

ASGAP

Correa Study Group

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Newsletter No. 16

November, 1997

Dear Members,

You can all give a big cheer, I have completed and submitted my thesis....'ray!!! It's the strangest feeling....I have time to read the newspaper, answer letters, weed the garden and watch the grass grow. Since coming back from Adelaide, I have done nothing but sit in front of a computer and write, write, rewrite, rewrite...mostly rewrite. So to all the people who have been waiting patiently for news from this end of Australia, my apologies. The journey is now over and things will now begin to return to some semblance of normality.

The Conference in Adelaide was a real blast. I think our group was possibly the best represented as far as members were concerned. I signed up a heap of new members as well, so from that point of view it was a great success. The Study group Leaders meeting was expertly conducted by our very able Co-ordinator, Helen Morrow, who is trying to get some consistency across the groups and set a few ground rules.

The number of study groups has grown over the past ten years and as they are spread all over the continent, it is hard to keep track of them. There are still many issues which need to be resolved. The question of membership is an issue. Should a study group member who just wishes to correspond also be a member of SGAP? What happens with people who are in prison or those who are unable to participate in outings.

There is the question of overseas members and the leakage of our genetic material and good plant forms to overseas interests. Study group leaders are frustrated in not being able to obtain permits to collect in the wild. What happens with good plant forms? ASGAP is so bogged down by strangling bureaucracy, that it is unable to reach out and be innovative. In the meantime, enthusiasts join up, see that little is happening and move on. Some study group leaders, those with the time and energy, have gone it alone and achieved small miracles. However, it is difficult when there is little moral support from the main body. Having had my whinge, I now intend to put into place some of the things that we discussed at the Conference.

The Tasmanian expedition needs organising and I have included some details in this newsletter. I also intend to canvas nurseries about entering into agreements re PBR registration for some of our better hybrids. The Correa Book which has been on the boil for a long time but which had to take a back seat will now start to take shape. Looks like I won't be able to watch the grass grow...

Over the past few days, Armidale has been enveloped in thick clouds of smoke blowing over from the large Pilliga fires. Bushfire is a major topic of conversation these days and the question of native gardens usually accompanies discussions about fires. Native plants have been given a bad press because of their flammability, especially the members of the Myrtaceae family. It was good to read a report which I have reproduced in this newsletter re the flammability of plants. You will be pleasantly surprised to find that members of the Rutaceae family are not nearly as flammable as many other plants. This means that you can safely plant your Correas up near your house. This must be a good selling feature.

On the subject of selling, I recently called in to Floralands Nursery and started yarning about...well, I think you can guess. Anyway, you could have bowled me over when the owner told me that Correas are quite hard to sell. *C. bauerlenii* is O.K. because it has a rainforest-type of look about it, but the hairy leaf types are not at all popular. The Sydney market is quite different to the Melbourne and Adelaide markets. There's a bit of work to do on that front as well.

Speaking of markets, I picked up a few Correas at the Conference Flower Show and Plant sale. One of them is a hard, shiny leaf Correa called *C. reflexa* 'Sauce Factory'. Now I can't work out if it was given that horrible name because it produces masses of tomato-red blooms or if the cutting was picked up in the grounds of a condiment establishment. There's our little mystery no. 231. I will send a struck cutting to anyone who has a logical answer. Humorous conjectures will also be welcome, so start sleuthing.

Cheers, Maria

From the Members and Friends

In the last Newsletter, John Emms asked about the longevity of Correa decumbens. Don Weybury has one that he thinks is over 20 years old. Bruce Grose also has one about the same age.

John also wrote about a C. reflexa with a deeply split corolla, which is similar to one in Bob O'Neill's garden (Avignon 357). Don Weybury has another from Bob's garden, which I think he called 'Wyabalong'. Bruce Grose seems to think that 'Akio Star' is named after Ian Starkey's wife.

Bruce also asked about Correa pulchella 'white'. I sent him a struck cutting of the form that I have and he thinks this may be a hybrid. He said that the original one he had came from the Port Lincoln area. Does anyone have any further information?

