THE THE JERN SOCIETY

OF PICTORIA inc.

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REBLETTER

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FEBRUARY 1987

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PRESIDENTS REPORT.

Our Christmas meeting, to be held on the lawn at Ripponlea was in extreme jeopardy due to a heavy downpour just as we arrived at 2.00 pm. We were very fortunate and grateful to Norma Michell for allowing us to use the magnificent Ripponlea ballroom.

Oliver Frost presented a very interesting talk on the reconstruction of the fernery and after our Christmas Hampers special effort, and afternoon tea we were able to inspect the ferns. All members were delighted with the magnificent condition of the ferns (many donated by our society members) and certainly agreed that Oliver Frost and his staff deserve great credit for a wonderful job, done in just twelve months.

Our sincere thanks to Norma Michell, Oliver Frost, and the Ripponlea Directors for allowing us the free use of this delightful setting for our final meeting of 1986.

Special effort. Congratulations to the winner of Mavis Potters Christmas Cake - Irene Haden, and the hamper winners.

1. Peter Puglesi

2. Peter Goschnick

3. Sue Wileman

4. Bernadette Blackstock

5. Oliver Frost

6. Gay Stagoll

7. Julien Basser

8. Dianne McCarty

NEW VENUE, as the Burnley school hall is no longer available to us we have tried for other large halls without success so our first meeting for 1987 will be at the Herbarium.

Although a little cramped we do hope that all members will bring along a favourite forn for display to give our first meeting of the New Year a gala atmosphere also ensuring a free ticket for our "Door Prize".

As the Doodia fern is our fern of the month please bring one along if possible to assist members with identification.

Finally I wish members a happy and healthy new year and hope to see you all at the Herbarium on the second thursday in February.

Kind Regards,

Keith Hutchinson.

NEW VENUE 1987

THE HERBERLIM

BIRDWOOD AVE STH YARRA
THURSDAY FEBRUARY 12TH BPM

SPERKER BARRY STAGOLL

PROGRESS AT RIPPON LEA

CSIRO weevils combat fern menace

Four thousand CSIRO developed weevils were flown to Sri Lanka recently to initiate a biological control programme against the floating fern, Salvinia.

Salvinia is a serious weed throughout the tropics and subtropics. It grows rampantly in rice paddy areas and must be removed before the rice seedlings can be planted. As well, it is a major weed of dams and irrigation canals and is considered by the Sri Lankan authorities to be a major threat to the future viability of the hugh Mahaweli Development Scheme.

The aim of the biological control project is to suppress the population of Salvinia before it is inadvertently spread via this irrigation scheme.

The weevils, Cyrtobagous salvineae, attack Salvinia by

eating away the buds and by burrowing into the stems. The weed eventually becomes waterlogged and sinks, leaving pollution-free clear water.

Wide acclaim for the weevils has already been received following successful programmes against Salvinia in Australia and, most recently in Papua New Guinea. The research team from CSIRO was awarded the 1985 UNESCO Science Prize for their work in controlling the weed in Papua New Guinea.

The project leaders are Dr Ivor Fernando of the University of Kelaniya near Colombo in Sri Lanka, and Dr Peter Room of CSIRO's Division of Entomology in Brisbane. The project is being funded by the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research.

1987 ANNUAL FERN SHOW

As advised in the December Newsletter, the Show this year will be held at the Nunawading Horticultural Centre in Forest Hill on Saturday, 4th April and Sunday, 5th April; setting up will be done on Friday, 3rd April. Hence we have just a little over 7 weeks left for preparation from the date of publication of this Newsletter.

Publicity is a prime need from now right up till the time of the Show. Advertising leaflets will be available at the February meeting and everyone attending is asked to take some and arrange to have them displayed in places where they are likely to attract the attention of potential visitors to the Show. Please try to promote the Show at every opportunity over the coming weeks. The Show Sub-Committee will be organising publicity through the media as usual.

