

THE FERN  
SOCIETY OF  
VICTORIA

NEWSLETTER

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:

Dear Member,

November Meeting: A very good attendance of Members came to hear Chris Goudey speak and screen slides of "Ferns of Lord Howe Island". Chris' talk proved to be informative, entertaining and full of interest. It is fully reported elsewhere in this issue.

Thank you very much Chris.

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Next Month: Thursday, 13th December 1984 at 8.00 p.m. Our traditional Christmas meeting featuring our Fern Forum Panel of Keith Stubbs (Compere), Keith Hutchinson, Barry Stagoll, Chris Goudey and Richard Hartland plus competitions for a Christmas Hamper and a propagating cold frame.

Although not confirmed at the time of writing, we are hopeful that Professor Chambers of Melbourne University will be able to attend and show his slides of the Genus Blechnum.

We are also looking forward to seeing a good exhibition of Members' ferns. A book voucher on the Society Book Stall will go to the owner of one lucky fern.

Then there will be supper and time for a chat.

Please don't forget that your involvement is needed in all activities to make the night typically successful. If you do not like speaking up in public yet have a question for the Panel, put it in writing and let Keith Stubbs have it before the meeting.

A plate of sandwiches or cakes for supper would be appreciated. Should be a great night.

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Fern Society Recess: Members are reminded that the Fern Society goes into a holiday recess in January, 1985. There will not be a General Meeting nor an issue of the Newsletter. All services will resume in February.

The first meeting for 1985 will be held on Thursday, February 14, when I hope to speak on a collection of simple practical tasks which Ella and I find necessary in the care of our ferns.

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Special Effort Winners at the November Meeting were:

Shane Alexander  
 Betty Duncan  
 and Beth Ward

Three lovely potted ferns, two containers of Maxicrop and a Macrami basket holder were the prizes. Congratulations winners.

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Wishing everyone a very happy Christmas and a healthy, happy and successful New Year.

With kindest regards,  
 DOUG THOMAS



Always a wonderful evening - so don't miss our December Meeting which will take the form of a Fern Forum and Christmas Meeting - 13th December at 8.00 p.m, Burnley Horticultural Hall.

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### 1985 ANNUAL FERN SHOW

The rapid approach of the Festive Season gives us our regular reminder that preparation for our Annual Fern Show must move into a higher gear. So start pampering your ferns just that little bit extra to have them in top condition for the event!

The 1985 Show will be held on Saturday and Sunday, 23rd and 24th March. This will coincide with the last weekend of Garden Week and we are hoping that the dual attraction might persuade some of our country members to come to Melbourne and visit our Show. The venue will again be the National Herbarium in the Botanic Gardens.

Visitors to the last Show expressed considerable interest in the family relationships amongst ferns and we have decided to use this as a basic theme for planning the layout of the 1985 Show. We aim to organise displays of a number of related or similar groups, while still retaining a smaller general display for plants outside these groups, items with special artistic appeal, etc.

This style of arrangement will require much more advance co-ordination of ferns being provided for display than we have been able to achieve in the past. To this end a member of the Show Sub-Committee has been nominated to act as co-ordinator for each group. The co-ordinators will be responsible for following up with members to obtain sufficient plants of the appropriate varieties for their displays. Their work will be made much easier if people with suitable plants in the various groups will let the co-ordinators know what they can provide. As usual the need is for well-grown, healthy plants; they need not be large to look good.

The groups selected for the "specialised" displays and their respective co-ordinators are:

		<u>Phone</u>
Adiantums	Barry Stagoll	729 2712
Aspleniums	Gay Stagoll	729 2712
Blechnums/Doodias	Julian Basser	569 3132
Nephrolepis	Bill Taylor	277 4310
Polypodies/Ephiphytic	Bill Taylor	"
Polystichum/Dryopteris	Ian Broughton (059)	64 6402
Pteris	Sue Gardner-Berry	862 2595
Fern Relatives	Peter Duell	592 9968

The success of the Show will depend as always on the involvement of as many members as possible in providing a wide range of plants, setting up the displays and running the Show over the weekend. Make it one of your New Year resolutions that you will take part in the Show where it is geographically possible.

