



THE  
FERN SOCIETY

OF  
VICTORIA  
Inc.

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# NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 10, NUMBER 4, MAY, 1988.



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PRESIDENTS REPORT:

Our April meeting was well attended to hear Chris Goudey tell us about the ferns of Lord Howe and Norfolk Islands. These two islands are gems for the fern lover and every member should try to holiday there at least once.

This month we have an article on one of our foundation members Albert Jenkins. I feel it is of great interest and I hope will be the forerunner to similar articles in future newsletters.

As from June 30 I will be resigning as Acting Editor of our newsletter. I feel the time has come for a fresh approach and my hope is that all members will give this interesting and important position in our society serious consideration.

We welcome the following new members to our society:

Mrs Carol Healy, McShare Street, North Balwyn  
Florence Jaquet, Grange Road, Kew  
E. Pittaway, Mitchell Avenue, Altona East

and we remember June Pritchard who has been confined to bed with a severe back problem and trust that she will be well again soon.

Special effort winners: 1. Keith Crellin                      2. Coral Nicholson  
3. Jean Boucher                      4. Dorothy Forte                      5. Graham Nicholson  
6. Coral Nicholson                      7. Jean Boucher                      8. Helen Ireland

Congratulations All.

Finally I would like to thank all those who assisted at the 'Gardening Made Easy', Nunawading and 'Expo 50 plus', Showgrounds. These both proved reasonably successful and we did sign some new members.

Please be sure to hear Dr. Willis at our May meeting.

Kind Regards  
Keith Hutchinson



..Thursday May 12 ..

Welsh Presbyterian

Church Hall

320 Latrobe st

Melbourne

SPEAKER -- DR. J.H.WILLIS

SUBJECT -- "FERN LIFE IN NATIONAL PARKS"

PROGRAMME - 7.30 - 8 p.m. FERN SALES

- 8 p.m. MEETING COMMENCES

- 9.30 p.m. PATHOLOGY TABLE & SPECIAL EFFORT

- 9.45 p.m. SUPPER

- 10 p.m. CLOSE

SPEAKER REPORT - GENERAL MEETING 14TH APRIL, 1988SPEAKER - Chris GoudeyTITLE - Ferns of Lord Howe Island and Norfolk Island

Three visits to Lord Howe Island and one to Norfolk Island proved just how highly Chris rates these jewels of the Pacific. His slide presentation allowed us to see their majestic beauty and view some magnificent fern specimens. The two mountains at the southern end of Lord Howe Island are continually covered in cloud, creating a humidity which assures that ferns grow in luxuriant abundance.

The climb to the plateau of Mt. Gower is quite difficult and Chris showed slides of the island at various stages of the climb. These included many magnificent tree ferns, two outstanding species were *Cyathea macarthur* and *Cyathea howeana* both growing happily in full sun. A large cluster of *Platycerium bifurcatum* were growing very luxuriantly among tumbled rocks on the side of the mountain. *Tmesipteris truncata* and *Lastreopsis nephrodiodes* were fine specimens with the latter having the appearance of sporangia growing on the upper surface of the lamina. In fact, the sporangia form on the underside and the indusium curls over the edges giving this false impression. Chris grew this fern for awhile but found it would not spore in cultivation so therefore was not at all popular.

On reaching the summit filmy ferns were abundant. *Callistopteris baueriana*, and *Hymenophyllum species multifidum* and *moorei* were covering most tree trunks and stumps etc.

Chris included some slides of magnificent palms which are endemic to the islands; *Howea belmoriana* and *forsteriana*, *Lepidorrhachis mooreana*, *Hedysepe canterburyana* and *Rhapaloskylis boweri* were the species. Another interesting feature of Lord Howe Island is the island Woodhen. Two years ago this bird was almost extinct but with a captive breeding program by the N.S.W. Government and eradication of feral cats, and protection from man the woodhen is now prospering throughout the island. Wild pigs and goats were also a problem as they were destroying all the *Marattia* ferns by undermining them and eating the roots and trunk. These are also now under control.