Even though the Nunawading hall is smaller than that at the Herbarium we will still need lots of ferns for the display. There was some confusion on this point last year and some people brought only minimal quantities so that the display was a little sparse in some areas. As always, we would like to encourage as many people as possible to bring ferns for the display both to increase the scope and variety and, more importantly, make it a product of the Society as a whole and not just of a small section.

Please ensure that all ferns, especially uncommon ones, are clearly labelled. We have been embarassed at times trying to answer questions about spectacular unusual ferns that are not identified. If you are not sure of the name, try to have the fern identified in advance rather than hope that someone at the Show will recognise it.

The Sub-Committee would like to hear as soon as possible from members willing to help in the Show activities - setting up and staffing the display, helping in the sales area, providing the tea and coffee service, etc - so that a roster can be arranged. The members of the Sub-Committee for this year are:

Bob Lee (Chairman) Julian Basser	Phone		1528 3132
Bernadette Blackstock		391	5517
Ian Broughton	(059)	64	6402
Peter Duell		592	9968
Sue Gardner-Berry		862	2595
Derek Griffiths		336	3157
Peter Puglisi		375	1748
Barry & Gay Stagoll		729	2712
Bill Taylor		277	4310

Members planning to offer ferns for sale are also asked to advise their intention promptly. There is no limit either low or high on the number of plants that can be brought along for

sale (and again we would like to encourage anyone with a few suitable surplus plants to participate), but we do wish to discourage the sale of small tubes as the effort of handling them is disproportionately high. Please note that people selling ferns are expected to contribute a reasonable number of plants to the display in proportion to their sales volume.

The continuing success of the Show depends on the participation of new people and the introduction of new ideas. Please come along and enjoy the Show activities and let the Sub-Committee know any suggestions you might have for improvements.

Bob Lee

TASMANIAN TRIP---STOP PRESS--ONE VACANCY EXISTS-CONTACT CHRIS GOUDEY (052)-823084

FERN SOCIETY OF VICTORIA - STUDY GROUP.

The initial meeting of the proposed 'Study Group' will be held at

2.00 p.m. Saturday, 28th February Grants Picnic Ground

(on Monbulk Road, on the southern outskirts of Kallista, adjacent to the Kiosk and Restaurant . . . look for a brown Nissan Urvan BPC 756, and wear your FSV name tags if you have them).

Those who wish to make a day of it (weather permitting), might like to meet earlier (around 11 to 11.30) for a picnic lunch and a short walk along the circuit track, across the road from the kiosk, before the meeting at 2.00 p.m. (There is a shelter-shed at the picnic ground, so the meeting will go ahead even if it happens to be wet on the day).

The main functions of the meeting will be to assess whether there is sufficient interest for the 'Study Group' to be a viable proposition, and then, if so, to organize an agenda for the rest of the year. Please give some thought beforehand to the part you could play in organizing an activity on one of the following dates. (See November and December, 1936 Newsletters for details of activities proposed-hopefully a more detailed set of guidelines will be formulated to assist activity organizers).

Proposed dates for 1987 are:

Discussion Meetings.
March 28th or 29th
May 30th or 31st
July 25th or 26th
Sept. 26th or 27th (school holidays)
November 28th or 29th

Outings (field trips)
April 25th or 26th (school holidays)
June 27th or 28th
August 29th or 30th
October 24th or 25th

GUEST SPEAKER REPORT - General Meeting, 7th December, 1986.
MR. OLIVER FROST - Curator Ripponlea Mansion Gardens.

1. The Fern House - Rebuilding.

It wasn't so long ago that the huge fern house at Ripponlea was derelict. It was covered in creeper which had become so rampant as to block out life giving light to the ferns and plants within. Bangalow palms, in their quest for the precious light had pushed holes right through the roof partially wrecking the structure. In consequence the fern collection was reduced to four or five species of tree fern and a couple of very old marattias.

Operating on a grant of \$240,000, Oliver and staff began work on the restoration of the fernery by first removing offending creeper and the spent materials of the original building. Steel rivets which had been used to secure truss joints and framework had corroded badly, so badly in fact that an alternative had tobe found. Stainless steel fasteners were chosen and used in the restored framework. According to Oliver the new structure will stand for 500 years.

