

is quite unlike *C. incana* – Graeme Jane’s species list mentions “*C. uniflora* var *uniflora* many entities – status unknown”. Around here we also found *Leptinella pectinata*, *Raoulia grandiflora* (Fig. 1, page 8), and a *Phyllachne* cushion, plus *Huperzia australiana*. (= *Lycopodium Australianum*)

Climbing still higher, someone noticed a very large orange/brown-coloured grasshopper, which I photographed. We were eventually rewarded with the sight of several *Aciphylla dobsonii* (Fig. 2), a little nibbled, (perhaps by thar?) but none in flower. A coarsely hairy *Myosotis* (species undecided; Fig. 3) was prettily in flower. Here the landscape was more seriously modified by the ski-field development and little was growing apart from the occasional *Aciphylla* (all *dobsonii*). Descending over ‘un-developed’ land brought more variety, including a single *Dolichoglottis scorzonerooides* growing on a cliff face.

A notable *Raoulia* was *R. youngii*, spotted by Miles Giller. There was lots of *Bulbinella* – now convincingly *B. angustifolia*, i.e. with distinctly narrow leaves.

Overall, after a somewhat discouraging start, we had a very good day of botanising.

## 18 JANUARY – FREEHOLD STREAM

Miles and Gillian Giller

Lingering cloud saw us head for the nearby walk up Freehold Stream, on the ranges behind our camp. The first part meandered across former glacial lateral moraines and terraces clad predominantly in secondary manuka (*Leptospermum scoparium*) shrubland. The orchids *Prasophyllum colensoi*, *Microtis unifolia* and *M. oligantha* were seen among hard tussock (*Festuca novae-zelandiae*). The white leaves of *Brachyglottis haastii* stood out among the predominantly tan groundcover. Occasional shrubs of matagouri (*Discaria toumatou*), porcupine bush (*Melicytus aff. alpinus*), and *Coprosma propinqua* provided potential habitat for jewelled gecko (though the first gecko spotted was ensconced in the wood-pile behind the hut).

After reaching the point where Freehold Creek exited its valley, the track passed under beech forest (*Nothofagus solandri* var. *cliffortioides*), where we again saw abundant red mistletoe (*Peraxilla tetrapetala*), unfortunately just past flowering. Apart from a few ferns (including *Asplenium richardii*,



Figure 1. Ohau Skifield: *Raoulia grandiflora*. Photo: Trevor Blogg



Figure 2. Ohau Skifield: *Aciphylla dobsonii*. Photo: Trevor Blogg



Figure 3. Ohau Skifield: *Myosotis* sp. Photo: Trevor Blogg



Figure 4. Ahuriri River valley: *Herpolirion novae-zelandiae*. Photo: Trevor Blogg

*Hypolepis millefolium*, *Polystichum vestitum* and *Cystopteris tasmanica*) and occasional orchids (*Chiloglottis cornuta*, *Pterostylis* sp. and *Gastrodia cunninghamii*) the understory was visually dominated by mosses. Species included *Lembophyllum divulsum*, *Dicranoloma dicarpum*, *Breutelia* sp. *Sematophyllum* spp., *Thuidium* sp. and *Rhizogonium* sp, plus several moss-like leafy liverworts (including *Frullania* spp.).

On emerging above the bush-line the weather deteriorated, but not before the array of sub-alpine shrubs was first scrutinised. A large bright-green *Hebe rakaiensis* stood out among *Brachyglottis cassinioides* (several in yellow flower), *Pittosporum anomalum*, *Coprosma dumosa*, *Melicytus* aff. *alpinus*, *Hoheria glabrata*, *Discaria toumatou*, *Myrsine nummularia* and *Bulbinella angustifolia*. The cryptic creeper *Clematis marata* was seen scrambling through a range of hosts, the females carrying balls of seeds, and *Celmisia petiolata* was flowering alongside the stream.

On our return to camp the hot news was the discovery of a mustelid which had casually sauntered into our kitchen area and taken up residence behind the fridges, occasionally playing peek-a-boo around the corner. Local conservationists John and Alison Smithies provided a box-trap, and the offender was eventually caught and despatched. It turned out to be a weasel, but only after much-contested deliberation (after all, mustelids are weaselily distinguished, each being stoatally different).

## 19 JANUARY – AHURIRI RIVER VALLEY

Ann McMillan

On the fourth day the Ahuriri River valley was our destination for the day.

### Ben Avon Wetland Reserve

In the morning the group looked at the Ben Avon Wetland Reserve, altitude 820 meters. It was a hot/warm sunny summer's day. Our group identified about 30 species of swamp loving/liking plants in the wetter places of this protected bog, with a range of both indigenous and adventive ones recorded from a smaller area nearest the road.

Most common in the water were two sedges, *Carex diandra* being the shorter, brownish one in the shallower water and closer to the road, then *C. virgata* was taller and golden in colour growing in deeper water, further away from the road. Two more sedges were *Schoenus pauciflorus* (red form) and *Eleocharis acuta* in the more open spaces in water. They appeared to be