MOEHAU 1929" in pale kahikatea. Handwritten on the back (Fig. 2) is the message:

*To Lucy B. Moore
 In memory of a Windy Sleep on Te Moehau
 o te Tamate Kapua
 Xmas 1929
 From L.M. Cranwell*

"Moehau" means "windy sleep". Tamate Kapua was the captain of the waka, *Arawa*, and on his death his sons buried him on the summit of the high peak at the end of the Coromandel Peninsula, which became known as Te Moehau.

The exploits of "the two Lucies" (Lucy Cranwell and Lucy Moore) and their explorations on Te Moehau have been well documented, and Leonard Cockayne, the leading botanist of the day, took a great interest in their botanical discoveries there. In a letter from Lucy Cranwell to Dr. Cockayne (kept in the Moehau Box in the Auckland Museum Library), dated 21 May 1929, she describes the windy sleep commemorated by the plaque thus:

"It would be impossible for me to describe the rare beauty of these southern ridges [.....]. Equally impossible would it be for me to describe the cruel nature of the going. We scrambled over occasional rocks, under great mossy roots, over prostrate limbs, through tangles of Astelia and Gahnia. Sometimes I felt that my head would be pulled off when I got stuck between unyielding limbs. The packs were especially awkward as they would jam where shoulders could



Fig. 1. "Te Moehau Plaque", 290 x 115 mm, marquetry by Sam Beatson. Photos by Vivienne Paterson.

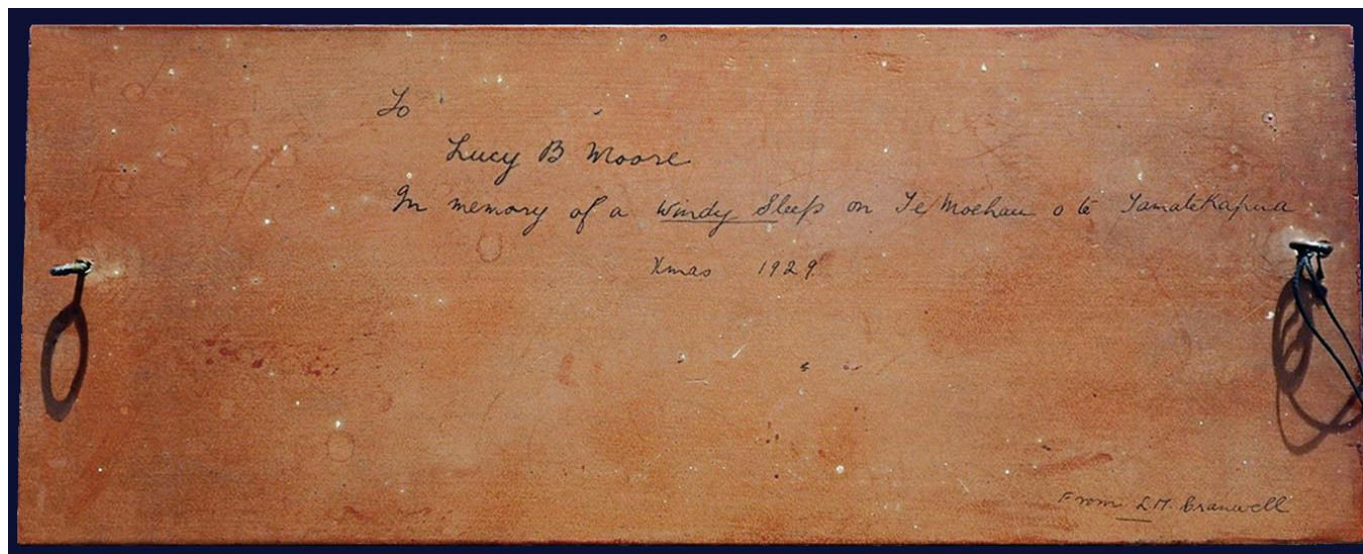


Fig. 2. The back of the plaque.

squeeze through [.....]. The slow progress was beneficial to our work also, as it was impossible to miss small orchids, liverworts and seedlings that would otherwise have escaped our notice had we not fallen headfirst amongst them. In the slow and painful process of extracting a limb from this or that rotten log which had not suffered my weight I found many interesting plants. One, a *Loranthus* I found on a *Quintinia* just as I slipped wildly down into a hidden crevice. This *Loranthus* was the only one we saw on the mountain [.....]

Dark – red and ominous – was falling as we neared the highest peak. The descent was impossible so we stumbled into some scrub on the crest of the ridge (at about 2900 ft) and made a rough bed of *Astelia trivervia* pulled and thrown down over the boggy soil. We slept well, contrary to all expectations, and woke to a dismal morning. A high nor'easter was raging around us, blowing fog and broken boughs, leaves, and mosses high in the air. The whole summit was rocking and erect taxads were swinging and groaning under the strain[.....]

We spent a few hours after daylight waiting for a lull, but, deciding at last that we were probably in for a three-day blow, we packed up our gear and managed to work across onto a neighbouring peak from which we knew a spur led fairly straight to Stony Bay. For several hours we relied absolutely on the compass as the ridge was difficult to pick up in the mist. Eventually we found a *Libocedrus* I had blazed on a previous trip. This heartened us immensely and we struck out to the north-east with some degree of confidence, and arrived at the sea at 4 pm, wet, quite cheerful, and tremendously hungry after our meagre breakfast.

It was an experience I shall never regret [.....] Bad weather prevented another ascent for some days but our time was well spent on the sea-shore, in valleys and in the collecting of local stories,[.....] and most cheering of all, accounts of the number of men who had lost their sense of direction on the Range and spent miserable days on Moehau until they were rescued."

