

NGATAMAHINERUA AT LAST (BUT NOT WITHOUT CASUALTIES)

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After 2 attempts to arrange a field trip to the summit of Ngatamahinerua, the highest point on Te Hunga, we set out to reach it from Thompson's Track. Two weeks before our intended trip the 4 WD track was a mud plug from the last farm gate, but to our surprise it had been cleared in the interim. Thus we managed to get halfway to the saddle in our vehicles before the mud became treacherous and our courage failed.

The walk to the saddle on the 4 WD track was nominated as a "no-botanising" zone but it was hard to keep eyes to front as we skirted the mud. Not far from the vehicle John Hobbs (true to form) spotted *Rorippa divaricata* growing lushly on the road edge. Much of the way to the saddle the road passed through mature pine forest, with signs that logging was imminent. In other places, mangao, rewarewa, mahoe and a variety of shrubs and ferns flanked the road banks. At one spot a filled-in fire pond, covered in raupo and *Carex geminata*, broke that pattern. It was flanked by a few small kahikatea and pukatea. When at last clear of the pines, the vegetation became much lower, changing to a mix of grass and scrub on the exposed saddle. In the wetter gullies *Pseudopanax laetus* was quite common. From the saddle we followed a very steep, deeply gouged track through grass (created by vehicles) to the edge of the main forest tract.

The next part of our route followed the North-South Track, sidling along a ridge to a former hut site before beginning a steady climb to the fork with the old North South Track (formerly closed decades ago). That part of the journey was through tall tawa forest, with tawa frequently forming an almost pure canopy. Other species included kamahi, mangao, pukatea, nikau, and pigeonwood with an understorey including hangehange, toropapa, raurekau, kawakawa, rangiora, kiekie and a good range of ferns including *Blechnum nigrum*.

At the track junction we took the steeper old route which continued up through tall tawa with abundant forest rice grass, now in full seed. As we climbed higher, tawari and miro became more abundant. At one point, we stopped to admire *Pittosporum kirkii* hanging from a mass of *Collospermum hastatum* low down on a miro. From this point onwards the vegetation became more open and lower, dominated by tawari and *Cyathea smithii* often with a dense ground cover of *Gabnia setifolia*. As we entered the main slip zone progress became slower as the *Gabnia* dominated, even though the track had been cleared in the spring. Now higher altitude species such as silver beech, toro, *Cordyline indivisa*, and *Dracophyllum traversii* appeared or became more common. As we crossed the barer heads of the slips snowberry, kanuka, grasses, and a few herbs such as *Nertera depressa* became more common.

Just below the plateau the track forked with one branch leading on to the main plateau and the other to Ngatamahinerua. Here in silver beech forest we chose the recently cleared route to the higher peak. After a short distance, however, the recent track clearance ceased but after an executive decision we headed for the summit anyway. We followed a mix of white old markers, pink tape and plastic bags through low scrub consisting of kamahi, tawari, raurekau with the odd emergent mature silver beech, miro and large tawari. The ridge soon flattened out and broadened and we scrambled through fallen trees heavily laden in mosses, liverworts and lantern berry. Here the tiny *Hymenophyllum armstrongii* was quite common amongst the bryophytes on the branches along with the expected *H. lyallii*. Finally we reached the elusive summit trig, but as we admired the view drizzle began to enclose us, so a retreat was started.

As we retraced our path along this summit we suddenly noticed abundant *Hymenophyllum pulcherrimum* that we had overlooked on the way up. As we descended towards Thompson's Track the drizzle became heavier and precluded most botanising. It was then as the tail-enders tried to catch up that one of them slipped and broke her arm. This slowed our descent somewhat, as the arm was nursed past various obstacles down

to the Track and back to the vehicles. Fortunately we were soon out of the rain allowing some further botanising but no exciting finds were made.

