

Our party left Auckland at 6pm sharp and by 10.20pm had reached our hotel at Rotorua. The following morning Mr. and Mrs. C.L.Purdie, our guides for the weekend joined us, and we travelled on to Mt. Tarawera via Lake Rerewhakaitu. The bus stopped at the point where it could no longer negotiate the scoria road. We then climbed up a short steepish track through bush to regain the road, which is now extended right to the dome. This is indeed a painless route, much appreciated by one who on earlier climbs has puffed her way up the very steep scoria slope from the Lake Tarawera side. On the tops we faced a strong unpleasant wind with mist billowing over the peaks, but this was frequently pierced by the sun which would light up all the gorgeous red and yellow colours of the rock and scoria in the chasm. All, especially the photographers, were thrilled by this fascinating scene. The open undulating tops are gradually being covered with a low-growing vegetation which made an interesting study. ( see a paper by C.C.Ogle in the Newsletter for October 1966 ) We returned to the bus by the road, which gave us an opportunity to see more of the bush growing on the lower ridges.

Sunday we took the road round the lakes, making a stop to allow for a short walk on the track around Lake Rotoehu, this particular place being a bird sanctuary. Further on we alighted again to visit the Rotoma scenic reserve. The easy-going track down to a delightful stream passes through dense bush, and this walk is highly recommended. After lunch by the wayside we continued to White Pine Bush, about 4 miles from Whakatane. Like many other isolated bush remnants this holds much of interest. The scrambling Fuchsia perscandens, a species quite new to many of us, was abundant, as was also the dainty Clematis parviflora. On the way back we turned off at Te Mahoe to look over the Matahine dam, at this time almost ready to be filled. Mr. Purdie was able to give us information on the development of this huge construction. In the evening some 20 members spent an interesting time at the Atamangi museum at Holdens Bay, when Mr. Arthur Sherwood described the origin and usage of the maori artifacts and early colonial treasures.

On Monday we took the old Rotorua - Tauranga road to stop at the bridge over the Mangorewa stream, where some time was spent admiring the plants along the river banks. Lindsaea viridis, the rarest of the Lindsaeas is still there although not so abundant as on our previous visit in 1961. Floods may be responsible for this. Mecodium atrovirens still clings to the stream bed and to the sides of the water-lapped rocks, often in association with moss. It is not common and it could be that its blackish fronds blending in with the rocks, and its preference for gloomy places cause it to be overlooked. We lunched at this lovely spot and then farewelled Mr. and Mrs. Purdie who had spared no effort in arranging our itinerary, and in acting as our leaders to all these interesting places. The route home was through steep bush clad hills to Oropi, and thence through Tauranga and Paeroa, to arrive back at 5.30pm thus bringing finis to a most rewarding weekend trip.