

The following account of the excursion to Walker's Bush, Feb. 28th, 1948, has been kindly supplied by Miss Joan Dingley.

"On Saturday, 28th Feb., about 25 members of the society visited Walker's Bush. This small reserve at the base of Mountain Rd., Henderson, was purchased for the city through the efforts of our society during the closing months of 1940 in order to save three large kauri trees, of which two were eight and one nine feet in diameter, from the bushman's axe. The trees are set in a delightful piece of bush surrounding a small stream, the banks of which are densely clad in the small tree fern *Wheki* (*Dicksonia squarrosa*). The trees are a few hundred yards from the road and a track to them is kept cleared by the Centennial Park board, who supervise this area.

After having lunch on the property of our president, Miss M. Crookes, Miss Crookes guided the party across the road into the reserve and here everyone spent an enjoyable afternoon admiring the kauri trees, studying the filmy ferns on the tree fern trunks and botanising generally. On our way back to Miss Crookes' cottage we met Mr. Cooper, the newly appointed museum botanist. He had inadvertently missed the bus, but so great was his enthusiasm to attend the excursion that he had walked from New Lynn. A hurried cup of tea before catching the Valley Road bus back to town concluded the excursion. The Society is indebted to Miss Crookes for her hospitality and her able leadership.

During the excursion the matter as to whether the two kauri trees on the track needed any protection was discussed. The general feeling was that at present the trees were safe but sometime in the future the tree near the stream might need some protection to keep the bank from falling away from its roots."

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#### NOTES BY THE WAY

We have just received the following interesting communication from Mr. J.R. Cameron, of 28 Speight Rd., Kahi:

"Just a note re the Carob Bean tree. (*Caratonia siliqua*). I was unaware until lately that there were more than two mature trees in Auckland, one in Domain Road (a male) and one in Park Road

(a female) neither of course bearing developed fruit. But recently I have discovered that there is another in Parnell Park, and from this tree I actually obtained a fully developed pod, very dry, almost black,  $\frac{3}{4}$ " wide and  $4\frac{1}{4}$ " long. It was the only bean on the tree, and may have been the only one to mature, but I will watch with interest from March onward and see what happens. This tree may be one of the rare dioecious specimens, having perfect flowers, or of course it may have been pollinated by bees from the nearest and only male tree I know of, and that would be about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles away, not impossible. If this tree is self-pollinating, it may be that its seeds would germinate a greater percentage of its kind, and so help on the development of this interesting fruit in Auckland. There are several Carob Beans at Keri Keri, but I have never heard of any that developed more than one inch in length before falling off."

(This interesting Leguminous plant, which hails originally from Mediterranean lands produces pods containing a juicy pulp, and are used as fodder. They are known in the Old World as Algaroba, or St. John's Bread. It is said that the seeds were the original carats of the jewellers. Ed.)

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Mrs. Molesworth has recently been kind enough to forward me specimens of the foliage, flowers and fruit, of that most fascinating plant, the "native" gourd, Lagenaria vulgaris. Lagenaria is not actually a native though it flourished in the northern parts of New Zealand long before the coming of the white man, since it was introduced by the Maoris. It has served the Polynesian people in manifold ways, entering very largely into the native economy in the Hawaiian Islands, where a particularly large form was grown. The Maoris used gourds as containers for water, oil, and preserved birds, as bowls etc., for food, and as whistles, floats, humming-tops, trumpets and masks.

The Hawaiians also used them as travelling and storage trunks, ossuary urns, numerous kinds of toys, as drums, decoys, lures, fish-line reels, bailers, funnels, lamps, strainers etc.

Mrs. Molesworth's vines came from seven seeds brought from the Great Barrier by Miss Betty Molesworth. These all germinated and produced large and lovely climbers. The foliage