

**Australian Naturalist Network**

**Get Together 2002**

**“The Tasmanian Experience”**



**REPORT**

## The Get Together

The Australian Naturalist Network Get Together 2002 was organised by the Launceston Field Naturalists Club Incorporated and based in and around Launceston, northern Tasmania. The programme was divided into three segments with a main core programme supplemented by a pre-core tour from Launceston through the north east to the central east coast back to Launceston and a post-core tour from Launceston to the north west coast and back to Launceston. The programme covered seventeen days from Wednesday 6 through to Friday 22 November 2002.

### I. The Pre-tour Programme

**Wed 6** Depart 8.30 am from Treasure Island Caravan & Cabin Park, travel to Bridport, visit Wildflower Reserve with guides from NE Field Naturalists Club, lunch at North-East Park, Scottsdale, visit Forest Eco Centre, travel to Weldborough Pass, walk in ancient Myrtle Forest, visit Halls Falls on Anchor Road (about 1 hour walk - medium to easy) or St Columba Falls, travel to St Helens and stay overnight at Kellrairie Units, evening meal at RSL.

**Thu 7** Spend morning in St Helens area, view spectacular coastline and white sand as well as coastal heathlands, travel to Scamander and meet guide for walk in Winifred Curtis Reserve and along Henderson Lagoon (make sure you have insect repellent the mosquitoes here are fierce!), drive along coastal highway to Bicheno Bird and Animal Park, visit Apsley National Park take easy walk to Lookout and Apsley Waterhole, overnight at Camp Seaview, Bicheno.

**Fri 8** Visit Gulch & Blowhole before driving south, visit beautiful Friendly Beaches coastal heathland behind dunes. On Coles Bay Road stop at bird viewing site at Moulting Lagoon, at Coles Bay visit recently opened Interpretation Centre, stay overnight at Coles Bay Iluka Cabins.

**Sat 9** Walk to Wine Glass Bay Lookout (steep walk 1 to 2½ hours) or walk in adjacent heathland, visit Sleepy Bay and Cape Tourville Lighthouse, excellent boardwalk with brilliant views, lunch at Coles Bay, drive to Launceston via Lake Leake Road, possibly visit Meetus Falls.



Cashes Falls

### Reports

The Pre-tour group set off on Wednesday morning and travelled out through Lilydale turning off past Pipers Brook Vineyard to Bridport where we had morning tea on the foreshore and met up with Joy Rayner, Louise Brooker and Peter Duckworth, our guides through the Bridport Flora Reserve. After a short walk through part of the reserve we then proceeded to another section of the Reserve where the group broke up and disappeared through the foliage in all directions with the three leaders.

Lunch was consumed at North-east Park and followed by a visit to the new Forestry Centre at Scottsdale. We then travelled to Weldborough Pass and had a walk in the Myrtle Forest before continuing on to meet up with Denny Walter and two others who gave a brief outline concerning Halls Falls and then led us into the Falls. En route we visited an old miner's dam site where we saw a small group of *Blechnum nudum*, Fishbone Fern, on stems about 40 to 50 cm high (unusual in that it is normally a ground-dwelling plant). After visiting the falls we then retraced our steps part way and branched off on another track through an old logging area where we saw the old stumps with shoe holes in them. On return to the bus we thanked our guides and proceeded to St Helens where we had our evening meal in the RSL and booked into accommodation for the evening.

On Thursday we travelled to Humbug Point before visiting the St Helens History Room where Denny Walter was waiting to answer our questions. From St Helens we headed south, driving out to St Helens Point where the coastal heathland was very disappointing due to a poor season, and continued on to Scamander, meeting up with Tim McManus opposite the Scamander Beach Resort where we had lunch. We then followed Tim to the Winifred Curtis Reserve where he took us on a walk in the Reserve.

After visiting Nature World on the outskirts of Bicheno and walking in to Apsley Gorge we spent the

night at Camp Sea View, visiting the Blowhole area after the evening meal to watch the Fairy Penguins coming ashore. The next morning (Friday) we visited the Gulch and walked to the Blowhole before heading south once again and turning eastwards to Coles Bay, calling in for lunch along Moulting Lagoon at a small park and then calling in at the new Visitor Centre for information on various walks before settling in for the night.

On Saturday we drove out to Cape Tourville, walked around the new boardwalk and then went to the main car park where we set off for the Wineglass Bay Lookout, some preferring the flatter walk along the shores of Oyster Bay. Some managed to reach the northern end of Wineglass Bay beach before returning to the bus. From Freycinet we headed off to Friendly Beaches, stopping at the lookout where most were impressed with the view. From there it was time to head back to Launceston with brief stops at the Moulting Lagoon Lookout on the Tasman Highway at Cherry Tree Hill and the Hazards Lookout on the Lake Leake Road.

Jeff Campbell

#### **Thursday 7th November - St Helens, Scamander, Bicheno**

We left St Helens for Binalong Bay to see the lovely orange lichen-coloured rocks. We could see the 'Bay of Fires', named because the first explorers saw a coastline dotted with smoke from the aborigines' fires. We walked through coastal heathland, viewing more orange lichen-covered rocks en route to Beer Barrel Beach.

