ASSOCIATION of

S.G.A.P. Fern Study Group

Newsletter Number 104

ISSN 0811-5311 DATE – MARCH, 2004

****

LEADER Peter Hind, 41 Miller Street, Mount Druitt. N. S. W. 2770
SECRETARY:
TREASURER: Ron Wilkins, 188b Beecroft Rd., Cheltenham NSW 2119
E-mail: ronwtwilkins@hotmail.com
NEWSLETTER EDITOR: Mike Healy, 272 Humffray St. Nth., Ballarat. Vic. 3350
E-mail address: jmhealy@netconnect.com.au

SPORE BANK: Barry White, 34 Noble Way, Sunbury. Vic. 3429

****

IF YOU HAVEN'T FORWARDED YOUR SUBSCRIPTION PLEASE DO SO ASAP

FINANCIAL REPORT PAGE 2
FORTHCOMING EVENTS PAGE 5

****

NEWSLETTER EDITOR'S RESIGNATION & APPEAL FOR NEW EDITOR

It is with regret that I tender my resignation as newsletter editor, a combination of factors (health and persistent drought) has meant that I no longer have the enthusiasm to continue in this position. It is important a new editor be found as soon as possible, because the newsletter helps fern enthusiasts keep in contact throughout Australia. My last newsletter will be in June 2004.

Any person willing to accept the position would of course be able to call on me for assistance until they feel comfortable in the role.

My wife Joyce has my heartfelt gratitude for all her assistance and computer skills while I have been trying to keep the standard of production up to the quality other editors set.

I thank members of the society for their items throughout my time with a special thank you to Joan Moore, Ron Wilkins and Irene Cullen for information on their group's events etc., and to members who have consistently written articles of interest for the newsletter.

Thank you all for the last five years especially (although I have been a member since June 1985} I am sorry circumstances no longer allow me to continue in this position but it gives the opportunity for new ideas. **All the best - Michael Healy.**

****

SECRETARY/TREASURER — RON WILKINS

For about 5 years (since Maureen Woollett 'retired' to the country) the Fern Study Group has been without a Secretary. In effect, the work has been split between former Treasurer Joan Moore, our Newsletter Editor Mike Healy, and. Peter Hind, More recently I have done a bit of the secretarial work too.

Although we can function this way, there are a number of ways in which a real secretary could be valuable. For example, we need to campaign to attract younger members who are fit enough to go on bushwalking excursions. Another problem we have is how to counter the isolation of members scattered around six states. In general there is a need for someone to be more pro-active about the interests of the group.

Cont. page 21

Secretary/Treasurer (Cont.)

One solution until someone else emerges to undertake one job or the other (or both!) is for me to broaden my tasks and become Secretary/Treasurer. I have more time now enabling me to travel widely and meet some members in distant places. Another way of increasing contact is through question and answer pages in the newsletter. When Maureen Woollett was secretary [inc. newsletter editor Ed:], exchange of information in this way was an interesting feature of the Newsletter. So do send any questions you have to me. You may be sure Peter will have answers for most of them but if there are any particularly curly ones we will track down the expert who has the answer.

Another thing that needs to be done is the construction of a web page. This is a potentially powerful way of contacting the many people who are quite interested in ferns but have never considered the advantages of belonging to a group such as ours. I should be able to do this during 2004. In the meantime I invite you to test me out! I am a good correspondent and would be delighted to hear about any ideas or questions you may have.

****

STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS FOR 2003
Prepared by Treasurer Ron Wilkins

RECEIPTS	2003	2002
Member subscriptions	$500.00	$485.00
Donations:		
ASGAP regions	80.00	105.00
Members	45.00	70.00
Dr Chaffey (share of royalties)	—	996.06
Newsletter colour plate (RW)	137.50	
Sydney raffles	21.00	51.00
Bank interest	193.16	86.21
TOTAL RECEIPTS	**$976.66**	**$1,793.27**
PAYMENTS		
Newsletters: paper and printing	$536.85	$402.90
Postage etc: newsletters	224.38	218.92
`Correspondence	22.85	25.10
Bank charges	—	6.00
TOTAL PAYMENTS	**$784.08**	**$652.92**

