

PERIODICAL EXCHANGES

Publications have been received during the year from the New York Botanical Garden and the New South Wales Natural Herbarium of Sydney. These have been placed in the library and may be borrowed by members.

Arrangements have been made to exchange this Society's Journal with the Transactions of the Botanical Society of Edinburgh.

PLANT SPECIMENS COLLECTED FOR THE CANTERBURY UNIVERSITY

HERBARIUM FROM THE CHATHAM ISLANDS IN MARCH 1974

Pauline Jenkins

Ten days spent in the Chatham Islands in March 1974 enabled a collection of 67 specimens to be made for the herbarium of Canterbury University. These have been identified by those with botanical knowledge and I, with no such knowledge, have been requested to give some background about the localities from which the specimens were collected. The collection is far from representative of all plants present and was made just when time and weather permitted.

All specimens were obtained from the main island as during the time we were there a southerly gale made it impossible to travel by fishing boat to other islands which it had been planned to visit. However most parts of the main island were visited by landrover. A Lands and Survey map was used, NZMS 240.

Specimens numbers 1 - 9 collected on March 12 were from just above high tide mark on the western side of the Rangikapua point, Map ref: 520W 530S. Many parts of the island have sandhills edging the beaches and these tend to be wind blown and to erode. Ammophila arenaria, specimen number 7 it would appear has been used to bind the sand. (However in parts of the island this has not been very successful and human skeletons have become exposed and our party found in such a wind blow later in the trip some

eleven perforated white pointer sharks teeth which are a typical Moriori ornament). Specimen number 8 Myosotidium hortensia, Chatham Island for-get-me-not though supposedly abundant in the past was found in only this spot in any profusion. Specimen number 5 Senecio elegans is not recorded as occurring in the Chatham Island by E.A. Madden and A.J. Healy in 1959.

Specimens - numbers 10 and 11 - were obtained on March 12 from the sandhills just west of the Kaingaroa homestead. Map ref: 520W 530S. Number 11 Plagianthus betulinus, ribbonwood, was a single tree in a patch of kopi bush and there are no other trees known in that part of the island. Corynocarpus laevigatus is known as kopi not karaka in the Chatham Islands where it forms many stands particularly on the lea side of sandhills. These stands of kopi are showing marked signs of the effects of browsing cattle and wind damage. It is in such patches of kopi that trees are found with Moriori carvings on the boles which are known as Dendroglyohs.

On March 13th specimens numbers 12 - 20 were collected near the road along the north coast between Te Whanga and the coast. Map ref: 500W 530S. Number 18 Cyathodes robusta, number 19 Dracophyllum paludosum and number 20 Dracophyllum arboreum were collected from an area where it is known that the peat has a high wax content. During investigations into the establishment of a wax industry based on Chatham Island peat it was suggested that the peat with a high wax content was formed from dracophyllum. Another plant collected that day - number 12 - Solanum aviculare has an economic potential and it is reputed to be used industriously in Hungary. Specimens numbers 12 - 15 were growing in a swampy area between coastal sandhills and peat.

Specimens numbers 21 - 33 were collected on March 14th round Okawa point. Map ref: 520W 525S. Number 21 Olearia chathamica, known locally as an aster was on a rocky face above the sea. Numbers 22 - 24 and 32 - 33 were on sandy soil near the high tide mark while numbers 25 - 31 were on peat near the shore.

On March 15th on a very long day, only one specimen was collected. It was from near the Waihi homestead. Map ref: 470W 525S. Specimen number 34 Corynocarpus laevigatus was from a kopi tree whose foliage was much larger than other kopi growing all round and it was considered by the locals to be a different specie.

On March 16th specimens were collected from three different map squares. Specimens numbers 35 - 37 between Hapupu airstrip and the Te Whanga ford, Map ref: 510W 520S. Specimens numbers 38 - 43 at the west end of the ford across Te Whanga on the shore

of the lagoon which would be quite frequently covered with water. Map ref: 500W 520S. Specimen number 44 Sophora microphylla Kowhai was found on limestone bluffs near Motuhou Point. Map ref: 485W 500S. Specimen number 35 still unidentified is a prevalent shrub to be found in kopi bush and was from near the Hapupu airstrip. Specimen number 36 still unidentified and specimen number 35 Gentiana chathamica were found on bracken covered peat moor.

Specimens numbers 45 - 48, which were collected on March 17th all came from the rocky coast in the Whakuru area. Map ref: 525W 530S. This N.E. tip of the island is particularly interesting as phormium tenax has been used extensively as shelter belts on the Pukerakei farm and the pastures have flourished when sheltered from the heavy winds which occur on this island. Also a coastal area has been fenced off from stock which gives shelter and helps regeneration preventing erosion.

March 18th was a cold wet day spent on the south coast in bush between Tuku a tamatea River and Cape L'Eveque (The Horns). Map ref: 485W, 485 and 490S. The rainfall on this coast is much higher than in other parts of the island and apart from a coastal strip which has been cultivated it is all in bush. Specimens numbers 49 - 56 were collected in this area. The bush is mainly Dracophyllum with many epiphites. There were quite large seedlings of big trees growing in the debris in the base of punga fronds. We saw wild cattle, sheep and pig and saw evidence of the damage they and opossums are causing in the bush.

On March 19th and 20th the South East gale caused rollers greater than usual and quite spectacular and the weather was even worse than the bad days before. March 19th only one specimen was collected on a sandhill in an exposed place near Matarakau Point. Map ref: 510W 530S. This was specimen number 57 Glaucium flavum, known locally as Baltic Poppy and said to have been imported by early whalers. Specimens numbers 58 - 64 were collected from the north side of the outlet of Te Whanga on March 20th. The outlet at present lies to the north of the area indicated on the map. However the specimens would be from Map ref: 505W 505S or possibly 505W 510S.

On March 21st specimens numbers 65 - 67 were collected in the sandhills near Lake Pateriki. Map ref: 515W 530S. There was evidence of the sea having broken into this lake in the past few days and an adze was picked up on the beach.

To me the Chatham Islands landscape appeared quite unlike the mainland of New Zealand. The wide rolling bracken moors, the stands of kopi, which are quite inspiring, and the endless empty

beaches and rocky headlands together with appalling man made litter were all notable. However there is an absence of beech bush where one would expect it and manuka is not noticeable. The original plant cover has obviously been modified in many ways and with the possible drainage of the lagoon and the deterioration of the kopi bush this modification may be greatly accelerated.

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