Lunched at Scamander, then met Tim McManus who spoke to us of his "passion" - the Winifred Curtis Reserve, an area of untouched heathland. Tim and his group have worked extremely hard to purchase the block. They raised \$40000 and obtained \$60000 through National Heritage Trust funding. There is a rare Smokebush on the block. Fortunately we had time for an extensive walk around the property. We drove to the Bicheno Bird and Animal Park where we saw Pelicans, Tawny Frogmouths, Masked Owls and 2 Wedge-tailed Eagles being fed. The owner explained about the different locations from which he had obtained tiger snakes - being isolated populations each group has adapted in a unique way, for example the snakes that only feed on muttonbird chicks over a few week period for the whole year have grown larger over many many years.

Fabulous views from our accommodation at 'Camp Sea View' and a great meal then Peter (our driver) drove us to the foreshore to see the Fairy Penguins returning at dusk to feed their chicks.

#### **Friday 8 November Bicheno to Freycinet**

Many ate breakfast outside to gain maximum enjoyment from the fine weather and wonderful scenery. We spent a pleasant hour at Apsley Gorge/Apsley Lagoon. In this dry woodland I had a close up view of an echidna snuffling for ants in the dry undergrowth. Most of the group walked to the Blowhole, passing Penguin burrows and several Penguins in the crevices in the rocks.

Windy conditions at Moulting Lagoon, our lunch stop, meant that only a few birds were seen.

The design of the National Park Interpretation Centre at Freycinet delighted me. It conveys the idea of ships, the ships of the French, Dutch and British as well as representing the enormous shipping trade between Tasmania and the mainland. The pink granite in the area is used in the centre; a well-designed replica of a shell midden provides a focus for the historical link the aboriginal people have with the land.

The Cape Tourville lighthouse boardwalk gave excellent views of the coast. Settled in our excellent accommodation, we dined at the Hotel at the conclusion of a great day.



Douglas-Apsley

#### **Saturday 9 November Freycinet to Launceston**

I went with a group to walk to Wineglass Bay, where we enjoyed excellent views. After lunch on the

shores of Coles Bay we were driven to the Friendly Beaches. The scenery was breathtaking - I ran out of adjectives! The colour of the white sand is caused by silica with very few impurities and provides a dramatic contrast to the azure blue of the sea.

We arrived at Launceston mid-afternoon after an excellent and enjoyable 4 days. Norma Garlick

## **II The Core Get Together**

### **Programme**

Bring your lunch and afternoon tea every day unless otherwise mentioned. The Coach Company provides morning tea each day except on Skemp Day Saturday 16th.

**Sat 9** At 7.30 pm Get Together will begin at RSL Building Wellington Street for Welcome and Introduction to Launceston and the Programme. Venue is a short walk (500m) from Caravan Park or if you drive there is a carpark at rear of building.

**Sun 10** Depart 9 am Commentator Jeff Campbell, bus will take all to Duck Reach and Jeff will lead those who wish to do the 45 min walk from Duck Reach to the Basin (rough surface, steep in places). Your Cataract Gorge map will give you details of tracks and walks. Others to drive to Basin in the coach and do walks there. Morning tea and lunch will be at the Basin. After lunch drive to Notley Fern Gorge and do a short easy walk through remnant rainforest.

**Mon 11** Depart 9 am George Town/Low Head trip wading birds. Commentator John Simmons., Ralph Cooper, an experienced 'bird' man, will lead those interested in birds, Alison Green, invertebrate zoologist, will lead another group looking for invertebrates. Lunch at Batman Bridge before proceeding to Gravelly Beach and meeting Rosemary Verbeeten at 1.30 pm. She will lead a walk along Tamar River to Little Swan Point where bus will meet the group. Return to city by 4 pm for Civic Reception.

**Civic Reception** at Town Hall Monday 11th 5.45 to 7 pm. We would like everyone to come to this event when the Launceston Mayor will welcome our visitors to the city, Bus pick up at 5.30 pm at Caravan Park. Please be punctual and bring your invitations. Parking at or near the Town Hall may be a problem at that time of day.

**Tue 12** Depart 9 am Field Trip to Narawntapu National Park, commentator Wen Nermut. Bring binoculars, insect repellent, lunch and afternoon tea. Introduction by the ranger on arrival. Be prepared to carry your lunch if you take the walk to Archers Knob. Leaders Julie and Wen Nermut, Sarah Lloyd of Central North FNC will lead bird walk; club members will lead other groups. BBQ in evening organised by LFNC members.

**Wed 13** Depart 9 am Field Trip to Liffey Falls at base of Western Tiers. The bus is unable to drive in to the picnic area as the road is too narrow, passengers will be transported in from the road junction by private vehicles. A 40 minute return walk to the Falls. Leaders for walks LFNC members. Lunch will be taken at picnic area. In the afternoon visit Ashgrove Cheese Factory at Elizabeth Town where cheese can be tasted and bought, followed by a visit to the Raspberry Farm at Christmas Hills (they supply a range of raspberry delights including superb icecream). No need for afternoon tea!

