

GREAT COLLECTORS:

HUGO FLECKER

Article abridged from John H. Pearn (1996) *Flecker, Hugo (1884–1957)*. Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University. URL: <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/flecker-hugo-10199/text18023>. Accessed online 21 April 2014.

Hugo Flecker (1884–1957), medical practitioner, radiotherapist, toxicologist and natural historian, was born on 7 December 1884 at Prahran, Melbourne. Hugo matriculated fourteenth in his class of fifteen, winning a prize for music despite congenital nerve deafness. He enrolled in medicine at the University of Adelaide in 1904 before transferring to the University of Sydney (M.B., Ch.M., 1908).

In 1911 Flecker travelled to Britain where he qualified L.R.C.P. (London) and became a fellow (1912) of the Royal College of Surgeons, Edinburgh. Back home, he served in the Militia until 20 August 1914 when he was seconded to the Australian Imperial Force as captain, Australian Army Medical Corps.

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EXCURSION REPORT Babinda Golf Club, 15 March 2014

BY DON LAWIE

A rare sunny day in March found us gathered for a picnic lunch at the well-appointed Babinda Golf Club clubhouse. We caught up socially and enjoyed some plant Show & Tell – particularly since Dave had some seedling Northern Silky Oak *Cardwellia sublimis* and rainforest cycad *Bowenia spectabilis* to give away.

The Saturday golfers teed off at 1 pm and we followed safely behind them down the first fairway as they set off on their Sisyphean journey. The course is a compact nine-holer laid out in a generally north-south axis adjoining a cane farm on the west and the main loco line then the Bruce Highway to the east. The western boundary was planted by Landcare about four years ago and is now a healthy hedge of maturing shrubs and trees and already exhibiting recruitment of bird-deposited additions. Almost all the trees and shrubs on the course are local native plants and as a result they are thriving in the well-cared for, mostly weed free environment.

The western hedge consists of a row of Creek Cherry *Syzygium australe*, already about three metres high, fronted with a row of well-established *Lomandra hystrix* and with a selection of local plants – Northern Olive *Chionanthus ramiflorus*, various species of

Macaranga and *Mallotus* including *Mallotus polyadenia* just coming into flower when they will exhibit their attractive cream coloured, 20 centimetre long catkins to attract butterflies and birds. More butterfly attractors were the Ulysses host *Melicope elleryana* - formerly *Euodia* tree – and *Melicope rubra* formerly *Evodia muelleri* the Little *Evodia*. Little *Evodia* is ideal as a suburban lawn plant, attracting butterflies and showing off its pretty pink flowers whereas *elleryana* is much too big and the spreading roots ruin a lawn. In the present circumstance it is ideal, and golfers can be assured of seeing the beautiful blue butterflies as they play

Discussion centred around a young, flowering specimen of Ivory Mahogany *Dysoxylum gaudichaudianum*. This tree will grow to above 36 metres in height (cyclones permitting), a tad large for gardens but ideal here. When young, this species resembles young White Basswood *Polyscias murrayi* and Stuart pointed out the differences in leaf and flower – simple when one



The Australian Tropical Herbarium's rainforest plant ID courses are running again this year. We'll be running the course in Cairns in June, and a fun residential course in Paluma in November. More information about these courses can be found on the James Cook University website: alumni.jcu.edu.au/PIC2014.

A major project for herbarium this year is the digitizing of our type collections. This means that all of our type specimens (the original reference specimen to which a species name is applied) will be photographed at high resolution, and made available on the internet. This will take some months to complete.

As mentioned last month major revision of the Annonaceae has recently led to name changes across the family. Familiar genera have been completely reconstructed or are gone altogether. Some examples from the Australian flora are:

Haplostichanthus ramiflorus now *Polyalthia xanthocarpa*.

