Thelymitra nervosa habitat, flowers and column—see page 8 et seq.
Contents: No. 122  

Cover  
Gottfried Lindauer’s 1894 portrait of William Colenso aged 83, from the Collection of Hawke’s Bay Museums Trust, reproduced with permission.

Editorial: Ian St George  
4 Colenso’s orchids.

The type locality: Ian St George  
8 Ngarauhoe: Thelymitra nervosa Col. & T. decora Cheesem.

Original papers  
15 Te Henui walkway: Gordon Sylvester.

Aussie notes: David McConachie  
16 Managing digital photographs. Robert Lawrence.

Notes, letters, questions, comments  
7 William Colenso Bicentenary celebrations  
18 Peter Tait and Pterostylis “Bluff”. Mike Lusk’s horned Thelymitra.  
New books on William Colenso. Instructions to contributors.  
17 NZNOG books.

The column: Eric Scanlen  
19 Defining three subalpine greenhoods
Colenso's orchids

William Colenso, printer, missionary, botanist, politician, writer, naturalist, ethnologist, linguist—a nineteenth century polymath—will be 200 years old on 17 November. He was a fastidious and almost obsessional worker who managed to get offside with almost everybody, and, to an extent, that difficulty in his personality has led lesser men to criticise his work rather than his person.

This was a giant of New Zealand's colonial history, one who has left a huge legacy in his many fields of expertise. Almost 100 species bear the epithet “colensoi”, two orchids among them.

He learned his botany from Allan Cunningham, NSW Colonial Botanist, who visited the Bay of Islands in 1838, and JD Hooker in 1841. He travelled widely in the North Island, but as a busy missionary printer could do little more than collect plants for others: he sent his first 600 specimens to WJ Hooker at Kew in 1842. The relationship between the colonial collectors and the “Home” experts is explored sensitively by Endersby (http://www.jimendersby.com/PDF/Endersby_No_Herbarium.pdf): suffice to say, Colenso, with growing botanical confidence, suggested names for his new taxa, but was almost always overridden by WJ Hooker, who either lumped them with named species (usually wrongly, at least in the case of orchids), shelved them for examination by JD Hooker’s return from his travels, or named them himself.

Colenso often expressed frustration at such treatment, but continued to send specimens to Kew—over 6000 of them (http://blog.tepapa.govt.nz/2009/03/26/colensos-collections/)—from his missionary journeys from Hawke’s Bay around his huge parish in the southern half of the North Island.

In 1852 he was dismissed from the church, and in the ensuing years became a land speculator, public servant, educationalist, local and national politician (he was Napier’s first Member of the House of Representatives, and sat in both the Auckland and Wellington parliaments). In 1878 he retired as School Inspector and returned to botany—spending weeks each year in the Bush districts, staying at local hotels, collecting specimens in the Ruahine foothills.

Now he was confident enough to begin naming his own taxa, and there followed a great number of botanical papers to the Transactions, describing his finds (and those of others who increasingly recognised his authority and sent him specimens).

He was affronted when James Hector, editor of the Trans., rejected one of his papers; he responded with tolerance to Thomas Cheeseman (no orchidologist) who lumped five of his Pterostylis species, and he was probably unaware that his good friend JD Hooker had expressed the wish to Hector that Colenso had never put pen to paper.

And what do we think of his botany now? Patrick Brownsey, fern expert at Te Papa, says, “Colenso had an eye for variation and was a good field botanist. Unfortunately, however, I think he was very definitely a splitter, didn’t have a good understanding of the modern concept of a species, and described every minor variant that he found.” (Brownsey P: pers. comm. 1 July 2009).