Bruce is about to register two new forms. One is a red form of C. glabra, which was found around the Greensborough area near Melbourne, but is now extinct in the wild.

Fortunately, Bruce had taken cuttings, so there are plenty of vigorous plants around in gardens, etc. The second plant to be registered is one he has called 'Portland Blush'. It is a pale pink natural hybrid between C. reflexa and C. alba var.pannosa, he thinks.

Commenting on fire relations, Bruce came across many different colour forms of C. reflexa after a big fire at Mallacoota. No doubt, the seedlings carry much variation in genetic material. How to split them off is a big problem.

Bruce has posed a big question, open to a new debate. When is a hybrid a hybrid? Bruce learned in his student days, that a hybrid has to be induced by human intervention and that there is no such thing as a natural hybrid. What do other people think?

For my money, I've always worked under the idea that you can have natural and induced hybrids. A natural hybrid can occur in the garden or out in the bush. An induced hybrid is one where pollen is carried by someone from one flower to another in the hope of creating a new hybrid.

Don Weybury remembers a massive bush of C. lawrenciana in the north-east of the state in a place where he used to go fishing. He doesn't know if it's still there today. He has a summer-flowering Correa, that could have originated from Fred Rogers place, but he isn't sure. He says it certainly is very nice. A nursery friend of Don's has also been using Clonex gel for some time and gets such good results, he wouldn't use anything else.

Jeanette Closs wrote that Les Payne, who owns 'Pulchella Nursery' at Buckland in Tasmania, found a wonderful area at Petal Point, north of Gladstone in Tassie's north-east. He has put in over 30 different colour forms of C. reflexa cuttings. These were collected within 1/2 to 3/4 km behind the dunes at Petal Point and near a water tank. There were lots of foliage variants. Les recommends late May or early June and may join us there.

Another member reported C. alba on dunes at Cape Portland Beach with flowers just covered in butterflies. Also, in the bush near Goat Island is a good place to see C. alba. C. backhousiana is easy to find near Sisters Beach near the boat ramp, this is also north-west, and there is a prostrate C. backhousiana at Arthur River on the west coast.

There are many colour forms of C. reflexa east of Low Head, which is east of the Tamar River and then Mt. Wellington is probably one of the best places to see C. lawrenciana.

Kris Schaffer of Tasmanian Garden Design and Consultancy may also join us on the expedition.

Rosemary Pedler writes from 'drought-ridden' SA.

'The real bright spots in my garden at the moment are my Correas and a resplendent Templetonia retusa. 'Marian's Marvel' (2 plants) are in glorious display and a prostrate C. reflexa type with a spread of 3m x 2m, bright pink and cream-tipped bells is also proving amazingly tough and floriferous in my 'only the tough survive' garden. I have had the first flowers from one of my 2 dozen plus Correa seedlings. It has obvious C. pulchella parentage as to the leaves and the large bell is a delicate pink with a warm creamy yellow flush at the petals, which are nicely reflexed. It is unusual and very pretty.'

Marian Beek writes that 'Red Spiders' may have become extinct. She lost her plant years ago and the area where she found it has been slashed. She sent a specimen of a C. pulchella form which someone gave her a few years ago called 'White Tips'. Does anyone have any more info on this one. It's fairly narrow with a cerise colour and creamy tips. Leaves are ovate with a definite point.

She is puzzled over the form on the calendar called 'Marian Beek', as it is obviously one of her hybrids collected by someone else and just named after the grower. 'Benara Bell' is the plant she originally called 'Beek's Bounty', and is a cross between C. alba and C. Marian's Marvel. She says the weather has been cold and dry with very little rain.

Correas of the Fleurieu Peninsula

In between seminars at the recent ASGAP conference, we were all treated to a couple of field trips where we could immerse ourselves in the South Australian bush. Needless to say, your intrepid leader, armed with a permit and pockets full of collecting bags set out in search of the elusive correas. Our first site was a reserve, whose name escapes me, where the local form of *C. reflexa* was similar to the typical coastal S.A. form.

