

Canterbury Herb Society



Number 296

October – November 2018

PRESIDENT'S REPORT.



Hi Everybody,

After being on holiday for over five weeks it's a bit tough getting back to domestic chores. I did my time in Europe and did see some interesting things. Hundreds of acres of sunflowers which must look spectacular when they are in full bloom. What surprised me though was the lack of birds around these fields. In fact there was a lack of birds everywhere.

My time in the UK was a bit damp. Twice I had to wait for branches to be cleared off the road and one time had to turn around as there were several trees across the road. That is the joy of travelling, those unexpected things that happen.

At our last meeting we talked about herbs that are mentioned in the Bible. Most of the herbs we use today were used in those times.

For our next meeting those who are booked are going out for lunch at the:

Raspberry Café, 40 Rhodes Road which runs off Old tai Tapu Road.

Please be there at **12.15pm** so we can all be seated at 12.30pm. The lunch is to celebrate 50 years of the Canterbury Herb Society.

Heather



Heather saw these anise balls and Lavender filled bird bags in a small shop that contained many other herbal novelties, up a narrow side street in Salzburg, Austria.





AUGUST MEETING REPORT

Making Herb Butters and Soups was an ideal topic for a cold August morning tea/lunch meeting. With Heather away overseas, members took turns demonstrating and talking.



Alyse made **Peanut Butter** using raw shelled peanuts from Bin Inn that she had roasted in oil then crushed and ground. A cheap quickly made peanut butter that tasted every bit as good, if not better than any bought product!

Next it was **Herb Butter**, with a secret collection of 4 herbs. Alyse chopped them roughly then put all into a food grinder with cubed butter.

Lastly she showed us how to make a **Cheese Dip**.

After each demonstration came a Quiz: **“What herbs/ ingredients?”**

We all gathered around for a taste on crackers and to note down what herbs we thought she used in each. Lots of laughter and not everyone got it right!!!

Herb Butter:

Parsley, thyme, dill, garlic chives.

Cheese Dip:

Grated cheese, chopped onion, cream cheese, hard boiled egg and a little bacon (optional) were all processed with tree onions, salad burnet and dried coriander seeds. Nice.

Our next tasting was of delicious warming

“Soups with a Difference”.

JANET: a soup using split peas, celery, onions, red lentils and mixed herbs.

ANNETTE: A whole sweet orange – skins, seeds, pith boiled until soft then blitzed .

A large potato and 3-4 carrots cut up and cooked in water.

Next the blitzed orange, the blitzed vegetables & all the water combined. Salt, pepper and about a Tbs. sugar added.





COLLEEN: Carrots, kumera, onion, lemon pepper, sweet orange juice & zest, chilli sauce, chicken stock & finally a

little coconut cream to thicken.

RONA: Lentils (cooked), lots of garden greens eg. silverbeet, bok choy, winter-lettuce, frozen peas, nettles, parsley, - any fresh garden herbs. Chicken stock & seasoning. All boiled briefly then blitzed. Cheeze on top.



Another Quizz: “**What is in the Soups?**” Brought more surprises and more laughter. A happy warm meeting on a miserable day.

HERB of the DAY

Puarangi - Native Hibiscus.

There are three varieties of native hibiscus, known as “Puarangi”. A short lived perennial, it was considered to be a native plant but more recently thought to be of African origin, possible brought here by the Maori. Here in the cool South Island it is better treated as an annual.



H. trionum grows to 50 – 80 cms high and has bright green, slightly bristly green deeply serrated leaves. The hibiscus type flowers last only for a day and vary from cream to soft yellow with maroon-purple centres. The bubble-like seed pods have resulted in a common name “bladder plant”. It grows from seeds or cuttings taken in summer. It is now mostly a garden plant and can become invasive.

H. diversifolius resembles *H. trionum* but has prickly stems and grows up to 2 metres. It is rare and prefers wild damp or swampy areas.

H. richardsonii is also rare. It grows to 1 metre high in coastal areas in the North Island and on some off-shore islands. The flowers do not have the dark centres of the other two varieties. Stock love to eat it.

All three species are known as **Puarangi** and all can be used in the same way but with great care as little is known about them.

Seeds could be used as a dye, and are high in oil so may be eaten in moderation, particularly by men! Leaves have been used for indigestion. Plants are used externally in the Pacific Islands for broken bones and as steam baths.

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SEPTEMBER MEETING REPORT:

Herbs of the Bible was our evening topic.

Heather, now back from her overseas trip, opened the meeting and welcomed new member Clare McPherson.