Chris, with his talk and slide presentation illustrated the picturesque beauty of these islands and their abundance in ferns served to show they are a fern enthusiasts paradise.

Keith Hutchinson moved a vote of thanks to Chris which was carried enthusiastically by all members.



A FERNIST WITH A MISSION.

Albert Jenkins loves to grow ferns, particularly those considered the most difficult to cultivate and he succeeds by careful study of their natural requirements and then supplying these needs.

A visitor to Alberts must always be careful not to suggest a particular fern could not be grown in Melbourne with its 40<sup>o</sup> Summers and fierce Northly winds, as most often Albert will show you one growing to perfection in his garden.

Albert was born in Eltham, New Zealand, and as a boy often visited family friends who owned a dairy farm at Inglewood, close by Mt. Egmont. The farm was surrounded by five acres of Rain forrest, filled with magnificent ferns and Albert just loved to wander amongst them. At the age of nine, he set off one day to climb Mt. Egmont, but when three quarters of the way up he met some adults who asked who he was with, when he said he was alone, he was firmly told to go straight home.

Fifty two years later in 1978, Albert returned to the farm pleased to find that the son had taken over from his father. Albert decided to try Mt. Egmont again, but at the same point heavy rain forced him down again. Two days later with sun shining, a determinded Albert reached the pinnacle of Mt. Egmont, proving one cannot keep a good man down for ever.

When Albert reached his teens, his family moved to Victoria and settled in Kinglake, potato farming. His father gave him a paddock to grow a crop for himself and after careful planning, he set his potatoes and they grew so large that The Department of Agriculture Officers came out to inspect them.



Albert in his mini rain forest.



Over the years, Albert had many jobs and whilst assisting a friend deliver briquettes and Soft drinks in West Brunswick, he decided he should go into business for himself, so he started his briquette business in Watsonia in 1952.

Although Albert worked very hard, his love of ferns gave him relaxation and enjoyment. He grew Adiantums to sell for a Missionary project but as his method of production was by division, the process was slow. Nearing retirement his aim was to learn Spore culture, so he joined The Royal Horticultural Society. Whilst attending the Bonsai Group Meeting, Albert heard Chris Goudey speaking on ferns and their culture. After the meeting, he met Chris and a strong friendship soon developed.

Now the Fern Society of Victoria was on its way. Steering Committee Meetings followed often until 11:30p.m. and finally the Inaugural Meeting took place at the Burnley Horticultural School in June 1979 with Chris elected President and Albert Senior Vice President.

During the years that followed, Alberts involvement with our Society became paramount. His ability as an interesting down-to-earth speaker with practical demonstrations became well known but as demand for his services increased, he attended every Society meeting and fulfilled fourteen Guest speaking engagements in one year.

Alberts garage was now transformed into a fern house and soon became filled with a magnificent collection of ferns, his garden also became a mini rain forrest which has kept many a visitor enthralled with its simple beauty.

Whenever our Society needed ferns for display, Albert would load up his car and trailer and then stand for hours giving of his knowledge and experience. His home-made compost once called the fabulous "Compostus Albertus Jenkinsi" is always in demand and is reputed to grow any fern to perfection.

Due to the ill health of Alberts wife, he had to resign from our Committee in 1984 but has continued to be an active Member of our Society, providing Maxicrop and allied products to Members at a discount price.





In 1987 Albert was awarded a Life Membership of the Victorian Fern Society not only for services rendered but also for his friendly, enthusiastic and unselfish commitment to the culture and enjoyment of growing ferns.

KEITH HUTCHINSON.



Albert in his converted glasshouse.





## RAIN FORESTS AND FERN GULLIES

### Carnarvon National Park, Queensland

The Carnarvon National Park is located 783 kilometres (470 miles) north west of Brisbane. It can be approached from the north through Rolleston and from the south through Roma and Injune.

At a point 117 kilometres (70 miles) north of Injune the entrance road heading west, will be reached. This entrance road, impassable for conventional vehicles in wet weather, covers 38 kms. (23 miles) to the "Lodge" and then an additional 3-1/2 kms (2 miles) of the camp and anger centre. Accommodation, meals, petrol and food supplies are all available at the Lodge.

