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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 Notes on plants collected at Cape Grafton in 1770 by Banks and Solander
- 3 The Cape Grafton Collections (part 1)
- 4 March field trip report – Barron Gorge Power Station.
- 5 April activities

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Notes on Plants Collected at Cape Grafton in 1770 by Banks & Solander

By R.L. Jago

INTRODUCTION

Sir Joseph Banks and Dr. Daniel Solander collected some 30,382 botanical specimens during their 1051 day round the world voyage on the Endeavour between the 25th August 1768 and the 12th July 1771. A tiny handful, comprising some thirty-one species, including three type specimens are known to have been collected at Cape Grafton on the 9th June 1770. These collections along with notes and manuscripts by Banks, Solander and Sporing along with the drawings of Sydney Parkinson, Sporing and Buchan made during the voyage are held at the British Museum of Natural History. The difficulties in getting the collected specimens, drawings and manuscripts back to England safe and sound in good condition can never be underestimated. It was a remarkable achievement.

The team employed by Banks on the Endeavour voyage consisted of the following.

- ✦ Dr. Daniel Carlsson Solander (1733-1782) a distinguished Swedish naturalist and pupil of Linnaeus.
- ✦ Sydney Parkinson (1745-1771) a gifted botanical, natural history and landscape artist.
- ✦ Alexander Buchan (?-1769) artist.
- ✦ Herman Diedrich Sporing (1733-1771) secretary and artist.
- ✦ Peter Briscoe (1737-1810) servant and field assistant.
- ✦ James Roberts (1752-1826) servant and field assistant.
- ✦ George Dorlton (?-1769) servant and field assistant.
- ✦ Thomas Richmond (?-1769) servant and field assistant.

The two Negro servant/field assistants Dorlton and Richmond died of exposure on Mount Banks in Tierra del Fuego in January 1769. Alexander Buchan the artist died in Tahiti 17th April 1769. Herman Sporing secretary and artist died at sea 24th January 1771. Sydney Parkinson the artist died two days later, by coincidence on what is now celebrated as Australia Day on the 26th January 1771.

[The country near Cape Grafton] lookd at a distance not unlike Mores or heaths in England

I have not to date been able to find a complete catalogue of the plants collected at Cape Grafton though only a small fraction of the vast amount of available literature has been examined. Some of the plant names used for a small number of illustrations in Banks Florilegium appear to be incorrect. What I believe to be the name recognised by the Queensland Herbarium as of December 2010 is used in the account for each of the species. Where this differs from that used in the Florilegium is noted by way of an explanation. The specimen itself would need to be examined to verify the correct identity. References pertaining to each species are included in the account of each species. A full list of all references is also included at the conclusion of the notes.

AT CAPE GRAFTON

Early in the afternoon of the 9th June 1770 Cook anchored the Endeavour somewhere around the middle of what is now known as Mission Bay at a position approximately one kilometre to the northeast of Rocky Island. Cook, Banks and Solander immediately set out with a crew in one of the ships boats to search for a suitable watering place on the mainland. Somewhere between the eastern end of what is now known as Palm Beach and Cape Grafton they landed at least once and possibly twice to search for a suitable watering point. At one or possibly two of these locations Banks and Solander made their Cape Grafton collections. The time spent collecting plants must have been brief perhaps no more than 15-20 minutes given the time necessary for the round trip of at least nine kilometres from the Mission Bay anchorage to Cape Grafton and back.

Banks account of their visit to Cape Grafton is very brief. The following extract is taken from his journal entry for the 9th & 10th of June 1770. Banks journal was kept in real time while Cook's journal entries are in ships time.

“9. Countrey much the same as it was, hills near the sea high, lookd at a distance not unlike Mores or heaths in England but when you came nearer them were coverd with small trees; some few flats and valleys lookd tolerably fertile. At noon a fire and some people were seen. After dinner came to an Anchor and went ashore, but saw no people. The countrey was hilly and very stony affording nothing but fresh water, at least that we found, except a few Plants that we had not before met with. At night our people caught a few small fish with their hooks and lines.

10. Just without us as we lay at an anchor was a small sandy Island laying upon a large Coral shoal, much resembling the low Islands to the eastward of us but the first of the kind we had met with in this part of the South Sea. Early in the morn we weighd and saild as usual with a fine breeze along shore, the Countrey hilly and stoney.”



Cape Grafton from the north east

The following extract is taken from the Journal of Captain James Cook for the 10th of June 1770. Note that Cook's Journal is in Ships Time not real time.

