



# The New Zealand Orchid Society Inc.

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## February 2018

### **FEBRUARY MEETING/BBQ/SOCIAL:**

**WHEN?** Wednesday, 21 March 2018

**WHERE?** Mt Albert War Memorial Hall, New North Road, Mt Albert

**TIME?** Meeting commencing at 7.30pm

**WHAT?** Guest speaker – Susan Tucker (with an assistant) on the innovative watering and recycling system being installed at the Redvale site



Big changes are happening at the Tucker's Redvale property with the installation of special watering tables, and a completely different approach to how they are watered and managed.

Because there is only a water collection system from the roof, with no city water supply top-up available, this system ensures that the water will be recycled to best advantage.

Come along and listen to Susan (and another) on how this system not only conserves water, but also fertilizers, and as well, manages sterilization at the same time.

It may be that there are aspects of this system that you can utilize in your own growing areas.

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### **Notes from the President**

We start another year of orchid meetings this year and our ranks thin even more with a few notable recent deaths, Ross Crabb, Mick Hughes, Frank Brljevic & Alistair Duthie. It is sad to note their passing as they were involved and very committed to the society as well as their orchids.

The society has now reached 3 score and 10 years old, i.e. 70 years old. We will arrange a celebratory meeting around the time when the society was formed - more information on this later.

The first meeting of the year was a barbecue held at our Bayswater nursery with a very good turnout mainly to view the improvements and the technology that we now employ to make our orchids grow better.

I had hoped that there was some more positive news on the changes at the Auckland Horticultural Council building but the discussions between the Auckland Council and AHC drag on.

We have had a setback with our Winter and Spring shows with now all of our 3 shows becoming one day shows. This is due to the Auckland Council's automated booking system not taking into account the length of tenancy for our orchid shows - isn't technology great? I wish to extend a big thank you to our secretary, Jeanette Austin for having to deal with this issue - checking out other possible venues and dates. If you feel so inclined, send an email to the mayor, Phil Goff, complaining about how this council is killing the community spirit of Auckland just to collect more money.

On a happier note, we had arranged to have Joel Schiff to talk about his new book on orchids "Rare and Exotic Orchids - Their Nature and Cultural Significance" as a practice for him launching his world tour lecture program on his book. Unfortunately he is sick this month so it's a turn on Susan talking about our new improvements at Redvale - a different story altogether than what you saw at the Bayswater open day. I twisted her arm - but the arm says the prez will also be contributing. We'll try to get Joel back for next month.

Ross

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### **Vale: Frank Brljevic**



It is with sadness that we have to report the recent passing of one of our old members, Frank Brljevic.

Frank was around in the very early days of the formation of the NZOS, and later served in a variety of roles over the many years he was active. He has been variously President, Vice- President, Registrar of Awards, as well as serving on the show committee, and on the 1990 World Orchid Conference committee when that was held in Auckland. Frank was a well-known and respected judge, both here and overseas, where he had judged at various shows, such as Santa Barbara, and at World Orchid Conferences that he attended.

Although Frank started out growing calla lilies, he soon saw the light, and went on to grow some real plants - orchids. He was a keen hybridizer of Cymbidiums and Odontoglossums in particular, and several of his plants were awarded over the years by the NZOS, and also the Cymbidium Society of America (NZ Branch). To most of his awarded plants he gave the varietal name of 'Raroa', and for special occasions 'Betty', named after his wife.

Anyone growing Cymbidiums, where they had been from seedlings raised in NZ, would have a fair chance of having, at least somewhere in the background, a plant originally raised by Frank.

Fittingly, Frank was made a life member of the NZOS, in recognition of his many years of service to the club.

Because of his interest in Cymbidiums, there is a trophy at the Spring Show - the Frank Brljevic Trophy, for Best Miniature Cymbidium, which he donated many years ago.

The NZOS would like to acknowledge the many years of service Frank gave to the club, and also to extend our condolences to his family at this time.

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**Report from the February meeting/BBQ**

This was our now regular “special February meeting”, where we combine a garden visit and a social BBQ, this time held at the Tucker’s growing area at Bayswater.

Unlike the Redvale property, which is primarily a large growing area for younger to mature plants, the Bayswater property also incorporates the laboratory, and the newly de-flasked seedling and mericlone raising areas.



Part of the laboratory which houses many thousands of seedling and mericlones, awaiting de-flasking once they have reached a suitable size.

Given that it was summer, and in theory should be warm and dry, it has still been quite a wet summer again, so we were lucky to actually have a BBQ outside, and get to see the outside growing areas as well, even if it was still a bit damp underfoot.



Pictured are some of the members that attended the BBQ, discussing the weather, politics, and benefits of pet insurance, while Ross tries to avoid burning sausages just out of view. And part of the growing area, where older seedling etc are maturing prior to moving to the Redvale property.

It was interesting to see how those plants that we treasure so much, start their life. Thanks to Ross & Susan for their hospitality, and an insight into growing orchids on a vast scale compared to us hobbyists.

