puncture but the tyre was quickly changed with all the help available. Two passengers elected to walk the rest of the way to lighten the load. They reached the top of the road soon after the cars by following a stream bed up the steep slope.

At the top we donned extra clothing to counter the cool breeze, then people immediately scattered in all directions. There was so much to see! Many stayed on the lower slopes beyond the ski buildings, for most of the morning where there was a lot of marshy ground and a great variety of plant species. Others climbed to the upper ridges where there were scree slopes, rocky outcrops and a hidden tarn. Some of the upper slopes had been "groomed" for the ski operations.

Graeme Jane provided an extensive plant list. Some of the plant highlights were additions to it. Rick Jackson found *Haastia sinclairii* and *Hebe epacridea*. Also found were a beautiful clump of *Lobelia linnaeoides*, on a barren ski run slope protected by a larger rock and *Raoulia eximia*, about a metre across. Other favourites were *Leucogenes grandiceps*, *Aciphylla dobsonii*, penwipers on scree (*Notothlaspi australe* = *N. rosulatum)*, *Myosotis traversii* in bud and flower and *Myosotis* "drucei", with its panicled flower, by a group discussing its non-appearance when it was spotted near their feet adjacent to a hut. Also seen were Alpine butterflies, grasshoppers and a South Island pipit.

Otago & Wellington Botanical Societies 'prayer meeting', kettle hole, Ohau. 5 January, 2002. – *Joyce Wilson*

Book reviews – *by John Steel*

Bednarek-Ochyra, H.; Vá ň a, J.; Ochyra, R.; Smith, R.I.L. 2000. ***The liverwort flora of Antarctica.*** 236 pp. P/back. Polish Academy of Sciences, Institute of Botany, Cracow.

Antarctica has an interesting relationship with New Zealand, both being near the bottom of the world and for their past links with the palaeo-continent of Gondwana. Its proximity to New Zealand has also encouraged a strong scientific interest here. Botanically, Antarctica has a limited flora which, apart from one dicotyledon,

Colobanthus quitensis, and the monocotyledon, *Deschampsia antarctica*, comprises a relatively small number of cryptogams. This, I suspect, does not come as much of a surprise. However, I was intrigued to find a whole book devoted to its hepatic flora.

This book, by a group of eminent scholars, is an excellent and comprehensive treatise on the subject. There is only one liverwort, the bipolar, *Cephaloziella varians*, present on the Antarctic mainland, the rest occurring on islands off the Antarctic Peninsula and the South Orkney and South Sandwich Islands.

The first four chapters give comprehensive descriptions of climate, biogeography, ecology, diversity and phytogeography, as well as the history of liverwort research of the area.

The fifth and final chapter gives an excellent systematic treatment of the species recorded as being present. Of the twenty-eight species in the area, twelve are represented in New Zealand and each is fully described and illustrated.

An interesting addition to the library for anyone interested in world distributions of species, liverworts in particular.

Peat, N.; Patrick, B. 2001. ***Wild rivers, discovering the natural history of the central South Island.*** 142 pp. P/back. University of Otago Press, Dunedin.

This is the fourth book in the series by these authors (Peat, N.; Patrick, B. 1995, 1996, 1999) and continues the themes of the previous ones. There is always a fear with books issued in series that the formula will date and lose its ability to hold the reader's interest and I confess to harbouring these fears when I first saw this volume. My fears were soon dissipated and instead, I believe the authors have improved on the earlier ones.

The book covers the area from the Rangitata River in the north to Shag Point in the south and inland to the Southern Alps and includes the Mackenzie Country. The first six chapters describe the principal geographical features that characterise the area and highlight the rich and varied biota of each, all tied together with the braided river systems that are so important here and the best examples left in New Zealand. The final chapter covers the future of the area, the threats to it and the conservation issues to be faced.

Once again the authors successfully meld together the many complex influences of a large and varied area in a very few pages using a wealth of information from many disciplines, the whole illustrated with well-chosen and excellent photographs. Their writing style is inclusive without sacrificing quality or patronising the non-scientific reader. It's all here: Māori folklore, environmental law, history – European and Māori, climate change, botany, glaciology, geology, entomology, in fact –ologies by the bucketful. However, I could have done without yet another full page picture of the Moeraki boulders! As a university press publication, I expect much better proof-reading and I found the errors therefrom irritable.

This is my fifth purchase of this volume, the other four having ended up as presents. At $49.95 this is good value and a worthy, even essential, addition to any bookshelf.