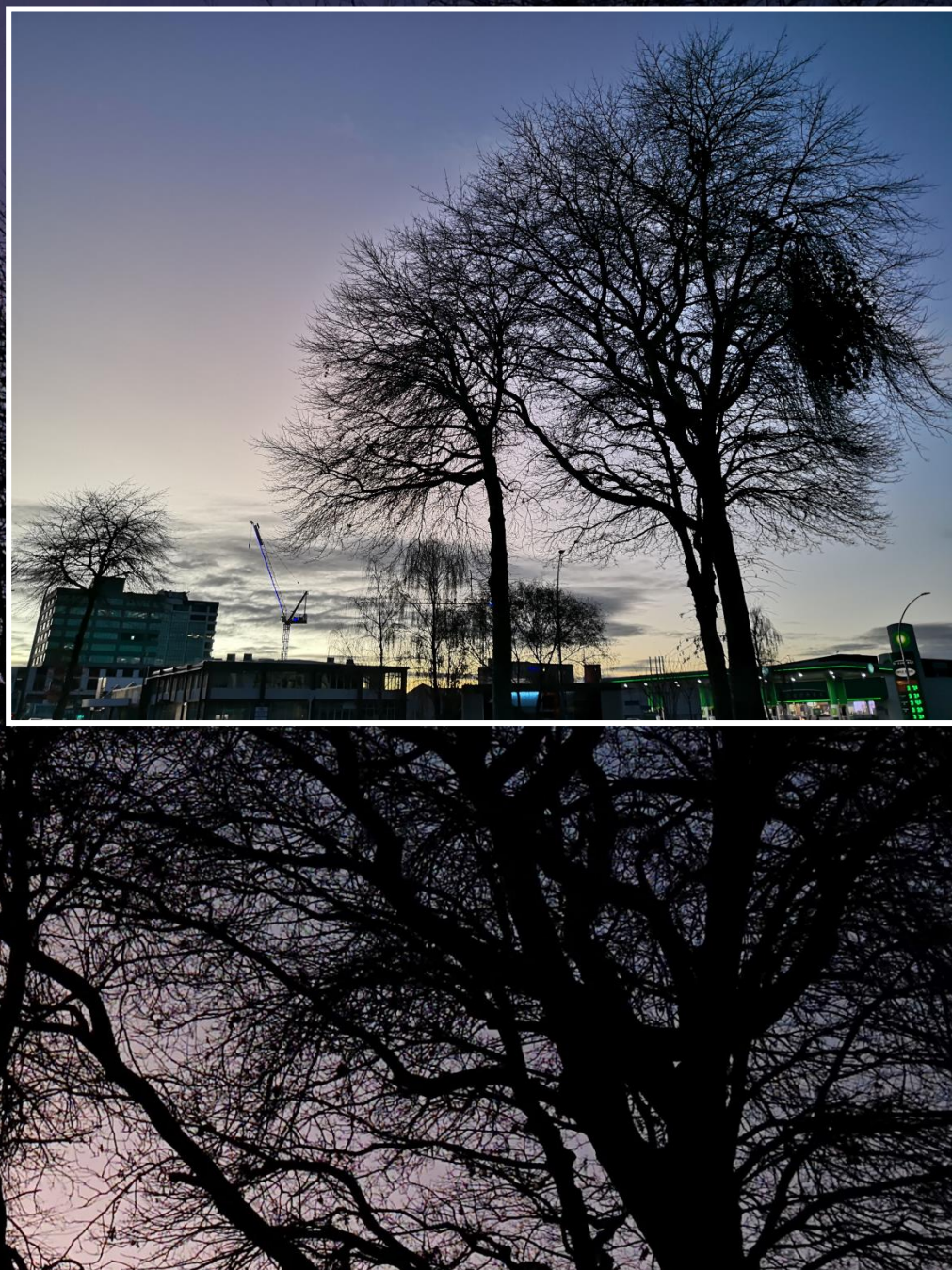


*Rotorua Surprise
(Lake Tīkītapu / Blue Lake)
Lake Tīkītapu Scenic Reserve
Whakarewarewa Forest Park*

*June 19, 2022
(Lake Tīkītapu - Lake Okareka Track
Loop Track / Feeder Track
Tīkītapu Nature Walk)*



Colour with Maori history, Lake Tikitapu is a naturally formed larva dam lake of size 150 hectares. The lake has a flat bed with crystal clear water (maximum depth 27.5m). It's lovely to hang around here in a warm sunny day. However, a bit cold today with wintry breeze, we all have put on thick clothing.