To an extent that could also be said of Colenso’s orchids, and in the past it has been. Modern taxonomy, however, has reinstated many of Colenso’s species lumped by subsequent botanists, and when we look at the lists of orchids associated with William Colenso we can only be amazed.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hooker’s orchids found by Colenso</th>
<th>Sites (Flora N-Z &amp; Handbook)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sarcochilus adversus</strong></td>
<td>Bay of Is. Wairarapa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prasophyllum colensoi</strong></td>
<td>E. Coast + interior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>P. tunicatum</strong></td>
<td>E. Coast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>P. pumilum</strong></td>
<td>E. Coast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>P. nudum</strong></td>
<td>Port Nicholson + Taupo Lake; E. Coast, clay hills, Te Hawara,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spiranthes novae-zelandiae</strong></td>
<td>Northern Island</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Thelymitra imberbis</strong></td>
<td>Bay of Islands etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>T. pulchella</strong></td>
<td>N. and Middle Is.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>T. pauciflora (T. colensoi)</strong></td>
<td>N. Is.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cyrtostylis oblonga</strong></td>
<td>Moist woods and shady banks, N. Is.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>C. rotundifolia</strong></td>
<td>Raukawa Ridge, Hawkes Bay + Cape Kidnapper; E. Coast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>C. macrophylla</strong></td>
<td>N. Is. E. Coast (Incl in C. rotundifolia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adenochilus gracilis</strong></td>
<td>Bay of Plenty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pterostylis graminea</strong></td>
<td>E. Coast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>P. micromega</strong></td>
<td>E. Coast+ bogs near Wairarapa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>P. foliata</strong></td>
<td>E. Coast + Ruahine mountains</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>P. trullifolia</strong></td>
<td>Bay of Is.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nematoceras oblonga</strong></td>
<td>N. Is. Mountains of interior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>N. macrantha</strong></td>
<td>Wet woods, bogs, E. Coast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>N. triloba</strong></td>
<td>E. Coast + interior; Cape Palliser, Cape Titiokura etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>N. rotundifolia</strong></td>
<td>Clay banks, Manawatu</td>
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<tr>
<td>Orchids described by Colenso</td>
<td>Found by</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. ichthyostomum</td>
<td>H. Hill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. tuberculatum</td>
<td>A. Hamilton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caladenia macrophylla</td>
<td>A. Olsen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. variegata</td>
<td>WC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corysanthes hypogaea</td>
<td>WC</td>
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<tr>
<td>C. orbiculata</td>
<td>H. Suter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. papillosa</td>
<td>Balfour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dendrobium lessonii</td>
<td>WC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earina alba</td>
<td>WC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. quadrilobata</td>
<td>WC, A. Hamilton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gastrodia leucopetala</td>
<td>WC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Microtis longifolia</td>
<td>WC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M. papillosa</td>
<td>CP Winkelmann</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orthoceras caput-serpentis</td>
<td>H. Hill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O. rubrum</td>
<td>WC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prasophyllum pauciflorum</td>
<td>WC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P. variegatum</td>
<td>Balfour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pterostylis auriculata</td>
<td>? Petrie</td>
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<tr>
<td>P. emarginata</td>
<td>WC, Winkelmann</td>
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<td>SW Hardy</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>P. patens</td>
<td>WC, Balfour</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>P. speciosa</td>
<td>H. Hill</td>
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<tr>
<td>P. subsimilis</td>
<td>A. Olsen</td>
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<tr>
<td>P. polyphylla</td>
<td>H. Hill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P. rubella</td>
<td>RW Rawson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Species</td>
<td>Author</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>P. trifolia</em></td>
<td>A. Olsen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>P. tristis</em></td>
<td>H. Hill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>P. venosa</em></td>
<td>A. Olsen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Sarcocciulus breviscapa</em></td>
<td>WC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Thelymitra alba</em></td>
<td>Balfour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>T. cornuta</em></td>
<td>Winkelmann</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>T. nemoralis</em></td>
<td>WC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>T. purpureofusca</em></td>
<td>WC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>T. formosa</em></td>
<td>WC</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>T. concinna</em></td>
<td>A. Hamilton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>T. nervosa</em></td>
<td>Collie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>T. fimbriata</em></td>
<td>? Petrie</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**REGISTRATIONS NOW OPEN**

**WILLIAM COLENSEO BICENTENARY CELEBRATIONS**

9-13 NOVEMBER 2011

**HAWKE’S BAY**

Printer of some of the most significant documents in New Zealand history, missionary, explorer and botanist, a free-wheeling politician and controversialist William Colenso was a maverick.

This year, on the bicentenary of Colenso’s birth, Hawke’s Bay Museum and Art Gallery will be hosting a celebration of his life and ideas with a programme of events, centred on a two day academic conference.

The keynote speakers for the conference are author and science historian, Dr Jim Endersby of the University of Sussex and Peter Wells, author of the new book ‘The Hungry Heart – A Journey with William Colenso’.

Go to [www.williamcolenso.co.nz](http://www.williamcolenso.co.nz) to find out more about the full programme of events taking place, and to register for the conference.

**HAWKE’S BAY MUSEUM & ART GALLERY NAPIER**
In 1887 William Colenso described *Thelymitra nervosa* from plants found in the “high lands at the base of Mount Ruapehu (Tongariro range), whence specimens were brought by a visitor in 1879” [1]. Molloy has pointed out that the type specimen has a column identical with that of *T. decorra*, described by Cheeseman in 1906. Scanlen has used the name *T. nervosa* for plants whose petals have no spots, also finding differences in the post-anther lobe of the columns he has examined.

