

Cutty Grass Track, Waitakere Ranges.

Auckland Botanical Society Field Trip, Saturday 19th June 2021

Geoff Davidson

Participants: Jenny Andrew, Yumiko Baba, Graham Beck, Ewen Cameron, Steve Cook, Neil Davies, Bev & Geoff Davidson (trip leader), Anne & Bryan Dudley, Francis Duff, Leslie Haines, Philip Moll, Peter Moosberger, Vivienne Paterson, Juliet Richmond, Joshua Salter, Sam Sutherland, Alison Wesley, Maureen Young.

The Cutty Grass Track exists as the access way to maintain the power line supplying the houses along Anawhata Road and at Piha. Previously it was a road-width track, occasionally overgrown with gorse (*Ulex europaeus*) and cutty grass (*Gahnia* spp.) – barren and dry clay in summer; sticky, slippery mud in winter. It is now a carefully engineered gravel road with good camber and drainage. We did not regret the lack of “the universal sea of mud” recorded in June 1969 (Haydock 1969). The upgrade which re-opened at Easter 2021, was in the cause of keeping *Phytophthora agathidicida* out of our forests and, as the track had been closed for some years, this was the opportunity to walk its 3.5 km length.

We met 2.5 km. along Anawhata Road at the carpark (500 m beyond the Ridge Road Track entrance and just before the McElwain’s Lookout Track). Considering the dire weather forecast predicting an extreme weather event, the group of 20 keen members was a good turnout. In fact, the sun shone strongly till mid-afternoon, and we ambled slowly, enjoying its warmth; so slowly that we scarcely travelled half the length of the track, leaving the southern half from the Scenic Drive for another day.

Over many years the Auckland Botanical Society has visited the Cutty Grass Track several times: in 1969 (Haydock 1969), 1976 (Beever 1977) and 1981 (Seddon et al. 1981). Much has changed in the last 40 years, and we set out to create a thoroughly researched species list to determine the current status of the vegetation. This will now serve as an interim report until we can study the rest of the track for additional species.

Quite what it was about the botany that slowed us so is difficult to say, but the consequence was that by the time we reached the junction with Ridge Road Track, a full 660 m, it was lunch time, so we diverted up a sidetrack to make camp on the lawn and deck of the Alpine Sports Club hut (Fig. 1). From there a gap in the vegetation provided a view across ridges towards the west.



Fig. 1. Settling for lunch at the Alpine Sports Club hut. Photo: J. Salter. All photos taken on the trip.



Fig. 2. Alison, Leslie, Steve and the rest, striding back along the well-formed track. Photo: J. Salter.

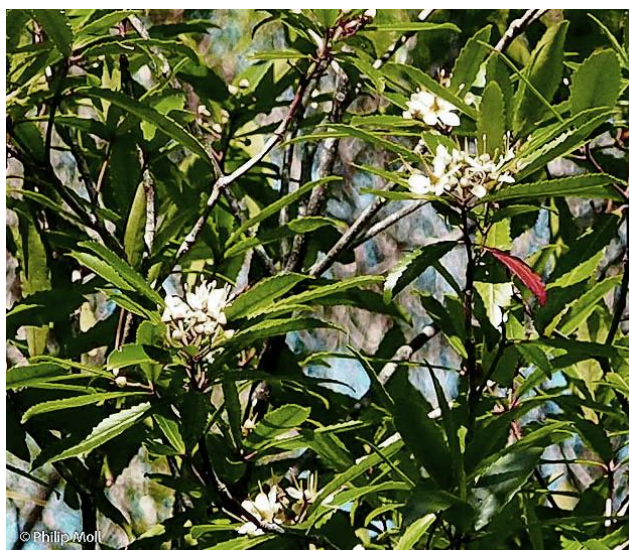


Fig. 3. *Ixerba brexioides* in flower. Photo: P. Moll.



Fig. 4. The mid-winter flowering, pleasant-scented toropapa. Photo: P. Moll.



Fig. 5. Abundant green fruit on a toro, ripening to purple. Photo: P. Moll.



Fig. 6. Unripe green supplejack fruit (already sampled by birds?). Photo: P. Moll.

The afternoon's progress was no faster and we doubt that we reached the half-way mark. With the weather threatening to change for the worse, we abandoned our effort and returned to our vehicles in a short 10 minutes (Fig. 2).

