

## TO THE SPENSER MOUNTAINS, SUMMER 1910-11

*Diary, handwritten in pencil, is to be presented to Landcare Research, Lincoln.*

### Colin Burrows

The party for this trip, led by Robert Laing (1865–1941), included W.W. Rowntree, T.M. Laing and C.E. Foweraker (then aged 24). They met and often were helped by other people who are named here. The account that follows consists of excerpts from a diary kept by Foweraker. It particularly describes transport, camps, the country traversed, the weather, the vegetation, and some of the plants encountered. R.M. Laing (1911) published botanical notes and a list of the species collected. Foweraker also made his own list but only a few highlight species from this are noted here. At the time Cheeseman's (1905) *Manual* was their reference. Modern names and some explanatory notes are placed in square brackets. Foweraker lists the components of almost every meal – a few examples only are cited. The story begins:

**Fri. Dec 23, 1910.** Left Christchurch for Culverden by 8.50 am (slow) train [the country traversed is described]. After crossing Hurunui R. passed through a dense manuka scrub. Both species [i.e., kanuka and manuka, then both placed in *Leptospermum*]. Reached Culverden. Great difficulty in obtaining seats in car [this was the mail motor car to Hanmer]. Car got a tight chain at Montrose Station, delayed about half hour. Pretty scene in crossing upper Waiau bridge. Reached Hanmer about 4 pm. Stores had not come through and McArthur [manager St James Station] had sent only one packhorse so we put up at Lahmert's.

**Dec 24.** Next morning stores arrived. R.M.L and I had a walk towards Jacks Pass and did some collecting. In afternoon Ted Kane [pack man] arrived. Had an extra packhorse.

**Dec 25.** Kane appeared in paddock at 7.30 am. Blacksmith engaged to shoe horse. Packed swags and sacks for two packhorses. Kane rode, rest walked. Left at 10.15. Reached Jacks Pass. Met McArthur and Leichman. Rain; had to push on and could not look at plants. Descended and traversed flats. Reached St James at 1.30. Dinner mutton (good), potatoes, cabbage, bread, butter, jam, tea, cakes. Very comfortable night but a bit chilly.

**Dec 26.** Turned out 6 am. Wash in Clarence [R.]. Breakfast chops, mince, bread, jam and tea. Gave cook (Smith) 5 shillings. Got four loaves bread. Left at 8.30. Followed Clarence and rabbit fence to Campbell's hut, 12.30. Left at 2. Climbed Fowler's Pass. Alpine vegetation: *Celmisia*, *Aciphylla*, *Dracophyllum*, *Veronicas* [Hebes] etc. Very easy climb down. Reached camping ground half way down at 4. Pitched camp among *Fagus* [*Nothofagus*] [most of the bush cover in the area is *Nothofagus solandri* var. *cliffortioides*].

**Dec 27.** Breakfast. Shot weka. Packed up and started 10.40. Pretty mountain creek. Main stream almost unfordable in places. Reached L. Guyon 1.15. Start 2.45. Tomahawk [axe] fell on heel of Baldy. He bolted and so did Whiskers. Baldy kicked off everything except saddle top. Caught them all right. Packed up after collecting gear. Missed track; followed east side of river. T., R. and I got mixed in a swamp. Crossed Waiau [R.], up to girths and went to Neville's [Ada Station], hospitably received. Mrs Neville four months here and sick of it. We camped in men's whare.

**Dec 28.** Spent wretched night, hot, close. Started up Ada [R.] at 10.30. Halted beside *Fagus* forest at 12. Camped by a stream about 3 miles up, near old whare. Separate ridge pole for tent fly. *Fagus* branches for bedding. Spent most of afternoon fixing camp. Blowflies in vast swarms. Blew Mr Robt's blankets badly, also Rowntree's a bit. Robt put on methylated spirit and strong sol. corrosive sublimate [mercuric chloride].

**Dec 29.** Alarmed a bit. Horse down, twisted leg on rope. Put mosquito netting before tent to exclude flies. Packed blankets etc in bags. Very cold, rain, hail and wind. Lit fire down creek. Mr Robt and I did "phytogeographical" work in the *Fagus* forest behind tent. Whiskers went down stream. Mr Robt and I fetched him back. Worked out plants collected in morning and pressed a few. Whiskers cleared out again. Tough work pressing plants in wind, rain, smoke and ashes. Mr Robt and I washed up while others fetched up Whiskers. Big camp fire. Turned in at 9. Slept very well, but cold.

