

extensive views in all directions, of which the most dramatic were to the west, where we looked down on the rich Waikato plain a thousand feet below, with Cambridge laid out like a map and Mt. Pirongia as a backdrop; and to the south with Karapiro Lake and Maungatautari. The cleared summit with its views, the Gudex memorial, the flowering trees on the site of the former sanatorium and the bush margin, proved sufficiently interesting to many to occupy the available time. There is a forest reserve on the western slope of the mountain and some of us walked a little way into it, not as a party but in separate small groups. One group reported a stand of Libertia and of Asplenium lamprophyllum; another found the ferns and ground plants very delightful, though not much different from those of the Waitakeres; they came across a large puketea with numerous seedlings scattered around. A third group was rewarded by a rich patch of Corybas trilobus and C. macranthus, with many plants of the latter in flower. When the bus drew up on the summit on arrival, Mr. Butler immediately found on a tree on the roadside a large specimen of Drymoanthus adversus, with numerous flowers, which orchid (under its former name of Sarcochilus) was a great favourite of Gudex.

Michael Gudex was headmaster of the Hamilton High School for many years and as a keen amateur botanist he explored and listed the flora on many of the hill blocks in the middle Waikato, frequently led parties into the bush and inspired an enthusiastic following. After his death a monument to his memory was erected on this hilltop.

After an early lunch we got away quickly to avoid the traffic jam which usually develops on the southern highway later in Labour Day. A vote of thanks was accorded Mr. Warren for his enjoyable programme of visits.

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#### OUR WEST COAST TRIP. 28th. JANUARY TO 3rd. FEBRUARY.

As on previous occasions the report of the trip has been compiled by several members to distribute the work involved. We trust that the report will lose nothing by reason of this, but will be found interesting and informative to those who were unable to join the privileged 40 who made up the very happy party.

#### Friday - 28th. January.

A little excitement occurred in the initial stages through a taxi having a flat battery and thus causing a delay to the pick-up bus at the Victoria St. meeting point. However there was no further delay and we were able to board our plane almost immediately on arrival at the airport. The flight was a good one, except that cloud south of Auckland interrupted our view of the country over which we were passing. On reaching Nelson in fine weather, we found our bus awaiting us, driven by one Bob Walbran, who proved subsequently to be the best driver we have had on any of our trips. Not only was he very knowledgeable regarding the country through which we passed, but also superb in handling a big bus in tricky situations.

After a welcome breakfast in a tea-room at Tahuna, we set off on our long journey by road to Hokitika. For some miles we passed through the Golden Downs Forest, which contains several species of introduced conifers, a short stop being made on the summit of the Spooner Range for the benefit of our photographers. So much of interest was now to be seen that time flew by until we reached Murchison, where we stopped for a short break.

The next part of the journey through the Upper Buller Gorge to Inangahua Junction was rather awe inspiring; in fact it could be said that this is no place for those with bad nerves. At one spot a large part of a hillside has been thrown down into the river, partially blocking it. It is unbelievable how violent Nature can be when she decides to become rough. Lucky indeed are we who do not have to live in an earthquake area such as this. The road is narrow enough, but driving is made more difficult by great quantities of earth and rock which have fallen from above. We were held up at one very bad area while bulldozers forced a gap only just wide enough to allow the bus to pass through.

Leaving the gorge, we now made good time to Reefton, where we lunched in the local reserve. Then followed a brief visit to the Black Point Museum, a most interesting place housing many articles which are not seen to-day, but which were in common use not so long ago.

The journey was without excitement now until we got near Greymouth. Here the road was almost blocked by three enormous boulders which had fallen from above. Whether they were pushed, or fell of their own accord, we do not know. However, the bus had just enough room to scrape through.

The road from Greymouth to Hokitika was good and we were able to breathe freely for a change. We reached our hotel feeling quite fresh and in good time for a wash and change before dinner.

The general feeling after this journey was one of amazement at the great amount of poor, waste and unoccupied land in this part of the South Island.

Saturday, 29th. January.

LAKE KANIERE AND GOLD MINE.

A.D.M.