The highlight was just before lunch when a large flowering tawari (*Ixerba brexioides*, Fig. 3) was spotted on the edge of a clearing. Also displaying mid-winter flowering was the pleasant-smelling toropapa (*Alseuosmia macrophylla*, Fig. 4). An abundance of fruit on several toro (*Myrsine salicina*, Fig. 5, and cover illustration) caused the comment 'how seldom it is seen in fruit'. Also in fruit was supplejack, kareao (*Ripogon scandens*, Fig. 6), and a luscious-looking *Astelia solandri* (Fig. 7).

Near here, a rewarewa (*Knightia excelsa*) and a kanuka (*Kunzea robusta*) in intimate contact caught Josh's eye. Closer inspection revealed several vigorous bryophytes thriving on the rewarewa trunk (Figs. 8, 9).

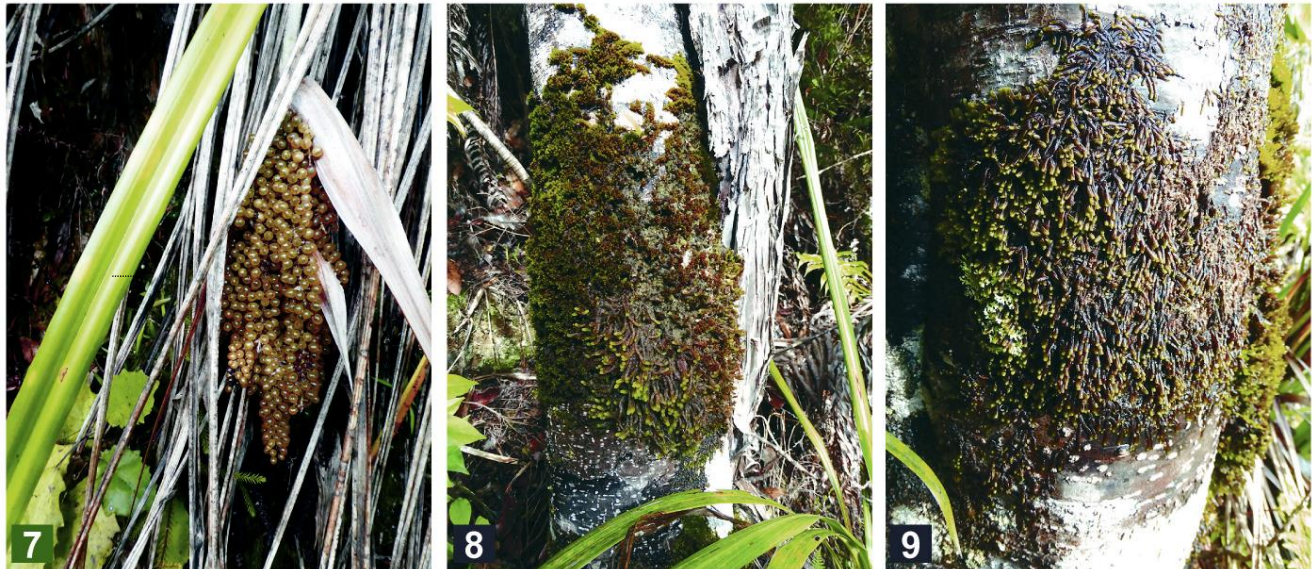
Much debate arose about *Blechnum procerum* and *B. novae-zelandiae* (now both *Parablechnum*) and where their hybrids fall between them. The other common blechnum with a name change is maukurangi, now known as *Diploblechnum fraseri*, the miniature "tree fern" that grows up to 1 m tall with a trunk no thicker than your thumb. The change to *Diploblechnum* is not universally accepted, but it means that we have a new monospecific genus. It is albeit shared abroad, as the species is also native to the floristic regions of Malesia and Taiwan, both within the Indomalayan biogeographic realm.

In combining the previous lists (See Appendix), I found it fascinating to see the name changes that have occurred over the years. Who remembers the genera *Mecodium* or *Polyphlebium*, *Olea* or *Neopanax*? (Now known as *Hymenophyllum*, *Trichomanes*, *Nestegis* and *Raukaua*, respectively.) Species changes are even more numerous.

The day concluded most pleasantly when most accepted the invitation to return to the Davidson's home for a mid-winter mulled wine and shared meal in celebration of the coming solstice and Matariki.

Acknowledgements

I thank Graham Beck and Ewen Cameron for the species list, and Philip Moll, Joshua Salter and Ewen Cameron for the photos.



