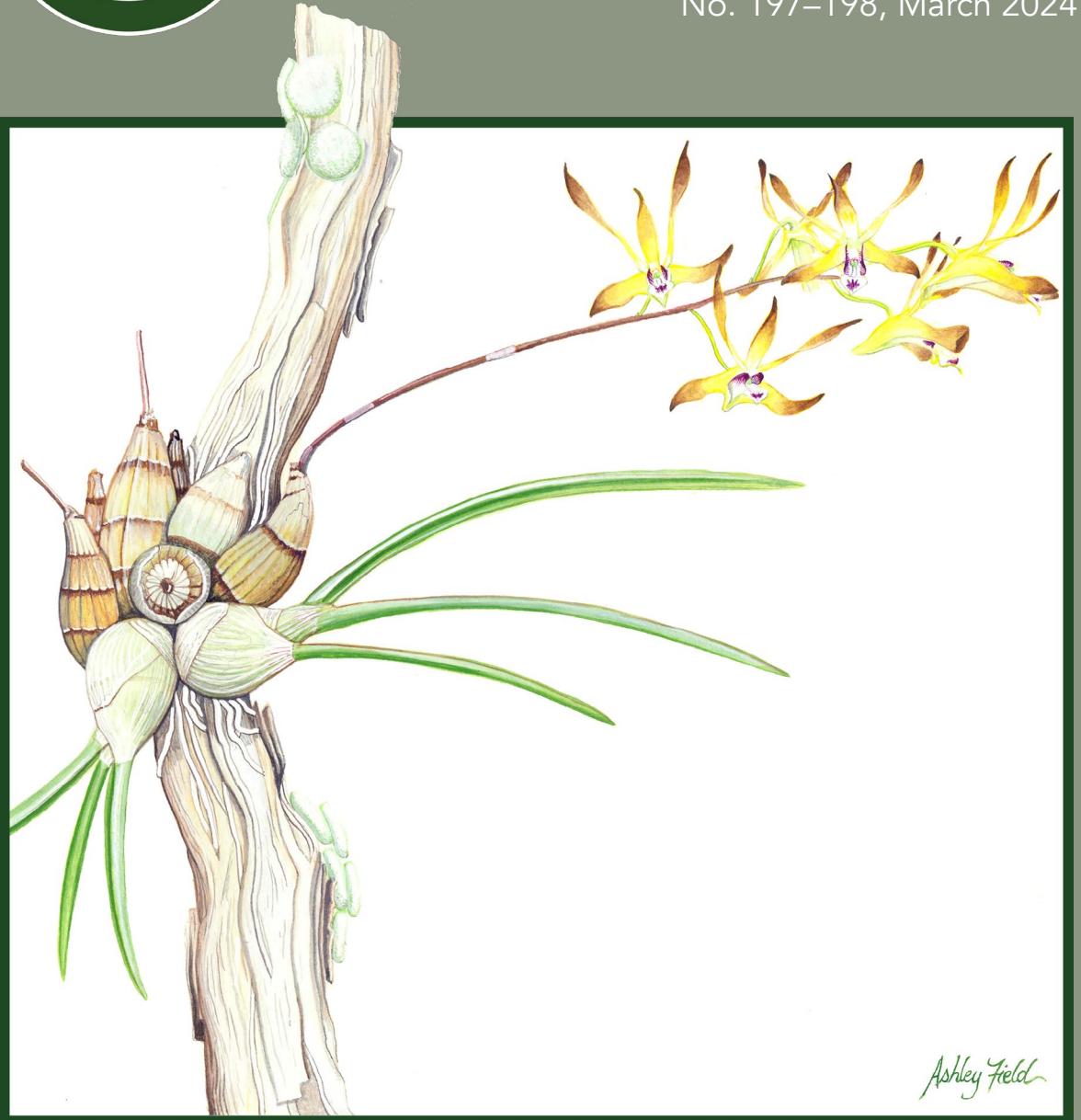




Newsletter

Australasian Systematic Botany Society

No. 197–198, March 2024



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ASBS AGM 2024

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Society's 45th AGM

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From the President

Katharina Nargar ASBS President

The 50th anniversary year of ASBS has drawn to a close with a truly grand finale, the Biosystematics conference 2023 held in Canberra. The joint conference of the Australasian Systematic Botany Society, Australian Biological Resources Study, Society of Australian Systematic Biologists and Australasian Mycological Society was a tremendous success, celebrating and showcasing the achievements of our vibrant Australasian biosystematics community and outlining our ambitions for the future to meet the challenges ahead. Many thanks to Mike Bayly as ASBS representative of the conference organising committee as well as all involved in the organisation of the conference. The Biosystematics conference report in this newsletter provides a great account of the many highlights of the conference. I would also like to thank the New Zealand chapter convenors Heidi Meudt and Rob Smissen as well as Ilse Breitwieser for organising a special celebratory event and a workshop for our New Zealand members to commemorate the 50th ASBS anniversary.

Congratulations to Tom May for being awarded the Nancy T. Burbidge medal 2023, the highest award of the Society. The award was presented to Tom at this year's Biosystematics conference and honours Tom's longstanding and significant contributions to the discovery, description, understanding and conservation of Australia's vast fungal diversity. Throughout his career, Tom has brought substantial energy to improving knowledge of fungal diversity, has been a leader in fungal systematics and nomenclature nationally and internationally, and has been passionate about communicating the diversity and importance of fungi. Tom has also been an enthusiastic teacher and mentor, training the next generations of fungal scientists as well as many citizen scientists. Well done Tom and highly deserved!

Congratulations are also in order for Steve Hopper, who was recently listed as one of the ABC Science Show's Top 100 Australian Scientists. Thank you for being a passionate spokesperson for our discipline and the conservation of Australia's unique flora.

As every year, the conference presentations of ASBS students and early careers were of high quality and it was really heart-warming to see so many cutting-edge research projects being undertaken by the next generation of systematists and taxonomists. Congratulations to this year's winner of the Pauline Ladiges Award Sophie Newmarch (University of Auckland), to Brooke Raphael (University of Southern Queensland) who won the ASBS prize for the best speed talk, and to Consolata Nanjala (James Cook University) for winning the Bob Anderson Award 2023 for the best presentation of a student from a developing country.

In terms of other news, I am really thrilled about the new ASBS website (<https://asbs.org.au/>) which was launched at this year's AGM by Kelly Shepherd, who courageously led the website redevelopment. I hope that you are enjoying the new look and features of the website, including the news blog and a dedicated members area as much as we do. Please send your items for the news blog to the webmasters, Kelly Shepherd and Anna Monro. We love to hear from you.

On a related matter: Lizzy Joyce is stepping down as ASBS Newsletter Editor with this issue. Many thanks to Lizzy for having been such a fabulous newsletter editor and having given the ASBS Newsletter a fresh look. The editor position is now vacant and Council is seeking a new Editor. Please contact Council or Lizzy (E.Joyce@lmu.de) if you are interested in joining the editorial team.

Best wishes,
Katharina

New Life Members of ASBS:

Alexander S. George AM & Anna M. Munro

Katharina Nargar ASBS President

ASBS Council is delighted to welcome two new Life Members to the Society: Alexander Segger George AM and Anna Munro were awarded ASBS life memberships in recognition of their history of service and significant contribution to the Society. The certificate of life membership was presented to the two awardees at the Annual General Meeting in Canberra in November 2023. Alex and Anna join three other living Life Members Robyn Barker, Bill Barker and John Clarkson.

Alexander S. George AM

Alex has been a foundation member of the Society and an active member of the Society since its inception. Alex was member of the inaugural Council serving four terms as Councillor (1973-1979) and instigated the Perth Chapter with a first meeting in June 1973. Alex served as Chapter convenor from 1973-1975 (Perth) and 1986-1988 (Canberra). Alex has assisted in organising four conferences in Western Australia on behalf of the Society. In addition to the inaugural conference held in Perth in August 1973, most notable Being Dampier 300 held in Perth in December 1999 with SASB, and Investigator 200 held in Albany in December 2001. Alex served as ASBS Newsletter editor from 1978 to 1980 producing eleven issues (*ASBS Newsletter* no. 15–25) and assisted Barbara Barnsley to produce *ASBS Newsletter* no. 54. Alex stepped in again in 2020 to help ensure the newsletter continued to be produced by taking on the role as Associate Editor in 2020 seeing four issues to print. Alex has also been a prolific contributor of articles to the newsletter with over 150 contributions. Alex is a valued member of our community and his outstanding contributions to systematic



Above Alex George presenting a talk to the Western Australian Naturalists' Club in October 2021. Photo: Alex George.

botany were recognised by the award of the Nancy T. Burbidge Medal in 2004.

Anna M. Monro

Anna is a well-known and valued member of our Society, e.g., through her roles as nomenclatural reviewer for taxonomic manuscripts for the *Australian Systematic Botany Journal* or her contribution to the latest version of the International Code of Nomenclature for algae, fungi, and plants



Left Anna Monro being awarded ASBS Life membership at the ASBS Annual General Meeting in November 2023. Photo: Murray Fagg.

(Turland et al. 2018). Anna joined the Society over two decades ago, in December 2001 and served four terms on Council as Treasurer (2004/05 to 2007/08). Anna is the current Public Officer of the Society and has held this position since 2013, which makes her the longest standing Public Officer in the history of the Society. Since 2013, Anna has been the Society's webmaster, a responsibility she initially shared with Murray Fagg until Murray's retirement. Anna assisted with the recent migration of the ASBS website to a new hosting platform and continues in the role of webmaster together with Kelly Shepard. Through her roles, Anna has been continually supporting the Society, and more often than not behind the scenes. Through this award, Council is acknowledging Anna's continued and critical contributions to the day-to-day running of the Society.

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Biosystematics 2023

Conference Report

Andrew McDougall, Patricia Chan, Helen Kennedy, Francis Nge, Luis Williamson & Fran Guard

Biosystematics 2023 was held as a joint conference of the Australasian Systematic Botany Society (ASBS), Society of Australian Systematic Biologists (SASB), the Australian Biological Resources Study (ABRS), and the Australasian Mycological Society (AMS).

The conference was held at the Kambri Cultural Centre, on the campus of the Australian National University, from the 27th to the 29th of November, with workshops and field trips on the 26th and 30th.

The conference theme was "Celebrating the past | Planning the future." With this year marking the 50th Anniversary of both the ABRS and the ASBS much celebrating was done (read — cake was eaten). With the diverse group of scientists, researchers, curators, policy makers and students assembled a sizable amount of work and planning for the future was also accomplished.

Sunday, November 26
Workshop day!

With 'AI' dubbed word of the year 2023, Alexander Schmidt-Lebuhn and Nunzio Knerr had their finger on the pulse with their workshop 'Image Classification Models for Species Identification' held at Australian National Botanic Gardens (ANBG) Crosbie Morrison Building.

In the 'Nomenclature Workshop', held at the ANBG Banksia Centre, Mark Harvey made intelligible and accessible the art of describing new animal taxa without breaking any rules.

Later, the marathon of socialising/networking began with a welcome mixer at

Kambri, generously sponsored by BushBlitz.

Monday

On Monday the 27th, delegates were welcomed to country by Wally Bell. Wally is a Ngannawal elder who has long been a champion for Aboriginal caring for country. We were privileged to receive a safe right of passage on Ngannawal land. Chennupati Jagadish, the President of the Australian Academy of Science then officially opened the conference.

The first plenary speaker was Prof. Doug Hilton AO, the newly appointed Chief Executive Officer of CSIRO. He shed light on the significance of systematics and taxonomy in the field of biology and conveyed a sincere enthusiasm for the field, drawing from his own research in moth taxonomy, evolution, and biology. Hilton also shared insightful comments on the landscape of systematics in Australia and offered refreshing perspectives on generational change, surpassing the conventional call for increased government funding.

Dr Olwen Grace, Deputy Director of Science at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Edinburgh delivered the second keynote. This compelling presentation, emphasized the crucial role of natural history collections in scientific research and advocated for the considered and measured utilisation of existing specimens, including types, for modern applications including DNA sequencing. Drawing on her leadership experience with the Accelerated Taxonomy program at the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, Grace provided both strategic insights and practical perspectives on leveraging biological specimens for scientific advancement in the face of the biodiversity

crisis.

After morning tea, the first parallel talk sessions began.



Above Jeremy Bruhl, Russell Barrett and Judy West catching up over lunch.

Session 1 on 'Symposium: 50 years of the ABRS', chaired by Haylee Crawford-Weaver and Bryan Lessard, who currently lead ABRS, described the many achievements of the ABRS over the last five decades in the realm of taxonomy. Following this, Arthur Chapman delved into the history of the Australian Plant Name Index from its inception to the present day. Russell Barrett showcased progress in Fabaceae for the Flora of Australia, while Elena Kupriyanova shared her research on the polychaete fauna. Christopher Glasby presented on ANNiKEY, a taxonomic key system for Annelida. Storm Martin spoke about intriguing findings on trematode flatworm species richness in relation to biogeographical expectations. Thomas Cribb explored the realm of fish trematodes, and Tina Gopalan delivered a short-format talk on living species counts.

Simultaneously, Session 2 on 'Biotic interactions', was chaired by Lara Shepard. In this session, Melinda Greenfield provided insight into fungi, ant-plants, and resident ant interactions. James Bickerstaff explored the phylogenomics of bark and ambrosia beetles concerning biosecurity concerns. Zoe McCarthy delved into the comparative phylogeography of carnivorous plants and

kleptoparasite bugs in eastern Australia. Misha Mangila discussed *Eucalyptus* insect gall development, and Stephanie Goedderz explored plastid phylogenomics in mycoheterotrophic orchids. Patricia Chan's short-format talk shed light on *Darwinia* diversity in relation to scent drivers. Hilary Pearl and Peter Pemberton also presented short-format talks on phylogenetic dispersal patterns of mycorrhizal associations and molecular ecology of endemic outcrop shrub populations, respectively.

Over lunch delegates attended the book launch of the Australian Longhorn Beetles volume 3, celebrating this significant achievement and body of taxonomic work. After lunch, delegates were spoiled for choice with three concurrent sessions.

Session 3 on 'Biogeography', was chaired by Mr Australian biogeography himself, Mike Crisp. The session featured Perry Beasley-Hall who instructed us in the important role cave crickets have in nutrient dispersal in cave systems, Sarin (Putter) Titragul made us all fall in love with blind snakes (the cutest snakes out), and Sophie Newmarch shared insights on Pacific Ocean Iridaceae biogeography. Elizabeth Joyce spoke about her work on the evolution of the mahogany family. Antonio Rayos then presented phylogenetic analyses of Lepidoziaceae, a liverwort family. Short-format talks by Rinchin Yangzom, Kerry Ford, Steven Cooper, and Nicole Gunter covered the topics of the revision of *Pedicularis* for the flora of Bhutan, *Carex* diversity in New Zealand, species radiation across an extreme elevational gradient, and biosystematics of native dung beetles, respectively.

Session 4 on 'Communication, outreach and conservation', chaired by Andrea Wild, featured some Sci-comm heavy hitters. Andre Wanderley do Prado made a case for the role of narrative in systematics. Jo Harding regaled us with tales of Bush Blitz species discovery, and Jaever Santos discussed the impacts of the ABRS National Taxonomy Research Grant Program. Bryan Lessard shared insights into strategic communication

in taxonomy, while Mollie-Rosae Slater-Baker presented on parasitoid wasps. Ying Luo highlighted discoveries in leaf-mining moths through an *iNaturalist* project. Marcel Cardillo rounded out the session with a short-format talk on phylogenetic diversity and conservation.

Session 5 on 'Species delimitation', chaired by Mike Bayly covered all sorts of species from *Agaricus* to *Planigale*. Lara Shepherd discussed the feasibility of using ddRADseq to resolve relationships of spear grasses (*Aciphylla*: Apiaceae). Leon Perrie then explored ddRADseq based analyses within this group. Luke Vaughan shifted the focus to undescribed fungal diversity, while Grace Boxshall tackled species boundaries in *Agaricus*. Linette Umbrello provided insights into diversity in *Planigale* - micro marsupials. Barbara Azevedo de Oliveira, Lorna Ngugi, and Lindsay Shelton followed with short-format talks on *Acacia*, a new *Tetramolopium* species, and the reinstatement of *Persoonia angustiflora*, respectively.

A packed first day was rounded out with two more concurrent sessions. 'Symposium: Taxonomy Australia: meeting the challenge of the Decadal Plan', was chaired by Andy Austin and inspired a lot of forward thinking discussion. A talk by Erinn Fagan-Jeffries presented a view on public engagement and the plight of parasitoid wasps. Keith Bayless used a talk on systematics of Australian acalyptrate flies to explain challenges in biodiversity research. Mark Harvey spoke on taxonomic documentation of Australian arachnids, Rachael King on making crustaceans known, and Lisa Kirkendale presented the *Decadal Plan*'s perspective on bivalves.

