

# Field Trips

DEC. 3: WHAKANUI TRACK

Leader: Mr. I. A. McNEUR

Fourteen people, two of whom had camped by the stream the night before, went on this trip to the Orongorongos, east of Home-dale. The party left the track where it begins to wind up a steep gorse-covered hillside and continued up the valley straight into some fine bush. After a while they left the stream and climbed a spur. A few hundred feet up there was a sudden change from dense bush to open beech forest. Under the trees, almost entirely hard beech (*Nothofagus truncata*), the ground was covered with kidney fern, filmy ferns and autumn earina; also growing terrestrially were *Tmesipteris*, *Dendrobium* and *Earina mucronata*. Scrambling over the ground were the rats *Metrosideros scandens* and *M. perforata*. The shrubs *Leucopogon fascicularis* and *Cyathodes acerosa* were common and in places there were stands of beech saplings. Everywhere there were seedlings of hard beech following the heavy seed year. After climbing about 1000 feet up the ridge the party returned to the stream and hurriedly packed up as mist settled on the tops and rain began to fall.

A.P.D.

JAN. 14: LAKE KOHANGAPIRIPIRI

Leader: Miss R. MASON

Six people came on the trip to Lake Kohangapiripiri. The day was unpromising and blustery to start with but turned out better than expected. The lake lies at the mouth of a valley behind Pencarrow Head and is separated from the sea by a shingle bank to which it owes its formation. It has an outlet to the sea which is often closed; it is slightly saline. A dark green belt of the tall sedge *Scirpus lacustris* grows in the water almost all around the lagoon except on the seaward side.

At the mouth of a little valley running into the south-west end there is a swampy patch. Raupo (*Typha angustifolia*) growing here had young flowers still showing the bracts in the male inflorescence. *Rumex conglomeratus*, *Polygonum serrulatum*, *Isolepis* spp., *Ranunculus rivularis*, and a few plants of *R. macropus* were growing here. *Glossostigma elatinooides* was in flower and we amused ourselves by watching the quick response of its stigma to touch.

The water fern, *Azolla filiculoides* var. *rubra*, and duckweed (*Lemna minor*) floated in the watery places. The tiny watermeal, *Wolffia arrhiza*, was also here. This is an extension of its known occurrence.

In the lake itself there was a dense growth of two grassy water plants; *Lepilaena bilocularis*, light green with small delicate flowers

of a single stamen and of a membranous perianth and four carpels with feathery styles; and *Ruppia spiralis* (sometimes called horse's mane weed), darker green, with a small inflorescence floating on the end of a long white fine stalk which retracts in a spiral when the flower has been fertilised. Some of the curious fruits of *R. spiralis* were seen. Each flower gives rise to several hard green fruitlets, which become black later, on the end of stalks about an inch long. We noticed many small conspicuous orange bodies on clear green, branched plants. They were the fructifications of two charophytes, members of a rather peculiar branch of the green algae. *Potamogeton cheesemani* occurs almost throughout the lake. In the shallow water at the edge *Limosella lineata* was growing.

We had a brief look at the shingle bank. The most conspicuous plants are silver grey hummocks of *Raoulia australis* but a good number of fairly bright green hummocks proved to be an unnamed species of *Pimelea*, which occurs on the Wellington coast.

Lake Kohangapiripiri is a lake within reasonable reach of Wellington, an hour and a half to two hours' easy walk, and it is a good place to see interesting water plants. There is a swamp at its head which we did not have time to explore.

R. M.

FEB. 4: KAPAKAPANUI (3615 feet)      Leader: Mr. A. P. DRUCE

A party of twelve travelled by car through Reikorangi to the base of Kapakapanui and spent a long day climbing a leading ridge to the trig and returning by the same route. The belts of vegetation usual on the western sides of this part of the Tararua Range were passed through, although on the spur itself there was still much modification following the damage caused by the great storm of February 1936. For instance near the foot of the spur at 700-800 feet altitude where the forest had been severely wind-damaged and the floor was exposed to full light, large patches of *Libertia ixioides* had taken charge to the exclusion of most other plants. Over broken logs *Metrosideros scandens*, with the first flowers showing, scrambled in profusion. It was pleasing to note scattered rimu seedlings and saplings in this jumble of vegetation.

Proceeding up the spur the northern rata and rimu were the dominant large trees up to 1,500 or 1,600 feet altitude with many tawa seedlings, saplings and adult trees. Three good specimens of matai were seen where the ridge flattened out for a short way. About 100 feet higher we came across the first large Hall's totara after having already passed some seedlings. Almost immediately after that we entered the *Nothofagus menziesii*, *N. fusca* belt which is so different from the forest below it. In this belt silver beech seedlings from the 1949 germination were present everywhere. A previous

seeding of this species and of red beech had filled an old wind-throw or burn with a dense stand of saplings.

A.L.P.

### On the Summit

At about 3200 feet we came out into the burnt area and pushed our way through a dense growth of tall bush-tussock (*Danthonia cunninghamii*). Although this tussock does not occur naturally in the open, it grows freely in several places in the Tararuas and Rimutakas (e.g., Mt. Climie) that have previously supported forest. It is not known how long ago the silver beech on Kapakapanui was burnt, except that it was prior to 1912; surveyors are thought to have been responsible for they needed an unobstructed view to neighbouring peaks. In the tussock *Astelia cockaynei* was plentiful and there was quite a bit of leatherwood (*Olearia colensoi*) in places. No regeneration of silver beech was observed on the burnt area. On the very top where the tussock was not so thick a number of mountain plants had come in—*Gautheria depressa*, *Pentachondra pumila*, comb-sedge (*Oreobolus pectinatus*) and gentians among the more conspicuous.

There was not much time to spare but some of us had a quick look at the bog in the shallow depression to the east of the summit. The bog lies in an area of snow-tussock (*Danthonia flavescens*) surrounded by leatherwood scrub, and for its size supports quite a rich flora. As the occurrence of a natural area of snow-tussock and bog on Kapakapanui is of considerable interest a complete list of species is appended. The bog is beginning to erode away at the lower end and, as has happened already on parts of Bull Mound, it may well disappear in a few decades leaving only the characteristically leached underlying rock to tell of its former existence.

A.P.D.

### List of Bog and Tussock Plants

<i>Danthonia flavescens</i> (broad-leaved variety)	<i>Deyeuxia setifolia</i>
<i>D. gracilis nigricans</i>	<i>Agrostis perennans</i>
<i>Carpha alpina</i>	<i>Schoenus pauciflorus</i>
<i>Drosera stenopetala</i>	<i>Ranunculus geraniifolius</i>
<i>Celmisia spectabilis</i>	<i>Drapetes dieffenbachii</i>
<i>Pentachondra pumila</i>	<i>Astelia linearis</i>
<i>Cyathodes empetrifolia</i>	<i>Oreobolus pectinatus</i>
<i>Abotanella pusilla</i>	<i>Aporostylis bifolia</i>
<i>A. caespitosa</i>	<i>Isolepis aucklandica</i>
<i>Juncus antarcticus</i>	<i>Epilobium pernitens</i>
<i>J. novae-zealandiae</i>	<i>Gentiana</i> sp.
<i>Caltha novae-zealandiae</i>	<i>Isolepis</i> sp.
<i>Suttonia nummularia</i>	