Figs. 7–9: **7.** Ripe translucent pale-brown fruit on an *Astelia solandri* overhanging the bank. Photo: E.K. Cameron. **8.** Two mosses *Cladomnion ericoides* (pendulous green-tipped shoots) and *Macromitrium ?microstomum* (shorter stems), thriving on a rewarewa trunk (approx. 180 mm diam.) while a kanuka snuggles up on the right. Photo: J. Salter. **9.** Lower down on the rewarewa shown in Fig. 8 was the leafy liverwort *Thysananthus anguiformis*. Photo: J. Salter.

References

- Beever, James (Jim) 1977: Outings to Huia and Cutty Grass Track. *Auckland Botanical Society Newsletter* 34: 5-6.
 Haydock, K.J 1969: Cutty Grass Track. *Auckland Botanical Society Newsletter* 26: 3-6.
 Seddon, M; Hatch, E.D; Beever, James; King, J. 1981: The Cutty Grass Track. *Auckland Botanical Society Newsletter* 36: 7-9.

Appendix. Cutty Grass Track Species List based on four accounts from 1969 to 2021 - compiled by Graham Beck with additions from Ewen Cameron, and some bryophytes added by Joshua Salter.

= addition to previous lists
 * = exotic species
 pl. = planted species

vouchers = collection year given for vouchers in Auckland Museum herbarium (AK)

	Haydock Jun 1969	Beever Nov 1976	Seddon et al. Apr 1981	current visit Jun 2021 SW half of track	Vouchers
Ferns & Lycopods					
<i>Asplenium bulbiferum</i>	X				
<i>Asplenium flaccidum</i>		X	X	X	
<i>Asplenium oblongifolium</i>	X		X	X	
<i>Asplenium polyodon</i>			X		
<i>Blechnum discolor</i>	X	X	X	X	1993
<i>Blechnum filiforme</i>			X		
<i>Blechnum fraseri</i>	X	X	X	X	
<i>Blechnum novae-zelandiae</i>	X	X	X	X	
<i>Blechnum procerum</i> (as <i>B. minus</i>)	X	X	X		
<i>Cyathea dealbata</i>	X		X	X	
<i>Cyathea medullaris</i>	X	X	X	X	
<i>Cyathea smithii</i>	X		X	X	
<i>Dicksonia squarrosa</i>	X	X	X	X	
<i>Histiopteris incisa</i>	X		X	X	
<i>Hiya distans</i>					1993
<i>Hymenophyllum demissum</i>			X		
<i>Hymenophyllum dilatatum</i>	X		X	X	
<i>Hymenophyllum flabellatum</i>	X		X	X	

	Haydock Jun 1969	Beever Nov 1976	Seddon et al. Apr 1981	current visit Jun 2021 SW half of track	Vouchers
<i>Hymenophyllum lyallii</i>				x #	
<i>Hymenophyllum multifidum</i>				x #	
<i>Hymenophyllum nephrophyllum</i>	x			x	
<i>Hymenophyllum rarum</i>			x	x	
<i>Hymenophyllum sanguinolentum</i>			x	x	
<i>Lastreopsis hispida</i>				x #	
<i>Lindsaea trichomanoides</i>	x				
<i>Loxogramme dictyopteris</i>			x		
<i>Lycopodiella cernua</i>				x #	
<i>Lycopodium deuterodensum</i>				x #	
<i>Lycopodium volubile</i>			x	x	
<i>Lygodium articulatum</i>	x		x	x	1961
<i>Microsorium pustulatum</i>	x		x	x	
<i>Notogrammitis heterophylla</i>	x				
<i>Paesia scaberula</i>	x		x	x	
<i>Phlegmariurus billardiieri</i>			x	x	
<i>Pneumatopteris pennigera</i>				x #	
<i>Pteridium esculentum</i>			x	x	
<i>Rumohra adiantiformis</i>	x		x	x	1970
<i>Selaginella krausiana</i> *				x #	
<i>Tmesipteris elongata</i>				x #	
<i>Tmesipteris tannensis</i>			?x	x	
<i>Trichomanes venosum</i>	x		x	x	
Gymnosperms					
<i>Agathis australis</i>	x	x	x	x	
<i>Cupressus macrocarpa</i> * pl.				x #	
<i>Dacrycarpus dacrydioides</i>			x	x	
<i>Dacrydium cupressinum</i>	x	x	x	x	1961, 1970
<i>Pinus radiata</i> *				x #	
<i>Phyllocladus trichomanoides</i>			x		
<i>Prumnopitys ferruginea</i>	x	x	x	x	1968
<i>Podocarpus laetus</i>	x	x	x	x	
<i>Podocarpus totara</i>	x			x	1974
Dicotyledons					
<i>Alseuosmia macrophylla</i>	x	x	x	x	
<i>Alseuosmia quercifolia</i>	x				
<i>Aristotelia serrata</i>			x		
<i>Beilschmiedia tarairi</i>			?x		
<i>Beilschmiedia tawa</i>	x	x	x	x	
<i>Brachyglottis kirkii</i>		x	x	x	
<i>Brachyglottis repanda</i>			x		
<i>Callitriche muelleri</i>				x #	
<i>Carpodetus serratus</i>	x		x		
<i>Centaurium erythraea</i> *			x		
<i>Centella uniflora</i>			x	x	
<i>Cirsium vulgare</i> *				x #	