**Dec 30.** Dull but cold. Started up Ada at 8.30. Passed Faerie Queen [high mountain on N. side]. Snowclad tops, birch [beech] below. River winds greatly. Bush thick, bogs at side. Had to cross Ada frequently. *Sphagnum* bog on top [at Ada Pass into the upper Maruia R.]. Returned at 6. Passed a mountain tarn; pair of paradise ducks and six young ones. Orchids on edge of bogs. *Oursias* in flower, *Oxalis magellanica*.

**Dec 31.** Clear sky and sun. Started 9.45 to climb and examine slopes to south behind camp. Had stiff climb through birch forest and then came out on hill vegetation. Shingly slopes and subalpine vegetation to top. *Aciphylla*,

*Celmisia*, *Notothlaspi* (sweetly scented), *Haastia* 6 ft across, *Cotula* [*Leptinella*] *pyrethrifolia*, grasshoppers, black butterfly. Set course by compass. Mr Tom went back after lunch. Very rough climb down a shingle slope and gully creek to Ada banks. Mr Tom had tea (stew) waiting. Sewed blankets together. Mr Robt made red lantern (ruby fabric) and changed [photographic] plates. Turned in at 10.

**Sun. Jan 1, 1911.** Very fine morning, warm and pleasant. Changed plants [in presses]. Worked out those collected past two days. Watson Aplanats very useful dissecting microscope. Got through a lot of work. Finished plants by 3. Mr Robt and I strolled down Ada on right side, explored rocks. Crossed to Neville's. Wrung out socks and went inside. Neville putting in a batch of bread. Wood burning oven - risen bread in tins put in hot ashes. Had tea, eggs, scones, butter, raspberry jam. Got loaf of bread and our other bag of sugar. Returned at 7.

**Jan 2.** Rained and blew all night. Mr Robt and I worked out plants till 12.20. Fine now, but windy. Started to rain in afternoon and rained all night. We read books and magazines. I wrote letters. Water came into foot of tent. Rowntree cut drains with axe to take water off.

**Jan 3.** Weather fine. Robt and I changed plants and dried things. Packed up. [They packed blankets and other gear in sacks for the single packhorse, and each carried their own small swag.] Started 12.10, reached Neville's 1.20. Boiled billy in whare. Tom cut down a sheep [i.e., one that had been killed and cleaned and hung in a tree.] We took four loaves and two brownies [brown scone loaves]. Packed up and set out for Glacier Gully [in the Waiau Valley to the north]. Arrived at 6 and it took us all our time to get camp pitched before dark. Hobbled horse this time.

**Jan 4.** Fine and sunny. Found horse. Hobbled him closer. Breakfast porridge and ham. Saw two hares, got rifle and shot one. Set out at 9 for Glacier Gully. Head is a rugged cirque. Immense shingle fan in centre. Cascades from melting snow falling down precipitous sides. Tiny glacier [actually a snow avalanche cone] at bottom of fan. Cirque very rugged, snow filling crevices. Climbed up side gully, somewhat like a canyon. The flora was magnificent - *Celmisias*, *Senecios* [*Dolichoglottis*], *Angelica* [*Gingidia*], *Aciphylla*. Climbed to top of ridge. Descent down rocks, then through dense bush of *Podocarpus nivalis*; wretched work; returned to camp.

**Jan 5.** Woke - mosquitoes and sandflies dreadful. Mr Robt and I worked out plants. Rowntree and Tom went towards Neville's. T. returned with horse and R. went on and returned with four loaves and sugar. In afternoon Rowntree and I went up gully to S. and the others gully to N. I discovered *Pittosporum patulum*. Returned at 4.30. Mended boots. This country very

devoid of bird and animal life; paradise ducks alone abundant, one or two keas and hares.

