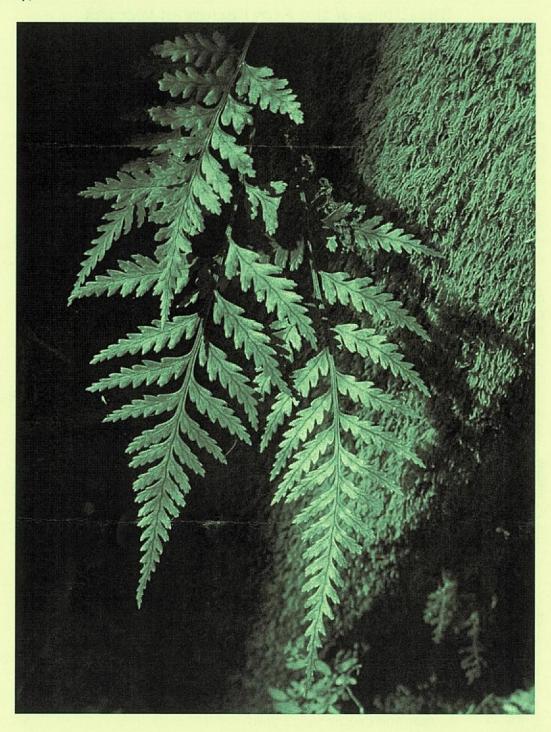
FERN SOCIETY OF VICTORIA

Newsletter

Volume 31, Number 3 May/June 2009



Fern Society of Victoria Inc.

ABN 85 086 216 704

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Objectives of the Fern Society of Victoria

To bring together persons interested in ferns and allied plants

To promote the gathering and dissemination of information about ferns

To stimulate public interest in ferns

To promote the conservation of ferns and their habitats

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Subscriptions

Single \$17.00 Pensioner/student \$14.00 Family \$19.00 Pensioner family \$16.00 Overseas \$25.00

(overseas subscription payments by international bank cheque in \$Aus, by airmail please)

Subscriptions fall due on 1 July each year

Meeting venues

The Kevin Heinze Garden Centre, 39 Wetherby Road, Doncaster [Melway 47 H1] Other meetings as advertised in this Newsletter

Opinions expressed in this Newsletter are the personal views of the authors and are not necessarily endorsed by the Society, nor does mention of a product constitute its endorsement.

Timetable for evening general meetings

7:30 Pre-meeting activities – sale of ferns, spore, books, merchandise

and special effort tickets. Also library loans and lots of conversation.

8:00 General meeting

8:15 Workshops and demonstrations

9:15 Fern identification and pathology, special effort draw

9:45 Supper and another good yarn

10:00 Close

Next Meeting

Thursday 21 May 2009 Forum on Polypodiaceae

Polypodiaceae is a large family of predominantly epiphytic ferns, including at least 60 genera and over 1,000 species. As this will be a group discussion, members are urged to bring in ferns to form the basis for that discussion. Perhaps you have a fern from this family that is not growing so well, or that you are not sure of the identification. Or perhaps just a fern you would like to know more about.

Fern competition - Polypodiaceae

Australian Polypodiaceae genera:

Belvisia Colysis Crypsinus Dictymia Drynaria Goniophlebium Lemmaphylum Microsorum Lecanopteris Platycerium

Additional non-Australian Polypodiaceae genera include:

Aglaomorpha Niphidium Phlebodium Polypodium Pseudodrynaria Schellolepis



Microsorum diversifolium (Kangaroo Fern) photo: Robin Wilson

See page 38 for the calendar of events for the remainder of 2009

Fern Society of Victoria Newsletter Volume 31 no 3, page 35

President's Note

At our March Meeting we had a first-hand account from Mary and Reg Kenealy of their experience of the Marysville fire, and the traumas of survivors coming to terms with relocation and the loss of family, friends and neighbours along with material items and items treasured for their personal history. It was very nice to have Mary and Reg with us at the meeting and they provided a very informative and moving narrative. Mary and Reg are made of stern stuff, as the saying goes.

