

FIELD TRIP TO LOGUES BUSH, WELLSFORD
20 October 1984

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Our day at Logues Bush turned out to be one of those gems - a really enjoyable botanical experience. It was Labour weekend Saturday so that must account for the low attendance - 12, plus our four guides. (And I'm sorry to report we didn't really miss the rest of you at all! We decided that the size of the party was just right. Better anyway than the 200 who turned up for the first guided tour earlier this year.)

Logues Bush, 40 ha (100 acres) was bought from the Logue family in February this year by the local Council, Lands & Survey Department and by Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society through public subscription. The official opening of the reserve is to be in February 1985 by which time the Lands & Survey Department will have built a footbridge over the stream. At the moment the only access, if you want to keep dry, is through a farmer's paddock (after he has moved the Jersey bull) and across a very decrepit swing bridge. One of our leaders thought he'd take his chances and jump across at a narrow spot but he got wet feet and legs for being so intrepid.

A word about our guides: four members of Mid-North Branch of Royal Forest & Bird Protection Society - Dr Lucy Moore (who is a member of A.B.S. as well), Frank Hudson, Marc Dill and Margaret Young. They are all very knowledgeable about the plants in the bush, and collectively had the sharpest botanical eyes I'd encountered. The rest of us just needed to follow along and have everything of interest (and there was much) pointed out to us.

The bush was milled for kauri over 100 years ago. At that time nothing else was taken and there hasn't been any timber extracted since. There are lots of large totara, both Podocarpus totara and P. hallii (for the benefit of those of us who were uncertain of the difference, we came upon "twins", one of each species). There were also large rimu, kahikatea, matai and kawaka (Libocedrus plumosa). Not so large but interesting all the same were a couple of Nestegis cunninghamii (black maire).

Among the smaller plants of special interest was Alseuosmia banksii, a smaller plant than the more familiar A. macrophylla, and with a smaller, very variable leaf. It was just past its flowering, but one of our guides found one small yellow flower for us to photograph and sniff at, before it fell off from shock at all the attention. A. macrophylla also grows in the reserve though not so abundantly. There were a large number of small-leaved shrubs throughout the reserve, a number of them not particularly familiar to Aucklanders, e.g. Melicope simplex, Coprosma rotundifolia, Melicytus micranthus, Paratrophis microphylla, Pennantia corymbosa.

The fern spotter found Asplenium bulbiferum var. gracillimum, with its beautiful finely divided frond; A. hookerianum; Adiantum aethiopicum; Athyrium japonicum and A. australe growing within a foot of each other; Lastreopsis glabella. These were all down on the stream flat, where they presumably have to cope with occasional floods, as well as the Tradescantia (wandering jew) which unfortunately flourishes there.

I've saved the best for last: about a dozen plants of Pseudowintera axillaris (horopito) were discovered on the flood flat by the stream, a couple of them still in flower. And when guide Margaret stopped to look at some Bulbophyllum pygmaeum low on the trunk of a kauri, she spied immediately above it a nice colony of B. tuberculatum. That caused great excitement of course.

Altogether, a satisfying day.