

A. S. G. A. P. Fern Study Group

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A. S. G. A. P.

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From the Editor

Dan Johnston

The visit of members of the British Pteridological Society will provide a focus for numerous activities of the group during this month. In fact, its been wonderful weather up here in Queensland for plants in general and ferns in particular, so the ferns should be at their best. Hopefully it will be dry enough to comfortably get out and see them.

I expect to be producing the next newsletter in early July, so I'd appreciate receiving articles for it by the end of June. (I expect to be away for about 2 months from mid-July.)

Program for British Pteridological Society Visit

Condensed by Dan Johnston from itinerary supplied by Jennifer Ide and Barry White

The program below is somewhat tentative. Local members are welcome to join the BPS members on activities, at least in the Sydney and South-east Queensland sections. Contact the organisers to confirm details. Barry White is coordinating the overall program. Peter Hind is organising the Sydney activities, Peter Bostock the South-east Queensland activities, and Robert Jago and Nada Sankowsky the Cairns region activities.

Tuesday, 14th April. Travel to Lara to visit **Chris Goudey's nursery**. Travel further on the Great Ocean Road, one of Australia's most scenic drives. Lunch at the town of Lorne. Visit **Grey River Reserve, Beauchamp Reserve and Turton's Tract** in the Otway National Park.

Wednesday, 15th April. Visit **Beauty Spot, Mait's Rest, Melba Gully State Park** – all still in the Otway Ranges. Lunch today will be at Laver's Hill. Visit **Les and Rosemary Vulcz's nursery**.

Thursday, 16th April. Visit **Eddie and Robyn Sabljack's nursery** in Kinglake. Visit **Wirrawilla Reserve** in Kinglake. Lunch at **Healesville** – it is famous for its Wildlife Park and Zoo, showcasing more than 200 species of Australian Wildlife. The park has played a major part in the rescue and rehabilitation of some of the many wild animals trapped in the recent horrific bushfires that affected this area of Australia. In the afternoon, visit **Badger Weir Reserve**.

Friday, 17th April. Fly to Sydney. 14.00 hrs: Visit **Sydney Botanic Gardens and Herbarium**.

Saturday, 18th April. Morning: Visit **Peter Hind's garden** . Afternoon: Visit **Fairy Grotto and Grose Valley at Pierces Pass** – west of Mt Banks.

Sunday, 19th April. Visit **Wentworth Falls** - Spectacular waterfalls and the home of a rare dwarf conifer *Microstrobos fitzgeraldii*. The plants are fairly inaccessible. Binoculars would be useful. Visit **Adelina Falls** at Lawson, Lower Blue Mountains.

Monday, 20th April. Visit **Mt Wilson** – ferny heaven. Cool climate rainforest on basaltic soil at over 1000 m (3000 ft) altitude. A. **Waterfall loop walk**. B. **The Cathedral of ferns**. Afternoon: Visit **Blackheath** and **Govett's Leap Falls**.

Tuesday, 21st April. Drive to Armidale.

Wednesday, 22nd April. Itinerary not available.

Thursday, 23rd April. Itinerary not available.

Friday, 24th April. Drive to Brisbane. Ferning along the way: Visit **Bald Rock National Park**. Visit either **Girraween National Park**, west of Bald Rock National park just on the Qld side of the border or **Main Range National Park** at **Cunningham's Gap**.

Saturday, 25th April (Anzac Day). Morning: Visit to **Rod Pattison's home**, in Brisbane. Afternoon: Visit to **Claire Shackel's residence**.

Sunday, 26th April. Travel to the **Springbrook Plateau** – meeting at **Tallanbana Picnic Area** for a walk along the **Twin Falls circuit** – *either* a full loop of four or so kms (and at least four hours) *or* a return trip with a slightly lesser degree of difficulty.

Monday, 27th April. Visit either **Mt Glorious** and other parts of **Brisbane Forest Park** just west of Brisbane OR the **Conodales** (National Park and Forestry areas) near **Kenilworth**.