On our first morning we visited Lake Kaniere, about 12 miles from Hokitika, stopping for a while on the way to examine the forest on the terrace gravels which cover large parts of Westland at the foot of the mountains. The dominant tree was kamahi, with tall, closely spaced slender trunks, interspersed with some well grown rimu. The understory contained Cyathea smithii, Quintinia acutifolia, Schefflera digitata and twiggy Coprosmas. Olearia ilicifolia was new to many of us. The ground cover was rich and interesting, with seedling kamahi, pokaka and rimu, Libertia pulchella, Leptopteris superba, Blechnum minus and other ferns, with a deep moss carpet.

After a short stop on the shore of Lake Kaniere, beautifully situated among forested hills, we continued along the road which runs round the northern side of the lake, stopping to look at the spectacular

Dorothy Falls. The road circuits the head of the lake and we returned to Hokitika via the broad fertile Kokatahi Valley, pausing to admire a tame deer with a fine antler, which came up to the fence to receive offerings of barley sugar.

In the afternoon we paid a visit to the Blue Spur Gold Mine. This is an abandoned sluicing claim, insufficiently rich in gold to be worth working commercially, but which has been re-opened as a tourist attraction, where for a modest charge visitors are shown tunnels, a sluice in operation, and the primitive process of panning gold-bearing gravels by hand, and are taken for a short bush walk. For an extra charge visitors can try their hand at panning. Several of our party did so and were rewarded by finding at the bottom of their pans a few flakes of alluvial gold which they took home in a glass tube.

The road to this mine, as well as some of the roads traversed on other days, passed through an example of pakihi land, which is fairly widespread in Westland. This is level terrace land which has a tight iron pan under the surface, with such poor drainage that little will grow on it except bog plants. Seen from the bus it is largely carpeted with stunted Gleichenia dicarpa. Frequent attempts have been made to farm it by burning off and sowing in grass, nearly all resulting in failure.

Sunday, 30th. January.

FRANZ JOSEF GLACIER.

W.H.

We made an early start for our trip to Franz Josef. The weather was not very bright, which was a pity, as the colour of the lakes we passed was grey and they lost some of their beauty through lack of reflections. As with so much of the West Coast, places which a hundred years ago had been thriving towns are now a name on the map and all that remains of the gold mining activities are patches of water in the swamp and perhaps a chimney standing alone.

Crossing the tidal river Totara and valley, we passed through Ross, a tiny settlement now where once there were 3500 miners and 47 hotels to quench their insatiable thirst. Here was mined the huge nugget weighing 99ozs, the largest found in New Zealand, nicknamed the Hon. Roddy and later presented to the King. We then passed through the beautiful Fergusson's Bush, 5 miles of scenic reserve, and on over the big Waitahi River with the wide river flats, then through bush till the road skirts the shores of the lovely little Lake Ianthe. Here, just off the road, we saw the giant matai reputed to be over 1000 years old, but many of the party were mainly interested in several pigeons which were contentedly feeding on the supplejack berries and wineberries almost within reach.

Our next stop was for a welcome cup of tea at Harihari - no wonder its translation, Joy-joy, seemed appropriate. From here we went over forest clad Mt. Hercules, then through cleared areas of farm land, clumps of bush and flax with swift flowing creeks, and always the mountains towering on our left. In one part we crossed a large desolate area of swamp and dead vegetation with here and there the remains of a farmhouse, all that is left after a disastrous flood several years ago.

We passed the turning to the Okarito Lagoon, the sanctuary and breeding place of the Kotuku, the white heron, and so on to Franz Josef where we had lunch outside the impressive Westland National Park H.Q. It is disappointing that the view of the glacier previously seen through the altar window of the little church nearby is now obscured as the bush has grown too tall. The bus took us along the narrow road beside the glacial waters of the Waiho River almost to the end of the glacier. The Forest Ranger who had come with us from the H.Q. piloted most of the party over the rocks for a nearer look at it and, on their return, there was a pleasant bush walk where he pointed out the places where the glacier had reached at various times since 1790. By this time light rain had set in and we had seen the best of the day, which had been most enjoyable.

Owing to shortage of time, our bush walk was done almost at a gallop. This was unfortunate, as there was a great variety of plants on the track, many of them being most interesting or comparatively rare. The following is a very incomplete list of those seen - Olearia illicifolia, Mazus radicans, Aristotelia hybrids (A. serrata x A. fruticosa) of various shapes and sizes, Pittosporum colensoi, Olearia avicenniaefolia, Epilobium in flower, Hoheria glabrata in flower, Neopanax simplex, Luzuriaga parviflora, Carmichaelia grandiflora, Metrosideros umbellata in flower, a Senecio (possibly S. reinoldii), Pratia angulata and the ferns Trichomanes strictum, Leptolepia novae-zelandiae and Todea superba. Orchids included the Corybas species, Pterostylis (two varieties), Dendrobium cunninghamii in flower and Earina mucronata, also in flower.