I have examined herbarium specimens of *T. decorra* and in drying the spots have disappeared. Colenso was describing ten-year-old specimens—any spots, like all colour, would have faded to reveal the underlying venation (hence “nervosa”).

Curiously, Colenso had seen the plant before. He had collected his specimen No. 1934 from a river bank near Eparaima (was WNW of Wallingford) and sent it to Kew in 1848. There is also a specimen in Herb. Colenso at Te Papa labelled 1934, identified by Cheeseman as *T. longifolia*, but actually *T. nervosa*.

**Colenso’s description** [1]

*T. nervosa*, sp. nov.

Rather slender, straight, erect, 9–10 inches high; a white glossy sheath at base, 1 inch long, transparent, veined, truncate, margin entire with a long narrow linear mucro; 2 distant sheathing cauline bracts each 1½ inches long, acute, adpressed. Leaf single, 6 inches long, 3 lines wide, linear-acuminate, submembranaceous. Scape very slender almost wiry at top, bearing 3 distant flowers; floral bracts coloured, very broad, ½ inch long, acuminate with a long mucro, veined, minutely papillose on tips at outside, the upper flower having 2 bracts opposite, the inner one much smaller; pedicels slender, ¼ inch long. Perianth purple, 1 inch diameter, spreading, all segments much veined, veins branching; dorsal sepal oblong apiculate; lateral sepals ovate-acuminate apiculate; lateral petals sub-obovate apiculate; labellum broadly oblong-
lanceolate, obtuse; column black-purple above, largely bifid, each lobe 1-notched, incurved; the two appendages each on a long slender arm arising from below as high as the column; largely plumose at top in a globular ball; hairs very flexuous, sub-moniliform, twisted, their tips obtuse and rounded; anther broadly ovate, obtuse, apex below top of column. Ovary lanceolate, \( \frac{1}{2} \) inch long, coarsely ribbed.

**Hab.** High lands base of Mount Ruapehu (Tongariro Range), County of East Taupo; whence specimens were brought by a visitor in 1879, and given to me with some other plants (**sp. nov. supra**).

**Obs.** This is another small neat-looking species, with large dark-coloured flowers, their segments much veined (as also are their coloured bracts), the lower lobe or labellum being larger than the others. The number of the flowers on a plant vary, usually 3, but in one of my specimens 2, and in another only 1; each of these two plants being also smaller. A striking character is the low branching of its slender staminodiae or lateral lobes of its column which are also elongated, and their peculiar wavy moniliform hairs. There may be more basal sheaths belonging to the plant, as my specimens do not include their roots or tubers.

**Who was the collector?**

*T. nervosa* was one of only three of Colenso’s orchid descriptions in which he did not identify the collector [2]. Happily, in a paper written six years afterwards he did identify him as William Collie [3]. He wrote:

… on my remembering a few nice botanical specimens collected at Tongariro by Mr.Collie, and given by him to me (some of them—*Dracophyllum rubrum*, *Pimelea stylosa*, and *Thelymitra nervosa*—being novelties, were described by me and exhibited here before this society in 1887); and also in looking over my album and noticing therein some of the fine photographic views taken by him of Tongariro and Ruapehu….—I determined on writing a short paper—a résumé of Mr. Collie’s repeated visits to that locality: especially, too, as he had done what no one else has done, either before or since—descended into the crater of Tongariro and spent a night within it.

The *Marlborough Express* of 3 November 1900 carried a notice of Collie’s death: it is the only biography I can find.

An old settler who played a not unimportant part in earlier affairs of Blenheim passed away recently at Barral, a township of New South Wales. Though it is nearly thirty years since he left Blenheim, many will remember Mr William Collie. He … was to the fore in getting the name of our town changed from “Beaver” to Blenheim, urging that it was appropriate that the capital of a province named after one of England’s greatest generals should commemorate his most famous victory…. Deceased’s own name is perpetuated in “Collie's Hollow,” by which the depression running through the centre of the town is known. Mr Collie lived in Blenheim for about 17 years, leaving in 1874 for the North Island. He was at Napier for some time, then went to Auckland, and during the Melbourne Exhibition crossed over to Australia, in search of a climate more suitable for the rheumatic affection from which he suffered.

In Marlborough Collie photographed Ernest Rutherford and his family; his photographs of the White Terraces at Rotomahana are in the Te Papa collections; I can find no record of surviving Tongariro/ Ngauruhoe photographs, although it is clear from Colenso’s account [3] that many were taken.

Those “high lands” are a pretty vast area to go looking for an orchid, but there are some clues to refine the search. Collie described his December 1877–January 1878 trip in the *Transactions* [4]. He went up there to photograph the Tongariro (Ngauruhoe) crater:

“In the pleasant, if sometimes arduous, pursuit of art-photography, the writer camped for weeks close to the main volcanoes and geysers of the colony, enjoying excellent opportunities for search into the origin and working of these marvellous and attractive exhibitions of nature's powers.”

