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OFFICE BEARERS:

CHRIS GOUDEY IAN BUCKMASTER ALBERT JENKINS President Vice-President Vice-President & Treasurer IRENE BOLSTER LORRAINE GOUDEY KEITH HUTCHINSON Secretary Book Sales Editor

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Peter Lumney, from the National Herbarium, spoke at our last meeting, his subject being "The Ferns in the Botanic Gardens".

We all learned a great deal about the history of the Fern Gully, replanting of ferns in the gully, and some of the problems involved. Peter also showed colour slides of many of the ferns in cultivation at the Gardens.

We, as a Specialist Society, have been invited by the Botanic Gardens to plant up an area in the fern gully. An area would be allocated to us, and we could get together and make a planting that would be there for all to see and enjoy for many years to come. This will be discussed at our next meeting.

Whilst on the subject of displays, we will be staging a display of hardy ferns at the Herald and Garden State Festival, to be held at the Fitzroy Gardens on November 8th - 1lth. As mentioned in the last Newsletter, we are the only specialist society which has been invited to stage a display, so come along and enjoy the Festival.

Our Society is growing in numbers. We have had quite a few enquiries about membership from both the United States and Britain, as well as from interstate.

Thanks to all those who donated ferns for the special effort at the last meeting, and also for the spore which was donated.

We need a lot more spore - any fern will do. It may be common to you, but others may not have it. Very few of our native ferns are grown outside this country. With overseas members, and affiliation with International Fern Societies, we hope to be able to offer a wide range of spore from other countries in the future.

Due to the late publication of our last Newsletter, we had a poor response to our last monthly competition, with only one competitor, and to make matters worse, the fern entered was not an Australian fern. However, a prize was awarded for a beautifully grown fern. The fern chosen for our next competition is a potted indoor fern. It can be any fern which you have grown indoors, but not a basket.

With the warm weather approaching, we may be able to arrange a few excursions - to such places as the Botanic Gardens Nursery, Ripponlea Fernery, Sherbrooke Forest, Wholesale Fern Nursery, and perhaps to the Otways or Tarra Valley National Park.

In closing, I would like to thank
Keith Hutchinson for the quality of
our Newsletters. Keith is a very
busy man with business and other
commitments, and is to be congratulated.
He took over as Editor of the Newsletter in September.

CHRIS GOUDEY President

URGENTLY NEEDED !

Articles, photographs (preferably black & white, and clearly marked on back with source, subject, and date), and queries, for inclusion in the Newsletter, plus any suggestions to assist our Fern Society to be more helpful and interesting for you, the members. Contributions should be forwarded to Keith Hutchinson, 17 Grandview Grove, Rosanna, 3084.

Ed.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

We now have our copies of the R.H.S.V. Gardening Diary, and they will be available at the next meeting. Those of you who have ordered copies are asked to please come to claim them, before the rest are sold. (How's that for positive thinking?)

We regret the spelling of some of the names of spores requested in the last Newsletter - but no doubt you could recognise them. We still have enquiries for these spores, so do contact me if you have any of them.

Ted and I put on a display of native ferns at the Waverley Group of SGAP's show at Jells Park. We were pleased with the interest shown by the public, and hope that we have captured at least a few more members. Ferns and native plants seem to be most compatible, and it is good that we can help each other's societies.

There have been requests for copies of Chris Goudey's talk on spore progagation, as printed in the last

TREASURER'S REPORT

Newsletter. If anyone missed this, I can obtain a copy for you. Please ring me on 755 1222 - preferably late in the evening.

Elsewhere in this edition, you will find a resume of Peter Lumney's talk on the ferns in the Botanic Gardens in Melbourne. We hope that this will be of interest to those who live out-of-town, and cannot get to meetings. Peter illustrated his talk with many slides, and although the benefit of these is missing, the text of the talk is still very interesting.

I hope to see as many as possible at the Herald and Garden State
Festival - we will be situated in the Royal Horticultural Society's Pavilion. Do come and make yourself known!