The other members of the Fern Show Sub-Committee not listed above are:

Bob Lee (Chairman)	836 1528
Bernadette Blackstock (Secretary)	391 5517
Greg Bunting	890 3960
Bernard & Bernadette Coleman	82 2169
Peter Puglisi	375 1748

## NOVEMBER MEETING REPORT

## "FERNs OF LORD HOWE ISLAND" - by Guest Speaker, Chris Goudey

A very good attendance of Members at the General Meeting on 8th November enjoyed a pictorial feast by our former President.

Chris' talk and slides were arranged in a very entertaining sequence. We were treated to photographs of the natural features of the island, the climatic phenomenon of clouds actually forming over the high mountain peaks, the ascent into the different areas of rain forest and the palm and ferns occurring there. Then to provide variety and interest a segment on the endemic birds of the island was included.

The two mountain structures which dominate are Mount Gower (866 m) and Mount Lidgbird (765 m). Chris explained how the peaks of these mounts are almost constantly covered in cloud; cloud which generates locally. This constant source of humidity provides just the right conditions for luxuriant growth in the ferns. Consequently the ferns take advantage and grow in abundance to high altitudes.

As well as the two mounts we were shown slides of the airfield, local installations and a mountain called Whale because of its shape.

Turning then to the ferns, Chris said that about seventeen species were endemic and to show us some outstanding specimens of these he took us into the rain forest areas. Initially it was the magnificent *Kentia* palm which were prominent, then in their turn, some splendid specimens of tree ferns were shown. Two outstanding species were *Cyathea Howeana* and *C. Macarthurii*. These both appear to tolerate full sun at certain times of the day.

Another fern of particular interest was the *Blechnum* species - *Oceanicum*. Chris said that the fern grows as a creeper, but that it is not particular as to whether it climbs on tree ferns, logs or rocks. It is dark green, glossy, with fronds to one metre long and pendant.

A slide of a fertile frond of *Lastreopsis Nephrodioides* was shown. This fern grows in the southern mountain areas of the island. The fronds are broad and beautiful with fertile fronds appearing to have developed sporangia on the upper surface of the frond. This is an illusion, the sporangia is in fact formed on the underside but the indusium which protects it curls right over on the edges to give the impression that something very unusual is happening.

Chris interspersed his fern photographs with some depicting native wild life. He explained that for years feral pigs, goats and domestic cats gone wild, had taken a heavy toll of the wild life and plants. Forest clearing had also contributed to the disaster. One species of endemic bird which is perilously close to extinction is the Lord Howe Island Woodhen. This bird is flightless and easy prey for its many predators. In an effort to save the species from total extinction the New South Wales Government recently launched a captive breeding program which Chris said is showing signs of succeeding.

It was back to the ferns after that where we were treated to slides of lovely endemic filmy ferns. Then there were slides of *Platyserium Bifurcatum* (Elk Horn Fern). Not growing as epiphytes in tall forest trees as we would expect, but as a terrestrial, luxuriant among tumbled rocks on shaded hillsides. There appeared to be hectares of them.

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The talk and slides clearly illustrated the Lord Howe Island landforms, climate and abundant fern species. It served also to show those Members who have booked for the forthcoming excursion just what they can expect to see and enjoy. Conversely for those staying at home, we saw in Chris' slides something describing what must be a fern enthusiast's paradise.

Bill Taylor ably moved a vote of thanks to Chris which was carried by the enthusiastic applause of Members.

#### RAIN FORESTS AND FERN GULLIES

(Continued from the November issue)

#### Concluding New South Wales:

Mount Warning State Park will be found in the far north east of New South Wales seventeen kilometres west of Murwillumbah. It is clearly visible for some distance in all directions.

