

**AUSTRALASIAN MYCOLOGICAL SOCIETY INC.
MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
AND ANNUAL REPORT**

This section contains minutes of the AGM for 1999, and reports from the President, and convenors of subcommittees.

Tom May (Secretary, Australasian Mycological Society)

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
AUSTRALASIAN MYCOLOGICAL SOCIETY INC.**

Westmead Hospital, Sydney
6.00 pm, Saturday 21 August, 1999

Present: Cheryl Grgurinovic (Chair), Wieland Meyer, Tom May, Heino Lepp, Peter Buchanan, Ceri Pearce and 23 members and friends. Apology: Tony Young.

1. Minutes of Previous Meeting

MOTION: that the minutes of the 1998 AGM are confirmed as a true and accurate record. Moved: Peter McGee, Seconded: Jack Simpson. Carried.

2. Ballot for Council Office Bearers

Tom May reported that a single nomination was received for each position on Council, and thus the following were declared elected: Cheryl Grgurinovic (President), Wieland Meyer (Vice-President), Heino Lepp (Treasurer), Geoff Ridley (Secretary), Peter Buchanan (Councillor), Ceri Pearce (Councillor).

3. Presidents Report

Cheryl Grgurinovic tabled her President's Report (appended to these minutes). She highlighted major issues from her Report in relation to the Patron (Gretna Weste), the Jack Warcup Prize, the *Australasian Mycologist*, and the preparation of a web page for the Society.

4. Financial Report

The Treasurer, Heino Lepp, tabled his Treasurer's Report for the financial year ended 30 June 1999. This has been published in *Australasian Mycologist* 18 (3). The audited financial statement for 1998/1999, which was enclosed with *Australasian Mycologist* 18 (2), was also tabled. Heino reported that there has been an increase in members from 110 the previous year, to 160. Income from subscriptions is up 30%. Cost of the Societies publication has risen from \$400–500 per issue to \$600–750 due to the new format, which includes some colour illustrations. The yearly amount expended on the *Australasian Mycologist* varies according to exactly when the accounts for the printing are paid. The bank balance is approximately \$9,000. Heino did not suggest an increase in membership fees. He recommended that a direct debit and credit card facility be established, and that some money be invested in higher paying accounts.

MOTION: that the Financial Statement as tabled with the Treasurer's report be accepted. Moved: Pam Catcheside, Seconded: Teresa Lebel. Carried.

MOTION: the Treasurer commence a direct debit and credit card facility for the Society. Moved: Peter McGee, Seconded: Jim Trappe. Carried.

MOTION: the Treasurer transfer an amount to a higher paying account, with the approval of Council. Moved: Peter McGee, Seconded: Pam Catcheside. Carried.

5. Reports of Subcommittees

5a. Education Special Interest Group

A report is appended to these minutes. Peter McGee noted that web-based learning programs were in development, as well as interactive identification guides to microfungi and rainforest macrofungi.

5b. Conservation

A report is appended to these minutes. AMS member Tony Young has been involved in a significant case concerning protection of bushland at Lane Cove, where there is a highly diverse community of Hygrosporaceae. It was noted in discussion that the NSW Committee responsible for listing endangered species is sympathetic towards the listing of fungi.

5c. Poisons Network

Tony Young supplied a report on activities of the Poisons Network (appended to these minutes). Tony noted that the indemnity issues appear to be resolved, and provided details of an interesting case of ingestion by *Panaeolina foenisecii*, without ill effects. A survey of fungal ingestions reported to the Victorian Poisons Information Centre is being undertaken.

6. Future Meetings

6a. 2000

Will be held jointly with the annual New Zealand Fungus Foray, at Lake Te Anau, from 6–13 May. There will be a one day scientific meeting, and workshops and 3–4 days foraging. Lawre Taylor has made arrangements for coordination of flights from Sydney to Queenstown. Contacts for the AMS meeting/NZ Fungus Foray are Peter Buchanan and Peter Johnston. A notice about the Foray will be included in the next *Australasian Mycologist*.