CASH IN BANK DEC. 2002	**$4,884.94**
CASH IN BANK DEC. 2003	**$5,046.52**
CASH IN HAND	**$ 31.00**

TREASURER'S COMMENTS: The last royalties from Dr Chaffey's book "Australian Ferns Growing them. Successfully " were received in 2002. The book is now out of print. However, the Group continues to benefit from interest payments on the money invested in a term account and it is this money that gave our account a small surplus in 2003. When this donation is dispersed our income and expenses will more nearly balance. Thus the experiment with a colour plate in the November newsletter cannot be repeated unless the author pays for the plate, as I did for my article. I note that the subscriptions to the ASGAP Rainforest Group have been increased to allow the inclusion of colour plates in their Newsletter. ◈

WHO IS STEVE CLEMESHA?

Written by Steve at request of Ron Wilkins

I became interested in ferns in about 1965 when my friend, Brian Whitehead took an interest in them. We collected various species from around Sydney and Wollongong. They grew well in the fairly clayey soil of our block at West Pennant Hills. The area got heavy frosts some years which killed or damaged many of my orchids so this increased my interest in ferns.

At the time I corresponded with David Jones in Victoria. He suggested we write the book Australian Ferns and Fern Allies, so we did. [First published 1976, Reprinted 1977 & '78, Revised edition 1981, reprinted 1982 and later? **Editor**]

I talked with Gerry Porter, then of French's Forest area of Sydney. We decided to try and form a Fern Study Group so sent letters to all people we thought were likely to be interested and that was the beginning of the Fern Study Group. I was its first leader and sent out newsletters. I used to visit Ray and Marie Best at Kenthurst and see Ray's beautiful fernery.

In 1976 I moved to Coff's Harbour area. I gave up being leader of the Fern Group, as I was a long way from most of the Group.

The block here is not as good a site for growing ferns but it is frost free which suits my orchids and other plants. One day I got a phone call from Jean Hope who I previously had not known about forming a mid north coast fern group. I couldn't go to the first couple of meetings but have gone to most since. I met our leader Charlie Charters and his wife Judy, Phil Avery and Julie McIntyre, Rose Bach and Patsy Heffernan, Roy and Bea Duncan, Harry Dyer, Jean Hope and more recently Graeme and Elaine Reid. Unfortunately some have moved away and Roy has passed away.

We have good outings and go to interesting places many of which I never would go to except for the fern group. Most of our outings are two to three days.

Since moving here I have become a left wing greenie fighting the now late and departed Look At Me Now Outfall and numerous National Park proposals. We have done very well and won all our major issues thanks to the Carr government which has given many new national parks including the ones we were working for. Some of the new national parks have good fern habitats and interesting species.

Ferns are not my only interest. I have orchids, carnivorous plants and a range of other plants, native or otherwise – Jack of all trades - master of none.

I do jogging and bush walking. Recently while walking up Mt. Warning looking at the interesting zone above the rainforest I was passed by a few young guys. I reached the top after a while and one of the young guys said with surprise, "Oh! you made it." I didn't think I looked that bad.

On one fern outing I walked passed a *Todea barbara* and did not see it. I have never lived it down but get my own back sometimes including in newsletters. I now say *Todea barbara* is my favourite fern but I really don't have favourites in anything – there are too many I like.

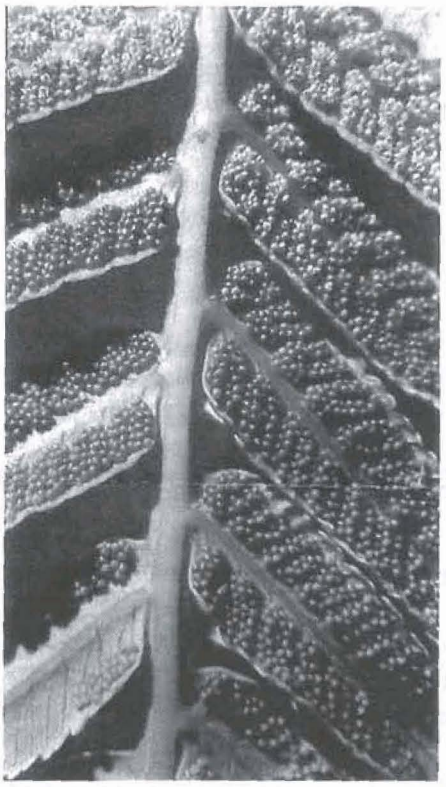
I found *Gleichenia mendelli* in NSW for the first time at Minnie Water. I have since found it in a number of places in the area and at Minyon Falls.