Simultaneously, Session 7 on which focused on plants studies, chaired by John Clarkson, featured Shelley Rowntree clarifying *Lepidosperma* assemblage. Sangay Dema explored the phylogeny of eastern Australian *Phebalium*, Phil Garnock-Jones delved into the intriguing topic of heterodichogamy in *Ascarina lucida*, Declan Blackburn spoke on *Asteliaceae* systematics, and Aiden Webb tackled *Caesia* phylogenetics. Rob Smissen, Shelley Rowntree (again), and Matthew Barrett wrapped up the session with short-format talks on allopolyploidy and genomics in *Lepidium*, *Chrysocephalum* generic limits, and *Triodia* hummock grass systematics, respectively.

Extra-curricular activities for the evening included the Annual General Meeting of The Society of Australian Systematic Biologists and a social mixer for students and early-career researchers.

The SECR mixer was kindly sponsored by the Environment Institute at the University of Adelaide and was held at Badger & Co. SECR representatives from across the societies got together to organise this event for their peers as an extra opportunity, early in the conference, to get to know each other. Brock Hedges put together a systematics themed bingo sheet to inspire some competitive networking and conference buddies, wearing green name tags made sure everyone felt



Above Illustrated notes by Patricia Chan summarising some talks from session 5.

welcome. The event was a great opportunity to meet new people, reunite with established colleagues and hatch plans for new research projects.



Above Students and early-career researchers mingling at the social mixer. Photo: Tim Collins.

Tuesday

The second day of the conference got off to a flying start with another brilliant plenary. Prof. Simon Ho, professor of Molecular Evolution at the University of Sydney, shared his wealth of expertise in molecular clocks, evolutionary rates, and molecular ecology. Drawing on his pivotal role in establishing the Molecular Ecology, Evolution, and Phylogenetics Lab, where he has mentored over 25 postgraduate students, Prof. Ho's presentation elucidated some of the intricacies of phylogenetic dating analyses, offering attendees a glimpse into the technical methods central to his research. Ho had the students in the audience (and probably many researchers) tapping away furiously at their keyboards taking notes on analyses to run and theory to consider when analysing their own phylogenies.

Prof. Lyn Cook presented the SASB award oration, where she regaled us with a surprising tale of her personal journey from cricket enthusiast/ accomplished sports person to the distinguished figure in our scientific

community. Beyond sharing her personal evolution, Cook's presentation delved into the breadth of her research. Notably, Cook's positive outlook on students' enthusiasm, particularly in the fields of biology and fungi, at UQ's summer schools underscored her dedication to fostering educational opportunities and helping to build up the systematics workforce of the future.

Session 8, themed 'Symposium: Teaching and capacity building,' was jointly chaired by two of our most enthusiastic teachers Andrew Thornhill and Lyn Cook. After a short introduction by Thornhill, Cook delivered a compelling presentation advocating for an integrated approach to systematics education at the tertiary level. Joanne Birch provided an insight into the pivotal role which university herbaria play in training systematists. Andy Austin offered valuable insights into the role of short courses and workshops in the training of student and ECR systematists. Ben Parslow delved into the training of taxonomists from literature, and Bronwyn Collins introduced us to the wildly successful and long running Volunteer Botanical Training Program. Mike Rix, in turn, explored the indispensable role of museums in the training of systematists. The talks collectively tackled challenges and opportunities in educating future systematists. A 20-minute panel discussion concluded the session.

Simultaneously, Session 9 centered on 'Communities,' and was chaired by Elena Kupriyanova. Yi-Kai Tea shared insights into mesophotic coral reefs, while Brock Hedges focused on DNA metabarcoding for freshwater conservation. Nick Murphy provided an exploration of invertebrate forest floor community interaction with fire. Hosna Ara Chordhury Nisha delved into the world of Serendipita fungi as potential barley root endophytes, offering a fresh perspective on symbiotic relationships. Sadia Ayyub then presented on soil-mediated effects of *Eucalyptus viminalis* dieback, unveiling intriguing connections between plant health and soil conditions. Short-format talks by Hilary Pearl, Brooke Raphael, and



Above Left Heidi Zimmer and Anthony Whalen at the launch of the *Flora of Australia: Orchidaceae*. **Right** Orchid themed celebratory biscuits. Photo: Murray Fagg.

Helen Armstrong covered abiotic correlates with diversity in heathlands, new species of endophytic *Coprinopsis*, and an enigmatic snapper parasite, respectively, revealing hidden aspects of various ecosystems and their inhabitants.

During lunch the monumental *eFlora of Australia Orchidaceae* treatment was launched by Heidi Zimmer.

Session 10, 'Biosecurity and biocontrol,' was chaired by Juanita Rodriguez. Patricia Lu-Irving described the challenges posed by invasive species *Lantana camara*. James Buxton demonstrated morphological and molecular approaches for ant identifications, emphasizing the importance of accurate identification in biosecurity. Penelope Mills provided valuable insights into the phylogenetics of scale insects, shedding light on their evolutionary history. Tareva-Chine Atkin-Zaldivar addressed taxonomic revision in the genus *Coccygidium*, offering a comprehensive view of taxonomic challenges. Ryan O'Donnell then presented a new development in fungal taxonomy, showcasing advancements in our understanding of fungal diversity. Short-format presentations by Teresa Lebel and Daniel Huston explored confirming the identity of the exotic *Lepiota* and biosecurity implications of dysfunctional taxonomy in an Australian cereal cyst nematode, respectively. These talks collectively presented a view of

the challenges and implications in the realm of biosecurity and biocontrol.

Session 11, 'Population genomics,' was chaired by Katharina Nargar. Patrick Fahey provided insights into the landscape genomics of the Eastern Redgums, showcasing the role of genomics in understanding ecological patterns. Todd McLay explored genetic differentiation in eucalypts, offering valuable information on population dynamics. Robb Eastman-Densen delved into conservation genomics of the New Zealand limestone outcrop *Gentianella calcis*, highlighting conservation challenges. Jessie Prebble, Stephen Zozaya, Molly Bloomfield, Zjon Coleman, and Zixiong Zhu presented short-format talks on population genetics of critically endangered *Leptecophylla*, assessing population structure in the Cycad *Macrozamia moorei*, and discovering population-level genomic structural variants in wild *Eucalyptus* populations respectively.

Session 12 on 'Phylogeny and Taxonomy', chaired by Mitzy Pepper showcased some of Australia's most challenging taxonomic groups. Mike Rix presented talks on taxonomy, biogeography, and the evolution of trapdoor spiders, Tim Hammer updated on the taxonomy and systematics of *Hibbertia*, Kerry Ford spoke on new rare *Carex* species from the Eastern South Island of New Zealand, and Sofia Samper Carro spoke on new protein sequences for analysing zooarchaeological

and palaeontological Australian marsupials. Jaever Santos presented an introduction to the Auckland University of Technology Lab for Cephalopod Ecology and Systematics. Following this, Karia Garcia, Gareth Holmes and Anne-Cecile Colin presented short-format talks on newly discovered gall-inducing scale insects, incongruence between nuclear and plastid phylogenies, and phylogenomic discordance in the rapid radiation of *Eucalyptus*, respectively.

Session 13 on 'Data and biodiversity informatics', was chaired by Tom May and was the perfect session for the data lovers amongst us. Endymion Cooper covered the topic of Australia's National Species List. This was followed by Hervé Sauquet, who spoke on AusTraits: the Australian plant trait database. Volker Framenau presented on the Fauna Portal and money spiders, and Emma Holvast presented on continuous shape data for phylogenetic reconstruction. Chris Ware discussed the value of targeted biological surveys. Following this, Shelley James, Yumiko Baba, Hannah McPherson and Peter Jobson presented short format talks on streamlining data delivery, historical trends in herbarium collections, an assessment of the use of DArt sequencing in documenting herbarium collections, and a comparison of botanical activities in Australia from 1973 to the present respectively.

Talks in session 14 on 'Palaeo and Evolution', chaired by Marcel Cardillo had us all a bit awe struck and dreaming about the ecosystems of long ago. Keaghan Yaxley provided a talk on global variation in avian phylogenetic diversity, connecting modern bird diversity with historical patterns. Emily Roycroft spoke on speciation across biomes in Australian delicate mice, contributing to our understanding of small mammal evolution. Tara Evans explored ancient Kurrajongs in South Australia, shedding light on the historical distribution of plant species. Jürg Schönenberger delved into early angiosperm flower evolution, offering insights into the evolutionary history of flowering plants. Julia Herting provided a comprehensive

perspective on the impact of fossils on reconstructing ancestral flowers in Ericales, emphasizing the role of paleontological evidence in understanding plant evolution. Andrew Rozefelds spoke on volcanoclastic evidence from silcrete floras of *Pteridium*, offering a glimpse into ancient ecosystems. Short-format talks by Simon Tierny, Maggie Haines, and Giulia Pernia covered the topics of phylogenomics of South West Pacific bees, global brittle star diversity, and patterns of distribution in subterranean crustaceans respectively.



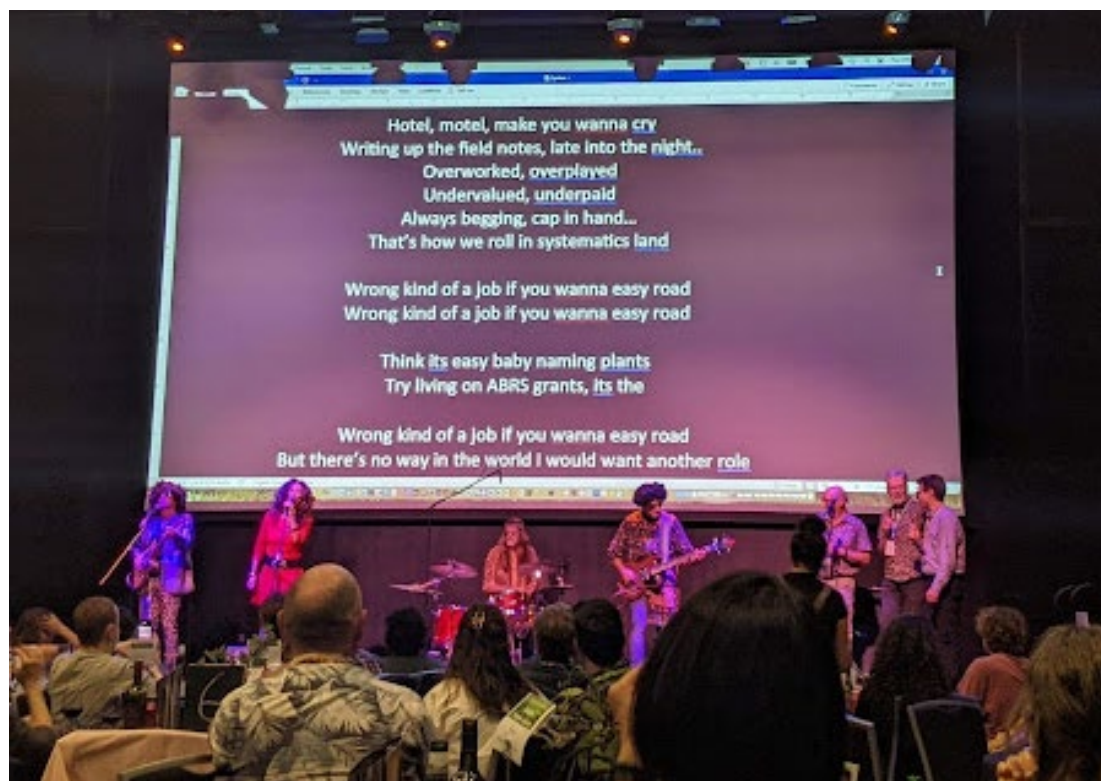
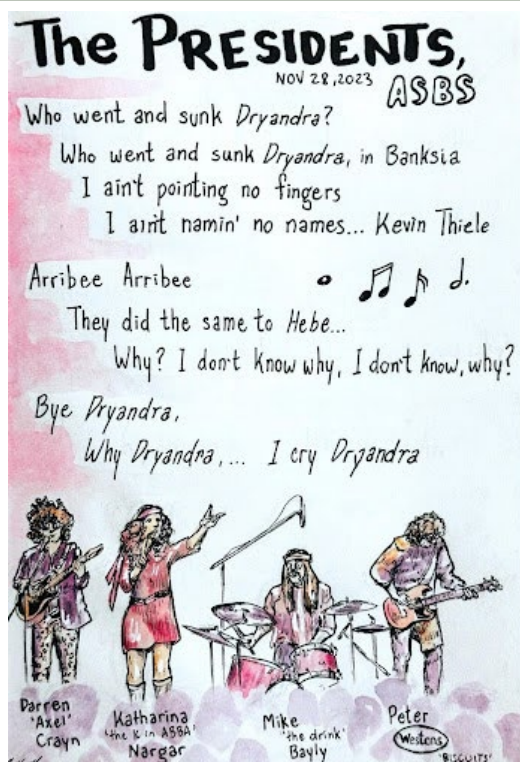
Above Illustrated notes by Patricia Chan summarising some talks from session 14.

The day kept rolling after the last parallel talk session with a panel discussion featuring the review of the *Discovering Biodiversity Decadal Plan*, followed by the launch of the new *Australian Journal of Taxonomy*. This included some straightforward explanations of its capabilities and functions, and attendees had the chance to ask questions. Discussions of a step change in taxonomy stepped us straight through to dinner.

The conference dinner was held in the Manning Clark Hall. The MCs for the evening, Andrew Thornhill and Brendan Lepschi, kept the atmosphere lively with an entertaining trivia quiz. The quiz winners were thrilled to receive such worthy prizes as a pair of socks, or one pencil (from the registration desk).

If you thought Andrew and Brendan's antics were the main show you were in for a surprise. The premiere performance of *The Presidents* (of the ASBS) brought the house down with Australian botanical taxonomy themed renditions of (otherwise) popular songs. Our beloved leaders (past and present), Katharina Nargar (vocals), Darren Crayn (guitar and vocals), Peter Weston (base) and Mike Bayly (drums) gave the performance of their musical careers.

The lyrics were rearranged to address key issues, such as *Dryandra* sinking into *Banksia*, the contribution of Karen Wilson to the correct use of botanical Latin, and the challenges faced by poorly funded field botanists. The topics were set to tunes like *La Bamba*, *Take a Walk on the Wild Side*, *Pinball Wizard*, and *It's a Long Way to the Top*. We have it on good authority that *The Presidents* are taking song and theme requests for next year's performance.



Above The Presidents performing at the conference dinner by Patricia Chan. **Below** Darren Crayn, Katharina Nargar, Mike Bayly and Peter Weston aka "The Presidents" were joined by other past presidents of the ASBS—Dan Murphy, John Clarkson and Mike Crisp— on stage for an encore performance.

Wednesday

On Wednesday morning, those nursing weary heads were brought back to life by a captivating presentation on innovative approaches to expedite biodiversity discovery and monitoring by Prof. Rudolf Meier, from the Centre for Integrative Biodiversity Discovery in Berlin. Focusing on hyper-diverse invertebrate groups, Meier's pioneering work incorporates robotics, machine learning imaging, and nanopore sequencing, offering a promising solution to the challenges of sorting, identifying, and describing these elusive "dark taxa." In discussing scaling up taxonomic descriptions and sequencing for insects through automation, he emphasized the potential of applying rapid techniques in developing countries with high biodiversity but limited facilities for study.

Rudolf was followed by Dr Tom May, who delivered the ASBS Nancy T. Burbidge Lecture. Tom is a Principal Research Scientist in Mycology at Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria, with over three decades of expertise in macrofungi, and shared insights from his extensive career dedicated to the taxonomy, ecology, and conservation of fungi.

After morning tea we launched into another round of parallel talk sessions. Session 15 on 'Cryptic species,' chaired by Michelle Guzik, featured talks exploring hidden biodiversity. Mike Crisp presented on the separation of cryptic conifer species in southern Australia, Alicia Toon delved into the complex history of the *Macrozamia plurinervia* group, and Frances Guard discussed the surprising variability of the velvet parachute fungus. A talk by Andrew McDougall addressed cryptic species in orchids, and Scott Cutmore spoke on the topic of cryptic trematodes species richness. Chen-Hsin Fan, Torin O'Connell, and Nicole McMullen presented short-format talks on cryptic species within *Apiomorpha strombylosa*, within *Apiomorpha calycina*, and within *Orchrogaster lunifer* respectively.

Session 16 on 'Symposium: Genomics of Australian Plants 1,' chaired by David

Cantrill showcased the remarkable research achievements made through collaboration with GAP. Alexander Schmidt-Lebuhn provided insights into the Australian Angiosperm Tree of Life, and Theo Allnut spoke on bioinformatic aspects of the GAP reference genome project. Trevor Wilson presented a talk on evolution and diversification of Australian *Teucrium*. Luis Williamson spoke on the topic of evolution of Australian *Drosera*. This was followed by Caroline Puente-Lelievre, who spoke on expanding the epacrid tree of life. The last talk for the session was presented by Anže Žerdoner Calasan and covered the genomic history of the Australian *Chenopodium* alliance.

