

KAREKARE.17th. March.Miss. M. Crookes.

Our trip to Karekare was made under ideal conditions. The weather was sunny and mild and under the able leadership of Arthur Mead we managed to see a satisfying amount of coastal vegetation.

First we went through the Happy Valley, along the south side of the bay. Here we were astonished to find kaihua, Parsonsia heterophylla, in some cases in full flower though normally it should have finished that activity by the end of April. That odd little member of the dock family, Muehlenbeckia complexa, whose tangled stems form such pleasant bushes to rest in usually finishes its flowering and fruiting by about the end of February ( though Allan admits this may go on till June ), was energetically producing its intriguing little fruits which consist of a little glossy black "nut" standing on the succulent white floral envelope.

There used once to be a house along the Happy Valley and now Arum lilies have spread and multiplied extensively about the consolidated dunes. Interlopers certainly, but a refreshing contrast to their companions the inkweed, Phytolacca octandra, and the boxthorn, Lycium horridum, which, alas, also find consolidated sandhills much to their liking.

We wandered across the sand dunes past the Watchman and then Mr. Mead gave a short talk. He drew attention to the two sand binders, the pingao, Desmoschoenus spiralis, and the silvery sand grass, Spinifex hirsutus, whose pale leaves contrast so with the orange coloured ones of the pingao. Mr. Mead, who has observed this area for years, pointed out how readily the former plant re-established itself once the cattle were barred from the dunes. He also showed us the male and female inflorescences of Spinifex, which unlike the hermaphrodite pingao has its male and female flowers on separate plants. The big seed head with its many seeds that romps and bowls along the beach during summer was now past its best and in the process of settling down into a somewhat sodden aggregation. The introduced marram grass was also present but although Ammophila arenaria is no better a sand binder than our native ones, it appears to be easier to establish hence it is widely used. Its narrow seed heads readily distinguish it.

On rocky outgrowths on the cliff were found distinctive forms of the shore asplenium, called by David Knowlton the "West Coast variety" of the hanging spleenwort, Asplenium flaccidum. No one could confuse the long drooping forest plant with this stiff little upright form. Speaking of the plant, I pointed out that though it seemed very similar to shore forms found in the Hauraki Gulf and on Waiheke Island, microscopic examination showed it to be quite distinct. Among other things these forms have quite distinctive scales.

While making our way back to the picnic area, Mrs. Tonkin directed my attention to a plant of Ipomoea palmata. I was greatly surprised, as this beautiful native convolvulus is an inhabitant of the far north and the Three Kings Islands and is widespread in tropical and subtropical regions. One does not look for it south of about Hokianga. Why so far south? Mrs Tonkin ( who lives at Karekare ) told me she had also seen it at the north end of Piha. I was greatly puzzled as to why

the plant had wandered so far south. The problem, however, was solved when Miss Dingley told me that Betty Molesworth ( our first secretary ) had given her father some cuttings to plant in his garden at Piha. There it thrrove exceedingly and presumably its seeds have established themselves elsewhere. It will be interesting to learn just how far south this sturdy plant will go. It is hoped that members will keep their eyes open for it along the coast. Look for a slender, smooth liane or scrambling herb, with a leaf blade up to about three and a quarter inches and divided almost to the base. The flowers are quite lovely, a convolvulus like flower in pale purple with a darker throat. So good hunting!

After lunch we went to the waterfall and then wandered up Taraire track as far as La Trobe track and then on down to the beach once more. Above the waterfall and along the track we found some very fine specimens of Pteris comans, a species never found far from the coast and distinguished by its netted veins. Pteris saxatilis was also fairly common, and a few specimens of P. macilentata. Along the lower Taraire track were some fine plants of Asplenium bulbiferum var. laxum. This very handsome variety replaces the species near the coast. On the lower La Trobe track was an area rich in masses of A. lamprophyllum. The dainty little Hooker's spleenwort, A. hookerianum, also grows in the vicinity, although we did not come across it. As regards orchids, the only one we saw flowering was a small greenhood, Pterostylis brumalis. The species P. trullifolia has undergone considerable revision in Vol. 2 of the Flora and as the species are common about Auckland, perhaps a word would be in order. Brumalis means "winter flowering", very appropriate since it flowers from April to August. The type specimen of P. brumalis is from Laingholm and was deposited by E.D.Hatch in the Herbarium of Botany Division, Christchurch. He called it P. trullifolia var. rubella. P. trullifolia was originally P. rubella ( Col. ). Hatch regarded it as a variety of trullifolia hence named it P. trullifolia var. rubella. Cheeseman had previously called it P. trullifolia var. gracilis. Our third species P. alobula we previously knew as P. trullifolia var. alobula Hatch, and was described by him in the Transactions of the R.S.N.Z. in 1949.

It all sounds very complicated, but if one takes note of spotting points it is really quite simple.

P. brumalis L.B. Moore. Flowers from April to August. Spotting point, stem often reddish. Stem leaves mostly without stalks. This species probably grows to a little south of Auckland, but it behoves members to look out for new records.

P. alobula (Hatch) L.B. Moore. You can spot this at once since it lacks a lobe where the lateral sepals - the ones with "horns" - meet. The lower stem leaves are stalked and the lip has a narrow truncate tip. It flowers on into the spring and can still be found in October.

P. trullifolia Hook.f. is very easy to spot. In the little rosette of leaves at the base of the stem, the veins are well marked, so the leaf is described as "rugose" ( wrinkled ). It is the latest flowering of our three, running on from June to October.

There are of course various other differences distinguishing

these three species, but I have avoided detail and these three spotting points are easy to remember.

Of the trees along our route, we noted a number of tawapou, Planchonella novo-zelandica. One beautiful big red berry was found - doubtless there were many out of reach. The route is also an excellent place for noting various Pseudopanax hybrids, that come in a variety of shapes and sizes.

I am often not attracted by variegated plants, but I must say I was delighted by a beautiful variegated leaf of Clematis paniculata brought to my notice by Mr Palmer. In this plant the leaf veins were outlined in yellow, while the rest of the leaf remained dark green. The effect was most attractive.

Our meeting closed with a hearty vote of thanks to Mr Mead, for his planning of the excursion and his leadership.

WAIWERA AND WENDERHOLM.

18th. September.

L.W. Butler.

Our day's outing was to a patch of bush on the hill south of Waiwera and then to the Wenderholm Reserve, both of which several of us have visited more than once. The Waiwera bush is interesting. It is here that the broad dark green leaved tawa is found, so different from the thin leaved, yellowish form which is also here. There were also a large leaved Paratrophis, Alseuosmia macrophylla in flower, a few Pterostylis banksii and some juvenile Pterostylis trullifolia. I saw one Dendrobium cunninghamii.

We went down to the Waiwera beach and there had lunch, which had a great attraction for the seagulls. From there a short trip took us to the Wenderholm Reserve. We entered a track from the main road and wandered slowly up hill. Since the cattle have been kept out now for some time, it is surprising how much regeneration there has been during the last few years. We found Melicope ternata and M. simplex along with their hybrid in flower, some more broad leaved tawa and more large leaved Paratrophis, some whau, Entel a arborescens, in flower and coming down the other side towards the beach, some well grown tawapou, Planchonella novo-zelandica.

We rejoined the bus about 3.p.m. and after passing a vote of thanks to Mr Warren our leader, returned home after a most enjoyable day.