

## **‘Ferns of Dunedin’ workshop (18<sup>th</sup> June): Report by Kelvin Lloyd.**

A rather rainy Sunday was perhaps appropriate for this workshop, given the liking of most ferns for permanently moist habitats! Attendees were: Bastow, Fredricka, Nola, Tetsuya, Allison, Barbara, Clifford, Darren, Mel, John, Moira, Sam and myself.

An excellent introduction was provided by John Steel, who firstly noted the day’s proximity to St. John’s Eve (24<sup>th</sup> June). We learned that once upon a time it was believed that ferns produced invisible seeds at midnight on this date. If you managed to get hold of one of these fern seeds you would gain the power of invisibility! This tale was used to explain the paradox of proliferating ferns that never seemed to flower, however I’m sure the myth was dispelled for workshop participants, who were treated to an excellent animated video explaining the fern life cycle in intimate detail. Ferns are not seed plants, of course.

We learned about the characters used to differentiate fern species from one another *e.g.* degrees of frond dividedness, sporangia and sori, lobation and life form. Armed with this knowledge, we ventured out to test John’s new fern key. Some of us visited Morrison’s Creek while the others went to the Leith Saddle area. Luckily we timed the field trips for a non-rainy part of the afternoon, although it remained cold.

I’m afraid the Leith Saddle people recorded far more ferns than us Morrison Creekers, but at least we out-*Blechnum*-ed them! Mind you, Barbara hadn’t informed us it was a competitive event. Rather, we took the opportunity to familiarise ourselves with the workings of the new key. Morrison’s Creek was certainly a *Blechnum* showcase, ranging from a patch of pert *B. penna-marina* fronds springing from the turf at the start of the track to a mass of magnificent *B. colensoi* fronds drooping from damp

banks further along. Tiny fronds of the filmy fern *Hymenophyllum minimum* were successfully identified by the key. The highlight of the afternoon came late, seeing us gather admiringly around a patch of beautiful *Leptolepia novae-zelandiae*, before our return to the Botany Department for a welcome cuppa and biccies. I'm sure I can speak for everyone in saying that we all learned something from this workshop. Thanks to John and Bastow for a great workshop!

## Species lists - ferns and fern allies:

### Morrison's creek

*Asplenium bulbiferum*  
*Asplenium flaccidum*  
*Blechnum chambersii*  
*Blechnum colensoi*  
*Blechnum fluviatile*  
*Blechnum novae-zelandiae*  
*Blechnum penna-marina*  
*Blechnum procerum*  
*Cyathea smithii*  
*Histiopteris incisa*  
*Hymenophyllum minimum*  
*Hymenophyllum sp.*  
*Leptolepia novae-zelandiae*  
*Leptopteris hymenophylloides*  
*Microsorium diversifolium*  
*Polystichum vestitum*

### Leith Valley streamside

*Asplenium bulbiferum*  
*Asplenium flaccidum*  
*Blechnum chambersii*  
*Blechnum discolor*  
*Blechnum fluviatile*  
*Blechnum montanum*  
*Blechnum novae-zelandiae*  
*Crepidomanes villosum*  
*Ctenopteris heterophylla*  
*Cyathea smithii*  
*Dicksonia squarrosa*  
*Grammitis billardierei*  
*Histiopteris incisa*  
*Hymenophyllum bivalve*  
*Hymenophyllum demissum*

*Hymenophyllum flabellatum*  
*Leptopteris superba*  
*Microsorium diversifolium*  
*Polystichum vestitum*  
*Rumohra adiantiformis*  
*Tmesipteris tannensis*

### Leith Saddle

*Asplenium flaccidum*  
*Asplenium polyodon*  
*Blechnum discolor*  
*Blechnum fluviatile*  
*Blechnum montanum*  
*Ctenopteris heterophylla*  
*Cyathea smithii*  
*Dicksonia squarrosa*  
*Grammitis billardierei*  
*Histiopteris incisa*  
*Huperzia varia (Lycopodium varium)*  
*Hymenophyllum bivalve*  
*Hymenophyllum demissum*  
*Hymenophyllum flabellatum*  
*Hymenophyllum multifidum*  
*Hymenophyllum rarum (?)*  
*Hypolepis millefolium*  
*Hypolepis rufobarbata*  
*Microsorium diversifolium*  
*Paesia scaberula*  
*Polystichum vestitum*  
*Pteridium esculentum*  
*Rumohra adiantiformis*  
*Tmesipteris tannensis*