

# Albert James Allom (1825 – 1909)

**A**lbert James Allom was born on 20 December 1825 in London, England, the son of eminent artist and architect Thomas Allom, whose lithographs of the New Zealand Company's settlements, based on sketches by Charles Heaphy and others, helped to promote emigration.

Edward Gibbon Wakefield, proponent of systematic colonisation and a director of the New Zealand Company, was a close friend of the family. Albert was barely sixteen when he joined the company's staff as a survey cadet and came to New Zealand on the *Brougham*, arriving in Wellington on 9 February 1842. He assisted with the Manawatu survey, supervised road works in Wellington, and in 1844 was one of the preliminary survey team sent to Otago on the schooner *Carbon*. When the staff disbanded the following year due to financial difficulties, Allom, in partnership with another cadet, John Tully, leased a Wairarapa cattle run, Tauanui.

Recalled to England in 1848 for personal reasons, Allom spent most of the next three years assisting Wakefield and others with planning and shipping arrangements for the Canterbury settlement. In 1851, as private secretary to the newly appointed lieutenant governor of Tobago, he left England for the West Indies, and a year later became colonial secretary there. While on leave in 1856 he married Eliza Horn of Winchfield, Hampshire, and returned to his post in the West Indies, but resigned in 1860 due to ill health.

Back in London Allom was appointed general manager and agent of the Great Barrier Land, Harbour and Mining Company, and with his wife and three children he arrived at Auckland on the *Mermaid* in December 1861. In November and December 1867 he assisted Thomas Kirk and Frederick Wollaston Hutton in their geological and botanical survey of Great Barrier Island. Kirk named a new shrub daisy they discovered on Mount Young after Allom "as a pleasant memorial of his valued aid when exploring the Great Barrier Island".

When the Great Barrier Company went into liquidation, Allom moved to Thames and for eighteen years held various positions in the departments of justice and mines. After reaching compulsory retirement age in 1886 he lived for seven years in Tasmania, where his son-in-law was government geologist. He then returned to Auckland and took an active interest in public movements, including the erection of a statue of Queen Victoria in Albert Park, and establishment of the Auckland Scenery Conservation Society. He died in Parnell on 16 February 1909.



## ***Olearia allomii***

*Olearia* are shrubs or trees, generally with the undersides of leaves covered in soft, dense hairs, and heads of daisy-like florets. About 180 species occur in New Zealand and Australia, with a few in New Guinea and Lord Howe Island. *Olearia allomii* is a shrub up to 1 metre tall, with stout branchlets and under surface of leaves covered in dense, silvery appressed hairs. The leaves are thick, leathery and shiny on the upper surface when mature, with the midrib prominent beneath. The 5–10 petal-like ray florets are white, the central disc florets mauve. Late spring to early summer flowering, *Olearia allomii* is confined to central Great Barrier Island, where it grows in skeletal soils and rock crevices.