

EDITORIAL

Mauri Ora is expected to be an annual journal, devoted to the publication of papers on original research in biology, and this first issue represents a milestone in student biological research at the University of Canterbury. Its main purpose is to provide a journal in which undergraduate student research projects and graduate research can be published and circulated to a wide scientific audience. Its appearance expresses a confidence that suitable contributions will continue to be forthcoming, and it is the journal's policy to offer contributors a consistent and accurate presentation of their work.

With continued student enthusiasm and support, it is envisaged that *Mauri Ora* will take its place amongst other publications contributing to biology in New Zealand.

The diversity of topics included in Volume 1 is encouraging and it is hoped that in future there will be even more undergraduate student contributions, more balanced contribution from botany and zoology students, and contributions from students in other departments who are working on biology-related topics.

Mauri Ora is the result of the energy and foresight of the University's Biological Society, which first met in 1971, and during 1972 drew up directives for the publication of an annual journal. Credit must go to this society, and particularly to its 1972 president, Mr R. Gibson, for making the financial and management arrangements, and for choosing a name for the journal. The name, "mauri ora", signifies the Maori concept of the soul of Nature, and pays tribute to an ancient tradition attuned to the indigenous flora and fauna of our shores, streams, and forests.

The assistance and support of the other members of the Editorial Committee: Dr M.C. Crawley, Dr C.J. Burrows, Messrs J. Russell, R.E. Fordyce and R. Gibson, and of the Biological Society Committee, is acknowledged. Professor Knox offered the services of his secretary, Mrs Margaret Hawke, whose patience and typing skill is much appreciated. Mr T. Crosby readily gave his advice at all times and with Miss Frances L'Estrange also assisted with the typing. Mr G. Robinson and Mrs Joan Buckley assisted with the preparation of figures.

Unfortunately it is not the policy of the University to assist with the production of student publications, but Bascands Ltd have been more than willing to give advice and co-operate with us in publishing this journal. The Students' Association also provided grants of \$50.00 (1972) and \$250.00 (1973) towards meeting the cost of producing *Mauri Ora*.

The first issue coincides with the centennial of the University of Canterbury and provides a fitting opportunity to briefly trace the history of biology at the University and to remember those instrumental in establishing this discipline on a firm foundation.

In 1872 Canterbury Collegiate Union opened with five lectureships, and a total roll of 83. Dr L. Powell, previously an ophthalmic surgeon, was appointed to the lectureship in biology. In the first year he had 37 students, one of whom was the Chancellor. Powell's chief interest was the study of Arachnida.

Lectures of three hours per week were held in one of seven rooms in the Canterbury Museum and Christ's College. Collegiate Union classes terminated in 1874 and Canterbury College began the same year, with chemistry and biology classes in the Oddfellows' Hall in Lichfield Street.

Powell was succeeded by Capt. F. W. Hutton, who was appointed Professor of Biology in 1880. Hutton was also Lecturer in Geology, and Curator of Canterbury Museum after the death of Sir Julius von Haast. Hutton recognized the importance of laboratory work in teaching biology and included two hours practical work in each week's course. He is remembered for his work on New Zealand Mollusca, and for his early recognition of the significance of Darwin's work, *On the origin of species*.

Dr D. A. Dendy, previously on the editorial staff of the oceanographic survey ship, "Challenger", was appointed lecturer in 1893, and following Hutton's resignation, became Professor in 1894. His ability and enthusiasm gave the department a fine reputation. A laboratory to accommodate 30 students was completed in 1896.

Dr C. Chilton succeeded Dendy as Professor of Biology in 1903. Chilton had graduated from Canterbury College in 1881, studied marine biology at Otago and medicine at Edinburgh, and practised as an ophthalmic surgeon in Christchurch. His achievements include many publications on Crustacea, and, together with Dr L. Cockayne and Robert Speight, the establishment of a botanical and geological field station at Cass. His reprint collection on Crustacea remains a valuable asset in the Department of Zoology. He actively promoted research, pressing the Professorial Board to subsidise research scholarships, and by 1920 research was becoming accepted as part of the College's function. In 1909 *The subantarctic islands of New Zealand*, edited by Chilton, was published. These early associations of the Biology Department have developed into the present research programme on these islands.

The field station at Cass was built in 1914 at the end of the railway line for £175 plus £20 for mattresses. Chilton frequently led weekend field trips to the station, and he urged that a botanical reserve be established in the vicinity. His application for £100, to finance the fencing of a grassland area, was repeatedly declined by the Board of Governors, and the reserve was never realised.

Chilton was also the first Rector of Canterbury College, from 1923-1928.

E. Percival was elected to the Chair of Biology in 1928, having been assistant to the late Prof. Walter Garstang at Leeds. His work embraced both freshwater and marine biology, and included fine studies on brachiopod embryology. He encouraged students in their research, and led zoology field trips to the field stations at Cass, and Menzies Bay, a small cove on Banks Peninsula, made possible by the goodwill of the Menzies families. Percival, Sir Karl Popper (a lecturer in philosophy) and a group of other scientists, established a true research tradition at Canterbury College.

Percival's draft of a scheme which permitted students to attend lectures other than those in their course prepared the way for the present development of interdisciplinary studies.

The Biology Department was divided into the Departments of Botany and Zoology in 1954, with W.R. Phillipson becoming the present head of Botany, and Percival, the head of Zoology. In 1959 G.A. Knox succeeded Percival as head of Zoology.

The Edward Percival Marine Laboratory at Kaikoura equipped mainly for studies in marine zoology, was opened in 1963, and field courses are now held there. Botany and Zoology, along with other science departments, moved into their more spacious, if rather austere, quarters at Ilam in 1966.

From 37 students enrolled in biology in 1872, the enrolments in botany and zoology this year, 1973, total about 850. It is envisaged that *Mauri Ora* will become an essential part of this future growth, and will promote the University's standing in biology.

Material for this historical perspective has been drawn from the following sources:

HIGHT, J. and CANDY, A.M.F. 1927. *A short history of the Canterbury College*. Whitcombe and Tombs Ltd., Auckland. 317pp.

GARDNER, W.J., BEARDSLEY, E.T. and CARTER, T.E. 1973. *A history of the University of Canterbury 1873-1973*. Caxton Press, Christchurch. 530pp.

Notes compiled and kindly loaned by Mrs F.R. Allison, were also used.

S.L. Bennington

Editor