

range of filmy ferns (especially *Hymenophyllum multifidum*, *H. flabellatum* and *Trichomanes venosum*) were perching on all available sites. The fork-fern *Tmesipteris elongata* was often seen on tree fern trunks. The gigantism of several species is typical of the Chatham Islands, perhaps never more obvious than the local form of *Polystichum vestitum*, which often had leaves arching well over 1.5m high.

A cross-country vehicle ride towards the western side of the island gave us a splendid overview of Mangere Island and Little Mangere, where the black robin population was rescued. Several copses of the endemic rautini (*Brachyglottis huntii*) were seen growing alongside the vehicle track.

Our scenic flight back home allowed us to view the forest restoration work on Mangere Island. We also looked down on a colourful mosaic of peatland forest and wetlands on the southern tablelands of Chatham Island, most of us wishing we could just drop down and explore these extraordinary plant associations.

29 NOVEMBER – TE MATARAE, HENGA SCENIC RESERVE

Bill Sykes

A fine warm day with little wind, echoing my diary comment “dispensed with coat”. Some of our party went to Pitt Island but I remained with the rest on the main island. Firstly our knowledgeable and very helpful driver Alison Davis took us to the southern shore area of Te Whanga Lagoon east of Te One. There we visited Pat Smith’s property at Te Matarae and were taken round by this well-known Chatham personality with very definite views on most things from plants to animals and people, and especially government bureaucracy. Around his sheltered house well-protected by trees that he has planted during the past two decades is a garden of introduced plants. Macaronesian and South African plants were prominent and the arborescent *Echium pininiana* (Fig. 5) and *Melanoselinum decipiens* were in full flower. These were supplemented by the South African composite *Argyranthemum frutescens*, gazanias and aloes, to name the most conspicuous. Mention of such plants draws attention to the Mediterranean climate aspect to much of the garden flora on the Chathams and thus to some adventive species too.



Figure 5. The sheltered garden of Pat Smith at Te Matarae with its arborescent *Echium pininiana* in full flower. Photo: Bill Sykes

Beyond the house area was a patch of indigenous forest with a well-maintained track for taking visitors around. The dominant trees were *Myrsine chathamica*, *Coprosma chathamica* and *Corynocarpus laevigatus*, along with smaller *Pseudopanax chathamicus* and *Melicytus chathamicus*. There were also the lianes *Muehlenbeckia australis* and *Ripogonum scandens*, and our knowledgeable host introduced us to the art of eating raw the young shoots of supplejack. In this area I was particularly interested in a small area of jagged upraised limestone that was so reminiscent of the similar-looking makatea or raised coral limestone in parts of tropical Polynesia. The similarity was even enhanced by the presence of the fern *Asplenium polyodon* in rock crevices because this is also present on several of the Cook Islands with makatea (Fig. 6, p.8). From the forest we emerged on to the lagoon beach with its colourful two senecios; the indigenous yellow *Senecio radiolatus* and the introduced purple *S. elegans*. Scattered amongst them was *Glaucium flavum* with its large orange poppy flowers.

Afterwards Alison took us back to the main road to the Henga Scenic Reserve near Lake Marakapia. Firstly however, we had lunch sitting on the lawn of the nearby Chatham Island Lodge that provides the main visitor accommodation outside Waitangi. Then we walked through the Henga low forest out to the windswept dunes; in fact the shoreline there is composed of a series of open or scrub-covered sand dunes. These

merge into the low forest behind, the latter being especially dominated by *Myrsine chathamica*, *Melicytus chathamicus* and *Corynocarpus laevigatus*, with an understorey of *Macropiper excelsum* in many places. There I noticed another outcrop of raised limestone with its flora of scattered ferns and tree saplings growing out of the crevices. On the more open dunes *Pimelea arenaria* was abundant and in suitable sites grows *Pratia arenaria* and *Samolus repens*. Also it was nice to see in many places the yellow brown plants of pingao, *Desmoschoenus spiralis*, amongst the marram grass. However, I saw no *Myosotidium hortensia* whereas I did so in this area in 1993. By this time it was almost 6pm so Alison rounded us up and shepherded us back to the Lodge and on to the bus again. Without further delay we headed back to Waitangi and a magnificent “fishy” dinner at the Hotel. Seafood each day was something that we were coming to expect on the Chathams.

30 NOVEMBER – NIKAU BUSH AND WHAREKAURI

Judy Bugo

While some of the group flew off to Pitt Island the remainder were treated to an unforgettable day. The group headed north from Waitangi and made their first stop at some limestone cliffs on the shore of Te Whanga Lagoon (Fig. 7), just north of Cattle Point. Of special interest on the low cliffs, close to the water’s edge, were *Sophora chathamica*, a *Calystegia* with very large flowers, *Urtica australis* and *Linum monogynum* var. *chathamicum*.

The cliff forest canopy consisted of *Myrsine chathamica*, *Olearia traversii*, *Coprosma chathamica*, *Sophora chathamica*, *Pseudopanax chathamicus*, *Melicytus chathamicus* and *Corynocarpus laevigatus*. Chatham endemic understorey species present were *Leptecophylla robusta*, *Hebe dieffenbachii*, *Coprosma chathamica* and *Geranium traversii*, along with the indigenous *Macropiper excelsa*, *Haloragis erecta*, *Solanum laciniatum*, *Urtica australis* and *Acaena novae-zelandiae*. Ferns included *Adiantum cunninghamii*, *Asplenium oblongifolium*, *Pteridium esculentum*, *Microsorium pustulatum*, *Pyrrosia eleagnifolia* and *Asplenium chathamense*.

We then drove 2 km north to the Nikau Bush Conservation Area. This 19 ha reserve was fenced off in 1981 and has regenerated vigorously. It is the site of the largest stand of Chatham Island nikau *Rhopalostylis* aff. *sapida* on Chatham Island. The reserve is a good example of lowland broadleaf forest found on slightly swampy ground. The regeneration