The book launch of the *Australian Botanical Liaison Officer Scheme* at Kew at lunchtime gave all in attendance an insight into a fascinating time in Australian botanical taxonomy. Several past liaison officers, including Jeremy Bruhl, Michael Crisp, Alex George, Juliet Wege, Judy West, Peter



Above John Clarkson and Alex George at the book launch of *The Australian Botanical Liaison Officer Scheme* at Kew. Photo: Murray Fagg.

Weston, Annette Wilson and Karen Wilson, were present.

After lunch, two parallel sessions continued to offer intriguing perspectives. Session 17 on 'Hyperdiverse taxa' was chaired by Erin Fagan-Jeffries and covered a spectrum of hyper diverse-groups. Rose Andrew discussed combinatorial speciation in *Eucalyptus*, Shannon Tetley focused on Australian Mesostoinae using mitogenomes, Yun Living Li spoke on the phylogenetics of a hyperdiverse beetle radiation and Andre Wanderley do Prado explored taxonomy and systematics of wolf spiders. Pedro de Souza Castanheira announced a potential new family of orb-weaver spiders, Peisong Tian presented on a taxonomic revision of *Trachymela* beetles, and Consolata Nanjala spoke on trait evolution patterns in Australian orchids.

Session 18, a 'Symposium: Genomics of Australian Plants 2,' chaired by Caroline Puente-Lelievre, continued the exploration of genomics. Daniel Murphy covered *Acacia* phylogenomics, Francis Nge spoke about the systematic and taxonomic implications of phylogenetic incongruence, and Benjamin Anderson spoke about the feasibility of use of Angiosperms353 in population genomics. Laura Simmons presented on new discoveries in *Cassia tomentella* and *Samadera bidwillii* species complexes, and Harvey Orel finished the session with a talk on conservation genetics of *Zieria*.

Session 19 on 'Dark taxa,' chaired by Camille Truong, explored hidden realms in biodiversity. The opening talk by Michelle Guzik discussed building a custom barcode reference library for subterranean groundwater communities. Bryan Lessard spoke on resolving cryptic species within *Culex annulirostris* using museum genomics, and Ying Luo spoke on the topic of taxonomic revision of leaf mining moths *Phyllocnistis*. Nerida Wilson spoke on the National Biodiversity DNA Library, and Camille Truong spoke on the challenges of linking of fungal DNA barcodes to fungal names.

Session 20 on 'Methods,' chaired by Steve Cooper, delved into various novel scientific approaches in Systematics. Jeremy Wilson discussed a description workflow for 40+ new species of wishbone spiders of Eastern Australia, Alicia Grealley presented on recent advancement in cost-effective target sequence capture approaches, Juanita Rodriguez compared whole-genome sequencing against target capture in Hymenoptera specimens, and Andrew Thornhill closed the session with an exploration of global spatial angiosperm phylogenetics.

With the last talk of the conference delivered the only thing left to do was present prizes for the best student talks and thank the many organizers and sponsors for their valued contributions. Separate student prizes were offered by SASB (supported by Pensoft publishers) and ASBS (supported by CSIRO Publishing and ASBS). For the SASB prizes, Sarin (Putter) Titragul won the prize standard (15 min) talk, Helen Armstrong won the prize for best speed (5min) talk, and Patricia Chan won the runner up best speed talk. For the ASBS prizes, Sophie Newmarch won the Pauline Ladiges award for best presentation,



Above ASBS president Katharina Nargar presenting Consolata Nanjala the Bob Anderson Award. Photo: Murray Fagg.

Brooke Raphaelwone the prize for best speed talk and Consolata Nanjala won the Bob Anderson award supporting the best speaker from a developing country.

The Australian Systematic Botany Society AGM that evening was arguably the most exciting AGM we have had in years! The shiny, new [ASBS website](#) was officially launched, thanks to the hard work of council but especially to the herculean efforts of councillor Kelly Shepherd. As if that wasn't exciting enough, Patricia Chan gave us a sneak peek into the ongoing process of



Above Alex George and Karen Wilson, who are founding members of the society cutting the ASBS 50th anniversary cake after the AGM.

designing a new logo for the society.

Thursday

On Thursday, a group of hard-working students undertook the BEAST 2 workshop led by Remco Boukaert and Jordan Douglas. A group of adventurers also set out on the conference field trip, a hike to Square Rock in Namadgi National Park.

From a student's perspective, Biosystematics 2023 provided a thoroughly enriching learning experience. The week-long immersion into the world of Australian biodiversity,

taxonomy, phylogenetics, biogeography, ecology and conservation was inspiring and motivating, but most of all really good fun. To have the Australian systematics community back together after several long years of predominantly virtual interactions, was a great reminder of the power of community. There are many serious challenges we are facing as biodiversity scientists but events like this remind us that our best chance of rising above these challenges is together.

A heartfelt thank you goes to the dedicated individuals comprising the organizing committee, who made the conference the brilliant success it was. Special recognition is extended to the Core Committee members, including Michelle Guzik from the Society of Australian Systematic Biologists, Mike Bayly from the Australasian Systematic Botany Society, Haylee Weaver from the Australian Biological Resources Study, Claire Stephens from the Australian National University, Camille Truong from the Australasian Mycological Society, Brendan Lepschi from CANB, and Erinn Fagan-Jeffries from The University of Adelaide. Their collaborative efforts and commitment were instrumental in making the event a rewarding experience for students. Gratitude also extends to the Strategic Committee members Andy Austin, Judy West, Craig Moritz, and Kevin Thiele for their invaluable contributions to the organization and execution of the conference. To everyone else who volunteered their time to make this a successful event, from the registration desk to AV assistants and the MC's at the conference dinner, thank you!

Naturalists in Namadgi National Park

Conference Field Trip Report

Shirley McLaran and Sophie Newmarch



Above Field trippers at Woods Reserve.

Around 35 conference attendees participated in the field trip to Namadgi National Park on the 30th of November. The attendees split into two groups to walk the Square Rock Trail. In the allotted 3.5 hours one group walked to the summit and back, approx. 10kms in total, while the other group took a more leisurely stroll, turning around at Smokers Flat.

Smokers flat walk – by Shirley McLaran

Given the inclement weather and gambling on the views being reduced by cloud cover, I opted for the shorter walk. This allowed plenty of time to explore and take photos for posting on *iNaturalist*. It was pleasing to see around 430 observations of 154 species posted by 10 observers in the group.

The trail began in a boggy area where *Epacris breviflora* and *Gahnia subaequiglumis* stood out, then climbed gradually into mixed eucalypt forest. The forest floor was littered with large granite boulders and the understorey was dominated by *Daviesia mimosoides* in fruit, while *Cassinia* spp., *Olearia* spp. and *Veronica derwentiana*

were flowering. The trail levelled out as we approached the grassy herb field called Smokers Flat.

I regularly walk with plant enthusiasts, but this walk was extra special due to the presence of botanists, mycologists and entomologists



Above Robb Eastman-Densem Botanising at Smokers Flat. Photo: Patty Chan.

brought together by the joint conference. Thanks to Helen Kennedy and Mike Bayly for organising the trip.



Above Not perturbed by the weather, some participants in a boggy section near the start of Square Rock trail. Photo: Shirley McLaran.

Square rock walk – by Sophie Newmarch

I was part of the group of nine who hiked to Square Rock with fingers crossed we would get a view. The hike was stunning in terms of the flora and landscape features. Many plants were in flower including alpine shaggy pea (*Podolobium alpestre*), and billy buttons (*Craspedia variabilis*) in addition to the ones mentioned by Shirley. An ink-cap fungus (*Coprinus* sp.) was spotted as well as male and female galls on eucalypt leaves.

When we reached the summit, we were in luck and were able to see across the ranges covered in mixed *Eucalyptus* forest that showed signs of recovery from the 2020 bush fires. We had fun climbing the boulders and taking in the view.

On our descent, we came across a beautiful red belly black snake (*Pseudechis porphyriacus*) by the side of the path. I was excited to see a snake until I was informed it was quite poisonous. We managed to skirt around it and return to the bus.

The picnic lunch of Bahn mi was delicious and fuelled more escapades into the surrounding bush. Somehow Helen and Mike managed to herd us back onto the bus to arrive on time. Everyone I spoke to on the ride home



Above Patty Chan, Sophie Newmarch and Harvey Orel enjoying the views on top of Square Rock. Photo: Mike Bayly. **Below** At the summit of Square Rock. Photo: Patty Chan.

agreed it was an epic conference fieldtrip and were very grateful to Helen and Mike for organising it.



Above A sleepy red belly black snake. Photo: Sophie Newmarch



Australasian Systematic Botany Society Inc.

45th Annual General Meeting

29th November 2023, Australian National University, Canberra

Minutes

Tim Collins ASBS Secretary

Annual General Meeting
Wednesday, 29 November 2023, 17.00 AEDT
Kambri Cultural Centre, Australian National University (ANU), Canberra, Australia.
AGM held in-person and via Zoom link:
<https://unimelb.zoom.us/j/88400576204?pwd=UDJIRIRnQjFSSnVyYks1VUtKOVppdz09>
Password: 024508

Welcome and apologies [Katharina]

Meeting opened at 5:00 pm (AEST)

Apologies: Heidi Meudt, David Mabberley

Present: ASBS Council: Katharina Nargar, Mike Bayly, John Clarkson, Kelly Shepherd, and 55 members were present in-person.

Katharina welcomed everyone to the 45th AGM of our society.

Minutes of previous AGM were published in the ASBS Newsletter 193-194:14-15) and taken as read.

Moved as a true record of the meeting by Peter Jobson.

Seconded by Kelly Shepherd.

Reports

President [presented by Katharina Nargar]

Treasurer [presented by John Clarkson].

Student/ECR Subcommittee [presented by Helen Kennedy/Patrick Fahey/Andrew McDougall]

ASBS newsletter [presented by Lizzy Joyce]

Research Committee [presented by Mike Bayly]

Webmaster [presented by Kelly Shepherd]

Facebook [presented by Mike Bayly]

Reports will be published in the Newsletter with these minutes.

Other business

Life Membership Awards [presented by Katharina]: Awarded to Alex George and Anna Monro

New website [presented by Kelly Shepherd]. Kelly detailed the new look and features of the website <https://asbs.org.au/>. Many features including payment of annual subscriptions and donations to the Research and General funds are available on the new website. Students will need to update their

status on the website when their studies are complete.

Close of meeting: 6:40 pm (AEST)

New logo [presented by Kelly Shepherd/Patty Chan]. Patty outlined the project brief and how they developed a list of patterns using similar logos. They talked about taxon selection and the incorporation of the membership survey suggestions. Patty has drafted some logos to develop a final logo that will be voted on by the membership early in 2024 to decide whether to accept the new logo or retain the existing logo.

General Business

A question was raised from the floor regarding student status updates on the new website. Students will need to update their status on the website when their studies are complete.

Thanks and congratulations were extended to Kelly Shepherd from the floor by Hervé Sauquet and Murray Fagg.

New ASBS Council

Katharina Nargar announced the new ASBS Council. All positions have been filled. John Clarkson is moving from Treasurer to Vice-President, Mike Bayly is moving from Vice-President to Treasurer, Heidi Meudt and Kelly Shepherd are leaving Council and we welcome Tim Collins is joining as Secretary, Katharina Nargar remains as President. Three nominations were received for the two Councillor positions. An online ballot was held. Voting closed at 5pm AEST on 24 November. Lalita Simpson and Kelly Ford were the successful nominees.

Katharina Nargar – President
John Clarkson – Vice-President
Mike Bayly – Treasurer
Tim Collins – Secretary
Lalita Simpson – Councillor
Kerry Ford – Councillor

An ASBS birthday cake was cut as part of the 50th birthday celebration of the society.

President's report

Katharina Nargar ASBS President

50th anniversary of ASBS

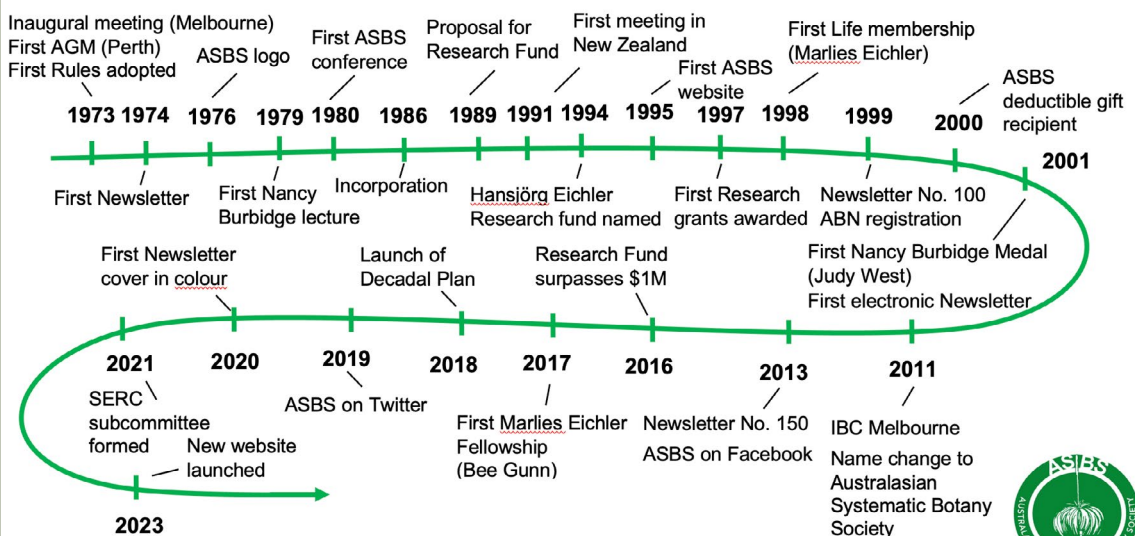
In the 50th anniversary year of the Society, I would like to start with highlighting some of the milestones in the history of ASBS as visualised in the ASBS timeline (below). These include the inaugural meeting of the Society (1973), the first newsletter (1974), logo (1976), and website (1995) as well as the name change to 'Australasian Systematic Botany Society' to better reflect our membership (2011) and the launch of our new website (2023) – just to name a few of the many achievements of our Society.

A society is an institution that only comes to life through its members. Therefore, would like to acknowledge all our members for their manifold contributions to our Society. Our inaugural and early ASBS members: thank you for your pioneering work in shaping the Society. Our Nancy T. Burbidge medallists: thank you for your leadership and longstanding and significant contribu-

tions to Australasian Systematic Botany. All members who served on ASBS Council or its subcommittees, those who served as ASBS public officers or chapter convenors: thank you for keeping the Society running smoothly. All members who have been involved with organising ASBS conferences, including fieldtrips, workshops and social events: thank you for providing us with a stimulating scientific forum to meet, exchange ideas and form long-lasting friendships. All newsletter editors, editorial teams, newsletter contributors, Facebook posters, and Twitterers: thank you for keeping us informed and connected. And last but not least, all our members past and present: thank you for being such a great bunch of people!

Council activities 2023-2024

In terms of Council activities this term, I would like to highlight three major undertakings which kept Council occupied besides usual Council business: the Biosystematics



Above ASBS timeline 1973-2023. Adopted from John Clarkson (2023), modified.

2023 conference, the new website development, and the logo redesign.

Biosystematics 2023 conference

What an inspiring event the Biosystematics conference was, marking the 50th anniversaries of ASBS and ABRs at a joint conference with the SASB and the AMS! Huge thanks to the conference organisers, Mike Bayly (ASBS), Michelle Guzik (SASB), Haylee Weaver, Camille Truong (AMS), Brendan Lepschi (ASBS/CSIRO) and Erinn Fagan-Jeffries (SASB) and all who contributed to making this conference such a success. From ASBS, special thanks go to Mike for the mammoth task of organising a conference in Canberra from Melbourne. Many thanks to Brendan Lepschi and Helen Kennedy for being part of the local organising committee including organising the field trip; to Alexander Schmidt-Lebuhn for running a workshop on AI; to Helen Kennedy, Tim Collins, and Patrick Fahey of the SERC subcommittee for organising fun networking activities for our SERCs; Brendan Lepschi and Andrew Thornhill for a hilarious bingo night and my fellow members of 'The Presidents' for musical entertainment at the conference dinner to commemorate the 50th anniversary of ASBS.

New ASBS website

The new website has been over three years in the making, which was a huge project courageously led by Kelly Shepherd. Many thanks to Kelly for your vision and for leading the charge for this project with such determination and despite all the hick-ups and challenges along the way. This has been a truly massive effort! Many thanks go also to Stephanie Hunter from Silvercode for developing the website and for her eloquent problem-solving to make everything work for us, as well as Anna Monro and all members of the past three Councils for their assistance, contributions, and feedback along the way. Kelly will provide more details in her website report and the launch of the new website at this AGM.