“SUNDAY 10th After hauling round Cape Grafton we found the land trend away NWBW. Three miles to the Westward of the Cape is a Bay wherein we anchord about 2 miles from the shore in 4 fathom water an owsey bottom. The East point of the bay bore S 74° East, the west point S 83° West and a low green woody Island laying in the offing bore N 35° East. This Island lies NBE½E distant 3 or 4 Legs from Cape Grafton, and

is known in the Chart by the name of green Island. As soon as the Ship was brought to an Anchor I went ashore accompanied by Mr Banks and Dr Solander, the first thing I did was to look for fresh water and with that View rowed out to wards the Cape because in the bottom of the Bay was low mangrove land and little probability of meeting with any there, but the way I went I found two small streames which were difficult to get at on account of the surff and rocks upon the shore. As we came round the Cape we saw in a Sandy Cove a small stream of water ran over the beach, but here I did not go in the boat because I found that it would not be easy to land. We hardly advance any thing into the Country, it being here hilly which were steep and rocky and we had not time to viset the low lands and therefore met with nothing remarkable. My intention was to have stay'd here at least one day to have looked into the Country had we met with fresh water convenient or any other refreshment, but as we did not I thought it would be only spending time and looseing so much of a light moon to little purpose and therefore at 12 oClock at night we weigh'd and stood away to the NW having at this time but little wind attended with showers of rain. At 4 oClock the breeze freshend at SBE with fair weather. We continued steering to NNW ½W as the land lay having 10, 12 and 14 fathom at the distance of 3 Leagues from the land."



Endeavour replica near Cooktown



John Hill

The Cape Grafton Collections

By R.L. Jago

Three type specimens are known to have been collected by Banks and Solander at Cape Grafton 9th June 1770. The first is described this month, the others will be included next month.

TYPE SPECIMENS

ORDER: LAMIALES
 FAMILY: Acanthaceae
 NAME: *Brunoniella acaulis* subsp. *acaulis* (R.Br.) Bremek.
 TYPE: Cape Grafton, J. Banks & D. Solander 9th June 1770.
 SYNONYMS: *Aporuella acaulis*; *Ruellia acaulis*
 COMMON NAME: Blue Yam

HABITAT: Open forest & woodlands in rocky areas from near sea level to in excess of 1,000 metres altitude on both granite & metamorphic substrates.

PRONOUNCED: broo-no-nee-ELL-a a-KAW-lis

ETYMOLOGY: The generic name is in reference to its supposed resemblance to *Brunonia*. The species epithet is derived from the Latin *acaulis* without a stem.

CONSERVATION STATUS: A common native species.

DESCRIPTION: A prostrate herb usually with a very short unbranched stem but occasionally with a few short decumbent branches arising from within the leaves; roots with elliptical underground tubers 20-50 mm. long x 8-10 mm. in

Three type specimens are known to have been collected by Banks and Solander at Cape Grafton 9th June 1770

diameter; leaves simple, opposite, with each leaf pair attached at 90° to the adjacent pair, usually in a basal rosette, leaf blade 20-65 mm. x 10-25mm., petioles 8-20 mm. long, cystoliths linear; inflorescence a solitary flower on a long pedicle arising from the axils of the basal rosette of leaves, rarely with some axillary flowers on short decumbent branches; corolla blue, funnel-shaped 20-30 mm. diameter; stamens 2; fruit a capsule 13-17 mm. long.

DISTRIBUTION: Western District of New Guinea (a single record) to north eastern Australia south to Port Curtis.

NOTES: One of several species of local plants collected at Cape Grafton by Banks & Solander in 1770 that is not illustrated in Banks Florilegium. This species is locally common in the Cairns Region especially on clay soils in eucalypt woodland with *Eucalyptus platyphylla* between Port Douglas & Cairns. Also common on coastal headlands and hills (Mt. Lumley Hill etc) and in open woodlands with *Melaleuca viridiflora* adjacent to mangroves. The narrow elliptical underground tubers were apparently eaten by local aboriginal groups either raw or roasted and are said to taste like Sweet Potato (*Ipomoea batatas*).

REFERENCES:

Barker, R.M. (1986) A taxonomic revision of Australian Acanthaceae. *Journal of the Adelaide Botanic Gardens*, Vol. 9; 99-102.

Bailey, F.M. (1909) *Comprehensive Catalogue of Queensland Plants*; 373-374

Bailey, F.M. (1901) *Queensland Flora Part 4*; 1145

Brown, R. (1810) *Prodromus Florae Novae Hollandiae*: 479

Field Trip to Barron Gorge Power Station, 19 March

By R.L. Jago and Mary Gandini

After a lengthy, friendly and exceptionally well catered Annual General Meeting at Ing and Nicole's place, those with energy wandered off to Barron Gorge Power Station for a poke around. The species list compiled by Bob and Mary follows. I'm told that the exceptionally rare *Wetria australiana* was also spotted during the afternoon.