He described a night spent in the crater, but he made no mention of plants.

His companion FE Lys later wrote that they camped in the bush between Ruapehu and Ngauruhoe, and also 20 miles away at Mamoe-
nui [5], a stream on the Waikato-Tokihaunu road.

In 1886 Colenso collected another Thelymitra on whose label he wrote, “fl. of Thelymitra. Dry Parsonsia hill. Petals broadly ovate obtuse with mucro — sprinkled with blue. Sep. lanc. ovate purple brown. Anther heart shaped. Column dark purple hooded. 2 staminodia longer than col & densely plumose on long appendages. Stigma obtusely trifid, 2-notched in front of gland. Perianth rarely open.... Parsonsia hill. Thelymitra Decr. 10/86”. Cheeseman catalogued it as Herb. Colenso 24274A. (Parsonsia Hill is one of Colenso’s pet names for places he visited frequently in Central Hawke’s Bay, in this case near Matamau). I have examined the specimen in Herb. Colenso and I believe it is T. nervosa (though not easy to tell in the dried state).

Colenso did not publish it, perhaps because he regarded it as the same as Collie’s plant. Finding it may have jogged his memory of the latter and led to his describing T. nervosa formally.

**What did later botanists think of it?**

Cheeseman wrote that T. nervosa was “unknown to me” and went on to describe T. decora (with spots on the petals) from Taupo and “hills near the base of (wait for it!) Ngauruhoe, alt. 2000-5000ft”. Hatch ignored it completely. Moore wrote that the name T. nervosa Col. “remains unresolved”.

Brian Molloy (pers. comm.) identified T. nervosa Col. with T. decora Cheesem. by examining the original specimens.

Eric Scanlen has used the name T. nervosa for unspotted, and T. decora for spotted forms. He (pers. comm.) says of spotted forms, “Back of the p.a.l. is almost black and always minutely warted. Unspotted T. nervosa … (has) back of the p.a.l. striated not warted.” He notes other differences [J109: 29, 36].

I on the other hand think there can be little doubt that T. nervosa = T. decora. Some unspotted but similar forms may not be T. nervosa but may represent an undescribed taxon.

**What’s there now?**

Tony Druce divided the Tongariro National Park into five floristic sectors: East, West and South Ruapehu, and East and West Tongariro (see map preceding page). Thelymitra decora appears in his plant lists for all except the South Ruapehu sector – with plant frequencies given as “few” for East Tongariro, and “many” for West Tongariro. The current Check-list of Indigenous Vascular Plants recorded from Tongariro National Park equates T. decora with T. nervosa and repeats that information [6].
The Tongariro Crossing bears 65,000 visitors annually. We joined them on 4 December 2010, walking in from the Mangatepopo road end—and in the unhappy expectation that we would not be likely to find the orchid in the crater, regretfully abandoned the temptation to ascend the mountain and spend a night there.

*T. nervosa* had been in full flower at sea level (Queen Charlotte Sound) three weeks earlier, but at the altitude of the Crossing the plants were only in bud. On the way out, however (our passage along Mangatepopo road punctuated by pauses to peruse patches of *Pterostylis patens*) spots of blue led us to plants matching Colenso’s description, in full flower. They all had spotted petals (inside front cover).

**References**

3. Colenso W 1893 “More Last Words”: being an Appendix to several Papers read here during Past Sessions on the Volcanic Mountain-range of Tongariro and Ruapehu, with its adjoining District. Transactions of the New Zealand Institute 26: 483-498.
5. Lys FE 1893. Mr Collie’s camera. Letter to the Editor, Hawke’s Bay Herald 10 June.
Te Henui walkway
by Gordon Sylvester

Recently (August) while surfing the net looking for illustrations of my favourite orchids, I came across a site claiming to have *Dendrobium kingianum* growing on trees within its area of interest.

Looking over the photographs, sure enough there was a photo of a mature *D. kingianum* with several pseudobulbs attached to a host tree. There were also photographs of several other species of purely New Zealand orchids.

I emailed the contact for the group asking about the *D. kingianum*. It was ultimately confirmed that the plant had been transplanted by an unknown person into the track area. In a further email I was asked to identify another orchid and a photo was supplied (Fig.1, p.12).

While looking further at a map of the site, I noted it was both a prominent stream system and a walkway with some associations with the botanical gardens within the precincts of New Plymouth.

The photograph was sent to several members with more knowledge of the genus than I have, and an identification was made. It was however not to be a new record for the area, as the Group had already identified the species on their website.