Named by Captain Cook as a navigational reference, Mount Warning is actually the remains of an ancient volcano. It is a most interesting place because it can be climbed right to the summit. As you climb, by well constructed pathways, you pass through storey after storey of lush rain forest. Each storey providing a change in the compilation of the plant communities.

The fern count is large and interesting containing stags, elks, bird's nest and willow spleenworts. Blechnums and shield ferns are lovely growing in the rich mulch. Bangalow palms are elegant and beautiful too.

The rain forest will also yield a very interesting bird and animal population. Native pigeons of several species are outstanding.

Accommodation: Guest House at the Park, Camping - Caravan Park, Motels, Hotels at Murwillumbah.

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#### Dahrug National Park:

Seventy seven kilometres north of Sydney on the north side of the Hawkesbury river, quite near to the Wisemans Ferry is Dahrug National Park. It has well appointed and maintained picnic facilities and a bush camping park.

Activities would embrace bushwalking, photography, observing birds, wildflowers, ferns and aboriginal rock engravings. In addition a visit and walk along about two miles of the Great North Road is a fascinating and unique experience. The Great North Road was the first road link between Sydney and Newcastle, the strip through Dahrug was built by convict labour in about 1826. Convicts were forced to hew and shape sandstone rocks with primitive hand tools. The slabs and blocks thus formed were used to build the road over the mountain.

The road drains, sumps and buttressed retaining walls are standing to this day yet not a spoonful of concrete or mortar has been used in the construction. Most of the drainage system is still functioning and the marks made on the sandstone by the hapless convicts are still clearly evident.

On the walls of cuttings along the way look for messages engraved into the sandstone by the convicts. Names, dates, geometric shapes, the hangman's gibbet and noose, etc. etc.

Accommodation: Hotel at Wiseman's Ferry, Camping - Caravan Parks, Motels, Hotels at Gosford and in northern Sydney suburbs - Windsor and Richmond.

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New England National Park:

North east New South Wales, 75 kilometres each of Armidale.

This is a wilderness park of massive proportions where if you wish you can take bush walks of very long and very rugged character. The area was volcanic thirty to forty million years ago and is now highlighted by a peak 1710 metres high; Point Lookout. The views from such high points are breathtaking and full of interest. The rain forests vary from temperate to sub-tropical.

Probably the most comfortable walk is to "The Cascades", a circuit walk of about two and a half kilometres. Along the way ferns, palms,

epiphytic orchids and clubmosses are abundant. Look for *Dyctimia Brownii* growing on huge boulders, not up in the trees. Three species of tree ferns and lovely tassel fern, *Lycopodium Myrtifolium* (Long Club Moss) should be sought along the way. In late October, look for the Orange blossom orchids in flower. Most of these appear to have established on the trunks of huge forest trees. The creek and Cascades are an absolute delight.

Accommodation: Camping - Caravan Parks, Motels, Hotels at Armidale and Dorrigó. <sup>32</sup> Small motel at Ebor.

DOUG THOMAS

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A special thanks to Albert Ward and Chris Goudey for their excellent preparations for our trip to the Otways. Their efforts made our weekend a very memorable one and took us to many unusual and unique places we may never have seen. Betty Duncan gave us great assistance with identification and amazed me with her ability to climb into any situation when a member discovered an unusual fern. I was also impressed with the friendly atmosphere and ready co-operation with all members of the tour party.

KEITH HUTCHINSON

As 1984 draws to a close I would like to thank the many members who have assisted me during the year. Our President, Doug Thomas, for his superbly written contributions always with time to spare. Chris Goudey, Rod Hill, Barry Stagoll, Bill Bright, Bob Lee and Bill Taylor have all helped make our newsletter more interesting.

Kath Brown, Jean Trudgeon and Margaret Radley, what a team! They have put in a sterling effort collating, folding and addressing approximately 5,500 newsletters this year. Fantastic!! Jean has been teaching ceramics and has recently opened a shop - Ivy Ceramics Craft Centre, 241 Banksia Street, Ivanhoe West. She won several several prizes in the Whittlesea show and her quality work is well worth seeing if you are in the area. Keith Stubbs and his wife Berenice have given a lot of time in transcribing talks by our monthly speakers.