*Today is a good morning in Hamilton,
with a clear sky and pretty calm weather.*

*In the van, we can see a bit of drifting low cool elongated cloud
upon sunrise.*

*It takes a while to drive to Lake Tikitapu, adding some more sleep
on the way.*

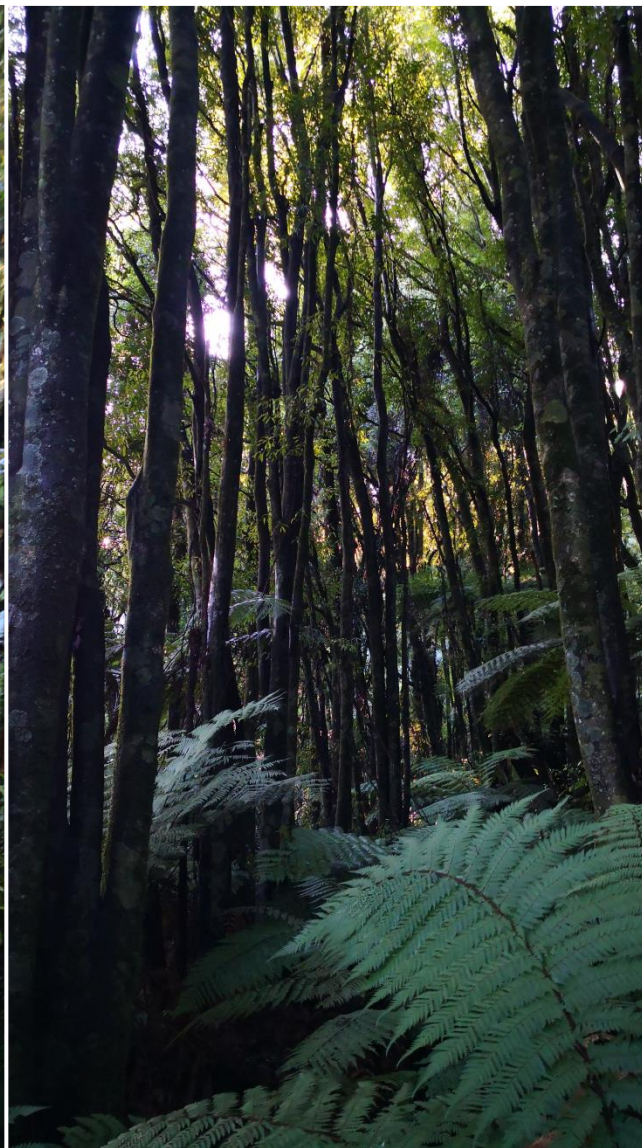
*The stretch of blue, earning its name, is commonly referred as
Blue Lake. This Lake is a popular destination for locals and
visitors.*

*Being the smallest lake of the four small lakes between Lake
Rotorua and Lake Tarawera in Bay of Plenty, the natural
blueness owes to the pumice and rhyolite on the lake bed.*

*Walking tracks wind through native bush and exotic conifers of
Whakarewarewa Forest, with flourishing undergrowth.*

*In this early winter day, how lucky we have a fine day after
yesterdays pouring rain.*

Let's have a look, have an appreciation of what's here.



Lake Tīkitapu - Lake Okareka Track

Leading by Pam, we head to Okareka Loop Road where we enter the track through an inconspicuous bush opening in Lake Tīkitapu Scenic Reserve.

Covering with fallen leaves and twigs, the ground, although wet, is not that muddy.

