CHE FERN SOCIETY OF UICCORÍA

newsletter

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:

Dear Members,

A topic has not been attempted previously in the Society was introduced and very well handled by Keith Hutchinson. A big attendance of Members was given an interesting and absorbing lecture on Keith's methods for photographing ferns. Keith covered camera, accessories, composition, depth of field and impact in his delivery.

Several Members brought slides to the meeting and these provided variety and interest, especially when Keith used them to discuss composition, lighting and impact.

Thank you very much Keith and thank you Members for bringing in your slides.

Next Month: On Thursday, 11th October, 1984 our Guest Speaker will be Rod Hill. The title of Rod's talk is "Ferns of the Blue Mountains, N.S.W."

As usual the meeting will commence at 8.00 p.m. in the Burnley Horticultural College Hall, Swan Street, Burnley. Christmas Break-up Meeting - Advance notice: Planning for our Christmas meeting began at the Committee meeting last month. The planning included our fine traditional Fern Forum, an appeal to Members for donations of goods suitable for a Christmas hamper, an appeal for Members' ferns for decoration (Book prize for the luckiest of the owners) and provision by the Committee of \$40.00 cold frame as a prize in one of the competitions.

The Winners:

Six well grown potted ferns, all of different species, were the prizes in the Special Effort competition at the September meeting. Congratulations to the lucky winners, who were:

- Jim Nealy
- 2. Brian Fowler
- 3. Sandra Roberts
- 4. David Colliver
- 5. Doug Thomas
- 6. Paul Roberts

With kindest regards,

DOUG THOMAS

We are fortunate to have as our speaker at our October Meeting Mr. Rod Hill.

Rod's talk will be titled:

"Ferns of the Blue Mountains N.S.W."

PRESENTATION TO ALBERT JENKINS

At the September meeting, a presentation was made to Albert Jenkins; a token of appreciation of his work as Vice-President and Member of the Society. Albert was presented with a China plate, hand painted to describe a beautiful fern.

Speaking on behalf of Members, Chris Goudey recalled the early formative days of the Fern Society and the influence which Albert had on original and subsequent organization. Chris said that Albert was committed to the work of setting up public displays and providing his own beautiful ferns for such displays. Other organizations have also benefitted from Albert's expertise in display presentation. Chris also said that Albert could always be depended upon to attend at meetings one hour before commencement in order to involve himself in hall preparation.

Since coming together in their involvement with the Fern Society, Chris said that he has come to regard Albert as one of his closest friends.

In support of Chris, Bill Taylor endorsed his remarks and expressed regret that Albert has had to relinquish his position as Vice-President. Bill added that to him Albert is seen as a constructive, practical innovator; always capable of finding a solution to a problem.

Responding, Albert thanked the Society for the gift and for the tributes expressed. He said that he enjoys his involvement with the Society, particularly the friendship and fellowship which abounds here. He was happy that his wife, slowly recovering from serious illness, had been able to accompany him on two recent speaking engagements.

From us all, good luck and God bless you Albert.

Keith Hutchinson's talk - "My Methods for Successful Fern Photography" was the first of its kind for the Society. It was very well prepared and delivered in an interesting and informative manner.

Keith told us that because ferns grow in poor light situations, the camera has to be used in such a way as to take advantage of whatever light is available. A photograph taken in natural light is usually superior in quality and colour to that taken with flash.

1. Equipment: The camera should be a single lens reflex type; one which can be forcused on the subject by viewing through the lens. The S.L.R. camera will also feature aperture readings (R-stop), shutter release speeds, film speeds (A.S.A.) and a built-in light meter.

Keith demonstrated accessories which are useful in producing good photographs. These included the tripod, upon which the camera is mounted in poor light, and a shutter release cable which allows slow shutter release (use of available light) and eliminates movement or shudder of the camera at the time of exposure.

A macro-lens; one which is used for close-ups then right through the distance range to infinity is very useful. A few clamps were shown; these can be attached to branchlets etc. and used as an alternative to the tripod.

A battery operated flash unit was shown, and by bouncing the flash off a white umbrella positioned above the camera, special lighting effects are possible. Also a mirror can reflect a light source back into a fern to give good results.