IRENE BOLSTER
Secretary

Peter Franks has had to relinquish the position of Treasurer, as he has taken his wife and family back to England.

As we were unable to include a financial report in our last issue, this report covers a period of two months.

I am pleased to report that our finances are still in good condition. Our membership over the two months has increased by 42 members. Subscriptions amounted to \$366. Supper donations and commission on fern sales totalled \$41.24, and profit on special efforts was \$134.95.

Printing expenses were heavier, as they included printing of competition cards, two newsletters, wrappers and postage, etc. These expenses totalled \$562.06, while hall hire and other expenses amounted to \$34.61.

Our balance stands at \$1,357.42, from which we have advanced \$200 to cover urgent purchase of books.

To help cover costs, advertising space is now available in the Newsletter. Anyone interested should contact Keith Hutchinson, our Editor, for further details.

ALBERT JENKINS Treasurer

A RESUME OF TALK GIVEN BY PETER LUMNEY by Irene Bolster

Ferns in the Botanic Gardens, Melbourne

Peter began by describing his work with the Gardens, and explained that one of his duties was assessing plants for identification purposes.

He quoted from a "Census of the Gardens" compiled in 1883 by William Guilfoyle, the successor to Baron Von Mueller. This census shows that at that time there was a 900' fern gully along a water course, with over 100 native tree ferns. These were sheltered by native and exotic trees and shrubs. There were several hundred Epiphytic Ferns from New South Wales and Queensland, Platyceriums, Polypodiums and Aspleniums, and these, together with many native ferns, combined to make a beautiful vista.

Unfortunately, there are not so many ferns now, as the area was cleared a few years ago, and is now in the process of being re-stocked. Peter mentioned other locations, such as Ripponlea, which had quite large ferneries in the earlier part of the century.

He went on to show several slides of views of the fern gully and the various species growing there - Culcita Dubia, Todea Barbara, Dicksonia Antarctica, etc. As Dicksonia grows more quickly than Todea Barbara, at this time the Todeas are being used as ground cover, but it is intended to obtain Pteris Umbrosa (Jungle Brake) to use as ground ferns. Other slides showed Asplenium Nidus (Bird's Nest), and single species look most attractive.

Other slides showed typical views of the fern area, with Dicksonian in the background, Polystichum Proliferum, now being planted in the drier areas, and Culcita Dubia, together with Cyathea Australia (Rough Tree Fern), Asplenium Platycerum and Blechnum Nudum. Also shown was some Cyathea Cunninghamii (Slender Tree Fern) which is most attractive, and some Cyathea Dealbata. One bed is planted with New Zealand ferns.

In the Gardens there are several Slender Tree Ferns about 25' in height. These are marked with coin spot leaf scars, and have fronds 3' - 4' long. Another fern has brown scales, and was labelled Alsophyla Excelsa, but Peter was of the opinion that this was wrongly named.

As an indication of just how difficult identification can be, we were told that Bob Chinnock of New Zealand, Dr. Mary Tindale, the author, and Professor Holton of the Singapore Botanic Gardens - and world expert on Cyatheas - do not agree on the name of this fern.

Another fern has black stripes and white hairs; these are attractive ferns growing outdoors or indoors. The name of this fern is Sphearopteris Excelsa, but once again, there are divergent opinions. Professor Holton thinks it is Cyathea Brownii, from Lord Howe Island, Dr. Mary Tindale thinks it is Cyathea Cooperii, from New South Wales, while Peter Lumney thinks it is Cyathea Robusta, from Norfolk Island. With such experts not in agreement, who can say which is correct?

.... Cont'd.

(from previous page)

Peter mentioned that few ferns are grown outside the Fern Gully, although there are some Rock Ferns in the Northern Rockery. It has not yet been possible to establish the King Fern - Osmunda.

We were then shown lists of plants available from overseas gardens - from China, Russia, Mozambique, etc., and it was explained how countries can exchange plants and seeds with each other.

