

Folk wishing to go back to the Wilton Bush Road (Solander) entrance, follow Cunningham Path, named after Allan Cunningham of Sydney Botanical Gardens who, with help from his brother, did a great deal of intensive collection in North Auckland from 1826 to 1838. This path runs north, parallel with Wilton Road, passing the Interpretive Centre to the northernmost exit to that road where it meets the Richard d'Urville Path. The latter is downhill, parallel with the northeast reserve boundary, and emerges at Solander entrance: it commemorates Richard and d'Urville, two of the group of French collectors and botanists during the period 1824 to 1842. d'Urville's published work in 1832 on the New Zealand flora occupies an important niche in New Zealand botany. Linking Cunningham Path with the one commemorating the French group has the logic of recognition by him of Richard's work which he included in material prepared for publication. Botanical names do, of course, provide abundant evidence of the work by Raoul and Lesson, as well as those already mentioned.

FINAL NOTE

It may be possible during the preparation of a management plan for Otari to have some of the Cockayne proposals resurrected, perhaps to coincide with the 60th anniversary of the publication by the WCC of "The Scheme" bearing his name. Enough remains of the "Kauri Forest" and the "New Zealand Conifers" to warrant further attention to them without depreciating the very attractive planting of the latter in a garden setting by the Interpretive Centre. In the forest setting on Flax Clearing Spur the time would be appropriate for inter-planting in line with the Cockayne Scheme.

Himalayan Trek

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At 7am on 7th February 1972, twenty-three 'botsocers' gathered at Wellington Airport for a seven weeks' overseas holiday which embraced a few days' sightseeing in Singapore and Bangkok, 25 days trekking in the Annapurna-Dhaulagiri region of the Himalayas, more sightseeing in Kathmandu, a visit to the Taj Mahal in India and a final shopping spree in Hong Kong. We all carried Air New Zealand cabin bags clearly printed on one side on a green background "Wellington Botanical Society Tour 1972". The trip was the culmination of a year's planning during which we decided on the particular area in Nepal we would visit and enrolled sufficient members to ensure we would benefit from the substantial travel concessions offered parties of fifteen or more.

For the 25-day trek we engaged the services of Mountain Travel, Nepal, who provided everything necessary for the trek apart from footwear, clothing and other personal items. We had first class German expedition tents, foam

mattresses, two sleeping bags each (one light), good food and a competent staff of twelve Sherpas, headed by the famous sirdar Pasang Kami. The Sherpas put up the two-person tents, cooked all meals, hired porters to carry all the gear and generally looked after us in every possible way. Before we left Kathmandu, Colonel Roberts, proprietor of Mountain Travel, called at our hotel and talked to us for over an hour on the vegetation, geology and weather patterns of the areas in which we intended to trek. This was indeed a bonus, as almost invariably he left all contacts with trekkers to his office staff.

The trek started at Pokhara at 2500 ft, crossed the 9100 ft Ghorapani Pass to the Kali Gandaki River which we ascended through a deep gorge (with snowy peaks rising to over 26000 ft on either side) to the mountain village of Jhomson. Here we were on the dry, desert-like northern side of the Himalayas near the Tibetan border which, for security reasons, we were not permitted to approach. However we climbed to a camp at 13400 ft and next day made a slow trip to about 16000 ft. At that altitude we realised that a period of acclimatisation would have been necessary had we wished to climb higher. Our return to Pokhara was by the outward route except for two interesting side trips.