2. <u>Composition</u>: Keith believes that composing your pictures properly is most important. By use of a blackboard Keith showed us the basics of division of the slide frame. This is divided into thirds in both horizontal and vertical directions. The corners of the centre square thus formed should be the areas of most interest in the photograph. In contrast to this, placing the subject right in the centre of the picture should be avoided.

Tracks, streams and pavements should lead into the picture but not out of it. Odd numbers of objects compose more pleasantly than even numbers - i.e. prefer one or three fern specimens to two or four.

- 3. <u>Depth of Field and Lighting</u>: To achieve depth of field, that is sharpness and good definition in your photographs, use a small aperture (F-stop). Settings from F-8 through to F-16 should be the aim. To complement this F-stop setting, the shutter release speed should be set at 1/15 second or slower providing the camera is mounted upon a tripod and a shutter release cable fitted.
- 4. <u>Impact</u>: In competition judging, Keith said that the impact of a slide photograph on the viewer during the first fifteen seconds of screening goes a long way in the judge's assessment of the value of the slide.

5. <u>Conclusion</u>: Several Members brought slides to the meeting, some of which had been photographed in China. Keith used all of these to explain points regarding definition, lighting and composition. Finally Keith screened slides which had been entries in recent Photographic competitions. These were outstanding and completed a most enjoyable and instructive night.

Vice-President Albert Ward capably moved a vote of thanks on behalf of Members.

RAIN FORESTS AND FERN GULLIES: (Continued from the September issue)

<u>Queensland</u> The Eungella National Park

Eungella National Park lies eighty kilometres (50 miles) due west of the central Queensland town of Mackay. The park is part of the Clarke range; its area slopes away almost to the coast on its eastern side and towards Finch Hatton on the west.

Approach is made only from Mackay up the Pioneer Valley and through the little township of Finch Hatton. This road passes through extensive sugar cane fields and their associated sugar refining mills,

Historically the Mackay - Pioneer Valley area is one of those where bitter and intense struggles once took place between the sugar cane farmers and white cane workers. The farmers had imported cheap labour in the form of Kanakas from islands in the Pacific and preferred these to local white skinned workers. The practice of using Kanakas was stopped by the Commonwealth Government in the late 1800s.

Some confusion exists regarding and status of the town Eungella. Actually Eungella is not a town at all; the only building of note is the Chalet and on some maps the place is referred to as Dalrymple Heights. Accommodation can be obtained at the Chalet or at Finch Hatton.

The word Eungella is aboriginal and means "Land of Cloud". This is a marvellously descriptive word because cloud often covers the range providing those moist humid conditions in which ferns grow so well.

There is an amazing number of fern species to be seen here with an equally amazing diversity of character. Much of this Park is wilderness and inaccessible; so untamed in fact, that only recently a honeyeater was found and named for the first time. It is now known as the Eungella honeyeater.

Within the Park there are neat well kept picnic and barbeque areas. The pathways into the rain forest are well graded and maintained.

Stags, elks and birds nest ferns are plentiful and huge; these in turn are hosts to Pyrossias (felt ferns), Davallias (Hares foot ferns) and Aspleniums (Willow spleenworts). There are several tree fern species to be seen, with prickly tree fern (Cyathea Leichardtians) and the black tree fern (C. Rebeccae) being outstanding.

On the western slopes of the Park a large, magnificent fern will be seen. This is Marattia Salicina (Potato Fern), a close relative of Angiopteris Evecta. The two are very similar and can be easily confused. However, if the stem of a frond of Marattia is cut, the stain which issues is purple.

Schellolepis subauriculatum, an epiphyte with long pendant fronds grows from the backs of elks whilst on the jungle floor Adiantum Cunninghamiii and Adiantum Formosum are beautifully prominent. A beautiful dark green filmy fern, Selanodesmium Elongatum grows in the soil in quite dark situations.

Out in more open places, even on the roadsides, the giant scrambling fern (Diplopteriygium Longissimum) grows in huge masses to 4.5 metres (15 feet) high. At first glance one is reminded of a clump of scrambling coral fern, but pinnae and everything else about it is huge.

