

Pamela Dale (nee Walshe) 1930-2023

Juliet Richmond

Pam and her husband Pat were members of Auckland Botanical Society (ABS) and attended occasional monthly evening meetings and local field trips. In the early 2000s Pam participated in five of the Society's biennial week-long South Island field trips, namely Molesworth 2002, Lake Ohau 2004, Golden Bay 2006 (Fig. 1), Kaikoura 2008 (Fig. 2), and Central Otago 2010, adding a distinct entomological flavour to these outings. In addition, Pam was a participant on the 2003 trip to New Caledonia, and in 2009 Pam and Pat joined the second ABS trip to the Chatham Islands (Accounts of all these field trip trips are published in the Society's Journal). Interested in everything and everyone, Pam was a lively addition to these Botanical Society outings.

The South Island trips gave Pam the opportunity to visit or revisit sites where the psyllid subjects of her PhD thesis had been collected, and to fill in gaps in their life histories. Her PhD thesis subject was a comprehensive revision of the Psylloidea of New Zealand. Because they were often on endemic New Zealand plants found in remaining areas of native vegetation, the Botanical Society outings to just these places suited Pam perfectly. On the Molesworth trip Pam successfully found psyllid galls on *Aristotelia fruticosa* thus enabling her to complete the life cycle for the associated psyllid. On the Otago visit to the Old Man Range, Pam reminisced about eating sun-ripened apricots up on the top of the range during her PhD collecting trip. She contributed to the field trip report for the Golden Bay trip, covering the visit to the Cobb Valley and providing entomological highlights along with the botany (Dale 2006). On the Chatham Islands trip Pam was sorry to miss out on searching for the psyllid that lives only on *Leptinella featherstonii*, endemic to the Chatham Islands.

Pam's interests were wide ranging and varied, from the distant stars to the smallest insects and this was reflected in those who spoke at her funeral.

She was born on 26 April 1930 at Cape Foulwind and spent her early years on that part of the west coast, a legacy of her Walshe forebear. During the Great Depression, when Pam's father could not find any work, he took his family down to the West Coast so he could fossick for gold to earn a living. Pam went to school there and took great joy in claiming that she was once dux of the six-student Cape Foulwind primary school. One of her treasures from that period was a gold locket presented to her for this achievement.

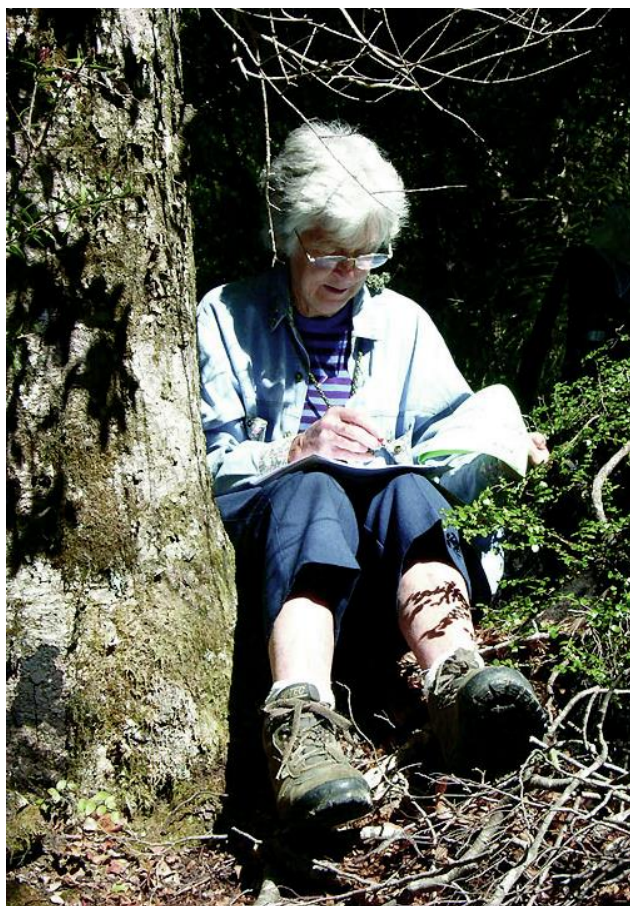


Fig. 1. Pam, Pupu Walkway, NW Nelson. Photo: Bev Davidson, 5 Jan 2006.



Fig. 2. Entomologist in action. Pam inspecting *Carmichaelia glabrescens* for psyllids, Kowhai River, Kaikoura. Photo: Bev Davidson, 7 Jan 2008.

Pam studied Science at Canterbury University, where she met Pat, then went on to lecture at that institution. When husband Pat's work took them to Samoa, Pam taught secondary school there. A former pupil from that time spoke at her funeral of Pam's influence and later her friendship when the former pupil relocated to Auckland.

One of Pam's PhD supervisors, Trevor Crosby, retired former editor of the Fauna of New Zealand Monograph Series, spoke of what a mammoth undertaking a revision of the New Zealand Psylloidea was and how, as the foremost psyllid expert in the country her studies were constantly interrupted by requests for biosecurity identifications. Her work on New Zealand psyllids continues to be important for separating New Zealand's species from new psyllid arrivals, often pest species. Her PhD study, undertaken as an adult student and completed in 1986, was only one of the achievements during her life.

Another major interest for Pam was astronomy. Pam joined the Auckland Astronomical Society in 1969, and Grant Christie, a colleague from the time of her involvement, spoke at the funeral of her contribution to the society as secretary and then when she managed the Auckland Observatory. During this time Pam wrote an article on what she called "The Barbecue Stars", published in the New

Zealand Geographic, on star identification and using a handspan to measure distances in the summer sky at dusk.

Central to her life was her family, husband Pat, their three sons, Mark, Malcolm and Tom, their families, and her grandchildren. At her funeral all spoke of the significance of Pam in their lives. The grandchildren, both at university studying science, spoke of Pam's legacy in their choice of subject.

Pam died peacefully on 16 July 2023 aged 93 at the Ryman Murray Halberg Village in Lynfield, Auckland, 10 years after Pat. Her long and interesting life was celebrated in a service at Purewa by her sons, their families, friends, and colleagues.

Acknowledgements

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Reference

Dale, P. 2006: Cobb Valley. p.36. *In*: Wilcox, M. (Ed.) & Jones, S. (Coord.), Trip Report: Golden Bay, North-West Nelson, 2–10/01/06. *Auckland Botanical Society Journal* 61(1): 25–39.