Much of the trek was on well-established paths used for centuries by Nepalese porters and traders between India and Tibet. Every now and then we would pass heavily laden pack trains of mules or donkeys or, nearer Tibet, a few yaks. The animals carried loads such as rice or grain from lower altitudes or salt from the Tibetan Plateau. We were never far from the numerous villages on our route and as we walked along the main streets we would see women drying grain or weaving or sewing beside the path, or sometimes on the flat roofs of their houses, where hay and wood are usually stored. Crops such as rice, maize, wheat, barley and millet are grown on narrow terraces on steep hillsides. We sometimes camped on such terraces after a crop had been harvested and before replanting began. On most days the Sherpas would wake us up in the dark before 6am with a small bowl each of warm "washii water" to enable us to have a quick wash, pack up the contents of our tent and have a cuppa and some porridge before setting off about 7am. As there was no advantage in reaching a stopping place before the heavily laden porters, we would just stroll along in parties of two or three photographing the pleasant people of Nepal, their habitations and the magnificent mountain scenery. About 11am we would reach an advance party of our sherpas who had cooked what most of us thought was the most enjoyable meal of the day. Now was the time to sit in the sun, eat an appetizing meal, chat and write up a diary. The night's camp site would be reached between about 3.30 and 4 pm. After a cuppa we would have time to look at the local vegetation or a nearby village or temple before lining up for a hot dinner. Once the sun left the camp site, the temperature dropped steadily and most of us would be in our sleeping bags by about 7pm. During the 25 days we never had to walk in stormy weather. However, one night, we had some rain, and on another night towards the end of the trek, a heavy snowfall, during which we were woken up by hilarious sherpas shaking the snow off our tents before they collapsed on us. Next morning we had breakfast standing up before a roaring fire. We usually tramped in shorts and found our warm winter tramping gear sufficient for the conditions.

On the trek we walked from the wet, forested areas on the southern flanks of the Himalayan chain to the dry, arid regions on the northern side. As Ruth Mason commented, it could be compared to tramping from the West Coast

across the Southern Alps to the driest parts of Central Otago. Incidentally Nepal is about the same shape and size as the South Island of New Zealand. On the fourth day we climbed up to Ghorapani Pass through tall *Rhododendron* trees with an understorey of sweet smelling *Daphne* bushes. There had been a recent snowfall and the *Daphne* flowers looked cute peeping out from under a thick layer of dry powder snow. During the trek we saw Himalayan oaks, pines, firs, cedars (deodara), magnolias, poplar and juniper trees.

Where not under cultivation, the ranges are usually forested between about 7000 ft and 13000 ft. In the more open places, numerous primulas were in flower as also was a small blue gentian, a bright yellow jasmine, saxifrage and some cushion plants etc. The northern regions produced only sparsely scattered vegetation and some spiny plants typical of arid conditions. At intervals along the trail, the locals had planted one or two Banyan or Peepal trees (figs) and shade trees for porters and usually alongside a raised rock platform on which to place their heavy loads. We were too early for most alpine flowers but had we delayed the trek we would have had to put up with summer monsoon clouds which obscure the high peaks and the irritation of blood-sucking leeches which appear in wet weather. As we were on the move almost every day we did not have the time, nor indeed the knowledge, to positively identify many plants and a botanist or horticulturist conversant with Himalayan plants would have been a welcome addition to our party. However as Phil Gardiner of Avenue Nurseries, Levin said before we left New Zealand that while we would enjoy very much looking at the vegetation and magnificent mountain scenery "what would take us to town" would be meeting the friendly people of Nepal and observing how they coped with life in their primitive mountain villages. And so it proved to be.

The 23 members of the party were

Miss Alison Andrews	Mrs Erna Hurst	Mr Stan Muirson
Mrs Minnie Barr	Miss Agnes Hutson	Mrs Enid Powell
Mr Kingsley Brown	Mrs Phyllis Hynes	Mr Ian Powell (Leader)
Mrs Iris Coulter	Miss Heather Jardine	Mrs Margaret Robertson
Mr Jack Coulter	Mr Tom McArthur	Mr Harold Stimpson
Mr Frank Fitzgerald	Mr Gilbert Mabin	Mr Arthur Thompson
Mrs Iris Gittings	Miss Ruth Mason	Mrs Doris Thompson
Mr Ken Gittings	Dr Isobel Morice	

Pennantia 'Otari Debut'

R H Mole¹

The incidence of just one plant of a species occurring within a sizable bush area is not, in itself, a rare occurrence. For example, it would seem that at least four examples of this phenomenon occur within the 80ha Otari Native Plant Museum, relating to pokaka (*Elaeocarpus hookerianus*), maire tawake

1. Otari Native Plant Museum, Wellington 5.