A short trip to the Finch Hatton Falls is well worth the effort. In this area other unusual ferns will be found. As you walk along the track which leads into the Finch Hatton gorge, look among the shrubs in damp, sandy places for the snake fern (Lygodium Reticulatum). This fern is a creeper which climbs abundantly through the shrubs.

Further into the gorge and quite near to the pathway, the dark green Asplenium Paleaceum should be seen, then among the rocky outcrops in fairly open situations, the bulky Microsorium Punctatum occurs. It grows in thick colonies atop of the boulders.

Eungella National Park is a fern enthusiasts dream. You will need quite a few days there in order to see it all.

DOUG THOMAS

Acknowledgements
Historical: Australian Encyclopedia
Fern Identification:
National Herbarium, Brisbane



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WE WERE WRONG

Members' attention is drawn to a reference in the September, 1984 Newsletter on Page 9 against the Item (b). The item with respect to, "... takings from the Annual Show" is incorrect and should have read:

(b) Takings from the Annual Show, which have been subsidising the production of the Newsletter, were only 9% less than the previous year after expenses. Attendance figures in 1984 were just over half of those for 1983.

The Editor and Executive Committee apologize for the error and trust that Show Sub-Committee Members have not been disheartened or discouraged by it.

DOUG THOMAS (PRESIDENT)

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FERN SOCIETY TOUR TO THE OTWAY RANGES

Details have now been finalised for the Fern Society tour to the Otway Ranges, and bookings have been made for 45 people. The tour has been booked for the weekend of the 17th and 18th November.

The coach will leave Melbourne at 8.00 a.m. on the Saturday and return on Sunday evening (not too late).

We will visit the best, most accessible fern areas in the Otways such as Mait's Rest, Melba Gully, Beecham Falls, Grey River Scenic Reserve, Turtons Track and other places of interest.

A barbecue lunch will be provided by the Bus Company on the Saturday and the Saturday and our overnight accommodation and breakfast will be at the Bay Park Motel, Apollo Bay.

The cost of the tour will be approximately \$44.00 per person, which includes the coach and all meals except tea on the Saturday evening, which we can buy in Apollo Bay.

There are still a number of vacancies left; if you are interested please see me at the October meeting.

CHRIS GOUDEY

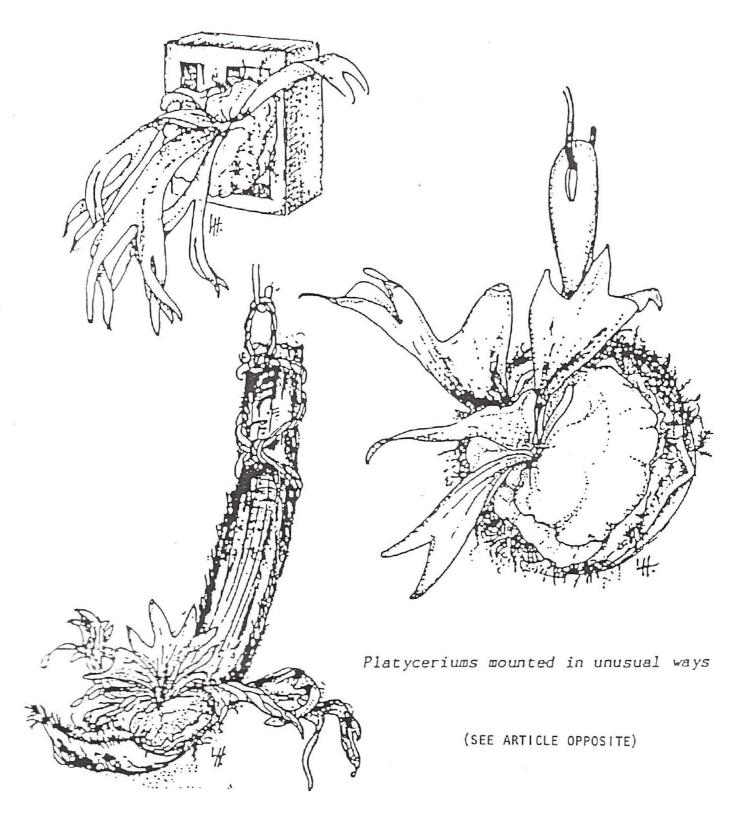
LORD HOWE ISLAND TOUR

The Fern Society tour to Lord Howe Island in May 1985 is booked out.

