

## Fellow of the Royal New Zealand Institute of Horticulture (FRIH)

### Martin Boyce Keay



Martin Keay FRIH and his Australian terrier Bertie, working at Highwic. Photo by Marcel Tromp, supplied by Heritage NZ.

Martin is a professional garden designer and creator based in Auckland. He is much respected and has been a driving force in Auckland gardens for many decades.

Martin works in partnership with a great number of garden lovers and between them they create gardens to inspire and learn from. Martin combines his extensive horticultural knowledge with an artist's eye, huge passion for plants, and hard physical work (he is in his 70s yet works like a man in his 20s). He has a deep knowledge of Auckland conditions, soils, weather, and topography which informs everything he does.

His expertise is also in knowing and planting the best species and selections for the conditions in each garden in which he works. He seeks hard-to-find and underused plants from specialist growers throughout New Zealand to add interest to the gardens he develops. On top of this, Martin brings his artistic instincts and his vision of the garden as a whole to bear on his plan. These skills, and his ability to inspire others, are the qualities which have enabled Martin to bring to the gardens of Auckland,

both privately and in the public domain, a unique quality which would not exist without him.

Martin tirelessly gives his time and knowledge freely to many and is a person of great stature in the community. He has contributed a great deal of voluntary time to organisations and gardens such as Heritage Roses, Highwic, and the Nancy Steen Garden. He also speaks regularly to community groups about heritage roses, gardening and plants. Attendances at these events are always high as he is viewed as one of the most experienced gardeners in Auckland.

Martin is a 'master gardener' who fully deserves recognition through a Fellowship with the RNZIH. He has been a member of the RNZIH since 2018.

**Citation prepared by  
Penny Hansen and 15  
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### Susan Caroline Riera Molloy



Sue Molloy FRIH, viewing a painting of J.F. Armstrong, Curator of the Christchurch Botanic Gardens 1867–89.

Sue is a long-standing Botanical Resources Coordinator at the Christchurch Botanic Gardens. In this role she curates the garden, herbarium, and library records, and has a special interest in botanical and horticultural history of Canterbury.

Sue and her siblings were fortunate to be inspired by their plant loving parents Barbara and Brian Molloy. Dr Brian Molloy is a well-known botanist/ecologist and has also been honoured by the RNZIH, being awarded an Associate of Honour in 2007. Sue's earliest plant memories were her mother's outdoor collection of cacti and succulents – so typical of the 1960s. In the summer of 1969–70 her family moved to the Christchurch suburb of Riccarton to a house and

garden that became their family home for more than 40 years – until the earthquakes devastated it. Built in 1900 and neglected by previous owners, Sue watched her parent's labour of love redefine the garden. Her mother grew an abundance of gorgeous flowers which she pressed and framed to create her own unique flower pictures. They lived within a few minutes' walk of Riccarton Bush, Mona Vale and Hagley Park. It wasn't uncommon to have a kererū take a rest in her father's native tree corner as it navigated its way to or from the Botanic Gardens and Riccarton Bush.

During school holidays Sue had opportunities to accompany her father on his work field trips. These trips entailed getting to ride in a Botany

Division (DSIR) Land Rover, which was a novelty in those days leading Sue to think that this must surely be important work! Plant specimens gathered were taken home and put in the fridge or pressed under a mat destined for the Botany Division herbarium at Lincoln.

Another recollection is having conservationist Lance McCaskill often visiting their home to talk in his unmistakable voice all things Riccarton Bush with Sue's father.

As a family they went on Canterbury Botanical Society weekend excursions. Memorable during this time was botanist Dr Lucy Moore whose fondness for teaching children plant names was evident. She seemed to have a soft spot for Sue's family and enjoyed visiting to deliver one of her scrumptious, freshly baked rice puddings.

Sue has worked in the Christchurch Botanic Gardens three times over 35 years. The first was in 1982 to gain practical work experience for a Diploma in Horticulture at the then Lincoln College the following year. The second was in 1984 as the Botanical Technician with responsibilities including plant records and labels, visitor interpretation panels, and managing the Gardens contribution to the global seed exchange *Index Seminum*. Seed collecting in the Chatham Islands was a highlight of this period as were the annual trips into the Southern Alps, with Foggy Peak being a staff favourite. Sue and two colleagues decided to venture into SE Asia with great expectations of seeing rhododendrons in northern Burma. However, logistical challenges in Burma at the time did not allow them to get that far north.

In 1987 Sue gained a RNZIH National Certificate in Horticulture (Amenity). 1987 was also the year the Gardens

opened their first Information Centre. Sue curated the core display on the history of the Gardens.

From 1989 Sue spent four years on her OE (Asia, Africa, Europe, Middle East) including a short time at Royal Botanic Gardens Kew. While in London Sue took a complete change of direction and worked for Goldman Sachs (J. Aron & Company) after which she was offered a six-month position in their Singapore office. This allowed her to spend quality leisure time in the Singapore Botanic Gardens and her first real exposure to the amazingly landscaped roofs and walls of the fanciest hotels in Singapore on a scale she had never seen.

Sue re-joined the Gardens staff in Christchurch as the Botanical Resources Coordinator in 1993. In this capacity, she has personally been involved in databasing tens of thousands of hardcopy plant and herbarium records. Instead of being hand-painted, plant labels are now computer generated. Sue and her colleagues had a major transition in 2014, moving from their old 1950s cramped and damp facilities into a new building with a purpose-built research library and herbarium for their impressive collections.

The research library, archives and herbarium have evolved with the Gardens. The library alone now houses an impressive collection of seminal texts. Sue has taken great pleasure in curating, networking, enlarging and researching the provenance of these historical collections to share as permanent scientific objects.

For example, from 1991 until his death in 2010, Dr Eric Godley (former Director of Botany Division, DSIR) sought information for his Biographical Notes series published in the *New Zealand Botanical Society*

*Newsletter*. As Dr Godley's mobility became more challenged, Sue enjoyed finding the information he required. For this Dr Godley fondly referred to Sue as "the scout", and she feels indebted to him for his encouragement with plant and people histories.

In 2017, John Clemens (the previous curator) and Sue were successful in renaming the herbarium to the Lawrie Metcalf Herbarium. This fittingly commemorates Lawrence James Metcalf AHRH, QSO (1928–2017), one of New Zealand's most renowned horticulturists, and a former Assistant Director of Christchurch Botanic Gardens. Much of the citation on Lawrie's apprenticeship background came from information held in the RNZIH journals.

Sue is currently collaborating with John Clemens on research of John and Joseph Armstrong (father and son botanists who emigrated from England) and are publishing their work in a series for the *Canterbury Botanical Society Journal*.

The Christchurch Botanic Gardens were established in 1863 and Sue is passionate about all the historical aspects of the Gardens, including plants, people, buildings, furnishings, and archives. Sue is proud to have had a 20 year plus research project that she instigated come to fruition recently – in late 2021, the Magnetic Observatory Museum in the Gardens was opened to the public. In 1901, the magnetic observatory was erected in the gardens to assist with magnetic surveys including for Antarctic expeditions, and this history had largely been forgotten.

Sue Molloy has been a member of the RNZIH (via the Christchurch City Council) since 2009.

**Citation prepared by  
Murray Dawson**