	Haydock Jun 1969	Beever Nov 1976	Seddon et al. Apr 1981	current visit Jun 2021 SW half of track	Vouchers
<i>Clematis paniculata</i>		X		X	1967
<i>Coprosma arborea</i>		X	X	X	
<i>Coprosma autumnalis</i>	X	X	X	X	
<i>Coprosma lucida</i>	X	X	X	X	1960, 1961
<i>Coprosma robusta</i>		X		X	
<i>Coriaria arborea</i>				X	1993
<i>Corynocarpus laevigatus</i>				X #	
<i>Crepis capillaris</i> *				X #	
<i>Dracophyllum latifolium</i>	X	X	X		1985
<i>Dysoxylum spectabile</i>			X	X	
<i>Eleocharis dentatus</i>	X	X	X	X	
<i>Erigeron sumatrensis</i> *				X #	
<i>Euchiton japonicus</i>				X #	
<i>Fuchsia excorticata</i>			X		
<i>Gamochaeta coarctata</i> *				X #	
<i>Geniostoma ligustrifolium</i>			X	X	1960
<i>Gonocarpus micranthus</i>					1958
<i>Griselinia lucida</i>	X	X	X	X	
<i>Haloragis erecta</i>	X		X	X	
<i>Hebe macrocarpa</i>			X	X	1961
<i>Hebe stricta</i>		X	X	X	1960
<i>Hedycarya aborea</i>	X	X	X	X	1961
<i>Helichrysum lanceolatum</i>			X		
<i>Hoheria populnea</i>	X		X	X	
<i>Hydrocotyle dissecta</i>				X #	
<i>Hydrocotyle tripartita</i> *				X #	
<i>Hypericum pusillum</i>				X #	
<i>Hypochaeris radicata</i> *				X #	
<i>Ixerba brexioides</i>	X	X	X	X	1961, 1985
<i>Knightia excelsa</i>	X	X	X	X	1985
<i>Kunzea robusta</i>		X	X	X	
<i>Laurelia novae-zelandiae</i>	X	X	X	X	1967
<i>Leptospermum scoparium</i>		X	X	X	
<i>Leucanthemum vulgare</i> *				X #	
<i>Leucopogon fasciculatus</i>	X	X	X	X	
<i>Litsea calicaris</i>		X		X	
<i>Lobelia anceps</i>			X	X	
<i>Lophomyrtus bullata</i>		X		X	
<i>Lotus pedunculatus</i> *			X	X	
<i>Melicytus macrophyllus</i>	X	X	X	X	1961
<i>Melicytus micranthus</i>		X		X	
<i>Melicytus ramiflorus</i>	X	X	X	X	
<i>Metrosideros diffusa</i>				X #	
<i>Metrosideros fulgens</i>		X	X	X	
<i>Metrosideros perforata</i>			X	X	1985
<i>Metrosideros robusta</i>				X #	
<i>Myrsine australis</i>	X	X	X	X	