Monday, 31st. January

LAKE BRUNNER AND SHANTYTOWN.

L.W.B.

Leaving at 9 a.m. we travelled north on the Hokitika - Greymouth road for several miles, then turned inland on the Kumara Rd., passing through two old gold mining towns, Stafford and Goldsborough. These places are now practically non-existent. In the early days of Dick Seddon (the place he came from) they were populous. Now nothing but a few derelict buildings remain. We met the Otira Gorge Road near Kumara and drove through to the railway junction, where we picked up two of our members who had spent the night in Greymouth.

Turning back to Kumara, we left the main road and crossed the Taramakau River on the road to Lake Brunner. From the middle of the bridge we could see a gold dredge that is still working, doing its best to mess up the country. We followed a stream which was full of dredge tailings of many years existence - they extended for miles. A little later on we stopped for a spell in the middle of a patch of very nice bush, where we found many interesting specimens.

Arriving at Mitchell's about lunchtime, we strolled round and enjoyed the view. Lake Brunner is the largest lake in Westland, six miles long by four miles wide. On the northern shore we could see the town of Moana, on the Otira-Greymouth line.

After lunch we returned to Kumara, walking down a part of the road through the bush. From Kumara junction we went towards Greymouth and turned inland to a place called Shantytown, a replica of a West Coast gold mining town of the 1880's complete with its gold sluicing claim set

amid natural bush, just seven miles from Greymouth. Here one will find an old time Pub., General store, Printing works, Chinese den, Gaol, Carpenter's shop, Barber's shop, Cobbler's shop and a genuine 104 years old Church. This place was well worth the visit, especially to have a short ride in the old train.

From there we had an uneventful ride back to Hokitika. At places where we stopped to botanise, we saw amongst others the specimens on the following list:-

Elaeocarpus dentatus, Myrsine salicina, Podocarpus totara, Weinmannia racemosa, Phyllocladus alpinus, Pennantia corymbosa, Olearia avicenniaefolia, Meliclytus lanceolatus, Coprosma foetidissima, C. rotundifolia, Dracophyllum traversii?, Hoheria glabrata, Carpodetus serratus, Aristotelia serrata, Paratrophis microphylla, Dendrobium cunninghamii (in flower), Earina autumnalis, Bulbophyllum pygmaeum, Metrosideros umbellata, M. perforata, several Dacrydiums and small-leaved Coprosmas, also numerous rimus. The beautiful fern, Leptolepia novae-zelandiae, was very plentiful at Mitchell's on the shores of Lake Brunner.

Tuesday, 1st. February

PUNAKAIKI ROCKS.

B.W.

Setting out for Punakaiki and passing through Greymouth we saw a lone pohutukawa in bloom near the bridge and further on a helicopter working for Japanese prospectors touched down in a field. Bob, our driver, gave us pieces of history about each area as we passed through, such as the Strongman mine where sixteen men died, and he pointed out the site of the home of Richard John Seddon where the chimney was still standing, and Barrytown where the gold dredge was still working. Further on we saw a group of Australians investigating the sand for ilmenite, zircon and rutile.

We were surprised to see nikau growing so far south and found that this is their southern limit. Northern rata, also at its southern limit, clothed the hillsides, some still being in bloom. For some distance the road followed the coast and extensive views of sea, cliffs and rocky outcrops greeted our eyes as we rounded the bends. We had a few short stops on the way to botanise and found Ascarina lucida, Elaeocarpus dentatus (hinau), Quintinia acutifolia, Pseudowintera colorata, Myrsine salicina, Solanum aviculare, Fuchsia perscandens, Gnaphalium trinerve, the large moss Dawsonia superba and the ferns Blechnum minus, B. patersonii, B. penna-marina, Lindsaea trichomanoides and what looked very like Lindsaea viridis.

Arriving at Punakaiki some members of the party refreshed themselves at the tearooms and others botanised on the edge of the bush. We were delighted with the tame wekas which wandered in our midst looking for food.