There is a comprehensive collection in the Nursery and requests from the public for visits will be considered. The work of the Nursery can be listed under several different headings -

- 1. Display, and tropical ferns in Tropical House
- 2. Growing ferns in high humidity under tropical conditions
- 3. Conservation of rare plants
- 4. Engendering interest in rare plants
- Fostering botanic interest and education, catering for study groups from universities, etc.

Peter's talk was full of interest, and much appreciated by those who came along to hear him.

DESCRIPTIONS OF BOOKS OBTAINABLE THROUGH THE FERN SOCIETY OF VICTORIA

(Reviews taken from L.A.I.F.S. Fern Bulletin, Vol. 5, No. 11)

FERN DICTIONARY: This bound book lists over 700 common names for ferns with the correct botanical name for each. 750 fern genera, indicating which ones have been abandoned and giving their present names, as well as identifying the family to which each belongs and other interesting facts. Includes 1150 entries in a glossary of descriptive words which are used as species names or ferns or found in literature about ferns. Pronunciations are given for every genus, species and all uncommon words. All definitions and explanations are in simple language. By Wilbur W. Olsen, U.S.A.

PRICE: \$5.39 AUS

HARDY FERNS: Reginald Kaye's highly interesting and very readable book covering all the fascinating hardy ferns of England as well as those from other countries. He gives full instructions for growing in every situation. There are also fine chapters on identification, propagation and hybridization. Throughout the 200 pages of extensive information are excellent line drawings and an extra 20 pages of glossy pictures, four in colour. Published in 1968, temporarily out of print. Should be available by end of year, U.K.

PRICE: \$11.71 AUS

PLATYCERIUM FERN FACTS: A practical book on Staghorn Ferns, written by Wendy Franks, with photography by Ed Franks, covering the entire Platycerium genus - descriptions, pictures, peculiarities, cultural requirements.

120 pages, with 57 full page photographs of the 18 known species and their cultivars. U.S.A.

PRICE: \$6.72 AUS

(from previous page)

FERNS TO KNOW AND GROW: F. Gordon Foster's exceptionally interesting but extremely practical book on all phases of fern study and culture. 282 pages, paperback, lavishly illustrated with line drawings and his unique and incomparable microphotographs - revised and enlarged edition of THE GARDENER'S FERN BOOK. U.S.A.

PRICE: \$5.80 AUS

SOUTHERN FERN GUIDE: Recent edition of the pocket sized field guide to ferns of the south-eastern and south midland United States of America, by Edgar T. Wherry. 350 pages, paperback.

PRICE: \$5.17 AUS

SOURCES OF FERNS: This booklet contains 24 pages of listings, alphabetized first by states and second by names of suppliers, under 20 separate heads such as ferns, native ferns, other plants, services, etc., identifying wholesale and retail sources. U.S.A.

PRICE: \$1.27 AUS

HANDBOOK ON FERNS: Brooklyn Botanic Gardens' excellent, full-coverage treatment of all phases of fern growing, collecting and studying, beautifully illustrated. U.S.A. PRICE: \$2.24 AUS

A REVIEW OF THE SPECIES OF PLATYCERIUM: Barbara Joe's complete review of the Platycerium genus, the first major review published since 1915. This is a reprint of the article which took the entire September, 1964 issue of Baileya. U.S.A.

PRICE: \$1.98 AUS

FERNS AND FERTILIZER: Barbara Joe's excellent and complete discussion of the need for correct fertilization of ferns and problems encountered. Reprint from the April-June, 1068 issue of the American Fern Journal. U.S.A.

PRICE: .37¢ AUS

EXOTICA SERIES 3, NINTH EDITION: The definitive Pictorial Cyclopedia of Exotic Plants by Alfred Byrd Graf with over 12,000 illustrations, 291 plants in colour, a guid to care of plants indoors, and horticultural colour guide. 1500 pages of photographs and horticultural information, 484 photographs of ferns. This book normally retails at \$135.00; we can supply it to members for \$84.96 AUS

TROPICA: Colour Cyclopedia of exotic plants and trees - The all colour pictorial reference book with 7,000 photographs in living colour, by A.B. Graf. (This book retails at close to \$200.00)

PRICE: \$120.12 AUS

FERN GROWERS' MANUAL: This large book by Barbara Jo Hoshizaki covers all the information growers want to know, in a style which everyone can understand. It is illustrated with 8 pages of colour plates, 300 black and white photographs, and drawings. U.S.A.