	Haydock Jun 1969	Beever Nov 1976	Seddon et al. Apr 1981	current visit Jun 2021 SW half of track	Vouchers
<i>Myrsine salicina</i>	X	X	X	X	1960
<i>Nertera dichondrifolia</i>			X	X	
<i>Nestegis lanceolata</i>	X	X	X	X	
<i>Nestegis montana</i>	X	X	X	X	
<i>Olearia furfuracea</i>	X	X	X	X	
<i>Olearia rani</i>	X	X	X	X	
<i>Parsonsia capsularis</i>			X	X	
<i>Pittosporum cornifolium</i>				X #	
<i>Pittosporum ellipticum</i>				X #	
<i>Pittosporum kirkii</i>					1948, 1970
<i>Pittosporum tenuifolium</i>	X	X	X	X	
<i>Plantago australis</i> *				X #	
<i>Plantago lanceolata</i> *			X	X	
<i>Plantago major</i> *				X #	
<i>Prunus vulgaris</i> *				X #	
<i>Pseudopanax arboreus</i>		X	X	X	
<i>Pseudopanax crassifolius</i>	X	X	X	X	1985
<i>Quintinia serrata</i>	X	X	X	X	1961, 2011
<i>Raukaua anomalus</i>	X				
<i>Raukaua edgerleyi</i>	X	X	X		1958
<i>Rubus australis</i>	X	X	X	X	
<i>Rubus cissoides</i>	X	X	X	X	2003
<i>Rumex brownii</i> *				X #	
<i>Ranunculus repens</i> *				X #	
<i>Schefflera digitata</i>		X	X	X	
<i>Senecio minimus</i>					1958
<i>Solanum americanum</i>				X #	
<i>Sonchus oleraceus</i> *				X #	
<i>Ulex europaeus</i> *			X	X	
<i>Vicia sativa</i> *					1978
<i>Vitex lucens</i>			X		
Monocotyledons					
<i>Acianthus sinclairii</i>				X #	
<i>Agrostis capillaris</i> *			X		
<i>Aristea ecklonii</i> *				X #	
<i>Astelia hastata</i>			X	X	
<i>Astelia solandri</i>		X	X	X	
<i>Astelia trinervia</i>		X	X	X	
<i>Axonopus fissifolius</i> *			X	X	1978
<i>Cordyline australis</i>			X	X	
<i>Cordyline banksii</i>		X	X	X	
<i>Cortaderia selloana</i> *				X #	
<i>Corybas acuminatus</i>					1990
<i>Crocasmia ×crocasmiiiflora</i> *				X #	
<i>Dendrobium cunninghamii</i>	X		X	X	
<i>Dianella nigra</i> s.l. (incl. <i>D. latissima</i>)	X		X	X	

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<i>Earina autumnalis</i>			X	X	
<i>Earina mucronata</i>	X	X	X	X	
<i>Ehrharta erecta</i> *				X #	
<i>Freycinetia banksii</i>		X	X	X	
<i>Gahnia setifolia</i>		?X	X	X	
<i>Gahnia xanthocarpa</i>			X	X	
<i>Juncus bufonius</i> *			X		
<i>Juncus effusus</i> *			X	X	
<i>Lepidosperma australe</i>			X		
<i>Luzula banksiana</i>			X	X	
<i>Machaerina tenax</i>					1973
<i>Microlaena avenacea</i>			X	X	
<i>Microlaena stipoides</i>					1932
<i>Oplismenus hirtellus</i>				X #	
<i>Paspalum dilatatum</i> *			X		
<i>Phormium tenax</i>			X	X	
<i>Pterostylis banksii</i>		X			
<i>Rhopalostylis sapida</i>	X	X	X	X	
<i>Ripogonum scandens</i>	X	X	X	X	
<i>Rytidosperma gracile</i>					1932
<i>Schoenus apogon</i>				X #	
<i>Schoenus maschalinus</i>				X #	
<i>Sisyrinchium micranthum</i> *			?X		
<i>Sporobolus africanus</i> *				X #	
<i>Thelymitra longifolia</i>		X		X	
Liverworts					
<i>Bazzania novae-zelandiae</i>					1950
<i>Plagiochila incurvicola</i>					2004
<i>Psiloclada clandestina</i>					1973
<i>Telaranea lindenberghii</i> s.str.					1983
<i>Thysananthus anguiformis</i>				X #	
<i>Trichocolea mollisima</i>					1950
Mosses					
<i>Breutelia pendulosa</i>				X #	
<i>Cladomnion ericoides</i>				X #	
<i>Dicnemon calycinum</i>					1973
<i>Hypnodendron comosum</i>				X #	
<i>Macromitrium ?microstomum</i>				X #	
<i>Sphagnum falciculatum</i>			X		1965, 1973
<i>Sphagnum novo-zelandicum</i>					2002
<i>Tayloria callophylla</i>					1975
Unaccepted record					
<i>Olearia paniculata</i>	X				