

## October 2025 Newsletter

### From the President

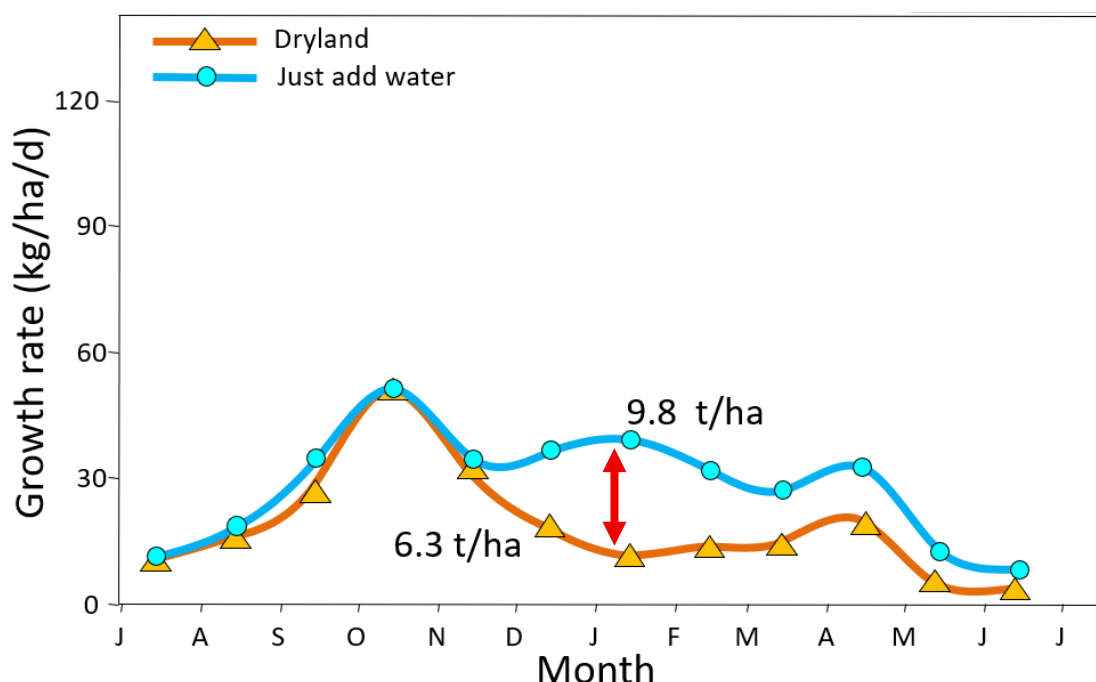
Getting away for a month to visit new places in warmer climes is great, but it's good to be home. In my absence I was pleased to hear that the presentation by the two students from the Engineering School at the University of Canterbury was well received.

