WOODCOCKS @@@@ 19th November 1966

After a rainy start to the day the weather was kind to us and we were met at Woodcocks Bush by Mr.E.J.Woodcock, whose father came here 103 years before as one of the first settlers in the district. The bush which we examined in detail over some 30 acres showed a variety of communities from the forest in its virgin state with good podocarps which were never logged to an interesting piece of vigorous regenerated bush probably resulting from a fire well over a century ago. Mr.Woodcock led the party over pleasant tracks through his bush, though some got left behind as there was so much of interest on first entering the bush. It is often difficult to find a pace to suit all tastes!

The regenerated bush met at first is some of the finest pole stand podocarp regeneration we have seen for some time. The floor of the stand had much of interest too, in sharp contrast to the bare floor where stock wandered over the fence. Among the mosses carpeting the ground several orchids were soon spotted, many now in fruit. Pterostylis trullifolia, Acianthus (both spp.) and Corybas were all in good fruit promising abundant future growth. A solitary flower of Corybas oblongus lingered on, and a further search produced no more. Pterostylis banksii was in fine flower with some of the biggest blooms I have seen. On one tree Mr.Butler spotted 3 epiphytic orchids (Bulbophyllum, Earina and Dendrobium), and on another tree Sarcochilus was seen in flower.

The dominant podocarp wad the rimu with some fine young trees, with occasional totaras, miros, tanekaha and kahikatea. Of special interest were the kawakas with numerous young specimens. Kauri was seen as an odd seedling, but only 2 rickers in the main canopy. Ti-tree was right up with the rimu, tall and straight to 70 or 80 feet and diameters in excess of a foot, not to be suppressed yet. The odd juvenile matai was present, and a patch of seedling kowhais.

Associated with these as an understorey were several broad-leaf shrubs including toro, matipo, putaputaweta, mahres (Olea lanceolata was compared against Mida, which was surprisingly common here, and also a big specimen of O.montana). , mahoe, hangehange and heketara. Terrestrial Senecio kirkii was common, and the odd lancewood.

At one spot the 3 juvenile divaricating forms of Melicytus micranthus, Melicope simplex, and Pseudopanax anomalum could be seen side by side. As the moister bottom sites were reached kie-kie, nikau and kohe-kohe were common, with tawa, pate, and karaka. It was here a veteran white pine stood alone among the supplejack and Elatostema. Higher up the odd old rimu survived, along with the tarairie in places. Paratrophis microphylla made a fourth divaricate species. Many people I think were misled into thinking that rewarewa was commoner than it was in fact. Whereas there were some fine flowering specimens with flowers lying thick beneath them, the saplings were more often those of hinau, which in its juvenile stage looks very like rewarewa, with long flat serrate leaves.

There were numerous ferns which one would expect here, but those which were of greatest interest to many were Loxoma and Gleichenia which had both been introduced at one place and were thriving. Once again a puzzling Hypolepis was picked up by Miss Crookes - a sticky velvety one combining the characters of more than one species. I look forward to an identification of this and the Kaukapakapa one collected on our last day's outing.

More than one member picked up the shell of the kauri snail, which Mr.Woodcock knew well and assured us had been there always, though had been moved to spots where it was not known nearby. We were indeed grateful for the keen interest he shows in bush preservation. JH.