PRICE: \$16.99 AUS

THE GENUS ADIANTUM IN CULTIVATION: Ten years of painstaking work by Barbara Joe resulted in this exceptionally interesting and complete explanation of Maidenhair Ferns in cultivation. This is a reprint of the article which took the entire Autumn and Winter, 1970 issues of Baileya. U.S.A.

PRICE: \$3.57 AUS

FERN AND FERN ALLIES: by R. J. Chinnock, New Zealand.

We are having trouble obtaining this book at the moment, and we will advise on any further developments at a later stage. N.Z.

PRICE: \$9.17 AUS

1980 CALENDAR: Drawings and planting information on ferns and exotic shade plants U.S.A. PRICE: \$4.51 AUS

PATHOLOGY HINTS by Ian Buckmaster

- If your room has a warm dry atmosphere, spray the fern occasionally with an atomizer. The finer the pinnules of the fern, the more often the need for atomising.
- A little Condy's Crystals in the water-base under the Adiantum fern will help deter insects and algae from increasing.
- Remember that all other plants and flowers that you bring into the same room bring insects with them.
- Keep a book on 'what you do, and when' to your fern.
- A slug will often use the side vent to a plastic pot. Keep an eye open for this pest.

they should have light shading most of the time. The feeding can be important. Feed with half strength of Formula 20 to assist in root growth. It can be poured around the tree trunk and a little added every fortnight to the apex of the tree.

The best time for planting the

The Cyathea family are the more

difficult to re-establish, so that

The best time for planting the difficult Cyatheas is in the Spring. Good drainage is essential. The Dicksonia Antarctica can be planted all the year round, but be sure to get plants which have been properly looked after during the warmer months. A dried out, suffering tree is hard to detect.

TO PLANT A TREE FERN

Most of the tree ferns purchased from shops are Dicksonias (soft tree ferns). These must have a tag with a registered number. If you are fortunate, you may be able to get other varieties of the Cyathea family.

The Cyatheas generally are difficult to transplant. This is just their characteristic. To give them the best chance of re-establishing, the hole should be about 1/3 the depth of the plant. A 5 ft. tree - plant at about 2 ft. depth. The hole should be dug wider and deeper than required. The base of the hole can then be lined with a mix of coarse sand, peat moss, and a little added blood and bone. After standing the tree at the right depth, fill in around the base to 6" - 8", with more of the coarse sand and peat moss (mountain moss is very good also). If you happen to have a little mountain soil, it could be mixed in too. The idea is to surround the basal area of the tree with a permeable mix which will hold moisture, and be about pH 4 - 6.

GARLIC SPRAY

Take three ounces of garlic bulbs, chop them and mix with two teaspoons of liquid paraffin and soak for 48 hours. Add 1 pint of water and mix well with a quarter ounce of good oil-based soap as a spreader. Filter, and store in a plastic container - not a metal one, to avoid a re-action.

This solution must always be used in a diluted form, never straight.

One per cent solution is a good one to start with. For ferns, it would be wise to make trials on different fronds, labelling the frond.

This is a pesticide which is free of the hazards of harmful chemicals.

Remember, prevention is better than cure.

IMPORTANT: PLEASE CHECK BACK PAGE OF NEWSLETTER FOR DIARY DATES

DIARY DATES

8TH NOVEMBER: 8 p.m.

Burnley Horticultural School Hall, Burnley

HARRY JACKSON, of Idaho Nurseries -

"CULTIVATING FERNS"

13TH DECEMBER: 8 p.m.

Burnley Horticultural School Hall, Burnley

ALAN MORRISON -

"PHOTOGRAPHING FERNS"