It is not surprising that a tour to such a beautiful island has proved to be so popular.

If you have been thinking of going, but have left it too late please accept my apologies.

CHRIS GOUDEY



FERN SOCIETY OF VICTORIA - PAYMENT OF SUBSCRIPTION FOR YEAR 1984-85

Single Membership : \$12.00 Family Membership : \$15.00 Single Pensioner : \$ 8.00 Full-Time Student : \$ 8.00 2 Married Pensioners : \$10.00

BOOK NOTES FOR PLATYCERIUM GROWERS AND HOBBYISTS by Ralph Hughes

THE AMERICAN STAGHORN

Platycerium andinum Baker, the American staghorn, is discussed in Ferns and Allied Plants with Special Reference to Tropical America, a 857 page book by Rolla M. Tryon and Alice F. Tryon, published by Springer-Verlag, New York. 1982. \$148. It represents one of the 127 tropical and temperate American genera illustrated with photos, drawings, diagrams, and electron micrographs. Elbert Hennipman reviewed the treatment of this genus on pages 738-743.

Of special interest to the staghorn hobbyist and grower is specific, though fragmentary information on ecology and geography. The American staghorn, limited in distribution to Andian South America, as known by several collections in Peru and Bolivia, grows from 100 to 1200 meters (300 to 4,000 ft) on the eastern slopes of the Andes where on occasion it grows "in clumps of 6 feet or more across". Ralph H. Hughes

SPORE LIST - OCTOBER :

Spore samples may be purchased at monthly meetings, or by sending a list of your requirements with 20 cents for each species requested plus 50 cents for packaging and postage to Mr. W. Bright, 520 Burke Road, Camberwell 3124.

A cheque made payable to "The Fern Society of Victoria" is the preferred method of payment for spore. Postage stamps in 30, 10 and 5 cent denominations may also be forwarded for small orders. Please allow two to three weeks for postage.

Many species are still available from the list published in the newsletter, but if ordering from this list, please include a supplementary list in case some species are depleted.

Instructions on propagation from spore are also available for an extra 10 cents.

