

Jim Barnett Scenic Reserve, Putaruru

Linda Watson

The trip, on Sunday, 5 July 2020 and led by Kerry Jones, was combined with the Rotorua Botanical Society and it was great to have 21 botanists turn up for the day coming from Rotorua, Pureora, Te Awamutu, Kawhia and Hamilton.

The Jim Barnett Reserve in Waotu is administered by the South Waikato District Council and managed by a committee of dedicated, passionate individuals who have put in countless volunteer hours at the reserve, clearing tracks, building amenities, carrying out pest control, planting and managing work crews to maintain the tracks. A few of these members were there on the day to accompany us and talk about the project.

The Lake Taupō eruption in 186 AD eradicated most of the bush in the area but at Waotu a low hill diverted the destruction and a narrow strip of the bush, 1000 acres, was left standing alone in regenerating tussock and shrubs. The Māori people named this forest Te Waotu tahi nga rakau (the tall forest that stood by itself). The area was densely populated by Ngati Kahupungapunga at first and then by Raukawa. The early European settlers arrived and by the end of the 19th Century, much of the shrubland had been cleared for farming.

Logging began in the Waotu Forest in the 1890s. About 90% (900 ha) of Waotu bush was gone by the 1920s. Massive tōtara and rimu were cut down, loaded onto wagons and pulled out by horses and bullocks along purpose-built tramways.

We found evidence of the logging tracks and large stumps of huge tōtara trees remaining.

The Waotu forest, which spans 25 ha, has regenerated well since then. It was purchased from the Barnett family and opened to the public as the Jim Barnett Reserve in 1991 (with the 25 ha incorporating the small Walter Barnett



Old purpose-built tramway logging track, littered with rewarewa leaves

Reserve, a patch of trees still in private hands, and six hectares of QE11 covenant, all in the neighbourhood).

Tawa (*Beilschmiedia tawa*), mangeao (*Litsea calicaris*) and rewarewa (*Knightia excelsa*) dominate the canopy but stands of tōtara (*Podocarpus totara*), rimu (*Dacrydium cupressinum*), kahikatea (*Dacrycarpus dacrydioides*), mataī (*Prumnopitys taxifolia*) and miro (*Prumnopitys ferruginea*) can also be found. Māhoe (*Melicytus ramiflorus*), pate (*Schefflera digitata*) and five-finger (*Pseudopanax arboreus*) are common in the understorey.

We started on the Tane track and had lunch in the sun in a destined camping site which had been cleared for the purpose and replanted around the edges with plants such as kōwhai (*Sophora tetraptera*), Corokia species, tree lucerne (*Chamaecytisus palmensis*), native broom (*Carmichaelia australis*). These ‘immigrants’ had been specifically planted as food for birds and we managed to hear tui and kereru as they swooped over our heads.



Old tōtara in the reserve.

After lunch, we explored more of the 10 tracks and checked out the towering tōtara, still standing after at least 1000 years. Further along from the tōtara there was an impressive, solitary ancient radiata pine, possibly one of the biggest in New Zealand. It has now been cut down and was lying across the track.

We were back at the cars mid-afternoon just as the day deteriorated weather-wise and the rain started.

Another interesting botanical walk with easy walking tracks and great company.



Lunch in the sun at the campsite.

Jim Barnett Scenic Reserve species list

Graeme Jane & Gael Donaghy

Compiled from visits 3 June 2006 and 4 July 2020

Map: BE35 Grid Ref: 1836210 5773490

* = exotic species

Psilopsids, Lycopods & Quillworts

* *Selaginella kraussiana*

Ferns

Arthropteris tenella
Asplenium bulbiferum
Asplenium flaccidum
Asplenium oblongifolium
Asplenium polyodon
Blechnum chambersii
Blechnum discolor
Blechnum filiforme
Blechnum fluviatile
Blechnum novae-zelandiae
Cyathea cunninghamii
Cyathea dealbata

Cyathea medullaris
Cyathea smithii
Deparia petersenii subsp. *congrua*
Dicksonia fibrosa
Dicksonia squarrosa
Diplazium australe
Histiopteris incisa
Hymenophyllum demissum
Hymenophyllum dilatatum
Hymenophyllum flabellatum
Hymenophyllum frankliniae
Hymenophyllum scabrum
Hypolepis ambigua
Lastreopsis glabella
Lastreopsis hispida

Leptopteris hymenophylloides
Loxogramme dictyopteris
Microsorium pustulatum subsp.
pustulatum
Microsorium scandens
Paesia scaberula
Pellaea rotundifolia
Pneumatopteris pennigera
Polystichum vestitum
Pteridium esculentum
Pteris macilenta
Pteris tremula
Ptisana salicina
Pyrrhosia elaeagnifolia
Rumohra adiantiformis
Tmesipteris elongata
Tmesipteris lanceolata
Tmesipteris sigmatifolia
Trichomanes venosum

