

Farmers in the area are keeping an eye on the fallow deer numbers and allow controlled shooting to take place at times when the numbers build up. I do not think they are a serious threat to the fauna and flora as they are mainly grazers and not

browsers like red deer. If the numbers of the latter were to build up they would be a far more serious threat. Our best source of information presently, on the Pollok herd, is Mr Ray Lane, who like Mr Douglas, has made a lifetime study of them.

References

Cameron, E.K. 2000: Flora of Taitua Forest, Awhitu Peninsula. *Auckland Botanical Society Journal* 55(2): 94.

Stace, G. 1987: National Treasures the Douglas Score. Section 1 Norman Douglas, the man and his work. A video by Avid Productions Limited.



Auckland Naturalists' Field Club Excursion to Rakino Islands in 1883

Mike Butler

The announcement for the excursion in the classified advertisements section of the Auckland Evening Star doesn't give the actual date, but was described as "Friday next (Prince of Wales's Birthday)". Tickets were available from named members, but it was noted that "The Committee will not engage to issue tickets on board".

Source: Auckland Evening Star 12 November 1883.

Field Naturalists' Club

"Members of this Club with their friends, to the total number of 112, left Queen street Wharf in the P.S. Tainui, at 9 o'clock on Friday morning, bound for Rakino Island, outside of Motutapu. The run down occupied a pleasant two hours, at the end of which the steamer came to anchor in a semi-circular bay, opposite the island's only house. A large proportion of the excursionists landed in boats, while the rest went on further in the steamer to one of the two Otatou Islands [The Noises], hoping, as ardent naturalists, to be rewarded with new and rare plants, and possibly animals. Their expectations, however, were scarcely realised, for they got no new vegetable specimens, and schnapper, which was caught in abundance, can scarcely be reckoned a rarity. Mr Cheeseman, the Club's indefatigable secretary, found a specimen of the only melon indigenous to New Zealand (*Sicyos angulata*) [now *S. australis*]. Its fruit, at maturity, is only about the size of a bean.

Other rarities were the hymenanthus, and the rhagodia (very uncommon) which latter also occurs at Rakino. Several orchids, most of them common, were found. On the beach at Otatou was picked up a human jaw-bone (lower), with all the teeth save one intact, and perfectly sound. Each of the first double teeth was ground down in the most singular manner, as if the owner, when living, had been in

the habit of masticating very hard food (say fern-root). Judging from the teeth, Drs Moore and Purchas diagnosed the fragment to have belonged to a male Maori, aged between 50 and 60, who was possibly drowned in the harbour years ago.

Those who had landed at Rakino were most hospitably entertained by Mr Sandford, who lives here with his family, and raises sheep and cattle. The Club had evidently been expected, for extensive preparations had been made, and food and drink were supplied throughout the whole day. The excursionists had reason to be thankful to Mr Sandford and family for their very courteous attention. Rakino did not seem to yield anything very remarkable from a naturalist's point of view, and ferns and plants worth taking being rare, some attention was directed to oyster-gathering, and it must be confessed, with great success. Oysters abound on the rocks surrounding the island and are to be had in cartloads.

About 4pm, the Tainui arrived from Otatou, and re-embarkation commenced. The last stragglers were on board about 5.10, and a start was made for home. The route taken was the alternative one round the outside of Motutapu, by Rangitoto Reef, and through the Channel. Queen street wharf was reached shortly after 7, and the excursion had proved a most enjoyable one."