Continued overleaf

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ADTARTUM ALTHIOPICUM(5-04)
                                               COMMON MAIDENHAIR
       CAPILLUS VEHERISCIE USD
                                                VEHUS-HAIR FERN
 11
 .
        CAUDATUM (3 -84)
                                                TRAILING MAIDENHAIR
        CONCINNUM: EDWINII: (14 83)
 11
        CAS COMUSOMNO
                                               BLACK STEM
                                                ROUGH MALDENHAIR
 N
         RTSPIDULUM(3-84)
         PATENS (10-83)
        PERUVIANUM (3-84)
                                                SILVER DOLLAR
         RADDIANUM(3-83)
                                               DELTA MAIDENHAIR
         RADDIANUM : CRESTED MAJUS: (6-84)
         RADDIANUM :ELEGANS: (3-83)
         RADDIANUM :FRITZ LUTH: (6 84)
         RADDIANUM : GRACILLIMUM: (3-84)
         RADDIANUM :LEGRAND MORGAN: (12-83)
         RADDIANUM : MICROPINNULUM: (3-84)
         RADDIANUM : OCEAN WAVE: (3-84) .
        RADDIANUM :OLD LACE: (2-84)
        RADDIANUM :PACIFIC MAID: (2:84)
        RAUDIANUM : VICTORIA/S ELEGANS: (3-84)
    ADIANTUMTENERUM :GLORIOSUM GREEN (3-84)
    ADIANTUM TENERUM :SLEEPIRG BEAUTY: (1-84)
        TENERUM :PINK SLEEPING BEAUTY : (4-84)
        TRAPEZITORME : BRASILIENSC: (3-84)
                                              DIAMOND MAIDENHAIR
        SP:(S:E:QLD)(3-84)
    AMPHINEURON OPULENTUM(2-84)
    ANEMIA MEXICANA(12-83)
                                               FLOWERING HOLLY-FERN
        PHYLLITIDIS(?)
    ARACHNIODES ARISTATA(3-83)
                                               PRICKLY SHIELD-FERN
        ARISTATA VARIEGATA(2-84)
        SIMPLICIOR (?)
                                               MOTHER SPLEENWORT
    ASPLENIUM BULBIFERUM(NATIVE)(3-84)
                                               MOTHER SPLEENWORT
        BULBIFERUM (NZ)(3-84)
        DIMORPHUM(10-83)
                                               THREE IN ONE FERN
                                               NECKLACE FERN
11 #
        FLABELLIFOLIUM(3-84)
        TRICHOMANES (3-83)
                                               COMMON SPLEENWORT
    ATHYMUM FILIX-FEMINA(2-84)
    ATHYRIUM NIPONICUM :PICTUM: (3-84)
                                               JAPANESE PAINTED FERN
    BLECHNUM AMB1GUUM(1-83)
N*
        CARTILAGINEUM(12-83)
                                               GRISTLE FERN
                                               LANCE WATER-FERN
        CHAMBERSII(2-84)
11 -
        DISCOLOR(4-84)
                                               CROWN FERN
                                               RAY WATER-FERN
        FLUVIATILE(2-84)
                                               DWARF TREE-FERN
        GIGGUM(4-84)
        GREGSONII (1-83)
                                               SOFT WATER-FERN
        MINUS(2-84)
                                              FISHBONE WATER-FERN
       NUDUM (1-84)
       NUDUM :FURCANS: (4-83)
        OCCIDENTALE (3-84)
                                              HAMMOCK FERN
                                            STRAP WATER-FERN
        PATERSONII (5-84)
                                              ALPINE WATER-FERN
        PENNA-MARINA(3-83)
        REVOLUTUM(?)
        TABULARE(?)
       VULCANICUM(4-84)
                                              WEDGE WATER-FERN
                                              HARD WATER-FERN
       WATTSII(2-84)
                                              ROCK FERN
   CHEILANTHES TENUIFOLIA(3-83)
   CHRISTELLA DENTATA(3-83)
       PARASITICA(1-84)
    COLYSIS SAYERI(2-84)
    CONTOGRAMME INTERMEDIA(?)
   CONIDGRAMME FRAXINEA: MT SARAWAHET (?)
   CTENITIS SLOANEI(3-84)
                                              FLORIDA TREE FERN
                                              COMMON GROUND-FERN
N
    CULCITA DUBIA(3-83)
                                              ROUGH TREE-FERN
    CYATHEA AUSTRALIS(1-84)
       BAILEYANA(8-83)
                                              WIG TREE-FERN
        BROWN11(1-84)
                                              COIN-SPOT TREE-FERN
       COOPERT (1-84)
N
       COOPERI:BLACK SCALES: (2-84)
                                              COIN-SPOT TREE-FERN
       CUNNINGHAMII(2-84)
                                              SLENDER TREE-FERN
       DLALCATA(1-84)
                                              SILVER TREE-FERN
       LEICHHARDIIANA(2-84)
                                              PRICKLY TREE-FERN
       MARCESCENS (CUNNINGHAMIL-AUSTRALIS MIX)(3-84)
                                              BLACK TREE-FERN
       MUDULL ARTS (3-84)
       SM11H11(4-84)
        SP: (LARGE/MALAYSIA) (10-82)
        SP: (REW GUINEA) (2-84)
   CYCLOSORUS TRUNCATUS (3-84)
   CYRTOMIUM FALCATUM(3-84)
                                              HOLLY FERN
   CYSTOPTERIS FILIX-FRAGILIS(2-83)
                                              BRITTLE BLADDER-FERN
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DAVALLIA PYXIDATA(2-84)
                                                 HARE/S FOOT FERN