The last couple of weeks have at last brought some weather conditions which have helped to put the garden back on the path to recovery (at least at our place). We hope other members have had a similar experience. We had our garden open again under the Open Garden Scheme on 18 and 19 April and most of it was looking pretty nice (aside from a small number of dead shrubs and young trees which we hadn't got to remove yet). Many of our visitors were surprised that the effects of the rough summer were not very obvious, which gave us a nice feeling after the hard work we'd had to put in over the past few weeks. Many of them spent quite a time in the Fernery, and their interest in doing so was very nice to observe.

Gay & I presented talks on ferns to two horticultural societies since early March, and found their members very interested in the subject. Another invitation has already been foreshadowed to talk to a sub-group of one of the

societies, and members from the other society have since visited our garden. So there's definitely interest in ferns out there. One point that I made in these talks is how many species of ferns will be showing themselves off amongst the very first plants to recover from the fires, which they found very interesting, particularly as some of their members had suffered severe damage to their own gardens. Of course, we covered what they could do to encourage their own gardens, and their ferns, to revive from the effects of the severe summer weather regardless of whether they'd been affected by fires.

The visiting members of the British Pteridological Society have now completed the Victorian part of their Australian tour, and gone on to the Blue Mountains and further north. Unfortunately, due to our need to complete the preparations and deal with the bureaucratic aspects of our garden opening we personally didn't get the opportunity to meet up with them whilst they were in Victoria, but our Secretary Barry White was looking after them, and I'm sure that they will have been pleased with his efforts. Thanks to Chris and Lorraine Goudey, and Les and Rosemary Vulcz for hosting visits to their properties. I haven't heard whether they visited Eddie and Robyn Sabljak at Kinglake as originally planned, but our thanks should go to them in any case for their willingness to have the group visit them as well.

Barry White had to withdraw from attending the Members' Meeting in March at short notice, and as a result we did not have the use of the digital projector. I've included an article in this issue about the talk I gave on Ferns and Wildflowers of Western Australia. The audience was very understanding of the absence of pictures to help them follow what I was talking about.

Hopefully we can run through the pics at another meeting before too long. As mentioned in a brief article published in FSV Newsletter in

early 2007, we were fortunate to be able to see the fern collection (and the garden) of John Banasiewicz, President of the WA Fern Society, at Jandakot in the south of Perth whilst we were in WA. (Unfortunately we missed the opportunity of meeting John in person). We shared some photos of his fine collection with that article, but only in black and white. So it will also provide the opportunity to have a proper look at his very fine fern collection.

Barry Stagoll

Editor's note

On behalf of the Committee and, I am sure, all members, I would like to thank our outgoing Editor, Brenda Girdlestone, for her sterling work editing and producing this Newsletter. Brenda asked to have a rest and I, perhaps foolishly, offered to have a go at it. Having produced this issue I now have a better understanding of how much work Brenda put in and why she might want (and deserve) to be relieved.

I do not intend to write an "Editor's Note" for every issue, but a few comments are called for at least this time, to explain the change of format. Readers will already have noticed some cosmetic changes in this issue. Many of the changes

were forced since I do not have the software that Brenda used and I could not import or replicate all of the previous page layout and fonts, especially those on the cover.

One additional change that I did want to try is the two-column layout you are now reading, which makes for swifter reading (at least so I am told). However it may not be to everyone's liking. Please send any comments, either positive or negative, and I will confer with the Committee and try and respond to the consensus view.

Please also consider making a contribution yourself to a future Newsletter.

Robin Wilson

Calendar of events 2009

Next Meeting: Thursday 21 May 2009

Forum on Polypodiaceae see page 35 for details

Thursday 18 June 2009

Terry Turney
Ferns with Simple Fronds
Fern competition - Fern with Simple Frond

Thursday 16 July 2009

Barry Stagoll Ferns of Yunnan, China Information, observations and travel notes from Barry and Gay's recent journey through China.

Thursday 20 August 2009

speaker and topic to be advised

Sunday 27 September 2009

Excursion to Colin Cleak's home in Nagambie

Note the change of date (previously advertised as an October event).

Members intending to participate should contact a member of the Committee by Thursday 24 September and advise of their intention. Aim to arrive at the Cleak's home by around 11.30 am on 27 September, and please bring along a salad and drinks to accompany a barbecue lunch which Colin and Noelle intend to host. They will also provide coffee and tea. More detail, including map directions to find the Cleak's home, will appear in the next Newsletter.