I then asked my contacts if we could record their information on our database. The answer was in the affirmative. The contacts were John Dudonski and Phil Bendle, Phil took the photographs using a Sony Cybershot 7.2mb dsc w35 Macro focus 2cm

There is some good orchid photography, check out the website of the friends of the Te Henui Walkway.

The plant list:

- *Adelopetalum tuberculatum*
- *Corybas cheesemanii*
- *Diplodium alobulum*
- *Dendrobium kingianum*
- *Drymoanthus adversus*
- *Earina aestivalis*
- *Earina autumnalis*
- *Earina mucronata*
- *Gastrodia cunninghamii*
- *Gastrodia "long column"
- *Ichthyostomum pygmaeum*
- *Microtis unifolia*
- *Nematoceras aff. rivulare “Te Henui”* (tag named “Taranaki” in the NOG Index)
- *Nematoceras iridescens*
- *Nematoceras macranthum*
- *Nematoceras papa*
- *Nematoceras trilobus*
- *Orthoceras novae-zelandiae*
- *Pterostylis banksii*
- *Pterostylis aff. montana*
- *Singularitybas oblongus*
- *Thelymitra longifolia*
- *Thelymitra pauciflora*
- *Winika cunninghamii*

I am informed that there are possibly two species of *Microtis* “and John hasn’t checked but he had noticed two different flowering times, and *Thelymitra* (two unknown species) no ID yet”.

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**Original papers**

**Te Henui walkway**

by Gordon Sylvester
Managing digital photographs
by Robert Lawrence, reprinted from NOSSA vol.35 (7) August 2011.

Since I obtained my first digital camera in 2005 I have photographed many species of plants that I encountered with my work and on orchid excursions with NOSSA. Having thousands of photographs named and filed systematically enables suitable photographs to be found when wanted. Others may be interested in the simple method that I use.

I have a folder that I use for storing all of my plant photographs. It is called „Virtual Herbarium.. This name has the advantage of coming near the end of the alphabet so it is always at the bottom of my list of folders. This makes it easy for me to find photographs if required for a publication, display or competition.

In this folder I have folders labelled by location. I put all of the photographs from a particular location in the one folder. I simply name all of my photographs with the botanic name. If a photograph has more than one plant species of interest I make a copy and label it with the other species. (Sometimes I photograph fauna such as lizards or even arthropods. I make a separate folder for these and label with the common name of the animal and also file these in the folder with the appropriate location. If I find a species name I will use this to label the photographs. Having them in separate folders stops me wondering what sort of plant it was.)

The attached screen is an example of the filing and naming system that I use on my computer.

The advantage of this system is that I automatically have the location information with the photographs. I can search all of my photographs for a particular genus or species. Alternatively, I can find all of the plants photographed at a particular site.

Using Windows 7 makes it very easy to name photographs; one simply selects all of the photographs of a particular species and right-click and rename all at once. Word automatically adds a number for each picture/file.

For the system to work requires that photographs are labelled and filed as quickly as they are taken. My view is that a photograph is not worth taking if there is no time to label and file it. A high priority has to be given to this task and time needs to be planned following each outing at which photographs are taken.

I would add that this task was more difficult prior to having Windows 7. Each photograph had to be labelled and numbered individually. I did a search of all my files before labelling a species so that I could have a unique number for each file. A helpful trick is to create a new folder and put all of the photographs of one species in it. These can all then be labelled together. One can tab to the next file and paste the botanical name.

When labelling a species, it is often worth looking through old photographs already labelled.

Often I have had more experience since the older photographs were taken and I recognise that some need to be relabelled. By looking through the photographs I get to see the variation within a species. This helps me learn to identify the plants that I encounter.

It is also a good idea to have a separate folder
for copies of favourite photographs. These might be suitable for printing and framing, for screen savers, wallpapers, publishing or for competition.

Others may have systems that may be useful to others for managing photographs. Please write a description and send it to the Editor of this Journal (ie, NOSSA Journal—Ed.)

---

**Colenso’s collections**

including the unpublished work of the late Bruce Hamlin on William Colenso's New Zealand plants held at Te Papa

compiled by Ian St George

412 pages + searchable CD

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**Colour field guide to the native orchids of New Zealand**

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82 pages of text + over 200 colour photographs

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---

Books available from Brian Tyler, 4 Byrd St, Levin. BandJ.Tyler@xtra.co.nz.
Peter Tait (Stewart Island) emailed, “... a post script on Pterostylis “bluff”. You might remember I sent you a photo some time ago, as I was unsure of it, never having seen it before and it not appearing in any of my books at all. You wrote back and told me it had been discovered on Bluff hill the previous summer and you thanked me for extending its range to Stewart Island. Well last summer I was honoured to be asked to speak at the memorial service of Joan Kirtlan (nee Leask). The Leasks are a very old Island family. I was somewhat astonished to find the ashes casket covered with P. “bluff” blooms. The older Island families used to regard such things as normal. Anyway I asked the four daughters about them, and they told me they had always called them Kaka Beak orchids. Without researching it further I would be very surprised if Dorothy Jenkins had not painted them. Dorothy is long gone, but was well known as a highly talented flower artist. And there I was thinking I had ‘discovered’ something new.”