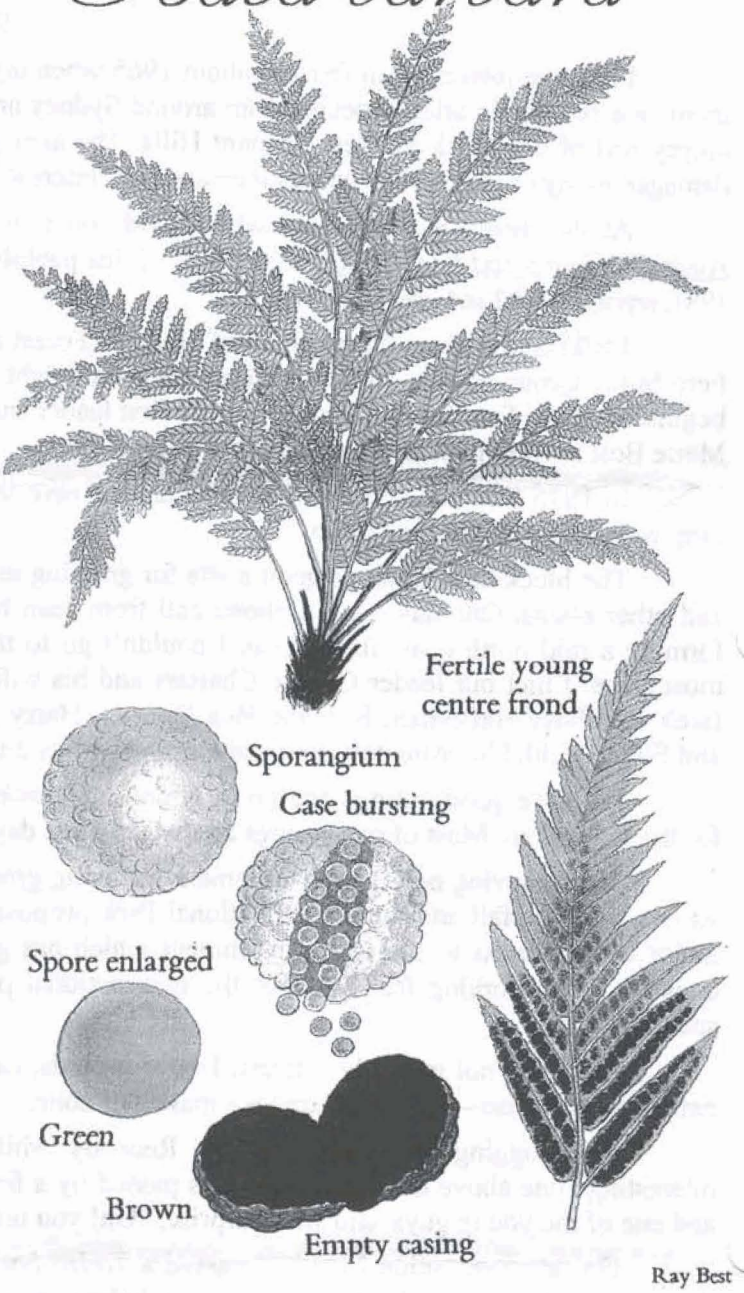
I enjoy living on the north coast. Interesting forest areas and beaches are close by. I don't like big cities. ◈

****

I feel Steve is being too modest in what he has written – it is very understated for what I believe has been his contributions to horticulture. The following item details his reference to *Gleichenia mendelli* and I hope the reference to *Todea barbara* will bring back both memorable times with Ray and Marie Best and his more recent encounters **Editor Mike Healy**

Todea barbara





These diagrams by Ray Best are from his book Growing Ferns" (1980), published by Bay Books. They appeared in SGAP Fern Study Newsletter No. 59 Dec. 1992 I am lucky enough to have a copy of this book which the article described as a 'classic in Australian fern literature. All photos and illustrations are in colour and the drawings are invaluable for demonstrating the diagnostic features.'