Thursday 15 October 2009

speaker and topic to be advised The Annual General Meeting will be held on this night

Thursday 19 November 2009

speaker and topic to be advised

Sunday 6 December 2009

Christmas lunch and breakup

Ferns (& wildflowers) of Western Australia

Barry Stagoll

As presented at the March 2009 meeting of the FSV

Western Australia is by far the largest Australian State, and accounts for around one-third of mainland Australia. It's larger in area than all but a very few independent countries in the world.

Ferns are comparatively rare there by comparison with the relative abundance of species on Australia's east coast from Cape York all the way to Tasmania. Given that the environment of a large proportion of Western Australia is inhospitable (or relatively so) for ferns - in common with much of the inland in the rest of the continent - this is unsurprising. As Jones & Clemesha put in it in their definitive treatment of the ferns of Australia Australian Ferns and Fern Allies: "The meagre fern flora of Western Australia is a mere reflection of the tropical and southern groups of the eastern States." They described around 416 species of ferns and fern allies endemic to Australia. Of these 48 (42 being ferns) were known for WA. None is endemic exclusively to that State. Even in the very small portion of WA known as the "South-West", which is home to a remarkably large and diverse range of plant species (many of them unique to that region), there are extremely few endemic fern species and fern allies. The list numbers 24 (including 18 ferns).

Gay & I travelled to the South-West in spring 2006 to make our own exploration and to see and photograph the amazing array of native plants in their natural environment. Our interest is mostly in the detail of individual plant species, not in photographing the massed fields of wildflowers that the tour operators take groups to see, so we made a "self-guided" tour which included visits to some quite isolated spots. We were delighted with the results. By covering a large part of the triangle from the environs of Perth to the southeast as far as the Stirling Ranges and the Albany district on the southern coast, and Cape Leeuwin in the far southwest, we found a great many individual species in just two weeks. Moreover by visiting a range of micro-environments at varying altitudes we saw many more in bloom than we could have expected otherwise. As to the different flowering plants to be found, there is a truly amazing diversity in the unique banksias, dryandras, kangaroo paws and cats paws, pea-flowered species of several genera, and small terrestrial orchids.



Pimelea sp., Stirling Ranges

There are also many fine forest trees unique to the region, including of course the magnificent Jarrah.

(continued next page)

Fern Society of Victoria Newsletter Volume 31 no 3, page 39



Banksia baueri

The search for ferns was mostly incidental, but we were fortunate to encounter a number of the ferns known to occur there.

There are no tree ferns endemic to Western Australia. Of the 11 Australian species, only Cyathea cooperi is there, but it is a naturalised escape (in the locality of Bedfordale). It's our observation that the ubiquitous tall and magnificent grass trees (Kingia australis) in many locations in the South-West are a very satisfactory landscape substitute for the tree ferns of our eastern forests.

Using Jones & Clemesha's categorisation of Fern Allies/Fern Oddities (plants not readily recognised as ferns because they have unusual ways of propagating offspring) and "Other" Ferns in Australian Ferns and Fern Allies the

count for the South-West is 6:6:12 = total 24.



Kingiae "grasstrees" near Perth

The list compiled by Jones & Clemesha is:

Fern Allies

Isoetes drummondii
Isoetes humilior
Hyperzia serpentinium (formerly
Lycopodium) – Bog clubmoss
Phylloglossum drummondii – Pigmy
clubmoss (rare)
Selaginella gracillima – Tiny
selaginella
Selaginella uliginosa – Swamp
selaginella

Fern Oddities

Azolla filiculoides – duckweed
Azolla pinnata – duckweed
Marsilea drummondii – Common
nardoo
Marsilea hirsuta – nardoo (very
similar, but smaller)
Ophioglossum lusitanium ssp.
coriaceum – terrestrial, with 1-3cm
fleshy-veined, wide, sterile fronds;
fertile pinnae very narrow up to
15cm long.

Other Species

Adiantum aethiopicum – Common maidenhair

Adiantum capillus-veneris
Anogramma leptophylla – Annual
Fern. Like Cheilanthes. Can
reproduce from spore, perennial
prothallus, or tuber-like structures
bearing archegonia, to reproduce
after dry summers.

