

BANNOCKBURN CAMP SNIPPETS JANUARY, 1984

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Renewal of friendships and making new ones along with seeing more of the unique plants of the Otago Central range tops these were reason enough for our long journey South. There was also an unsatisfied curiosity about a place carrying that name and being linked with the Nevis in the gold-mining days. Nor were we aghast at the prospect of departure from Wellington Botanical Society traditions to enjoy such 'fleshpots' as 'roofs over', beds, chairs and tables, cooking stoves, hot water in sinks and showers, even a swimming bath. Earlier brief visits to the mountains had given us some inkling of the strange way of alpine native plants, but we started at a disadvantage as far as the adventives of the valleys were concerned. What an interesting reflection of the rich history of the region is presented by these plants that now have an air of permanence almost as much as the mountain top natives. Merging of natives and adventives at the lower altitudes was noted on our first day's outing, on a depleted hillslope above the Lye Bow nursery near Alexandra where woody plants included a small-fruited wild cherry, Prunus, escaped from its role as rootstock, hawthorns, wild irishman, shrubby Coprosma (aff. with C. parviflora), Olearia virgata, briar rose, and gooseberry (ripe and delicious). The site had enough crannies and shadows, and moistness among the rock masses to support five native ferns plus native herbs and lianes such as Rubus and Clematis; away from the rock masses grew the adventive herbs, scabweed, large aciphyllas, and sparse tussock.

On our first morning we stopped just north of Alexandra where wild thyme grows as the main ground cover and has been shown to have commercial value. Seventh form pupils at the secondary school have been looking at aspects of thyme honey production under the guidance of a teacher, who spoke to us about it, before the Clyde Museum director took up the theme of dried thyme for culinary use. We were shown the equipment that had been used in the drying and cleaning of thyme and sage in a marketing venture which failed to survive.

Bert's Epic. Jean and I found ourselves sharing a four-bunk alcove with Bert Brehm visiting botany professor from Portland, Oregon.

It so happens that two friends in Portland with whom we stayed in 1981 also happen to be Bert's friends. The second morning saw the car cavalcade off at a reasonable time bound for the Old Man Range but certain delays at the turn off up Cahill's Road, near Shingle Creek, saw us arriving at the range top carpark close to lunch time. A primary reason for using this route was to give Bert a free rein in his pilgrimage to find a certain hybrid swarm between two local aciphyllas, which might be likened to the 'Newfoundland' and the 'Chihuahua' of that genus, respectively A. scott-thomsonii and A. hectori. Cahill's Road continues beyond the carpark as a rough track leading eventually to Waikaia from whence come trail bike riders, causing annoyance to the farmers and concern to environmentally conscious folk, when the riders seek the thrills to be found in criss-crossing the botanically rich mountain top bogs. Bert set off on foot along the Waikaia track, to return by the appointed time with a tale that should certainly have gone on tape: here's the gist of it. 'I got picked up by one of those trail bikes but we must have taken the wrong fork. So I left him and took to foot again in the direction I thought was right. Rider number two happens along, picks me up, and all is going well until a really lucious mud-hole looms up. The bike didn't quite 'make it'. We parted company and the rider who must have been an observant type said I'd walk to the spot in under the hour. Anyhow along comes number three rider on a really powerful bike and a taste for tackling the biggest and wettest mudholes. He too seemed to know the place I was looking for, and we were going fine when there was an unheralded stop. I tumbled off, wiped the mud from my eyes, and found my pack had landed in the middle of that Aciphylla patch. After that hair-raising series of adventures on the bikes with enough mud-cover to make me a suitable candidate for a New Guinea 'sing sing', it was surely a sight worth coming half round the world to see. Those bike boys also helped me back with my precious swag of treasure'. We had the story from Bert after he had cleaned up back at Bannockburn. One of the tables was devoted to a display of plants showing a range of features belonging to one or the other of the putative parents. Incidentally the dining lecture hall was a facility whose worth was evident not only in providing a suitable venue for the telling of Bert's tale, but also for the invaluable post-mortems on each day's doings.

