

KAUAERANGA VALLEY20th February.A.D. Palmer.

Our long day trip this year was to Kauaeranga Valley in the Coromandel Forest Park. The bus was skillfully driven to the road's motorable limit at the Whangaiterenga Picnic Area, our leader, Mr Purdie, telling us some interesting points of the area's history on the way.

Those of the party who were feeling energetic had a quick lunch and set off along the old Kauaeranga Rd. towards the foot of Table Mountain. On the way we detoured down a side track to see the remains of the old booms in the Kauaeranga River. These were built to fetch up the logs driven down from the dams in the upper Kauaeranga. The logs were then taken on to Thames by tramway. Previous to the construction of the tramway, the logs had been driven all the way downstream to the Parawai booms, but around 1915 farming had become established along the lower reaches of the river and the damage caused by this method of moving the logs became too great to be tolerated. Of botanical interest on this track were some plants of Loxoma cunninghamii, a somewhat rare fern found only in the northern part of the North Island and here about at its southern limit.

We continued along the main track, through scrappy regeneration, with a high proportion of introduced plants from Leycesteria formosa to apples! Of interest were some good specimens of Pittosporum eugenioides with what seemed to me to be unusually broad leaves.

Taking an unnamed track to the left, nearly opposite the start of the Billy Goat Track, we entered bush proper. Here we found several specimens of Senecio myrianthos which is endemic to New Zealand and occurs only on the Coromandel Peninsula. This is a fairly distinctive species, particularly when in flower ( Nov - Dec. ) as it is one of only three shrubby species of Senecio which have heads bearing white ray-florets. The others are Senecio hectori, which occurs only in the South Island and has larger heads ( up to 5 cm compared to about 1 cm ) and distinctive leaves, and the familiar Senecio kirkii, also with larger heads and quite fleshy, glabrous leaves. The leaves of S. myrianthos are membranous, glabrous above, tomentose beneath, often purplish about the main veins on the underside.

Orchids noted on the track were two or three plants of Earina autumnalis in flower and seed heads of Thelymitra. Mr Butler reported finding Prasophyllum pumilum near the picnic ground.

I noticed a group of young specimens of Dawsonia superba, New Zealand's largest and most striking moss but at this stage looking, at first glance, like pine seedlings. There were several species of Schoenus on the track and some fine patches of Nertera in berry.

We finally turned round reluctantly and retraced our steps, unfortunately in a gradually more persistent light rain which had been trying our spirits all day.

Near the bus at the picnic ground we saw Pittosporum huttonianum, another of the local plants, occurring on Great and Little

Barrier Islands and the Coromandel Peninsula.

We returned to Auckland via Miranda, where we stopped for tea, some taking it on a rather chilly beach, others in the warmth of the hotel or bus. The mangroves in the area bore masses of their somewhat insignificant flowers, surprising for their pleasant scent. A vote of thanks to our leader Mr. Purdie was carried by acclamation.

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Mr. and Mrs. Purdie will soon be leaving Auckland to live in Wellington, where Mr. Purdie will be based in his new position as Advisory Officer to the Nature Conservation Council. This looks like being a very interesting position and Mr. Purdie has already travelled several thousand miles in both Islands, looking at sites for proposed new developments etc., with possible conservation in mind. Already in the course of these travels he has found Hebe speciosa, thought to be extinct in the wild in the North Island. For obvious reasons he's not letting on as yet exactly where it is but will say that its on the west coast to the north of Dargaville.

I am sure that our members will be sorry to see them leave Auckland yet again, but will wish them both well in the future.

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#### SOUTH ISLAND '72.

The next Botanical Society trip to the South Island is now off the ground. It is proposed to visit the West Coast area, using Hokitika as a base and extending from the Punakaiki Rocks area in the North to Franz Josef in the South.

The approximate dates will be Friday, January 28th to Thursday, February 3rd. It is likely that we shall leave Auckland by plane at 5.30 a.m. on Friday, arriving at Nelson at 7.a.m. where it is hoped that breakfast can be arranged.

Accommodation has been arranged for 40 at a first class hotel in Hokitika. It is anticipated that the total cost will be about \$ 105. A lot of interest has already been shown in this trip, so please be in early with your bookings as soon as you are notified that they are being taken.

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