Field Trip: Upper Huia Reservoir, Waitakere Ranges
Saturday, 20 June 2009

Peter Hutton, Mike Wilcox and Maureen Young

Field trip participants: Harry Beacham, Colleen Brewer, Warren Brewer, Jan Butcher, Pam Dale, Neil Davies, Donna D'Costa, Anne Grace, Marcel Horvath, Peter Hutton (leader), Helen Lyons, Sandra Maclean, Barrie McLeay, Gretta McLeay, Sharon Osman, Suman Pancha, Juliet Richmond, Emily Roper, Gorakh Silvester, Harold Waite, Alison Wesley, Mike Wilcox, Maureen Young (recorder).

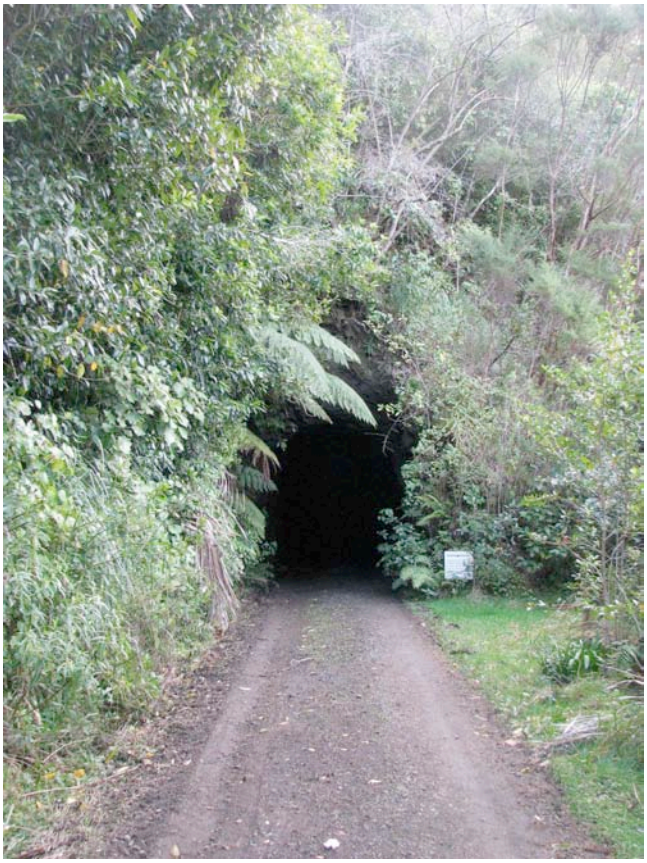

Fig. 1. Tunnel, Huia. Photo: Mike Wilcox, 20 June 2009.

We had got permission and the gate key from Watercare so were able to drive all the way to the upper Huia Reservoir. It was an exciting drive from the coast to the cleft in the hills where the reservoir stands. Six kilometres of narrow gravel road wound over a steep hill, through cuttings for the railway built in the late 1920s and through a tunnel (Fig. 1) to the base of the dam.

We had several botanical walks from there. The first was a loop back down the road a short distance, then along the last remaining section of railway track which led over a bridge and through another tunnel. It was great looking down to the mamaku (*Cyathea medullaris*) below and walking beneath the dripping cliff. The water pipeline that followed the path of the old railway line made for an interesting walk (Fig. 2),

Fig. 2. Pipeline, Huia. Photo: Mike Wilcox, 20 June 2009.

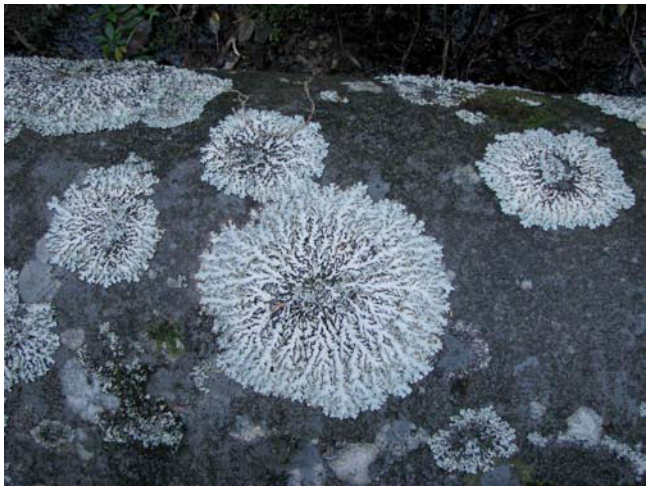

Fig. 3. Lichen (*Parmotrema* sp.?) on water pipe, Huia. Photo: Mike Wilcox, 20 June 2009.

