

tuft on either side is paler yellow and fully in view. This is T. hatchii which for a long time was confused with other species. It received its name only in 1968, as a tribute to Mr E.D. Hatch of Auckland who has grown and written about New Zealand orchids for almost 25 years.

At the top of this first slope you should bear to the left above the bush and presently you will be approaching a shallow valley with a boundary fence running through it. This is a good place to see a fourth species of Thelymitra which likes damp peaty ground. This T. pulchella lives up to its name in being a little beauty, though not necessarily the prettiest of all. The flowers are again in subtle shades between pink and blue but this time marked with stronger blue stripes. The column is usually rich dark red, only slightly hooded, and the hair tuft on each side is represented by a few filaments of golden yellow, or by reddish or white teeth on an irregular little flap or lobe.

You may find other kinds of Thelymitra in this general area, perhaps a different species with striped flowers, or one with blue spots on the petals. Remember to look at the details of the column, and to keep a note of the colours of the various parts. In the 75 acres of View Hill Reserve, stretching south west of the boundary fence, 15 species of orchids have been recorded, many of them in forest. The only other one to be mentioned here is a Pterostylis or greenhood that can easily be seen on this grassland walk.

A high rounded windy hilltop lies somewhat to the north of the T.pulchella place and in a flatish depression on its near slopes scrub is burnt off from time to time. Here plants of Pterostylis montana can be found in some numbers in a good season. The smallest are in the most open places and stand only two inches high at flowering, their leaves a sickly yellowish colour, but where grass grows longer in the protection of a shrub a fine green plant may be six inches tall. The flowers are much smaller than those of the more familiar P. banksii and of a plump chubby shape without any elongated tips.

Having paid your respects to these small but aristocratic flowers, and perhaps photographed them, you will find the way back to your car short and easy, and you should return empty-handed.

ACACIAS NEAR BURNHAM

by C.W.H. Dunn

The recent interest in dyes from plants reminded me of the efforts of my grandfather John Dunn during the eighteen-seventies at Burnham. He bought land half a mile West of Dunns Crossing on the main South Railway Line at Weedons.

John Dunn applied for this crossing to be formed as it shortened the journey to his cousins, Days of Days road in Springston, by way of what is now known as Dunns Crossing Road.

"The Plains" as the area was called was very bare and dry. John Dunn ploughed his paddocks and sowed the seed of wattle (Acacia). His aim was to grow a forest of trees which would produce bark, then in demand for dyeing.

As a Porlock man he must have had in mind the Exmoor team of men who collected oak bark for dyeing.

He hoped to do the same with wattle bark. While the plants grew he spent some of his time building fences. This was done by digging sods in squares and stacking them between the ditches from which the sods were taken. Gorse seed was then sown on the ridges to form a live fence. Gorse plants could have been used also. The ditches gave the fence the appearance of extra height. John Dunn was a stonemason and would find this an easy employment as he contracted the art by the chain.

There are several plantations of wattle to be found around Burnham so it may be assumed that others were doing the same. Before the trees came to maturity, synthetic dyes were on the market which meant there was no market for wattle bark. John Dunn then left the district and settled on a run opposite Kairakei on the South bank of the Waimakariri now identified as Dunns Bank.

FLORA AND VEGETATION OF KAITORETE (ELLESMERE) SPIT

by Colin Burrows

The sere, brown, low-lying Spit south of Lake Ellesmere does not look a very promising place for botany but it is a most interesting area when one gets to grips with it. I will restrict this article to the dunes, sandy flats and grass-covered gravel flats south of Birdlings Flat not including the lake shore and shingle beach ridges. The geological and cultural history of the area is long and complex and, since it has some bearing on the botany, may be mentioned briefly. During periods of rise and fall of sea level between about 6000 and 2000 years ago the Spit was formed, both by marine and, more recently, lake wave action. Since then there has been some marine erosion at the southern end and progradation at the northern end. The dune area has probably only been in existence for two thousand years or more. Maori eyes probably saw a Spit little different superficially from what it is now. Silver tussock (Poa laevis, formerly P.caespitosa) would have been the main plant probably with Notodanthonia unarede, but scrub areas with Muehlenbeckia complexa, bracken, and matagouri prominent would have been present especially on older dunes and pingao (Desmoschoenus spiralis) the main plant on the young dunes. The Spit was an important route for the Maori and there are numerous old oven sites present. No doubt the Maori burned the vegetation and this may have affected some scrub areas.

From about 1845 European settlers began to take up large grazing runs for cattle and sheep on the Spit and this is still the present