

QUARTERLY NEWS LETTER

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The holiday season has proved a most interesting period for many of our members and the editor rejoices that no less than three accounts of botanical trips have come to light. It is of additional interest that trips have been made both to Northland and to the south of the South Island. We offer our thanks to Mr F. Warren for his informative account of the Botanical Society's trip to Whangarei and beyond. Our thanks are also due to Mr. Farnell for an account of a trip to Milford Sound and we are glad to receive a further article from Mr. Kitchen dealing with the ferns of that and other southern districts, which we will be happy to publish in the next News Letter.

A feature of special interest in our present number is an account of an undescribed orchid by Mr. E.D. Hatch, accompanied by detailed line drawings. It is hoped that members will note carefully both the description and the drawings so that in future they can keep their eyes well open when browsing round the roots of taraire trees, which on present information, seems to offer most hopeful possibilities for finding further specimens of this most unusual orchid.

THE WAIPOUA ORCHID - EIGHT YEARS LATER

Edwin D. Hatch.

In the Auck. Bot. Soc. Newsletter, Sept. 1955, and again in Auck. Orch. 1959, I noted and illustrated an unusual orchid from Waipoua. This was found by Miss E. Kulka, growing in deep leaf mould beneath an old man Taraire on the banks of the Waipoua River, and was collected in flower on 28 Jan. 1955. The solitary, much dissected and rather battered specimen was sent to me by Colwyn Trevarthen on 28 May, 1955. Nothing like it had before been recorded from either Australia or New Zealand. Further than that I could not go.

On 10 Jan. 1963, Mrs. Hynes rang me from the Museum. A plant corresponding to the Waipoua orchid had been brought in from Gloriā on the Kaipara. Mr. J. Beaver with his son Ross, had gathered it

Hypolepis rugosula 1. Winstone Beach

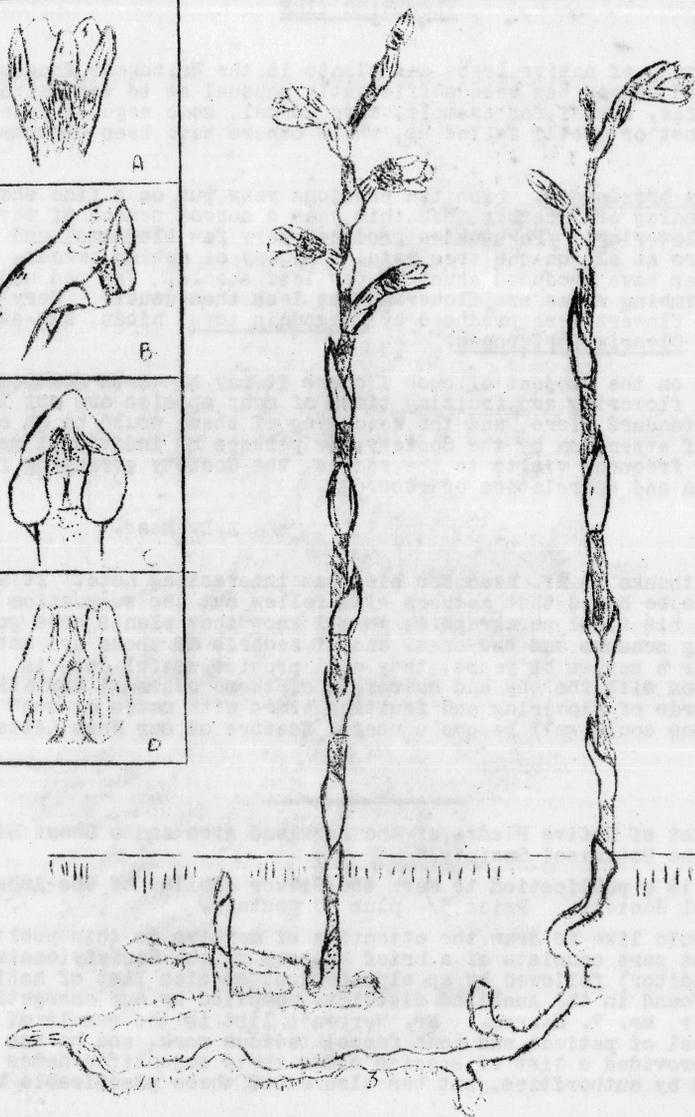
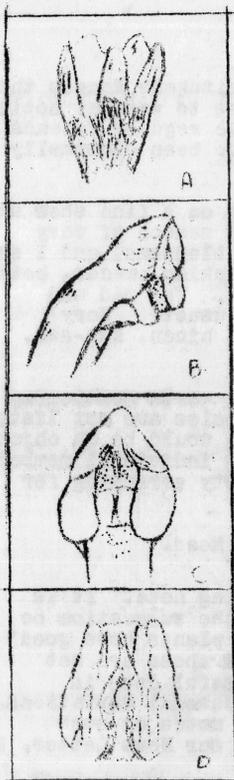
(still from under mature Taraire) on Christmas Eve 1962, and had nursed it carefully for three weeks in order to get back alive. A block of assorted leaf and root debris, tucked into a foil strawberry chip, contained a tangled mass of branching rhizome, totalling 62 cm. in length, on which were 3 flowering stems and 4 more just breaking the surface. The whole was intertwined with long white fungal hyphae. Also in the block, but not attached, were 2 tubers.

The most striking thing about the plant (and something the original Waipoua specimen had not told me) was that it had no chlorophyll - not a trace of green anywhere. Obviously saprophytic and mycorrhizal, probably in association with the Taraire. (Miss Ella Campbell's recent paper - Trans.R.S.N.Z.1:1962.p.289 - on Gastrodia cunninghamii is worth studying in this connection).

The leaves are colourless sheathing bracts, scattered at intervals up the reddish, pubescent stem - which is some 12cm high. Flowers 1-5 rather regular, the sepals and petals being roughly alike and some 6mm long. The lower portion of the flower is of the same reddish-brown as the stem, while the upper portion is creamy-white. The plant though small is quite conspicuous, the dark stem and flower bases contrasting with the colourless bracts to give a banded effect which stands out against the dark background of the surface debris. The short dorsal sepal, overlying the longer petals, gives the illusion of an emarginate apex to the flower.

The plant, which I have so far managed to keep alive is forming vertical droppers some 2 cm long, which suggests that it will make tubers for wintering, an unusual occurrence in rhizomatous orchids. It will be the type of a new genus, its nearest relations apparently belonging to the tropical subtribe Vanillinæ and occurring in Java. But more of this later.

I would like to express my gratitude to Miss Kulka and Mr. Beaver for discovering the plant, recognising it as something unusual, and bringing it in for study. And to Mrs. Hynes and Mr. Trevarthen for drawing my attention to it. This is another feather in the Bot.Soc. cap. Only recently Society members were responsible for the rediscovery, after nearly forty years in limbo, of two other orchids - Bulbophyllum tuberculatum Col. and Corybas Carsei (Cheesm.) Hh.



E. D. H.
1. 1963