Tuesday, 28th April. Fly to Cairns. Afternoon: Visit **Nada and Gary Sankowsky garden** at **Tolga**.

Wednesday, 29th April. Morning: Drive to **Mt Edith, Tinaroo Range**. Afternoon: Visit to **Mt Baldry**.

Thursday, 30th April. Visit **Mt Lewis**.

Program for the Sydney Region

Peter Hind

April – Those who wish may join the visiting British Pteridological Society outings, whilst they are in Sydney. Their Sydney, Blue Mountains Itinerary is:-

Saturday, 18th April, Home of Peter & Margret Hind, for morning tea and looking at cultivated mostly Australian ferns. After lunch drive to Pierces Pass on Bells Line Road to see *Leptopteris fraseri* and other ferns.

Sunday, 19th April, Wentworth Falls in a.m. After lunch, Adelina, and other waterfalls at Lawson. *Blechnum gregsonii* is abundant here.

Monday, 20th April, Mt Wilson: Waterfall walk and Cathedral of Ferns in a.m. After lunch, Govett's Leap at Blackheath.

Bring your own packed lunch & hot water, tea, coffee etc. BPS members will be buying packed lunches to eat at picnic areas.

Above itinerary is subject to change phone Peter Hind on 96258705 to check.

Saturday, 16th May, Meet from about 11a.m. at the home of Ron and Paula Wilkins.
Study to be decided.

Saturday 20th June, Meet at 9.45 am at the corner of Singles Ridge Road and Hawkesbury Road at Winmallee. We will be given a guided tour by David Sonters of "Sonters" Wholesale Fern Nursery. Bring a packed lunch as in the pm we plan to do a short walk nearby, probably Sassafras Gully near Springwood.

Saturday 18th July, Meet from about 11a.m. at Dots place, We will be studying *Asplenium* species in Australia.

All outings are subject to weather conditions being favourable.

Peter Hind 96258705

Program for South-east Queensland Region

Dan Johnston

Saturday 25th, Sunday 26th, and Monday 27th April, 2009 See the BPS Program above. On Saturday, meet at Rod's at 9:00am. On Sunday, meet at Tallanbana Picnic Area, Springbrook at 9:30am.

Sunday, 3rd May, 2009. Meeting at 9:30am at Claire Shackel's home,
Subject: propagation.

Sunday, 7th June, 2009. Excursion to Jolly's Lookout area in Brisbane Forest Park. Meet at the car park at the turnoff of the Jolly's Lookout road from Mt Nebo Rd at 9:30am.

Sydney Region Meeting Reports

Report of the October meeting at West Ryde

Dot Camp

The group has been asked to recommend fern sites in the Sydney & Blue Mountains area for the proposed visit by members of the British Pteridological Society in April 2009.

Peter will contact the group and pass on our suggestions.

We then discussed our future program followed by a brief study of *Pteris* ferns.

Peter showed us specimens of the attractive Lord Howe Island *Pteris microptera*, *Pteris tremula* which does not mind a bit of sun, *Pteris vittata* prefers some lime in the soil mix and *Pteris pacifica* from Queensland. *Pteris* growing in the bush around Sydney are *Pteris comans*, *P. tremula*, *P. umbrosa* and *P. vittata*.

Report of Sydney Group Visit to Robertson, March 2009

Margaret Olde

On 21st March, 5 members met at Robertson in the Southern Highlands of NSW. Our first stop was at Robertson Nature Reserve – a small remnant of the historic Yarrowa Brush which was a combination of dense impenetrable warm and cool temperate rainforests which once covered 2500 hectares of the eastern part of the Highlands. We were greeted by the impressive sight of a massive pine tree covered in *Pyrrosia rupestris*. *Pellaea falcata*, *Lastreopsis microsora* and *L. acuminata* were seen, while *Arthropteris tenella* was in abundance, beautifully displayed climbing both large and slender trunks of trees, as well as covering fallen trees. Another beautiful fern growing in profusion was *Phymatosorus scandens* (syn. *Microsorium scandens* ed.). *Phymatosorus pustulatum* (syn. *Microsorium pustulatum* ed.) was sighted twice on trees. The tiny *Asplenium flabellifolium* spread in matted clumps, surrounded by *Dicksonia antarctica*, *Cyathea australis* and some *Diplazium australe*.