Note Extra Meeting Wednesday 13th 7.30 pm A business meeting has been arranged to discuss different matters relating to the Australian Naturalist Network such as the register, web site, calendar and future meetings etc. and will be held in the Flinders Room at the RSL building in Wellington Street (same venue as on Saturday 9th). All those who are interested are invited to attend

**Thu 14** Depart 8.30 am Drive to Beauty Point, West Tamar, conducted tour of 'Seahorse World' starts at 10 am (concession entry fee of \$10 each will be collected on bus). Lunch at Gravelly Beach, stop at Brady's Lookout, drive to West Tamar Wetlands Centre and after an introductory talk walk to historic Tamar Island (2 hours return) leader Julie Nermut

**Fri 15** Depart 8 am Full day trip to Cradle Mountain. Two smaller buses will be used so we are able to drive to Dove Lake after calling in at the Visitors Centre. Commentators Alison Green and Jeff Campbell. A small book on Cradle Mountain Flora written by Dick Burns is available at the Centre. Walks of different lengths and difficulty are planned, be prepared to carry your lunch with you on any of the longer walks. Leaders Dick Burns, Jeff Campbell and Alison Green. On return journey call in at Sheffield Town of Murals. Sturdy shoes and wet weather gear are essential - sleet, rain, snow and driving winds can occur at any time of the year. Take a small backpack with food and water especially for the longer walks

**Sat 16** Depart 10 am Excursion to Skemps, LFNC property at Myrtle Bank, commentator Geoff Martin. Take one, two or more of the 8 available walks of different levels of difficulty, plant a tree, play bocce or just relax and chat, the choice is yours! Morning and afternoon teas and lunch are to be provided by local members.

**Sun 17** Depart 8.30 am Day Field trip to Mathinna Falls and Evercreech White Gums Reserve, travel via Upper Blessington and Roses Tier to visit a Sphagnum Moss meadow with endemic plants. Return by 5 pm for the 6.30 for 7 pm dinner at Village Motor Inn, Westbury Road and hand over to 2004 host group. Transport by members vehicles

**Mon 18** Punch Bowl Reserve for final get together. Be there about 11 am, members will transport

those wanting a lift to the venue. Bring your lunch and take some local walks. BBQs available.

### Reports

At the meeting on Saturday 9th the question was posed 'What is a sandgroper?' Alison Green provided the following from *Insects of Australia Vol 1 Page 393*:

'Sandgropers are atypical relatives of grasshoppers. They are cylindrical, larviform (like young stages) wholly subterranean insects. They tunnel in sand in both humid and arid regions. Their eyes are reduced, their first legs are adapted for digging, they are wingless. Sandgropers belong to genus *Cylindracheta*. There are 6 species of *Cylindracheta* in Western Australia and there is one species in New Guinea. *Cylindracheta psammophila* sometimes damages wheat in Western Australia (sandgropers are omnivorous feeders). Sandgropers look something like a mole cricket minus wings, but crickets belong in a different Suborder.

Classification: Order *Orthoptera* - contains grasshoppers, crickets, katydids

Suborder *Caelifera* - contains normal grasshoppers with short antennae, locusts etc plus some groups of atypical relatives

Superfamily *Tridactyloidea* - contains some of these atypical relatives

Family *Cylindrachetidae* - Sandgropers and their Patagonian relations.

**Some Historical Information** provided by Jean Neville

#### Settlement of Low Head

Located on a grassed peninsula at the entry to the Tamar River is a small settlement based on the pilot station and lighthouse. The Port of Launceston was situated on the Tamar nearly 64 km inland and from around 1825 a signalling system was in operation at Low Head to advise Launceston of the movement of ships. The first lighthouse was built in 1833 replaced by another in 1889.

**Town Hall**, corner St John and Cameron Streets, Launceston

A large two-storey Classical Revival town hall in stuccoed brick completed in 1864. Its richly moulded façade includes a parapet with urns. The main façade has an imposing Corinthian colonnade and Corinthian pilasters extend around the other walls. The interior includes a fine chamber and upper foyer. An impressive building in virtually original condition, part of an historic precinct.

#### Myrtle Bank

Village near St Patricks River 36 km NE of Launceston off the Tasman Highway. Rowland Skemp emigrated from England in 1883 aged 20. His subsequent farming experiences inclined him to rueful balladry as in *The Cocky Farmer*

'Oh, he sowed the land with grasses and he planted many spuds,

With thistles fine and turnips, oats and wheat,

And he bought him forty sheep, and twenty ancient cows,

And twenty little pigs to give him meat.

But the grubs ate all his grass and the rain spoilt all his hay

While his pigs ate all his spuds and turnips round,

And it cost him fifteen sovereigns when his cattle got astray,

Just to resume them from the public pound'.

His son John Skemp, who lived here until his death in 1966, wrote 'Memories of Myrtle Bank', in part a biography of his father, as well as 'Tasmania: Yesterday and Today'

#### Sunday 10 November: Cataract Gorge Reserve and Duck Reach Power Station

After the bus dropped us off, most of the group turned right and walked down to First Basin, looking at the flowers growing along the path and in the crevices of the rocks. A great walk! Some of the group turned left (as we were all supposed to do) and went to the Duck Reach Power Station.

Members were free to explore the area - the azalea and rhododendron walks, a relic from the formal gardens of last century, were looking gorgeous. Peacocks were strutting around the lawns, one male strutted around displaying his beautiful tail. This was in the area near the Band Rotunda and Restaurant.

Everyone who visits Cataract Gorge is impressed by the Suspension Bridge. This bridge was washed away in 1929 and again in the 1969 floods. Rebuilt in 1995 to celebrate the centenary of the site, it provides a visual focus for visitors. Some members visited the Eagle Eyrie Lookout and Alexandra Lookout while others rode on the Basin chairlift. The overall length is 457 metres and the 308 metre central span is claimed to be the longest single span in the world.