Melodorum crassipetalum, now *Uvaria sankowskyi*

Polyalthia australis, now *Monoon australe*

Polyalthia patinata, now *Monoon patinatum*

Polyalthia nitidissima, now *Hubera nitidissima*

March Excursion Report (continued)

is a practising Botanist! (The specific name also was discussed so I'll attach a small monograph on that).

The course is flat with minor undulations, site of a former cane farm and giving evidence of once having been swampy ground. Numerous drains and minor flowing creeks criss-cross the fairways and small drains parallel and divide each fairway. We had had over two inches of rain the previous day and the drainage is near perfect since there were no puddles at all. The water in both drains and creeks is crystal-clear, running over sandy bottom and populated by many tiny native

fish. The water plant *Monochoria* thrives in areas and had a few pale lilac flowers. *Monochoria* is a native plant, Stuart told us, but is easily confused with the exotic invasive water weed Purple Hyacinth and well-meaning landholders have been reported as poisoning *Monochoria*, mistaking it for the exotic.

The fairways are delineated by the afore mentioned small drains, and careful plantings of solitary local large rainforest trees and a few palms. Notable species include Milky Pine *Alstonia scholaris* Quandong *Elaeocarpus angustifolius*, Kauri Pine *Araucaria sp.*, Golden Penda *Xanthostemon*

chrysanthus, and the locally endemic, important timber tree Sour Hardwood *Ristantia pachysperma*. A popular planting ideal for the situation (as are all the former) is River Cherry *Syzygium tierneyanum*, all specimens of which are thriving. A Club member is an orchid enthusiast and has placed numerous local orchids, principally the Golden Orchid *Dendrobium discolor* and the White Dove Orchid *Dendrobium crumenatum*, in appropriate trees. A spectacular example was the Lilac Orchid *Dendrobium nindii* in a River Cherry, orchid stems upwards of three metres in length and with a stunningly-beautiful inflorescence of perhaps fifty perfect pale lilac flowers. This would have to be the Plant of the Day.

The whole course was ravaged by Cyclone Larry almost exactly eight years ago, followed up by Cyclone Yasi five years later. Scars remain but care and re-planting have eliminated most of the evidence. There is a small area of remnant swamp abutting the Highway boundary, complete with dark water, Pandanus and Climbing Swamp Fern *Stenochlaena palustris* enveloping Umbrella and Evodia trees.

Many more trees were noted but the list would be too long. Suffice to say that the course was a delight to visit and as an ex-groundsman myself I fully appreciate the effort involved by the small band of volunteers in maintaining such high standards.

PROFESSOR CHARLES GAUDICHAUD-BEAUPRE

A French Naval Apothecary and Pharmacist, who collected (plants) in the Sydney hinterland and in the Blue Mountains, NSW, 1817 – 1820.

In France in the 19th century the professions of Apothecary and Pharmacist came somewhere between Surgeon and Physician. Apothecaries could diagnose illnesses and treat them with medications which they or their apprentices made.

Knowledge of human anatomy and physiology, as well as a detailed botanical knowledge was a prerequisite in the training of an Apothecary. In 1956 when I commenced my apprenticeship as a Pharmaceutical Chemist the same subjects were mandatory as much of our compounded medicines then were sourced from plants.

Gaudichaud-Beaupre travelled the world seeking new plants of use for medicinal purposes, inspired by Banks and Solander's discoveries during Cook's 1770 visit to Australia. The full extent of Gaudichaud-Beaupre's discoveries will never be known since his ship *L'Uranie* was wrecked in the Falkland Islands in 1820 and 4,000 to 6,000 of his specimens were lost. He survived however and a number of Australian plants bear the specific name *Gaudichaudi* in his honour. Perhaps, when next time we stumble over the name *Gaudichaudianum*, we should be grateful that his full name was not used!

With acknowledgment to *Doctor in the Garden* by John Pearn, Amphion Press.

