O ye Clematis and .....
O ye Fomes and ..... these three verse to be sung concurrently
O ye Pterostylis and ....

Bless the Lord.

Sung at the Auckland Botanical Society, Midwinter Dinner, July 1995. Adapted by permission from Benedicite by Andrew Carter & Oxford University Press 1991.

Field Trip To North Cape, October 20-25 1995

Introduction Maureen Young

Over an extended Labour Weekend, 23 members headed north intent on exploring the North Cape Scientific Reserve and surrounding areas. Thanks to the efficient and enthusiastic support of the Department of Conservation staff members, Lisa Forester and Trevor Bullock, camp was set up, first at the shearers' quarters at Te Paki, and subsequently at Carl's Bach, a stone's throw from beautiful Waikuku Beach. Trevor's assistance in escorting the motley assemblage of 4WD vehicles over the hair-raising road to the Cape, was also much appreciated.

To spread the weighty responsibility of writing a trip report, a new approach was tried. Each day a randomly chosen member of the party was told - "today is your day!". The following patchwork report is the result of this tactic.

Friday 20 October Stella Rowe

There was a prolonged arrival by Bot. Soccers at the Te Paki shearers' quarters all Friday afternoon, and indeed on into Saturday morning when the food eventually arrived. Once the bees were cleared away from under the roof we all settled in, reminiscing about past trips and planning for the delights to come on the Surville Cliffs, a botanists' Mecca.

Saturday 21 October

Our convoy of four wheel drives set out for Waikuku Beach after breakfast, taking a turn-off from the Spirits Bay Road on the old serpentine quarry route which runs at first through pine forest.

Several of us were dropped off to walk along Tom Bowling Bay, going down through the pines to the stream at the southern end. *Pomaderris edgerleyi*, *Hibiscus diversifolius*, *Colensoa physaloides* and a vivid pink *Parsonsia capsularis* by the stream, then *Doodia aspera* on the hillside, all took time to examine, but in the end we were not long behind the others who had to tow each others' vehicles out of the deep muddy spots on the road.

Camp near an old bach was an idyllic spot under pohutukawas two minutes from the beach, which most people explored in the afternoon, the *Atriplex billardierei* being an especial draw. The plants did not appear as lush as in David Given's photograph (Wilson & Given, 1989) as *Theleophyton billardierei*.

It was a good start to what was to follow on the Surville Cliffs the next day.

Sunday 22 October Merilyn Merrett

It was with some surprise and trepidation that I received the news that I was to be scribe for Sunday's botanising activities. Being a new member and this being my first "away" trip, I figured this must be some form of initiation rite.

The group left camp shortly after 8 am with the objective being to walk/botanise up the old mine road to the Surville Cliffs, visiting the quarry site at some stage.

We set off along the 4 wheel drive track, soon spotting *Adiantum aethiopicum* growing under the dominant one and a half metre tall *Leptospermum scoparium* canopy. Before reaching the old mine road, we walked alongside a newly erected electrified fence which we were warned to be wary of because of the high voltage, which was apparently capable of throwing a person some distance. Interestingly, on the homeward journey Frank managed to test this out! I had caught up with Frank and as we were walking along and conversing, he inadvertently grabbed a wire! He didn't get thrown anywhere but whereas previously he had complained of tired feet, he later seemed to have a spark in his step! (and a twinkle in his eye).

The old mine road climbed steadily upwards and was extremely colourful, with tonnes of red, brown and green earths, sculptured by the elements to form a smooth surface intersected with channels and bounded by down-cuttings along the sides. During the climb the group managed to become split into several sub-groups. The front party was seen disappearing into the low cloud, while discoursing at length about the characteristics of various *Thelymitra* species. Roadside plants included *Cyathodes juniperina*, displaying white and dark red fruit, abundant *Gleichenia dicarpa*, and occasionally *Pseudopanax lessonii*. *Pimelea urvilleana*, *Pomaderris edgerleyi*, and *P. paniculosa* subsp. *novae-zelandiae* were in flower, and *Cassytha paniculata* was common, draping the manuka.

Some wonderful rocky areas by the road were inspected, revealing diminutive plants of *Parsonsia capsularis* in flower, and beneath the calf-high vegetation, *Lindsaea linearis* was extensive, looking magnificent with the new, unrolling, erect fertile fronds. Monocots noted were *Morelotia affinis*, *Schoenus brevifolius*, *Lepidosperma filiforme*, *L. laterale*, and *Dianella nigra*. Occasional *Hebe macrocarpa* var. *brevifolia* with its reddish-purple flowers, and *H. ligustrifolia* with its yellowish foliage were present. *Geniostoma rupestre* var. *crassum* was noticeable due to its strong curry aroma.

The cliff area itself was amazing because of the prostrate growth displayed by all species. Manuka plants no taller than about 10 cm were heavily in flower, and *Leucopogon parviflorus* with its reddish foliage and upright flowers looked really lovely. The flowers of *L. parviflorus*, when viewed under a hand lens, looked amazing because of the dense hairiness of the upper surface of the petals. *Arthropodium cirratum* was in bud, and *Thelymitra* species were abundant and in flower. During lunch break some people descended the cliffs for a short distance to look at *Pittosporum pimeleoides* subsp. *major* and *P.* aff. *ellipticum*.

After lunch we ambled and botanised along the cliff tops with a high point of the day occurring when Geoff spotted *Thelymitra matthewsii* growing in an area bare of other vegetation. The small population consisted of 7 plants, distinctive because of the spiral leaf. Only one plant was in flower - a lovely purple colour.