The original cast iron pillars remain but were re-excavated at the base where fresh concrete was poured to ensure a solid support and to guard against corrosion. The semi-circular roof and vertical sides of the framework were covered in red cedar treated lathes spaced 50 mm (2 inches) apart.

The fern house is huge in its present state but an additional grant of \$50,000 ensures that the south end of the building will also be restored in 1987. Oliver said that originally the south end was glazed and that it covered a pond. It is not possible to re-create the original on the funds available, instead the steelwork and woodwork will be replaced.

To date 10,000 man hours have been expended in the reconstruction and the south end work will add another 5,000 man hours to the total.

2. The Rockery.

In preparing for the introduction of the new plantings, Oliver said that remnants of the old rockery were retained because the pleasing nature of the landscaping is still wholly effective. Honeycomb rocks were added where necessary.

The rockery now houses a very representative collection of ferns. There are twenty three species of tree ferns plus two hundred and fifty other species and cultivars. Spore from the ferns in the collection would soon be maturing and Oliver will make spore collection available to the Fern Society spore bank.

All weather paths have yet to be laid in the rockery and a rendered aggregate surface is considered to be the most suitable. After all, the expected future traffic flow is 100,000 visitors a year.

A controlled wilderness area is envisaged for the fernery. Future management will include seperation of plants so that individuals can be identified and replacing casualties economically from the natural progression.

3. The Fern Society involvement.

Oliver said that he was happy to have Members of the Fern Society as guests for the meeting; the attendance was excellent having regard for the heavy rain, slippery roads and heavy traffic. He thanked members for their efforts in raising funds, purchasing and donating ferns and for assisting with advice on the proper maintenance of the

various species. Although each person on the gardening staff is experienced in general botany, none had a specialized knowledge of the cultivation of ferns. Oliver said he was grateful to the Fern Society for helping to correct this problem to the extent that new found confidence would soon be directed to trying to grow ferns from spores.

Now that the ferns are growing so magnificently it is very gratifying for the garden staff to observe the reaction of the visitors to the spectacle. Many visitors audibly express surprise and delight at their first sighting of the plants. As they wander through the rockery they leave no doubt as to the pleasure it is affording them. Many leave it with an obvious feeling of pride. Pride in the fact that they have witnessed a real success story - Australia made.

4. Thanks.

President Keith Hutchinson ably moved a vote of thanks to Oliver on behalf of Members. He was supported by sustained acclamation.

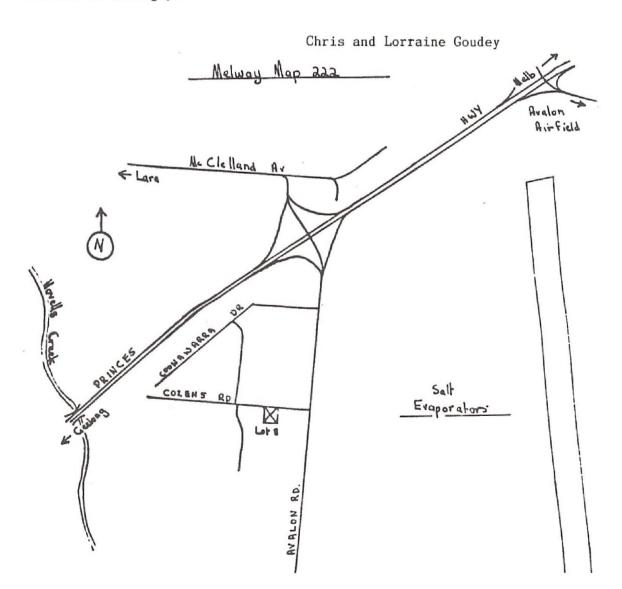
OPEN DAY AT LARA

We would like to invite members of the Fern Society of Victoria to an afternoon at our place on Sunday 15th February 1987 at 1.30pm.

Our address is - 25 Cozens Road, LARA

If you have a Melway Street Directory, it is on page 222, H 9.