Logo redesign

Council has initiated work on the redesign of the ASBS logo this year. For this work, Council really wanted to engage someone who is as passionate about plants and systematic botany as we all are. Therefore we are excited that we were able to engage Patty Chan, an ERC and member of the Society, who stood out to us for her exceptional creativity and botanical artwork. Patty has been working on the logo redesign with Kelly and myself since earlier this year. Patty will provide an overview about the progress on the logo redesign so far at this AGM.

Newsletter

Newsletter editor Lizzy Joyce will step down at the end of this year. Many thanks to Lizzy for having given our newsletter a fresh look and for producing the newsletter at such a high standard. Thanks to the whole newsletter team for their contributions as well. Council is now recruiting a newsletter editor, please get in touch with Council or the newsletter team if you are interested in the role. Kelly Shepherd has kindly agreed to join the newsletter team to assist with the new editor with the newsletter layout. Many thanks, Kelly.

New ASBS Life Members

In the 50th anniversary year of the Society it is my great pleasure to announce that Council has awarded Life membership to Alexander Seger George AM and Anna Monro. [More on the two new ASBS Life Members on page 3 of this issue].

Chapter convenors

As reported in Newsletter 195, several chapter convenors are stepping down from their roles. Many thanks to the outgoing chapter convenors Robyn Barker (Adelaide), Jeremy Bruhl (Armidale), Frank Udovicic (Melbourne), and Juliet Wege (Perth) for having been the local contacts for our ASBS members. We welcome Andrew Thornhill as new chapter convenor for Armidale. If you are interested in becoming a chapter con-

venor, please contact Council. If more than one nomination is received for the same chapter, the membership for this chapter will elect the new chapter convenor via vote.

Changes on Council

Heidi Meudt will be leaving Council after serving the maximum term of six consecutive years on Council. Heidi first served in the position of Vice President, in which she did a stellar job at looking after our ASBS grant schemes supporting our SERC members, and then as Secretary, keeping Council on track and ASBS members up to date about ASBS matters. Many thanks Heidi, you will be much missed! Kelly Shepherd will also leave Council at the end of this term. Thank you, Kelly for your manifold contributions as Councillor, in particular the amazing work you have done for our new website, for which we are immensely grateful! We are very grateful that you will remain actively involved in the Society by joining the newsletter team. John Clarkson will step down from his role as Treasurer, which is quite a daunting prospect for Council but luckily John will remain on Council for another year. As the longest serving Treasurer in the history of our Society, we thank John very much for looking after the Society's assets so diligently and for ensuring that the Society has remained in such a sound financial position over all these years. Thank you John for staying on Council and assisting the incoming Treasurer transitioning into this demanding role. And last but not least, many thanks go to Mike Bayly for his diligent work as Vice President, looking after the Societies' grant schemes and for the organisation of the Biosystematic 2023 conference on behalf of the Society.

2024 Council

Council received a single nomination for each of the roles of President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. Three nominations were received for the role of Councillor and an online ballot was held for the two Councillor positions. The Council will, after this AGM include Katharina Nargar (me) continu-

ing as President, John Clarkson moving from Treasurer to Vice President, Tim Collins as newly joining Secretary, Mike Bayly moving from Vice President to Treasurer, Lalita Simpson continuing as Councillor, and Kelly Ford as newly joining Councillor. We are very happy that Tim Collins is joining Council as a former member of the SERC subcommittee and that with Kelly Ford a representative of our New Zealand membership is joining Council. I look forward to continuing to work with the (partly) new Council in 2024!

References

John Clarkson (2023): In the beginning... A snapshot of 50 years. *ASBS Newsletter* 195: 4-5.

Treasurer's report 2022/2023

John Clarkson ASBS Treasurer

1. Introduction

I am pleased to present the financial statement of the Australasian Systematic Botany Society Inc. (ASBS) for the year ended 30 June 2023 (Appendix 1). The finances of the Society are run on a financial year basis with data reported on a full cash basis.

Philippa E. Whitting of McKinnon & Co. Atherton audited the accounts once again. Her report to members is attached as Appendix 2.

2. Membership

Table 1 summarises the number of members as of 16 November 2023. For the first time in several years, the number of people joining the Society has been greater than members lost to resignation or death and numbers have increased slightly since the last report (+11). It is sad to note the passing of four long term members this year, three of whom joined the Society in 1973 and 1974.

Table 1 Membership of ASBS as of 1st November 2020 (non-financial members in brackets).

Fee	Full	Concessional	Gratis	Total
Ordinary	195 (33)	n/a	0	195 (33)
Student	n/a	52 (10)	0	52 (10)
Retiree	n/a	68 (7)	0	68 (7)
Unemployed	n/a	6 (2)	0	6 (2)
Institutional	4 (0)	n/a	14	18 (0)
Life	n/a	n/a	4	4
Total	199 (33)	126 (19)	18	343 (52)

Of some concern, however, is the high number of non-financial members, almost double that reported last year. This, despite several reminder notices being sent. The Society's primary means of communication is now via email and it is important that members let the Secretary or the Treasurer know if their address has changed. Under Rule 5(1)(d), a

member who remains unfinancial for more than two consecutive years ceases to be a member of the Society. Seven members were recently struck off and 10 more may be lost soon.

The following new members have been admitted to the Society since the last AGM:

Stephanie Chen	Australian National Herbarium	Ordinary
Zjon Coleman	University of Queensland	Student
Nicholas Cuff	Northern Territory Herbarium	Ordinary
Eamonn Culhane	University of Technology, Sydney	Student
Robb Eastman-Densem	University of Canterbury	Student
Shelomi Doyle	University of New England	Ordinary
Stella Fish	University of Otago	Student
Andrew Frank	Queensland Herbarium	Ordinary
Emily Hoskin	University of Adelaide	Student
Riyad Hossen	University of Melbourne	Student
Hayden Jones	Massey University	Student
Nina Kerr	Macleod, VIC	Ordinary
Sara Nour	NT Dept of Industry, Tourism & Trade	Ordinary

Samiksha Patel
Brooke Raphael
Rinchen Yangzom

University of Canterbury
University of Southern Queensland
University of New England

Student
Student
Student

3. Management of Funds

3.1. General Fund

The General Fund finished the financial year with a \$12,145 deficit. This is unusual. The last reported deficit was in 2019 and before that 2012. This year's deficit can be attributed to a number of issues.

- With COVID related travel restrictions fully relaxed, Council was able to offer travel grants to postgraduate students from the devolved grant received from the Australian Biological Resources Study (ABRS). \$16,500 received over the 2019 and 2020 financial years had remained largely unspent until this financial year. A similar situation will flow through to the 2023/24 financial year as the balance of the funds are spent.
- With the generous support of the Australian Institute of Botanical Science and the Royal Botanic Gardens Trust, the SECR Conference held at the Australian Botanic Garden at Mount Annan in November 2022 was run at no cost to participants. Some costs associated with the conference were met from ASBS funds. These would usually be recouped from registration fees.
- The lifting of travel restrictions also meant that Council was able to hold a face-to-face meeting for the first time in two years and attend the AGM in person.
- Finally, in this anniversary year, Council resolved to give the Society's web site a much-needed revamp and engaged a professional web design company to assist. This was funded from cash reserves that had accumulated from years of surpluses. There will be further costs associated with this in the 2023/24 financial year.

Assets in the General Fund are held as cash at call or in reasonably short (6-9 months) term deposits. Increases in the cash rate have been reflected in better interest rates offered on term deposits, currently 4.85%, and hopefully will continue to improve for some time.

Regardless of the deficit reported for the past financial year, while the financial position of the General Fund remains strong, my recommendation is to leave membership fees unchanged for 2024. This decision may have to be reviewed for 2025 when costs or savings associated with the upgraded web site and new on-line payment system are known.

3.2. Research Fund

The Research Fund derives its income primarily from donations, investment income, and profits from conferences. As a not-for-profit organisation with tax exempt status, the Society is also able to claim a refund of franking credits paid on its Colonial First State investment. The Society continues to offer up to \$40,000 each financial year to support research projects in plant systematics. Projects supported include the Hansjörg Eichler Research Grants (\$20,000) and the Marlies Eichler Postdoctoral Fellowships (\$20,000). Grants for the 2022/23 financial year totalled \$7,182. No Marlies Eichler Fellowship was awarded in 2022.

This financial year, 64 members (listed below) made donations to the Hansjörg Eichler Research Fund totalling \$16,830. All donors, including the following members who agreed to having their names recorded publicly, are thanked for their generous support:

Rose Andrew
Mike Bayly
Chris Betteridge
Joanne Birch
Barbara Briggs
Margaret Brookes
Patrick Brownsey
Jeremy Bruhl

Kerri Clarke
John Clarkson
Ian Cowie
Darren Crayn
Andrew Franks
Laurie Haegi
Frank Hemmings
Rod Henderson
Gareth Holmes
John Hosking
Betsy Jackes
Laurie Jessup
Richard Jobson
Pauline Ladiges
Robert Lamont
Teresa Lebel
Terry Macfarlane
Merran Matthews
Bill McDonald
Andrew Mitchell
Katharina Nargar
Gareth Nelson
Jo Palmer
Ruth Palsson
Caroline Pannell
Rosemary Purdie
Lindsay Shelton
Kelly Shepherd
Philip Short
Nikola Streiber
Janice Swab
Ian Telford
Kevin Thiele
Stephen Vanleeuwen
Helen Vonow
Barbara Waterhouse
Juliet Wege
Judy West
Peter Weston
Molly Whalen
Annabel Wheeler
Karen Wilson
Peter Wilson
Nicholas Yee

The Research Fund ended the financial year with a surplus of \$31,927, slightly more than the previous financial year and this in a year

where there was no profit from an annual conference. It is pleasing to report a surplus given that global markets are still struggling to recover from the COVID pandemic and facing global economic pressures brought on from rising inflation and the fallout from the war in Ukraine. The Society can confidently maintain the current level of grants.

Figure 1 shows the trend in unit prices over the reporting period. Unit prices remain below the long-term average of \$1.0105 recorded since the fund was established in April 2002 ranging from a low of \$0.8794 on September 20 to a high of \$0.9274 on April 3. This is also below the average (\$0.9890) for the last five financial years. A return to the long-term average would increase the current value of the managed fund by close to \$120,000. It has not been necessary to draw on the managed fund but the first draw down might happen soon.

4. Final Comments

I was keen to continue to serve as Treasurer for one more term after which, having been a member of Council for a maximum of six years, I would have been ineligible to continue. However, having recently retired, and with the Society moving to a largely web-based method of handling subscriptions, continuing as Treasurer would likely prove to be technically impossible given the difficulties I have with maintaining an internet connection at home — one of the few frustrations of living in a rural area. Mike Bayly has nominated for the position and will be elected unopposed at the AGM. Mike has served two terms as Treasurer in 2008/9 and 2009/10 so is familiar with what is required and I have agreed to nominate as Vice-president to help Mike settle into the new role. I have enjoyed my time as Treasurer and would like to thank members for their support over the past five years.

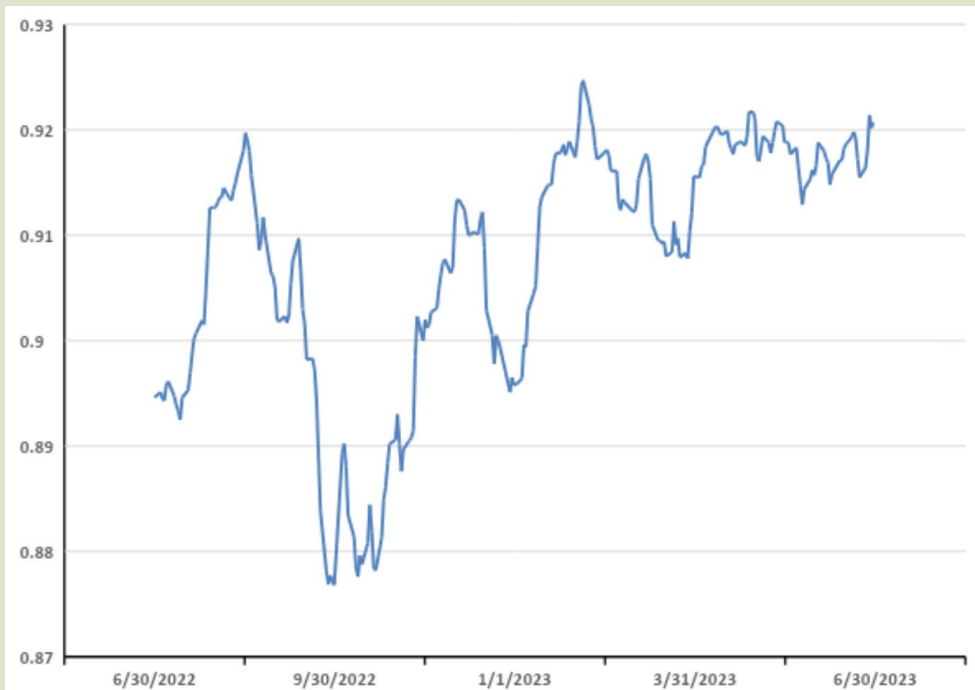


Figure 1 Trend in the sell value of a unit for the reporting period. A high of \$0.9274 was realised in March and a low of \$0.8794 in September. This represents an unrealised difference of \$64,000 in the value of the investment.

5. Summary

The Society remains in a sound financial position and I recommend that:

- membership fees remain unchanged
- with the change in Treasurer, a new auditor be appointed to undertake the 2023/24 annual audit
- the managed fund remains unchanged at least until the current financial markets stabilise.

Appendix 1

Financial Report for the year ended 30 June 2023

Australasian Systematic Botany Society Incorporated

ABN 22092454279



Council's Report

Your Council members submit the financial statement of the Australasian Systematic Botany Society Incorporated for the year ended 30 June 2023.

Council Members

The names of the Council members who held office throughout the reporting period and at the date of this report are:

President	Katharina Nargar	Elected November 2022
Vice President	Michael Bayly	Elected November 2022
Secretary	Heidi Meudt	Elected October 2021
Treasurer	John Clarkson	Elected December 2018
Councillor	Kelly Shepherd	Elected November 2020
Councillor	Lalita Simpson	Elected November 2022

Principal Activities

The principal activities of the society during the reporting period were to promote systematic botany in Australasia.

Significant Changes

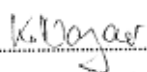
No significant change in the nature of these activities occurred during the reporting period.

Operating Results

The operating results are as set out here under:

	Year ending June 2023	Year ending June 2022
General Fund	(\$12,145.48)	\$3,672.91
Research Fund	\$31,927.01	\$29,036.64
Total	\$19,781.53	\$32,709.55

Signed in accordance with a resolution of the Members of the Council on:


Katharina Nargar (President)

27th November 2023


John Clarkson (Treasurer)

27th November 2023



Income and Expenditure Statement
Australasian Systematic Botany Society Incorporated
For the year ended 30 June 2023

	2023	2022
General Fund Income		
Cheque Account		
Conference		–
Copyright Agency	101.07	172.67
Donation to Eichler Fund	16,830.00	13,165.00
Subscriptions	9,525.00	9,968.28
ABRS Student Travel Grant		–
Refund from Research Fund	2,000.00	
Refund from Conference Fund		11,000.00
Sundry income		–
	28,456.07	34,305.95
Conference Account		
Transfer from General Fund	3,000.00	50.00
GAP Workshop fees	–	240.00
Sponsorship	–	3,700.00
Registrations	–	2,251.18
Refund of deposits paid for ASBS 2020	–	–
Miscellaneous	0.17	5.00
	3000.17	6,241.18
Rabobank Accounts		
Interest High Interest Savings Account	53.09	1.38
Interest Term Deposit 1	1,200.50	465.98
Interest Term Deposit 2	244.70	646.89
	1,498.29	1,114.25
Total General Fund Income	32,954.53	41,666.38
General Fund Expenses		
Cheque Account		
Council expenses	3,533.06	–
Auditor's remuneration	1,441.00	1,419.00
Bank charges, credit card fees	186.47	260.80
Student travel assistance	5,033.31	750.00
Miscellaneous expenses	–	305.98
Newsletter costs	3,188.13	2,333.98
2022 ECR Conference	3,095.54	–
Web page	6,937.50	–
Transfer to Conference Account	3,000.00	–
Transfers to Research Fund	18,685.00	13,570.00
	45,100.01	18,639.76
Conference Account		
Conference platform hosting	–	571.12
Miscellaneous	–	307.70
Social Evening	–	424.89
Transfer to General Account	–	11,000.00
Transfer to Research Account	–	7,000.00



Bank charges, credit card fees	-	-
Refunds	-	50.00
	0.00	19,353.79
Total General Fund Expenses	45,100.01	37,993.47
General Fund Surplus/(Deficit)	(12,145.48)	3,672.91
Research Fund Income		
Donations to Research Fund	16,685.00	13,970.00
Profit from ASBS2021	-	7,000.00
Investment Income – Colonial Wholesale Investment		
Distributions	30,982.60	52,073.40
Management Cost Rebates	1,106.49	1,210.07
Franking Credits	2,585.00	1,107.00
Miscellaneous Income	0.03	3,895.93
Loan from General Fund	2,000.00	
Total Research Fund Income	53,359.12	79,256.40
Research Fund Expenses		
Bank Charges	-	-
Management Fees	12,250.11	14,032.76
Hj. Eichler Research Grants	7,182.00	16,187.00
Marlies Eichler Fellowships	-	20,000.00
Return Loan to General Fund	2,000.00	
Total Research Fund Expenses	21,432.11	50,219.76
Research Fund Surplus/Deficit	31,927.01	29,036.64
Current Year Surplus	19,781.53	32,709.55



Balance Sheet
Australasian Systematic Botany Society Incorporated
As at 30 June 2023

	2023	2022
Assets		
General Fund		
Cash and Cash Equivalents		
General Fund: Cheque Account	23,547.70	40,191.64
General Fund: Rabobank HISA	10,223.74	10,170.65
Conference cheque account	3,064.79	64.62
Total Cash and Cash Equivalents	36,836.23	50,426.91
Investments		
Rabobank Term Deposit 1	65,858.52	64,658.02
Rabobank Term Deposit 2	54,573.09	54,328.39
Total Investments	120,431.61	118,986.41
Total General Fund	157,267.84	169,413.32
Research Fund		
Cash and Cash Equivalents		
Research Fund: Cheque Account	14,890.56	2,802.53
Total Cash and Cash Equivalents	14,890.56	2,802.53
Investments		
Colonial Wholesale Investment	1,228,262.69	1,177,926.92
Total Investments	1,228,262.69	1,177,926.92
Total Research Fund	1,243,153.25	1,180,729.45
Total Assets	1,400,421.09	1,350,142.77
Member's Funds		
Accumulated Surplus	1,350,142.77	1,434,799.17
Current Year Earnings	19,781.53	32,709.55
Unrealised Capital Gain/Loss	30,496.79	(117,365.95)
Total Member's Funds	1,400,421.09	1,350,142.77



Notes to the Financial Statements
Australasian Systematic Botany Society Incorporated
For the year ended 30 June 2023

1. Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

The financial report is a special purpose financial report prepared in order to satisfy the financial reporting requirements of the members. The Council has determined that the Society is not a reporting entity.

