

The general appearance of the beech forest was extremely variable; sometimes the floor was thick with *Blechnum* ferns, sometimes it was a vast humpy field of mounding moss, sometimes there was a thick cover of beech saplings and sometimes the floor had a rich variety of other shrub and tree species.

The 3-wire bridge and the rotten-log-bridge were a bit of a challenge, but we reached the Hope Arm Hut in plenty of time for the boat rendezvous at 4:00pm.

While we had been sheltered in the bush, the wind had picked up, making it impossible for the boat to land at the usual place. After much arm-waving and shouting between ship and shore, we sidled around the lake shore to a smaller, more sheltered cove, where the boat was able to pull in safely. The white-capped lake gave us a very bumpy ride back to Manapouri, between steep-sided hills dropping straight into the water, around islands splashed with red rata, and then slowly up the broad dark water of the Waiau River.

For me, the highlights of the day were more touristical than botanical, but others listed these botanical highlights:

Val: Lots more orchid species than expected.

Moir: The tall *Plagianthus*, Kowhai and Kaikomako in the grove.

Ros: The large areas of 'mounding mosses' under the beech trees.

Sever: The 3-wire bridge!

Chris H.: *Aristotelia fruticosa* (shrubby or mountain wineberry); *Melicytus flexuosus* (leafless porcupine plant) - a strange plant, with variable leaves; the variety of bush in the various understories; a 20m+ *Plagianthus regius*; 18m *Cordyline australis*; *Alepis flavida* (yellow mistletoe) in mountain beech, on the way down to the jetty.

Allison: Finding the newly re-named *Coprosma pedicillata* (=C "violacea"), just as Neill Simpson predicted we should.

Clifden Limestone (3 Jan) – Pat Enright

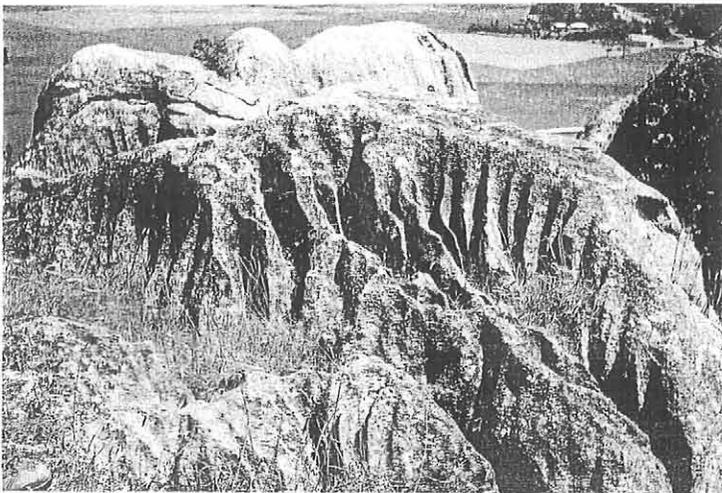
On a lovely hot typical Southland day we botanised two limestone areas near the Clifden Historic Bridge. The day started slowly with a walk across the golf course and then the fun started. Led by a couple of intrepid pathfinders we bashed around at the base of the limestone bluff looking for a way to get up onto the top. There was a diversity of ferns at the base of the limestone scarp, mainly *Blechnum chambersii*, with maidenhair (*Adiantum cunninghamii*), hen & chicken (*Asplenium bulbiferum*) and others. The botany was interesting without being too exciting but once a short break was called near a more open seasonally wet area, species numbers and variability increased with several orchids and a small *Raukaua simplex* being noted.

The party then split with a group walking along the fenceline to get easier access up onto the top of the escarpment. This was mostly beech with an interesting understory of sedges and ferns. *Blechnum discolor* being particularly common. The descent was made outside the fenceline where the mistletoe *Tupeia antarctica* was seen on ribbonwood (*Plagianthus regius*) and *Ileostylus micranthus* on mingimingi (*Coprosma propinqua*), perhaps protected from possum depredation by the somewhat isolated nature of the trees. Of note also were a very large specimen of *Myrsine divaricata*, a specimen *Coprosma rubra* spotted just over the fence and a few *Olearia fragrantissima* plants.

After a leisurely lunch inertia seemed to have set in for a while but eventually a straggling procession made its way to the bush area on private land above the river. The main attraction here was the presence of both *Olearia hectori* and *O. fragrantissima*. Seeing them both together helped reinforce the difference between the two species, the zigzag branches of *O. fragrantissima* being the main determinant. *Tupeia antarctica* was seen growing on one of the *O. fragrantissima* trees. A large flowering specimen of *Aciphylla subflabellata* was also a notable find as was a plant of the rare sedge *Uncinia strictissima*. Concern was expressed about an exotic *Sedum* sp., which was noted growing on a number of limestone ledges. A specimen was taken for identification purposes.

Some of the group then made their way down to the beech forest beside the river where a number of *Gastrodia cunninghamii* plants were in full flower. These were heavily scented and the perfume permeated the air. Funnily enough some people could not detect the perfume and other comments ranged from it being delightful to rather cloying and unpleasant. Down on the river edge we were greeted with a lovely rata tree (*Metrosideros umbellata*) in full flower.

Overall another very enjoyable day of good company and good botanising.



Clifden Limestone. Photo by Robyn Bridges