#### Notley Fern Gorge

My Impressions. I am sitting on a bench seat on this beautiful day. Shafts of sunlight are coming through the trees. The canopy is more open than at the Tarra-Bulga National Park in Victoria that I am most familiar with. The canopy there is extremely dense, but at Notley Fern Gorge the sun shone onto

mosses, lichens and moss-covered logs. There is no sound of people but I can HEAR the gentle rustling of leaves on the forest floor, the quiet sound of ground birds fossicking among the leaves, the constant noise of birds chattering, the squawk of yellow-tailed black cockatoos, the gurgle of water over the rocks.

I can SEE leaf litter, dark brown tree ferns, moss-covered logs, grey-green lichen on fallen tree limbs and rocks, emerald-green moss, foliage shining from the dappled sunlight. Norma Garlick

### Notley Fern Gorge

The afternoon of Sunday 10th was spent at Notley Fern Gorge just west of Legana which is on the west side of the Tamar. The drive inland was pleasant although the countryside was rather drier and looking more like the mainland, but as we started the descent into the Gorge another world awaited us.

Jeff Campbell started with a hunt for a special tree orchid (*Sarcochilus australis*, Gunn's Tree Orchid). Being unsuccessful we decided to press on and check again on the return when we'd have a new slant on things.

Geoff Martin then led us through a marvellous experience of discovering ferns, in particular Filmy Ferns; those delicate green drapes most strikingly seen down the trunks of Tree Ferns. *Hymenophyllum australe* was distinguished by secondary pinnae being divided, making paired sori and also by having filmy wings extending beyond the stipe. *H. cupressiforme* has sori adjacent to the main rachis. Margins of fronds are randomly toothed. *H. flabellatum* or Shiny Filmy Fern have longer pendant fronds. *Polyphlebium venosum*, Veined Bristle Fern, has prominent veins and a bristle protruding from a little axial cup.

Other ferns looked at in particular were *Asplenium bulbiferum*, Mother Spleenwort and *Lastreopsis acuminata*, Shiny Shield Fern. Geoff pointed out that the Spleenwort sori are oval and Shield Ferns are round. *Microsorium pustulatum*, Kangaroo Fern, was seen in all its variable shapes with just one strap-like frond to being multi-lobed. *Grammitis billardierei* I now appreciate could never be confused with Kangaroo Fern as Grammitis is a dainty finger sized fern often in a little clustered rosette pattern. *Tmesipteris billardierei* is quite distinctive in having a long pendulous frond with almost leaf-like pinnae arranged 3-dimensionally down the stipe. *Blechnum nudum*, Fishbone Fern, were showing their fertile fronds which could be so easily considered an old withered ordinary frond and *B. wattsi*, Hardwater Fern, was adding a lovely splash of colour with its new growth in rosy pink.

On our return, almost back to the bus in fact, Jeff found his treasure - *Sarcochilus australis*, and we found many others as well. Even though they were not in flower we were all thrilled with the finds and felt it made a grand finale to a lovely afternoon.

Jean Hawkes

### Monday 11 The Gorge Town Wildlife Sanctuary

Intertidal Invertebrates. The shore invertebrates group began with twenty people. Within the Gorge Town Wildlife Sanctuary our territory was comprised of stony areas separated by soft, wet sand.

Animals found included four species of *Grapsidae*, Shore Crabs, - *Cyclograpsus granulatus*, *Paragrapsus quadridentatus*, *P. gaimardii* and *Brachynotus spinosus* plus five-rayed cushion stars, *Patiriella exigua*. Smooth Pebble Crabs, *Philyra laevis*, were in nearby pools on sand. Further offshore soldier crabs, *Mictyris platycheles*, walked on the sand.

No live European shore crabs, *Carcinus maenas*, were seen. However, carapaces of young specimens, washed ashore, confirmed the presence of this introduced species in the Tamar Estuary.

Stones nearer low tide level housed a greater variety of invertebrates but the sloppy approach route was a deterrent. The gum-booted leader brought back, for temporary display, another two sea stars, a six-rayed *Patiriella gunnii* and an eight-armed *Allostichaster polyplax*.

In spite of wet feet for most members the excursion was declared a success

Alison Green



Narawntapu Briefing

## Tuesday 12 November 2002 - Narawntapu National Park

At 9.05 am we left Treasure Island Caravan Park for the Narawntapu National Park, following the Tamar Estuary at the base of a dolerite embankment through Legana to Exeter, where we turned left passing through Frankford and Holwell, to the Narawntapu National Park and the Asbestos Range. Flinders named the range Asbestos Range from the colour of the ground after bushfire. Launceston Field Naturalists Club had a lot to do in making the area a national park. The asbestos mine at Beaconsfield is at the eastern end of the range, outside the national park. The vegetation ranges from coastal heath through dry sclerophyll to wet sclerophyll forest depending on the rainfall.