We look forward to seeing you all.



The tour commences at 4.30pm at Station Pier, Port Melbourne on Friday 6th March 1987 and arrives back in Melbourne at 8.30am on Monday 16th March 1987.

ACCOMMODATION

At Turners Beach, we will be stopping at the Uniting Church Camp, at Queenstown, the Mountain View Holiday Lodge, 1 Penghara Road, Queenstown and at Hobart the Pines Resort, Surf Road, Seven Mile Beach.

As the accommodation is semi-hotel style, you are to provide your own sleeping bags, warm travelling rug, pillow case, tea towel and all eating utensils ie. knife, fork, spoon, plate, bowl and cup.

I suggest that you also take wet weather gear and good walking shoes or boots.

If you have any further queries, please ring me, preferably in the evenings on (052) 823084.

Chris Goudey TOUR MANAGER

TASMANIAN FERN TOUR 6th - 16th MARCH 1987

ITINERARY

Friday 6th March

Meet other tour members at Station Pier at 4.30pm. Check-in and depart at 6.00pm on the Abel Tasman ferry, arriving at Devonport at 8.30am.

Saturday 7th March

Cradle Valley

On arrival at Devonport, we will meet up with Michael Garrett and board our coach for Cradle Valley, where there are plenty of short walks with good scenery. A number of alpine ferns and mosses can be seen here. Overnight at Turners Beach.

Sunday 8th March

North Coast

Today we will visit Leven Canyon and the Fern Glade Park at Burnie. Overnight at Turners Beach.

Monday 9th March

Northwest Coast

A busy day visiting Dip Falls, Copper Creek, Milkshakes Reserve, Julius River and Lake Chisolm. Overnight at Turners Beach.

Tuesday 10th March

West Coast

Leave Turners Beach for Queenstown, stopping at the beautiful, Hellyer Gorge to view possibly the rarest fern in Australia, the Maidenhair Spleenwort, Asplenium hookeranum. Overnight at Queenstown.

Wednesday 11th March

West Coast

Visit Hemmskirk Falls, Regatta Point (Strahan) and Crotty Road which leads into deep rainforest gullies, which abound with ferns, lichens and mosses, and hopefully the Oval Wedge Fern, <u>Lindsaea trichomanoides</u>. Overnight Oueenstown.

Afternoon free time in Hobart, or a visit to Westlands Wholesale Nursery to view spore propagation. Overnight in Hobart.

Friday 13th March

Southwest Tasmania

Visiting Serpentine Dam, Scotts Peak Dam site, where we will see the beauty of the southwest with its mountains, gorges and horizontal scrub, the Wedge Water Fern, Blechnum vulcanicum, the Dwarf Coral Fern, Gleichenia abscida, the Brittle Bladder Fern, Cystopteris filix-fragilis, the Common Spleenwort, Asplenium trichomanes, the rare Bordered Filmy Fern, Hymenophyllum marginatum and many more. We will also visit Mt. Field National Park to view Lady Barron Falls, with its massive tree ferns covered with filmy ferns. Overnight in Hobart.

Saturday 13th March

Port Arthur

Travel to Port Arthur and onto Remarkable Caves to see the Maritime Fern, Asplenium obtusatum. Overnight in Hobart.

Sunday 15th March

Mt. Wellington

Spectacular views of Hobart and the Derwent River, more alpine ferns and beautiful walks along O'Grady's Falls track to view Asplenium terrestre.

Afternoon - Hobart to Devonport. Ferry departure time 6.00pm, arriving in Melbourne at 8.30am Monday 16th March.

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ANSWER TO DECEMBER 1986 - "CAN YOU NAME THIS FERN?"

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DIARY DATES.

1st MEETING FOR 1987.

SPEAKER - BARRY STAGOLL - FERNS OF NEW ZEALAND & PROGRESS AT RIPPONLEA VENUE: THE HERBARIUM - DATE: THURSDAY 12TH FEBRUARY.

NOTE. In the event of a power strike on the evening of any meeting, we regret that the meeting must be cancelled.

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