

The Seventh Fungal Foray: Okataina, Rotorua, 10th to 14th May, 1993.

by Barbara Segedin

Forty-one participants assembled at the very comfortable Outdoor Education and Recreation Centre on the road to Lake Okataina on Monday night. Marie and Lawre Taylor were again our excellent organisers for fungi and food, ably assisted by the local organiser, Lindsay Gibbons, whose local knowledge and contacts made this a memorable foray. We had several overseas participants again this year, Mr M Izawa and Ms Hirome Tanaka from Japan; Professor Wang, Professor Gao and Ms Yang Xiao from China, now at Invermay and Auckland; and Dr Don Walker from Sydney. A small party of bryologists added another collecting strength to the foray.

The first day started very early for some, with a visit to the forest towards the Pongakawa Valley at 7 am to hear the kokako. The not-so-early birds joined the first party at a novel event, a barbecue breakfast at the intriguing "Equine Nursery", which turned out to be a magnificent estate once belonging to the Gibbons family and now owned by a German company. After breakfast we all piled back into the cars and were treated to a tour of the estate before we visited the Carrie Gibbons Memorial Reserve at the entrance to the estate. It is named after Frank and Lindsay Gibbons' mother and consists of tawa forest. Our next stop was a reserve on the shores of Lake Rotoma where we ate our lunch in the sunshine and even forayed amongst the beach gravel. Back into the cars again for a long drive through the pine forests near Kawerau, heading for the forest surrounding Lake Tarawera outlet. Most of the forest was mixed tawa and manuka, with towards the Tarawera Falls an almost pure pohutukawa forest, somewhat less productive of fungi than tawa. On Wednesday evening we had the privilege of a magnificently illustrated lecture by Chris Ecroyd on his work concerning the fertilisation of *Dactylanthus* by bats. This was followed by Peter Austwick's film of travels in Thailand showing market stalls of local fungi.

On Thursday the party broke up into several smaller units, some going to Rainbow Mountain, some to Rotorua and some exploring the tracks near the lodge. The Ngahopua track round the crater lakes opposite the lodge, though an almost pure tawa forest, yielded some very interesting fungi including the biggest find of the Foray, a huge *Bondarzewia* more than 50 cm in diameter on a rotting log. The evening was devoted to a showing of slides of fungi contributed by various foray members. The third day was spent in the Rotorua area, visiting the grounds of the Forest Research Institute, Whakarewarewa forest, and the Blue Lake.

The accompanying long but probably still not exhaustive list of fungi observed on the Okataina Foray is an indication that 1993 was a "good" year for the fungi and Okataina an excellent place to enjoy the benefit of good hunting. The Foray closed with the usual discussion about next year, with opinion strongly in favour of a South Island venue. The probable site will be Nelson Lakes, Lake Rotoiti; and the dates May 16-20, 1994.