Abley assisted by Deputy Cherree and other members of our not so secret society, the first specimens were duly spotted and pounced upon. They were not grand specimens, being rather low-growing and sparsely scattered, with nary a flower in sight. Care was taken to collect fresh growing shoots from a variety of plants, all exhibiting some minor differences in leaf form.

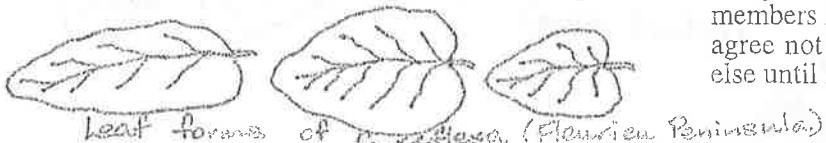
Having learned the lessons of our last expedition to Kangaroo Island, the plants were not only collected and labelled but also...yes! We had to sniff the leaves and...voila! They all had the typical *C. glabra* smell, but were pretty obviously *C. reflexa*. So now we have discovered an association with the Kangaroo Island *C. reflexa*s. How to explain this?

Elizabeth Campbell in her conference talk on the geology of Kangaroo Island, stated that K.I. is an extension of the Fleurieu Peninsula and has similarities with the Mt. Lofty Ranges. It was joined to the mainland during the Pleistocene glaciations and was slowly separated off with rising sea levels. As *C. glabra* grows on the Mt. Lofty Ranges, the Fleurieu Peninsula *C. reflexa*s would have intergraded with *C. glabra* and this intergrade must have happened before K.I. was cut off.

The task will now be to make a 'Sniff Map' of *C. reflexa* in South Australia. How far does the intergrade extend? Are there natural barriers to its spread?

Another foray to Cox's Scrub revealed the same peculiarity. Here the plants were more abundant and several colour forms were noted. Some serious collecting took place on this site and it is hoped that cuttings will soon be ready for pricking out. They are looking quite healthy and a few have struck.

Ivan Holliday's conference paper on Kangaroo Island lists many more common associations with mainland plant populations, so it is possible that this peculiarity of *C. reflexa* may be quite widespread. So, get sniffing... and let's put the puzzle together. First you need to get hold of *C. glabra* and become familiar with its smell. I look forward to hearing some interesting sniffy reports.



Royal Horticultural Society Colour Card

John Emms suggested that we might like to think about purchasing a set of colour cards to standardise the colour descriptions of the Correas that we collect and grow. The current purchase price would be around \$170.00 and the description is as follows:

'This standard reference for plant colour identification has over 800 colour variations. Arranged in four easy to use fans, each colour patch has a central port-hole which can be laid over the plant to be matched. The chart comes in a box with full instructions for achieving uniform results. An example of the cards can be seen in 'Australian Plants' Sept. '96, No. 140 p. 349.'

John thinks that the system has a lot of merit and would be of particular use on field trips where the opportunity to check colours is not always available. Flowers with blue, purple or mauve do not seem to photograph accurately, so a method of recording colours to a standard has merit.

What do the members think? Should we spend the money on the card system?

Future Directions

Over a very noisy lunch a significant group of Correa SG members tried to conduct a meeting to determine future directions. Here are some of the ideas. Members want to learn more about:

- * Propagation
- * What will grow where
- * Correas as cut flowers
- * Flower calendar
- * Superior forms on sale
- * Identification
- * Naming of plants

Neil Marriott has volunteered to identify plant specimens collected in the wild. If you want to send a piece to Neil, it must be fresh and wrapped in damp newspaper. Place in a green vegetable bag and send express if possible. You will need to provide Neil with as much background as possible and the plant needs to be a wild sourced plant.

Cherree Densley has volunteered to fill in Cultivar registration forms. To register a cultivar, it needs to be distinctly different from its parents and show promise as a nursery plant. Registration only protects the name, you get no royalties.

