

Dacrydium cupressinum - Bush remnants on the high plains at Coopers Creek. Three trees of rimu, probably relics of the ancient beech-conifer forest known as Harewood Forest, still survive in small patches of private bush and actually grow on the Canterbury Plains. The largest is almost 90 cm in diameter and clearly pre-European; the other two are about 30 cm in diameter.

Libocedrus bidwillii - Bush remnant of Hall's totara near trig KK, Western Valley Road, Port Levy. A healthy adult tree about 12 m tall and 84 cm in diameter, noted by Mr. Jock Bulman, Noxious Weeds Inspector, Little River. As far as we know this is the only live adult cedar left on Banks Peninsula, all others having died in the 1950s and 1960s (Kelly, 1972). There are, however, many seedlings and saplings of cedar on most of its former sites especially in the Armstrong Reserve. Mr. Bulman's sketch of the cedar is included below so that it might inspire others to become keen observers of the Canterbury flora.



Mountain Cedar

Approx: 2'6" diameter
40' high
20' clean trunk

Footnote: The communities in which most of the species listed above may be found are currently being investigated for their reserve potential.

Reference

Kelly, G.C. 1972: "Scenic Reserves of Canterbury". Department of Lands and Survey, Wellington, 390 pp.

'THE OLD MAN RANGE'

Ross Elder

Swinging high on the lift platform of a tractor, and seated in comfort on a couch, we turned off the Roxburgh-Alexandra highway, down across Chasm Creek and up the ridge behind the Shingle Creek Tavern. We were on a farm-inspection and general sight-seeing trip to the top of the Old Man Range.

At the start the vegetation was mainly silver-tussock with a good cover of pasture grasses and clover, while occasionally white or blue flowers of Wahlenbergia albomarginata or the orange drupes of Cyathodes fraseri showed amongst the grass. Matagowries were dotted about near the road but as we progressed higher they were replaced by spaniards. At 1000 m the predominant plant was snow tussock, larger and more rank in its growth habit than the silver, and with a mat of dead foliage surrounding each plant. Little other growth was apparent. Somewhere about 1100 m it was replaced by the smaller blue tussock. A much finer species, the individual plants spaced much further apart, with intervening ground well clad with grasses and low growing herbs.

The track we followed serves as an access route to the 'Last Chance' race, and had been recently graded. In the turned over soil on either side grew masses of Neopaxia (Claytonia) australasica in full flower and whose sweet scent, carried by the wind, could be smelt over a chain away.

Above about 1500 m the vegetation was mainly low-growing cushion and sprawling mat plants set off by large rock outcrops variously coloured by patches of lichens. The tops are reached at about 1500 m and present a magnificent view of the surrounding country. Eastward lies Lake Roxburgh, to the West, through a gap in the Garvie Mountains, part of the Remarkables near Queenstown are visible. Looking North the tops slope gently up to Hyde Rock, 1672 m, and seven to eight kilometres further on, the Obelisk, 1785 m, the highest point of the range.

Noticeable, is a row of low stone cairns, spaced a chain apart, which were erected in the early 1880's, at \$2.00 each, as guides to miners working in the Campbells on the Waikaia side of the range. The track started at Gorge Creek, where the 'Miners' Monument' now stands. The timber poles which stood upright in the cairns have long since disappeared.