TE HUNGA-THOMPSONS TRACK VASCULAR PLANT SPECIES LIST

G Jane; RBS

NZMS 260 T14 27629 63886

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| <i>Acaena anserinifolia</i> | <i>Cyathea medullaris</i> |
| * <i>Agrostis capillaris</i> | <i>Dianella nigra</i> |
| <i>Alseuosmia macrophylla</i> | <i>Dicksonia squarrosa</i> |
| <i>Anaphalioides trinervis</i> | <i>Dracophyllum traversii</i> |
| <i>Asplenium bulbiferum</i> | <i>Earina autumnalis</i> |
| <i>Asplenium lamprophyllum</i> | <i>Earina mucronata</i> |
| <i>Asplenium polyodon</i> | <i>Euchiton audax</i> |
| <i>Astelia fragrans</i> | <i>Freycinetia banksii</i> |
| <i>Astelia solandri</i> | <i>Gahnia setifolia</i> |
| <i>Beilschmiedia tawa</i> | <i>Gaultheria antipoda</i> |
| <i>Blechnum chambersii</i> | <i>Geniostoma ligustrifolium</i> var. |
| <i>Blechnum colensoi</i> | <i>ligustrifolium</i> |
| <i>Blechnum discolor</i> | <i>Grammitis billardierei</i> |
| <i>Blechnum fluviale</i> | <i>Grammitis magellanica</i> ssp. <i>nothofagetti</i> |
| <i>Blechnum nigrum</i> | <i>Griselinia littoralis</i> |
| <i>Blechnum novae-zeelandiae</i> | <i>Griselinia lucida</i> |
| <i>Brachyglottis kirkii</i> var. <i>kirkii</i> | <i>Hedycarya arborea</i> |
| <i>Brachyglottis repanda</i> | <i>Histiopteris incisa</i> |
| <i>Cardamine "Long Style"</i> | * <i>Holcus lanatus</i> |
| <i>Cardiomanes reniforme</i> | <i>Huperzia varia</i> |
| <i>Carpodetus serratus</i> | <i>Hydrocotyle dissecta</i> |
| <i>Clematis cunninghamii</i> | <i>Hydrocotyle microphylla</i> |
| <i>Clematis paniculata</i> | <i>Hydrocotyle novae-zeelandiae</i> |
| <i>Coprosma colensoi</i> | <i>Hymenophyllum armstrongii</i> |
| <i>Coprosma foetidissima</i> | <i>Hymenophyllum demissum</i> |
| <i>Coprosma grandifolia</i> | <i>Hymenophyllum flabellatum</i> |
| <i>Cordyline banksii</i> | <i>Hymenophyllum frankliniae</i> (was <i>H.</i> |
| <i>Cordyline indivisa</i> | <i>ferrugineum</i>) |
| <i>Cortaderia fulvida</i> | <i>Hymenophyllum multifidum</i> |
| <i>Corybas acuminatus</i> | <i>Hymenophyllum pulcherrimum</i> |
| <i>Corybas trilobus</i> | <i>Hymenophyllum revolutum</i> |
| <i>Ctenopteris heterophylla</i> | <i>Hymenophyllum sanguinolentum</i> |
| <i>Cyathea dealbata</i> | * <i>Hypochoeris radicata</i> |

	<i>Ixerba brexioides</i>		<i>Parsonsia heterophylla</i>
	<i>Juncus distegus</i>		<i>Pellaea rotundifolia</i>
*	<i>Juncus effusus</i>		<i>Phyllocladus alpinus</i>
	<i>Juncus planifolius</i>		<i>Pneumatopteris pennigera</i>
	<i>Knightia excelsa</i>		<i>Podocarpus hallii</i>
	<i>Kunzea ericoides</i>		<i>Polystichum wawranum</i>
	<i>Lastreopsis glabella</i>		<i>Prumnopitys ferruginea</i>
	<i>Lastreopsis hispida</i>		<i>Pseudognaphalium luteoalbum</i>
	<i>Laurelia novae-zeelandiae</i>		<i>Pseudopanax colensoi</i>
	<i>Leptopteris superba</i>		<i>Pseudopanax crassifolius</i>
	<i>Leucopogon fasciculatus</i>		<i>Pseudopanax laetus</i>
*	<i>Leycesteria formosa</i>		<i>Pseudowintera axillaris</i>
	<i>Libertia micrantha</i>		<i>Pseudowintera colorata</i>
	<i>Libocedrus bidwillii</i>		<i>Pteridium esculentum</i>
	<i>Litsea calicaris</i>		<i>Pteris macilenta</i>
*	<i>Lolium perenne</i>		<i>Pteris tremula</i>
*	<i>Lotus pedunculatus</i>		<i>Pterostylis banksii</i>
	<i>Loxogramme dictyopteris</i> (syn.		<i>Ranunculus reflexus</i>
	<i>Anarthropteris lanceolata</i>)		<i>Raukaura edgerleyi</i>
	<i>Luzuriaga parviflora</i>		<i>Raukaura simplex</i>
	<i>Lycopodiella lateralis</i>		<i>Rhopalostylis sapida</i>
	<i>Lycopodium deuterodensum</i>		<i>Ripogonum scandens</i>
	<i>Lycopodium scariosum</i>		<i>Rorippa divaricata</i>
	<i>Lycopodium volubile</i>		<i>Rubus cissoides</i>
	<i>Lygodium articulatum</i>		<i>Rumohra adiantiformis</i>
	<i>Macropiper excelsum</i> ssp. <i>excelsum</i>		<i>Rytidosperma gracile</i>
	<i>Metrosideros diffusa</i>		<i>Schefflera digitata</i>
	<i>Metrosideros fulgens</i>		<i>Schoenus maschalinus</i>
	<i>Metrosideros perforata</i>	*	<i>Senecio jacobaea</i>
	<i>Microlaena avenacea</i>		<i>Sticherus cunninghamii</i>
	<i>Microlaena stipoides</i>		<i>Thelymitra longifolia</i>
	<i>Microseris scapigera</i>		<i>Tmesipteris elongata</i>
	<i>Muehlenbeckia complexa</i>		<i>Tmesipteris tannensis</i>
	<i>Myrsine australis</i>		<i>Uncinia clavata</i>
	<i>Myrsine salicina</i>		<i>Uncinia distans</i>
	<i>Nertera depressa</i>		<i>Uncinia uncinata</i>
	<i>Nothofagus menziesii</i>		<i>Urtica incisa</i>
	<i>Olearia rani</i>		<i>Viola filicaulis</i>
	<i>Paesia scaberula</i>		<i>Weinmannia racemosa</i>