Asplenium flabellifolium – Necklace Fern

Asplenium aethiopicum Ceratopteris thalictroides – Floating water fern

Cheilanthes distans – Bristly cloak fern (drought-resistant) Cheilanthes tenuifolia – Rock fern

Cheilanthes tenuifolia – Rock ferr (drought-resistant)

Cheilanthes vellea – Woolly cloak fern (drought-resistant) Gleichenia microphylla – Scrambling coral fern

Lindsaea linearis – Screw fern Paraceterach reynoldsii – Another drought-resistant "resurrection fern"

Pleurosorus rutifolius – Blanket fern (drought-resistant) Pteridium esculentum – Common bracken

Pteris vittata - Chinese brake



Cheilanthes distans

It's interesting to note how many of the species represented are drought-resistant. Even though much of the South-West (particularly nearer the coast, and the elevated areas of the ranges), are relatively well-watered compared to the dry inland of the State, the rainfall is not experienced year-round. Also many of the soils are sandy, or other very free-draining types, and the upper levels of such soils dry out readily between rainy periods.

Although we encountered a limited number of ferns, typically in small occurrences, of course it was still a pleasure to do so. Particularly nice occurrences of Adiantum capillusveneris, Asplenium aethiopicum, Lindsaea linearis, Cheilanthes austrotenuifolia and C. distans were found in numbers of locations.



Lindsaea linearis

For the record, the other ferns and allied plants of northern districts of WA (none of which I recall noticing during plant hunting hours on business visits in the north in past years) are essentially aquatic, tropical, or drought-resistant species.

These comprise 3 "fern oddities", 15 ferns found only in the North-West, and another 6 which inhabit moister, more "tropical" territory in the far North. These are:

Fern Oddities

Helminthostachys zeylanica – Flowering fern. (Ophioglossaceae family)

Lygodium microphyllum – Climbing maidenhair or Snake fern (At a glance its general appearance somewhat like the native flowering Clematis).

Schizaea dichotoma – Branched comb fern. Narrow strap fronds under 45cm dichotomosly divided. Conspicuous in coastal areas.

(continued next page)

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Other Species

Acrostichum speciosum –
Mangrove fern. Coarse and tough.
The rhizomes are used as bush
food.

Adiantum phillippense – A pantropical species.

Ampelopteris prolifera – In the NW. Like a Cyclosorus with fine pinnae, was formerly classified as Cyclosorus.

Blechnum orientale – Strap water fern. A pan-tropical species. Ceratopteris cornuta – Floating water fern. In the NW. Produces young plants from bulbils. Cheilanthes hirsuta – In the Kimberleys

Cheilanthes pumilio – In the Kimberleys

Cheilanthes sciadoides – In the Kimberleys

Cyclosorus interrruptus – In the NW

Dicranopteris linearis – In the NW; pan-tropical. Similar to Gleichenia and closely related.

Drynaria quercifolia – In the NW Lindsaea ensifolia ssp. ensifolia – In the NW in dryish areas. Fronds up to 8cm long.

Microsorum aff. scolopendria – In the NW

Nephrolepis cordifolia – In the NW; pan-tropical.

Nephrolepis obliterata – In the NW Platyzoma microphyllum – Braid fern. In the NW, swampy areas, but drought-resistant.

Stenochlaena palustris
(Blechnaceae) – Climbing Swamp fern – tropical.

We're not sure how much effort and local knowledge may be required to find more of the fern species of the South-West (we logged only 5 of them). But we were happy to have had the inspiration to learn more about them.



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From the Show Bench

(competition report from the March 2009 meeting of the FSV)

The category for March was *Pteris* and the ferns in display were:

Pteris dentata - Toothed Brake

This was a large fern growing in coir peat and doing very well. This is a hardy fern coming from Africa and is an excellent clumping fern for a moist sheltered garden position.

Pteris hendersonii

This is a large fern which comes from Asia

Pteris tremula - Tender Brake

This is a hardy fern for a wide range of conditions. It is found in all eastern States of Australia. This specimen was also growing in coir.



Pteris umbrosa in natural habitat (photo: Barry Stagoll)

Pteris umbrosa - Jungle Brake

There were several of these all being the southern form which has wider pinnules than the northern form. This is a hardy fern which is excellent for the garden as it can cope with low light conditions.