 N
          SOLIDA : RUFFLED ORNATA: (3-84)
     DENNSTAEUTIA DAVALLIOIDES(3-84)
 11 4
                                                 LACY GROUND-FERN
      DICKSONIA ANTARCTICA(2-84)
                                                 SOFT TREE-FERN
 N
         F1BR0SA(11-83)
                                                 WHEK I -- PONGA
         LANATA(10-83)
          SQUARROSA(3-84)
                                                 WHEKT
 И
          YOUNGIAE(S:QLD FORM)(12-83)
                                                 BRISTLY TREE-FERN
     DIPLAZIUM ASSIMILE(10-83)
 N
 N
         AUSTRALE(2-84)
                                                 AUSTRAL LADY-FERN
 N #
     DOODIA ASPERA(3-84)
                                                 PRICKLY RASP-FERN
 N×
         CAUDATA(2-83)
                                                 SMALL RASP-FERN
                                                 GIANT RASP FERN
 N
         MAXIMA(5-84)
 N
         MEDIA(3-84)
                                                 COMMON . RASP-FERN
     DORYOPTERIS PEDATA(10-83)
                                                 HAND FERN
     DRYOPTERIS ATRATA(1-84)
                                                 SHAGGY SHIELD FERN
         ERYTHROSORA(4-84)
                                                 AUTUMN FERN
         GYMNOSORUS(3-83)
         SP:(FILIX-MAS)(3-84)
                                                (MALE FERN)
         SP: (MIXED) (3-83)
         SP (12-83)
         SP-2(2-84)
     HUMATA GRIFFITHIANA (5-84)
     HYPOLEPIS PUNCTATA(3-84)
                                                DOWNY GROUND FERN
 N
     LASTREOPSIS ACUMINATA(2-84)
                                                 SHINY SHIELD-FERN
 H
         HISPIDA(4-84)
                                                 BRISTLY SHIELD-FERN
 N*
         MICROSORA(4-84)
                                                 CREEPING SHIELD-FERN
 N
        (EB-B)ATINUM
 N *
        SMITHIANA(2-83)
 N
         SP:(3 DIFFERENT SPECIES)(9-83)
         SP: (6-UNKNOWN SPECIES) (9-83)
N
     LUNATHYRIUM JAPONICUM(5-84)
                                                JAPANESE LADY-FERN
     LYGODIUM MICROPHYLLUM(5-84)
Н
                                                CLIMBING MAIDENHAIR
     MARATTIA SP:(SALICIFOLIA)(6-83)
    MICROSORIUM DIVERSIFOLIUM(2-84)
N *
                                                KANGAROO FERN
        PARKSII(2-84)
    NEPHROLEPIS CORDIFOLIA :PLUMOSA?: (10-83)
        :EASTERN ZIMBABWE GIANT: (?)
    OPHIOGLOSSUM PENDULUM(6-84)
                                                RIBBON FERN
N #
NK
    PELLAEA FALCATA(3-83)
                                                SICKLE FERN
H
        FALCATA NANA(11-83)
                                                DWARF SICKLE-FERN
N
        PARADOXA(11-83)
        VIRIDIS(8-82)
                                                HART/S-TONGUE FERN
    PHYLLITIS SCOLOPENDRIUM(3-84)
    PLATYCERIUM SUPERBUM(2-84)
                                                STAGHORN FERN
    PLEUROSORUS RUTIFOLIUS(8-83)
                                                BLANKET FERN
H
    POLYPODIUM ANGUSTIFOLIUM(4-84)
                                                NARROW LEAF STRAP FERN
        AUREUM(3-84)
                                                GOLDEN POLYPODY
        AUREUM : MANDAIANUM: (6-84)
        FORMOSANUM(12-83)
                                                GRUB FERN
    POLYSTICHUM AUSTRALIENSE(10-83)
N
N
        FORMOSUM(12-83)
                                                BROAD SHIELD-FERN
                                                MOTHER SHIELD-FERN
N
        PROLIFERUM(12-83)
        SETIFERUM: CULTIVAR: (2-84)
        TSUS-SIMENSE(4-84)
                                                TSUS-SIMA HOLLY-FERN
N
    PTERIS COMANS(2-84)
                                                NETTED BRAKE
        CRETICA : ALBOLINEATA: (12-83)
                                                RIBBON BRAKE
                                                SLENDER BRAKE
N *
        ENSIFORMIS(10-83)
        HENDERSONII (2-84)
        MACILENTA(4-84)
                                                NEW ZEALAND BRAKE
        MULTIFIDA(2-84)
                                                SPIDER BRAKE
        SEMIPINNATA (2-84)
        TREMULA(2-84)
                                                TENDER BRAKE
N
        UMBROSA(10-83)
                                                JUNGLE BRAKE
        VITTATA(4-84)
                                                CHINESE BRAKE
N.
    RUMOHRA ADIANTIFORMIS(CAPE FORM)(2-84)
                                                LEATHER FERN
        ADIANTIFORMIS(NATIVE) (2-84)
                                                LEATHERY SHIELD-FERN
N
N*
    SCHELLOLEPIS SUBAURICULATA(6-84)
                                                BLACK CATERPILLAR FERN
    SCYPHULARIA PENTAPHYLLA(4-84)
    THELYPTERIS PATENS : LEPIDA: (?)
    TODEA BARBARA(12-83)
                                                KING FERN
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⁽x) INDICATES SPECIES IN SHORT SUPPLY