We then drove 8 kilometres south to Belmore Falls where, in a 2 stage drop of 100 m, the first waterfall plunges off a sandstone platform into a deep pool and the second into the rainforest gullies of the Moreton National Park. At the causeway area grew lush specimens of *Todea Barbara*, *Blechnum nudum*, *B. wattsi* and *B. minus*, *Hymenophyllum cupressiforme*, *Gleichenia* sp., *Sticherus flabellatus* and *S. lobatus* as well as small amounts of *Grammitis billardierei* and *Calochlaena dubia*.

Across the causeway was a damp cliff face hosting *Histiopteris incisa* and most of the above ferns, with *Diplazium australe* and *Cyathea australis* further up the roadway.

South-east Queensland Reports

Christmas Meeting

Claire Shackel

Thirteen members of the Queensland branch of the fern study group meet at Rod Pattison's home in [redacted] for the Christmas break up. The main business of the day was to organize the program for the next six months. The possibility of a week's trip to Rockhampton instead of the usual May long weekend away was discussed.

We were all saddened by the recent death of Irene Cullen, who for many years was the organizer of the Brisbane group. It was decided to make a donation to the Cancer Foundation as requested by the family instead of flowers.*

At the conclusion of the meeting a fern swap was held and members had contributed some interesting ferns. Everyone went home with at least two new ferns. The party was taken on a tour of Rod's rainforest garden containing a very large collection of both native and exotic ferns. Rod specializes in variegated and frilly specimens. There were few variegated ferns but an array of crested and unusually divided ferns. *Doodia* species were among the ferns showing great diversity in frond form. Rod also has an extensive collection of varieties/frond variations of *Drynaria rigidula* that he has collected himself.

* This was moved by Ray Baxter and seconded by Lorna Murray and passed by the meeting.

February 2009 Meeting at Bellbowrie

Claire Shackel

For the first meeting of the year, the group met at our leader's home at Bellbowrie. The subject for discussion was *Doodia* – Peter's favorite. A number of specimens were displayed and Peter discussed the possible relationship between some of our problem *Doodia* species and the recently described *D. hindsii*. The presence or absence of tubercles on the stipe was used in the initial separation of species. There was a discussion on the *D. australis/media* complex and one of the specimens was tabled.

The *D. caudata* complex was also visited. The local type is rarely stoloniferous but the form from the Carnarvon area forms lovely mats. The diminutive form from the Tweed/Currumbin valleys is also stoloniferous and forms dense clusters.

Springbrook Outing on 1st March, 2009

Claire Shackel

A smaller than usual group met at the entrance to the Best of All Lookout at the southern end of Springbrook. With recent good rains, the ferns were in good condition and the following ferns were seen at the car park - *Arthropteris beckleri*, *Pyrrosia rupestris*, *Pellaea nana*, *Lastreopsis microsora*, *Blechnum patersonii*, *Hypolepis muelleri*, and *Platynerium bifurcatum*. *Microsorium pustulatum* and *M. scandens* grew together on a tree trunk and the different rhizome structures were very obvious. On the walk up to the lookout, *Arthropteris tenella*, *Asplenium australasicum*, *Blechnum patersonii*, *Cyathea leichhardtiana*, *Diplazium australe*, *Dictymia brownii*, *Lastreopsis munita*, and *L. smithiana* were seen.

The lookout is one of the highest areas on Springbrook and is on the cliff edge overlooking the Tweed valley in New South Wales. The view is spectacular when the valley is not filled with clouds. Sunday was fine but the view was very hazy. Beside the lookout were many plants of *Lastreopsis silvestris*, a fern of high altitude and limited distribution.