If you have a natural hybrid growing in your garden, which is a good form and different, the best thing to do is to give it a name and ask a few members in different locations to trial it. They should agree not to pass cuttings of the plant on to anyone else until it is registered. You will need to record the

parents and as much information about the plant and flowers as possible. Photos of the plant and parent plants should also be taken and cultivation notes from the trials need to be kept. If everything is positive, pass the information on to Cherree, who will take the necessary steps to register it.

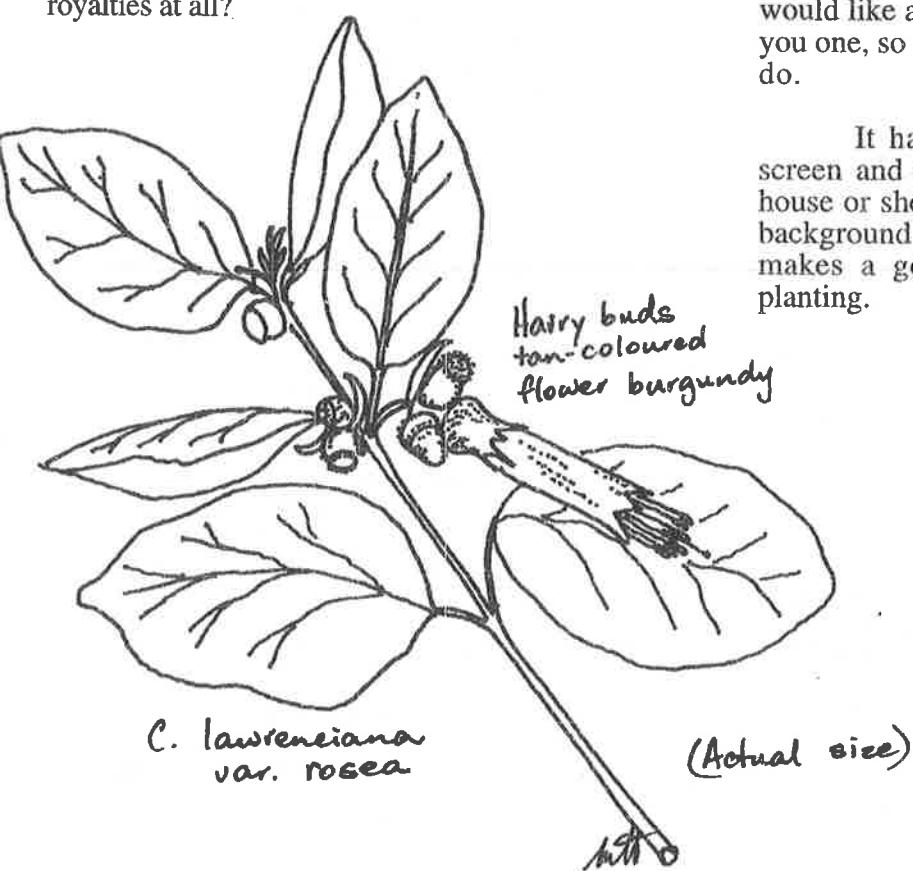
Plants do not have to come out of gardens for registration. If you see a superior form in the bush, that you would like to see in the nursery trade, give it a name that begins with the locality (e.g., 'Portland Blush') and go through the same steps as above.

Several nurseries are interested in trialling and marketing Correas and I will be writing to a number of them about some sort of partnership.

Plant Breeders Rights (PBR) are now available in Australia and it would be wonderful if we could work out a way of earning some money from the wonderful Correas that we have growing in our gardens. It is a complex and very expensive procedure and we would need to have an arrangement with a large nursery that would be prepared to mass produce and market.

There is also a philosophical problem in how to ensure that a member putting forward a plant for PBR is being honest about the plant's origin. What about plants in the wild? My feeling is that PBR should only be applied to garden hybrids of superior form. Some evidence needs to be given as to the authenticity of a plant being proposed.

What do you think? Please write with your suggestions as this could be a minefield and we need to tread carefully. Should members receive any royalties at all?



