

SATURDAY, 30th. JAN.

On this our final day at Lincoln, the trip was led by Dr. Godley. The weather was not as hot as it had been but was by no means unpleasant.

We travelled north through Weka Pass, passing large limestone outcrops, some of which had weathered to take fantastic shapes. One resembled a frog and another a giant gecko.

On reaching the farm of a Mr. Hodgens in Pyramid Valley, we were taken to a swampy depression in which were discovered the bones of many moas of more than one species. It is believed that the moas with their long legs became trapped in the mud and ultimately died of starvation.

This farm was also rich in limestone outcrops and those having cameras were soon busy recording for the benefit of others the wonders of nature.

Our return journey was made through Scargill. Sophora prostrata was quite plentiful in some of the paddocks we passed and Dr. Godley took the opportunity of collecting a few specimens for his Division.

Our plane journey home to Auckland was again pleasant and uneventful. We reached Mangere airport in fine, mild weather, found our bus awaiting us and were driven off feeling quite fresh and happy.

Many points of interest will have been overlooked in this report. For this we apologise, but no doubt we will be forgiven for an attempt to keep it down to reasonable size.

In conclusion we must once again extend our heartfelt thanks to the members of the staff of Botany Division of D.S.I.R., without whose help and advice the whole trip would not have been such an unqualified success.

F.M.W.

HUIA.

20th March.

A.D. Palmer.

Our March trip was to the Huia area. We left the bus at the foot of the newly constructed earth dam and started out by climbing the dam face. This must have been one of the noisiest starts to an outing ever, as a result of the heavy earthmoving equipment that was being driven around and about us at seemingly breakneck speeds. Having safely negotiated this hazard we stopped at a point overlooking the area to the rear of the dam, whilst our leader, Mr. Mead, explained the workings to us. He told us that the flooding of the area was due to begin in April and would take from 3 to 6 months to complete.

We walked on up the metal road, through tall tea-tree dotted with Dodonaea viscosa, Knightsia excelsa, young kauri, rimu, Corynocarpus laevigatus, Aristotelia serrata, Myrsine australis, Pittosporum tenuifolium, Geniostoma ligustrifolium, Dysoxylum spectabile, Olearia rani, Podocarpus totara etc.

At one point higher up the track we passed the old site of a crusher which had been used for crushing metal and was powered by water from the pipeline which we had been following.

We turned off onto Christie's Track, through fairly dense bush, dropped down to a stream which was crossed with much hilarity but no casualties more serious than a few wet feet, then climbed slowly again on the other side, keeping the stream on our left. The streamside was very attractively clothed with ferns and much Elatostema rugosum, a lover of damp shady places, particularly stream-sides; sometimes known as the New Zealand begonia although it is in fact a member of the nettle family, Urticaceae. There is only one New Zealand species and this is endemic. I noticed one or two plants of Leptopteris hymenophylloides and much Asplenium bulbiferum; also a magnificent kahikatea, so laden with berry it looked as though it was clothed in red flowers

Twice we saw saplings of pigeonwood, Hedycarya arborea, with their leaves in whorls of three instead of the usual pairs of opposite leaves, (a variation noted by Mr. Mead in an article in the Newsletter of March 1968). In one case the variation occurred on one branch only of a stem that had branched near the base. A rata, Metrosideros robusta, was noted which, from the straightness and even girth of its trunk, looked as though it had grown up from the ground, instead of the usual manner of starting as an epiphyte and sending down aerial roots to the ground which eventually join together and swallow the host plant.

We had our lunch on the side of the spur we were to climb afterwards (no track) to see the highlight of our trip - Dacrydium kirkii. This is a very local tree and the only other stand of it in the Waitakeres is at the University Reserve, Kelly's Rd., Oratia. This is more or less the southern limit of the species. We soon came upon some small specimens with only juvenile leaves and most attractive they were too. The large specimens were found on the top of the ridge and these carried both juvenile and adult foliage. The long, linear juvenile leaves are strikingly different from the small scale-like leaves of the adult and the transition is very abrupt, often occurring on the same branch. A large mass of Dendrobium cunninghamii, which had obviously flowered profusely this season, was epiphytic on a Dacrydium, together with Griselinia lucida.

On our way down to the track again, we noted a fairly large specimen of Libocedrus plumosa, Pittosporum ellipticum, Coprosma arborea identifiable by the distinctive pinkish colouration of the underside of the leaf, Freycinettia banksii in fruit and Litsea calicaris.

Returning to the bus, we diverted from the main track at one point to see an area containing several rather fine specimens of Schizaea dichotoma.

So ended an excellent outing, well enjoyed by a larger than usual turn-out taking advantage of the last opportunity to visit this area. We were as always ably led by Mr. Mead, to whom a vote of thanks was proposed by Mr. Lediard and carried by acclamation.