By 10.20 am we were entering the park gate, noting that Port Sorell was over to the east (left). At 10.30 am we were enjoying morning tea on a mat of *Mazus pumilio* in the Springlawn area. During morning tea we were given choices of activities we could undertake from bird watching, wetland walks or a walk to the summit of the range at Archer's Knob approx. 6.5 km return. I (Noel) chose the latter. The track to the base of Archer's Knob is through a series of inundated swales between sandy ridges. The ridges (sand dunes) trend at 140° presumably blown up by NE winds. Through the *Melaleuca* scrub and coastal heath there were many strongly leaning trunks of *Acacia longifolia*, *Melaleuca lanceolata*, Coast Beard Heath *Leucopogon parviflora* and *Banksia marginata*. After nearly 2 km we reached the base of Archer's Knob where there were outcrops of tors of Graphite Schist and interbedded quartzite. The directions of these Precambrian (Proterozoic) rocks compare with sedimentary rocks of the McDonnell Ranges at Alice Springs over which we tramped at the ANN Get-Together in August 2000. There are no rocks of similar age in Victoria, but it is believed by the Geological Survey of Victoria that similar Proterozoic metasediments occur beneath Port Phillip Bay and Melbourne. These rocks form the same plate as Western Tasmania through King Island and underlie the Kinglake district, accounting for the open folding of the Devonian sediments overlying the "Tasmanian Plate". The "thin skin" open folds of the Kinglake Plateau were protected from the strong E-W pressure folding noted each side of the plateau, presumably protected by the Tasmanian plate. After having lunch whilst enjoying the view of the north coast and Bass Strait from the summit heights of Archer's Knob we returned north downslope to Baker's Beach and walked over a kilometre westerly on the sandy high swash mark noting a variety of mollusc and marine life. Leaving the beach we turned back inland to Springlawn carpark noting the sandy ridges were running E-W to SW-NE.

I (Dorothy) chose to do some birdwatching with Sarah Lloyd. The route took us through thick scrub of *Acacia longifolia* ssp *sophorae* and *Banksia marginata* and large trees of Sweet Bursaria *B. spinosa*, and Bracken (*Pteridium esculentum*), but we managed to catch a glimpse of a few smaller birds, the Grey Fantail being very common. We heard lots of birds, including the Olive Whistler. In fact we heard the Olive Whistler calling all around us throughout the day- a two note drawn out whistle, sometimes with a crack on the end and occasionally a more typical "whistler" call – but do you think we could see it?!! It evaded us all day! I was interested to note during the tour period that a number of birds had variations in their calls which are different from those in Victoria. Although, in the case of the Grey Shrike-thrush its call varies across Australia.

A boardwalk led us through Swamp Paperbark *Melaleuca ericifolia* and Woolly Teatree *Leptospermum lanigerum*, to a well camouflaged Bird Hide where we were lucky enough to see a White-breasted Sea-eagle battling with an eel above the lake. This large lake attracted a lot of birds including Black and Musk Ducks and a Raven attacking a Swamp Harrier (See Bird List for the day). While eating lunch on the boardwalk, dangling our legs over the edge, we spotted three Coots, fairly rare in Tasmania, and listened to frogs - eleven species are found in Tasmania.

Off again, we slogged over the sandhills to a beautiful, wide ocean beach (Baker's), the tide being out we spotted Pied Oystercatcher and two Hooded Dotterels and further along a young White-breasted Sea-eagle and two Sooty Oystercatchers.

This type of beach is attractive to a few species of shells, mainly bivalves and the most obvious were the large (3-4" wide) Reddish Trough Shells and White-ribbed Horse Mussels. Univalves found were Half-grained Helmet and Conical Sand Snail, the latter being an active and widespread predator of bivalves. Captured bivalves are held by folds of the Sand Snail's body and a round hole drilled through the shell. It's proboscis is then inserted through the hole, enzymes released and the partially digested flesh of the prey broken up and ingested with the aid of radular teeth. We found the sand-coloured collar-shaped egg mass which is produced by the female Sand Snail.

We cut inland and back to Springlawn for a refreshing afternoon cuppa with a great assortment of refreshments. As the park is too large to walk around in one day, Wen Nermut and fellow members were kept very busy ferrying us to various points along the coast, which was much appreciated. So we both visited Griffiths Point to sample the Lower Cambrian dolerite (greenstone) there. The joints were measured for dip, strike and exposed length.

Apparently there was little change in the tensional stress directions from Archer's Knob to Griffith's Point which suggests that the plate was stable in direction in this area at this stage. The plate was believed to be in the northern hemisphere around the latitude of Hawaii and part of another ancient

continent called Rhodinia.

Also found at Griffith's Point were shells, masses of them! A beautiful 2cm screw shell called Silver or Banded Kelp Shell was found in hundreds, probably thousands. Although the one species, one pattern is bands in different colours, and the other is covered with very fine reddish-brown angled lines on a cream background. Lots of other species were trapped among the rocks of the Point and altogether approx. 35 species of univalves (snail-type) shells and 26 species of bivalves were recorded during the day. (See Shell List for whole Tour ).

On arrival back at Springlawn carpark we enjoyed a marvellous barbecue with a variety of salads catered for by our Launceston FNC hosts. As we ate at dusk sitting around the barbecue area, out came all the animals for their supper - Pademelons, Bennet's Wallabies, Wombats and further afield Forester or Grey Kangaroos, to crop the already closely shaved lawn all around us. An excellent day's 'field natting', made all the more enjoyable by the great planning and organisation of the Launceston FN members. Many thanks to all.

About 7 pm we began our return via Franklin River and we crossed the Rubicon at 7.20 pm and joined Highway 1. The rich red brown chocolate soils derived from the Tertiary basalts in the paddocks was paled by sand on the ridges presumably blown in from Bass Strait when dry during the last ice age. This was noted 8 km from Hartford through to Elizabeth Town to Deloraine, Meander River to Westbury. We reached the Treasure Island Camping Park about 8.20 pm. An excellent day.

Noel Schleiger and Dorothy Mahler

#### **Narawntapu National Park** The medium length walk

From 'Springlawn' nine people walked an anti-clockwise circuit which included bird hide and lagoon, bush track, sand dunes and beach. Another member accompanied this group part way.