The road terminates at the camp and all exploration taken from there must be on foot. A resident Parks Ranger will cheerfully advise you as to the many wonderful walks and places of special interest.

Walks of up to 34 kms (20 miles) have been prepared and can be attempted without fear of becoming lost. The main water course is the Carnarvon Creek, whose bed is wide, covered with water-worn rocks and whose water is shallow and crystal clear. Over countless years this creek has carved its way through sandstone to form spectacular cliffs up to 180 metres (600 feet) high. Tributaries of the Carnarvon Creek have also carved out deep, twisting ravines which provide the protection and moisture which ferns love so well. Actually there are more fern species in the gorge area than have been listed by park authorities.

Walks to many of the places of interest follow the course of the creek which has to be crossed and re-crossed manytimes. This is no hardship however because there is so much in compensation to be seen in the beauty and wonder of Nature. Walking here is really a pleasure.

Cabbage tree palms are probably the dominant vegetation which produce festoons of lovely yellow flowers in the Spring. Other wildflowers are prominent at this time too, and form very impressive displays. On protected faces of the sand stone cliffs the native *Dendrobium Kingianum* orchids are in bloom producing masses of pink and white decoration.

In all of the walks which can be taken in the Park, each one follows either the main Carnarvon Creek or tributaries which empty into it. It doesn't really matter which walk you take for there is rich reward in the pleasure of discovery in any direction, be it ferns, wildflowers, native birds and animals, palms, aboriginal rock paintings or frogs.

There are several unique and unusual fern species to be seen. In places where sand and silt have piled up against bends in the banks of creeks, look for the incredible "walking fern" (*Ampelopteris Proliferum*). From the distance this fern can easily be mistaken for the soft water fern (*Blechnum Minus*) but closer in there is a surprise. At points along the upper portion of the frond stem (rachis) small plants will be seen in various stages of development. These little plantlets eventually develop roots and then become separate plants. By this means the species "walks" and proliferates into dense masses of beautiful plants.

The magnificent silver elkhorn (*Platycterium Veitchii*) is here. It is so plentiful throughout the gorge area that you will wonder why it is described by Botanists as rare. It has the unique habit of germinating from spores and multiplying by means of "pups" entirely on the faces of huge sandstone rocks, not necessarily shaded from the sun. Its food supply comes from dust, fallen leaves, debris and bird and animal droppings. Water comes firstly from rainfall and subsequently seepage. An absolutely beautiful fern.



At several situations throughout the Park, Aboriginal rock paintings will be found. These are fascinating and full of interest. Sites which are outstanding have been named. Balloon Cave, The Art Gallery and The Cathedral. The paintings are actually stencils made by holding objects against the rock face and "spray" painting an ochre based paint blown from the mouth.

Boomerangs of two types - Warring and food gathering, hands and arms, emu feet, stone axes, clubs and shields are all described. Food gathering is represented by fishing nets and the nuts and fruits of various plants.

One of the most outstanding ferns in the world has a ravine named for it in the Carnarvon Park - Angeopteris Erecta.

A. Erecta is a largest terrestrial fern in the world. It has occurred in all major continents where its fossilized remains have been found in coal deposits which have been age tested at forty five million years. The Angeopteris Ravine is the only area in the Park where Erecta is established. It appears to be reasonably secure on Fraser Island and in north eastern Queensland.

Mature fronds reach 4.5m (15 feet) length and are almost totally supported by water. Should water supply to the plant fail the frondage collapses but will revive again if water supply is restored. The Angeopteris develops a trunk up to one metre (3'4") in diameter. Look closely at this and in a mature specimen you will surely see small bulb-like appendages. These are called auricles and they provide a means by which propagation of new plants can be undertaken.

In the Angeopteris Ravine and in other caves and gorges, other ferns of special interest include the Jungle Fern (Macrothelypteris Torresiana), the dainty maidenhair (Adiantum Capillus Veneris) and the ageless skeleton fork fern (Psilotum Nudum).

