

CANTERBURY BOTANICAL SOCIETY (NZ) INC.

64TH ANNUAL REPORT

JUNE 2016 – MAY 2017

Officers and Committee (June 2016 - May 2017)

President: Gillian Giller

Vice-president: Jason Butt

Secretary: Alice Shanks

Treasurer: Sarah Wright

Membership coordinator: Judy Bugo

Committee: Fay Farrant (minutes secretary), Melissa Hutchison (website manager), Bryony Macmillan (journal proof-reading & newsletter posting), Dean Pendrigh (newsletters), Miles Giller, Paul Maurice, Geoff Henderson

Monthly meeting programme (June 2016 – May 2017)

- June: AGM. The History of Riccarton Bush. Speaker: Joanna Orwin
- July: Patagonia – Similar but different. Speakers: Carol Jensen & Bob Webster
- August: Investigating forest fragmentation thresholds for suitable plant-birds mutualisms – a multidisciplinary approach. Speaker: Marine Aubert
- September: Seed dispersal in isolated North Canterbury forest fragments. Speaker: Anna Henderson
- October: The status of wetlands in Oceania. Speaker: Dr Philippe Gerbeaux
- November: The untold story of New Zealand's wetlands. Speaker: John Preece
- December: Flowers of the Caucasus. Speaker: Paul Maurice
- February: No speaker.
- March: Assisting post fire regeneration of native plants through seeding. Speaker: Nick Ledgard
- April: The flora of Macquarie Island. Speaker: Jane Gosden

- May: Disentangling the effect of deer and possums from those of natural disturbance in New Zealand's forest. Speaker: Dr Peter Bellingham

Monthly field trip and camps programme (June 2016 – May 2017)

- July: Trip was cancelled.
- August: Bowenvale Track to Dry Bush, Port Hills. Leader: Alice Shanks
- September: Tiromoana Scenic Reserve, North Canterbury. Leaders: Miles & Gillian Giller
- October: Tawhai Bush, Oxford. Leader: Alice Shanks
- October: Gun Club, West Melton. Leader: Brian Patrick
- November: Snowdon Station wetland. Leader: Miles Giller
- November: Spring Camp was cancelled.
- December: Mt Pearce, Banks Peninsula. Leader: Alice Shanks
- February: Summer Camp. Danseys Pass. Leader: Alice Shanks (7 participants)
- March: Joined the 'Walk for the Planet', 7 Rivers 7 Weeks. Te Pirita Drylands by Rakaia River.
- April: Rockwood Range. Leader: Alice Shanks
- May: Mt Grey kamahi, North Canterbury. Leader: Miles Giller

Joanna Orwin spoke in June on her recently published book on Riccarton House. Using her skills as a botanist and historian she was able to provide an interesting talk on the area. In July, Carol Jensen and Bob Webster's photos and stories of their trip to Patagonia had some members thinking of putting a visit to this country on their 'to do' list. The August and September speakers had both studied forest fragmentation and birds. Marine Aubert studied whether there is a threshold area and isolation level under which the lack of interactions with birds adversely affects breeding systems of native plants. Anna Henderson's study aimed to find out how many and what species of birds are present in some North Canterbury remnants, and how effective these species of bird are at seed dispersal. October and November topics both involved wetlands. Philippe Gerbeaux concluded that the conservation of wetlands comes from living close to nature and understanding the mutual benefits. John Preece gave us the sobering fact that at an international scale New Zealand currently has the unenviable distinction of being second (behind Italy) in overall wetland loss. He followed this by saying this trend can be reversed and NZ still has some stunning wetlands. Paul Maurice finished the year by giving us an outline of trips he had made to the Russian Caucasus and Georgia; beautiful photos kept us wanting to see more. With the recent fires on

the Port Hills still fresh in our minds, Nick Ledgard gave us a talk on the use of seeding as one possible method to establish natives. He gave us an overview of seeding trials conducted in other fire affected areas. We enjoyed the diversity of Macquarie Island flora and fauna in April without having to endure the island's rather challenging climate when Jane Gosden showed us her photos. Question time was lively after our May speaker, Peter Bellingham, who spoke about possums, deer and natural disturbance.