Pteris multifida – Spider Brake A fern from Asia

Pteris cretica cv. albo-lineata Pteris cretica cv. Rivertoniata Pteris cretica cv. Wilsonii Pteris cretica cv. Wimsettii

These ferns are all cultivars from *P. cretica* which is widespread throughout the tropics and subtropics. They are all hardy but do best in a sheltered area like a fernery. All are very suitable to grow in plastic baskets.

Pteris semipinnata

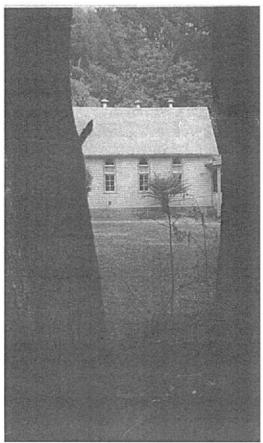
An unusual fern from SE Asia. it requires a protected situation in our area.



Pteris tremula at Mount Worth (photo: Barry White)

He saved a church

(by Kim Cain, originally published in Crosslight, the newspaper of the Uniting Church in Australia, no. 186 March 2009)



Kinglake West Uniting Church was saved from the flames

A trip to Kinglake West is a trip to a tragic town, a tiny town tortured by fire. Seven people lost their lives. Others lost their homes, their hopes and their dreams. Evident everywhere is the amazing randomness of bushfire - spots of untouched green amid streets of devastation. One patch of green runs up against the Kinglake West Uniting Church. It is the only church left in the area. Tall gums, pine trees and ferns shelter it. A lawn cum car park extends from

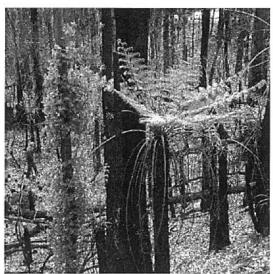
one side. It too is green. But the other side of the church is scarred and black. Here the fire came within metres of the fragile little weatherboard building - its gutters still cloqued with dried leaves. It wasn't divine intervention that saved this tiny spiritual home. The desperation of neighbour Eddie Sabljak kept the flames at bay. Mr Sabljak runs the adjacent Fern Acres Nursery. He fought for nine hours to stop the fire getting to the church. "I knew if that church went, my property would be next," he told Crosslight. "I didn't care if it was a church or a mosque. I just knew that if it went, my place would go too." A long narrow stand of eucalypts, pines and scrub runs down behind the church, right up to his place. "One tree kept spitting and sparking all night," Mr Sabljak said. "An old tyre kept flaming and other fallen timber kept the fire going." Unhelpfully, someone had stacked heaps of firewood in the undergrowth, saving it for winter. "That just added to the ferocity," he said. Mr Sabljak said it was a pitched battle, using all he had at hand - everything from shovels to throw dirt on embers, to hoses hooked up to his water supply to douse flames in trees ten metres above his head. The battle continued through the day and night. He wasn't on top of it until about 4 am. His wife delivered fresh supplies of drinking water and food and helped where she could. "We all owe Eddie a lot," said a Kinglake West parishioner. "He worked so hard to save our place of worship. If it wasn't for him we wouldn't be here [to worship] today".

Eddie says he is not a hero. The church folk understand he was protecting his own home. But they are thankful that with the little church saved one place of worship remains. Now they mourn the town's greater losses - people, hopes and dreams.

Rev. Kim Cain, Communications Director, Uniting Church in Australia



Eddie Sabljak sits among the ashes at Kinglake West



Cyathea australis and eucalupt regrowth at Kinglake 2 months after the fires (photo: Barry White)

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Bracken, Cyathea australis and eucalupt regrowth at Kinglake 2 months after the fires (photo: Barry White)

Spore List

Fern spore is free to members of the Fern Society of Victoria who donate spore. Otherwise the cost is members 20 cents per sample, non-members 50 cents, plus \$1.00 to cover postage and handling. Available at meetings or by mail from Barry White, 34 Noble Way, Sunbury, Vic. 3429 Australia, Ph. (03) 9740 2724. There is no charge for spore for overseas members, however to cover postage two International Reply Coupons would be appreciated; or alternatively spore may be exchanged. International Reply Coupons can be purchased at most Post Offices. There is a limit of 20 packets per order. As some spores are in short supply please include alternatives. For updates see http://home.vicnet.net.au/~fernsvic/Sporlist.html