FLOWERING PLANTS

Anacardiaceae	Lauraceae	Rubiaceae
Euroschinus falcatus	Cryptocarya hypospodia	Aidia racemosa
Rhus taitensis	Litsea fawcettiana	Nauclea orientalis
Semecarpus australiensis	Malvaceae	Rutaceae
Apocynaceae	Trichospermum pleiostigma	Bosistoa brassii
Alstonia scholaris	Mimosaceae	Micromelum minutum
Hoya australis ssp. tenuipes	Paraserianthus toona	Salicaceae
Ichnocarpus frutescens	Moraceae	Casearia grewiifolia
Parsonsia latifolia	Ficus congesta	Sapindaceae
Parsonsia longipetiolata	Ficus hispida	Alectryon tomentosus
Secamone eliptica	Ficus microcarpa	Atalaya rigida
Tabernaemontana orientalis	Ficus opposita	Cupaniopsis flagelliformis
Araliaceae	Ficus racemosa	Ganophyllum falcatum
Polyscias elegans	Ficus variegata ssp. variegata	Guioa acutifolia
Schefflera actinophylla	Ficus virens ssp.	Sapotaceae
Asteraceae	sublanceolata	Palaquium galactoxylon
Sphagneticola trilobata	Ficus virgata	Urticaceae
	Streblus brunonianus	Dendrocide photinophylla
		Pilea microphylla

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|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Bignoniaceae
Pandorea pandorana | Myristaceae
Myristica globosa | Pipturis argenteus |
| Casuarinaceae
Casuarina cunninghamiana | Myrtaceae
Eugenia reinwardtiana
Melaleuca viminalis
Syzygium tierneyanum
Tristaniopsis exiliflora
Xanthostemon chrysanthus | Verbenaceae
Stachytarpheta cayennensis |
| Celastraceae
Euonymus australiana | Oleaceae
Chionanthus ramiflora
Olea paniculata | Vitaceae
Cissus repens
Cissus vinosa |
| Combretaceae
Terminalia sericocarpa | Phyllanthaceae
Breynia cernua
Cleistanthus humile
Cleistanthus semiopacus
Phyllanthus cuscutifolia
Glochidion philippicum | FERNS
Adiantaceae
Adiantum atroviride
Adiantum hispidulum
Cheilanthes nudiuscula
Doryopteris concolor |
| Commelinaceae
Murdannia nudiflora | Phytolaccaceae
Rivina humilis | Aspleniaceae
Asplenium nidus
Asplenium paleaceum |
| Cyperaceae
Scleria mackaviensis | Piperaceae
Piper caninum | Blechnaceae
Doodia media |
| Elaeocarpaceae
Elaeocarpus grandis | Poaceae
Oplismenus compositus | Davalliaceae
Davallia denticulata |
| Euphorbiaceae
Aleurites rockinghamensis
Claoxylon tenerifolium
Codiaeum variegatum
Mallotus philippensis
Mallotus polyadenos
Mallotus repandus
Tragia finalis | Primulaceae
Maesa dependens
Maesa haplobotrys | Polypodiaceae
Drynaria sparsisora
Microsorium punctatum |
| Fabaceae
Austrosteenisia blackii
Desmodium tortuosum | Rhamnaceae
Alpitonia petriei
Ventilago ecorallata | Pteridaceae
Pteris ensiformis
Pteris ensiformis cul. |
| Hemerocallidaceae
Geitonoplesium cymosum | | Victoriae
Thelypteridaceae
Christella dentata |
| Lamiaceae
Callicarpa pedunculata
Plectranthus sp. | | GYMNOSPERMS
Araucariaceae
Agathis robusta |

April activities

By Stuart Worboys

April's SGAP meeting will be held in the nursery tea room at the Flecker Botanic Gardens. I'll be introducing SGAP members to the new rainforest key, demonstrating how easy it is to use, and how much better the new version is.

Bring a plate, bring some native plants to identify. Look forward to seeing you there.



MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS- QLD REGION-

(Please Note: New fee structure) Renewal \$35.00.

New Members \$40, each additional member of household \$2.00.

Student - Renewal \$23 New Members \$28.00.

Cairns Branch Fees -\$10.00 Full Year.

To access our Library for the loan of publications, please contact David Warmington