

Mt Te Aroha loop – the third part

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On Sunday 17 October 2004, I headed over from Tauranga to join Auckland Botanical Society on the second day of their weekend stay in Te Aroha. I arrived about 9 am and, as planned, the main party had headed up the mountain from the Domain at about 8 am and a second party had headed off to the Tui Mine. I decided to first catch up with the main party and check out some orchid sightings from the previous year, then complete the lower section of the summit loop, from the Domain to the Tui Mine.

I caught up with the tail-enders about near the Bald Spur lookout, supposedly 20 mins up the track. There was no sign of the *Caladenia bartlettii* or the *Pterostylis cardiostigma* I sought around that area but a good flowering of *Corybas macranthus* was evident. I was told that a couple of people had driven round to the Summit Road gate for the climb via the Tui Mine. Nevertheless, I decided to continue with my plans and try to catch up with them, then meet the main party completing the loop.

The track from the Domain was initially through rather open to scattered kanuka (*Kunzea ericoides*) that became much more weedy as the town reservoir was approached. In particular, wild garlic (onion weed, *Allium triquetrum*), herb Robert (*Geranium robertianum*) and honeysuckle (*Lonicera japonicum*) were abundant, as well as wandering jew (*Tradescantia fluminensis*) and all the other common pests of older gardens. The range of weedy herb species sourly tested my knowledge of the adventive flora.

For a short while I became entangled with a maze of mountain bike tracks in recently cleared "wasteland" of bracken and honeysuckle in which numerous native species had recently been planted. These tracks came close to the houses and the area was particularly rich in their discards and weeds.

Back on the main track again, the kanuka quickly became quite closed and had a rich understorey dominated by kawakawa (*Macropiper excelsum*) up to 4 m tall - a sign that the area had been free of stock for some time. Scattered along the track side were numerous, obviously planted, native species about 2-3 m tall, especially in areas with a light grass ground cover. Other small trees were less obviously planted, including a few kauri 4-5 m tall. Periodically the track passed close to pasture but the greater the distance from the reservoir the fewer adventive weeds there were. But even here *Clematis paniculata* was displaced by abundant honey suckle now high in the dominant 10 m tall kanuka.

The track crossed several small streams, each time allowing a few new plants to be added to the list,

usually seedlings or saplings of plants such as kohekohe (*Dysoxylum spectabile*) or ferns such as *Blechnum chambersii*. Further from the forest margins rewarewa (*Knightia excelsa*), kohekohe and pukatea (*Laurelia novaezelandiae*) became more common. Finally some mature forest was reached, dominated by huge puriri (*Vitex lucens*), kohekohe and tawa with the odd karaka (*Corynocarpus laevigatus*). A few nikau were scattered beneath with *Arthropteris tenella* scrambling over the roots and lower stems.

So far the track had been a slow gradual climb, then noise announced the large Tunakohia Stream was nearby and soon the track followed steeply up it. The forest now became more broken with mamaku (*Cyathea medullaris*), silver fern (*C. dealbata*), rangiora (*Brachyglottis repanda*), heketara (*Olearia ran*), *Gahnia lacera* and *Morelotia affinis*. Along the stream bank the characteristic *Rhabdothamnus solandri* and *Helichrysum aggregatum* were present on the rocky banks. After crossing the stream the climb became very steep as a huge cascade/waterfall filled the creek bed. Here the forest was damper with *Corybas macranthus* and *Elatostema rugosa* forming large patches, a sudden abundance of ferns and the odd patch of *Arthropodium candidum*. The slope slowly opened up and the vegetation became characteristic of the drier ridges in the area with tanekaha, hinau and heketara quite abundant and scattered rimu, miro and nikau. The ground cover included dense tangles of *Lycopodium deuterodensum* with flowers of *Libertia grandiflora* and tufts of *Cordyline pumilio* peeping through.

