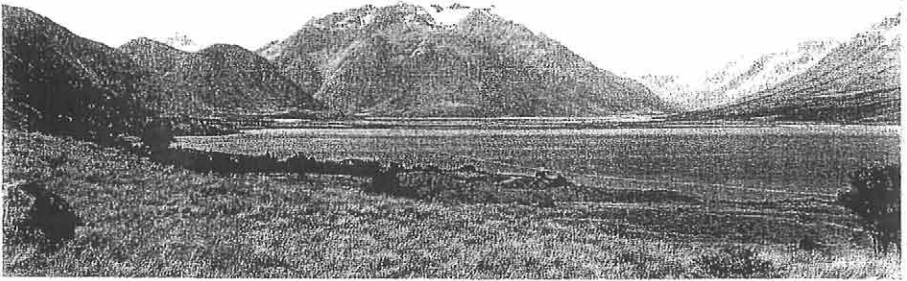


Summer Trip – Mt Cook to Omarama and more.

Keen botanists of diverse backgrounds and ages came from around the country to join this summer's combined Otago and Wellington Bot. Soc. 10 day trip. Sites visited ranged from wetland to alpine, from dry riverbed to dripping beech forest. The plants were fascinating, the people were wonderful and the campsites, beside Lake Pukaki and then Lake Ohau, had splendid views of the mountains (when the clouds parted).



View up Lake Ohau from above our cosy Glen Mary Ski Club base – *Joyce Wilson*

Participants included: Ted Abraham-*Mangaweka*, Beth Andrews-*Ekatahuna*, Barbara and Peter Beveridge-*Wellington*, Robyn Bridges-*Dunedin*, Barbara Clark-*Wellington*, Rosemary Collier-*Wellington*, Gael Donaghy-*Tauranga*, Audrey Eagle-*Dunedin*, Chris Ecroyd-*Rotorua* David and Karen Havell-*Palmerson North*, Chris Horne-*Wellington*, Ros Iles-*Wellington*, Rick Jackson-*Christchurch*, Graeme Jane-*Tauranga*, Allison Knight-*Dunedin*, Rodney Lewington-*Wellington*, Barbara Mitcalfe-*Wellington*, Donella Moss-*Wellington*, Ruth Peszynski-*Cromwell*, Frank Rogers-*Wellington*, Emil Schmiege-*Ekatahuna*, Darca Sherratt-*Wellington*, Barbara and Neill Simpson-*Queenstown*, Val Smith-*New Plymouth*, Nola Walker-*Dunedin*, Bastow Wilson-*Dunedin*, Joyce Wilson-*Wellington*.

🌿 Pukaki Scientific Reserve, 28 Dec – *Gael Donaghy*

Chosen for its easy access from camp on our first morning, this reserve proved to be a worthy starting point for botanising.

The reserve is fenced to exclude rabbits, and looked like it had been grazed tussock grassland in the past. Nearest the road a thick cover of *Hieracium* was evident. Keen eyes soon spotted little orchid seedheads emerging from this, and a grovel uncovered the rosettes of one of the small multiheaded *Pterostylis* orchid species. Dissection of a shrivelled flower allowed it to be identified as *Pterostylis mutica*. The rosettes of leaves were still green despite the fact that the seeds had been dispersed from many of the capsules.

Near the road there are small, seasonally wet areas which provide habitats for wetland species like *Pratia perpusilla* with its rumpled leaves and split flower, and *Epilobium angustum*, which also has distinctive rumpled, brownish leaves. As we moved back from the road, the tussock grassland contained many more orchid plants, mostly *Praesophyllum colensoi* and the little *Microtis oligantha*, with its few-flowered spike. By late morning it was warm enough for the white flowered sun orchid, *Thelymitra longifolia*, to be in flower.

Moraine with large rocks provided shelter and protection for shrubs and other plants. Here the shrubs are dominated by *Discaria toumatou*, *Aristotelia fruticosa*, and *Coprosma propinqua* with some *C. intertexta*. In the shelter of the rocks were interesting plants like the small renga renga lily (*Arthropodium candidum*), two *Asplenium* – tiny *A. flabellifolium* and the beautiful carrot fern (*Asplenium richardii*), the white-leaved herbaceous yellow daisy *Brachyglottis haastii*, and the spider orchid *Corybas trilobus*. Perched in its usual habitat, the “hot rock fern” *Cheilanthes humilis* should not have been a surprise!

Those who took the long way back to the vehicles were rewarded with flowering plants of *Hebe cupressoides* while those who took the more direct route had time to spend exploring the red tussock fringed wetlands.

❁ Wet Grassland on Pukaki Downs Station, 28 Dec - Robyn Bridges

Plan A had been to botanise the Big Rock stream catchment in the afternoon. But as is the way with well laid plans, we ended up driving and walking across Pukaki Downs Station to botanise an area of low lying grassland, with a bit of bog surrounding a small alder lined lake (the source of the Station's water supply).

As we descended the last slope we had a close encounter with a magnificent solitary *Aciphylla aurea*, whose stems were heavily covered in seed. On the same contour and similarly isolated, grew a specimen of *Olearia virgata* with a fragrance reminiscent of almonds. With the benefit of hindsight, and Geoff Roger's stunning talk, this may have been one of the few remaining shrub species purported to have originally covered this area.

The lower boggy flat, which had been grazed, was dominated by *Juncus* species and introduced grasses. Interspersed were *Oreobolus pectinatus*, *Drosera arturi*, *Celmisia gracilentia*, *Epilobium* 'one of the 40', *Anistome imbricata*, *Gonocarpus* sp, *Gnaphalium traversii* and *Muehlenbeckia axillaris*.

A foray to the lake edge found *Carex secta*, *Phormium tenax* and *Chionochloa rubra*. On slightly less boggy ground we saw *Ranunculus glabrifolius* and *Wahlenbergia*. On drier and much softer areas, especially in patches of full sun, a few wilting *Botsocia sitzii* and *Botsocia prostrata* were in evidence.

Well, it was the afternoon of the first day!

Our thanks to the Managers of Pukaki Downs Station for permission to botanise their land.

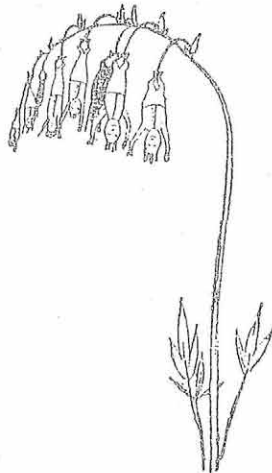


Fig. *Manypeepia upsidownia*
From Edward Lear's *Nonsense Botany*.