

excursion. The members also expressed appreciation of Mr. H. StClair Brown for his interest in and care of this very beautiful piece of bush.

* P. Wardle. Biological Flora of New Zealand. 1. Weirmannia racemosa Linn.F. (Cunoniaceae) Kamahi. N.Z. Journal of Botany, Vol.4, No.1, March 1966.

** Holttum. Flora of Malaya, Vol.2. Ferns

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EASTER IN THAMES

K.J. Haydock.

During Easter this year my family and I spent our time botanizing in the area around Thames which is part of the Coromandel Forest Park. The area was only opened to public access on 7.3.70, until when access had been by permit only.

One trip was up the Kauaeranga Valley, the road following the river most of the way to the motorable end at Whangaiterenga Picnic Area. The Forest Service are establishing an indigenous Arboretum just past the Park Headquarters, with the flora labelled and giving a good representation of the plants in the area.

The Kauaeranga Valley has been extensively milled in the past for commercial timbers, mainly kauri, and fired and cleared for farming. Much of this burnt over land and the abandoned farms are reverting to Leptospermum scrub and eventually back to native bush and the rest has been planted in exotic pines.

The Whangaiterenga Picnic Area was surrounded by Leptospermum ericoides and L. scoparium scrub and a variety of different Pittosporum species in a small area, P. eugenioides, P. tenuifolium and P. ellipticum being most prominent. The track leads on from the picnic area with Coprosma areolata and Gleichenia dicarpa being prominent along the sides. Extensive boggy areas were encountered on route with clumps of Podocarpus decrydioides growing therein, Kauri, rimu and rata trees were prominent on the back ridges to the south and Table Mountain to the north.

A short trip took us up to Edwards Lookout just past the picnic area. The soil was of very poor quality and signs of the last burn off were still evident. The flora was generally stunted and small. We only went up to the first knoll which gave us extensive views up and down the valley.

Going further up the valley we turned off the main track, forded the Kauaeranga River and proceeded up the Tarawaere Creek to one of the old timber dams. This was used to store water before being tripped and the resulting rush of water taking the felled logs downstream to be milled. This track was literally a botanists paradise, 56 species of trees

and shrubs and 36 species of ferns being listed by us with our limited knowledge. At the start of the track there was a dead tree with 3 species of fern and 3 species of rata growing on it, Metrosideros fulgens, M. diffusa and M. perforata. This set the pattern for the track. Orchids, mosses, liverworts and ferns of all sorts growing in great profusion both on the ground and epiphytically. One tree was covered in Hymenophyllum species, the next covered with Trichomanes reniforme and both were liberally sprinkled with Eearina mucronata and E. autumnalis. E. mucronata was noted growing on a rock 2 feet above ground level and Asplenium bulbiferum was found epiphytic on a tree fern, 6 feet above the ground. Glow-worms were also found on a wet bank by the streamside. Bird life appeared to be fairly common judging by the amount of song heard and the fact that we saw 3 tuis together in one tree.

The dam itself was in good repair considering it is approx. 40 years since it was used. The undergrowth around the dam had been cleared to give a good view and a tree stump 6" in diameter just behind the dam, noted as having been freshly felled, showed the growth rate since the dam was abandoned. The prominent growth in this area consisted of tree ferns and Fuchsia excorticata, showing the once open nature of this area which is slowly being crowded out by the regenerating forest species. Blechnum patersonii was growing in two places on the dark stream banks just before the dam was reached. Gnaphalium kerianse, a member of the daisy family, was growing in great profusion on the stream banks and on large boulders in the stream.

If you don't like getting your feet wet, don't go! We took count on the way back from the dam and we crossed the stream twenty times. No stepping stones, no bridges! However, we recommend you overlook this matter as the beauty makes it worthwhile - and the first crossing is the wettest anyway, after that it's not so bad and even becomes quite enjoyable.

A trip was made up Tararu Rd with a plant list being taken at the start of the road and another on the track at the end. The whole area was extensively milled and mined and is reverting to scrub with many introduced species at the bottom of the road and regenerating bush at the top. Muehlenbeckia complexa was found to have a different leaf shape to that normally found on coastal dunes around Auckland. Above the end of the road there were many abandoned mine tunnels driven into the hillside from the track. Senecio kirkii was noted in flower here as well as at Te Puru.

The Botanical Society could well spend a week based on Thames exploring the numerous tracks radiating into the Coromandel range from just north or south of Thames. (The Society will be having an outing to Kauaeranga on 20th February, 1971.- Ed.)

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Mr and Mrs Haydock and family have recently moved to the South Island where Ken has taken up a position at the Cobb Valley hydro-electric station. We wish them every success and hope that they will soon be writing articles for the Newsletter on the interesting botany of the area.