Yes, Carnarvon Gorge National Park is a remote wilderness, but an extremely interesting and beautiful place.

DOUG THOMAS

\* \* \* \* \*

I have reprinted this article on Carnarvon Gorge by Doug Thomas from May 1984 newsletter. Not only is it excellent reading but may create enough interest for the possibility of an excursion there in 1989. I have photocopied a Brochure on the accommodation at Carnarvon Gorge Basis Lodge.

Editor



## ALL INCLUSIVE TARIFF COVERS

### Meals:

Early morning tea, breakfast, Devonshire morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea, dinner and supper each day, as well as special Fondue and Barbecue evenings. Wholesome packed lunches are prepared for guests wishing to stay out all day. Our dining room is fully licensed.

### Activities: Holiday Season

There are early morning bush breakfasts, guided walks, abseiling and rugged climbs, wildlife rambles and spotlighting at nights. Hiking and climbing gear is available at no additional cost as is guides' time, abseiling instruction and occasional picnic bus trips. (Horse riding can be arranged, but at extra cost).

### Activities: Tourist Season (Summer Savers)

While no guided activities are included in the tariff Lodge staff will do all they can to assist you. Free transport between the Lodge and the Park Visitors' Centre is provided and the staff will happily provide you with a packed lunch and rucksack for day outings and information and advice on where to go, what to see.

### Entertainment: Year Round

You are always welcome to use our games equipment and to borrow books from our Library, free of charge. In holiday season there are film and slide evenings as well as games, party and bush dance nights. Bush yarn and campfire sing-a-longs are held as weather permits.

All Safari and Ensuite Safaris are located around the well maintained grounds amongst the eucalypts and macramia palms where wallabies and friendly wildlife play.

We strongly recommend that you bring your camera for those once-in-a-lifetime shots that keep your holiday alive forever.

# Australia

Carnarvon Gorge Oasis Lodge,  
via Rolleston, Qld., 4702.  
Ph: (079) 84 4503

## THE SPIRIT OF CARNARVON . . . . .

Carnarvon Gorge Lodge was founded in 1968 by John Morrison, painter, sculptor and dentist. Established as a staging point for guests wishing to explore the 'Gorgeous' Carnarvon area with its wealth of fauna, flora and aboriginal artifacts. Over the years the Lodge has hosted thousands of visitors, both local and from overseas and has endeavoured to develop along lines that create minimum impact on the environment or the guests who stay there.

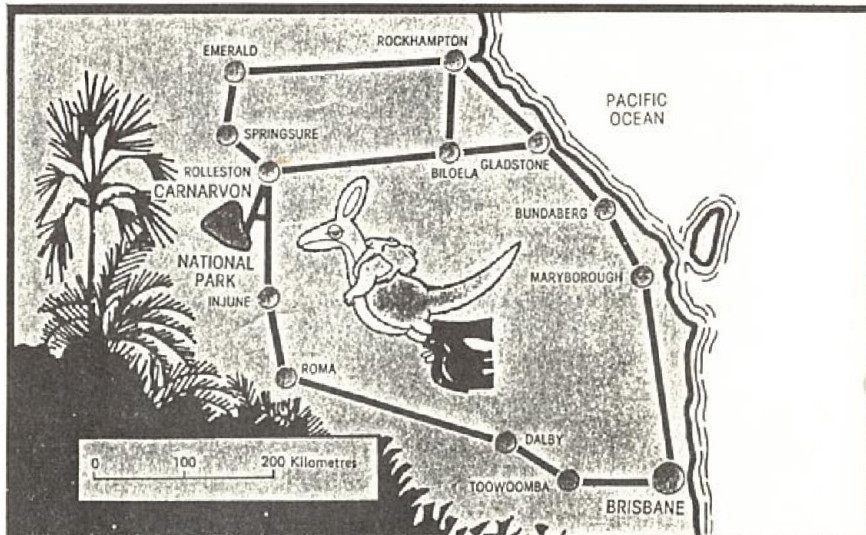
"Let the ground open up and swallow you!" Carnarvon Gorge is no ordinary collection of mystical canyons clothed in lush sub-tropical vegetation. It's possessed by a timeless spirit. A special feeling that pervades the ancient sandstone cliff and chasms in this remarkable place of nature. That draws people from all over the world to the towering stone cathedrals located in the centre of Queensland's outback. Its elfin grottos. Its ancient aboriginal wall paintings. Its sandy beaches cooled by spring fed streams and thousand year old ferns.