The financial report has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of Australian Accounting Standard AASB 1031: Materiality. No other applicable Accounting Standards, Australian Accounting Interpretations or other authoritative pronouncements of the Australian Accounting Standards Board have been applied.

The financial report has been prepared on a cash basis.

The following specific accounting policies, which are consistent with the previous period unless otherwise stated, have been adopted in the preparation of this financial report.

(a) Membership

Membership fees are recorded on a cash basis.

(b) Income Tax

Under present legislation the Society is exempt from income tax and accordingly no provision has been made in the accounts.

(c) Comparative Figures

Where required by Accounting Standards comparative figures have been adjusted to conform with the changes in presentation for the current year.

(d) Members Funds

In accordance with the rules of the Society, accumulated funds are not available for distribution to its members.

Research Committee

The Australasian Systematic Botany Society is an approved research institute and is registered as a charity by the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission.

The approved membership of the Research Committee comprises:

Mike Bayly	<i>Ex officio</i>
Benjamin Anderson	Appointed May 2022
Janet Gagul	Appointed May 2022
Peter Heenan	Appointed May 2022
Murray Henwood	Appointed March 2016
Sarah Mathews	Appointed March 2015
Jennifer Tate	Appointed May 2022



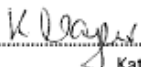
**Statement by the Members of the Council
Australasian Systematic Botany Society Incorporated
For the year ended 30 June 2023**

The Council has determined that the Society is not a reporting entity and that this special purpose financial report should be prepared in accordance with the accounting policies outlined in Note 1 to the financial statements.

In the opinion of the Council:

1. The financial report as set out on pages 1 to 6 presents a true and fair view of the Society's financial position as at 30 June 2023 and its performance for the year ended on that date.
2. At the date of this statement, there are reasonable grounds to believe that the Society will be able to pay its debts as and when they fall due.

This statement is made in accordance with the resolution of the Council and is signed for and on behalf of the Council by:

President 
Katharina Nargar – President

Treasurer 
John Clarkson – Treasurer

Dated this 27th day of November 2023

Appendix 2



CERTIFIED PRACTISING ACCOUNTANTS
ABN 65 010 329 576

McKinnon & Co Accountants Pty Ltd
1/53 Mabel Street, Atherton
PO Box 279, ATHERTON QLD 4883
Telephone (07) 4091 1244
Fax: (07) 4091 3202

Email: accountant@mckinnonandco.com.au
Web: www.mckinnonandco.com.au

INDEPENDENT AUDIT REPORT
TO THE MEMBERS OF AUSTRALASIAN SYSTEMATIC BOTANY SOCIETY INC.

Report on the audit of the financial report

Qualified Opinion

We have audited the accompanying financial report, being a special purpose financial report, of the **Australasian Systematic Botany Society Inc.** (the Association), which comprises the balance sheet as at **30 June 2023**, the income statement, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies and management's assertion statement.

In our opinion, except for the possible effects of the matters described in the Basis for Qualified Opinion paragraph, the financial report of the Association presents fairly in all material respects in accordance with the *Associations Incorporation Act 1981* (as amended by the Associations Incorporation and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2007)

Basis for qualified opinion

Qualification- Segregation of duties

Such is the scope of the Association, it is not practical that internal controls can be constantly in place to provide a high degree of assurance that cash monies are fully accounted for. This qualification is not unusual for a small Incorporated Association.

We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial report section of our report. We are independent of the Association in accordance with the auditor independence requirements of the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (the code) that are relevant to our audit of the financial report in Australia. We have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the code.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Emphasis of matter - basis of accounting

We draw attention to note 1 of the financial report, which describes the basis of accounting. The financial report is prepared to assist the Association to meet the requirements of the applicable legislation. As a result, the financial report may not be suitable for another purpose. Our report is intended solely for the Association and should not be distributed to or used by parties other than the association. Our opinion is not modified in respect of this matter.

Responsibility of management and those charged with governance

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in accordance with the applicable legislation and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of the financial report is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial report, management is responsible for assessing the association's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the association or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.


Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the association's financial reporting process.

Independence

In conducting our audit, we have complied with the independence requirements of Australian professional ethical pronouncements.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial report

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of this financial report.



Philippa Whitting
Director

Office 1, 53 Mabel Street, Atherton Q 4883

Dated this 8th day of November 2023

Newsletter report

Lizzy Joyce ASBS Newsletter Editor

I would like to extend a huge thank you to my Editorial Team — John Clarkson, Todd McLay and Shelley James for all their time, hard work and patience on the *ASBS Newsletter* this year. Our efforts have resulted in three issues of the *Newsletter* published in the past year, including one double issue (no. 193-194, March 2023).

As per tradition, our new President, Katharina Nargar, chose a new cover, which now features a beautiful illustration of *Dendrobium canaliculatum* by Ashley Field. The 2023 issues included contributions for our regular sections of the *President's Report*, *Hansjörg and Marlies Eichler Research Reports*, *History*, *Herbarium Happenings*, *Announcements*, *Book Reviews*, *In Short*, *Obituaries*, *ABRS Reports* and *SECR Subcommittee Reports*. Thank you to all that have contributed to these sections! Todd McLay has continued to do a great job of putting together an entertaining News section to keep members abreast of botanical news in the media and interesting publications. A particularly valuable and interesting addition to the *Newsletter* in the past couple of years has been the 'In the beginning...' series by John Clarkson, who has written an article for each issue looking back at various aspects of the Society's history in the lead up to our 50th Anniversary. We have also continued our endeavours to bring our Student and Early Career Researchers to the

fore in the *Newsletter* with our *SECR Feature* articles.

I would like to encourage all members — at any career stage — to send in items for the *ASBS Newsletter*. It is an important part of our Society that keeps everyone informed and feeling connected across the vast distances of Australasia that is only possible because of the contributions of our members!

Finally, I would like to announce that I am stepping down as *ASBS Newsletter* Editor, with this being my final issue. My move to Germany has made it harder to keep up with *Newsletter* business, and at the beginning of 2023 I suggested to Council that it is time to pass on the baton. I have thoroughly enjoyed having the opportunity to be more closely involved with our Society as Editor of the *ASBS Newsletter*. Since moving overseas I have gained an even greater appreciation for how special our Society is, and it has been fulfilling to spend time contributing to it where I can. My particular thanks go to John Clarkson, Todd McLay and Alex George for your efforts, time and help over the past four years, as well as Shelley James, Anna Monro and the ASBS Councils for your support with editing and publishing. I look forward to keeping in touch with our membership through future issues of the *ASBS Newsletter*!

Webmaster's report

Anna Monro & Kelly Shepherd ASBS Webmasters

For the last financial year, the Society's existing website continued to be maintained by Anna Monro. The site was hosted on a web server based at the Australian National Botanic Gardens (ANBG), as it has been since around December 1995. Since October 2014 the ASBS "subsite" has been aliased as asbs.

org.au, which gave the appearance of an independent domain. Content for the site was supplied by members of the ASBS Council and by the editors of the *Newsletter*.

Over this period the activities of the webmaster were largely "business as usual".

Three issues of the *ASBS Newsletter* were uploaded (no. 191, 192 and 193/194) as soon as possible after receipt. Various routine updates were also made to listings of job and training opportunities and award recipients.

Launch of the new ASBS website

Council has been working behind the scenes over the last few years to develop content for a significantly revamped website. In mid-2023, the company Silvercode was contracted to design the new website using WordPress with WooCommerce functionality. Council worked closely with lead developer Steph Hunter to finesse the design and develop the online membership payment system. The site was successfully migrated to a truly independently-hosted site, while maintaining the asbs.org.au address, and was launched at the AGM in Canberra in early December.

It is hoped the new site will offer significant advantages, including self-service to update

membership details, options for automatic payment of membership subscriptions and donations, and online web editing by a wider range of ASBS Council members. Anna Monro and Kelly Shepherd will continue as webmasters updating content provided by Council and members. Please get in touch via webmaster.asbs@gmail.com if you have feedback about the new site.

We would also like to take the opportunity to thank previous ASBS website editors and IT personnel based at the ANBG for their support over many years and during the recent migration. Thanks in particular to Jim Croft, Greg Whitbread, Andrew Lyne, Murray Fagg, Anne Fuchs and Mohammad Ziauddin.

ASBS Facebook group report

Mike Bayly ASBS Facebook Administrator

The *ASBS Facebook* group, now about 10.5 years old, has grown from 1,727 members in November 2022 to 1,946 members in November 2023. The group is 'public', which means anyone can see the group, its members and posts, but only people in the group can post to the page.

There were 143 posts to the group since the last AGM, soliciting 3047 reactions and 358 comments from group members. We thank all regular contributors for keeping the group lively. Some particularly active members this year were Karen Wilson, Tanya Scharaschkin, Marco Duretto and Jeremy Bruhl.

With changes to Facebook rules in 2022, membership to the group is unvetted, but we changed the group settings this year, so that the ability to post content requires manual approval. We also added some membership questions to help the approval process and

to help separate the spammers from those who are genuinely interested in botany. This has led to a reduction in the number of spam posts getting through, but it does mean that some genuine members might wait a while to have posting rights approved. Despite the tightening, some spam will still get through, and we ask members to report problematic content to us so that we can remove it promptly.

The tired cover image for the group was revamped during the year. It currently features flowers with a golden hue appropriate for our 50th Anniversary year. We will aim to switch it again in due course.

The Facebook group is a great way for the dispersed members of our society to keep in touch and discuss our common interests. If you are on Facebook and haven't yet joined our group, you should!

Research Committee report

Mike Bayly Vice President and Chair, ex officio of the ASBS Research Committee

This is my first and last report, in my current term on council, as Vice President and ex officio chair of the ASBS Research Committee. I took over the role from Hervé Sauquet at the last AGM and will hand it to John Clarkson for the next year.

The Research committee this year included a great team of continuing members, as follows: Ben Anderson, PERTH; Janet Gagul, University of Papua New Guinea; Peter Heenan, Manaaki Whenua – Landcare Research, New Zealand; Murray Henwood, University of Sydney; Sarah Mathews, Louisiana State University, USA; Jennifer Tate, Massey University, New Zealand. Of these, Murray Henwood has flagged his intention to step down before the next grant round, after more than eight years on the committee (commencing March 2016). I'd like to thank Murray on behalf of the society for his great contribution to the committee.

Hansjörg Eichler grants in 2023

For the March round of Hansjörg Eichler grants we received three applications and, as reported in an earlier *Newsletter*, the two funded projects were:

Declan Blackburn (University of Melbourne), An investigation of Asteliaceae (Asparagales) systematics based on whole chloroplast genome sequencing

Patricia Chan (Australian tropical Herbarium) Disentangling Drivers of Diversification: Molecular phylogenomics, historical biogeography, floral evolution, gene flow, and species diversification in *Darwinia* (Myrtaceae).

For the September round of grants, we received four applications. Assessment of applications was still underway at the time of the AGM [but results are announced else-

where in this issue of the *ASBS Newsletter*].

Marlies Eichler Postdoctoral Fellowship

We offer one round of grants per year for this fellowship, with applications closing in July. This year we received one eligible application, and it was fully supported for funding by the committee. The successful fellow was Lalita Simpson, Australian Tropical Herbarium, for the project: "Taxonomy and conservation genomic assessments of threatened orchids". The total amount awarded was \$19,722.

Student travel grants

Over the last three years we have had funds from ABRs (\$16,000 in total) to provide support for student travel for conferences, fieldwork, lab or herbarium visits. The funds were initially meant to be spent in a 12-month period but, because of COVID-related travel restrictions, we were permitted to spend them over multiple years. In July-August 2023 we opened a final round of travel grant applications under this scheme. Applications were assessed by Council (not the Research Committee). Successful recipients in the final round were Antonio Rayos (University of Sydney), Harvey Orel (University of Melbourne), Molly Bloomfield (University of Melbourne), Grace Boxshall (University of Melbourne), Sangay Dema (University of New England), Brooke Raphael (University of Southern Queensland), Frances Guard (University of Southern Queensland), Robb Easteman-Densem (University of Canterbury), and Sophie Newmarch (Massey University). Antonio Rayos was awarded funds to visit AK; the funding distributed to all other students supported travel to our recent Canberra conference.

Student and ECR Subcommittee Report

Helen Kennedy, Patrick Fahey, Andrew McDougall & Paulo Souza Baleeiro
SECR Subcommittee Representatives

The Student and Early Career Researcher (SECR) Subcommittee was formed in August 2021 to address a need for greater representation of SECRs on council. The primary directive of the subcommittee is to support the active ASBS student and ECR community in a safe, diverse and inclusive environment.

Now in its third year, we saw some anticipated turnover of subcommittee members early in 2023. Thank you to James Clugston and Tim Collins for your contributions to the subcommittee. In late 2023, we welcomed three new members; Patrick Fahey, Andrew McDougall and Paulo Souza Baleeiro. The three new members will serve alongside returning member Helen Kennedy.

In 2023, SECR subcommittee members participated in monthly council meetings representing the perspectives of the SECR community. Naturally, the Biosystematics 2023 conference was a big part of the council agenda across many months and the subcommittee took the lead organising three initiatives for SECRs at the conference.

Councillor Kelly Shepherd suggested that a conference buddy system could assist first-timers and those who didn't know many people at the conference to feel more included and welcome. Eight SECRs volunteered to wear a name tag identifying them as a 'conference buddy', i.e. someone approachable and keen to help make others feel comfortable in the sometimes daunting social experience of attending a conference.

An icebreaker round of conference bingo was organised for SECRs, providing openings for new conversations and shared experiences. A big thank you to Brock Hedges from SASB for designing the bingo sheet.

The social mixer sponsored by the Univer-

sity of Adelaide and Environment Institute was organised in collaboration with SECR members from the other attending societies and was a great success. Over fifty SECRs attended and spent a great evening getting to know each other early in the conference. The SECR subcommittee welcomes feedback on the initiatives organised for the conference.

In 2024 the SECR subcommittee has identified improving communication with SECRs as a primary directive. We will again be focusing a substantial amount of energy on SECR engagement at the annual conference, perhaps producing some merchandise for the occasion and organising an SECR focused fieldtrip. Additionally, we would like to promote SECR engagement with the local ASBS chapters and grow the student membership.

As always, feedback and collaboration is always very welcome.

New Zealand ASBS chapters' celebration of the 50th anniversary of the ASBS

Ilse Breitwieser Allan Herbarium, Manaaki Whenua – Landcare Research, Lincoln, New Zealand

The New Zealand ASBS chapters' celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Australasian Systematic Botany Society was held at the Allan Herbarium (CHR), Manaaki Whenua - Landcare Research (MWLR), Lincoln, New Zealand, on 6 December 2023. It was held in conjunction with the New Zealand National Herbarium Network (NZNHN) AGM and its Disaster Preparedness workshop on the following day.

