

who live there, to see the spread of *Ugni molinae* (Chilean guava) –a real pest in certain areas and I couldn't even keep one alive in a pot here.

DOC has done a great job in conjunction with many of the landowners in protecting and restoring the unique habitats. There are twenty reserves on the Islands and these have seen the resurgence of many threatened plants and animals.

It was wonderful to see the Moriori dendroglyphs on the kopi trees in the Hapupu Reserve and it is sad to hear that they are diminishing in number as the trunks mature.

For me the trip to Pitt Island – a 20 minute plane trip from Waitangi – was of special interest as my teacher from Standard 3 came from there. Her great nephews were at Sumner School with my children and I remember one of them saying that his fisherman father had been eaten by 27 sharks. Small wonder that nobody swims for pleasure in The Chathams! On Pitt Island we were driven around by Bubbles, a very friendly and able young woman keen to learn as much as possible about the plants. Her sister, who was striding around with a gun over her shoulder, was married to the pilot of our little plane. Everyone seemed to be related one way or another. The inhabitants of Pitt – all 35 of them – have to be 'masters of all trades' as there are no resident electricians, plumbers, carpenters, etc. It's not just the men either. The 'number 8 wire' mentality is alive and well on The Chathams; do-it-yourself is the order of the day.

28 NOVEMBER – KOPINGA MARAE, OWENGA, RANGAIKA RESERVE

Bryony Macmillan

Being our first day this produced a kaleidoscope of impressions of the landscape, island life, Moriori history, largely endemic plants, and getting to know our guide and driver Alison Davis.

The visit to Kopinga Marae along the Owenga Road from Waitangi gave us an introduction to the Moriori revival. Built to a Moriori design, pentagonal, and opened in 2004, it is imbued with their history in modern art, explained by our host and orator Mana. We took the opportunity to enjoy and photograph the endemic species growing in the surrounding garden. Chatham Island toetoe (*Cortaderia turbaria*) in flower made a fine background.

Just west of Owenga we turned off the road through a farmstead and out onto the open pasture of Alfred Preece's farm. Because of the exceptionally dry weather Alison was able to drive the sturdy little Nissan bus about 8 km to the south coast and to within a short walk to Rangaika Scenic Reserve. Regeneration is dense on the fenced cliff top with *Olearia chathamica*, flax, *Astelia chathamica* and young dracophyllum pushing through the fern under tall *D. arboreum* trees (Fig. 1). We walked up a peaty hill along the reserve fence line consisting of a wind-shorn canopy of *Olearia*, *Corokia macrocarpa*, dracophyllum, and *Hebe barkeri*, with *Sporodanthus traversii* and *Hierochloe*.



Figure 1. Stand of *Dracophyllum arboreum* on the fenced cliff top at Rangaika.
Photo: B.Macmillan

A walk in the bush (grid ref. CH Sheet 2: 56-43; Fig. 2) under the open sun-lit branches of *Dracophyllum arboreum*, hebe, *Pseudopanax chathamicus* (hoho), *Melicytus chathamicus*, *Coprosma chathamica* (with pink pitted bark), and many tree ferns was all too short. In the understory *Coprosma propinqua* var. *martinii* was most abundant and we saw young *Myrsine coxii*. The leaves of supplejack were impressively large. The ground flora had us photographing orchids, ferns and herbs. The abundant, feathery moss on every log and stump was *Camptochaete deflexa*.



Figure 2. Interior of Rangaika Scenic Reserve on the south coast.

Photo: B. Macmillan

The return to the bus gave fine views of the perpendicular basalt coast line with the Mangere Islands and Pitt Island to the south-east. We passed through meadows of dense *Poa chathamica*. Back at Owenga we turned east to the Manukau farm of the Solomon family where stands the life-like statue of Tommy Solomon (1884-1933) spokesman for Moriori for many years.

29 AND 30 NOVEMBER – PITT ISLAND

Miles Giller

A total of 15 Bot Soccers flew over to Pitt Island on Nov 29th or 30th. We were welcomed at the airstrip by Bernie and Bubbles, who gave us a guided tour of the island's botanical, historical (and culinary) highlights. At Glory Bay we saw the historic Glory Bay cottage, currently under restoration by DOC. On the shore nearby we were shown the ultimate 'loo with a view', an A-frame long-drop overlooking Southeast Island, with an uninterrupted view all the way to South America. On the rocky headland around it we found *Apium prostratum* subsp. *denticulatum*, *Geranium traversii*, the fern *Blechnum durum* (looking and feeling as if it was made from soft plastic, Fig. 3, p 8), and *Disphyma papillatum* resplendent in full pink flower.