Mike Lusk sent the curious photograph of the Thelymitra with the horned anterior margins of the midlobe, flowering in early December in the Ruahine foothills: another example of the polymorphism of the amphidiploid T. hatchii (Fig. 3, p.18).

Mike also sent the photograph (Fig.2) of a very dimunitive Pterostylis of the P. graminea group.

A number of new books on William Colenso are advertised in the October 2011 issue of eColenso, the newsletter of the Colenso Society. Back issues of eColenso are available at http://www.colensostudy.id.au/.
Defining three subalpine greenhoods

Pterostylis venosa, Pt. trifolia, Pt. humilis and Pt. confertifolia have been confused from the word go by the acknowledged experts and informed amateurs alike. The Column set out to clearly define each species and try to determine why the confusion.

Pterostylis venosa (Fig. 4) set off the enigma when William Colenso described it from two dried and pressed specimens from the eastern Ruahines, donated by Mr A. Olsen in 1896 [1]. Only one specimen was dissected but inner details could not be ascertained so were not mentioned in the description. The stem was 2½in. (63.5mm) tall, somewhat short for the species as known today and it had only two leaves where there are usually three. The leaves were "sub-orbicular-oblong, 1¼ in. long, 1 in. wide". Now we expect that it would have had the slender, linear stigma, typical of predominantly insect pollinated plants, where any of its own dislodged pollen falls clear of the stigma, thus largely avoiding self-pollination. The acuminate labellum, with a slightly rounded tip, bends through 90º and its surface is covered with tiny brown hairs, only visible with a x 20 magnifier or microscope. (pers. comm. G. Upson). Its preferred habitat is the high subalpine under beech canopy. This is one of the few Colenso species that T.F. Cheeseman accepted.

Pterostylis trifolia (Figs. 5 & 7) was described by Colenso, just three years later, in 1899, from a single, withered specimen, also from Mr A. Olsen. [1]. This plant was rather tall for the species at 2½ in (63.5mm), leaves were "broadly oblong, 1½ in. long, 1 in. broad, tips very obtuse-rounded …", seeming remarkably close to those of his Pt. venosa. Hold it right there: the pix that Vic Vercoe (J73:28) and Mike Lusk (J109:36) have been sending us, from under high sub-alpine leatherwood scrub, in the southern Ruahines, are shorter and have sub-acute leaves with an acute floral bract having undulate margins on the lower half. Somewhat different wouldn’t you say? The similarities between holotypes for the two species could explain why Lucy Moore and T.F. Cheeseman considered Pt. trifolia to be in fact Pt. venosa. The Pt. trifolia holotype sounds like a hybrid! Why didn’t Colenso mention differences and comparisons between his two species, described only three years apart, as he normally did with his other species? Flower descriptions also match reasonably well; perhaps he had doubled up on one species but didn’t realise until too late to withdraw? Not at all, read on.

In 1926 [2] L. Cockayne and H.H. Allan described a short, three leaved greenhood found "On margins of subalpine scrub and in lower subalpine herbfields, about 1,200m altitude, Ruahine Mountains, near Apiti." Their fairly full Latin description has been word-by-word translated from the Latin by Mark Moorhouse with syntax construed by the Column, as follows:—

“Pterostylis confertifolia Allan sp. nov. Terrestrial herb ±7cm tall; stem erect and tuber pea-shaped ±7mm diam. Leaves crowded, clasping the stem, the lower ones scarious, scale-like and obtuse, the upper ones, usually three, erect to spreading, pale green. Somewhat thick, but thin when dry. Leaves 3-5cm long, 1.5-2cm broad, elliptic to ovate, obtuse, veins indistinctly netted, margins somewhat incurved, bases sheathing, broad, off-white and narrowing. Flower solitary, green with red veins, barely overtopping the leaf and rising when in seed. Flower ±2cm long, not including obovoid ovary ±1.5cm long. Galea is erect for ±12mm then curved, ending abruptly in a short point. Lateral petals,
lower part, nearly all on one side of the mid-rib, linear-oblong in upper part, falcate, acute. Lateral sepals fused for ±8mm then in two lobes ±1.2cm long, rising erect and acuminate. Label-llum thickish, dark brick-red, linear-oblong, margins very finely serrated, with an elongated groove, tip minutely notched, narrow, somewhat protruding. Appendage curved with two long points and ornamented with short, moderately broad filaments. Column slender, helmet part evenly erect, lateral lobes parallel, with upper lobes broadly triangular with short acuminate points; lower lobes broad-oblong and obtuse and clothed in minute felt-like hairs.”

