

GENTIANA ON BANKS PENINSULA

M.J.A. Simpson

J.B. Armstrong (1880) recorded *Gentiana montana* for Banks Peninsula but Laing (1919) said "almost certainly in error".

It always gives me pleasure to ratify an Armstrong record, so when June Hay of Pigeon Bay casually remarked that "those were the rocks where the gentians grow", an expedition was soon planned to confirm this. In early March of this year therefore, June Hay, Ruth Mason and I followed Camerons Track from the Summit Road to a point below the dyke ridge between Le Bons Bay and Lavericks Bay (S85/95 373291).

On the lower slopes, immediately above the road, bleached and burned tree stumps indicate former forest. Here we noted *Olearia virgata* var. *rugosa*. Above this is a narrow zone of relic subalpine grassland/herbfield. Flowering tussocks of *Chionochloa rigida* overtop smaller grasses and herbs including *Dichelachne crinita*, *Rytidosperma* sp., *Anisotome aromatica*, *Celmisia gracilentia*, *Cyathodes fraseri*, *Helichrysum bellidioides*, *Raculia glabra*, *Senecio lagopus*, and there are scattered shrubby plants of *Dracophyllum acerorum*, *Coprosma* sp., and *Hymenanthera alpina*. *Phormium cookianum* and large clumps of *Earina autumnalis* grow amongst the rocks.

Steeply sloping pavement rock slabs rise from here to form an elevated outcrop on the ridge, c 600m. To the east the dyke wall falls sheer for some 70 m with little vegetation. On the ridge crest, plants of *Leptospermum ericoides* are very dwarfed and windswept.

But sure enough in crevices of the sloping rock slabs and amongst the grasses and herbs below, numerous healthy clumps of gentians in full flower made an attractive sight. Colin Webb tells me they can be placed in *G. serotina*.

Geoff Kelly (1972) and John Thompson (1977) both recorded *G. grisebachii* from Devils Gate reserve. There is too a specimen of *G. grisebachii* collected by T. Kirk, and labelled by him *G. montana*, from Lake Road, Lincoln (WELT 43451 and duplicate CHR 262987). Armstrong's *G. montana* record may have referred to either *G. serotina* or *G. grisebachii* but there is no doubt that gentians are alive and well on Banks Peninsula.

REFERENCES

- Armstrong, J.B. 1880. A short Sketch of the Flora of the Province of Canterbury, with a catalogue of species. T.N.Z.I. 12, 325, 353.
- Kelly, G.C. 1972. Scenic Reserves of Canterbury.
- Laing, R.M. 1919 The vegetation of Banks Peninsula, with a list of species.
- Thompson, John. 1977. Canterbury Botanical Society Journal No 10.

TRAVERSIA BACCHAROIDES

Colin Burrows

Has anyone seen Traversia baccharoides within the boundaries of Arthurs Pass National Park recently? We have some old records (J.B. Armstrong, Poulter Gorge, 1867; J.von Haast, Poulter Gorge, 1868) but none in recent times.

Traversia, a glabrous-leaved daisy shrub, occurs rather locally from the eastern Waimakariri and Hurunui valleys northward into Marlborough and Nelson. Arnold Wall collected it at Mt White in 1919 and I found specimens in the Esk River and Upper Ashley valley in 1957. It may still occur in the Poulter catchment. Several other species reach their southern limits there also. Traversi often grows on rock faces in gorges or at forest margins. Please let me know if you find it in the park.

See page 59 for drawing