A narrow track led us through low coastal scrub to the spectacular pancake rocks. The usual small plants grew in the cracks, but two unusual finds were Plantago triandra and, along the cliff edge, drifts of Craspedia uniflora were flowering. Where the grass was short

on the edges of the track Pratia angulata, in bloom and berry, grew in profusion.

The rock formations were very interesting and the party was much attracted to watching the water spouting through the blowholes as each wave surged in. Altogether an interesting and enjoyable day.

Wednesday, 2nd. February.

ARTHURS PASS.

M.H.

One of the highlights of our Hokitika trip was the day at Arthur's Pass. Many members knew this area well from previous visits with the Society, but for me it was my first visit to a South Island alpine area. The mountains seemed to reflect the heat down into the valley and surprisingly the day was pleasantly warm and brilliantly sunny.

As we came into the high country, the vegetation changed completely, the rocky roadside covered with Olearia spp. Dracophyllum traversii and D. longifolium, with a ground fringe of fine lacy tutu, Coriaria angustissima.

The beauty and grandeur of this Pass Road is breathtaking. We left the bus near Otira to explore the edge of an old road and found Nothofagus solandri var. cliffortioides with the roadside covered with masses of Epilobium and Blechnum vulcanicum. Our lunch stop was at Arthur's Pass Village and I was amazed to see the railway station and a train entering the tunnel, in this wilderness area so removed from civilisation. Lunch seemed a secondary consideration, especially as I realised we were sitting in the shade of a glorious Hoheria glabrata in full bloom. A visit to the Museum - unfortunately the herbarium was empty due to re-classification - and a quick look at the alpine garden were all we had time to do. As we left, the towering mountains loomed about 4000 ft. above us and, on the right, the Bridal Veil Falls fell in silvery spray. Further on we saw the Devil's Punch Bowl Falls, whose stream supplied power to make the tunnel on the Canterbury side.

On the homeward trip we stopped to view an area which didn't look very interesting to me in my ignorance of alpine country, until I stepped on to this mountain bog. It was a fantastic miniature garden, the surface covered with a green cushion mat of Donatia novae-zelandiae and Phyllachne colensoi and, peeking out from this, was the dainty little purple Utricularia monanthos, barely an inch high, whose roots bear tiny bladders which catch minute aquatic animals. Growing near was the carnivorous Drosera arcturi, a tiny creeping Coprosma with large red berries, Anisotome aromatica in flower, a Celmisia glandulosa so small we searched for its rosette of leaves, Podocarpus nivalis in berry and, on the edge, the yellow Euphrasia cockayneana flowered.

Time called but we could have lingered, finding so much in this interesting bog garden. On the rocky area on the other side of the road grew Olearias, tutu and a large clump of beautiful Celmisia coriacea in flower.

The scenery took all our attention on the homeward journey, and so ended a day to be remembered always out of nearly a week of exciting and interesting days.

Thursday, 3rd. February.

Homeward Bound.

We managed to get away from Hokitika at 8.45 a.m. All or most were sorry to leave the Hotel Westland, where we had been so comfortably lodged. Owing to the fall of large rocks near Greymouth, mentioned in our report for 28th. January, the road was closed and we were obliged to take the alternative route via the coast road to Westport and then through the Lower Buller Gorge. However, this was an advantage, as we saw new country and were able to enjoy the beauty of the Lower Gorge. The lunch break was taken at Westport.

When we reached the Upper Buller Gorge we found the bulldozers still at work clearing the road, and were held up for some time to enable a track to be cleared for traffic. Once again we saw the damage caused by the upheavals during the earthquakes a few years ago.

The remainder of the bus journey was without incident and we reached Nelson in good time for tea and a stroll round the city. At the airport our baggage was quickly loaded into the plane and we were allowed to take off shortly before the appointed time. The flight was good and uneventful. Shortly before passing over New Plymouth, the pilot invited us to visit him in the cockpit, two at a time. This privilege, apparently most unusual, was very much appreciated by our members.

On arrival at Auckland, all in good spirits and not at all weary, Shears bus was found to be awaiting us and we were soon whisked away to the city.

So ended what all agreed was one of the best trips that the Society has had on its programme. Many thanks to Mr. Lediard for planning it.

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NORFOLK ISLAND TRIP.

Just a reminder to those who are interested in the South Pacific Botanical Group's trip to Norfolk Island in October - Time is running out and seats are filling up fast. Early application is therefore desirable if you want to be sure of a place. A booking form is enclosed in the front of this Newsletter - USE IT NOW!

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