6b. 2001

Ceri Pearce suggested Cairns as a suitable venue, and noted that the Australasian Plant Pathology Society Conference will probably be held in Cairns from 24–28th September 2001. The venue will be confirmed next month at the APPS meeting in Canberra. AMS could be involved as a joint organiser, or could hold a scientific meeting at around the same time. There would also be the possibility of AMS organising some workshops. An approach could be made to APPS to investigate joint organisation of the conference.

7. Other Business

7a. Donation of artwork from BMS

At a reception at the IUMS-Congress of Mycology, British Mycological Society President, Prof. Stefan Buczacki presented Cheryl Grgurinovic with a framed painting of a fungus. Cheryl displayed the painting.

7b. Links to Australasian Mycologists and Other Societies

Tom May enquired if there were Australasian mycologists outside Australia and New Zealand who might be encouraged to join AMS. It was noted that recent mycological activity in New Guinea has been through the Belgian Research Institute at Madang, and that in New Caledonia it is through France. Peter McGee suggested that the Society should focus on expanding in the immediate region and on bringing more people into the Society. Heino Lepp proposed mini meetings at a local scale, such as jointly with groups like the Sydney Fungal Studies Group. Wieland Meyer noted that the Australasian Society for Microbiology has a Mycology Group, and links with this should be encouraged.

7c. IMA Asian Branch

The membership of AMS in the IMA Asian Branch has not yet been resolved. Jack Simpson offered to investigate setting up an Australasian Regional Group.

7d. IMC in Australasia

The possibility of hosting the IMC in Australia will depend on the situation regarding the moves to combine the IUMS Mycology Congress and the IMC. Cheryl Grgurinovic noted that a bid from Australasia would need to be jointly between AMS, APPS, ASM, etc. Eric McKenzie pointed out that APPS has already moved a motion in support of an IMC bid.

7e. Outgoing Secretary

Cheryl Grgurinovic moved a vote of thanks to outgoing Secretary, Tom May.

Meeting Closed: 6.40 pm.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The Society appointed a new patron, Dr Gretna Weste at the beginning of 1999. A brief biography was published in the *Australasian Mycologist* 18 (1).

A student prize was instituted to honour the Society's previous patron. The prize is to be called the Dr Jack Warcup Memorial Prize. It will be for \$AUS250 and will be awarded for the best talk/poster by a student. It will be awarded for the first time at the Society's Meeting in Sydney on 21 August.

Substantial amounts of time have been taken up assisting with the organisation of the 3rd Australasian Mycological Society Meeting on 21 August 1999 at Westmead Hospital. A number of people, Wieland Meyer and Dee Carter and their students, myself and Heino Lepp have been involved with the organisation of the meeting.

The *Australasian Mycological Newsletter* has had a major overhaul to become the *Australasian Mycologist*. The journal now offers anonymous refereeing of articles and allows authors to use colour plates. Significantly, the first article describing a new species was published in the first issue of the renamed journal (18 (1)).

Development of the webpage has been slower than I hoped, but I will be putting more effort into it once the August conference is over. It will initially include an introduction to the Society, its patron, subscription forms, the journal's instructions to authors, past AMS conferences, the student prize, the office bearers and their addresses, and links to other related sites.

I have written to a Canberra newspaper (*The Chronicle*) about collecting fungi in national parks and the dangers of eating mushrooms.

I have responded to a request to provide sponsorship for the Ninth International Congress for Culture Collections (ICCC-9) in Brisbane in July 2000. The Society would not be able to provide any financial support, but I suggested that the organising committee might consider a further category for small organisations that can't afford to provide financial support but would be willing to provide intellectual and activist support.

Cheryl Grgurinovic

REPORTS OF SUBCOMMITTEES

EDUCATION SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP

The Education Special Interest Group has had two small successes this year. To date, a small sum has been made available for development of an interactive key to microscopic fungi. This will be added to the key to the Rainforest Macrofungi being developed by Tony Young, within LucID. The monies for this development came from a successful application for funds under CUTSD to the federal government by a consortium of academic teaching diversity. The key, called BioED, will be available free of charge to all universities within Australia.

A second small sum has been made available from the University of Sydney to further develop teaching materials on the biology of fungi for presentation over the web. At present a small program is available on the taxonomy of fungi (*sensu stricto*). Segments on ecology, physiology, genetics, structure and interactions will be developed over the next 12 months to be available for incorporation in a new unit offered intensively by the University of Sydney from 2001.

