

BETHELL'S BEACH - - - 18 March 1967 - - - M. Davis

The day was warm and sunny when we arrived and the rest of the morning was spent on the beach, so that we had ample opportunity to see the cliff vegetation as well as that of the sand dunes. On the northern cliffs Coprosma repens (taupata) Astelia banksii and large clumps of Phormium tenax occur in association with weather beaten teatree scrub. Nearer the shoreline Salicornia australis grows vigorously and Disphyma is also present.

On the damp sandy flat Samolus repens, Selliera radicans and Gunnera arenaria were found. The small tape measure plant, Lilaeopsis orbicularis, Lobelia anceps and the shore daisy, Senecio lautus occur here as well, together with the little dwarf sedge Carex pumila, whose long rhizome lies buried in the sand. Amongst the sand binders the silvery sand grass, Spinifex hirsutus is common. Numerous seed heads were seen.

Where there is relative stability on the dunes Cassinia retorta with some introduced plants forms a fairly compact association over which the wiry stems of Muehlenbeckia complexa grow vigorously.

After lunch we followed the track beside the stream. This marks the beginning of a stable plant association. The comparatively luxuriant vegetation on one side of the stream is in striking contrast to the black iron sands of the dunes on the seaward side. On the damp rocky cliff above the track Arthropodium cirratum (the renga lily), and Phormium colensoi grow. Amongst the trees on the margin of the stream are Corynocarpus laevigatus (karakā), Sophora microphylla (kōwhai) and Myoporum laetum (ngaio). In the swampy areas we noticed Typha angustifolia (raupo), Juncus holoschoenus and nearby the grass Dichelachne.

Above the track there is a mixed association of coastal shrubs and trees. Amongst them are Macropiper excelsum (kawakawa), Meliccytus ramiflorus (mahoe), Brachyglottis repanda (rangiora), Schefflera digitata, Geniostema ligustrifolium (hongehege), Rhabdothamnus solandri, Carmichaelia oligera, Metrosideros excelsa (pohutukawa), Entelea arborescens (whau) and Cordyline australis. The scrambler Freyinetia banksii (kiekie) is also plentiful. Coprosma grows beside the track, the most common being C.rhamnoides with particularly fine fruits. Also C.areolata and C.crassifolia.

Our thanks are due to those who organised a most interesting and pleasant trip.