Running on damp sand on Bakers Beach were sand-beach slaters, *Actaecia sp*, (probably *A. bipleura*). They rolled up when disturbed. While enrolled these small crustaceans were bowled along by the wind until they uncurled and put their fourteen feet on the sand again.

The morning's medium walkers were transported to Griffiths Point and Bakers Point during the afternoon.

Alison Green

#### **Wednesday 13 November Liffey Falls, Raspberry Farm and Cheese Factory**

We set off in the large bus accompanied by several vehicles, the latter required to ferry the bus passengers from the turnoff in to the Falls picnic area, the road being too winding and narrow for the bus, although I have previously been right in on a large bus. When our coach operator checked our programme and advised that it was unsuitable for access by bus members insisted that it remain on the programme as it is such a great area to visit with fantastic scenery, not just the Falls but the walk along the river as well, hence the decision to ferry the passengers the last few kilometres by car. In the event this worked quite well, our bus driver checking beforehand to confirm that the bus could not negotiate the road. There were sufficient vehicles present to require only two trips to ferry all the passengers. After morning tea the group set off downstream from the picnic area to the Falls, carrying our lunch which most consumed in the river bed below the Falls. In reality there are three sets of falls on the Liffey, all fairly close together with the topmost falls no longer accessible due to the road upgrade on the Lake Highway upstream, there being no car parking area available due to the steep sides of the roadbed. It was always a very steep scramble and hairy descent to them anyway.

After being ferried back to the bus we continued our journey via Lake Highway to Deloraine, rejoining the Bass Highway and travelling on to the Raspberry Farm at Christmas Hills and the Cheese Factory near Elizabeth Town where products were sampled and bought before we set off back to Launceston.

Jeff Campbell

#### **Thursday 14 November Sea Horse World Beauty Point and Tamar Island**

The coach left the Caravan Park at 8.30 am driving directly to Beauty Point where we had our morning tea in a shelter shed because of the strong cold wind. We then proceeded to Sea Horse World for which we were granted entrance at the concession rate of \$10 each. Sea Horse World is a commercial farm.

Our group was split into two, each lectured about the seahorses and given a conducted tour where we were able to inspect the breeding ponds. The female lays her eggs directly into the male's pouch where they are fertilized and hatched. Most of the young are hatched at night and once hatched they are totally independent of their parents. A male will hatch more than 1000 young during his lifetime.

These young are about the size of a lil pin and are removed from the breeding pens daily into ponds of their own. Our guide caught a female and taking it out of the water demonstrated how it would wind its tail around a person's fingers. In another tank he put a fingertip on the glass and all the seahorses came to his finger to investigate. The guide also caught a male but did not lift it out of the water because of the possibility of getting air into his pouch with the eggs. He also poured a solution (food) into a tank and we were able to observe the seahorses snapping up their meal.



Millions of seahorses are killed annually, their biggest use being in the Chinese medicine trade but these seahorses all go to aquariums etc. throughout the world. Records of seahorses can be traced back to Egyptian times.

We were taken back to the same shelter shed for our lunch because of the weather conditions. Our coach driver then headed for Tamar Island making a 10 minute stop at Bradys Lookout and a short deviation through a new developed village (Grindelwald) built on Swiss designs before arriving after 2 pm at Tamar Island Interpretative Centre, locally known as the flying saucer because of its design. Here we were given an introductory talk by our leader Julie before spending two hours on the board walk which crosses the wetlands and the tracks across the island ending on a pontoon reaching out into the Tamar Estuary where boats can be moored.

Tamar Island once was a farm, traces of which can still be seen. A story about the last couple who lived there, after the death of the wife, the man stood his plough against a tree which has now grown around it. There are numbers of majestic old English trees plus a building still remaining.

Camping is prohibited but there are good toilet facilities and picnic tables etc. A few birds were seen - a pair of mountain ducks, greater egret, swans etc. Some plants were pointed out.

A cup of tea was available in the 'saucer' where the Australian Naturalists members were able to inspect the many specimens on display and also lovely wall charts of birds and animals. There were post cards and a number of other items available for purchase.

A great day came to a close back at the caravan park after 5 pm

Don Macreadie

### Friday 15 November Cradle Mountain

An early 8 am start saw the two smaller buses with commentators Alison Green on one and Jeff Campbell on the other depart for Cradle Mountain. After morning tea and a look through the Visitor Centre we then proceeded to Dove Lake car park. The group was given a choice of walks, two groups, one led by Alison Green and one by Dick Burns, doing the Dove Lake walk, a third led by John Simmons part of Dove Lake and Waldheim and the fourth led by Jeff Campbell the Crater Lake and part of Marions Lookout. There was much to see and the scenery and flora in the Cradle area are always great to see, the Deciduous Beech, *Nothofagus gunnii*, being ever popular. We had lunch on the track and just managed to return to the buses in time for the scheduled departure. Our return to Launceston was via Sheffield 'Town of Murals' where we had afternoon tea and a good look at the murals.

Jeff Campbell



Everyone's Tassie Trip Photo



Dove Lake Walk

### Saturday 16 November John Skemp Field Centre

Today we had a new guide - the Club historian Geoff Martin, who told us more about John Skemp and his wonderful bequest to the Launceston Field Naturalists. It was not without problems, and we heard of the efforts made by the club to fulfil his wishes and develop the area in the best possible ways.