Noel

### NZOS Ratified Awards

There are no new awards to report, given the lack of shows and meetings since the last newsletter, but the judges have been busy deciding which plant will be the recipient of this year's **Geoff Laird Orchid of the Year**, from those plants awarded during 2017. The winner will be announced at the May meeting & AGM.

### The NZOS is 70 years old this year

Yes, that's right, **we are 70 years old** this year.

For those of you who weren't around then, here is a bit of that past history:

Following a period of informal meetings at the homes of various orchid enthusiasts after WWII, it was suggested by the Secretary of the Auckland Horticultural Society, Mr. W Cosgrove, that there might be enough interest to form a society. On 13 April 1948, he wrote to 20 members who were orchid enthusiasts, inviting them to an informal meeting to discuss forming an orchid society.

On **22 April 1948**, 18 of those orchid enthusiasts met under the chairmanship of Mr. J A McPherson. He spoke about the desire to form a society. At the meeting Geoff

Laird proposed a motion that "a New Zealand Orchid Society be formed with headquarters in Auckland".

And with that, the New Zealand Orchid Society came into existence.

The **first official meeting** of the New Zealand Orchid Society was held on **12 May 1948**, at the offices of the New Zealand Drug Company. At that meeting the following officers were elected:

Patron: Sir Frank Mappin

President: Geoff Laird

Vice-Presidents: Charles Reader & Jim McPherson

Secretary/Treasurer: AE Brownlie

Initial annual subscription was set at One Pound, One Shilling (over \$100 in today's money) – and we think orchid growing is an expensive hobby today!

The NZOS has been involved in shows ever since its formation, with our **first orchid show** being held in conjunction with the Auckland Horticultural Councils' own show, on **8 & 9 September 1949**. That show attracted over 6000 people.

In **1958** the then President, Bill Potter, and Secretary, Albert Blackmore, of the New Zealand Orchid Society decided to study the judging rules of several overseas societies, and eventually the NZOS executive decided to adopt a modified version of the New South Wales Orchid Society's judging rules, and to elect judges and a Registrar of Awards.



And so, the **New Zealand Orchid Society's judging system**, was born.

On **6 September 1959** the first panel of judges were appointed.

The first Registrar being Albert Blackmore.

Other notable initial New Zealand Orchid Society judges included Assid Corban, Bill Potter, and Fred Powell.

From overseas, Frank Slattery, a long time cymbidium hybridiser, and then Registrar of Awards for the Australian Orchid Council, and who had assisted earlier with the formation of the judging system, was also included as a judge.

The first **competitive** orchid show, following the introduction of the New Zealand Orchid Society's judging system, was held at Milne & Choice on Queen St in the Spring of **1959**.

In **1961**, the New Zealand Orchid Society moved the show to the Auckland Town Hall on Queen St.

In **1965**, the New Zealand Orchid Society moved the show again, this time to the Mt. Albert War Memorial Hall.

The move was to incorporate both shows and meetings nights, and this is where it remains to this day.

Undoubtedly our biggest challenge came with the hosting of the World Orchid Conference in 1990, a huge undertaking.

Here is a photo from our history – some of the committee from 1990 and their partners, supplied by Frank's daughter.



Some of the 1990 World Orchid Conference Committee members  
 Back Row: Des Leahy, Frank Brljevich, Alf Day, Mona Day, Joe Vance, Betty Brljevich  
 Front Row: Maureen Brljevich, Betty Vance, Gary Cooke, Heather Cooke.

We are planning some celebrations to mark our 70<sup>th</sup> year this year, so start looking for your old NZOS memorabilia items for the May meeting.

**Vale - Alystair Duthie**

Although no longer a member, I was advised recently of the passing of an old member, Alystair Duthie, by his daughter. Many of our older members will recall Alystair, who was a great enthusiast for the growing and hybridizing of Australian native orchids, particularly *Sarcocylus*, and *Dendrobiums*, as well as lesser known ones, such as *Pterostylis*, and *Diuris*. His careful growing resulting in him receiving several cultural certificates from the NZOS for his plants over the years.

Alystair's health had meant he gave up growing orchids some years ago, and due to a continuing general decline, he recently moved into a rest home, and had donated many of his orchid books to us at that time, for which we are grateful.

Alystair served on the NZOS executive, and the show committee, for a number of years, as well as being a NZOS judge.

Our sympathies go out to his family.

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**2017/18 FUTURE PROGRAMME AND UPCOMING EVENTS**

**21 March 2018** – meeting night

**18 April 2018** – meeting night

**12 May 2018** – NZOS Autumn Show

**16 May 2018** – meeting night – 70 years – bring your NZOS memorabilia

**18-22 July 2018** – 21st Australian Orchid Council Conference & Show, Sydney

**27-28 July 2018** – NZOS Winter Show

**21-22 September 2018** – NZOS Spring Show

**24-28 July 2019** – Asia Pacific Orchid Conference, Sarawak, Malaysia

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**Thought for the day**

**Don't give up on your dreams so soon – try sleeping longer.**