About half way up the cascade an old aqueduct was reached and followed round almost to the Tui Mine road, the point at which the others had started and were now long gone. Here *Corybas macranthus* and *C. trilobus* were flowering abundantly and the large greenhood (*Pterostylis banksii*) formed scattered patches amongst the litter from the abundant mamaku. The nose was also assailed by abundant and densely flowering *Alseuosmia macrophylla* overhanging the track.

Again the track steepened as it passed through typical, rather open tawa-podocarp forest now with the kohekohe and puriri left behind. There were far fewer new species by now, just a couple of orchids (*Acianthus sinclairii* and *Corybas oblongus*), the now ubiquitous *Miscanthus nepalensis* in open areas and tangles of *Lygodium articulatum*.

At last at 2.15 pm the Summit road was reached and time was running out with no-one in sight (just some dogs barking in the distance). Very shortly the Tui Mine road was reached - time to turn round! And still no sign of other parties. An hour and a half to reach

the start out point. Time to move! The return to the Domain added a few species. In particular, a snack stop at the end of the aqueduct, that spectacularly overlooked the cascade, added *Nestegis lanceolata* and *Pterostylis alobula*. At the Domain, all was

revealed. The main party had turned and retraced from summit (it took too long to get to the top) and the smaller party had returned by via Summit road rather than the track. Foiled again!

Species list for the track between Te Aroha Domain and Tui Mine Road (*adventive species)

Fern Allies

Lycopodium volubile
Tmesipteris elongata
Tmesipteris lanceolata

Ferns

Adiantum cunninghamii
Adiantum fulvum
Adiantum viridescens
Anarthropteris lanceolata
Arthropteris tenella
Asplenium bulbiferum
Asplenium flaccidum
Asplenium lamprophyllum
Asplenium oblongifolium
Asplenium polyodon
Blechnum chambersii
Blechnum discolor
Blechnum filiforme
Blechnum fluviatile
Blechnum novae-zelandiae
Cyathea dealbata
Deparia petersenii
Dicksonia squarrosa
Diplazium australe
Doodia australis
Hymenophyllum demissum
Hymenophyllum revolutum
Hymenophyllum sanguinolentum
Lastreopsis glabella
Lastreopsis hispida
Lastreopsis microsora
Leptopteris hymenophylloides
Lygodium articulatum
Microsorium pustulatum
Microsorium scandens
Paesia scaberula
Pneumatopteris pennigera
Polystichum wawranum
Pteridium esculentum
Pteris macilentia
Pteris tremula
Pyrrosia eleagnifolia
Trichomanes venosum

Gymnosperms

Dacrycarpus dacrydioides
Dacrydium cupressinum
Phyllocladus trichomanoides
 * *Pinus radiata*
Podocarpus totara

Prumnopitys ferruginea
Prumnopitys taxifolia

Dicot trees shrubs and woody climbers

Alectryon excelsus
Alseuosmia macrophylla
Aristotelia serrata
Beilschmiedia tawa
 * *Berberis glaucocarpa*
Brachyglottis repanda
Carpodetus serratus
Clematis cunninghamii
Clematis paniculata
 * *Convolvulus arvensis*
Coprosma lucida
Coprosma repens
Coprosma rhamnoides
Coprosma robusta
Coriaria arborea
Corynocarpus laevigatus
 * *Cotoneaster simonsii*
Dysoxylum spectabile
Elaeocarpus dentatus
Fuchsia excorticata
Geniostoma ligustrifolium
Griselinia lucida
Hebe stricta s.s.
 * *Hedera helix*
Hedycarya arborea
Hoheria populnea var. lanceolata
 * *Hypericum androsaemum*
 * *Jasminum humile*
Knightia excelsa
Kunzea ericoides
Laurelia novae-zelandiae
Leucopogon fasciculatus
 * *Ligustrum lucidum*
 * *Ligustrum sinense*
Litsea calicaris
 * *Lonicera japonica*
Macropiper excelsum ssp. excelsum
Melicope ternata
Melicytus ramiflorus
Metrosideros diffusa
Metrosideros fulgens
Metrosideros perforata
Metrosideros robusta
Muehlenbeckia australis
Myrsine australis
Nestegis lanceolata
Olearia furfuracea
Olearia rani
Parsonsia heterophylla

