

many *Solanum* species. For climbers, there is the bright red flowered copihue (co-pee-way) or *Lapageria rosea* and there are two species of lantern berry (*Luzuriaga radicans* and *L. polyphylla*): one with orange berries and one with yellow.

So in brief the debate goes:

“They look the same”.

“But they act differently”.

“But they look the same, AND they have almost the same species in them”.

“But they don’t act the same way”.

“But they look the same”

*(The views attributed to Chris Lusk are as interpreted by the author. Chris will express his own views in the next issue – Ed.)*

## Searching for Merry Hill – by Jennifer Bannister

Anyone who has looked at old herbarium packets or sheets, will have had problems with determining the location of some specimens. First of all, the handwriting might be difficult to read, but the greater problem is with place names. Sometimes a region is given as well, sometimes only a region is given ('Hawkes Bay' alone is not very helpful) but often no region is given. Problems can arise when names are no longer used (e.g., Pelichet Bay in Dunedin) or have been used in many different parts of the country (e.g., the New Zealand Atlas has more than a dozen entries for Mount Misery). A local name may never have been gazetted and may even be no longer be used by local people. In the Dunedin area, one lichen packet from the 1930's had Boyd's Bush as a location, I could find no reference to this but the packet helpfully had 'North Taieri' on it. I still could not find Boyd's Bush, but was told by a local historian that there had been a Boyd's farm in the area and I assume the bush belonged to this farm. Further problems arise when the name is from another part of the country.

Recently, in a loan from the Landcare Herbarium at Lincoln (CHR), a packet had the intriguing place name of Merry Hill, luckily it added 'near Feilding'. The packet contained a lichen called *Ramalina allanii*, named for Dr H. H. Allan. He had collected it at Merry Hill in the 1930's and then sent it to Europe for identification. It was made the type specimen of a new species, *Ramalina allanii*, however this lichen had already been named as *Ramalina australiensis*. I searched for Merry Hill but was unable to find it in any gazetteer. If the lichen had been *Ramalina celastri*, which is widely distributed throughout New Zealand, I probably would not have tried to find the site, but *R. australiensis* is found mainly on coastal rocks and nearby coastal forest in the north and north east of the North Island. Feilding appeared to be a highly unlikely site, although there is a disjunct population in Wellington Harbour.

I wanted to locate Merry Hill and see if I could find the lichen. My husband suggested that I should write to the local paper. The Otago Daily Times helpfully provided me with the name and address of the Feilding Herald and Rangitikei Mail, and I wrote a

letter, which they printed. Several people contacted me and I learnt that Merry Hill had been the name of a farm on the outskirts of Feilding. The grandson of the owner in the early part of the last century wrote to me and said the farm had been named after his grandmother, other people wrote and said they had played there as children, and one man had spread fertiliser on the farm in the 1930's. Dr H. H. Allan's connection with Merry Hill was that he had taught at the Feilding Agricultural High School and the school leased the farm for agricultural studies. One correspondent remembered being taught by him.

We were planning to visit the North Island and decided to look for the lichen now that we knew the location of Merry Hill. This was made possible by one of my contacts finding out who owned the land and arranging for us to be shown the bush on the farm, no longer called Merry Hill. It is at the back of what is now a deer farm and is not visible from the road. The bush must have changed greatly since Dr Allan collected lichens there. Part of the bush area was lost when the railway line was realigned and there has been a loss of understorey and herb layer through deer grazing and sheltering there. I could not find the lichen, so although I found Merry Hill I am still left with a problem --- why was *Ramalina australiensis* growing in bush near Feilding?

An intriguing possibility is that this is an old coastal forest as, during the Pleistocene period, the sea reached much further inland in this part of the North Island. Subsequently, falling sea levels formed new coastlines. Is this the reason *Ramalina australiensis* was found here, left behind in forest once growing on an ancient coastline? Or is this idea too fanciful, like the feeding patterns of Moa contributing to the evolution of divaricating shrubs?

## REVIEWS

### Divarication Debate – The Climate Perspective

*Review by Allison Knight*

Matt McGlone, a senior Landcare scientist, is the Royal Society of New Zealand's Cockayne Memorial Lecturer for 2001. He talked to an audience of nearly 200 in Dunedin this May, on '**Reconstructing the future: Past and present influences on the vegetation cover of New Zealand and future trajectories**'. His topic raised great expectations of an interesting debate, but there was never a mention of a moa. It was as if their influence as a dominant browsing species was irrelevant to the vegetation. Perhaps Matt was ducking for cover after William Bond's onslaught.

Apart from this notable omission, Dr McGlone gave a fascinating and thought-provoking address, extrapolating from his considerable body of work as a palaeo-ecologist. One cubic centimetre of sediment, he said, contains millions of pollen grains, and from identifying these grains, and estimating their relative prevalence over