Photo 1. *Hymenophyllum cupressiforme*.

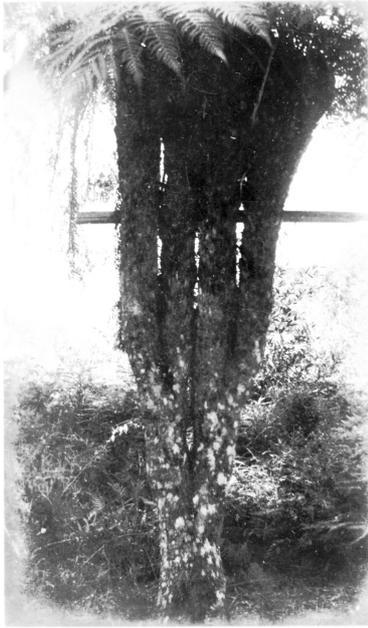


Photo 2. Multi-trunked *Cyathea australis*, Canyon Lookout, c.1946¹

Lunch was eaten at Tallanbana picnic area as the quest for the multi-stemmed *Cyathea australis* was to be undertaken in the afternoon. A Springbrook postcard¹ (see Photo 2) from the mid 1940's with a photograph of a multi-trunked specimen, called by locals the 'Wishing Tree', had been given to Peter, who wanted to see if any still existed near Canyon Lookout. The track from Tallanbana to Canyon Lookout initially passes through moist eucalyptus forest and then travels along the cliff edge above a deep gorge. The ferns seen in the eucalyptus forest were *Blechnum cartilagineum*, *Gleichenia dicarpa*, *Cyathea australis*, *Dictymia brownii*, *Asplenium polyodon*, *A. australasicum*, *Hypolepis muelleri*, *Pyrrosia rupestris*, *Platycterium bifurcatum* and *Davallia pyxidata*. The *Cyathea australis* in this area all seemed to be single-trunked.

Along the cliff edge in the heath vegetation *Calochlaena dubia*, *Cyathea leichhardtiana*, *Pteris vittata* and *Microsorium scandens* were observed. *Blechnum watsii* grew along the creeks before they cascaded over the cliffs. *Sticherus lobatus* and *Adiantum silvaticum* were seen in a very moist rocky area. *Hymenophyllum cupressiforme* and *Grammitis stenophylla* were other finds. As the heath vegetation became dryer *Gleichenia rupestris*, *Lindsaea linearis* and *L. microphylla* grew along the track edge.

The party decided to return to the cars along the road from Canyon Lookout after some refreshments at the café. *Cyathea australis* was common along the sides of the road and in residential properties lining the road. Two multi-trunked specimens were subsequently located among the many single-trunked plants in the vicinity of Rush Creek beside the main road. The better developed of the two was about 4 metres tall, and had 8 crowns. Also seen on the walk back were *Platycterium superbum* and *Pteridium esculentum*, and *Psilotum nudum* growing on a *C. australis* trunk.

Ferns Observed - Best of All Lookout

Arthropteris beckleri, *Arthropteris tenella*, *Asplenium australasicum*, *Blechnum patersonii*, *Cyathea leichhardtiana*, *Dictymia brownii*, *Diplazium australe*, *Hypolepis muelleri*, *Lastreopsis microsora*, *Lastreopsis munita*, *Lastreopsis silvestris*, *Lastreopsis smithiana*, *Microsorium pustulatum*, *Microsorium scandens*, *Pellaea nana*, *Platycterium bifurcatum*, *Pyrrosia rupestris*.