This sounds very much like Pt. trifolia Col. Even to the unhelpful lack of undulate margins on the floral bract, obtuse leaves and that which Colenso missed, Pt. venosa’s fine hairs on the labellum.

Why would H.H. Allan re-describe an orchid so similar to one already described by Colenso but 27 years earlier? Possibly the fact that T.F. Cheeseman had long since disallowed Pt. trifolia Col and had lumped it with Pt. venosa, led them to miss it completely? We may never know, however the similarity in descriptions has led to the Column’s adoption of salient traits of Pt. confertifolia as applying to Pt. trifolia, in the third edition of the Colour Field Guide (CFG3). Both parties above, omitted any mention of the stigma but Allan’s “Columna gracilis” (slender column) has been taken to indicate a linear stigma. Why did both parties mention obtuse leaves when copious present photos show sub acute leaves and a distinctly acute floral bract? Quite possibly their specimens included the Pt. venosa genes for obtuse leaves? More about that later.

The column got pix of Pt. venosa specimens (Fig. 4) from Ernie Corbet’s find under beech below the North Egmont Visitors’ Centre, on 19 Nov 1997. These became the Column’s mental type specimens of the species. But they showed a conical tip to the dorsal sepal, more-so in some than others. (Fig. 6) The nose-cone housed the tips of the lateral petals. Was it typical of Pt. venosa? Not at all, as it transpired, at the time of writing, some 14 years later, this was a previously unmentioned trait of Pt. humilis, as detailed later.

Ian St George, in Dec 2007, also secured pix from the same colony. One was a rather short Pt. venosa as seen on the back cover of J110. Its floral bract had the undulate margins of Pt. trifolia but failed to enclose the galea, which is on a stem tall enough to be Pt. venosa. On the front cover of the same J110, Ian’s other pic from the colony, depicts a typically tall Pt. venosa with no Pt. humilis nose-cone and no Pt. trifolia undulate margin to the floral bract.

So this colony can be classed as predominantly Pt. venosa but with genes apparent from Pt. trifolia in some specimens and from Pt. humilis in others. Pt. trifolia has not been independently reported from this site but some of its genes are apparently present.

Another of Ian’s but from Berwick Forest, straddling ERs 68/69, (Fig. 8) had the galea almost enclosed, but in a floral bract without undulate margins. It too would have fitted the Egmont colony but was from hundreds of km to the south.

Pterostylis humilis (Fig. 11) was first reported by H.B. Matthews from near Bruce Rd, Whakapapa, in January 1920. (J55:12, E.D. Hatch). Matthews took specimens home to Remuera and grew them on. He sent the resulting malformed plants to Dr R.S. Rogers in Australia, along with a photo of the best but distorted flower produced. The malformation was due no doubt, to the unaccustomed warmth and low relative humidity in Remuera. Rogers described the species from that flower and from the plants preserved in spirits. Matthews could have asked T.F. Cheeseman to describe it but seemed not to trust him. Matthews said, in his letter of 31 October 1921 [3] “You will probably call it another freak.” recalling what Cheeseman had said of his (Matthews’) specimens of Petalochilus saccatus and P. calyciformis which Rogers had previously described.

Pt. humilis Rog. still stands and it is perhaps the best known of these three subalpine green-
hoods. Its bulbous stigma is unique amongst the three and signals fall-back self-pollination where any remaining pollen falls from the anther onto its own protruding stigma. “3-10-15cm tall,” three prominent leaves, as with the previous two species, but leaves longer “4-9cm” and narrower “1.5-2.5cm” even though broad for a Pterostylis and “obtuse to sub-acute” quoting from Moore’s 1970 Flora. Probably, Moore’s wider, obtuse leaves also had Pt. venosa genes included because isolated colonies of Pt. humilis, in ideal habitat, have longer, narrower and sub-acute leaves. Such an habitat is by the track above North Egmont Visitors Centre, leading up the mountain. Another such colony, but of shorter plants, was at a lower altitude on a redundant loop of Middle Road, Horopito. But that colony was then obliterated by dumped slip spoil. A trait well represented in the Horopito colony was the conical tip to the dorsal sepal, neatly housing the similarly folded tips on the lateral petals (Fig. 10).