Rona spoke on our “Herb of the Day” She had been given several pieces of frankincense and we were each given a piece to keep.

Colleen then told us about herbs that are mentioned in the bible.

Heather had brought along potted samples of all the herbs Colleen spoke about. A very informative and happy evening that ended with a nice supper.

HERB OF THE DAY : **FRANKINCENSE**



<What is Frankincense?

Frankincense is the aromatic resin used in incense and perfume obtained from five trees in the genus *Boswellia*.



The Frankincense or Olibanum trees have a papery bark, sparse branches, paired leaves and white flowers with yellow or red centres. They are native to the arid stony dry lands of the Arabian Peninsula - Oman & Yemen, and to N.E. Africa – Somalia. When these scraggy hardy trees are 8 to 10 years old, all species are tapped three times a year to bleed drops of resin. The third tapping of each year produces the best quality. One species even grows in rock and has a bulbous disk-like swollen trunk which stops the tree from blowing over!

In ancient times the resin was more valuable than gold and a huge trade grew using camel transport. Frankincense was highly valued as far away as China. It was known to the Greeks. The fragrance is released by burning at very high temperatures. The Egyptians used the burnt fumes to purify the body cavities of mummies. Fumes from burning are still used today as incense in Catholic churches and in some Jewish ceremonies for meditation & to purify the air.

Today essential oil obtained by steam distillation is used in perfumes, for skin care by physiotherapists, for rubbing on new born babies and orally in medicine for diabetes & as an anti bacterial.

There are now fewer trees as land is being cleared and burnt for grazing. Longhorn beetles are destroying the trees and heavy tapping is leading to poor seed production. *Rona*

OTHER BIBLE HERBS:

We find the Bible record so fascinating when we realise that people have been using the same herbs that we use today, for several thousand years. Key Bible people had a good knowledge of herbs. Adam was the first gardener and probably named many of the plants. King Solomon was a plant lover and

owned a large collection of plants from the then known world. The Apostle Paul, though a noted theologian, could give details of grafting and pruning.

We read in the Bible of amazing and famous gardens such as those from the royal court of Queen Esther and the terraced roof and hanging gardens of Babylon. Jesus Christ, the greatest plant expert, liked to take time out to rest in the Garden of Gethsemane, and was buried briefly in the garden of Joseph of Arimathea. In this climate arbours were much valued for their coolness and shade.

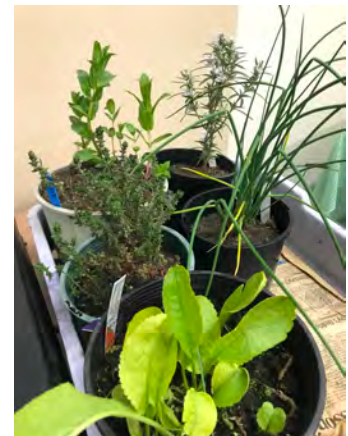
Very many herbs are mentioned by name in the Bible and Heather had brought around 20 potted specimens of these, which were arrayed along our tables and were available to purchase. Here is the list, and a pleasant afternoon's reading could be had by searching these online on a page such as 'Bible Study Tools', and reading first-hand what the references refer to: Balm, Coriander, Cumin, Dill, Mint, Hyssop, Leeks, Onions, Mustard, Myrrh, Rue, Sage, Thyme, Chicory, Endive, Parsley, Watercress, Thistle, Pennyroyal, Horehound, Horseradish, Wormwood, Rosemary, Basil, Chives, and Sorrel. Colleen handed around sheets as she spoke, illustrating each of the herbs with it's biblical quotation.

Some discussion was had about how we use these herbs today and that they may have changed over the centuries with breeding and cultivation practices.

All in all, our evening was enjoyably well spent and we all learnt something new. *Michele Moore*



Michele Moore.



RECIPE FROM an OLD N/L.

ANISE

BISCUITS

N/L. no.19. 1971

4 oz (150g) butter

1 teaspn. baking powder

3 oz sugar

2 teapns. Anise seeds

6 oz flour

1 Tbs. milk

2 oz ground rice (or increase flour to 8 oz.).

Method: Cream butter and sugar. Add anise seeds. Sift flour, ground rice, baking powder and stir in alternately with the milk. Roll out thinly, cut into shapes and bake .

N.B.Remove the seeds from the cases before adding! Ed.





FAREWELL PHYLLIS WILLIAMS

23rd July 1925 – 27th July 2018



Our Phyl. Always a lady, always immaculate, always a big smile, always a wonderful gardener with a wonderful garden. Always willing and hard working, always with a bunch of flowers, always a fantastic cook.