**Jan 6.** Horse was tethered short all night. Robt and I packed gear and some tinned provisions in one side pack, Tom and Rowntree ditto. Each had a swag. Vasculum [a metal container to carry unpressed plant specimens, long and with an oval cross-section] full, carried billies. Very heavy. Started off at 9. Went up Waiau and forded it through 15 ins water. Started across Maling's Pass (a fairly easy pass compared with the others). Followed rabbit fence. Sighted Lake Tennyson at 1.15. I went on, found hut and lit fire. Lunch at 2 pm. Hut belongs to Campbell, keeper of rabbit fence, one room, sack partition, firewood shed, garden etc. Very well equipped for these parts. Pitched tent outside fence (our tent is 8 × 10 ft). Horse wandered off, brought him back and tethered him. Cooked tea in old fireplace by hut. Thunder and a little rain. Fish in lake jumping.

**Sat. Jan 7.** Morning fine, lake beautiful, slight N. breeze. Set out at 8.30 for an exploratory trip to N. of lake. Four swans. Tried a rocky shingle slip. Very barren. *Veronica* [*Hebe*], *Podocarpus nivalis*, *Phyllocladus*, *Discaria*, *Hymenantha* [*Melicytus*] only plants in lower part – nothing in upper part. Climbed up a fan and a ridge to a peak, very rough (1,500 m) [they must have had an altimeter]. Vegetation rather disappointing. Saw a great deal of *Raoulia eximia*. Very tired, rough climb down. Found Campbell with two horses. He was thinning turnips, had made soda loaf. Tea at 6.30, rice, mutton and onion stew. Yarned with Campbell. Rabbit fence goes from sea to 3 miles W. of Waiau hut, terminates in bush.

**Jan 8.** Had breakfast at 8. Mr Robt and I worked at plants till dinner at 1. R. cooked a leg of mutton in camp oven; washed oven, heated lid, put in meat and slung over fire; put embers on lid. Mutton excellent. Howling cold N. wester blowing all day. Mr Robt and I worked on plants till 4.30. Others went for walk to S. of lake and found *Utricularia*. Gooseberry stew for tea (gooseberries, cinnamon, dried milk and egg powder).

**Jan 9.** Last night very stormy. Wind nearly lifted tent, which strained and flapped much. Rained very heavily for some time. Wind fell. At 6.30 breeze still blowing, but fine and sunny. Mr Tom set out for St James 8.30. Mr Robt and I described *Gunnera*. Wet most of morning, changed plants. Stopped raining about 11. Snow on mountains to north. Rain cleared off 1.15 and we went up slopes behind hut to the west. Did some fine work among the alpine and subalpine flora. Began to climb to Mt Princess; we reached 1,750 metres but snow and N.W. blizzard drove us back. *Haastias* and *Raoulia*s were magnificent. Returned to hut 6.30, very tired.

**Jan 10.** Very cold. Mr Robt and I worked on plants till 12.30. Gully west of hut not very fruitful. Visited locality for *Wahlenbergia cartilaginea* but got no flowers.

**Jan 11.** Fine morning. I went to south of hut, obtained specimens of *Drosera*. Explored gully, face and tops to north-east without much success. *Ligusticum carnosulum* [*Lignocarpa carnosula*]. Returned to hut. Mr Robt and I finished plants collected yesterday. I shaved and collected *Utricularia*. Prepared for trip out.

**Jan 12.** Turned out 5.30. Great difficulty getting swags into sacks. Left Tennyson 7.45. Had easy journey to Fowlers Ck (at 11.05). Excellent weather, very hot. Left Fowlers 12.20, St James 3.40. Had a look at shearing shed [shearing was in full swing]. Left 4.40, top of Jacks Pass 6 pm. Arrived at Hanmer 7.30. Distances (in miles): Hanmer-St James 8; St James-Fowlers Ck 10; Fowlers Ck-Neville's 17; Neville's-camp at Ada 3; Ada camp-Ada Saddle 5.5; Neville's-Glacier Gully 5; Glacier Gully-Lake Tennyson 7; Tennyson-St James 20.

[The dried specimens ended up in the Canterbury Museum herbarium. Some are now at Allan Herbarium, Landcare Research, Lincoln.]