March Excursion Report - photos



Fairways of the Babinda Golf Club



Dendrobium ninidii



Elaeocarpus angustifolius



Dysoxylum gaudichaudianum, five petals with a little trumpet or tube at the centre



Nymphaea sp., an attractive hazard



Fruits of *Melicope rubra*, formerly *Evodiella muelleri*

At St Philip's Anglican Church, Sydney, on 21 April 1917 he married Thelma Hensler Emma Malvina Arnold. From 1918 he practised at Temora, New South Wales, later moving to Melbourne, then finally establishing himself as a radiologist and radiotherapist at Cairns, Queensland. He was one of the few specialists north of Brisbane.

Excelling in botany, zoology and toxicology, in 1936 Flecker described the first fatal case of coneshell poisoning in Australia, and continued to report the effects of scorpion and snake venoms on human victims. He published accounts of two cases of survival from Australian taipan bites, but his international fame rested on his research into poisoning by jellyfish. Concerned at the unexplained deaths of swimmers, Flecker identified the cause as the box jellyfish (named *Chironex fleckeri* in 1956), one of the world's most venomous creatures. In the *Medical Journal of Australia* (April 1945) he described another jellyfish envenoming which he termed the 'Trukandji Syndrome', later traced to the box jellyfish, *Carrukia burnesii*; his subsequent paper in the same journal (July 1952) became a classic of its type.

Having been active in the Field Naturalists' Club of Victoria from 1921, Flecker developed extracurricular interests in natural history. As foundation president (1932-45) and vice-president of the North Queensland Naturalists' Club, he influenced the documentation and study of the region's flora. The club became a vigorous group, bridging the enthusiasm of amateur collectors and the scrupulousness of taxonomic botanists. Some 3414 collections comprising 2262 species attributed to Flecker are held in the Australian Tropical Herbarium, with hundreds more held in other institutions. More than fifty new species of plants were described during Flecker's presidency; with his encouragement, the club acquired its own herbarium. In 1933-48 he instituted and co-

***Dendrobium fleckeri* (photo by Ing Toh)**



***Lenbrassia australiana*, collected by Flecker**



***Alpinia arctiflora*, collected by Flecker**



ordinated a census of plants indigenous to the area as a cumulative supplement to the North Queensland Naturalist. At least six new species were named in his honour, including the rare and beautiful orchid of Mount Bellenden Ker, *Dendrobium fleckeri*, and a new halophytic wattle, *Acacia fleckeri*. From 1935 until 1937 he wrote a nature column in a Cairns weekly newspaper. His advocacy of conservation and his enlightened approach to ecology—he was concerned with the problems of soil erosion and the spread of noxious, introduced weeds—marked him as a pioneer of the 'Green Movement'.

Flecker died on 25 June 1957 at Cairns and was buried in the local cemetery; his wife, son and daughter survived him. That year he was posthumously awarded the J. P. Thomson medal of the R.G.S.A. and in 1971 the Flecker Botanic Gardens, Cairns, were named in his honour.

The following plants have been selected for Hugo Flecker's commemorative garden bed:

ARACEAE

- *Gymnostachys anceps*

ARALIACEAE

- *Mackinlaya confusa*

AREACEAE

- *Linosyris minor*

APOCYNACEAE

- *Cerbera manghas*

BORAGINACEAE

- *Cordia subcordata*

CYPERACEAE

- *Cyperus javanicus*

EUPHORBIACEAE

- *Codiaeum variegatum*

HEMEROCALLIDACEAE

- *Dianella ensifolia*

LAMIACEAE

- *Clerodendrum longiflorum*

PANDANACEAE

- *Freycinetia excelsa*
- *Pandanus monticola*

PHYLLANTHACEAE

- *Cleistanthus semiopacus*

PRIMULACEAE

- *Myrsine subsessilis*

PROTEACEAE

- *Persoonia falcata*

RHIZOPHORACEAE

- *Carallia brachiata*

RUBIACEAE

- *Lasianthus strigosus*

ZINGIBERACEAE

- *Alpinia caerulea*



Upcoming Events

CAIRNS SGAP

Saturday 26 April

12 noon. Redden Island. Meet at the car park on Cinderella Street, 150 m south of the Redden Creek Bridge (see map).