Adiantum formosum 3/08 Adiantum pedatum 2/07 Aglaomorpha corons 5/08 Amphineuron opulentum 4/08 Anemia phyllitides 6/06 Anemia tomentosa 8/08 Arachniodes aristata 11/06 Asplenium aethiopicum 12/07 Asplenium australasicum 1/08 Asplenium nidus 5/08 Asplenium nidus cv.5/08 Athyrium filix-femina 07/06

Athyrium filix-femina (red stipe) 12/08

Athyrium niponicum 'Pictum' 2/08

Blechnum ambiguum 1/08 Blechnum braziliense 3/08 Blechnum chambersii 9/07 Blechnum fluviatile 9/07 Blechnum spicant 7/08 Cheilanthes alabamensis /06 Cheilanthes kuhnii 1/06 Chingia australis 12/08 Christella dentata 3/06

Christella subpubescens12/08

Cibotium schiedei 1/07 Cyathea australis 4/08 Cyathea baileyana 12/08 Cyathea brownii /07 Cyathea cooperi 10/08

Cyathea cooperi (blue stipe) 1/07 Cyathea cooperi 'Brentwood' 3/08

Cyathea cunninghamii /07 Cyathea felina 10/08 Cyathea gleichenioides 2/07 Cyathea incisoserrata /07 Cyathea intermedia 2/07 Cyathea lunulata /07 Cyathea medullaris 11/08 Cyrtomium caryotideum 5/06

Cyrtomium falcatum 'Butterfieldii' 3/08

Dicksonia antarctica 8/08 Dicksonia fibrosa 10/07 Diplazium australe 4/08 Diplazium dilatatum 8/06 Doodia australe 12/08

Dryopteris affinis 'Cristata' /08

Dryopteris crassirhizoma 3/06 Dryopteris filix-mas 11/06 Dryopteris sieboldii 12/06 Dryopteris wallichiana 3/08 Gymnocarpium oyamense 8/08 Hypolepis rugosula 2/07 Lastreopsis acuminata 12/08 Lastreopsis decomposita 12/06 Lastreopsis glabella 4/07 Lastreopsis hispida 11/06 Lastreopsis marginans 1/07 Nephrolepis exaltata 7/08 Nepholepis falcata 3/08

Ophioglossum pendulum 7/08 Oreopteris limbosperma 08/06

Pellaea sagittata 3/07 Pellaea viridis 1/08

Platycerium bifurcatum 'Hula Hands' 10/07

Platycerium bifurcatum 'Venosum' (Mt.Lewis) 10/07

Platycerium hillii 12/06 Platycerium superbum 4/08 Platycerium veitchii 10/07 Pleisioneuron tuberculatus 12/08 Pneumatopteris sogerensis 12/08 Pneumatopteris costata 12/08 Polypodium formosum 10/07 Polystichum formosum 3/08 Polystichum proliferum 11/08 Polystichum retroso-paleacum /08

Polystichum setiferum 'Congestum' 12/07

Polystichum vestitum 2/07 Polystichum xiphophyllum 3/08 Pronephrium asperum 2/07

Polystichum setiferum 07/06

Pteris biaurita 3/08 Pteris dentata 1/09 Pteris hendersonii /06 Pteris sp. (Nepal) 3/07 Pteris umbrosa /08

Pyrrosia lingua 'Variegata' 5/06

Revwattsii fragile 12/08

Rumohra adiantiformis (Cape form) 2/08 Sphaerostephanos heterocarpus 7/08

Stenochlaerna palustris 2/07 Thelypteris navarrensis 1/07

Thank you to the following spore donors: Marco Calvimonte, Brenda Girdlestone, Don Fuller, Arlen Hill, Lorraine Deppeler, Warren Simpson Nada Sankowsky, Sheila Tiffin, Ton de Waard, Amaury Graulich, Werner Neumeuller, Frank Hardung, Kylie Stocks, Neville Crawford, Richard Brinckmann, Wendy Johnston, Niwat Claire Schackel and Crosby Chase.

Fern Society of Victoria Newsletter Volume 31 no 3, page 47



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