⁽N) INDICATES NATIVE AUSTRALIAN SPECIES

BURKE AND WILLS - KILLED BY A FERN?

The forthcoming film on the journey and the death of the two explorers will again focus attention on their tragic end.

It is likely that the fern Marsilea played a significant role in their final end.

Many people are aware that Burke and Wills were supplied by the aborigines with fish and nardoo cake during their last days in Central Australia.

Nardoo flour is prepared from the shorocarps of the aquatic fern Marsilea whose leaves resemble a large four leafed clover. Professor Ewart states of nardoo: "In time of scarcity the shorocarps of Marsilea are ground into a yellowish powder by the aborigines. Cakes made from it are astringent, contain tannin, and are highly indigestible".

Wills, who studied medicine for a period, wrote a note to his father a few days before he died: "My dear father, these a probably the last lines you will ever get from me. We are on the point of starvation, not so much from absolute want of food, but from want of nutrient in what we can get".

Dr. Beckler, the medical officer with the expedition, told the subsequent Royal Commission that scurvy was the major factor in the deaths. However, he added that the scurvy was not typical, the usual skin and gum sores were absent, instead the main symptoms were weakness, difficulty in walking, swollen legs, anaemia and frequent fainting.

The symptoms were typical of a Vitamin Bl (thiamine) deficiency often known as beri-beri which is word of Singhalese origin and means "I cannot, I cannot" in reference to the weakness and listlessness.

Beri-beri was not known as a disease entity in Australia at that time and a means of preventing it was not discovered until 20 years after the Burke and Wills expedition.

The food used on the expedition was poor in thiamine and it is likely that thiamine deficiency caused many of the medical problems encountered on the journey. However, in the final few weeks at Cooper's Creek, their diet included regular amounts of fish and nardoo cake supplied by the local aborigines. Fish is a good source of thiamine and therefore why did they die of thiamine deficiency? It is likely that the cause was the eating of nardoo. Not so much the nardoo flour which is also eaten by aborgines but the green plant, as it was a regular practice for them to eat green native plants such as portulaca as they were aware of the value of green plants in preventing scurvy.

However, Marsilea has a very high level of thiaminase, an enzyme which destroys thiamine. Its level of thiaminase is about 100 times the level in bracken fern which is sufficient to kill horses and pigs.

Marsilea periodically causes mass poisoning of sheep. In one incident on the Gwydir River in N.S.W. a few years ago about 2,000 sheep died. The sheep graze the Marsilea which grows rapidly on the flood plains. The thiaminase activity is high enough to kill sheep in spite of the sheep's ability to synthesise its own thiamine requirements in its rumen.

The green Marsilea has a bland taste and is likely to have been consumed by the explorers as a source of Vitamin C particularly as they were aware of its importance and also aware that there was something lacking in their diet.

In which case the cure became the killer, a situation which we sometimes see repeated with present day drugs.