In Retrospect: *Gleichenia mendellii* in N.S.W.

(Contributed by Steve Clemesha to SGAP Fern Study Newsletter No. 58 Sept. 1992)

During the July school holidays last year I was visiting my sister at the Gold Coast and I decided to go to Stradbroke Island off Brisbane to try and find *Gleichenia mendellii*. Mr S. Bruce Andrews in his excellent book on 'Ferns of Queensland' gave what had been regarded as a forgotten synonym *G.circinnata var. mendellii* a new status as *G.mendellii*. This fern resembles *G. rupestris* in being glaucous (bluish in colour) or nearly so on the underside of the frond, but the underside of the primary and secondary rhachis is matted with stellate hairs, whereas in *G.rupestris* it is glabrous (bare without hairs or scales) or nearly so. The pinnules of *G.mendellii* are smaller than *G.rupestris* and it grows in the ground in coastal swamps and not on rocks and cliff faces like *G. rupestris.* Its distribution was given as coastal Queensland from Fraser Island to the islands of Moreton Bay.

Cont. Page 5

In Retrospect – *G. mendellii* in NSW (cont.)

I drove to a friend's place at Brisbane. He had seen what he believed to be *G. mendellii* on the island so we caught the ferry over to there and walked about 3 km to the swamp where it grew. The fern was the dominant plant in the swamp and a check with my hand lens showed the matted stellate hairs. I dug up a few small pieces of the fern that were in the creek and brought them home and have them growing.

The following January I went to Minnie Water, south east of Grafton. This time the mission was to find the rare *Isopogon mnoraifolius* . I stopped near the Minnie Water general store -post office, stepped into the swamp there and it was covered with Glecheinia. It was glaucous beneath-but I did not have my hand lens so could not be sure about the stellate hairs. I brought fronds and plants of it home and compared them with my Stradbroke Island plants. They were identical. I sent specimens to the N.S.W. Herbarium and to the Queensland Herbarium. They confirmed my identification and stated it was the first record of the species in N.S.W.

A few months later I went looking for this species about 15-20km south of Minnie Water in the Yuragir National Park. I found it again. This time it was in a swampy gully and again very plentiful. I was pleased to find it in a secure habitat. 0n this day also I found *Isopogon mnoraifolius* for the third time although I did not find it on the day I first found *G.mendellii* at Minnie Water.

In cultivation *G.mendellii* is much like other *Gleichenia sp.* Small plants that can be dug out with some soil transplant fairly easily if kept humid till established. It is easier to establish in the cooler times of the year. ◈

****

GROUP REPORTS & FORTH COMING EVENTS

PROGRAMME FOR SYDNEY MEETINGS

February Meeting 11am Saturday 21 held at Peter Hind's house, 41 Miller Street, Mount Druitt. **Topic - discussion on Thelypteridaceae.**

March Meeting 11am Sunday 21 at Stoney Range, Dee-Why. Garden visit to a planted rainforest amongst Sydney sandstone flora.

April Meeting 10 am Saturday 17th Outing to "Bolwarra", 561 Foxground Rd. FOXGROUND NSW (near Kiama), property of Anne and Geoffrey Long. Private walking trails in good examples of Illawarra rainforest and wet sclerophyll forest. **See map page 6**

****

PROGRAMME FOR SOUTH-EAST QUEENSLAND

Sunday March 7th. Excursion Cooloolabin Forest. Meet 9.30 a.m. at the Park 2.3k from the lights in Yandina on the Old Gympie Road. Park is on the left hand side After a comfort stop, turn left out of Park onto Bunya Road, then left into Lees Road. 2.3k on, turn right into Browns Creek Road. A further 3.3k on, park under the power lines. The track continues along the lines.