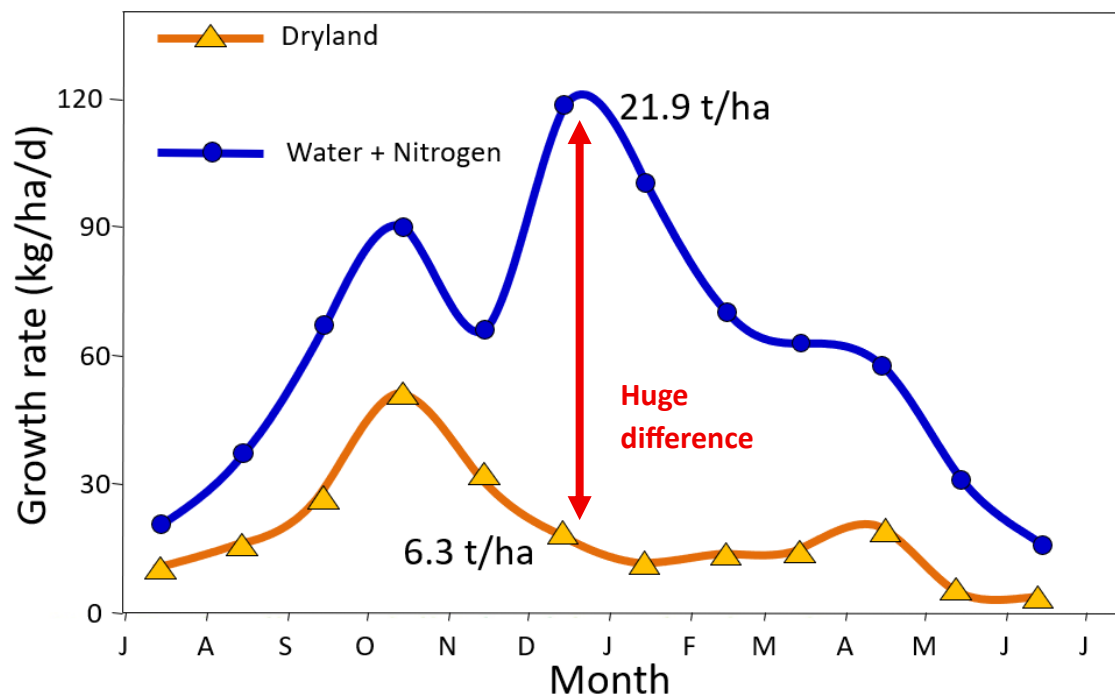
### Our recent speaker

I was very relieved that Professor Derrick Moot of Lincoln University was able to step in at short notice to be our September speaker. David is not your stereotypical professor; he leads his team from the front and gets his hands dirty. His mantra is "*Excellent agricultural science only happens in the field*".

Derrick spoke from his wide research experience and with enthusiasm about the issues that our sheep and beef farmers have faced in surviving and thriving in their businesses, and the huge advantages they have found from using lucerne to feed their animals. He also ventured into contentious subjects such as nitrogen usage and regenerative agriculture. Thus we all came away much better informed of how our farmers are adapting to the vagaries of our climate, and other challenging global problems. Derrick certainly covered a lot of ground (excuse the pun).

It's said that a picture is worth a thousand words, and I like graphs as a concise way of conveying technical information. Here are two graphs of experimental results from Derrick's presentation that compare the effects on crop yield by (1) applying water, and (2) both water and nitrogen. The second graph shows that significant benefits of the latter treatment are maintained throughout the year.





**My conclusions from these graphs:** While applying only water throughout the year improves the grass growth rate, there is no benefit in applying water during winter and spring because natural winter rainfall provides sufficient water. On the other hand, applying nitrogen all-year-round dramatically increased the plant growth rate in the summer, when farmers want to get a high carcass weight for their lambs destined to the freezing works.

I sat at the back of the room for Derrick’s presentation and was pleased that the re-vamped sound system in the Baylis Lounge is performing very well – I heard every word he spoke clearly (assisted of course by his strong delivery). But I also found that the smaller print on many of Derrick’s slides could not be read from where I was sitting. If you are keen on the detail of his talk, he has provided me with a PDF version of his presentation. Email me ([ewenique@xtra.co.nz](mailto:ewenique@xtra.co.nz)) and I will forward you a copy.

## Our upcoming speakers

### Wednesday 22nd October

Sarah Anderson - “Conservation in action on Te Pataka o Rakaihautū / Banks Peninsula”

Sarah is the Kaituitui / Coordinator of the Te Ahu Pātiki Charitable Trust. The Trust looks after a 500 hectare area of protected whenua that encompasses the two highest peaks on Te Pataka o Rakaihautū / Banks Peninsula traditionally known as Te Ahu Pātiki, but more commonly referred to as Mt. Herbert and Mt. Bradley. Sarah has a background in fine arts, the voluntary sector, administration, fundraising and working with fledging charitable trusts in their set-up phase. She currently lives in Lincoln but is originally from Ōtautahi/Christchurch with strong family connections to Rakaia Huts and Kaitorete Spit.

### Wednesday 26th November

Mark Rocket – a New Zealand entrepreneur, aerospace executive, and the founder and CEO of Kea Aerospace.

(Our Christmas luncheon will be after this meeting – members can register their attendance by signing up at the October meeting.)

## The Last Word(s)

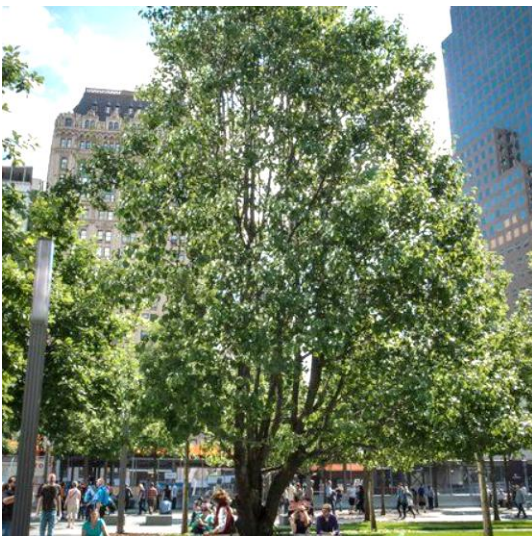
### The Survivor Tree and the Little Chapel That Stood

From experience, I have found that people who most are interested in places we have travelled to are those that have been to the same part of the world, or those who are considering doing a similar trip in the future. The remainder often show just polite interest, like “how did your holiday go?”, then move on to discussing something else.