- * *Passiflora mollissima*
- Pennantia corymbosa*
- Pittosporum eugenioides*
- Pittosporum tenuifolium*
- * *Prunus laurocerasus*
- Pseudopanax arboreus*
- Pseudopanax crassifolius*
- Pseudopanax lessonii*
- Pseudowintera axillaris*
- Rhabdothamnus solandri*
- * *Rubus fruticosus* agg.
- * *Salix cinerea*
- Schefflera digitata*
- * *Solanum mauritianum*
- Sophora microphylla*
- * *Teline monspessulana*
- * *Ulex europaeus*
- Vitex lucens*

Dicot herbs

- * *Aphanes arvensis*
- * *Cardamine hirsuta*
- * *Cerastium glomeratum*
- * *Cirsium vulgare*
- * *Conium maculatum*
- * *Conyza albida*
- * *Crepis capillaris*
- * *Digitalis purpurea*
- * *Duchesnea indica*
- Elatostema rugosum*
- * *Erigeron karvinskianus*
- Euchiton involucreatus*
- * *Euphorbia peplus*
- * *Galium aparine*
- * *Geranium molle*
- * *Geranium robertianum*
- Haloragis erecta* ssp. *erecta*
- Hydrocotyle moschata*
- * *Hypochoeris radicata*
- * *Lactuca virosa*
- * *Leucanthemum vulgare*
- * *Linum bienne*
- * *Lotus pedunculatus*
- * *Mycelis muralis*
- * *Myosotis arvensis*
- * *Oxalis pes-caprae*
- Oxalis rubens*
- Peperomia urvilleana*
- * *Phytolacca octandra*
- * *Plantago lanceolata*
- * *Prunella vulgaris*
- Ranunculus reflexus*
- * *Ranunculus repens*
- * *Rumex brownii*
- * *Senecio bipinnatisectus*
- * *Senecio jacobaea*
- Solanum americanum*
- * *Solanum chenopodioides*
- * *Solanum nigrum*

- * *Sonchus arvensis*
- * *Sonchus oleraceus*
- Stellaria decipiens* agg
- * *Stellaria media*
- * *Tanacetum vulgare*
- * *Taraxacum officinale*
- * *Tradescantia fluminensis*
- * *Trifolium repens*
- * *Verbena bonariensis*
- * *Veronica arvensis*
- * *Veronica hederifolia*
- * *Vicia sativa*
- * *Viola wittrockiana*

Monocot trees, shrubs and lianes

- Cordyline australis*
- Cordyline banksii*
- Cordyline pumilio*
- Freycinetia banksii*
- * *Asparagus scandens*
- Rhopalostylis sapida*
- Ripogonum scandens*

Monocot herbs

- Acianthus sinclairii*
- * *Allium triquetrum*
- Arthropodium candidum*
- Astelia solandri*
- Carex dissita*
- * *Carex divulsa*
- Carex lambertiana*
- Carex solandri*
- Carex spinirostris*
- Collospermum hastatum*
- Corybas macranthus*
- Corybas oblongus*
- Corybas trilobus*
- * *Cyperus brevifolius*
- * *Cyperus eragrostis*
- Cyperus ustulatus*
- Dianella nigra*
- Earina autumnalis*
- Earina mucronata*
- Gahnia lacera*
- Gahnia setifolia*
- Isolepis cernua*
- * *Juncus tenuis*
- Libertia grandiflora*
- Microtis unifolia*
- Morelotia affinis*
- Pterostylis alobula*
- Pterostylis banksii*
- Schoenus maschalinus*
- Uncinia banksii*
- Uncinia laxiflora*
- Uncinia scabra*
- Uncinia uncinata*
- Uncinia zotovii*