Thanks also to those I have failed to mention who have helped in any way. I wish all members a very Happy Christmas and a safe return from holidays and a New Year of Good Health.

KEITH HUTCHINSON

REPORT ON THE OTWAYS TOUR  
by Chris Goudey

Fifty people headed off in the early hours of the morning of 17th November for what was to be a fantastic weekend, this included a coach load with three cars following behind. We got off to a good start and the weather was great. Our first stop was the Erskin Falls but unfortunately we had to give the falls a miss. The coach was too large to negotiate the narrow steep climb out of the reserve.

Our next stop was the Grey River Scenic Reserve, where we had a marvellous barbeque lunch which was provided by the Bus Company. After lunch we made our way into the reserve, the gully was rich in ferns and we listed twenty-six species including two large specimens of the Skirted Treefern *Cyathea marcescens*, magnificent plants of the Slender Treefern *C. cunninghamii*. The predominant treefern was the Soft Treefern *Dicksonia antartica*, most of which were massive and completely covered with filmy ferns. We saw a most unusual form of Soft Treefern not far from the road, the fronds were small and the pinnae were all skeletonised (see drawing). A list of the ferns from the Grey River Reserve is as follows:

Asplenium bulbiferum	- Hen and Chicken Fern
" flaccidum	- Weeping Spleenwort
Blechnum chambersii	- Lance Water Fern
" fluriatile	- Ray Water Fern
" minus	- Soft Water Fern
" nudum (& fimbriated form)	- Fish Bone Water Fern
" patersonii	- Strap Water Fern
Ctenopteris heterophylla	- Gypsy Fern
Cyathea australia	- Rough Treefern
" cunninghamii	- Slender Treefern
" marcescens	- Skirted Treefern
Dicksonia antartica	- Soft Treefern
Grammitis billardieri	- Finger Fern
Histiopteris incisa	- Batwing Fern
Hymenophyllum australe	- Austral Filmy Fern
" cupressiforme	- Common Filmy Fern
" flabellatum	- Shiny Filmy Fern
Hypolepis punctata	- Downy Ground Fern
Lastreopsis acuminata	- Shiny Shield Fern
Microsorium diversifolium	- Kangaroo Fern
Pellaea falcata	- Sickle Fern
Polyphlebium venosum	- Veined Bristle Fern
Polystichum proliferum	- Mother Shield Fern
Pteridium esculentum	- Austral Bracken
Rumohra adiantiformis	- Shield Hare's Foot
Diplazium australe	- Austral Lady Fern
and Blechnum watsii	- Hard Water Fern further up the road

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We then travelled up the Grey River Road and on past Mt. Sabine to Turtons Track, where we spent the rest of the afternoon. The coach parked on the roadside and we all plunged into the bush. The small creek which runs below the road was an interesting place, with quite a number of slender treeferns along the creek bed. We also found nice specimens of the Weeping Spleenwort (they are still there) the Austral Ground Fern Hypolepis australe, Silky Fan Fern Sticherus tener and a magnificent specimen of the Long Fork Fern Tmesipteris billardieri. Most of the ferns we found in the Grey River area occurred here. The roadside embankments were covered with the Hard Water Fern with their brightly coloured new fronds. After leaving Turtons Track we made our way through to the coast and on to Apollo Bay and the Bay Pines Motel. The views of the ocean from the Wild Dog Creek Road were breathtaking.

We were all up bright and early on the Sunday morning ready for a big day. The first stop was at Owen McColl, one of our country members. Owen showed us through his magnificent native garden. A few of us made a quick dash down the hill, below Owen's house, to sample some of his rainforest and were surprised to find the whole hillside covered with the Lacy Ground Fern Dennstaedtia davallioides amongst other ferns. After saying our goodbyes to the McColls, we pushed on to Maits Rest and out of the bus again. This area was rich in ferns, as well as many of the species previously seen was an abundance of the Bristly Shield Fern Lastreopsis hispida. After leaving Maits Rest, we turned off on the Red Johanna Road to Brian Harringtons Fern Nursery, whilst everyone was selecting their souvenirs, we noticed massive thickets of the Pouched Coral Fern Gleichenia dicarpa and the Austral King Fern Todea barbara along the small creek which runs through the Nursery.