This is the spirit of the Carnarvon Gorge Oasis Lodge. A spirit that possesses you on organised walks to magical places. Rock scrambles to secret chasms. Horseriding in the wonderful wilderness. Visiting the resident platypus in their natural habitat . . .

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### ACCOMMODATION:

- 1. Cabins** are located close to the Main Lodge building and to the bathroom and toilet facilities, and offer comfortable budget accommodation. All cabins are carpeted and feature hand-made timber furniture and leather doonas.
- 2. Safari Tents** offer similar accommodation to the cabins but feature canvas walls, screened window openings, berber wall-to-wall carpets, tea and coffee making facilities and covered verandah with outdoor chairs.
- 3. Ensuite Safaris** are larger, have full private shower and toilet facilities, berber carpets wall-to-wall, tea and coffee making facilities and are located so as to provide the ultimate in privacy and outdoor experiences.



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# Maxicrop

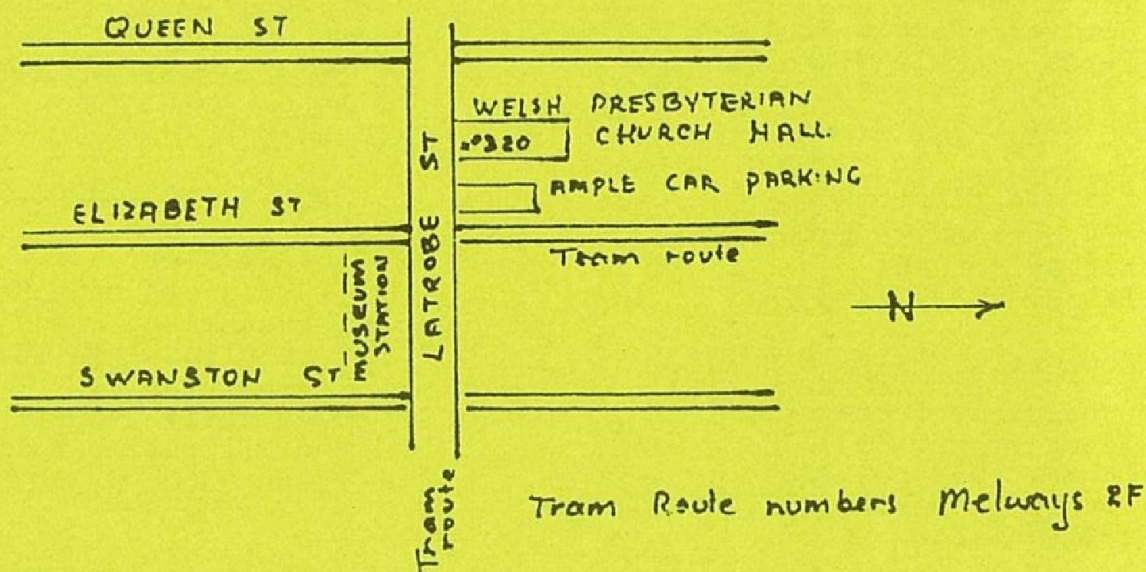
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DIARY DATES.

VENUE - WELSH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH HALL - 320 LATROBE ST. MELBOURNE

		SEPTEMBER	8
MAY	12	OCTOBER	13
JUNE	9	NOVEMBER	10
JULY	14	DECEMBER	8
AUGUST	11		

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

BUYERS' GUIDE TO FERN NURSERIES.

VICTORIA.

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VICTORIA.

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