

## SUMMER CAMP BASED AT GLEN MARY SKI CLUB HUTS, LAKE OHAU, 16 – 22 JANUARY 2010

### INTRODUCTION

Bryony Macmillan

Summer camp was based at the Glen Mary Ski Club huts, a short stroll from the shore of Lake Ohau on one side and a few steps into the sheltering manuka on the other.

16 January – Joy Comrie and Chris Woolmore guided us across country from Quailburn Road to the D.O.C. conservation area on Wairepo Tarns as described by Paul Maurice. In the afternoon we explored the Quailburn woolshed built of beech trunks, and Quailburn gorge.

17 January was spent in the basin of Lake Ohau Ski field, as described by Trevor Blogg, under cloud all day, while very hot sun prevailed at the lake shore.

18 January – on the walk to Freehold Stream bush I would add to Miles' and Gillian's account, a robust plant of *Kirkianella novae-zelandiae* on the track through the tussocks, with brownish foliage. On a small terrace near the bush margin is a permanent pond where the marginal turf provided plenty of interest. Abundant *Dichondra brevifolia* and *Hypericum japonicum* were identified.

19 January was spent in the Ahuriri Valley on the former Birchwood property now administered by Department of Conservation. Ann McMillan's story follows. In the afternoon we were invited to take part in the release on the riverbed of many young black stilts, kaki, raised at the Twizel aviary. This was an inspiring sight, the young birds stepped out of their boxes and very soon rose in the air as a flock and began to circle our group, flying past again and again before heading off across the river bed.

20 January took us to Temple River at the head of the lake for various walks. On Temple View bush circuit I enjoyed the sprawling subshrub *Coprosma depressa* on rocks at the streamside with bright red berries and chaffy stipules. *Acaena dumicola* grew under canopy gaps with *Schizeilema trifoliolata*, and *Acaena juvenca* grew shyly among beech duff under the canopy. In a *Bulbinella-Blechnum penna-marina* field at 600 m. were mounds of golden liverwort *Ptilidium ciliare*. Eleanor Bissell describes many more species on this walk. Returning to Glen Mary we explored the bush stands along the lake for *Peraxilla tetrapetala* which had almost lost all petals.

21 January – Miles and Gillian led a crossing of the lower Quailburn to reach Bendhu Scientific Reserve, a dense stand of bog pine *Halocarpus bidwillii* in

complete contrast to our previous sites. The reserve is about 50 ha of spreading bushes, a relic of early post-glacial plant succession. We added a very few associated species to the list. This visit was a real privilege. In the afternoon Joy Comrie led the way to a beautiful kettlehole turf, a dimple on the moraine south west of the lake, Here the botany was most challenging of all, the dominant species of *Carex* eluding us in the absence of fruiting heads. Suddenly Graeme Jane and Gael Donaghy appeared over the hill to offer many helpful suggestions. Much more time would be necessary to identify the many small sedges and grasses. *Lobelia perpusilla* was in flower and *Stackhousia minima* abundant in fruit, with *Ophioglossum coriaceum*. Discussion concluded over drinks, recumbent, watching little Southern Blue butterflies massing on socks and boots wet from the previous stream crossing.

Lastly we accompanied Alison and John Smithies who live at the lake, to see the Ohau Conservation Trust's restoration planting along the lake shore. The restoration is a joint project between D.O.C. and the Trust with the plants being grown at Motukarara from locally sourced seed. Mountain beech, kowhai, hoheria, hebe, cokokia, Hall's totara and snow tussock are the main species planted. John is the chairman of the Trust which also carries out weed control of conifers, broom, and sweet briar on the lake shore. Nearby is a dense natural stand of *Coprosma intertexta*.

Participants:

Margaret Austin	Paul and Ruth Maurice & Claire
Robert Birks	Ann McMillan
Eleanor and Barry Bissell	Fraser Ross
Trevor Blogg	
Jane Demeter	with help from:
Miles and Gillian Giller	Joy Comrie and Chris Woolmore
Rick and Fay Jackson	Graeme Jane and Gael Donaghy
Bryony Macmillan	Alison and John Smithies

## 16 JANUARY – WAIREPO TARNS RESERVE AND QUAILBURN GORGE

Paul Maurice

Early cloud was followed by a warm sunny day. Joy Comrie and Chris Woolmore, two of the local Department of Conservation officers, joined us for the day and shared their extensive knowledge of the area with us. The