Members of the NZNHN, as well as other guests from Canterbury Museum, School of Biological Sciences University of Canterbury and the Allan Herbarium, first enjoyed lunch and catching up, before I gave my birthday wish address to ASBS (Fig 1).

I reflected on my early days in New Zealand when ASBS became important for me because it gives New Zealand plant taxonomists and systematists their botanical community. However, ASBS was Australian only in those days. John Clarkson, Pat Brownsey and I started talking about whether the society could become Australasian at the 2007 ASBS meeting in Darwin

and at the 2009 meeting in Armidale. Further discussions at the ASBS meeting in Lincoln in 2010 led to a resolution at the AGM to make the society "Australasian". The members voted for a ballot and a second General Meeting. That was held on 15 March 2011 at the National Herbarium of New South Wales. The name change was successful and became valid on that day. This change was aimed at encouraging more New Zealanders, New Caledonians, New Guineans, and Fijians to join and become active members of ASBS. I was the first New Zealander on ASBS Council, followed by Leon Perrie, Jen Tate, Heidi Meudt and now Kerry Ford. Following the ASBS meetings in Auckland in 1991 and Lincoln in 2010, we organised meetings in Palmerston North in 2014 and Wellington in 2019. Phil Garnock-Jones was the first New Zealand Burbidge Medal recipient in 2013, followed by Pat Brownsey in 2017, me in 2018 and Wendy Nelson in 2020.

I also reflected on a few ideas that we had earlier brainstormed, why ASBS is so important to us:

- annual conferences offer networking,



Figure 1 Ilse Breitwieser giving her birthday wish address to ASBS at New Zealand ASBS chapters' celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Australasian Systematic Botany Society Photo by C. Lehnebach

talks on latest research and field trips to botanically interesting places;

- we can meet students and researchers through the society; we have positive, intellectually stimulating and collaborative interactions with other members;
- the society is a safe group of likeminded people that offers professional development opportunities (e.g., workshops, leadership opportunities);
- joining Council is an opportunity to give back and shape the future of the society;
- all members can apply for Eichler research grants;
- there is a new student and early career subcommittee to support and promote this cohort of membership;
- student conferences;
- the society is inclusive geographically;
- the society is key to promoting the various links between Australia and New Zealand.

The links between Australia and New Zealand include quite a few botanists who have moved in both directions across the Tasman, but also the many species we have in common. Considering the 3444 New Zealand species of Spermatophyta, Pteridophyta, and Bryophyta, c. 577 are shared between Australia and New Zealand. This is about 1/5 of New Zealand's flora (based on Checklist of New Zealand Flora 2018).

These links are also demonstrated in our collaboration on the decadal plan "Discovering Biodiversity – A decadal plan for taxonomy and biodiversity in Australia and New Zealand 2018 – 2027". Although New Zealand has not made as much progress in implementing the plan as we had originally dreamt, in spite of hard political times, some progress has been made. It is a tool we should use in future to work more closely together.

All these links are leading to Australasian connections and to wonderful lasting friendships.

Following my informal ASBS birthday wish presentation, Kerry Ford, Jessie Prebble, Anthony Wright, Robb Eastman-Densem and Rainer Vogt, who were attending the event

in person, contributed their birthday wishes to ASBS.

We were so pleased that several of our New Zealand and Australian ASBS members could join our celebration online. Bill Barker filled us in on early ASBS history while John Clarkson said that in his opinion, expanding the Australian Systematic Botany Society to an Australasian one has been an enrichment. This was followed by Heidi Meudt, Jen Tate and Phil Garnock-Jones giving their birthday wishes to ASBS.

Birthday wishes from the ASBS convenor of the South Island, Rob Smissen, concluded the formal celebrations before we cut the cake which Ines Schönberger had so beautifully designed (Fig 2).

We would like to thank ASBS for generously supporting this event by funding the lunch catering and cake.



Figure 2 Ilse Breitwieser and Rainer Vogt showing the beautiful birthday cake designed by Ines Schönberger to the online participants just before Ilse cut the cake. Photo by Sue Gibb © Landcare Research 2023 CC BY 4.0

ASBS supports Disaster Preparedness Workshop for the New Zealand National Herbarium Network (NZNHN)

Ines Schönberger Allan Herbarium, Manaaki Whenua – Landcare Research, Lincoln, New Zealand

As part of the 50th Anniversary celebrations of the Australasian Systematic Botany Society (ASBS), the New Zealand ASBS chapter held a Disaster Preparedness Workshop for the New Zealand National Herbarium Network (NZNHN). The workshop took part on 7 December 2023 at the Allan Herbarium (CHR), Manaaki Whenua – Landcare Research (MWLR), at Lincoln, New Zealand.

The workshop, partially funded by the ASBS, aimed to equip staff from various herbarium collections in New Zealand with the essential knowledge and skills required to safeguard and salvage their valuable botanical collections during emergencies. The significance of this training, particularly for herbarium collections, cannot be overstated given the vulnerability of these repositories to various environmental threats.

Staff from CHR (Allan Herbarium), WELT (Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa), PDD (New Zealand Fungarium), NZFRI (National Forestry Herbarium – Scion), Department of Conservation (DOC Tier 1 Sample Management), MWLR Library as well as the Health, Safety, and Environment Manager of MWLR took part in the workshop (Fig 1).

Lynn Campbell, from Campbell Conservation, a highly qualified paper conservator and a distinguished scholar at the Los Angeles Getty Conservation Institute, led the workshop (Fig. 2). With 32 years of experience and a rich background in conservation, Lynn's expertise was further enhanced by her involvement with the Canterbury Disaster Salvage Team. Lynn's credentials, including her work in Antarctica and various interna-



Figure 1 Participants in action at the Disaster Preparedness Workshop for the New Zealand National Herbarium Network (NZNHN). Photos by C. Lehnebach

tional institutions, made her an ideal guide for the participants.

Context and Importance

In recent times, global events have underscored the critical need for museums and collections to be prepared for disasters, both natural and man-made. The workshop emphasized that a well-defined disaster plan is crucial for responding effectively to emergencies such as floods, fires, or earthquakes, preventing irreplaceable losses. Collections, especially those in herbaria, face numerous environmental threats, and conservators play a vital role in saving and preserving these assets.

Workshop Overview

The one-day workshop covered fundamental concepts and tools essential for creating and implementing an emergency plan. Participants were guided through a systematic approach to defining objectives, scope, and content of their institution's emergency plan. Practical exercises were incorporated to reinforce these concepts and enhance critical thinking, teamwork, and communication skills. The workshop included presentations, discussions, and group exercises to make the learning experience comprehensive and engaging.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the workshop, participants gained the knowledge and skills necessary to prepare and implement an emergency plan for their respective institutions. The focus was not only on theoretical aspects but also on practical insights, including understanding materials used in paper-based collections, archival qualities, caring for damaged material, and salvage procedures.

Conclusion

The Disaster Preparedness Workshop, facilitated by Lynn Campbell, received positive feedback from participants, signifying its success. The workshop was not only a crucial step in enhancing the preparedness of herbarium collections in New Zealand but also served as a collaborative platform for professionals across institutions to share knowledge

and build a robust network for the protection of our cultural and scientific heritage. The engagement of the New Zealand National Herbarium Network further highlights the collective commitment to safeguarding invaluable botanical collections in the face of unforeseen challenges.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the ASBS for its generous support in co-funding the Disaster Preparedness Workshop. ASBS' commitment to advancing knowledge and preserving botanical heritage has made a significant impact on the professional development of the participants and the safeguarding of herbarium collections in New Zealand.



Figure 2 Lynn Campbell, from Campbell Conservation, leading the workshop. Photo by Ines Schönberger © Landcare Research 2023 CC BY 4.0

A new Flora of New Zealand treatment of *Veronica* by Phil Garnock-Jones

Ilse Breitwieser Allan Herbarium, Manaaki Whenua – Landcare Research,
Lincoln, New Zealand

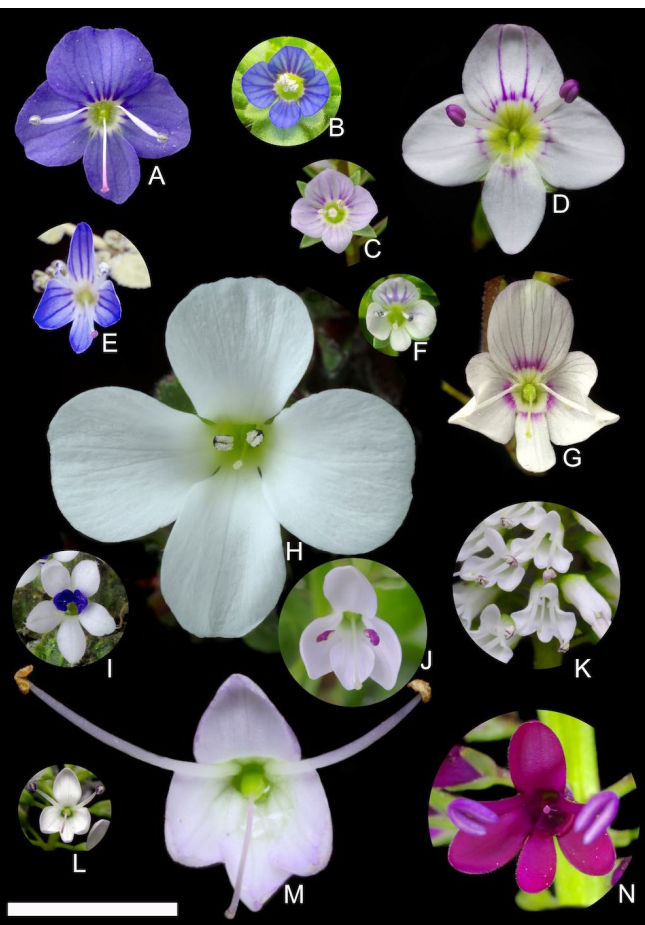


Figure 1 Reproducing Figure 16 of the *Veronica* treatment: *Veronica* flowers

A new Flora of New Zealand treatment of *Veronica* by Phil Garnock-Jones was published in the electronically based *Flora of New Zealand* on 8 December 2023 (Fig 1).

Phil prepared a 500+ page Flora treatment, with hundreds of beautiful colour photographs of plants in their natural habitat, flowers and even seeds (e.g., Fig 1, 2, 3 & 4), including distribution maps and detailed information on the habitat.

The *Veronica* publication is available online as [web content](#) or as a [printable PDF](#).

The genus *Veronica* currently includes about 450 species in 13 subgenera (Albach et al. 2004). The southern hemisphere indigenous *Veronica* belong to subg. *Pseudoveronica*. In Phil's *Veronica* treatment for New Zealand, 122 species are indigenous, 17 are naturalised, and two are uncertain. These are the two Australian species *V. calycina* and



Figure 2 Reproducing Figure 47 of *Veronica* treatment: *Veronica albicans* inflorescence



Figure 3 Left Reproducing Figure 48 of *Veronica* treatment *Veronica albicans* flowers; **Right** Reproducing Figure 17 of *Veronica* treatment: *Veronica* capsules.

V. plebeia that are wild in New Zealand, but it is not clear if they are indigenous or naturalised.

This Flora treatment of the indigenous species is based on the revisions that were published between 1993 and 2008 by Mike Bayly and Alison Kellow, Heidi Meudt, and Phil Garnock-Jones while the naturalised species are based on Bill Sykes in *Flora of New Zealand IV* (1988), but with new descriptions and updates.

Phil Garnock-Jones B.Sc. (Hons, Wellington), Ph.D. (Cantuar.) completed his doctoral thesis on the taxonomy of *Parahebe* and joined staff of Botany Division, DSIR, in 1975. There he worked on *Flora of New Zealand IV* but also on many taxonomic projects of our indigenous flora. He was appointed to the chair in Botany at Victoria University of Wellington (VUW) in 1994. Since retiring in 2009 he has been part-time teaching at VUW, researcher at Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongare-

wa, and now living in Nelson and continuing several botanical research projects.

The *Veronica* treatment has been by far the biggest piece of work for the electronically based New Zealand Flora. The *Veronica* project was a collaboration between Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa and Manaaki Whenua - Landcare Research through Manaaki Whenua - Landcare Research's Biota portfolio.

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1999 Explained

John Clarkson

A number of members who joined the society before 1999 and who have recently renewed their subscription through the new web site, have queried the start date shown on their machine generated receipts (Figure 1). This stems from an anomaly in the membership database which I touched on briefly in the March issue of the newsletter last year (#193-194:32). There is a field in the database that indicates when a person joined the Society – or at least it should do. However, members who joined prior to 1999 are recorded as

having joined that year.

I finished my first term as treasurer in 1999 but I can't remember what the database looked like or if it was even electronic. I passed on all of the Treasury files to Elizabeth Brown who, sadly, is no longer with us. I have been doing some further digging. I've tracked the error back as far as a copy of the database in Microsoft Excel dated 2006 but there the trail ends. When I next served as treasurer in 2013, the database had been moved to

Completed Renewal Transaction: # ****

Hi [REDACTED]

Your renewal with ASBS has been completed.

Order #**(14 January 2024)**

Product	Quantity	Price
Membership - Retired Member		
• Membership Type: Retired Member	1	AUD \$25.00
Subtotal:		AUD \$25.00
Payment method:		Manual Bank Transfer
Total:		AUD \$25.00

Subscription information

ID	Start date	End date	Recurring total
#****	29 August 1999	When cancelled	AUD \$25.00 / year

Customer details

• [REDACTED]
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Billing address

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 For any transactions, no GST has been charged.

Please note: Donations to the Research Fund above \$2 AUD are tax deductible. Donations to the General Fund are not tax deductible at this time.

Left A receipt generated by the new web-based payment system. The start date is shown as 29 August 1999 but this member joined the Society well before this.

Microsoft Access. I'm keen to get down to Melbourne sometime to spend some time in the ASBS archives. Hopefully that will throw some light on what happened. Until then, the card index that Alex George located, that I also mentioned in the newsletter article last March, allowed me to identify members who joined the Society between 1973 and probably 1976. 34 members, whose names appear on the cards, are still active members. The start date for these members can be corrected leaving the correct date for about 90 members who joined the society before 1999 to be resolved. The hunt continues and I'll keep you informed of any progress. In the

meantime, I'd be happy to hear from any member who might be able to offer an explanation.

Members can view and edit some of their details held in the online membership database by visiting the ASBS Website (<https://asbs.org.au/>) and clicking on Login. You should have received an email message from the webmasters on December 3 last year explaining what to do next. Unfortunately, the field that is causing the confusion is not one of the fields displayed.

Hansjörg Eichler Awardees Sep. 2023

Mike Bayly Vice President and Chair, ex officio of the ASBS Research Committee

Four applications were received in the latest grant round. The applications were of a high standard and the Research Committee had a tough job in raking them. We are pleased to announce that the successful applicants were as follows.

Samikshaben Patel, MSc student, University

of Canterbury, "A conservation genomic study of threatened limestone populations of *Senecio aff. matatini* (Asteraceae)", \$5000.

Hayden Jones, MSc student, Massey University, "The role of amphidiploid hybridisation in *Thelymitra* (Orchidaceae)", \$5000.

Hansjörg Eichler Grants Mar. 2024 Open

John Clarkson Vice President and Chair, ex officio of the ASBS Research Committee 2024

Applications for the first round of Hansjörg Eichler Research Grants for 2024 close on Thursday March 14.

Applications are welcomed for grants up to \$5000 for research projects focused on the systematics taxonomy, phylogeny and biogeography of land plants, algae or fungi. Grants are open to all ASBS members however, preference is given to students, recent graduates, newly-established botanists and non-salaried researchers.

Application forms can be downloaded from the Society's website at <https://asbs.org.au/grants-awards/hansjorg-eichler-scientific-research-fund/>. Applicants are encouraged to carefully read the grant criteria and instructions before completing the form. If you still have any question after reading the instructions, feel free to give me a ring on 0437 732 487. Leave a message and suggest a time when you would like me to ring you back.

Native Orchids of South Australia: a Field Guide

Book review by Robyn Barker State Herbarium of South Australia

Native Orchids of South Australia: a Field Guide.

June Niejalke, Robert Bates

Published by June Niejalke, Pinaroo, South Australia (2022).

Paperback; 417 pp: colour illustrations, colour maps; 24 cm.

ISBN 9780646863306.