Fig. 4. Bush below Upper Huia Dam, Huia. Photo: Mike Wilcox, 20 June 2009.

and there was a profuse growth on it of mosses such as *Ptychomnion aciculare* and *Macromitrium* sp. and

liverworts such as *Trichocolea molissima*, and lichens (Fig. 3).

Fig. 5. *Pittosporum eugenioides*, Huia. Photo: Mike Wilcox, 20 June 2009.

Next we panted up the zig-zag track to the top of the dam (Fig. 4). It was suggested that *Carmichaelia williamsii, Melicope simplex* ×*M. ternata* (*M.* ×*mantelli*), and *Olearia albida* near the track had been planted, probably by the caretaker, Nugget Thomson, in the 1940s. Lunch was in a sheltered spot at the far end of the dam. We noticed lemonwood *(Pittosporum eugenioides*) here, with its strikingly ovate leaves (Fig. 5). The party then split into two groups to investigate Nugget Track and the Upper Huia Dam Track.

Fig. 6. Kauri, Nugget Track, Huia. Photo: Mike Wilcox, 20 June 2009.

The walk up Nugget Track was at first steep and slippery, but it leveled out and became drier further up. Towards the ridge top there were impressive numbers of kauri (*Agathis australis*), some widely-spaced, squat and spreading, others more of ricker size, in denser stands (Fig. 6). Rimu (*Dacrydium cupressinum*) was also plentiful, and there were numerous large northern rata (*Metrosideros robusta*) – a prominent feature of this part of the Waitakere

Fig. 7. *Diplodium brumale*, Nugget Track, Huia. Photo: Mike Wilcox, 20 June 2009.

Fig. 8. *Ophioglossum coriaceum*, Upper Huia Dam Track. Photo: Gorakh Silvester, 20 June 2009.

Ranges. One of the commonest associated trees was white maire (*Nestegis lanceolata*), and taraire (*Beilschmiedia tarairi*) was also conspicuous on the lower section of the track. We found good numbers of *Melicytus macrophyllus* (and *M. ramiflorus* for convenient comparison), several kawaka (*Libocedrus*

plumosa) and miro (*Prumnopitys ferruginea*), and *Pittosporum ellipticum, Ixerba brexioides, Corokia buddleioides* and *Quintinia serrata*. The undergrowth in the kauri forest was a dense cover of *Astelia trinervia* (some reddish in colour), kiekie (*Freycinetia banksii*), *Gahnia xanthocarpa*, and spindly specimens of *Brachyglottis kirkii* var. *angustior*. *Rubus australis* was a prominent ground cover in places. Harry Beacham found a patch of *Ichthyostomum pygmaeum*, and an orchid delight in the kauri area was *Diplodium brumale*, flowering nicely (Fig. 7).

The Upper Huia Dam Track was very muddy. We walked as far as Castle Stream then returned. Some of the more interesting plants along this track were a single large toatoa (*Phyllocladus toatoa*), quite plentiful hinau (*Elaeocarpus dentata*), and a few plants of *Dracophyllum latifolium, Quintinia serrata* and *Corokia buddleioides*. The umbrella fern (*Sticherus cunninghamii*) was present along the track, and on a tree fern trunk near the stream was a covering of *Hymenophyllum ferrugineum*. *Pittosporum ellipticum* and *Libocedrus plumosa* were also present. A nice surprise was a population of *Ophioglossum coriaceum* growing on moss-covered rocks at the top of a small waterfall in the stream (Fig. 8). Most plants were sterile, but there were a few showing fertile spikes. *Lobelia angulata* (=*Pratia angulata*) grew in the same habitat, with little wisps straggling through the moss.