The Best of the Best (2)

Correa lawrenciana var. rosea is a large shrub growing to more than two metres in height and with a spread of one metre or more. Leaves are fairly large and rounded and the plant has an upright habit. Flowers are somewhat drab, compared with other Correas but I find them very interesting.

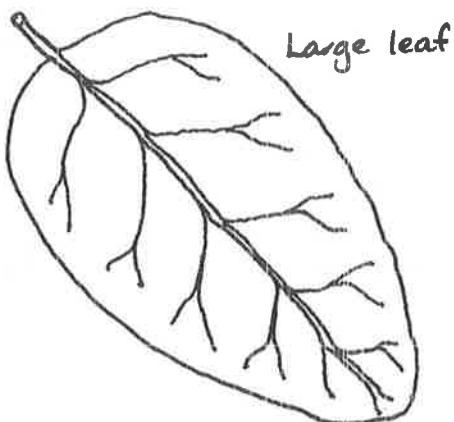
It has narrow deep burgundy bells which are lighter in colour at the tips. The flowers tend to be hidden in the foliage, so it is easy to miss them. However, my plant seems to flower the whole year around, which is a bonus, especially for the small birds which are now over-wintering in our garden.

My two plants which are growing side by side are about 5 years old. They were planted in a very well-drained site in semi-shade under a large Eucalyptus tree. The plants are rarely watered and appear to survive quite well in dry conditions. They would probably be much taller and lusher-looking in a better-watered environment.

This species originates in montane areas and is therefore frost-hardy. This is important in inland areas which experience frost in winter. My feeling is that this is one of those native plants that you can't kill. The plants benefit from an annual prune and I try to do this in the summer holidays. Apart from that this species seems to require no maintenance.

No pests seem to like it and the leaves are remarkably free of caterpillars and all the other hungry insects that make a mess of leaves. No doubt Rutaceae oils play a part in pest deterral. I believe that everyone should be growing this species. If you would like a struck cutting let me know and I'll send you one, so that you can enjoy this plant as much as I do.

It has landscaping potential as a hedge or screen and could be safely planted up against the house or shed. As a large shrub, it provides a good background for smaller more colourful plants and it makes a good understorey shrub in a bushland planting.



Ignitability of Leaves of Australian Plants

The following article is a review by David Murray of a study that was conducted by A. Malcolm and Peter H.R. Moore, Centre for Plant Biodiversity Research, CSIRO Division of Plant Industry, GPO Box 1600, Canberra, ACT, 2601

The plants that surround our houses may help or hinder a bushfire should one threaten the area in which we live. Some plants are more flammable than others. A variety of lists was published in the aftermath of the January 1994 fires.

Flammability is difficult to define, but it may be considered to have three components: 'ignitability' or ignition time delay, sustainability and combustibility. This study, which was specially commissioned by the Australian Flora Foundation, focussed on ignitability. Clearly, if the plants that are growing closest to houses are slow to ignite, or do not burn readily, then a passing fire is less likely to destroy the houses.

Mature leaves, phyllodes or cladodes (according to species) were chosen to represent 50 species from 19 Families. Their dimensions (surface to volume ratio), moisture content and mineral composition were measured and their ignitability assessed, both as fresh and as dry specimens, using a muffle furnace that was set at 4000 C. Ten replicates were processed. The results represent the means.

Because they rarely or never ignited at this temperature, samples of five species were further tested at 5000C. Since a species can be represented by plants at different stages of growth, the authors emphasise that they are dealing with growth-stage-specific plant properties. Therefore, the results provide only a guideline for choosing species.

The species that were tested included some with high oil content (e.g. *Eucalyptus* spp.), high mineral content (*Amyema* spp.) or succulence (*Myoporum* sp.). Surprisingly, higher mineral content tended to decrease ignition delay time.

The average ignition-delay-times for species ranged from 11.6 to 57.1 seconds for 'fresh' material, and from 3.2 to 36.9 seconds for pre-dried material. Most species displayed relatively short ignition-delay-times both as fresh and oven-dry specimens. (This major group included *Eucalyptus*, *Acacia* and *Melaleuca*.)