Our lunch stop was at Melba Gully (another barbeque). Melba Gully is often called "the jewel of the Otways". Melba Gully was donated to the people of Victoria by Mr. and Mrs. Axel Madsen in March 1975. This magnificent gesture began a new era for Melba Gully. In the 1930s and 40s, people from all over Australia came to see the quiet fern gully, set beneath majestic myrtle beech trees, and experience its cathedral-like atmosphere. Now it is under the care of the National Parks Service and is again accessible to all.

The gully is crowded with a dense forest of myrtle beech, blackwoods and tree ferns over a ground flora of low ferns and mosses. Higher up the slopes, the beech gives way to mountain ash, with an under-storey of musk, mulberry and Christmas bush. Up on the main ridge are old messmate trees set in a young stand of satin box, so called because of the dense satiny hairs on the undersides of the leaves.

There is one enormous old messmate tree that is hundreds of years old. It no longer has the characteristic heavy rounded crown of a mature tree; storms and fires have taken many of its large branches. Walk round the tree, then go inside and see daylight shafting down through its burnt-out heart.

Melba Gully is part of the upper reaches of the Johanna River, which flows out to sea between Moonlight Head and Cape Otway. At the upper end of the gully, water cascades over a solid sheet of rock as it tumbles through the tree ferns.

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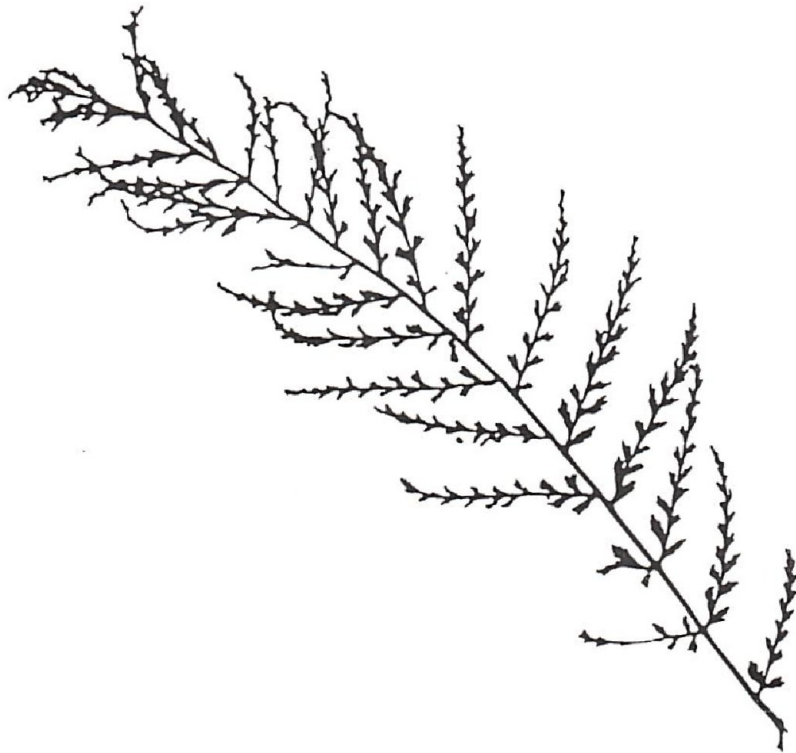
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After leaving Melba Gully, we visited the Cool Waters Nursery, where we met Ray Edwards. We were fascinated with his under ground glasshouse and his spore-raising techniques. Our thanks go to Ray for taking the time to show us through his nursery. We are looking forward to having Ray as our guest speaker in the new year.

