

immediate need. Should the chairman be unable to act, through illness or absence, the committee will vote for a new chairman, as stated in the constitution.

**Other business:** Suggestions were called for future events. Barbara Anderson suggested increasing the attraction of the field trips by giving them a theme. One such theme could for example be a weed survey and she has already spoken to relevant people at DoC. This was enthusiastically welcomed as a good idea and various members of the BSO present agreed to be involved.

The AGM was followed by an enjoyable talk by **Emeritus Professor Alan Mark** on **“Accelerating the conservation of biodiversity in tussockland through tenure review.”** Prof Mark showed us the dramatic imbalance between forested reserves and tussock grassland reserves, and led us through the tangled process of redressing the balance and creating tussock grassland reserves. We were impressed by how much had already been achieved, and a little daunted by how much still remained to be done to preserve biodiversity in a full range, especially in lowland areas. Congratulations, Alan, for all you have achieved, and are continuing to achieve, and thank you for increasing our awareness. Thank you, too, for the restoration of the tall snow tussock on the top of Maungatua. OTMC trampers had reason to be grateful for its shelter and its overgrowth of the *Aciphylla* on a recent chilly traverse. – *Allison Knight*

## **May meeting Report: Wildflowers of Eastern North America**

Four brilliant northern hemisphere seasons unfolded before our eyes as Dr Steve Stephenson, a William Evans visiting fellow from West Virginia, talked at our last meeting. Woods ablaze with autumn colour were the starting point, followed by native witch hazel (*Hamamelis virginiana*), which, with two flowering seasons, in late winter and in late fall, can be both the earliest and the latest spring flower.

The aromatic skunk cabbage (*Symplocarpus foetidus*), which can generate enough heat to melt snow, also emerges early. Interestingly, its flower head mimics a morel mushroom and is pollinated by the same kind of flies. More pleasantly fragrant are the 20 or so species of *Viola*, which range in colour from bright yellow to the purple Johnny-jump-up. Spring buds on the red maple (*Acer rubrum*) can turn whole hillsides red. While the intriguing trout lily (*Erythronium americanum*) flowers at the same time as the trout run up the streams.

Wild trillium abound. We saw whole mats of the large-flowered white trillium, the stinking red trillium, which smells like a wet dog, and the delicately painted trillium. Interesting to see in their natural habitat were old garden friends such as lily of the valley, Solomon’s seal and Dutchman’s britches. There were edible violets, toxic blue larkspur and aquilegia with long nectar spurs that encourage pollination by butterflies and humming birds. (One wonders how these have become so well naturalised in New Zealand).

The well-endowed May apple flower shyly hides beneath large leaves while the red bud (*Cercis canadensis*) and dogwood (*Cornus florida*) proclaim the real start of spring.

Then a riot of colour and form unfolds – flame azaleas, native magnolia, rhododendron (*R. maximum*) [the state flower of West Virginia], magnificent tulip trees (*Liriodendron tulipifera*) and the white ‘tea tree’ (*Sassafras albidum*).

Colourful wildflowers too numerous to name jostle for space and light in the vernal race against time to get pollinated and set seed before the white-tailed deer eat them or leaves of the forest trees shade out all the light. Then all too soon the autumn colour came round again.

Thank you, Steve, for a wonderful walk through your woods.  
– Allison Knight



### **National Fungal Foray, Okuru, 5 – 12 May, 2002.**

*The biggest congratulations and thanks for organising this year's very successful National Fungal Foray must go to David Orlovich and his team from the Botany Department, University of Otago, who put it all together. David's report follows – ed.*

This year the 16th New Zealand Fungal Foray was based at Okuru on the beautiful lower West Coast of the South Island. We left Dunedin at about 9 AM on Sunday 5th May and arrived at Okuru (about 10 minutes drive south of Haast) at about 4 PM. Having not seen the sun in Dunedin for some time, the warmth of Central Otago and the spectacular drive through the Otago Lakes and along the Haast Valley was a welcome indication of the great week we were about to have. In typical West Coast style, we had rain, sun, fog, storms and surprisingly mild temperatures for most of the week.

The wet weather preceding our visit ensured that there were mushrooms aplenty in the coastal forests south of Haast, albeit mostly wood-rotting ones, with a relative paucity of large ectomycorrhizal species even in the beech forests. Lawre Taylor treated the brave to a meal of *Armillaria novaezelandia* on one evening - that species was fruiting in abundance - although I must admit the slimy texture didn't particularly appeal to me! In all, there were about 54 participants in the foray, with most from New Zealand but others from Australia, the United States of America and England.

There was a notable presence of photographers, both professional and amateur, as well as journalists from TV NZ, National Radio and NZ House & Garden. We were treated to beautiful slide and video presentations by Taylor Lockwood, Don Horne and Shirley Kerr. Dunedin photographer Andrew MacKay has put some photographs from the foray on the web at <http://www.keaphotos.co.nz/> (follow the link to "Fungi" and then "Foray Photos").

Student attendance was particularly high, with Rebekah Fuller from the University of Auckland who gave a talk on Maatauranga Maori o nga Harore or traditional ecological knowledge of fungi, and a large group from the University of Otago that included eight 4th year Mycology students and several honours and postgrad research students. A real thrill for me was seeing these students really enjoying the week-long "immersion" in field mycology. I am sure that the interactions between the students and other foray participants, both professionals and amateurs, will motivate and enthuse this next generation of New Zealand mycologists and I'm really proud to be