We really got a warm welcome when we arrived, both from the field nats with drinks and lovely cheeses, and the 'Welcome' on the board and warmth from the stove which kept the room so cosy. The care, love and attention to detail was obvious right from the gateholders at the entrance, the piles of kindling and wood around the stove, the basket of nests and the journals just a few examples. It was interesting to see photographs of John and his parents, and I loved the beautiful and creative testimonial to Florence Kearney from her pupils. Interesting too to hear more of the achievements of the Simmons, and to admire their books on Acacias. I also enjoyed looking at Mary Page's beautifully illustrated Eucalypts book.

Eight walks have been laid out around the property, all well described in pamphlets. We were led out on three of these and saw many treasures. I really appreciated the nameplates on many good specimens. There were birds chirping around, frogs croaking in the dam, and a giant leech and echidna performed for us.

Our guides had been warned by the ladies to have us back by one to enjoy the lovely chicken, ham and salad lunch they had prepared. This was followed by fruit salad and more drinks and lots of talk and exchange of ideas. It was so nice eating outside and admiring the views, but there were more walks and things to see. Several of the walks returned through the old homestead site and the orchard, and you could see gooseberries, bluebells and aquilegias, and imagine the efforts involved in maintaining a property and making a home sixty-seven years ago.

The ladies had again excelled and our return was to a sweet and savoury afternoon tea to which we did justice.

We were almost disappointed to find Peter had come back for us and we had to gather for a family photograph, both in black and white and colour, by Al the Club photographer. We hope this will go into your events at Skemps album.

On the way home Geoff took us past a perfect example of how we don't want Forestry to treat a State Forest, then through some very pleasant countryside and past some lovely old Launceston homes to Wen and Julie's house. They had invited us to view a young injured Sea Eagle they were looking after. He looked quite majestic in a huge cage built at the back of a lovely garden full of magnificent roses. A wonderful ending to a memorable day. Thank you all.

Sheila Silver



The Mob at Skemps

### **John Skemp Field Centre**

'Welcome' was the message on the whiteboard inside the John Skemp Field Centre - and we certainly were. When our bus and tagalong cars pulled up at 10 am, the tireless LFNC members were waiting to greet us with morning tea set out on the tables, and the day proceeded happily from there. The generous lunch (provided a little later by the hardworking club members) was memorable.

The history of the Skemp property, along with the 50 year history of the LFNC itself, was included with the literature in our ANN sample bag. Two Skemp brothers came to Tasmania from England in the late 19th century and acquired land at Myrtle Bank just outside Launceston. The family property eventually finished up in the hands of John Rowland Skemp (1900-1966), who helped establish the LFNC in 1949 and remained an active field naturalist all his life. When he died he willed the Myrtle Bank property to the LFNC, and the transfer was finalised in 1968. It is now 50 hectares of rainforest, woodland and open grassland.

The modern building on the site, formally known as the John Skemp Field Centre, was funded largely from sales of the LFNC's beautifully illustrated Guide to Flowers and Plants of Tasmania, which many of us used every day of our visit. This book was first published in 1981, and careful investment of the sale proceeds resulted in \$25,000 for the construction of the building, which was formally opened in 1989.

Skemps is the focal point for the LFNC, which today is comprised of some 140 people who put in thousands of volunteer hours each year. The book is still a valuable source of revenue, although the club is now able to access government grants and help from local NGOs. The Field Centre is available for use by school groups and other bodies, and offers comfortable bunkroom accommodation as well as its general meeting room, toilets and showers, and neat kitchen. Having early breakfast outside in the sun overlooking the property must be a great pleasure for overnighters.

During the morning of the ANN visit, and again in the afternoon, small groups of us were taken on conducted walks of the property. Clear signs with relevant botanical details alongside trees and shrubs were much appreciated. The LFNC also provides detailed information sheets for each of its eight regular Skemps walks, telling visitors about walking times, levels of difficulty and distance as well as giving details of the vegetation and points of interest.

The future of Skemps means work and more work for the LFNC - we heard of plans for developing a

wetland, planting more trees, and attacking the environmental weeds - and the demands of ongoing maintenance are relentless. But there is no doubt that Skemps has helped establish a considerable profile for the club, and one that attracts public as well as private support. You don't get a mayoral reception if you're nobody.

We returned to Launceston refreshed and enthusiastic about what committed field naturalists could achieve in their local community, and full of admiration for what our hardworking hosts had managed to do.

Rosalind Smallwood

### **Sunday 17 November Mathinna Falls, Evercreech and Evening Meal**

We departed the Caravan Park at 8.30 for our trip to the Northeast, calling at an unusual Sphagnum Moss area near Roses Tier en route, it being set in the middle of a forested area and containing substantially different flora from the surrounding area. After delecting we continued on to Mathinna Falls before proceeding on to the Evercreech White Gum (*Eucalyptus viminalis*) Reserve for lunch and walks which had to be curtailed a little to allow for our return to Launceston for the catered meal.

The meal was held at the Family Motor Inn where a gay evening prevailed with much toasting and congratulating and other carryings on much to the enjoyment of all, a great last evening finale for the handover to the next group, the WA mob who will set it all up again for 2004, much looked forward to by all.

JC

### **Monday 18 November Punch Bowl Reserve**

The final event of the Core Programme was a relaxing day at the Punch Bowl Reserve with a later 11 am start. It was a very warm day, topping 28 in Launceston. Some did a bit of walking around the Reserve but most seemed happy just to enjoy each other's company in the shelters out of the sun and enjoying their BBQ.

