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## Thomas Cheeseman's Field Notebooks

More excerpts, with reference to *Phylloglossum drummondii*

Bec Stanley

I have transcribed some of the entries in the field notebooks of Thomas Cheeseman, relating to Auckland and our threatened plants. The following excerpt comprises notes made by Cheeseman on Waikumete in West Auckland. It is interesting for me because of the reference to the threatened fern ally, *Phylloglossum drummondii*, as 'abundant'. There are no recent records of this species known from Auckland, and in fact it has disappeared from most of its former range, in the last century. It is classified as Endangered (de Lange et al. 1999). As with Cheeseman's trip notes for South Whau, where he also found this small lycopod (see ABSJ 53(2)), he mentions fires which completely devastate the

area. *P. drummondii* is a species which favours recently burned shrubland. This species is now restricted to Northland where it grows at five locations (Lisa Forester *pers. comm.*). It also grows in Australia where it occurs in parts of West Australia, South Australia, Victoria, New South Wales, and north-eastern Tasmania. It is not classified as threatened in Australia (Briggs & Leigh 1988). To preserve the original style of the notebooks Cheeseman's nomenclature is followed, new names or those currently in use, and my approximations are provided in [ ] thus *Panax anomalum* [*Raukawa anomalus*].

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16 September Waikumete 1873 (from notebook 5 'Plants found in the North Island'):

"Few plants of interest are observed on the low clay hills between the Whau village and the debouchment of Henderson's creek into the

Waitemata. The vegetation has been so often burnt off that probably many species have been extirpated. Amongst the stunted tea-tree, *Pterostylis*

*trullifolia* is sparingly found, *Phylloglossum drummondii* is abundant. In swampy places *Lycopodium laterale* [*Lycopodiella lateralis*] is plentiful associated with species of *Sphagnum*, *Drosera binata*, *Eleocharis gracillima* [*E. gracilis*] while in damper places, *Cladium teretifolium* [*Baumea teretifolia*] monopolises large areas. In a few sheltered gullies that have not been so completely devastated by fire, *Pterostylis graminea* [*P. aff. graminea*] may be observed. It is now just commencing to expand its

flower. Here I also noted some fruiting specimens of *Corysanthes cheesemaniae* [*Corybas cheesemaniae*]. Several mosses were also gathered, but all apparently common". In a later entry, on 20 September that year, Cheeseman redetermines the *P. trullifolia* he saw at Waikumete as *P. puberula* explaining that 'this plant is certainly very nearly allied to *P. trullifolia*, but is, I think, distinct'. Cheeseman then discusses the principal differences between these two orchids.

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Another *Phylloglossum* record – this time from between the Mangatawhiri and Maramarua swamps, south Auckland:

Again, Cheeseman notes it is abundant and from the vegetation description of manuka/*Pomaderris* shrubland with 'barren' soil, it appears to have been in a recently burned area. *Pterostylis tasmanica* is considered nationally threatened, classified as 'declining' (de Lange et al. 1999). Interestingly,

based on herbarium records and field observations, *P. puberula* is often found with *P. tasmanica*, as in this case near Miranda (de Lange 1996). In the Waikumete entry Cheeseman doesn't mention seeing *P. tasmanica*, although it has since been noted at Waikumete (Peter de Lange *pers. comm.*).

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11 - 13 Sept 1876. Mercer (from notebook 21):

"These days I spent at Mercer principally for the purpose of examining the species of *Coprosma*: *C. cunninghamii* [*C. propinqua* x *C. robusta*], *C. rotundifolia*, *C. divaricata* (now included in *C. rhamnoides*), *C. tenuicaulis*, *C. rhamnoides*, *C. propinqua*, besides the more generally diffused *C. robusta*, *C. grandifolia*, and *C. lucida*. Flowering specimens of both sexes of the first six species were secured for preservation in spirits to be used for future comparisons with those other species. Few other plants of interest were noticed by the river. *Mazus pumilio* [*M. novaezeelandiae* agg.] occurs just behind the township, as also does *Myrtus pedunculata* [*Neomyrtus pedunculata*], *Panax anomalum* [*Raukaua anomalus*] etc. *Nasturtium amphibium* [*Rorippa amphibia*] is abundant on the raised bank by the side of the river, while every pool

is filled with *Glossostigma* here of a much more slender habit than near Auckland. *Callitriche verna* [*Callitriche stagnalis*] is equally abundant. The road from Mercer to Miranda runs over barren clay hills for the past 2 or 3 miles with the usual vegetation of *Pteris*, *Leptospermum* and *Pomaderris*. Further on the country is much more level being in fact a low ridge between the Mangatawhiri and Maramarua swamps, but the soil is equally barren. The only plants of interest noted here - *Phylloglossum drummondii* hitherto not seen further south than Papakura - here it is abundant. *Pterostylis squamata* [*Pterostylis tasmanica*] was seen on a low bank by the side of a branch of the Maramarua Swamp - but unfortunately was not yet in flower. *P. puberula* was common. The swamps were too wet to allow any examination being made of their vegetation".

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