From the base of the dam we walked down the road for 3 km at a swift pace. *Laurelia novae-zelandiae* was quite common near the road, and one tree of *Nestegis montana* was spotted by sharp eyes. At the lower entrance to the road tunnel we found the exotic maidenhair fern *Adiantum raddianum*.

<u>Appendix 1.</u> Native vascular plants seen on ABS trip to Upper Huia Reservoir, Waitakere Ranges, 20 June 2009 (pl.=planted).

Ferns & Fern Allies (42)

Adiantum cunninghamii
Adiantum fulvum
Asplenium bulbiferum
Asplenium flaccidum
Asplenium oblongifolium
Blechnum chambersii
Blechnum discolor
Blechnum filiforme
Blechnum fluviatile
Blechnum fraseri
Blechnum membranaceum
Blechnum novae-zelandiae
Cardiomanes reniforme
Cyathea dealbata
Cyathea medullaris
Cyathea smithii
Dicksonia squarrosa
Doodia australis
Histiopteris incisa
Huperzia varia
Hymenophyllum demissum
Hymenophyllum dilatatum
Hymenophyllum ferrugineum
Hymenophyllum sanguinolentum
Lastreopsis hispida
Leptopteris hymenophylloides
Loxogramme dictyopteris
Lycopodiella cernua
Lycopodium volubile
Lygodium articulatum
Microsorum pustulatum
Microsorum scandens
Ophioglossum coriaceum
Paesia scaberula
Pneumatopteris pennigera
Pteridium esculentum
Pteris tremula
Sticherus cunninghamii
Tmesipteris elongata
Tmesipteris lanceolata
Tmesipteris tannensis
Trichomanes elongatum

Gymnosperms (8)

Agathis australis
Dacrycarpus dacrydioides
Dacrydium cupressinum
Libocedrus plumosa
Phyllocladus toatoa
Phyllocladus trichomanoides
Podocarpus hallii
Prumnopitys ferruginea

Dicotyledons (78)

Alseuosmia macrophylla
Beilschmiedia tarairi
Beilschmiedia tawa
Brachyglottis kirkii var. *angustior*
Brachyglottis repanda
Carmichaelia williamsii – pl.
Carpodetus serratus

Centella uniflora
Clematis paniculata
Coprosma arborea
Coprosma grandifolia
Coprosma lucida
Coprosma rhamnoides
Coprosma robusta
Coriaria arborea
Corokia buddleioides
Corynocarpus laevigatus
Dodonaea viscosa
Dracophyllum latifolium
Dysoxylum spectabile
Elaeocarpus dentatus
Elatostema rugosum
Epilobium nerteroides
Epilobium rotundifolium
Euchiton collinus
Fuchsia excorticata
Geniostoma ligustrifolium
Griselinia lucida
Haloragis erecta
Hebe stricta
Hedycarya arborea
Hoheria populnea
Hydrocotyle elongata
Hydrocotyle moschata
Ixerba brexioides
Knightia excelsa
Kunzea ericoides
Laurelia novae-zelandiae
Leptospermum scoparium
Leucopogon fasciculatus
Litsea calicaris
Lobelia angulata (= *Pratia angulata*)
Macropiper excelsa
Melicope simplex × *M. ternata* (*M.* ×*mantelli*) – pl.
Melicytus macrophyllus
Melicytus ramiflorus
Metrosideros carminea
Metrosideros diffusa
Metrosideros fulgens
Metrosideros perforata
Metrosideros robusta
Muehlenbeckia australis
Muehlenbeckia complexa
Myrsine australis
Myrsine salicina
Nertera depressa
Nertera dichondrifolia
Nestegis lanceolata
Nestegis montana
Olearia albida – pl.
Olearia furfuracea
Olearia rani
Pittosporum ellipticum
Pittosporum eugenioides
Pittosporum tenuifolium
Pomaderris kumeraho
Pseudopanax arboreus
Pseudopanax crassifolius
Quintinia serrata
Ranunculus reflexus
Rhabdothamnus solandri
Rubus australis
Rubus cissoides
Schefflera digitata
Solanum americanum
Sophora chathamica
Sophora fulvida
Vitex lucens