Our last stop before heading for home was at the Triplet Falls on Phillip Road near Beach Forest. The long climb down to the base of the falls was well worth it. An abundance of ferns grew down both sides of the falls including large clumps of the Silky Fan Fern and many others.

After a long cool drink, it was back to the bus and home.

Our thanks go to the driver, who manoeuvred the large coach along the narrow winding roads with their small wooden bridges.



CHRIS. GOUDEY

#### SPORE BANK INFORMATION:

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.

FERNAHOLIC'S CROSSWORD

by Gillian O'Hara

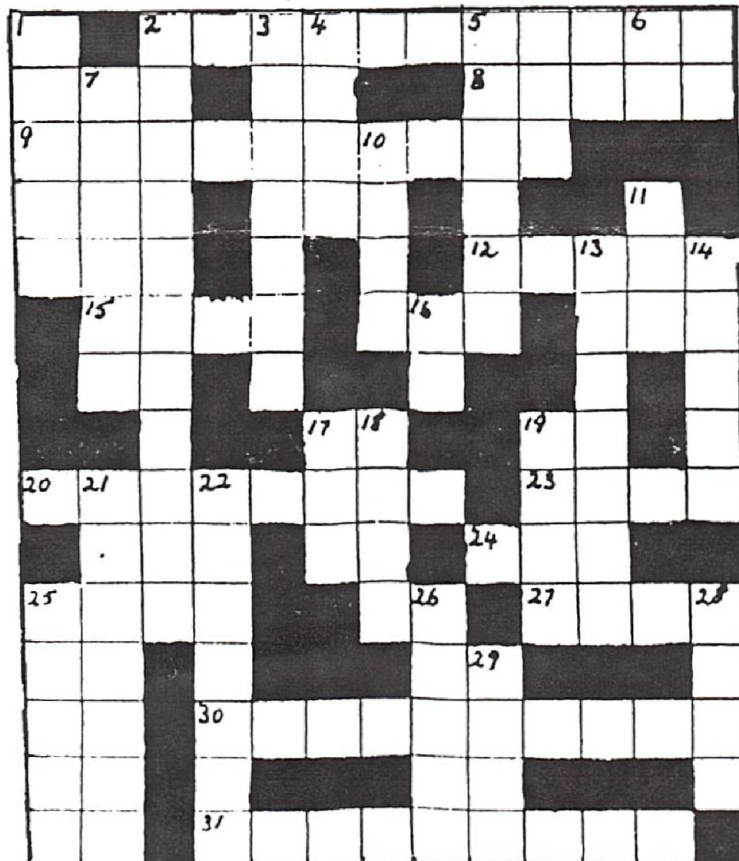
Our thanks go to Gillian O'Hara (wife of member Kevin O'Hara) for providing us with this excellent crossword. We know our members will thoroughly enjoy the challenge.

ACROSS:

2. Structure producing the female egg
8. Common name for 7 Down
9. A fern growing on rocks
12. A cluster of spore cases
15. A large fern
19. Across the Tasman
20. With an appendage resembling a crest
23. Collectors always want ...
24. Growing media (backwards)
25. Disliked by most ferns
27. Midrib
30. Native, but not necessarily confined to a particular region or country
31. A small fern

DOWN:

1. Not true
2. Structure producing motile male sperm
3. Coiled young frond
4. American term for coarsely shredded tree fern fibre
5. Blunt or rounded
6. Country with active Fern Society
7. A fern genus (backwards)
10. A Lavallia mammal
11. Tissue capable of growing into a new plant
13. Underground stem
14. A minute asexual reproduction body
16. An Australian Fern Society
17. Common name for Sticherus
18. A Platycerium animal
21. Colourful common name for Culcita Dubia
22. A distinct kind of fern
25. Required by all ferns
26. Unwelcome in spore growing
28. *Asplenium nidus*
29. A small body



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Carbour, via Milawa

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DIARY DATES

Thursday  
December 13th

Fern Forum and  
Christmas Meeting

Thursday  
February 1985

President Doug Thomas  
"Doing the little Things"

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.

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# Maxicrop

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