Three species (*Hakea cristata*, *H.petolaris* and *Podocarpus elatus*) ignited relatively quickly as fresh specimens, but were slow when dry; ten species (which included *Amyema cambagei*, *A. miquelli*, *Hakea macreana*, *H. multilineata*, *Casuarina distyla*, *C. glauca*, *Bossiaea scolopendria*, *Eriostemon myoporooides* and *Lomandra longifolia*) were slow to ignite as either fresh or dry specimens.

Many species in these two groups had low surface-to-volume ratios. Four species (including two accessions of *Myoporum acuminata* and *Anigozanthos flavidus*, were slow to ignite when fresh, but quick to ignite when oven-dry. These species had the highest water contents and the highest total mineral contents of all 50 species. Water content was not an infallible guide to ignitability, as illustrated by the *Hakea* results- the species whose leaves were slow to ignite had relatively low moisture contents.

The five species that required test at 5000C as well as at 4000C were *Casuarina glauca*, *Amyema cambagei*, *Myoporum acuminata*, *Eriostemon myoporooides* and *Geijera parvifolia*. These five species are thus 'desirable' from a fire-proofing standpoint. However, a host of higher flammability would be needed in order to grow the mistletoe (*Amyema canbagei*). It is interesting to note that *Eriostemon myoporooides* and *Geijera parviflora* belong to the Family Rutaceae, which is noted for producing oil in its leaves. Of the two oil-producing Families in the study, *Rutaceae* is 'safer' than *Myrtaceae*.

When planting in fire-prone areas, the general recommendations of Gilt and Moore include the avoidance of species, such as some *Melaleuca* spp. and *Xanthorrhoea* spp., that retain high proportions of dead material in their canopies or basally. Also to be avoided are species such as the *Eucalyptus* spp. that shed leaves or other litter in summer or during the local fire season. In a garden situation, these attributes can be ameliorated by pruning, tidying, composting and mulching.

Introduced species are sometimes recommended for planting near houses in preference to native plants. However, this is often done with little regard to adverse health effects (e.g. caused by *Hedera helix* or ivy), toxins that are released by burning (e.g. from *Nerium oleander* or their status as environmental weeds (e.g. privets, cotoneaster, ivy). From all perspectives it should be possible to select a satisfactory mix of both native and exotic species- or indeed to specifically grow Australian plants- according to an individual gardeners' preferences.

Reprinted from the South Australian S.G.A.P. Journal, November 1997.

Tasmanian Expedition 1998

There has been a great deal of interest in our forthcoming expedition and so far I can give you the following details.

Transport:	Own cars Some people may have room to allow for doubling up. Cars from the mainland will have to be brought over by ferry unless you want to hire.
Ferry:	Spirit of Tasmania Departs Monday, 6th July from Melbourne at 6.00 p.m. and arrives the following morning in Devonport at 8.30 a.m.
Return:	Thursday, 16th July at 6.00 p.m. from Devonport. Arrives Melbourne 8.30 a.m. Friday
Cost per person	Off Peak Season - Return fare Hostel Cabin \$206 (\$125 Apex) Inside cabin (2-4 bunk) \$302 (\$180 Apex) Porthole (2-4 bunk) \$324 (\$195 Apex) Double \$380 (\$236 Apex) Suite (Double + 2 bunk) \$450 (\$272 Apex) Concessions available for children and pensioners. Dinner/breakfast included in price
Vehicles:	Cars: \$30 one-way Must be < 5 metres long and < 1.9 metres wide. Otherwise it will be slightly more expensive.
Bookings:	Phone 13 20 10 Fax 1800 636 110 E-mail reservations@tt-line.com.au P.O. Box 168E East Devonport Tas. 7310
Payment:	Deposit of \$40 within 14 days of booking if made > 6 weeks before. Full payment within 7 days if booking is made < 30 days before. Cancellations < 30 days before results in loss of deposit. Apex fares (limited numbers only) Booking needs to be made > 30 days before. Payment within 3 days. Fare can be upgraded but not refunded. Sole use of cabin - 50% extra

Meeting Place:

Ferry Terminal, Devonport
Tuesday, 7th July, 9.00 a.m.