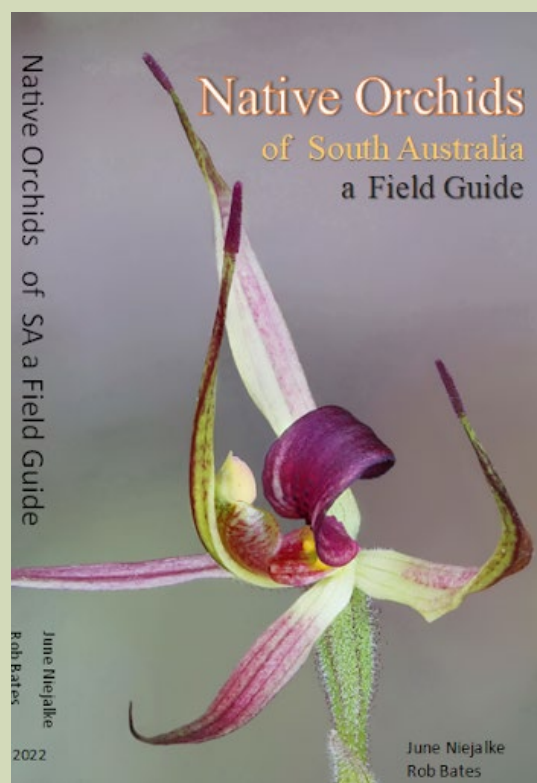
RRP: \$60. Available from NOSSA <https://nossa.org.au/about-us/native-orchids-of-south-australia-a-field-guide/> or The Australian Orchid Foundation <https://australianorchidfoundation.org.au/native-orchids-of-south-australia-a-field-guide/>

The last complete book on South Australian orchids (Bates & Weber 1990 – the “pink book”) was produced over 30 years ago and there have been enormous changes and much controversy about which generic names should apply since that time. Much of that controversy was visible in the DVD-ROM, South Australia’s Native Orchids by Bob Bates, published by the Native Orchid Society of South Australia (NOSSA) in 2011 <https://heritagebushcare.files.wordpress.com/2011/10/dvd-flyer-sm.pdf>. A feature of that work, along with the many new putative taxa, was the magnificent photography which accompanied Bob’s treatment of South Australian orchid genera and species.

June Niejalke, an experienced and respected South Australian orchidologist, has clearly worked tirelessly to produce this sumptuous new volume which is equally as magnificent in its photography of the orchids and she indicates in her acknowledgements that much of the information “has been derived from Robert Bates’...Orchids of S.A.” She also acknowledges the help of many people from the orchid world as well as orchid photographers.

This is a comprehensive book covering c. 400 taxa (including recognised species with formal names, taxa with informal names treated as species (sp.), subspecies (ssp.) or with no formal ranking (e.g. *Caladenia venusta* ‘Swamp Heath’) as well as hybrids.

Genera are placed within 11 colour-coded groups based on leaf and floral characteristics. Some of the larger genera are treated as alliances; for instance the *Caladenia* alliance contains fairy orchids (*Caladenia latifolia*), finger orchids (*Petalochilus*), cap orchids (*Stegostyla*), spider orchids (*Arachnorchis*) and wispy spider orchids (*Jonesiopsis*) with all



species being treated as *Caladenia* while the *Pterostylis* Alliance (Greenhoods) recognises a number of the newer genera (*Diplodium*, *Bunochilus*, *Oligochaetochilus* etc.) as does the *Microtis* alliance (*Microtidium*, *Hydrorchis*) and the *Corysanthes/Anzybas* Alliance (= *Corybas*). This is not really a problem as the alternate name is clearly stated as a synonym, but it probably should be noted that the Australian Plant Census (APC) now lists all of these segregate genera as synonyms.

Each genus has a full page treatment which includes an essential photograph of the flower with labelled parts. This is extremely helpful in understanding differences between the genera, and more particularly, the segregate genera of the alliances. There is a short taxonomic treatment, a description of the genus, discussion of the habitat the genus occupies and notes on pollination. Further notes and a pictorial display of variation within the genus lead to treatments of individual taxa, again sometimes followed by undescribed taxa, as for instance the three pages following *Oligochaetochilus* which documents 16 unnamed taxa, all with a photograph and seven with additional notes.

Each formally named species is treated on a single page headed by its binomial, and where relevant, its alternative generic name, and its common name. Below this are 2–4 magnificent photos of the plant, mostly showing a habit shot and different aspects of the flower. A brief but thorough taxonomy follows, containing the derivation of the species name, its type and place of publication and further comments on previous names it has been known by in the past. This is followed by a description mostly covering the habit, leaf, flower and labellum or column characteristics, sometimes also supplemented with extra notes on pollination and variation. A brief description of the habitat the species occupies, together with a map of South Australia showing where it occurs, which species it is similar to and what characteristics to look for to distinguish it. To complete the page is a statement on the

species occurrence in South Australia (rarity, restricted or widespread) and its South Australian and Australian status under the State (NPWS Act 1972) and Commonwealth (EPBC) Acts.

So much information sounds like it should lead to a very crowded page but this is definitely not the case and there is still plenty of white space on each page. Much consideration has been given to the layout of this book, particularly for those who are making their first foray into the orchid world of South Australia.

A chart showing flowering time by month, and two indexes, one to common names and one for scientific names, complete the book.

If you are a systematist there are some minor inconsistencies within the book but these are technicalities and won't even be noticed by the general reader. If you enjoy being in the bush in South Australia when the orchids are about then this is an essential book to have. Whether you carry it with you to work out what you are seeing in the field or whether you take photographs and identify them later, you are bound to learn something about these remarkable flowers. Remember too that you can make use of the flowering time chart to work out what will be flowering at a particular time. Enjoy!

Baudin's botanist

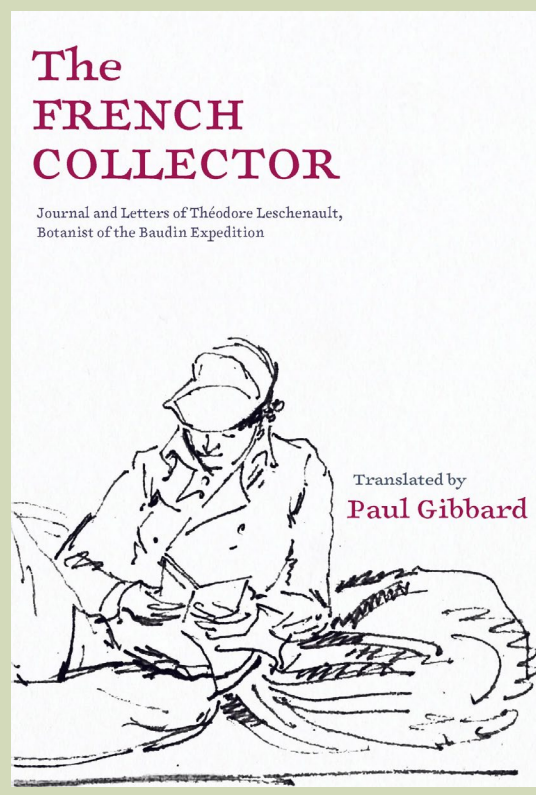
Book review by Robyn Barker State Herbarium of South Australia

Baudin's botanist

Book review by Robyn Barker, State Herbarium of South Australia

The French Collector. Journal and Letters of Théodore Leschenault, Botanist of the Baudin Expedition. Translated by Paul Gibbard. 2023. (UWA Publishing: Crawley, Western Australia).

ISBN: 978-1-76080-216-5. Soft cover, 350 pp. RRP \$39.99.



The botany of the “Encounter” – the information about the participants just keeps on coming, much of it prompted by the interest in the bicentenary of the Baudin and Flinders’ expeditions to Australia in the early 2000s. This time it is the turn of the botanist

Théodore Leschenault (often as Leschenault de la Tour from c. 1804) on the French expedition. His journal, covering the first part of the expedition from Le Havre, France to Western Port, Victoria, has been translated into English by Paul Gibbard of the University of Western Australia.

Leschenault’s name is not particularly well known in Australia, apart from south west Western Australia where the Leschenault Estuary, the Leschenault Peninsula Conservation Park and the suburb Leschenault, are all found in the Bunbury area. Lake Leschenaultia in the Leschenaultia Conservation Park, near Chidlow is named for the spectacular flowering species of the genus *Le[s]chenaultia*, some of the main attractions of any spring wildflower tour in Western Australia – think *L. macrantha* (wreath *Leschenaultia*) and *L. biloba* (blue *Leschenaultia*), to name just two. The botanist Robert Brown named this genus in honour of Leschenault with whom he botanised at Port Jackson, unfortunately misspelling his name as Lechenault, and creating the absurd situation of both spellings occurring within botanical names.

A copy of part of a private journal that Leschenault had kept from his arrival in Le Havre, France on 1st Oct 1800 to join the *Geographe* of Baudin’s expedition until his arrival in Western Port (Victoria) on 17th April 1802 on the *Naturaliste* has long been in the Paris Archives. This copy, believed to have been made by Leschenault’s brother, Samuel, consisted of Chapters 3, 4 and 5 and was the basis for an earlier translation by Paul Gibbard available through The Baudin Legacy Project pages (Web ref. 1).

The fate of Leschenault’s original journal of the expedition was unknown. His account of the first part, firstly on board *Geographe*, transferring to *Naturaliste* from Timor, had been completed in Port Jackson by 2nd

September 1802 and, together with specimens and drawings, was sent back to France in November 1802 on board the returning *Naturaliste*. All were sent to his mentor, Antoine-Laurent de Jussieu, botanist at the Muséum d'histoire naturelle, and one of the chief advisers to the government regarding scientific outcomes of the voyage. The journal's whereabouts remained a mystery until 2016 when it was put up for auction in Royan on the west coast of France, but it was then claimed by the French Government since they had covered the costs of the original expedition. It is now held in the National Archives of France. A copy was provided to Paul Gibbard for translation into English (Web ref. 2)

This book contains a translation of all 5 chapters of the newly found journal (pp. 77 – 235). The already known chapters dealt with the expedition from south-west WA to Timor (Ch. 3) on board *Geographe*, when significant plant collections were made from *Geographe* Bay and Shark Bay, the stay in Timor (Ch. 4) and the leg from Timor to Tasmania and Western Port, Victoria, on board *Naturaliste* (Ch. 5), clearly the more interesting chapters for Australian botanists. The two missing chapters do not relate to Australia, covering the initial part of the voyage from Le Havre, France to Tenerife (Ch. 1) and then Tenerife to the Ile de France [Mauritius] (Ch. 2). While they may be of lesser interest from an Australian botanical perspective, there are comments from Isle de France about the rows of *Mimosa* shade trees, called blackwood, lining the streets, presumably *Acacia melanoxylon* from Australia, raspberry bushes becoming feral, the successful establishment of cinnamon, clove and nutmeg plantations predicted to soon undermine the monopoly of the Dutch and how the fruit trees, brought on board from France for planting in the new lands, were faring (not well). In Tenerife Leschenault met with Citizen Broussonet and in Mauritius with Citizen du Petit Thouars, both distinguished botanists in exile. Because of their aristocratic connections, their earlier lives had been affected by the French Revolution, just as Leschenault's had been.

Prior to the translation of the journal is a substantial Introduction (pp. 1–45), providing an essential background to the journal's origins and history. Information is provided on Leschenault's early life, including imprisonment as a result of the Revolution, his somewhat surprising appointment as a botanist on the Baudin expedition, and his delayed return home after being left sick in Timor on the return voyage of the expedition to France. Unfortunately his botanical journal containing "nearly 800 descriptions and 250 drawings" (Letter 11) was entrusted to Baudin, who subsequently died on Ile de France. When Leschenault did return to France in 1807 his botanical journal and drawings could not be located and he lost the opportunity to publish his botanical findings. A brief account of his activities subsequent to his return is given supplemented by a separate chronology of his life. A chronology of the Baudin expedition, short biographies of shipmates mentioned in his journal, a map indicating Leschenault's travels in Australia aboard the two ships and a translator's note complete the introductory material.

Following the translation of the journal are 11 letters selected to throw further light on his life and his relationships with others. A sizeable section of notes (32 pp.) represents further explanatory material for the contents of the introduction, the translated journal and the letters. These notes represent considerable research by the author/translator. A substantial bibliography and two indexes, one to scientific names and one general, complete this densely packed information source on Leschenault.

Some things surprised me about the journal. Firstly Leschenault made "several observations about the deficiencies in the preparations made for the expedition" before they left Timor for the first time. These were mainly to do with the lack of supplies (predominantly food, wine and medicines), all contributing to the poor health outcomes experienced by all on board, and to the recruitment of the crew (p. 195). To express these views at this time in the voyage seems brave, particularly given that it would almost

certainly be read by those in command. In stark contrast, there is virtually no reference to support the oft-cited tensions between personnel on the ship depending on whether they were of aristocratic background or not. Nor is there mention of tension between Baudin and the naturalists or between Baudin and himself. Indeed their correspondence, as recorded by him, paints a picture of an affable relationship, quite at odds with Baudin's account. In documenting those on *Geographe* he would miss when he transferred to *Naturaliste*, Leschenault listed first Citizen Le Bas de Sainte-Croix, second in command to Baudin. It was he who nursed Leschenault through illness after *Geographe* Bay, and the two were great friends but even when Baudin dismissed him for insubordination in Timor, Leschenault followed the official line that Le Bas de Sainte-Croix had been forced to stay in Timor because of illness (p. 67, 194). Perhaps this might have changed later when Leschenault was moved out of his cabin to make way for the live Australian animals being taken back to France, but this part of the expedition is not covered in his journal, and we only have a record of Baudin's account (p. 28).

Robert Brown and Leschenault did not meet as a result of the "encounter" between *Geographe* and the *Investigator* on the southern coastline in April 1802 (Leschenault had requested a transfer to the *Naturaliste* in Timor since they lacked a botanist) but they did coincide in Sydney on two occasions, 9–18th May and 28 June–22 July 1802. While there, Leschenault spent time collecting plants with both Robert Brown and Peter Good on at least one occasion, 11th May, according to Good's diary, but there is no diary account for either of the botanists of their Port Jackson stay. Leschenault obviously impressed Brown who referred to him in a letter to Banks as

"A celebrated voyager and accomplished botanist whose plant illustrations, especially from the west coast of New Holland,...are eagerly awaited)" (Robert Brown to Joseph Banks 30 May 1802)

Leschenault, on the other hand, complained

to Jussieu (Letter 6, written during his second stay in Sydney) of the "vastly different resources" made available to Brown, in comparison to him. He didn't have access to an artist (Bauer) and nor did he have anyone to assist him in collecting, drying and describing plants (Peter Good).

The two maintained correspondence on their return to Europe and Leschenault provided duplicates of some of his Australian collections to Brown. It is probably true to say that if he had not had interaction with Brown in Sydney then his name would be almost completely unknown in Australian botanical circles. The loss of his Australian botanical note books meant that it was difficult for him to publish his own plant findings on his return to Europe in 1807, and then when Brown published his *Prodromus* in 1810, much of Leschenault's Australian work became superfluous. For instance his '*Baudinia humilis*' was predated by Brown's *Scaevola striata* R.Br. while '*Bonaparteia laureata*' was predated by Poirot's (1806) *Winterana lanceolata* [now *Tasmannia lanceolata* (Poir.)A.C.Smith]. Just who else of his fellow voyagers he named species for, as indicated in a letter to Jussieu (p. 256), is not known but such manuscript names might still be visible on his collections in Paris.

The journal also provides further support for the suggestion by others (e.g. Charles Nelson 1974, 1975; Duyker 2003; Mabberley et al., 2021), that Leschenault's collections were used by Labillardière in describing some of his new taxa. For example, Leschenault includes in his description of plants collected by Riedlé from the southern part of *Geographe* Bay on 31st May 1801

"a very pretty undershrub with beautiful red flowers which, as I believed that it had not yet been described, I named *Baudinia* after Commander Baudin. (This plant features among the drawings and descriptions of plants I have sent back)." (p. 136).

Gibbard indicates in his supplementary notes that the species was included in Leschenault's notebook as *Baudinia coccinea* but Labillardière, who received Leschenault's

specimens in time for inclusion in his *Novae Hollandiae plantarum specimen* of 1806, described the species as a new genus *Calothamnus*, with the species epithet *sanguineus*. Without going into further detail here, the lectotype in Labillardière's herbarium in the Webb herbarium in Florence, (FI011371), bears a separate label 'baie de geographe', a location which Labillardière did not visit. *C. sanguineus* appears to be another species to add to the list of anomalous Western Australian specimens attributed to Labillardière (Nelson, 1975) when it was collected by others.

Leschenault's contribution to the natural sciences was significant, particularly on the western coastline of Australia where Brown did not collect. But his contributions post Baudin and after leaving Australia were even more significant. Some idea of just how many collections he made for the Museum D'Histoire Naturelle after the Baudin expedition can be seen in an account of the collections of that institution published in 1823 (Deleuze 1823, p. 593). His name is common throughout. Not only did he make botanical collections, but also zoological, living and dead, and mineralogical collections. But it should also be pointed out that he was more than a collector as he did describe new plant taxa after his stint in Australia, while others later used his manuscript names to publish other taxa that he had recognised. Still others described new taxa after him.

