

John Lindsay (fl. 1785 – 1803)

The genus *Lindsaea*, which includes three fern species found in New Zealand, was named after John Lindsay, a British surgeon, of Westmoreland, Jamaica.

References that give John Lindsay's year of birth as 1785 are incorrect – 1785 is the date at which he is known to have been alive and working, and is shown by the abbreviation “fl.” (floruit) preceding it in the entry relating to him in the *Biographical Index of British and Irish Botanists* (1931). The use of the term also indicates that Lindsay's date of birth is unknown.

John Lindsay had strong links with Edinburgh. He was probably of Scottish ancestry, and may have received his medical training at Edinburgh University, which has nurtured many noted botanists. It is suggested that he might have been the son of Reverend John Lindsay (fl. 1753–88). The latter was rector of two parishes in Jamaica during the late 1760s and early 1770s, graduated Doctor of Divinity (Edinburgh) in 1773, submitted natural history drawings and descriptions to scientific institutions, and died in Spanish Town, Jamaica, in 1788.

It is known that John Lindsay, the surgeon, corresponded with Sir Joseph Banks, director of Kew and President of the Royal Society, and with Dr Hope of Edinburgh. Dr William Wright in his *Memoirs*, referred to Lindsay as a surgeon and expert botanist who discovered *Cinchona brachycarpa* in the parish of Westmoreland, Jamaica, in 1785. An account of this plant and a Jamaican bitter wood was published by Lindsay in the *Transactions of the Royal Society of Edinburgh* in 1793, the year in which he was elected a fellow of the society. An unpublished paper, with drawings, of his observations on the movements of the sensitive plant (*Mimosa pudica*) dated 1790 is held in the library of the Royal Society. Lindsay's momentous paper on the germination and raising of ferns from spores was read in 1791 and published in the *Transactions of the Linnean Society* three years later. From his instructions gardeners learned to propagate ferns from spores, and horticulturists at Kew Gardens amassed the world's largest and richest collection of living ferns – a distinction held to this day.

James Edward Smith, a pteridologist and one of England's leading botanists, commemorated Lindsay for his discovery, by naming the fern genus *Lindsaea* after him, and Dryander in his description referred to Lindsay as “an assiduous and skilful

botanist”. Specimens that Lindsay sent to Banks from Jamaica are in the National Herbarium. John Lindsay died in 1803.

[Jonas Carlsson Dryander (1748–1810), born in Gothenburg, Sweden, was a pupil of Linnaeus at Uppsala University. He arrived in London in 1777 and was botanist librarian to Banks from 1782, after the death of Solander. He was also librarian of the Royal Society and vice-president of the Linnean Society. The Australian genus *Dryandra* was named in his honour, but has recently (2007) been merged with *Banksia*.]



Lindsaea trichomanoides

Lindsaea, a genus in the Dennstaedtiaceae family, are terrestrial, mainly tropical ferns with dainty, smooth, fan-shaped leaflets; *trichomanoides*, meaning 'resembling *trichomanes*' ('fine hair'), alludes to the slender hair-like receptacle (sporangia stalk) characteristic of many of the filmy ferns. The slender, light red-brown stipes of *Lindsaea trichomanoides* are smooth and angled and grow in a small patch from a creeping scaly rhizome. The dainty fronds, 15–30 cm long by 3–6 cm wide, are dark green in colour, with small leathery leaflets. Sori extend around the outer margins of the ultimate segments. *Lindsaea trichomanoides* is common throughout the North Island (less common in the east), and in the South Island is confined to Marlborough Sounds and Westland, in relatively open bush on the forest floor. It is also found in Australia, Tasmania and Fiji.