Weekend Excursion meet Friday afternoon 23rd April at The Great Western Motel Glen Innis. Tours will be conducted on Saturday 24th and Sunday 25th of Fern areas in the locality. For further particulars contact Peter Bostock Phone H. 07 3202 6983. Members very welcome

N.B. No May Meeting

Sunday 6th June Meet 9.30 a.m. at Merle and Geoff Goadby's home 123 Haven Road Pullenvale. **Topic: Ferns of Tasmania.**

Sunday July 7th (should this be the 4th or 11th?) Excursion Meet 9.30 a.m. at the parking area **The Knoll National Park Mt Tamborine** Check U.B.D. Gold Coast MAP 13 K.8

STH EAST QLD REPORT..... Compiled by Irene Cullen

We in South East Queensland are still reeling after last week's heat, humidity and wild storms. Our ferns however delighted in it, as did the weeds. Our last meeting of 2003 was held at the home of Wendy & Dan

Cont. page 6

Sth East Qld Report (cont.)

Johnson. It was a joyous affair, with plenty of ferns for our fern exchange. A good start was made on our program for 2004. A problem with clashing dates for our usual long weekend excursion was overcome by moving it a week earlier to the Anzac Day weekend. See forthcoming events.

The first meeting of 2004 was held at the home of Peter and Pat Bostock. It was well attended. The study subject was Cheilanthes (Adiantacae family). There were only three species tabled for comparison, however Peter B. was able to give us much insight into the genera. Geoff and Merle Goadby very thoughtfully brought a tray of *C.distans* to be distributed among members. It grows prolifically on their Pullenvale property