So, I am reluctant to report on the trip that Ruth and I went on recently, but I will mention two things that impressed us a lot. They came from our visit to the 9/11 Memorial in New York.

A solitary pear tree stands in the Memorial Gardens amongst hundreds of swamp white oak trees. It was discovered amongst the wreckage of the 9/11 attacks. Its bark was charred from the fires at the site and many of its limbs had been reduced to stumps. Yet the tree, with just a few leaves remaining, showed signs of life.

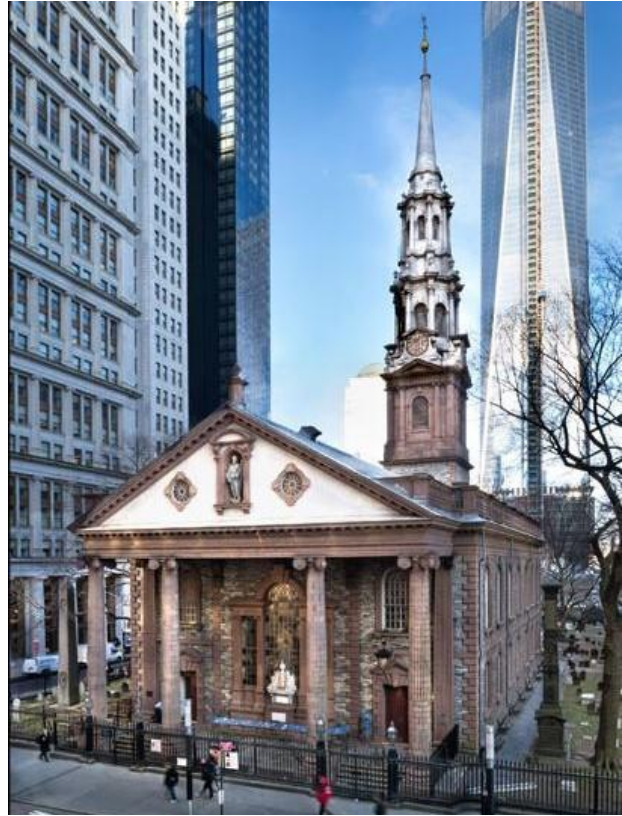
The tree was taken to a nursery to be cared for. With careful tending the stumps of gnarled and burnt bark gave growth of smooth limbs extended from the stumps. This has created a visible demarcation between the tree’s past and present. Since being replanted at the 9/11 Memorial in December 2010, the so-called Survivor Tree has become a living symbol of the ability to overcome adversity and recover. People continue to tie messages of encouragement at the base of the tree (shown below), and the tree bursts into magnificent blossom each spring



Nearby, stands another “survivor”, the St. Paul’s Chapel. It was constructed in 1766 and is the oldest church building in Manhattan. Located less than 100 metres from the World Trade Center site, the church became known as “The Little Chapel That Stood” after it survived the collapse of the Twin Towers on 9/11. Although only a small church, the phenomenon of St. Paul’s following the September 11 attacks was nothing short of miraculous. The building didn’t suffer any physical damage, and not even one window was broken. It is believed the church was protected by a giant sycamore tree that was planted in St. Paul’s graveyard.

In the tragic aftermath of 9/11, St. Paul’s Chapel became a haven for rescue and recovery workers at Ground Zero. More than 5,000 volunteers worked long hours at the church, cleaning, serving hot meals, and providing comfort to all who came to the church for rest and refuge.

*St Paul's Chapel – the little, old church that survived 9/11*



---

## **Our sympathy**

A U3A Ellesmere member, Martin Jagers passed away recently. We extend our condolences to Leah and her family at this sad time.

---

## **Committee responsibilities for 2025/26 :**

**President** – Errol Wood,   **Vice-President** – John Prendergast,   **Secretary** – Murray Allison,

**Treasurer** – Neal Borrie   **Interest Groups Coordinator** - Lyn Minchington

**Constitution Revision** – Nancy Borrie   **Membership Coordinator** – Dorothy Jordan

**Morning Tea Team Leader** – Nola Sutherland (not a committee member)

Our email address is [u3aellesmere@gmail.com](mailto:u3aellesmere@gmail.com)

---