Monocotyledons (37)

Acianthus sinclairii
Arthropodium cirratum
Astelia solandri
Astelia trinervia
Baumea articulata
Carex ochrosaccus
Carex solandri
Carex virgata
Collospermum hastatum
Cordyline australis
Cordyline banksii
Dianella nigra
Diplodium brumale
Earina autumnalis
Earina mucronata
Eleocharis acuta
Freycinetia banksii
Gahnia lacera
Gahnia pauciflora
Gahnia setifolia
Gahnia xanthocarpa
Ichthyostomum pygmaeum
Isolepis reticularis
Juncus planifolius
Libertia grandiflora
Microlaena avenacea
Microlaena stipoides
Oplismenus hirtellus
Poa anceps
Phormium tenax
Rhopalostylis sapida

Ripogonum scandens
Schoenus maschalinus
Thelymitra longifolia
Uncinia banksii
Uncinia uncinata
Winika cunninghamii

Trip Report: Visit to the QE II native bush covenant of Derek and Primrose Williamson, Griggs Road, Whitford, 18 July 2009

Mike Wilcox and Maureen Young

This mid-winter trip started with the threat of heavy rain, but the day turned out comfortably dry, with the bush sheltering us from the blustery westerlies. Our leaders were landowners Derek and Primrose Williamson of "Ratanui", 28 Griggs Road, Whitford, and our group was: Chris Ashton, Tricia Aspin, Colleen Brewer, Warren Brewer, Jan Butcher, Elaine Marshall, Barrie McLeay, John Millett, Suman Pancha, Alison Wesley, Mike Wilcox, Maureen Young.

Fig. 1. D. & P. Williamson's bush, "Ratanui", 28 Griggs Rd, Whitford. Google Earth.

The Willamson's bush (Fig. 1) is at the head of the Mangemangeroa Valley, Whitford. They have lived there since 1950. The bush area is fenced off and covers 14 ha of which 10 ha is in a QEII covenant. We started by looking at a piece of open ground that had been successfully planted up in native trees, from wilding seedling stock from the property. A prominent species here was mapou (*Myrsine australis*).

The main block of bush lies on a south-facing slope and supports a dense, mixed broadleaved forest some 20 m tall, the dominant species being taraire (*Beilschmiedia tarairi*) with a sprinkling of tawa (*Beilschmiedia tawa*), white maire (*Nestegis lanceolata*), mamangi (*Coprosma arborea*), lancewood (*Pseudopanax crassifolius*) and titoki (*Alectryon excelsus*), with emergent rewarewa (*Knightia excelsa*), and marginally, kanuka (*Kunzea ericoides*) (Fig. 2).

Fig. 2. Mixed broadleaved forest dominated by taraire. Photo: M. D. Wilcox, 18 July 2009.

A feature of the lower slopes beside the Mangemangeroa Stream was pukatea (*Laurelia novae-zelandiae*) represented by several large, healthy trees, and stands of kahikatea (*Dacrycarpus dacrydioides*). Epiphytes and climbers were not abundant, with just a few *Earina mucronata*, *Collospermum hastatum* and *Astelia solandri*, and one plant of *Pittosporum cornifolium* making up the perching flora, and occasional woody vines, predominantly *Metrosideros fulgens*, *Parsonsia heterophylla*, *Muehlenbeckia australis* and *Passiflora tetrandra*. The common subcanopy and understorey shrubs and trees were pigeonwood (*Hedycarya arborea*), kaikomako (*Pennantia corymbosa*), mahoe (*Melicytus ramiflorus*) and nikau (*Rhopalostylis sapida*), with milk tree (*Streblus heterophyllus*) and kanono (*Coprosma grandifolia*) prominent near the stream. Silver fern (*Cyathea dealbata*) was the commonest tree fern. The species that we all agreed was present in unusual abundance was kaikomako, with numerous seedlings and saplings throughout the bush, and some good-sized trees closer to the stream. The ground flora was noteworthy for the abundance and luxuriance of nikau seedlings, *Asplenium lamprophyllum* (Fig. 3) and few patches of *Pteris*