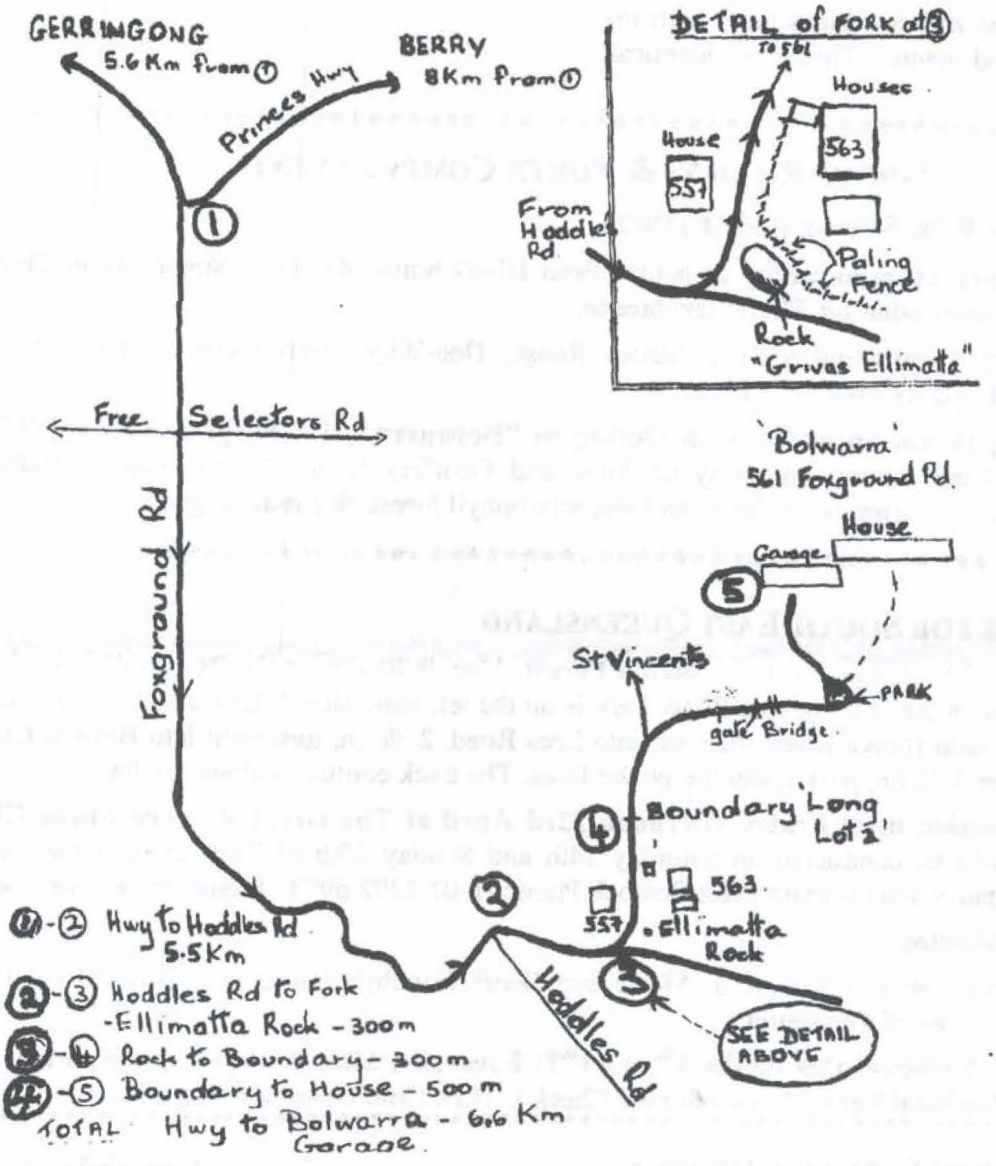
****

Directions for April 17th Sydney Excursion to "Bolwarra"

Anne & Geoff Long

"Bolwarra", 561 Foxground Rd. FOXGROUND NSW

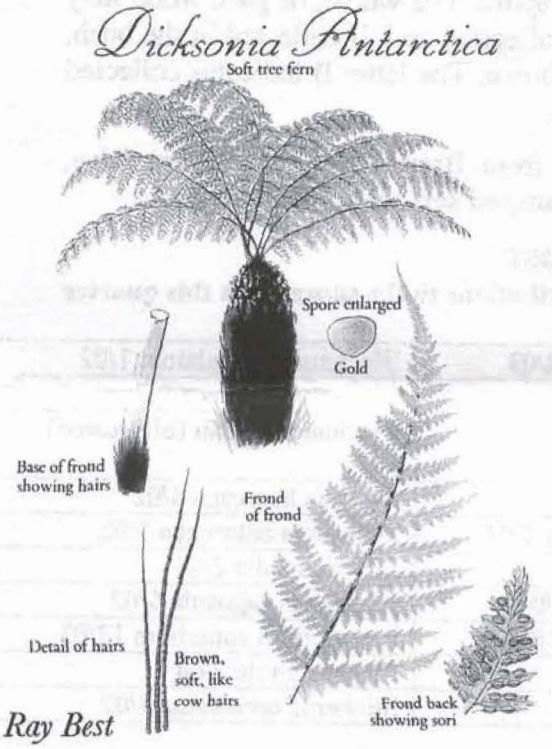
Phone 4234 0865. Mob. 0412 801 801. Fax.4234 0875. Email galong@ozemail.com.au



TREE FERN CULTURE

Gardening Australia ABC TV - Presenter: Malcolm Campbell [22/3/2002]

{Keith Rogers from South Australia is a member of our study group}



We meet Keith Rogers, international tree fern expert renowned for his extensive collection of tree ferns and cultivation of their spores. It is difficult to maintain the ferns in Mannum, South Australia because the rate of evaporation is around 3 times higher than the precipitation. Therefore, Keith has established a greenhouse with an elaborate misting system and shade-cloth down the sides to increase humidity and keep the plants moist. There are 3 different genera of tree ferns, the Australian ***Dicksonia*** and ***Cyathea*** and the equatorial ***Cibotium***, which grows from Malaysia to Mexico. Tree ferns are slow growing and take many years to reach a large size.

The fronds of a tree fern are called stipes. The trunk is covered in stipe bases where old fronds have fallen off and will also become covered with roots as it grows. If you look at a fern trunk that has been cut off, you will see a central region, which is used for the storage of starch and sugars. ***Dicksonia*** can be transplanted because of this root system which capitalises on water that runs down the trunk to the soil. ***Dicksonias*** are not very stable and tend to fall over so to compensate for this they often send out little offshoots, which develop into another trunk if they have enough light. In the garden, plant the trunk deeply enough so that it is stable. There are 25 species of Dicksonia globally, of which 3 occur in Australia. The **Bristly Tree Fern *(Dicksonia youngiae)*** grows from the south east QLD border to NSW and has distinguishing round black hairs on the stipes. The **Soft Tree Fern *(Dicksonia antarctia)*** grows from the extreme south east of Queensland down the coast to Tasmania. Its roots are initiated from the outside of the trunk, which can be cut and will regrow when planted but this is not the case with ***Cyathea*** which will die if cut.