As a final thought the criticism levelled by the Royal Commission at Wright for the tardiness shown by his relief mission may be somewhat unjustified in the light of subsequent knowledge about the weakness and listlessness associated with thiamine deficiency.

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AUSTRALIAN FERN JOURNAL

Our Fern Journal has been well received. It contains 32 pages which an entirely devoted to ferns with no less than 27 colour photographs as well as black and white photos and line drawings.

The Journal contains interesting articles on Propagation and Potting together with articles on the ferns of Lord Howe and Norfolk Islands as well as Coffs Harbour (N.S.W.), Anglesea (Vic.) and Mt. Kinabalu (Malaysia).

The Journal is available to members of the Fern Society at a cost of \$1.80 per copy, at the meetings. Country members please add 60 cents postage and all interstate members please add 65 cents postage.

Send orders to Lorraine Goudey, R.M.B. 1175, LARA 3212

A Monograph of the Fern Genus Platycerium (Polypodiaceae) By Elbert Hennipman and Marco C. Roos

Published 1982. North Holland Publishing Company, Amsterdam. 126 pages. Soft cover. \$63.

This work received a thorough review by Josephine Camas in the current issue of the Fern Gazette published by the British Pteridological Society. Her review, however, does not mention the two species name changes proposed by the authors nor their reduction to 15 from 18 the total number of species generally recognized in the United States. (Refer to the list in the Fern Growers Manual by Hoshizaki.) Name changes are as follows:

Hennipman & Roos

Hoshizaki

- P. alcicorne
- P. elephantotis

- P. vassei
- P. angolense

Reductions from species to subspecies (ssp) and varieties (var) are:

- P. bifurcatum ssp bifurcatum var bifurcatum
- P. bifurcatum ssp bifurcatum var hillii
- P. bifurcatum ssp veitchii
- P. bifurcatum ssp willinckii

- P. bifurcatum
- P. hillii
- P. veitchii
- P. willinckii

The description key proposed by Hennipman and Roos was found useful for identification of the stock imported from the wild and observed growing side by side in this reviewer's garden.

- Shields (base fronds) up to 30 inches long, upper part elliptical, consisting of up to four unequally shaped lobes. Fertile (foliage) drooping (pendulous), branches (ultimate segments) narrow to linear triangular ssp willinckii
- 1. Shields up to 20 inches long, upper part rounded to elliptical, either entire, or strongly wavy on the margins, or forked with the lobes linear; fertile fronds spreading or elliptical to obovate (ovate with the narrow end basal) 2
- 2. Shields 3 to 6 inches wide, upper part elliptical with linear lobes; fertile fronds 2 to 2½ times forked, covered with silvery, matted stellate hairs ssp veitchii
- Shields 6 12 inches wide, upper part rounded or elliptical, the margins distinctly wavy; fertile fronds 2 to 5 times forked, sparsely set with stellate hairs 3
- Shields with margins of upper part entire; fertile fronds all erect, mostly symmetrical, sparsely set with stellate hairs, branches elliptic to obovate ... ssp bifurcatum var hillii
- Shields with margins of the upper part wavy; fertile fronds mostly spreading, rarely symmetrical, densely set with stellate hairs, branches linear to narrowly triangular ssp bifurcatum var bifurcatum

These subspecies and varieties comprise a vast array of staghorns grown as garden forms, chance sporelings, cultivars of unknown origin, meristem plants, and nondescripts of the nursery trade. The present monograph, nevertheless, provides a systematic overview of the genus for juveniles and nature plants taken from the wild and with applicability to horticultural forms as well.

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DIARY DATES

Thursday October 11th

Rod Hill - "Ferns of the Blue Mountains (NSW)"

Thursday November 8th Chris Goudey - "Ferns of Lord Howe Island"

Fern Forum and Thursday Fern Forum and December 13th Christmas Meeting

NOTE: In the event of a power strike on the

evening of any meeting, we regret that

the meeting must be cancelled.

VENUE OF MEETINGS: Burnley Horticultural

School Hall, Burnley

TIME OF MEETINGS: 8 p.m.

PREPARED AND PRINTED FOR THE FERN SOCIETY OF VICTORIA



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