Gymnosperm trees and shrubs

Dacrycarpus dacrydioides
Dacrydium cupressinum
Phyllocladus trichomanoides
* *Pinus radiata*
Podocarpus totara var. *totara*
Prumnopitys ferruginea
Prumnopitys taxifolia

Dicotyledonous trees and shrubs

Alectryon excelsus subsp. *excelsus*
Aristolelia serrata
Beilschmiedia tawa
* *Berberis glaucocarpa*
Carpodetus serratus
* *Chamaecytisus palmensis*
Coprosma autumnalis
Coprosma robusta
Coriaria arborea var. *arborea*
Corynocarpus laevigatus
Dodonaea viscosa
* *Erica lusitanica*
Fuchsia excorticata
Fuscopora fusca
Griselinia littoralis

Griselinia lucida
Hebe parviflora
Hedycarya arborea
Hoheria populnea
Hoheria sexstylosa
Knightia excelsa
Kunzea ericoides
Laurelia novae-zelandiae
* *Leycesteria formosa*
Litsea calicaris
* *Malus x domestica*
Melicytus lanceolatus var. *lancelolatus*
Melicytus ramiflorus subsp. *ramiflorus*
Metrosideros robusta
Myrsine australis
Pennantia corymbosa
Piper excelsum ssp. *excelsum*
Pittosporum crassifolium
Pittosporum eugenioides
Pittosporum tenuifolium
Plagianthus regius subsp. *regius*
Pseudopanax arboreus
Pseudopanax laetus
Schefflera digitata
Solanum aviculare var. *aviculare*
Solanum laciniatum
Sophora microphylla
Sophora tetraptera
Weinmannia racemosa

Dicotyledonous lianes and related trailing plants

Clematis paniculata
* *Hedera helix*
Metrosideros diffusa
Metrosideros perforata
Muehlenbeckia australis
Parsonsia heterophylla
Passiflora tetrandra
* *Rubus fruticosus*

Daisy-like herbs

* *Achillea millefolium*
* *Bellis perennis*
* *Cirsium vulgare*

- * *Crepis capillaris*
- * *Erigeron sumatrensis*
- * *Gamochaeta coarctata*
- * *Jacobaea vulgaris*
- * *Lactuca serriola*
- * *Leucanthemum vulgare*
- * *Mycelis muralis*
- Pseudognaphalium luteoalbum*
- Senecio bipinnatisectus*
- * *Senecio vulgaris*
- * *Sonchus oleraceus*
- * *Taraxacum officinale*

Dicotyledonous herbs other than Daisies

- Cardamine dolichostyla*
- * *Cardamine hirsuta*
- * *Cerastium fontanum* subsp. *vulgare*
- * *Conium maculatum*
- * *Digitalis purpurea*
- Epilobium cinereum*
- * *Euphorbia peplus*
- * *Fumaria muralis* subsp. *muralis*
- * *Galium aparine*
- * *Geranium molle*
- * *Geranium robertianum*
- Haloragis erecta* subsp. *erecta*
- Hydrocotyle dissecta*
- Hydrocotyle microphylla*
- Hydrocotyle moschata* var. *moschata*
- * *Lamium purpureum*
- * *Linum trigynum*
- * *Lotus pedunculatus*
- * *Lysimachia arvensis* subsp. *arvensis* var. *arvensis*
- * *Modiola caroliniana*
- * *Oxalis articulata* var. *articulata*
- * *Oxalis corniculata*
- * *Phytolacca octandra*
- * *Plantago lanceolata*
- * *Plantago major*
- * *Ranunculus repens*
- * *Ranunculus sceleratus*
- * *Rumex acetosella*
- * *Rumex obtusifolius*

- * *Silene gallica*
- Solanum americanum*
- * *Solanum nigrum*
- * *Stachys sylvatica*
- * *Stellaria media* subsp. *media*
- * *Trifolium pratense*
- * *Trifolium repens*
- Urtica sykesii*
- * *Verbascum thapsus*
- * *Vicia sativa*
- * *Viola x wittrockiana*

Monocotyledonous trees and shrubs

- Rhopalostylis sapida*

Monocotyledonous lianes

- Ripogonum scandens*

Sedges

- * *Carex divulsa*
- Carex uncinata*
- Carex virgata*

Rushes and allied plants

- * *Juncus tenuis* subsp. *tenuis*

Grasses

- * *Agrostis capillaris*
- * *Anthoxanthum odoratum*
- * *Bromus catharticus* var. *catharticus*
- * *Dactylis glomerata*
- * *Festuca filiformis*
- * *Holcus lanatus*
- Microlaena stipoides*
- * *Paspalum dilatatum*

Remaining Monocotyledonous herbs

- Astelia microsperma*
- Astelia solandri*
- Dianella nigra*
- Phormium tenax*

Orchids

- Earina autumnalis*
- Earina mucronata*
- Microtis unifolia*