Gordon Sylvester’s pic of Pt. venosa x humilis (?) from Arthurs Pass, (Fig. 12) has brighter red tepal tips than any Pt. humilis and a better developed nose cone than this putative parent. Those better defined traits are difficult to justify by hybridism. Perhaps the Arthurs Pass colony is a remnant of an original parent?

Vic Vercoe’s Pt. venosa x trifolia (Fig. 9) from vicinity of Rangiwahia Hut, western Ruahines, was growing under leatherwood (Olearia colensoi) as you can see from the leaf-mould but its height is all Pt. venosa. The only visible connection with Pt. trifolia here, apart from the habitat, is the slight undulations on the lower margins of the floral bract.

Bruce Irwin made a colour slide of some sectioned Pt. humilis from North Egmont. Some had linear stigmas, others had distinctly bulbous stigmas. Otherwise they looked identical. Those with linear stigmas had to have Pt. venosa genes probably emanating from the colony below in the beech forest.

So, hybridising would seem to be happening between the three species and could explain why experts and amateurs alike have been confused in the past. The holotypes especially of Pt. confertifolia and Pt. trifolia apparently bearing genes from Pt. venosa, made it particularly difficult and both have thus been often lumped with Pt. venosa.

**Conclusion:** characters of three distinct species are clear in iconic pix 4, 5+7 and 11 but also shown are examples of common hybrids with some genes apparent from the other two sub-alpine species. Original descriptions were from either dried and pressed specimens, or one wilted specimen or a deformed flower from a heat stressed plant. It is entirely possible that describers and reporters had hybrids to hand most of the time hence the confusion right to the present day.

**References**
1. Trans. NZ Inst.1896, 28:p610; also NOG Historic Series 1 Colenso on Orchids P47
3. Scanlen, EA, Matthews & Son on Orchids NZNOG Historical Series 2006
Captions

Fig 4. *Pterostylis venosa* standard version, three short, broad, obtuse leaves, tall stem, North Egmont under beech canopy. 19 Nov 97.

Fig 5. *Pterostylis trifolia* standard version, short stem, three short, broad, sub-acute leaves, floral bract with undulate lower margins, clasps the galea. Maharahara under leatherwood by Mike Lusk 7 Nov 02

Fig 6. *Pterostylis venosa* + *humilis* genes, its nose-cone housing tips of lateral petals, also from North Egmont colony, 19 Nov 1997.

Fig 7. *Pterostylis trifolia* pair showing sub-acute leaves, sheathing bract acute. Mike Lusk, Maharahara 7 Nov 2002

Fig 8. *Pterostylis venosa* + *trifolia* genes, so short stem but no undulate margins on floral bract. Berwick Forest by Ian St George.

Fig 9. *Pterostylis venosa* + *trifolia* genes under leatherwood near Rangiwhaia Hut. Note basic *Pt. venosa stem and leaves* but undulate margins on lower floral bract; leatherwood leaf-mould by Vic Vercoe.

Fig 10. *Pterostylis humilis* short stemmed, low sub-alpine form from Horopito 25 Nov 95. Note the lateral petal tips neatly folded into the nose-cone of the dorsal sepal, sombre red tips to the tepals.

Fig 11. *Pterostylis humilis*, at Whakapapa 6 Dec 98. Note sub-acute leaves; 4th little leaf almost obscured; nose cone has lost the petal tips whilst being arranged for the camera.

Fig 12. *Pterostylis venosa* + *humilis* genes from Arthurs Pass 5 Jan 2010 by Gordon Sylvester. Flower has the *Pt. humilis* late flowering, nose-cone, and brighter red tepal tips on *Pt. venosa* stem and leaves.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species-Altitude</th>
<th>Height-Habitat</th>
<th>Stigma</th>
<th>Leaves</th>
<th>Floral bract</th>
<th>Tepal tips</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Pt. venosa</em></td>
<td>low sub-alpine</td>
<td>&lt;100mm beech canopy</td>
<td>Linear</td>
<td>Short, broad, obtuse</td>
<td>Short, broad, obtuse</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Pt. humilis</em></td>
<td>all the sub-alpine</td>
<td>&lt;150mm well-lit scrub</td>
<td>Bulbous</td>
<td>Long, less broad, sub-acute</td>
<td>Long, less broad, sub-acute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Pt. trifolia</em></td>
<td>high sub-alpine</td>
<td>&lt;70mm leatherwood</td>
<td>Linear</td>
<td>Short, broad, sub-acute</td>
<td>Short, broad, acute, lower half undulate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Details distinctive traits, on just the three species derived by the Column from numerous pix, various descriptions and email debates with contributors. What do you think?