**Selected Entries from Foweraker's List of Species** (names according to modern usage).

1. Fowler's Pass, Lake Guyon; 2. Ada Valley, Ada Pass; 3. Glacier Gully, Waiau Valley; 4. Lake Tennyson area.

<i>Adiantum</i> sp. <sup>3</sup>	<i>Leptinella pyrethrifolia</i> <sup>4</sup>
<i>Alepis flavida</i> <sup>2</sup>	<i>Lobelia roughii</i> <sup>4</sup>
<i>Anisotome haastii</i> <sup>2</sup>	<i>Leucogenes grandiceps</i> <sup>2</sup>
<i>Anisotome pilifera</i> <sup>3</sup>	<i>Myosotis monroi</i> <sup>4</sup>
<i>Australina pusilla</i> <sup>2</sup>	<i>Nothofagus fusca</i> <sup>2</sup>
<i>Brachyglottis bidwillii</i> <sup>4</sup>	<i>Nothofagus menziesii</i> <sup>2</sup>
<i>Brachyglottis cassinioides</i> <sup>4</sup>	<i>Notothlaspi australe</i> <sup>2</sup>
<i>Brachyscome thomsonii</i> <sup>3</sup>	<i>Notothlaspi rosulatum</i> <sup>2</sup>
<i>Celmisia laricifolia</i> <sup>4</sup>	<i>Olearia avicenniifolia</i> <sup>2</sup>
<i>Celmisia lateralis</i> <sup>4</sup>	<i>Olearia cymbifolia</i> <sup>1,2</sup>
<i>Celmisia viscosa</i> <sup>4</sup>	<i>Ophioglossum</i> sp. <sup>2</sup>
<i>Celmisia walkeri</i> <sup>1</sup>	<i>Oxalis magellanica</i> <sup>1,2</sup>
<i>Coprosma serrulata</i> <sup>3</sup>	<i>Parahebe catarractae</i> <sup>3</sup>
<i>Dolichoglottis scorzonerooides</i> <sup>2</sup>	<i>Parahebe linifolia</i> <sup>3</sup>
<i>Gaultheria antipoda</i> <sup>2</sup>	<i>Pimelea traversii</i> <sup>4</sup>
<i>Exocarpos bidwillii</i> <sup>2</sup>	<i>Peraxilla tetrapetala</i> <sup>2</sup>

<i>Gingidia decipiens</i> <sup>2</sup>	<i>Phyllachne colensoi</i> <sup>4</sup>
<i>Gingidia montana</i> <sup>1,2</sup>	<i>Pittosporum patulum</i> <sup>1,3</sup>
<i>Gunnera densiflora</i> <sup>4</sup>	<i>Pseudopanax colensoi</i> <sup>2</sup>
<i>Haastia pulvinaris</i> <sup>2,4</sup>	<i>Ranunculus insignis</i> <sup>1,2</sup>
<i>Haastia recurva</i> <sup>4</sup>	<i>Ranunculus sinclairii</i> <sup>4</sup>
<i>Halocarpus bidwillii</i> <sup>2</sup>	<i>Raoulia eximia</i> <sup>4</sup>
<i>Hebe cupressoides</i> <sup>2</sup>	<i>Rumex flexuosus</i> <sup>2</sup>
<i>Hebe macrantha</i> <sup>4</sup>	<i>Schizeilema roughii</i> <sup>3,4</sup>
<i>Helichrysum depressum</i> <sup>3</sup>	<i>Stackhousia minima</i> <sup>2</sup>
<i>Hoheria glabrata</i> <sup>2</sup>	<i>Stellaria roughii</i> <sup>2</sup>
<i>Leptinella atrata</i> <sup>3</sup>	<i>Utricularia monanthos</i> <sup>4</sup>

### References

- Burrows, C.J. 1982. Charles E. Foweraker, M.A., F.L.S., Botanist and Forester 1886–1964. *Mauri Ora* 10, 5-9.
- Cheeseman, T.F. 1905. *Manual of the New Zealand Flora*. Govt. Printer, Wellington.
- Laing, R.M. 1911. Some notes on the botany of the Spenser Mountains, with a list of the species collected. *Transactions and Proceedings of the N.Z. Institute* 44, 60-75.
- Parsons, M.J., Douglass, P., Macmillan, B.H. 1998. *Current Names for Wild Plants in New Zealand*. Manaaki Whenua Press, Lincoln (and Computer Data Base at Landcare Research, Lincoln).

Editor's Note: Charles Foweraker (1886–1964) was a Canterbury botanist who became senior lecturer in botany, and director of the first School of Forestry at Canterbury University College (Burrows 1982).

*Whalenbergia albomarginata*.  
Drawing by Hugh Wilson