Peter McGee

CONSERVATION SUBCOMMITTEE

Tony Young was involved in protection of bushland at Lane Cove which provides a precedent for the conservation of communities of Australian fungi. Tony reports that 'The gallery warm temperate rainforest of the Lane Cove Bushland Park on Sydney's north shore is unique for the city of Sydney in that it remains in extremely good condition. At least 19 taxa of Hygrophoraceae are known from the Park. This concentration of species in such a small area is very unusual—similar European sites are given heritage status. The New South Wales Scientific Committee, established under the *Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995* has made a Preliminary Determination to support a proposal to list the Hygrocybeae community of Lane Cove Bushland Park as an Endangered Ecological Community under Part 3 of Schedule 1 of the *Act*. In addition, Lane Cove Council is being assisted in an application to nominate the site on the Register of the National Estate, based largely on the prolific number of Hygrophoraceae. There has now also been a successful prosecution of an environmental pollution charge based on the Hygrophoraceae site's value'. Further information is provided in an article in *Biologue* No. 21.

The Fungimap scheme continues to grow, and collect valuable information on the 100 target species. Some of the target species were included because they were thought to be rare. The relative lack of records of such species is confirming their rare status.

Tom May

FUNGAL POISONING NETWORK

The difficulties of insurance indemnity for the purposes of medical prosecution now seem to have been resolved. It appears that Government employees are automatically covered by their employer's insurance cover (although you must ensure that this is the case). For privately employed mycologists, you need to arrange cover yourself, or through your State Poisons Information Centre. This cover relates to all work directed to the mycologist, whether re-directed from GPs or by direct contact from the Poisons Centre.

Production of a CD-ROM is being considered for the Queensland State Poisons Centre. This will have colour images of the most common fungi met with in the Queensland area.

An interesting case concerned a female child of about two years who was 'fed' six fruit bodies of a toadstool growing in a Brisbane front lawn by her elder brother. The child was admitted to casualty with no symptoms and was released still symptomless after six hours under observation, and eight hours after the actual ingestion. The toadstools were identified as *Panaeolina foenicisii*, by the characteristic rough spores with germ pore, and the cheilocystidia. There are conflicting reports on this species—which appears to be hallucinogenic in North America, but not so in Europe and Australia. For material from Australia analysed by Dr Tjakko Stijve in Switzerland, there is no evidence of any psilocin, psilocybin, etc. There is still the possibility of gastrointestinal irritation, although this did not occur with the Brisbane patient.

Tom May has been carrying out a study of ingestions of fungi reported to the Victorian Poisons Information Centre, with PIC staff Elizabeth Hender and Suzanne Beulke. They have found that for adults, most ingestions are of *Agaricus xanthodermus*, with very few other species involved. Two cases of poisonings by species of *Scleroderma* were reported. In contrast, children ingest a wide range of fungi, and there are only a few cases where symptoms can be related to the fungus.

Tony Young

AFFILIATION WITH THE BRITISH MYCOLOGICAL SOCIETY

The Australasian Mycological Society is now formally affiliated with the British Mycological Society. The Honorary General Secretary of the British Mycological Society has suggested that an initial step to action the affiliation would be to identify the postgraduate members of each Society and their research programmes. This will enable postgraduates from both Societies to establish contact with other postgraduates with similar research interests. Postgraduates are requested to forward their name, institution, contact details and research topic to me at my email address shown on the verso of the front page.

Cheryl Grgurinovic

NEW JOURNAL EXCHANGE

The Associazione Micologica Bresadola has agreed to exchange copies of the journal *Rivista di Micologia* (which has four issues a year) for the *Australasian Mycologist*. The Society also receives the *Victorian Naturalist* and the *Field Naturalist Newsletter*. Copies will be kept in the Australasian Mycological Society's library. Ceri Pearce has agreed to take on the job of Society librarian. See the verso of the front cover for her address.

NEW MEMBERS

Full members

Genevieve Gates, Taroom, Tas.
Dr Shaun Pennycook, Landcare Research, Auckland.

Student member:

Katy Sommerville, Monash University, Vic.