

## OASHORE, BANKS PENINSULA, FIELD TRIP OCTOBER 4TH 2008

**Kate Whyte**

The winter rain had paused for a clear spring day and so 20+ Botsoc members car-pooled along the treacherous Bossu Road to Oashore, in the Southern Bays of Banks Peninsula. They were rewarded with the fabulous view down the full length of Kaitorete Spit, to the crossbar of the snow covered Southern Alps. Early spring is a fabulous time for spring flowering natives in this area. Three species of Clematis were in full flower; *C. foetida*, *C. afoliata* and *C. paniculata*. Kate thought she only had the one *C. paniculata* to enjoy on the Oashore block (a show off boy) wrapped around a strong Coprosma but 2 weeks ago a very pretty female, almost as showy, raised her flowers to the sun across the road.

As it happened threesomes were popular this Saturday, and the botsoc crew discovered Oashore's three lawyers busy at it; *Rubus cissoides* and *R. schmidelioides* in the bushy stream edge promenading along the road, and the leafless *R. squarrosus* with its bright yellow-green barbs on the rocky cliff along the edge of L.Forsyth/Wairewa. Muehlenbeckias were also in a trio: *M. complexa* networking amongst the grass and shrubs, *M. ephedroides* demure and laid-out on the shingle of Kaitorete with its tiny flowers on show, and a lone shrub of *M. astonii*, discovered at the base of the cliff above the lake (a few hundred metres from its mates battling the nor-west wind around the corner). Did someone see *M. australis* too, quite possibly.

There were some notable singles spotted too, exciting for Kate was when Trevor Blogg pointed out a *Myrsine divaricata* along the road margin, half hidden amongst *Coprosma crassifolia*, a first record of this species on Oashore. Another species found, previously not recorded on Oashore, was *Hypolepis ambigua*. And seen alone by the stream, looking fresh in leaf and fragrant in flower was the one naturally occurring plant of *Olearia fragrantissima* on Oashore (she has quite a few friends in the next valley but not in the Oashore scene). A few weeks later, when the crowds had gone, Tree Olearias distant cousin, the dainty perennial *Celmisia gracilenta*, showed off her very pretty flowers all along the banks nearby.

Large, glossy green clumps of *Ileostylus micranthus*, in a tight relationship with any willing party were common to see (and not spotted on the day, but not far away, was Oashore's other known mistletoe, the more discrete *Korthalsella lindsayi*). Also holding on to its friends but in a much daintier grasp was the fragile looking *Scandia geniculata*, in flower, she was

scrambling over the shrubs smelling sweetly of aniseed when crushed. The two native jasmines, *Parsonsia heterophylla* and *P. capsularis*, were partnered together, scrambling over others and just in bud, daring any to tell them apart without their flowers open. Since that day Kate has had it confirmed by Hugh Wilson, who knows all the local social scene in the vegetation ball, that on Banks Peninsula *P. heterophylla* prefers to have broad leaves, once she grows beyond being a juvenile, typically making her a bit easier on Banks Peninsula to tell apart from her sister, who shows her narrow leaves all the time.

Other notable singles of a different nature were; *Festuca actae*, looking a bit blue along the road bank; the weird native sea holly *Eryngium vesiculosum* bursting out of the silty ground along the edge of L. Forsyth/Wairewa. She did not quite have her blue petals out but she was rubbing shoulders with *Selliera radicans*, *Lilaeopsis novae-zelandiae*, *Cotula dioica*, and the european buck's horn plantain.

The nor-west wind was whistling fiercely by the time all departed, leaving the visit to the plants of the bluffs above Te Wairewa till another day and Kate was already missing the keen eyes of so many enthusiastic botanists but wishing the travellers a safe journey home.

Kānuka, *Kunzea ericoides*  
Drawing: Hugh Wilson

