



Daphne Choules Edinger, Terry Sproule and Ursula Preston at the Herbarium.

Herbarium volunteers

by Vicki Hamley

Vicki Hamley, from the Herbarium, writes about three Herbarium volunteers, how they came to lend their assistance to CALM and the help they are giving us.

A chance meeting between a botanist and a nature lover at the Walcott Inlet in far north Kimberley in 1983 resulted in six years' voluntary service for the Herbarium.

When Daphne Choules Edinger retired as a science teacher she joined a Scientific Exploring Society's trip to the Walcott Inlet.

Kevin Kenneally (a senior botanist at the Herbarium) was the consultant botanist on that expedition.

Daphne asked Kevin if he would like some help

processing the collections back in Perth and has worked as his voluntary assistant ever since.

Daphne's dedication was rewarded in 1986 when she was made an Honorary Research Assistant of the Herbarium.

Terry Sproule, who is studying at Bentley Technical College towards a Diploma in Horticulture, began working at the Herbarium once a week last March.

Terry, who came to Perth from the Eastern States, said that working at the Herbarium was a good opportunity to learn and become more familiar with WA's flora.

Ursula Preston lives in England where she has done voluntary work for the British Museum (Natural History).

She visited Perth in 1986 and approached the Herbarium to do voluntary work.

When Ursula returned last October to visit her son, she resumed working in a voluntary capacity, coming in at least four days a week.

Her duties included mounting plant specimens, proof-reading, packing up loans of plant specimens to send to other herbaria and checking off returned loans.

Ursula returned to England in mid-December, promising to come and work for us again next time she was in Australia.

"I like pottering about with plants and I received a marvellous welcome here!" she said.

These three volunteers have made a substantial contribution to the Herbarium's technical area.

An important aspect of this liaison has been the volunteers' reliability, thus enabling the Herbarium to plan activities with the knowledge they will be available to take on specific duties over a designated period.

It's hoped volunteers will play a greater role in the Herbarium's operation in the future.

Curator Jim Armstrong would like to see a "Friends of the Herbarium" group established.

Ideally, such a group would be self-administering and a place to seek voluntary assistance for special projects and on-going tasks.