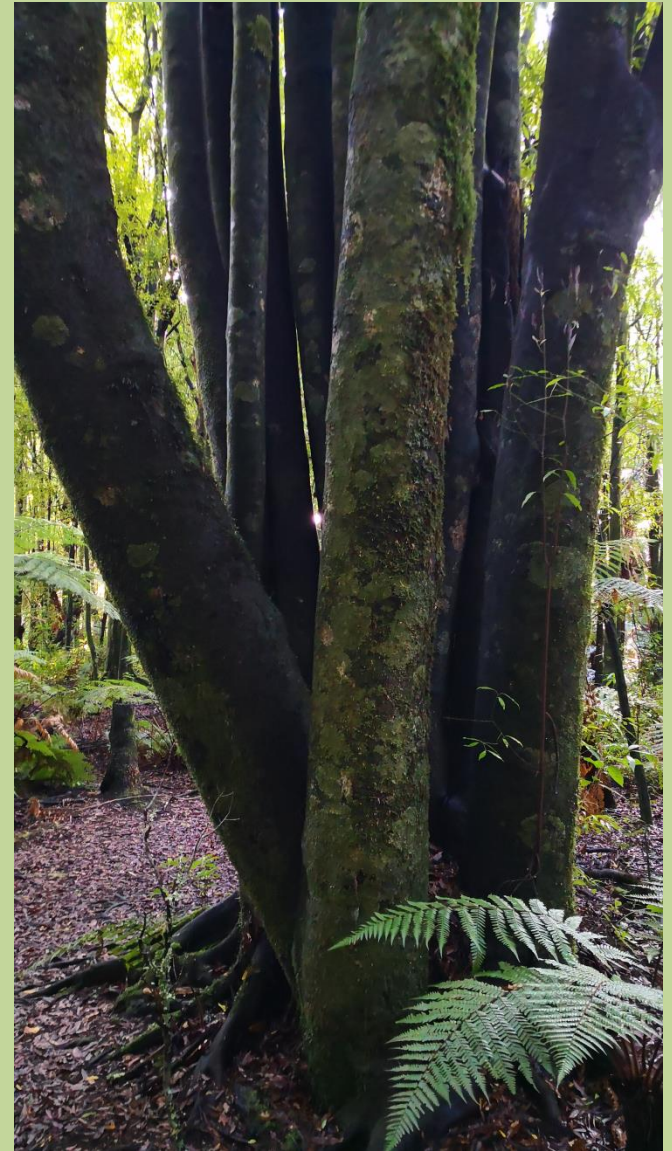
Sort of freshness in the morning nature, the dense foliage is still dripping with rainwater from last night.