Sadly, no further Leschenault journals for the remainder of the Baudin expedition to his being left ill in Timor have been found. It seems though that having established his work practices on the expedition, Leschenault continued to keep journals during his three year stay in Java, and presumably later in India, Sri Lanka and South America. For those interested in his activities in Java see Steenis Kruseman's account in *Cyclopaedia of Malesian Collectors* (Web ref. 3) where reference is made to a handwritten list of plants seen by him in Java in the Rijksherbarium, Leiden, as well as others of his work translated into Dutch and English.

Just as Leschenault was more than a collector

this book is more than a translation. The attention to detail in chronicling Leschenault's life before and, to a lesser extent, after the voyage, as well as providing backgrounds for Leschenault's companions on board the two ships involved and to others he met on the way, is shown in the prodigious notes – no skimping here! And, if this exercise teaches you anything, it is that Google translate is a totally inadequate substitute for a professional translation!

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Web ref. 1: <https://baudin.sydney.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/leschenaultenglish1.pdf>

Web ref. 2. French botanist Théodore Leschenault travelled to Australia in 1800-1803. His recently recovered journal contains a wealth of intriguing information (theconversation.com)

Web ref. 3. <https://www.nationaalherbarium.nl/FMCollectors/L/LeschenaultdelaTourLT.htm>

Colin James Webb, 1949–2023

Obituary by Phil Garnock-Jones, Victoria University of Wellington & Ilse Breitwieser, Manaaki Whenua Landcare Research Ltd.



We are sad to report the death of Colin Webb on 23rd August 2023 after a long illness. Colin made significant contributions to New Zealand science both as a botanist and as a public servant. After a PhD in Evolutionary Biology at University of Canterbury, he was employed by Botany Division of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research from 1975. His initial role was research in flower biology, but this was early broadened to include taxonomy and flora-writing. Under the radical neoliberal governments of the 80s and 90s, the DSIR and all government science was serially restructured and Colin ended up in Manaaki Whenua Landcare Research in 1992. During those turbulent years, an increasing involvement in management and strategic planning led Colin into first the Foundation for Research, Science, and Tech-

nology—where I remember he was active in increasing the term for contestable funding from one to usually three years—and then the Tertiary Education Commission where he was involved among other things with Centres of Research Excellence and Performance-Based Research Fund for Universities. He was a Fellow of the Royal Society of New Zealand and was awarded the Hutton Medal and the Allan Mere for his contributions to New Zealand botany.

His main research area was floral and sexual systems evolution and flower biology, where he contributed 39 research papers including 9 significant reviews. His research in this area included descriptions of flower biology, sexual systems, and pollination in a varied range of plant groups, but particularly Apiaceae. His sound natural history focus was informed by theory and modelling, very much following his mentors David Lloyd and Eric Godley. His PhD and later research on New Zealand Apiaceae provided empirical support for Lloyd's quantitative approach to gender, showing that, although gametophyte sex in seed plants is strictly and irreversibly binary, sex allocation in sporophytes is a quantitative and evolutionarily fluid phenomenon subject to selection from a range of forces. He will likely be best remembered for several valuable reviews, many co-authored with Lloyd, that simplified, explained, and clarified the classification of a range of plant reproduction phenomena: secondary sex characters, dichogamy, herkogamy, and heterostyly. Their inclusion of monoecy—usually seen as a kind of sexual system—and heterostyly under the umbrella of herkogamy was particularly insightful. Research on the overcoming of conflicts between pollination and fruit dispersal led to a realisation that similar conflicts between male and female functions in bisexual flowers

could select for flower phenomena, especially dichogamy and herkogamy. When David Lloyd fell ill in 1992, Colin helped bring some of his unpublished ideas to press.

Colin was also active and influential as a taxonomist. First he was lead author and overall editor of *Flora of New Zealand Volume 4* (Webb et al., 1988), to which he contributed treatments of Apiaceae, Asteraceae, Fabaceae and several smaller families. This 13-year project was undertaken at first reluctantly, but soon with his characteristic thoroughness and rigour, and brought—largely by Colin's efforts—to a successful completion despite some major disruptions. Secondly, his two-volume monograph of New Zealand seeds (Webb & Simpson 2001, Webb 2019) was largely written in his own time when he was involved in senior executive roles in Wellington after leaving Manaaki Whenua Landcare Research. And thirdly, in addition to these major volumes Colin also conducted taxonomic investigations that are notable for their experimental approach and often drew on his understanding of flower and seed biology. For example, in overcoming the technical difficulties of crossing and selfing the tiny florets of *Soliva* (Asteraceae), he produced genetic evidence that showed the cypsela characters by which the four species of subg. *Soliva* had been recognised were continuously variable within a single species (Webb 1986). Forthcoming obituaries in *New Zealand Journal of Botany* and *Journal of the Royal Society of New Zealand* will provide further detail and full bibliographies.

Colin Webb enjoyed a diverse range of interests outside work. He was a competent and fastidious gardener with a particular fondness for *Rhododendron*, a collector of fine art, excellent cook and knowledgeable wine drinker, keen cyclist and hiker, and ailurophile. Hiking led him to Nepal and in turn to philanthropic projects there towards the end of his life. His support for unfunded botanists through the Koiaata Trust and Mānuka Press will also be long appreciated.

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In the News

Front page of the Ulisse Aldrovandi Herbarium, Volume I. Photo: Università di Bologna

Online and in the media

Please send me anything that you think is of interest for the ASBS community, otherwise the news is just what I see on Twitter/X – Todd McLay todd.mclay@gmail.com.

‘Inestimable importance’: 500-year-old cache of pressed flowers reveals new secrets

A herbarium collected by Renaissance naturalist Ulisse Aldrovandi in Bologna 500 years ago is being used to understand climate change and human impact. Aldrovandi's 5,000 specimens, forming one of the richest collections of its time, reveal shifts in northern Italy's landscapes. Aldrovandi's herbarium, with detailed notes, proves invaluable for tracing ecological transformations and underscoring the importance of preserving historical collections.

Link to story: <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2023/nov/08/ulisse-aldrovandi-500-year-old-pressed-flowers-royal-society-aoe>

Plant-identifying apps: good for amateurs, bad for students

Mobile plant identification apps like PlantNet and PictureThis are extremely popular, but have poor accuracy with rare or endemic plants, based on studies from Ireland and Spain. Educators worry that over-reliance on these tools hinders students from developing essential skills in botany and environmental science. No kidding!

Link to story: <https://algorithmwatch.org/en/plant-identifying-apps/>

Articles mentioned: Campbell et al. 2023 - A repeatable scoring system for assessing Smartphone applications ability to identify herbaceous plants; PLOS ONE <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0283386>

Berjano et al. 2023 - Mind your app: Could plant ID applications lead to an increase in extinction risk?; PhytoTaxa <http://tinyurl.com/kftua56r>

After more than 50 years, Quanda contains its invasive Hudson pear cactus weed infestation

The community of Quanda in western NSW has successfully contained a decades-long invasion of the Hudson pear, an invasive cactus originating from Mexico. The weed, which can harm wildlife and spread rapidly, covered 28 hectares. Volunteers and the Hudson Pear Taskforce used chemical hand-spraying and regular inspections to prevent regrowth. While containment is achieved, much work is required to achieve its eradication.

Link to story: <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-11-27/hudson-pear-contained->



Hudson pear (*Cylindropuntia pallida*) Photo: NSW WeedWise

[after-50-years/103132446](https://www.abc.net.au/listen/programs/kimberley-breakfast/nowhere-else-tree/103154700?utm_campaign=abc_listen&utm_content)

Eucalypt enthusiast sings praises of rare Broome beauty

Phil Docherty, a big time gum nut, talks about the Cable Beach ghost gum, *Corymbia paractia*.

Link to story: https://www.abc.net.au/listen/programs/kimberley-breakfast/nowhere-else-tree/103154700?utm_campaign=abc_listen&utm_content



Corymbia paractia. Photo: ALA

Saving Gums: Protecting the Hunter's river red gums

More gum tree chatter, this time about river red gums in the Hunter region of New South Wales.

Link to story: <https://www.abc.net.au/news/rural/programs/landline/2023-10-29/saving-gums-protecting-the-hunters-river-red-gums/103036986>

Native violet recorded in Tasmania for the first time after bushwalker makes chance discovery

While walking in Tasmania's Ben Lomond National Park, Juliette Gaynor-Brown discovered a small purple flower, later identified as the endangered dwarf violet (*Viola improcera*). Not previously recorded in Tasmania, the finding was made through Gaynor-Brown's



Viola improcera. Photo: iNaturalist

iNaturalist upload, catching the attention of Hobart Herbarium Senior curator Dr. Miguel de Salas who was able to confirm it as a new Tasmanian record. A nice citizen science story.

Link to story: <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2024-01-22/violet-species-found-in-tasmania-for-first-time/103350044>

Papers and publications

Articles can be provided by request to Todd at todd.mclay@gmail.com.

Australia offers unique insight into the ecology of arbuscular mycorrhizal fungi: An opportunity not to be lost

Australia's ancient soils and distinct flora offer a unique opportunity to advance our understanding of arbuscular mycorrhizal (AM) fungi. Despite their prevalence, gaps exist in our knowledge of their biogeography and adaptation to Australian conditions. Comprehensive documentation of AM fungal communities is crucial for informed land management, benefiting conservation, restoration, and sustainable agriculture.

Read the paper: Frew and Aguilar-Trigueros (2023) Australia offers unique insight into the ecology of arbuscular mycorrhizal fungi: An opportunity not to be lost. *Austral Ecology* <https://doi.org/10.1111/aec.13451>

The species as a reproductive community emerging from the past

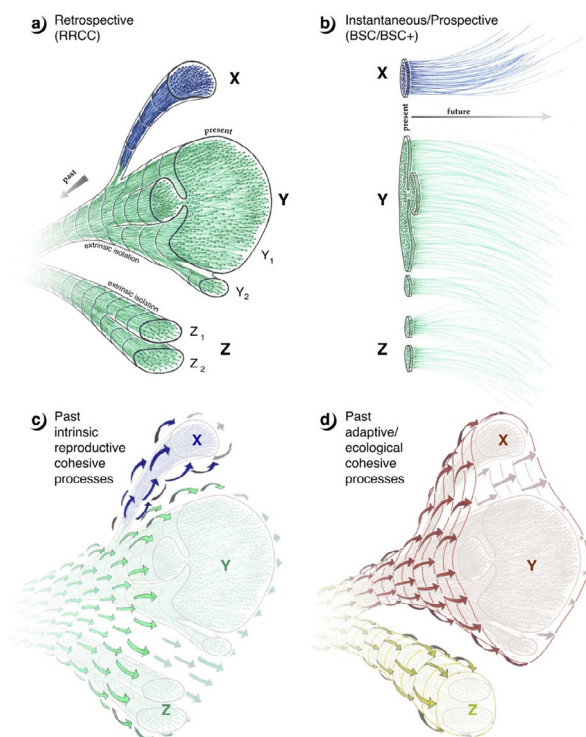
Throwing another species concept into the ring, Maddison and Whitton have come up with the Retrospective Reproductive Community Concept (RRCC). The RRCC views species as past reproductive communities, integrating both intrinsic and extrinsic factors, with a core tenet that “taxonomic species should approximate, but can only approximate, evolutionary units”. Should lead to some interesting discussions.

Read the paper: Maddison and Whitton (2023) The Species as a Reproductive Community Emerging From the Past. *Bulletin of the Society of Systematic Biologists* <https://ssbbulletin.org/index.php/bssb/article/view/9358>

Trials and tribulations of Neotropical plant taxonomy: Pace of tree species description

This study addresses the urgency of efficiently describing new Neotropical tree species to facilitate timely conservation strategies. Analyzing a dataset of 2123 Neotropical trees, the researchers calculated an average of nearly 16 years from specimen collection to species publication. Peru was identified as having the longest time lags, and Haiti has the shortest. The impact of political instability on taxonomic research completion was emphasised, with Collaboration between field botanists and herbarium-based researchers proving most effective to overcome such delays.

Read the paper: Luján et al. (2024) Trials and tribulations of Neotropical plant taxonomy: Pace of tree species description. *Plants People Planet* <https://nph.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/ppp3.10469>



Left The Retrospective Reproductive Community Concept by Maddison and Whitton (2023), *Bulletin of the Society of Systematic Biologists*: Species as reproductive communities emerging from the past (a,c,d) or as communities at this instant, and possibly projecting into the future (b).

The puzzle of plant hybridisation: a high propensity to hybridise but few hybrid zones reported

Despite plants' higher hybridization propensity, a survey spanning 1970–2022 reveals 2.3 times more vertebrate hybrid zones, despite six times more vascular plant species. Several factors were hypothesised by the authors as contributing to this discrepancy, including spatial and genetic structure deficits, hybridization effects between distantly related plant species, temporal lability of plant hybrid zones, botanists' perception biases, and a shortage of population genetic data. No singular factor explains the observed pattern, suggesting a complex interplay requiring broader empirical data across various plant taxa.

Read the paper: Feliner *et al.* (2023) The puzzle of plant hybridisation: a high propensity to hybridise but few hybrid zones reported *Heredity* <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41437-023-00654-1>

Strengthening Partnerships to Safeguard the Future of Herbaria

Herbaria face challenges like incomplete digitization and lack of current information. In this paper, Thiers suggests collaborative partnerships are vital for their future, emphasizing a shift towards considering herbaria as a unified global resource.

Read the paper: Thiers *et al.* (2024) Strengthening Partnerships to Safeguard the Future of Herbaria; *Diversity* <https://www.mdpi.com/1424-2818/16/1/36>

Artifactual orthologs and the need for diligent data exploration in complex phylogenomic datasets

Data artifacts, particularly artifactual orthologs, significantly impacted gene tree heterogeneity and phylogenetic inference in this study on Andean *Freziera*. Manual investigation of gene trees was compared to bioinformatic methods to detect paralogy, with additional 'artifactual orthologs' accounting for ~10% of sequences, negatively impacting phylogenetic support and

structure. After removing these artifacts, a signal of introgression was identified and *Freziera* was categorized into nine well-supported subclades, highlighting the complexities of plant phylogenomics and emphasizing the importance of careful data analysis in phylogenetic inference.

Read the paper: Frost *et al.* (2023) Artifactual Orthologs and the Need for Diligent Data Exploration in Complex Phylogenomic Datasets: A museomic case study from the Andean flora *Systematic Biology* <https://doi.org/10.1093/sysbio/syad076>

Diversification of flowering plants in space and time

Utilizing a new genus-level phylogeny and global distribution data for 14,244 genera, the research reveals that diversification rates in angiosperms increased during the early Cretaceous, decreased after the Cretaceous–Paleogene extinction, and rose again towards the present. Young, rapidly diversifying genera dominate temperate and dryland regions, while older genera with slower diversification prevail in the tropics, resulting in a negative correlation between spatial diversification patterns and genus diversity. [Ed. Note - it annoys me so much when a tree file or a viewable pdf doesn't accompany a paper like this]

Read the paper: Dimitrov *et al.* (2023) Diversification of flowering plants in space and time *Nature Communications* <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41467-023-43396-8>

Toward an open-source 3D-printable laboratory

Want cheap lab equipment and own a 3D printer? This paper introduces COBLE (Collection of Bespoke Laboratory Equipment), a modular 3D-printable system for low-cost, repairable lab equipment in the biological sciences. The range of designs facilitate affordable printing, assembly, and repair.

Read the paper: McNair *et al.* (2024) Toward an open-source 3D-printable laboratory *Applications in Plant Sciences* <https://doi.org/10.1002/aps3.11562>

ASBS student and ECR register

In order to promote the connectivity and visibility of our students and early career researchers (ECRs) in ASBS, ASBS Newsletter publishes a student and ECR register. If you're a student or ECR and would like to opt-in to this register follow this link: <https://forms.gle/wxSzGA9F-pBTNXB6j8>. For any questions or to change your details, contact Lizzy at editor.asbsnews@gmail.com

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The newsletter

The ASBS newsletter keeps members informed of society events and news, and provides a platform for debate and discussion. The newsletter is published quarterly on the ASBS website and in print. Original articles, notes and letters (not exceeding ten published pages in length) are encouraged for submission by ASBS members.

Have an article or an idea for the newsletter?
Send it to Lizzy at
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Full page: \$200
Half page: \$100
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The society

The Australasian Systematic Botany Society is an incorporated association of over 300 people with professional or amateur interest in botany. The aim of the society is to promote the study of plant systematics.

Membership is open to all interested in plant systematics. Members are entitled to attend general and chapter meetings, and to receive the *ASBS Newsletter*. Any person may apply for membership at any time by filling in a membership application form available at <http://www.asbs.org.au/membership/>. Subscriptions become due on 1 January each year.

The ASBS annual membership subscription is AUD \$45, and a concessional rate of AUD \$25 is offered to full-time students, retirees and unemployed people. Payment may be by direct credit, credit card or by cheque made out to Australasian Systematic Botany Society Inc. Members can update their contact details online at <https://asbs.org.au/login/>.

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