Shortly after this event, a trio of the male gender went exploring down a steep gully to test the temperature of the ocean and were not seen again for many hours. Some of us bashed our way through dense *Lepidosperma filiforme* to rejoin the track and then on to the quarry, while others

returned to camp at their own pace. The day's activities were followed by an evening of conviviality.

Monday 23 October Gordon Perry

I felt the power of a chicken bone being pointed directly at me - "You are writing up this day!".

This day proved easy to write about as it followed a previously heavy day of walking into the North Cape area, all so keen to take in the lie of the land yet not stand on some precious flora yet unseen by ourselves. So this second day took on a more settled approach, with longer distances walked.

The North Cape is truly unique, with plant life described by some as bonsai-like, supposedly caused by the mineral imbalance of serpentine soils. Just imagine studying a *Phyllocladus trichomanoides* "tree" of possibly tens of years old yet not up to knee height. At some 200 metres above sea-level, the Surville Cliffs are backed by rolling country supporting stunted vegetation and deep colourful clay eroded guts. There is a feeling of mystery about this most northern part of New Zealand. After perusing the cliff-top vegetation and finding several plants of *Pterostylis tasmanica* (*P. plumosa*) among the botanical treasures to be seen there, it was onward to North Cape; the next hill, the next hill, the next hill; unprotected legs painfully scratched by low growing manuka were at last given time to settle during the lunch break. From our vantage point we saw rafts of sea birds, some hundreds strong, working the rich fishing grounds below.

As we moved on again, a good population of *Korthalsella salicornioides* was found scattered through the manuka. Just ahead lay Murimotu Island which supports New Zealand's most northern navigational mainland light. With a natural land bridge we were able to climb and botanise before descending to begin our excursion back towards camp.

A fine fellow from the museum staff said the best way out from North Cape was to ascend the "embankment" rising away from the rocky shore. Up we went in a line formation like Mother Goose and family, to reach some 170 metres above sea-level. As well it was clad with pohutukawa trees, otherwise we would have fallen off. Traversing a valley or two and down a rain-gouged stream, we passed *Libertia grandiflora* and *Psilotum nudum*, and reached bouldered shores again. Over a once strong pa we clambered and across white sands to reach camp. Thanks to Bryn yet again for his preparation of the evening meal. So ended a long and enjoyable day.

Tuesday 24 October Geoff Davidson

Our last day at Waikuku Beach dawned dull and grey, which matched the mood of those who had attended the previous night's revelries, which were to have gone on for days, but ended with the last drops of fortified beverage. The last revellers began preparations for the morrow's breakfast of macaroni cheese. Enthusiasm returned at the prospect of more botanising, but left leaderless we wandered off in all directions. The *Colocasia esculenta* (taro) and *Araucaria heterophylla* (Norfolk pine) were the attraction at the pa site on the northern headland of the beach. The elusive *Eleocharis neozelandica* drew others into the swamp and on to the "lake" 2 km south. Others considered some "in depth" research into which came first - the increase in *Atriplex billardierei*, or the mounds of horse dung upon which many appeared to be growing.

A broken camp was packed into vehicles for the uneventful return trip to the Te Paki shearers' quarters. As we left, the vast flocks of *Larus novaehollandiae* dipped their wings in farewell, as though they realised we might never return.

Wednesday 25 October Maureen Young

The demands of the work-a-day world called many to return homewards on this day, but those left behind set off, despite the rain, in search of the Te Paki endemic, *Metrosideros bartlettii.* A combination of misunderstanding instructions and misreading the map meant that several gullies and ridges were traversed before the promised trees were located. These trees all looked wonderfully healthy, with the new season's foliage bright green against the old, and binoculars revealed that they were laden with buds. We regretted that we couldn't see them in a month's time when the white flowers would be open. As if to celebrate this scene, the rain cleared up, and we explored in comfort, and admired the efforts made by DOC to protect and enhance the community. Trees were banded against possums, bait stations were set up, and saplings were planted in a variety of situations.

We returned to base well pleased with our day, and on the next day, when driving home through flooded landscapes, we realised how minor our wetting had been.

Reference

Wilson, Catherine. M. & David R., Given. 1989. *Threatened Plants of New Zealand.* Botany Division DSIR Publishing, Wellington.

Editors Note: A species list of the North Cape area has been promised for the next edition of this year's journal.

Andropogon virginicus and *Stipa tenuissima*

R. O. Gardner, P. D. Champion and P. J. de Lange

The unwelcome presence in New Zealand of these two grasses is noted.

Andropogon virginicus L. broomsedge

Tufted perennial, 50 (-100) cm tall; leaves rather pale green, sheaths flattened, blades 3 mm wide, margins villous proximally. Inflorescence narrow, the 2-4 racemes c. 2.5 cm long, more or less included in the spathes; rachis internodes and pedicels with pale long hairs; spikelets paired, sessile spikelet c. 3 mm long, pedicelled spikelet obsolete.

Native to eastern North America. Naturalised elsewhere, including Hawaii and Australia, where it can be abundant in dry, low-fertility sites. It is an important weed of marginal pasture in the USA. Dense infestations in pine plantings present a fire risk and inhibit the growth of pine seedlings.

Broomsedge was first recorded for NZ by Edgar and Shand (1987). It has a scattered distribution at present, specimens coming from Glenbrook (in 1963), Waiotapu (1976), the Riverhead highway near Albany Hill (1987), and the Warkworth town centre (1995). One of us (P. J. de L.) saw it last year in Northland, at Matai Bay and at Te Paki. Despite seven years of eradication measures it persists at the Albany Hill site.