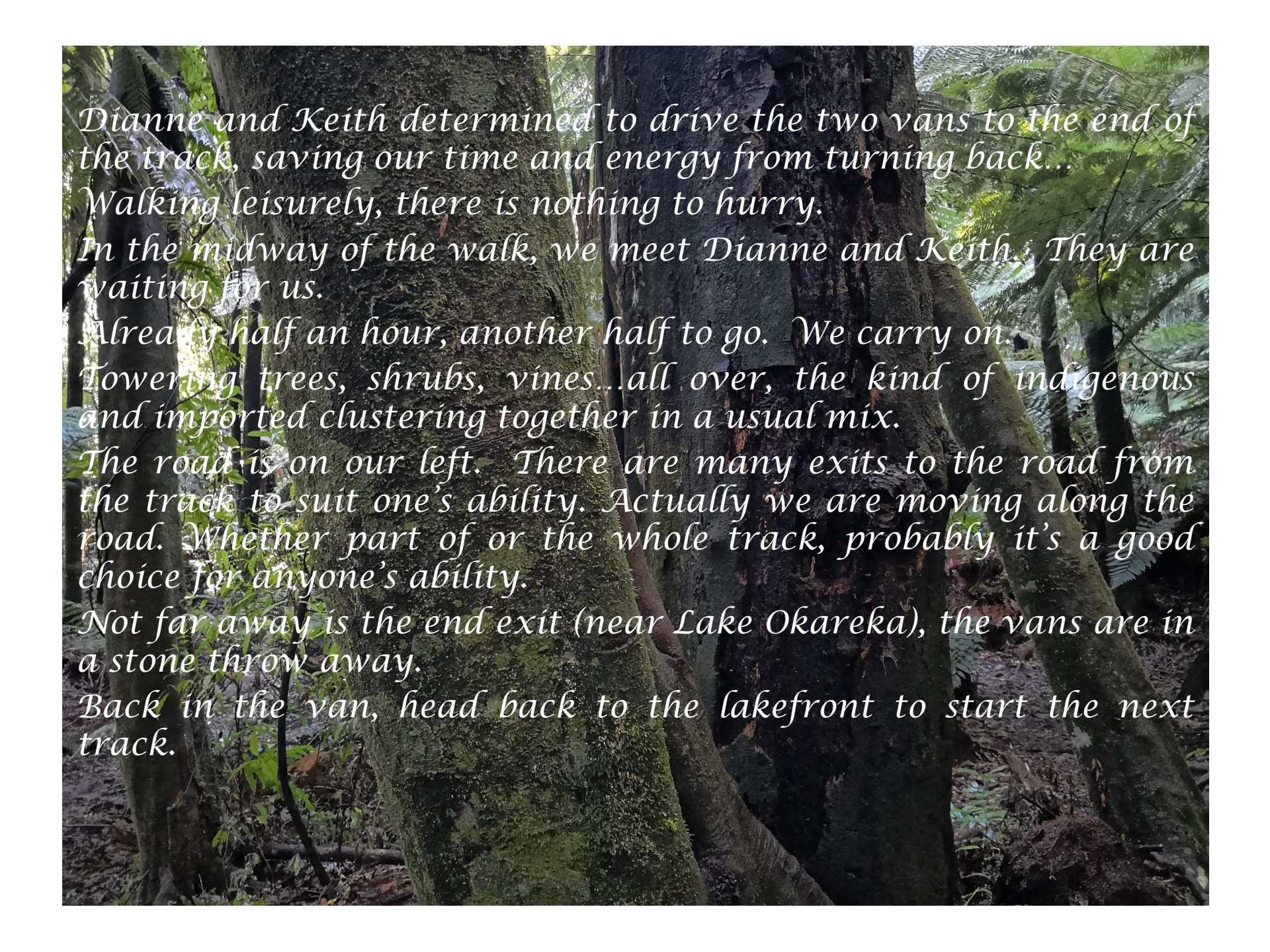
Winding up and down, we encounter a big pile of fallen trees, ending up with a bit of detouring.

Lush native plants all over and around, we step carefully.

Under the canopy, we are much protected from the winter coldness.







Dianne and Keith determined to drive the two vans to the end of the track, saving our time and energy from turning back...

Walking leisurely, there is nothing to hurry.

In the midway of the walk, we meet Dianne and Keith. They are waiting for us.

Already half an hour, another half to go. We carry on.

Towering trees, shrubs, vines...all over, the kind of indigenous and imported clustering together in a usual mix.

The road is on our left. There are many exits to the road from the track to suit one's ability. Actually we are moving along the road. Whether part of or the whole track, probably it's a good choice for anyone's ability.

Not far away is the end exit (near Lake Okareka), the vans are in a stone throw away.

Back in the van, head back to the lakefront to start the next track.

only, making us go over steeper ground with ups and downs.

The Feeder trail rolls through native forest which is well-maintained and is popular to bikers. There are many more cyclists than walkers when we stroll through.









The weather is still quite good by the time (at noon) we reach Te Pūtake O Tawa.

We are having lunch here. Many of us enjoying the coffee, milkshake and chips from the two shops.

Te Pūtake O Tawa is a new forest hub off Tarawera Road.

Maori artwork Umukaria, Wahiao and others (five Taonga), are displayed here. The artwork, forming part of the Whakarewarewa Development Project, is socially, culturally and historically important to locals and manuhiri.