The August weather was perfect for the field trip from Bowenvale to Dry Bush on the Port Hills. *Annogramma leptophylla* (Jersey Fern) was seen in all its fleeting glory and Di Carter was able to tell us about the Christchurch City Council plantings she has been closely involved with over the past decade. The rocky limestone terrain of the Tiromoana Scenic Reserve and a nearby QEII covenant made the field trip in September a bit scrambly in places but all agreed it was worth it. There were some large ribbonwood trees in the Scenic Reserve and a lush carpet of ferns including *Asplenium lyallii* (limestone spleenwort) was seen in some places. In contrast to the reserve, the covenant contained abundant lowland totara. Two field trips were organised in October. Tawhai Bush, Oxford – a QEII covenanted area of beech and podocarps that Bot Soc has visited several times in the past. One of the owners, Anthony Holcroft, is a long time Society member. Dryland at the Gun Club, West Melton: *Ophioglossum coriaceum* and *Leptinella serrulata* were added to the species list and Brian Patrick ensured that no moth went unnoticed. Due to only a small number of members able to attend the spring camp, an alternative day trip was organised to a wetland at Snowdon Station, Upper Rakaia. *Gingidia trifoliolata* was relocated on this QEII covenant where flax, sedge and bog rush dominate. December saw Society members enjoying the botany high up on Mt Pearce, Banks Peninsula in a QEII covenant owned by Society member Judy Bugo and in the nearby DoC Goodwin Reserve. Here thin-barked totara grow in association with tree fuchsia and pepperwood. The abundant orchid flowers were amazing. A camp was held in the Dansey's Pass area in February. A number of limestone sites were explored around the Waitaki Valley. Members joined the 'Walk for the Planet' to Te Pirita, Rakaia River in March. Two *Olearia adenocarpa* still exist in this area. The weather was perfect for the April field trip to Rockwood near Windwhistle. Our walk through the beech podocarp area was accompanied by birdsong. We were impressed at the landowner's work to remove the invasive sycamore, ash and holly. The May field trip was to a QEII covenant on Mt Grey where a healthy population of kamahi thrives east of the main divide. We also had time to explore the DoC reserve at the Grey River where there are rimu, mataī, tōtara and kahikatea present.

Submissions and Correspondence

The committee has continued to advocate for the protection of Te Pirita dryland on the northern bank of the Rakaia River. Matters are moving towards protection but the pace is slow.

Awards

A student grant was awarded by the Society in 2017 to Yuriy Malakhov who is studying algal films in Ihutai (Avon-Heathcote Estuary). Sarah Wright judged at the Canterbury Westland Science Fair and awarded a junior prize to Annelise Clark from Heathcote Valley School for her study on mosses. No senior prize was awarded.

Awards from other organisations received by Society members

The 2016 Ecological Society conference was held in conjunction with the Australasian Branch (SERA) of the International Society for Ecological Restoration. There were some inaugural awards presented for outstanding projects from Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Islands. The Botanical Society nominated Di Carter for the restoration work that she had organised and executed over many years on the Port Hills as a Christchurch City Council Ranger. (We were able to see the results of these plantings on the August 2016 field trip.) The Botanical Society was thrilled when Di was awarded the individual excellence in ecological restoration practice award. Congratulations Di.

Membership

One of the Society's life members Edith Shaw died in March 2017 so there are now eight life memberships. In the late 1970s Edith was the Society's treasurer and in the late 1980s she held the position of treasurer and secretary until she moved to Nelson. Edith loved to share her passion for filmy ferns with other members during field trips and camps. She jointly wrote a key to filmy ferns. She also wrote several articles for the Society Journal.

Membership has dropped slightly to 196 members with resignations outnumbering new memberships by four. Several of the resignations were family memberships. It is great to see that the new members include some younger people.

The number of members receiving posted newsletters has reduced by two. The Society thanks Wai-Ora Forest Landscapes for photocopying the newsletter at no charge to the Society.

Committee

We welcomed Sarah Wright, Judy Bugo, Geoff Henderson and Paul Maurice onto the Committee in June 2016, and Jean-Marie Tompkins resigned. Sarah took on the treasurer's tasks and Judy the membership officer's tasks. Thank you to the Committee for finding the time in your busy lives to attend committee meetings and carry out Botanical Society administration tasks. The most interesting part of the meeting is still the chat and cuppa after the business has been completed. Thank you also to the members outside the Committee who also contributed their time and expertise: John Clemens for editing the journal, Joy Talbot for technical editing of the journal, Fiona Lees for editing addresses and printing the labels for newsletters and the journal, and Ann McMillan for organising suppers at the evening meetings.

The field trips have been to a diverse range of habitats and the Society is appreciative of the landowners who have been willing to allow us access onto their land. Thank you to the speakers who have given us an insight into many topics in New Zealand and overseas. A special event for me this year was seeing one of the youngest and one of the oldest members attending and enjoying the same field trip. An interest in botany can truly span the generations.

Gillian Giller - June 2017