Ferns Observed - Tallanbana to Canyon Lookout

Adiantum silvaticum, *Asplenium australasicum*, *Asplenium polyodon*, *Blechnum cartilagineum*, *Blechnum watsii*, *Calochlaena dubia*, *Cyathea australis*, *Cyathea leichhardtiana*, *Davallia pyxidata*, *Dictymia brownii*, *Gleichenia dicarpa*, *Gleichenia rupestris*, *Grammitis stenophylla*, *Hymenophyllum cupressiforme*, *Hypolepis muelleri*, *Lindsaea linearis*, *Lindsaea microphylla*, *Microsorium scandens*, *Platycterium bifurcatum*, *Platycterium superbum*, *Psilotum nudum*, *Pteridium esculentum*, *Pteris vittata*, *Pyrrosia rupestris*, *Sticherus lobatus*.



Photo 3 *Lastreopsis silvestris*, upper frond surface.

¹ photo by Percy Wilson, commercial photographer, Brisbane

My sympathies go out to Kyrill Taylor with *A. tenella*. I did have a reasonable hanging basket of this fern but forgot it when dunk watering the baskets and it was exposed to direct sun for a couple of hours in the middle of the day. It dropped most of its leaves and has been very slow to recover but is still alive. The plant was a small piece taken from the family farm at Canungra. It was growing on sandstone rock/tree trunk on a dry vine forest bank 20m above the creek. There is only one plant in the 25 acre rainforest block and it must be a survivor as it is out of context and lived through years of drought. Canungra creek rises in the Lamington National Park so it has obviously come downstream in moister times. My efforts with spore from *A. tenella* have been totally unsuccessful. Spores have been collected from this plant and from other plants but without success - not even prothalli. Another small piece I was given 6 years ago is still a very small piece but I do not know its origin. From my experience local provenance gives the best chance of survival.

I do have a lovely hanging basket of *A. beckleri*. It was started about 15 years ago as a tiny piece that was kept in a drink bottle hot house for 3 years before it went into a small pot. After a number of upgrades it has developed into a dense dome in a 25cm. hanging basket. I have been reluctant to try dividing it up but have put some small pieces in bottle hot houses.

VALE Irene Cullen

Jan Sked*

Members were saddened to hear of the passing of SGAP Queensland Honorary Life Member, Irene Cullen, on 27th November, 2008.

Irene, with her late husband Russell, joined the Society for Growing Australian Plants in 1963. In those early days in the Society, Irene attended meetings and participated in all the Society activities. She became Recording Officer for the Coastal Lowlands Study Group in 1965. This Study Group was lead by Geoff Simmons and was the forerunner of the present Wallum Study Group. Irene was a member of a Committee set up in December 1965 to assist the establishment of native plantings in Clayton Park, Bribie Island.

In 1970 and 1971 Propagation Groups were established in Brisbane – the first on the southside and the second on the northside – and Irene and Russell joined the southside one. In 1971, these groups became Branches – respectively Brisbane Southside and Brisbane Northside.

From 1973 to 1976 Irene served on the Regional Council, as Regional Librarian. Then from 1984 to 1988, she served as Southside Branch Delegate. In 1988 she became Regional Librarian once more for a further four years, followed by two years as Brisbane Southside Delegate and then Regional Councillor until she retired at the AG.M. in 1996.

Russell and Irene represented the Queensland Region as Delegates to the ASGAP Biennial Conferences a number of times.

Irene was an active member of the ASGAP Fern Study Group, where she was contact member for the South-east Queensland Division since its first meeting on 1st July, 1983, when it was decided to form a local group. She organised this group for the next 21 years, until June 2004 and continued to be an active member of the group until recently. Irene was the backbone of the Fern Group in Queensland for many years. She had accumulated an extensive knowledge and collection of Australian ferns. She was always generous with her time, plants and practical information to help newer members.

Irene also organized bouquets for the Queensland Symphony Orchestra concerts, and was an active member of the Displays Committee for many years.

Irene and Russell devoted so much of their lives to serving our Society in so many ways, and it was very befitting that Honorary Life Membership was bestowed on them in March 1996. Sadly, Russell passed away in May of that year. Now, 12 years on, we say a sad farewell to Irene. May she rest in peace, having served our Society so well for so long.

* Reproduced with permission and some changes from the Queensland SGAP Branch Bulletin Vol. 47, No 4. March 2009.