Itinerary:

10 days of exploration and socialising and sightseeing.
We will travel in a clockwise direction (that way we'll have the wind behind us). We will follow the coast down to Hobart and then cut across country to the west side and follow the coast back to Devonport.

We will link with the Tasmanian SGAP groups to ensure that we cover the best sites and gain a complete understanding of habitats and forms, not to mention making friends with lots more SGAPers.

Accommodation will be in hostels, mining camps, billets, etc. We will try to keep this as economical as possible but will ensure that you are warm at night. It would be wise, however, to pack your hot water bottle.

You will need to bring warm clothing as we can expect some pretty bad weather, especially on the west coast and you will need to be generally self-sufficient. As I am also venturing into the unknown, I'm sorry that I can't be more specific. Remember that this will be an adventure. However, you may rest assured that your intrepid leader likes her creature comforts and will not lead you anywhere she would not want to stay herself. We do have local knowledge on side.

I shall gain a collector's permit for the group and will be collecting for the two Botanic gardens as before. This should assist us with entry to certain areas and perhaps we can fit in the Herbarium in Hobart. I will try to allow a day for sightseeing in Hobart and free time to go shopping, etc.

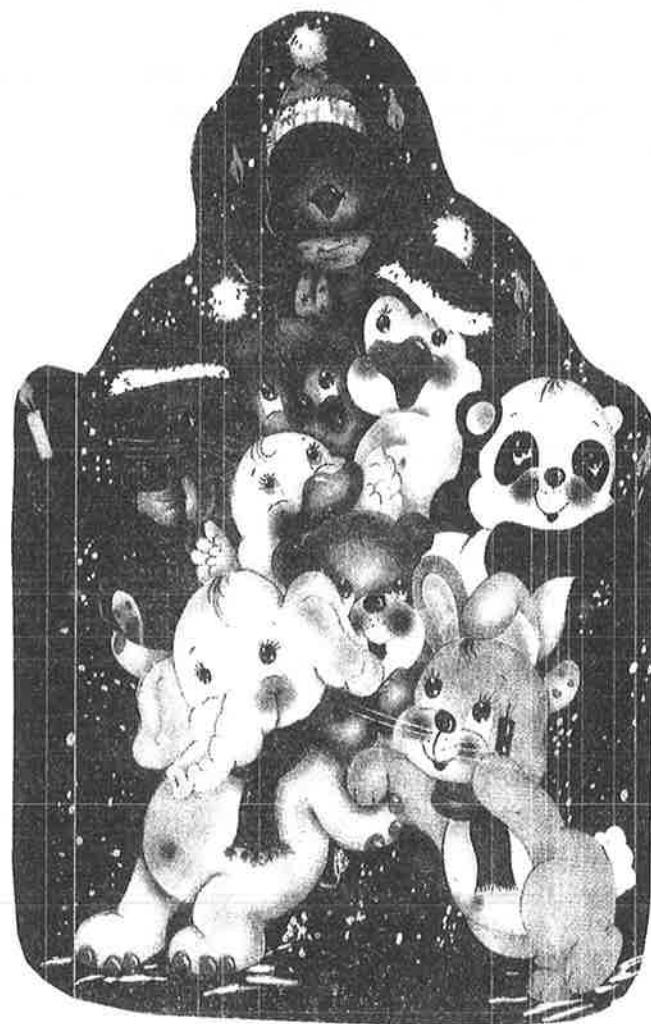
If you have any ideas to make our trip more interesting, please let me know. It would also be very helpful if you could let me know if you are coming at least **three months** beforehand so that I can do some fine planning with the Tasmanian groups. It would be wise to book the ferry early to take advantage of the Apex fares.

The last expeditions were so enjoyable, I anticipate this one will be even more so. More details will be posted out to interested participants around March or April.



Correa Study Group Membership List

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This will be us in Tassie!

Have a great Christmas
everyone!