Tīkitapu Nature Walk

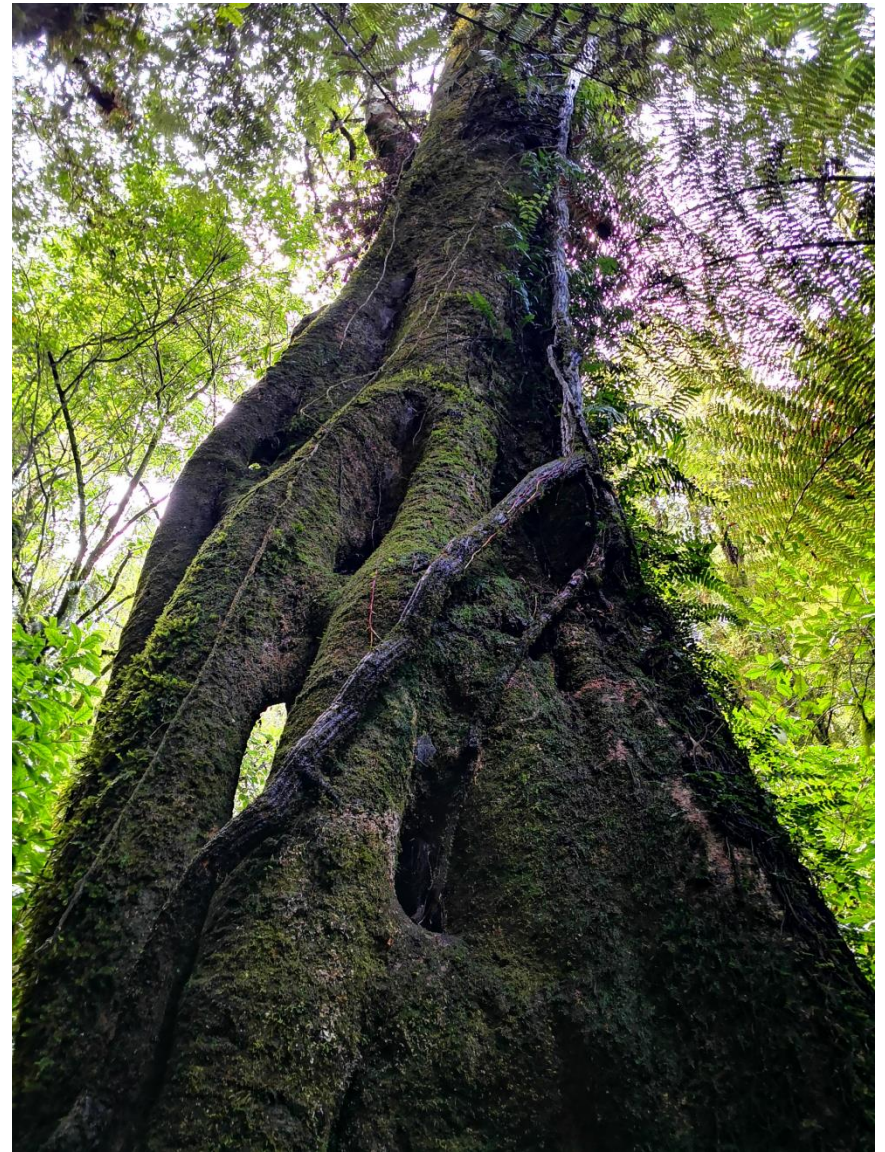
Back to the lakefront of Blue Lake after lunch, we go straight for the third walk.

Only about 30 minutes, this loop track is an easy one with Keith leading us.

Walking across the grassed area east of Tarawera Road, we enter the bush trail. It is a well-formed one over undulating terrain, with the highest elevation of 474.9m (total ascent 43.1m).

Famous for native bush alive with bird song. However, hardly find any bird at all as it is a bit cloudy in the afternoon.

There are information panels on bird's life and effects of Mt. Tarawera eruption on the forest.



Selected trees have also been labelled to give walkers on diversity of species present.

Dead plant remains, destroyed with Mt. Tarawera volcanic eruption, can still be revealed.

Lucky enough, we can see an ancient pukatea tree survives after the 1886 eruption. Only the hollow shell left with the interior gone. Heavily loaded with epiphytes, how amusing to find that life can be so appealing.

Marching up the steep inclination, we are please to move down the slope to check for the approaching exit.

Getting out of the bush, heading back to the lakefront carpark...Although the sky gets a little depressed, the Blue Lake is in its usual aqua clear.