To return to that first day on the Old Man, some of us took the

route from the carpark to the tundra top, which turned out to be further than expected, while the others went instead to a seepage area and reported enthusiastically on their findings, including species usually associated with higher altitude sites. Close to the carpark Celmisia prorepens provided fresh green patches, without flowers, to contrast with the sparse tussock and C. semicordata subsp. aurigans (= C. coriacea). Uphill we found a good collection of Old Man alpine of which Cotula goynei was outstanding, through a lens its flowers have exquisite colour and form. There was enough variety for me to use up seventeen exposures that afternoon, including the all-too-familiar Old Man feature 'species-unknown' item. An anisotome-type flower provided the answer, A. lanuginosa, when curious grey leaves were seen. Even without getting to the tundra we managed during that afternoon to meet a host of alpine usually found growing at the higher level as well as species not included in the Mark and Bliss list of alpine.

To be able to return to the range for a second fine day among the flowers was a majority wish that came to pass. Arrival by Syme's Road route at the range top is dramatic even without the customary shrieking and blisteringly cold wind sweeping across the tundra, a wind which invites one to hug the ground. Beyond the flat tundra with its black tors of impressive height and jagged profile, appear other flat top ranges with lingering snowbanks.

On the tundra the cushion and mat plants showed similarity in form among a surprisingly large group of unrelated species, sometimes distinguishable by colour. Silvery Raoulia mats merging with yellow-green Phyllacne cushions, and the ubiquitous brown-tinged Dracophyllum muscoides whose exposed, bleached white roots speak of the harsh conditions. Flowers are mostly white and often similar in size and form in different species, but the daisies especially the Raoulia, and the flower-filled Hectorella rosettes are distinctive. Plants with daisy flowers large by tundra standards are Brachycome sinclairii in the furrows and two sub-shrubs Celmisia brevifolia and C. ramulosa, both dark green plants growing on the ridges. In the absence of flowers it is not easy to distinguish C. argentea from C. sessiliflora but the rounded cushions of the latter are an ornamental feature of the tundra periphery. Occasionally a half-heard exclamation indicated sighting of Chionohebe densifolia (Pygmea tetragona) its flowers being much

larger than sister species and with buds pale-lilac; further interest stems from possible confusion with Parahebe trifida.

Around the tors on the 'pavement' is a new assortment of alpines among which are the silver-grey cushions of Myosotis pulvinaris crowned with congregated flowers of exquisite form, and rosettes of bronze-green leaves of Gentiana bellidifolia (amabilis) from which emerge enormous white flowers. They take the individual honours. In the shelter of the tors, eating of lunch may be combined with looking at the small red Acaena saccaticupula, Cotula goyeni and C. pectinata, and another Myosotis aptly M. pygmaea var. minutiflora. In such a habitat Margaret found another inconspicuous Myosotis of uncertain identity and the curious crucifer Pachycladon novae-zelandiae, that I had not seen previously, found room to put down its long taproot.

Seepage areas I have left till last, not because of their inferiority, but rather because the variety of species is too great to encompass. In the luxuriant growth one may distinguish Ranunculus spp. and Caltha novae-zelandiae in abundance, blue-green Acaena leaves contrasting with brownish mosses and Viola flowers, and emergent humps carrying Rao lia. Peripheral areas are a favoured site for sheets of Celmisia viscosa. Photography of the softly moulded mounds and hollows brings out on the screen, a lingering image of colour, form, and detail that is curiously satisfying.

NAME CHANGES

Ross Elder

In Journal 13: 63-65, John Thompson, the then editor, under the title 'Name Changes', listed genera in which name changes had occurred. He obtained his information from Nomina Nova II, 1970-1976: Edgar, E.; Connor, H.E. 1978: N.Z.J. Bot. 9: 103-118, and also listed taxonomic papers appearing in the N.Z. Journal of Botany from 1976-1978. The publication of Nomina Nova III, 1977-1982: Edgar, E.; Connor, H.E. 1983: New Zealand Journal Botany 21: 421-441, has raised the question of name changes again. That changes will occur must be accepted as the very essence of life itself, and the two references above have been given in full to illustrate the way such references were once, and are now, to be shown in the N.Z.J. of Botany - just another change.