

overseas enthusiasts ranging from professional bryologists to interested amateurs. Evening slide shows by Jessica Beever, Bill Malcolm, Kelvin Lloyd and John Braggins made for entertaining evenings. Those with the skills to identify bryophytes were so generous in their help that it was impossible to not catch the "bug" and get hooked on mosses! The intricate, miniature beauty of mosses was revealed under the microscopes set up to aid identification, and the organisers David Glenny and Geoff Spearpoint made sure this was an excellent and memorable workshop. I haven't been able to stop myself peering at neighbour's front fences and staring into cracks in footpaths searching for new species to identify ever since! The John Child Bryophyte Workshop opened up a new and beautiful world to me, and anyone with an interest in discovering the extraordinary in the ordinary should not miss this annual event. Next year's workshop is planned for the Hunua Ranges Regional Parkland, near Auckland.

Botanical and other delights of China, 4 Dec – Allison Knight

Our last meeting of the year was a mushroom gourmet's delight. David Orlovich tantalised a good crowd with 2 carousels of slides from his 2 week mycological tour of China, where there are over 150 different kinds of edible fungi available from the markets and probably hundreds of non-edible fungi yet to be fully described. Dr Wang Yun, Crop & Food, Invermay, added his local and mycological knowledge from the audience. We were all ready to sample a Chinese banquet by the last mouth-watering slide and afterwards a dozen of us enjoyed sampling a dozen tasty courses at the Asian Restaurant, washed down by local and Asian beers. A tasty end to the year's activities.

Reviews

Books

New Zealand's Leaf-dwelling Lichens

Bill and Nancy Malcolm, Micro-Optics Press. 73pp, A5, Spiral bound.

This is another of the Malcolms' informative, entertainingly explained and beautifully illustrated books that will help make the fascinating world of lichens accessible to anyone who is keen to explore it.

The first 33 pages set the scene, with a chatty, broad-ranging discussion covering everything from the best (mycorrhizas and brewers yeast) to the worst (moulds and athletes foot) of fungi; from the fungi that associate with algae or bacteria to form lichens to the very specialized lichenicolous fungi that only infect lichens. Any technical terms are clearly explained and can also be looked up in the well-illustrated glossary. A wealth of interesting detail on the leaf-dwelling (foliicolous) lichens includes such gems as: their chemical defenses against invertebrate grazing and plant defenses against them; the effect of their place in the canopy on the form of their thallus and spores; and exquisite explanations of the mechanism and evolution of asexual, sexual and vegetative reproduction in the canopy.

This is followed by a dichotomous key to the 33 genera of foliicolous lichens known in New Zealand, well illustrated with coloured micrographs and well supported by the glossary and the index of species illustrated. Full descriptions of each of the genera follow, often with little notes giving further background detail.

For those who would rather let the computer turn the pages, the key, descriptions and glossary are also provided on a CD that comes with the book. The PDF format can easily be read on a Mac or PC, providing one remembers to open the CD from INSIDE Acrobat reader. The key then becomes alive. A click on any technical term takes you straight to the explanation in the glossary, while a click on any genus that has been keyed out takes you straight to the description of that genus.

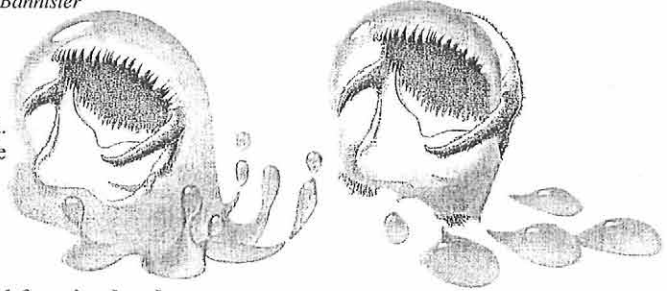
Altogether a very handy, readable and user-friendly production, which unravels the mysteries of a complex, tiny, but important, part of our biodiversity and evolutionary history.

Well worth looking for – both the lichens and the book!

Copies can be obtained from Micro-Optics Press, Box 320, Nelson. Fax (03) 545 1660
Cost: \$50 within New Zealand and \$60 overseas, which includes the CD, GST, post (air-mail overseas) and Bill's immaculate packaging. Sorry, no credit cards.

Allison Knight & Jennifer Bannister

Fig. from above. Campylidium (asexual spore-bearing structure) of the leaf-dwelling lichen *Badimiella pteridophylla*. The side arms trap an air bubble and shield the spores when flooded by a canopy drip.



Mackay, A. (2002). *Wild fungi calendar*

Andrew MacKay of Dunedin has produced a calendar for 2003 featuring thirteen different New Zealand fungi. Each photograph fills an A4 side with the calendar below. Andrew has been photographing natural history subjects for many years and these fungal portraits are up to his usual, excellent standard. Each is accompanied with its common and scientific names and where it was found. My favourite would have to be that of a large group of the ink cap fungus, *Coprinus disseminatus*. Photographed *in situ*, the background detail provides plenty of added interest as well as scale, as in the beautiful, little *Mycena uru* which is almost dwarfed by the moss, *Ptychomnion aciculare*. At \$25, it is a little on the expensive side for a calendar, but the quality of the photographs and rarity of the opportunity to obtain good examples of our native fungi, might make this a welcome gift for someone this Christmas. It can be obtained direct from Andrew by telephoning him at 03-476-7411, or through his web site www.keaphotos.co.nz (where you can find other examples of his work), or by e-mail at kea@keaphotos.co.nz

- John Steel