A deft needle-woman. Phyl liked things '*done properly*' and made sure she always did everything that way.

It is with sadness but with many happy memories that we record the passing of our longest serving member Phyl Williams just a few days after her 93rd. birthday. Although Phyl was not always able to attend our meetings over the last year, she remained a committee member and always wanted to hear what our society was doing.

Phyl joined the Herb Society very early on. She and husband Ralph lived on the hill and both had a great love of plants and of gardening. Phyl's immaculate herb garden had every herb plant imaginable and they all flourished in her care.

The first Herb Fair in the Horticultural hall in 1976, was so popular that the Herb Society decided to form an Evening group. Phyl opened her home & over 20 people arrived. Phyl was elected the first Evening Group President, a position she held three times over the years. Always a gracious person, Phyl welcomed and cared for our visitors & new members.

By 1978 the Evening Group had grown to over 40 all packed in to Phyl's large immaculate lounge ! Meetings were transferred to the Horticultural Hall. Thank you Phyl for all you did for the Herb Society. Wonderful times to remember. Phyl became an individual member of the Herb Federation of New Zealand when it was established in 1986 and attended conferences both here and in Australia. A special person. A special friend.

We miss you and remember you with love and give grateful thanks for all you did for the Herb Society over so many years.



SWEDISH BUNS USING SAFFRON - Marietjie Swart

'Lucia' Buns.

In Sweden, at the 'Festival of Light', Dec. 13, young girls are dressed in white with red sashes and one, "Lucia", wears a crown of candles. At home the eldest daughter, thus dressed, takes these 'S' shaped buns and coffee to her parents for breakfast.



$\frac{3}{4}$ cup milk	$\frac{1}{2}$ tspn saffron threads	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup sugar
$\frac{1}{4}$ cake active dry yeast	3 $\frac{1}{2}$ - 4 cups flour	$\frac{1}{2}$ tspn salt
3 ground cardamom seeds	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup butter- softened	2 large eggs
$\frac{1}{4}$ cup sour cream – or quark	raisins	

METHOD:

1. Heat the milk, saffron & a separate spare tspn sugar until steamy. Remove from heat, stir to dissolve sugar, cool to warm so not hot.
2. Sprinkle yeast over & stand 5 – 10 mins until foamy.
3. Whisk flour, sugar, salt, cardamom in a mixer, (or sieve together).
4. Make a well in centre & add all other ingredients. Mix all well.
5. Use a dough mixer (or by hand) to make a slightly sticky dough adding more flour if needed so mixture does not stick to your hand.
6. Make dough into a ball & let it rise in a large bowl covered with plastic, in a warm place until double in size (couple of hours or over night in the fridge).
7. Gently knead couple of times then press dough down, roll into a snake (about 14 ins) then break into balls & form into "S" shape pieces.
8. Cover, keep warm, let rise $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 hour to double in size.
9. Brush with a beaten egg and place raisins on top.
10. Bake 10 – 11 mins. until golden brown, cool 5 mins before eating. ENJOY.

These yellow buns were made by Marietjie for our 'saffron tasting' in September. Delicious. Ed.

N/L no. 17 1971 A HINT :

Garlic and caraway seeds on grilled steak is delicious.

CONTACTS FOR HERB SOCIETIES IN THE CANTERBURY REGION.

NORTH CANTERBURY: Co-ordinator – Sandra Townsend, PHONE : 03 3123347

ASHBURTON HERB SOCIETY MEETS:

WHEN: 1st. Wednesday of each month at 1.30pm.

CONTACT: Pam Whiteford, 56 Harland St. Tinwald.

PHONE: 03-3073810

TIMARU HERB SOCIETY MEETS:

WHEN: 3rd Monday of each month at 7:30pm, usually in members' homes.

CONTACT: Jeannette Greenyer 78 Lindsay St, Timaru

PHONE: Home 6861646, Work DD 6867486, Cell 027 237 2518.

DAY MEETING

Thursday – October 25th.

ANNIVERSARY LUNCHEON -

RASPBERRY CAFÉ - TAI TAPU

please arrive 12.15 P.M. at latest.

BOOKINGS NOW CLOSED.



EVENING MEETING -

Thursday – November 22nd. at 7:00pm

Making Dips for use at Christmas

Herb of evening: briar rose



Tasting: Please bring crackers with a difference.

All meetings held at the Avic Hill Craft Centre 395 Memorial Ave. unless advised.

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