Bring lunch, sun hat, sandfly repellent.

Saturday 18 May

Copperlode Dam.

Saturday 21 June

Kuranda

Saturday 19 July

Blue Arrow walk, Edge Hill.

Saturday 16 August (date to be confirmed)

Banks and Solander Garden Working Bee

Saturday 20 September

David Barrow's garden, Mirriwinni

TABLELANDS SGAP

Wednesday 23 April

Meeting. 7:30pm, CWA Hall, Tolga.

Sunday 27 April

Excursion to Lappa Road area. A chance to feast on Acacias and Grevilleas. Meet at Dimbulah, opposite the supermarket, from 9.30 for a 10 a. m. start to what promises to be another new and interesting trip.

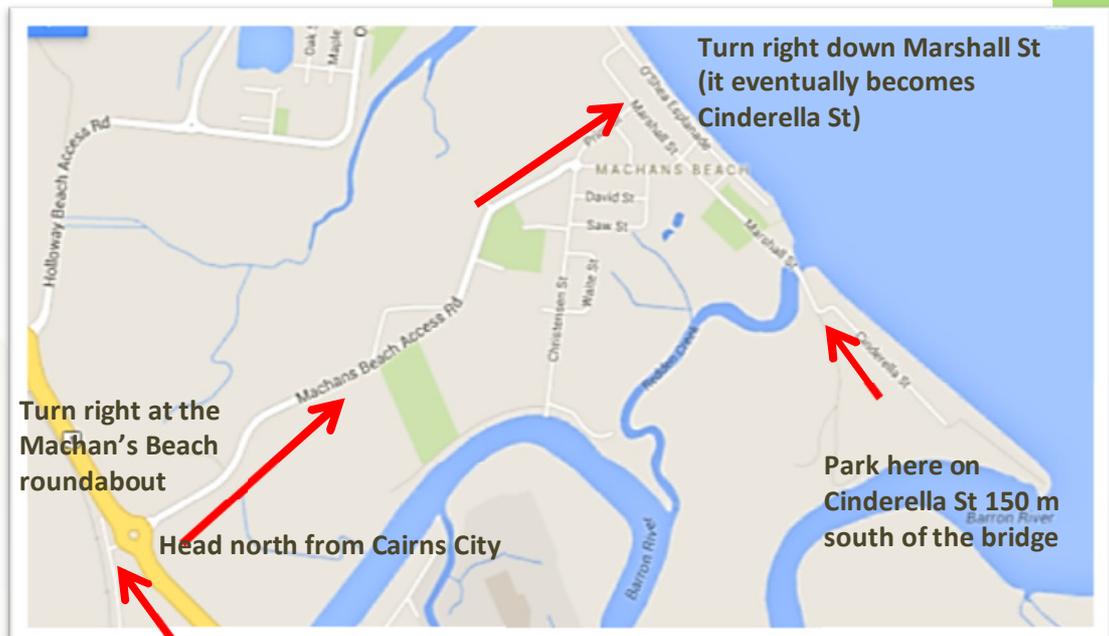
Any queries, please contact Chris Jaminon on 4091 4565 or email hjaminon@bigpond.com

TOWNSVILLE SGAP

Meets on the **2nd Wednesday of the month**, February to November, in Annandale Community Centre at 8pm, and holds excursions the following Sunday.

See www.sgaptownsville.org.au/ for more information.

OTHER EVENTS OF INTEREST



SGAP CAIRNS 2013 COMMITTEE

Chairperson	Rob Jago
Vice-chairperson	Pauline Lawie
Treasurer	Stuart Worboys
Secretary	Boyd Lenne
Newsletter	Stuart Worboys
Webmaster	Tony Roberts

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