There are 600-800 species of ***Cyathea*** worldwide, of which 12 are endemic to Australia. Their distinguishing feature is the scales, which are flat unlike the hairs of ***Dicksonia***. Their roots emerge from the base and into the soil, so when transplanting or repotting, the whole of the base needs to be moved. Keith has around 100 species of Cyathea in his collection from about 50-60 different countries. They can be kept indefinitely in a container (over 20 years) as long as they are given some slow-release fertiliser in a premium potting mix and are nourished with some inorganic and organic fertiliser 3-4 times a year and are watered frequently in small quantities and plenty of light.

The article goes on to discuss Cibotium, etc. and gives Keith's Web address.

****

High Summer in Mt. Clay (Victoria) Why is it so that ferns look their best at this time of year? Or perhaps lots of the other small vegetation has dried off leaving *Lindsaea linaris* (screw fern) to become more noticeable? *Adiantum aethiopicum* (common maidenhair fern) lives up to its name as it is very common on this bush block – it forms the groundcover in all the depressions, along the seepage lines and gullies and provides such a cool fresh green during the hotter months. There are only 3 other ferns found on this …block, *Polystichum proliferum* … and *Cheilanthes austrotenuifolia* appears along the north facing ridges. Bracken fern is common **From APS Vic. Newsletter March 2003**

SPORE BANK — Contributed by Barry White

The spore list is shrinking, more donations would be appreciated.

All types of spore are welcome including fresher samples of ones already on the list. There is no necessity to separate the sporangia from the spore. The whole, or part, frond may also be sent in, all is acceptable. Please include date of collection and, if collected in the bush, the area. In the list, the month and year of collection is shown. The letter B indicates collected in the bush. The area of collection is available on request.

ORDERING SPORE: Spore is available free of charge from Barry White, 34 Noble Way, Sunbury. Vic. 3042 **When ordering please include a stamped self-addressed envelope.**

CURRENT SPORE LIST

Thanks to Nev Deeth and Lorraine Deppeler for contributions to the spore bank this quarter

Arachniodes aristata 2/04	Asplenium aethiopicum 4/03	Blechnum articulatum 1/02
Blechnum camfieldii 9/02	Blechnum fluviatile 5/03	Blechnum minus 5/02
Blechnum penna-marina 5/03	Blechnum wattsii 5/02	Blechnum wattsii (bifurcated) 5/03
Cyathea brownii 2/04	Cyathea cooperi ¼	Cyathea howeana 5/02
Cyathea robusta 4/02	Dennstaedtia davallioides 2/04	Dicksonia antarctica 5/02
Dicksonia antarctica 2/04	Doodia media 4/03	Doodia media 2/04
Histiopteris incisa 5/02	Hypolepis glandulifera 2/04	Hypolepis rugosula 5/02
Lastreopsis acuminata 10/02	Platycerium bifurcatum 3/03	Platycerium superbum 12/03
Polystichum australiense 2/04	Polystichum fallax 4/02	Pteris tremula 2/04
Pteris umbrosa 2/04	Pteris vittata 3/03	Sticherus urceolatus 5/02

****

NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTIONS SOUGHT – Thanks to those who sent articles this quarter. However, I would still like to appeal to individuals or groups to send articles, questions on their favourite plant, an interesting spot they may have visited, a tip on how to grow, or propagate plants, or problems you might being experiencing with growing Questions have generated a deal of interest in the past.

DEADLINE FOR COPY:

Closing date for the June 2004 Newsletter is May 15th, 2004.

****

If undeliverable return to:
272 Humffray St. Nth.,
BALLARAT. Vic. 3350

SURFACE MAIL

POSTAGE PAID AUSTRALIA

Print Post Approved
P8P245358/OOO18

The Secretary
APS NSW Ltd
PO Box 744
BLACKTOWN
NSW 2148