

elder at the creek. There was some gorse along one perimeter fence that provided low shelter and will eventually be taken over by kanuka.

Our afternoon tea stop was by a huge pokaka that had recently blown down. The cut sections of trunk made good seats. Then we climbed up the gully, over the stile and, as I headed across the grassy paddock towards the vehicle, I turned round to see Nola and Bastow on their knees, peering into the grass. To everyone's surprise this exotic grassland supported a dense carpet of turf plants below the pasture grasses.

Native species recorded were:

Acaena novae-zelandiae

Anisotome aromatica

Centella uniflora

Geranium sessiflorum

Gonocarpus micranthus

Gunnera monoica

Helichrysum filicaule

Hydrocotyle novae-zelandiae var. *montana*

Kunzea ericoides

Microtis unifolia

Rytidosperma sp.

Awakiki Bush and Otanomomo, 25 .04 .01 - Helen Clarke.

A small group of six traveled South to visit these areas, ably led by Kelvin Lloyd. At Otanomomo we were joined by Noeline and Donald MacLean who own bush on the south edge of the Awakiki Reserve and have it covenanted with Q E II National Trust.

First stop was at Otanomomo Scientific Reserve, which is easily seen and often admired from SH 92 on the way to the Catlins. I was keen to see inside this interesting looking bush. Alas, as Kelvin had warned us, it was an exercise in "spot the most invasive weed" and there were many to choose from! We were alarmed to find, in the north west corner, Chilean Flame Creeper (*Tropaeolum speciosum*) abundant but also Holly, Elderberry, *Solanum dulcamara*, *Daphne laureola*, and very dense blackberry. Below the towering Matai and Kahikatea in this area we found very little in the way of healthy undergrowth. Talk during the visit was focussed pretty much on the weed invasion.

On the way to Awakiki Bush we made a quick check on another edge of Otanomomo for *Olearia hectori*, but were unable to locate any.

Awakiki Bush is reached via a farm track and just prior to entering the bush the trail passes by a derelict farmhouse and the remains of a garden. A very large Ivy smothers part of the back of the house and Hawthorn trees mark the garden boundaries. From the edge the bush looks degraded and scrappy but, surprisingly, once inside it is significantly more intact and healthy looking than Otanomomo.

The area has been fenced for about nine years now and has a small loop track allowing easy access to a large Totara. The obvious ramification of the recent fencing is an abundance of *Pittosporum eugenioides*, *Aristotelia serrata*, *Myrsine australis*, and to a lesser extent *Meliclytus ramiflorus*, *Pittosporum tenuifolium*, *Cordyline australis* and *Carpodetus serratus* all of which provide a very green effect at one to two metre height. This new understorey was really showing the effects of lack of moisture with droopy flaccid leaves. Always towering above are large Totara, Miro and Matai and the occasional old *Griselinia littoralis*.

Lunch stop was just inside the bush, where Moira and Allison set to try out the Acaena key. They discovered we were sitting on *Acaena juvenca*. The barbed fruit stuck to our clothes.

The largest *Podocarpus totara* allowed five people to “hug” it arms outstretched. The *Hoheria angustifolia* juvenile was checked out for its filiramulose habit. Mature trees of Miro and Matai were found for comparative identification. We observed the difference between *Neomyrtus pedunculatus* and *Lophomyrtus obcordata* and had many discussions on the small leafed shrubs. Pat Enright ventured in large circles checking out the plant list supplied by Kelvin, while Allison peered through her lens at the lichens, which included 5 different species of *Ramalina*. Kelvin showed us where Chilean flame Creeper has been found.

Once the circular track was completed Kelvin led us to a drier ridge where the tall podocarps did not dominate. Here we discovered how cryptic small seedlings of *Pseudopanax ferox* are, and took, for most of us, our first look at mature plants of this species. Other treats were the tiny dwarf mistletoe, *Korthalsella lindsayii* on *Melicope simplex*, the one specimen of *Oleria fragrantissima* found in the bush and the fern *Pellaea rotundifolia* at its southern limit. On the way out Kelvin pointed out *Coprosma virescens* on the bush edge.

A great day, thanks to Kelvin for sharing his knowledge of a very important remnant of totara dominated forest in lowland Otago. One was left, however, pondering the threat posed by the many invasive weeds within and surrounding the bush.

MORE REPORTS FROM THE OTAGO AND WELLINGTON BOTANICAL SOCIETIES' SUMMER FIELD TRIP.

This 10-day field trip was based at Borland Lodge, on the eastern boundary of Fiordland National Park, between Lakes Manapouri and Monowai. It ran from 29 Dec – 7 Jan. Newsletter 25 covered reports of visits to Pukerau Red Tussock Reserve, Green Lake Landslide, Hope Arm & Back Valley– Lake Manapouri, Clifden Limestone, Eldrig Tops, Otatara Reserve, Bushy Point and Threatened Plant Nursery, and South Borland Burn. Four of the five remaining reports follow.