HAMILTONS BUSH, AWHITU CENTRAL. 18th July. Miss H.M. Young.

In spite of cold winds and promised rain, the weather held for our July trip to Awhitu.

After leaving Waiuku we travelled north up the peninsular through very interesting country, with steep gorges to the east and a drop to the west with many strange shaped hills, now clothed in grass and well farmed. There were apparent signs of past Maori populations in many terraced hills adapted by those older inhabitants to be their pahs.

In prehistorical times these hills were sand, and over the ages have consolidated and become bush. From the fourteenth century they have been inhabited by the Maori, who came from Hawaiiki in the Tainui Canoe, which they portaged over from the Waitemata, pushing the then inhabitants, the Moriori inland.

A little over one hundred years ago there were no roads in this part of New Zealand and in fact the Manukau Harbour, by way of Waiuku, the Awaroa Stream and Pururpuru to the Waikato River was on the main route south - used for many years by Maori and pre-Maori, as well as by the first European settlers.

The peninsular itself was highly populated by Moriori, then by Maori people, who were friendly to the settlers and avoided coming into conflict with them during the wars. From such history as is available it would appear that the whole area was a wonderful kauri forest as short a time ago as 1835, which was cut out and milled. On the west coast there was a sizeable puriri forest which was cleared to make farmland. Now the kauri forest is regenerating, a process which takes many years.

Having passed through Awhitu Central, with peeps of the Tasman Sea roaring in on the west coast beaches through sudden gaps in the coastward hills, we were met by our leader, Mr.R.J. MacDonald, who took us to a section of regenerating bush covering two sides of a small creek, with fairly generalised bush growth including a number of kauri rikas. Most noticeable was the very great variation in the leaves of Mida salicifolia, a normally variable leaved tree. Almost immediately we found on the bush floor the little orchids Pterostylis trullifolia and Acianthus fornicatus var. sinclairii also the leaves of Acianthus reniformis var. oblongus. We walked down to a creek where there were many varieties of fern and mosses and amongst the the trees in the deeper bush we found the filmy fern Hymenophyllum demissum and the dainty little orchid Pterostylis graminea.

On the way back over another ridge we found an early Corybas trilobus in flower and the filmy fern Hymenophyllum sanguinolentum with its individual smell. We also saw Persoonia toru. We then left the bush and on the way up the road noticed the leaves of the Thelymitra and also two or three scattered plants of Acianthus fornicatus var. sinclairii in which the usual green colour was replaced by reddish purple.

We went up the road to the top of the hill, sitting just below the ridge for lunch. From the top of this ridge we could see the

Manakau Heads and the Tasman Sea.

After lunch we went further down the road to another patch of regenerating bush, now with sizeable kauri and taraire with their purple drupes. Most remarkable in this bush were the many large and handsome kohekohe, Dysoxylum spectabile. Here there were also Hoheria populnea and Beilschmiedia tawa. We found Adiantum fulvum in the bush and again on the roadside, its form differing considerably with its location.

We returned home having had a most interesting and happy day, for which we have to thank Mr. MacDonald, our very able leader.

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POKENO 15th August. L.W. Butler.

We arrived at Mr. Ross Mitchells farm in the Bombay hills at about 10.30 a.m., the day being fine and sunny but with rather a cold wind. Leaving the house we crossed several paddocks and came to a stream. Swollen by the previous days of rain a crossing was made with some difficulty, though we remained reasonably dry.

We went up a slope into a small patch of bush growing in a semi-swampy situation and found numbers of Sarcochilus adversus, several plants to a tree, Eugenia maire, Parsonsia heterophylla, Muehlenbeckia australis and a large Macropiper excelsum with a trunk about six inches through.

Coming out of this area we climbed a slope to a volcanic ridge with a flat grassy patch which was the site of an old Maori pah. There was a very interesting view across the valley towards the Meremere Power Station which we could see in the distance.

We then descended into a gully in which large king ferns, Marattia salicina, were numerous. Up a stream and then a ridge of mixed forest to a clear area where we stopped for lunch. After lunch we walked in a semi-circle, round a big gully, through several paddocks and a swamp, where the writer filled one boot with sloppy mud, to a patch of several chains of "Old Man Gorse".

Through the gorse we came to a slope of kauri forest, easy to move through and full of a variety of plants. There were some peculiar samples of Alseuosmia and numerous orchids, Sarcochilus adversus, Bulbophyllum pygmaeum, Earina mucronata, Corybas trilobus, Acianthus fornicatus var. sinclairii, A. reniformis var. oblongus, Pterostylis trullifolia, P. alobula, P. montana, P. graminea and big patches of rosette leaves. We hunted for P. brumalis but failed to find any. In this area there are some beeches, Nothofagus truncata.

The return to the bus was made by a different route which though muddier gave us an easier crossing of the stream. When we