BLOWHOLE GULLY - PIHA 19 September 1964 - - M.Todd

September is an exciting month for spring is truly with us and the beauty of flowers is again here in abundance. We set off by bus with a full complement of members all eager to spot the day's highlights of our native flora. The morning was bright - a bit chilly - a bit windy. Our first stop was an unexpected puncture - those waiting to be picked up further along were kept wondering, but we all came finally to the chosen disembarkment - the peak overlooking Piha, with its fine coastline laid out before us. Mr. Mead our leader, was here to greet us and give details of the way down to Blowhole Gully. The track was steepish and bush clad but reasonably open, so we could enjoy things around us quite well. In the valley at the bottom ran a deep bouldered stream and here Mr. Mead had stretched a stout rope to give us confidence on the slippery stones. We scrambled up the other side to a patch lying open to the sun, and here in the shelter, with a view of sea and bush we enjoyed our lunch break. Interesting rock formations lay above us, and further up a long scrub covered ridge. We broke up and scattered ourselves over this slope, seeking our own pet interests as we went. Returning later to our picnic spot with plastic bags full of findings, we realised that the day had proved more fruitful than had at first been anticipated . The long pull back up to the road was negotiated and we still had plenty of time to admire the lovely showers of starry Clematis, the full heads of the lawyer sprays and masses of native daphne that decked the hillside overlooking the sea. Birds were few but one tui persisted with his signature tune. Homeward bound we sped away round the twisting bush roads, grazing one little car on our way.

We voted it a very pleasant day, well spent and made comfortable by Mr. Mead who had previously traversed the area and paved the way. We owe our happy day to his thoughtfulness.

Mr. Warren adds a note -

The tawapou was good - lots of it and large. The local kowhai, Sophora microphylla var fulvida was beginning to flower. Among the ferns Cheilanthes sieberi and Pellaea rotundifolia were noted, and a seedling of what appeared to be Carmichaelia aligera with very large leaflets growing in dense shade.

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Last March I brought home a couple of young plants of Osmunda regalis from the Meremere bog, planted them carefully in a pot and stood them on a log in the fish pond. To my disappointment they lay down and died. Miss Crookes however told me that this particular species was often deciduous and advised me to leave the remains where they were just in case. Sure enough they have both recently (mid-September) begun uncoiling long green frondlets and look at the moment very much alive. Are there any other deciduous ferns in New Zealand ? E.D.H.

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