The packs referred to were made of wood and canvas, the kind commonly known as "kidney rotters" (Lucy Moore's kidney rotter is lodged in the Warkworth and District Museum). The pair did not carry a tent, and their sleeping-bags were of unlined canvas, so offered no warmth (Lucy Moore, pers. comm.).

Each time the young women ascended Moehau on their various visits they passed a quarry where granite blocks were being extracted, and they became friendly with the men, mainly local Maori, working there. Lucy Cranwell learned that one of these men, a lad named Sam Beatson, was competent in the art of marquetry, and she commissioned the plaque as a Christmas gift for her botanising and tramping companion.

After I had been given the plaque, I felt uncomfortable about owning it and thought that it should be in Auckland Museum, where Lucy Cranwell had been such an inspirational botanist from 1929 until her marriage to an American Major in 1944, so I wrote to her in America and asked what her feelings were. She replied very kindly that she would like me to enjoy it, rather than have it tucked away in a cupboard in the museum.

However, after 33 years of enjoyment I felt that it should now be passed on to the Museum, but

somewhere that it would be appreciated, rather than mouldering on a shelf. With that in mind I have

presented it to the Herbarium to be displayed where Lucy toiled so diligently all those years ago.

References:

Adams, Nancy M. 1965: *Mountain Flowers of New Zealand*. A.H. & A.W. Reed Ltd. Wellington, Auckland, Sydney.

Cranwell, Lucy M. 1929: Letter to Dr. Cockayne dated 21 May 1929. Original in the Moehau box at the Auckland Museum (Pictorial). Photocopy in the Lucy Moore archives at Warkworth Museum.

Obituary: Veteran ABS member, Dr Una Vivienne Cassie Cooper (née Dellow) MNZM, 1926–2021

Ewen K. Cameron

The seaweed era

A long-time Auckland Botanical Society (ABS) Veteran member, Vivienne Cassie Cooper (née Dellow) (Fig. 1), passed away in Hamilton on 5 July 2021, aged 94. In November 2018 she attended the launch of Mike Wilcox's book, *Seaweeds of Auckland*, published by ABS (Fig. 2). During the launch Mike mentioned that Vivienne's 1955 paper on Hauraki Gulf seaweeds (Dellow 1955) had inspired him as a teenager. In his book he references eleven of her papers (Dellow 1949–1955) dealing with local seaweeds. In the early 1970s Vivienne inspired many of us, including myself, introducing us to the wonders of algae in the Botany stage 2 & 3 classes and labs, at the University of Auckland. The field trip to Piha studying the intertidal seaweeds was particularly memorable as I was able to learn the identity of many of the seaweeds I had previously observed while learning to surf there. She was a knowledgeable, enthusiastic and caring teacher. Vivienne herself appeared to be inspired by Victor Lindauer, a New Zealand pioneer collector and distributor of sets of New Zealand seaweeds – in 1949 Lindauer was a senior research fellow in the Botany Department of the Auckland University College where Vivienne was a junior research fellow and PhD student. Vivienne later said, writing of his contributions to phycology (Cassie 1971: p.91):

"His kind and generous nature combined with his devotion to the cause of algae could not fail to evoke respect and admiration from those privileged to work with him – all the students called him "Uncle Victor"."

Some 30 of her earliest seaweed collections, collected 1947–1949 while she was based in Auckland, ended up in the L.V. Lindauer herbarium that was gifted to Auckland University after his death and

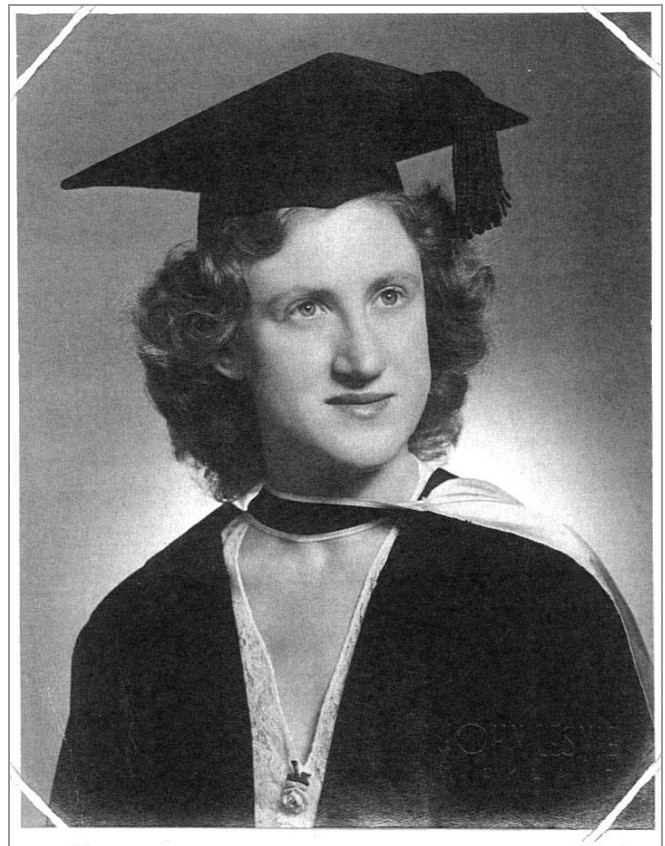


Fig. 1. Vivienne Dellow, in her Auckland University College MA graduating gown, 1948. Image supplied by Rachael Cassie.

later gifted to the Auckland Museum (AK). Over two days in August 1950 Vivienne collected 30 seaweeds (specimens in Te Papa Museum herbarium, WELT), presumably while with Lindauer, as most are from Long Beach (Lindauer's main collecting locality by