JC

### **Monday 18 November Punch Bowl Reserve**

A much later start today but obviously once again well planned by our hosts, This morning's free time did enable the down-cast mainlanders who are reluctantly returning home prior to the north-west tour, and those brighter characters who are looking forward to tomorrow's north-west tour to pack and prepare for their respective journeys by plane, ferry and bus.

With chores finished an eager group met at Punch Bowl Reserve about 11.00 am. The gardens and ornamental features, the Reserve's natural ambience - which we enjoyed during strolls, the company of friends - new friendships were still being made and the sharing of food at lunch-time made this session a very pleasant relaxing finale to the Core Programme of the Australian Naturalist Network 2002 Get Together hosted so well by the Launceston Field Naturalists Club.

On behalf of the visitors I wish to thank all the host club members who contributed to the Get Together's outstanding success. Additional thanks a re due to Jeff, John, Julie, Marion and Wen who were often doing that something extra for particular people. We appreciate your kindness, hospitality and of course your expertise on natural history.

We are looking forward to meeting with you again at the 2004 Get Together hosted by Western Australia's Darling Range Branch.

Shirley & Dick Southcombe

### **Post Tour Tuesday 19 to Friday 22 November Northwest/West Tasmania Programme**

Tue 19 Depart Treasure Island Caravan Park 8 am drive to Arthur River on West Coast via Corinna, drive Western Explorer Road to Arthur River. Stay overnight at Arthur River units, evening meal at Marawah Pub

Wed 20 In morning, Arthur River 'Reflections' Cruise and Rainforest Walk, view Sea Eagles, light luncheon served at Warra Landing and walk in forest (trip takes about 5 hours in all), enjoy a BBQ at end of cruise at host's home, drive through to Stanley. Stay two nights at Stanley Caravan Park Cabins.

Thu 21 Travel south to Roger and Julius Rivers, Milkshake Hills Reserve and Lake Chisholm (North West member to accompany group). Return to Stanley, stay overnight at same venue

Fri 22 Travel from Stanley via Dip Falls, hug or photograph the Big Tree. Drive through and visit beautiful Gunns Plains Limestone Cave. Lunch at Pindari at South Riana. Drive through to Launceston



Gunn's Plains Cave

### The West Coast Tour

We set out on the West Coast Tour at 8 am from the Treasure Island Caravan Park on Tuesday 19 November. To the great disappointment of all, the scheduled trip down the Western Explorer was cancelled on advice (later found to be inaccurate) from National Parks and Wildlife. It was decided to travel via Ulverstone, visiting the Naval Memorial Reserve for morning tea, and Fossil Bluff at Wynyard for lunch. We then continued on to Arthur River, booking in to accommodation at 'Arthur River Reflections'. We had a great meal at the Marawah Pub before settling in for the night. On Wednesday we boarded our cruise boat and journeyed upstream to Warra Landing where we had a light snack of cheeses and wines etc before doing the rainforest walk up to a small set of falls. On our way back we stopped to feed a pair of Sea Eagles that were initially a little reluctant to cooperate but finally took the 'bait'. On return to the units a great BBQ lunch provided by our hosts awaited us. It was then time to depart for Stanley and our accommodation at the Caravan Park, and of course, climb 'The Nut'.

Dick Burns, who led a walk at Cradle Mountain, joined us on Thursday morning for our trip south through Roger and Julius Rivers, the walk in to Lake Chisholm (a natural sink hole that became blocked and formed quite a large lake) and the Milkshake Hills Reserve before returning to Stanley. On Friday, our final day of the whole programme, we departed from Stanley to visit Dip Falls, an interesting set of basalt falls with a partial columnar formation actually formed by two separate lava flows, and The Big Tree. We had time for a short look in heathland on our way back to the highway from the Falls and found quite a large colony of Sun Orchids. We were running a little behind schedule by the time we arrived at Gunns Plains Cave, fortunately our guide waited for us. After visiting the caves it was on to the Pindari Deer Farm at South Riana for a late lunch before returning to Launceston, a great final day.



Gunn's Plains Cave

Jeff Campbell

### Birds recorded at Narawntapu 12 November by Sarah Lloyd

|                         |                        |                         |
|-------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Musk Duck               | Black Swan             | Pacific Black Duck      |
| Chestnut Teal           | Little Pied Cormorant  | White-faced Heron       |
| White-bellied Sea-Eagle | Swamp Harrier          | Tasmanian Native Hen    |
| Pied Oystercatcher      | Sooty Oystercatcher    | Hooded Plover           |
| Masked Lapwing          | Pacific Gull           | Silver Gull             |
| Brush Bronzewing        | Yellow-tailed Cockatoo | Green Rosella           |
| Blue-winged Parrot      | Shining Bronze-Cuckoo  | Laughing Kookaburra     |
| Superb Fairy Wren       | Spotted Pardalote      | Striated Pardalote      |
| Tasmanian Scrubwren     | Brown Thornbill        | Yellow-rumped Thornbill |

|                     |                        |                   |
|---------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| Little Wattlebird   | New Holland Honeyeater | Eastern Spinebill |
| White-fronted Chat  | Olive Whistler         | Golden Whistler   |
| Grey Shrike-Thrush  | Satin Flycatcher       | Grey Fantail      |
| Grey Butcherbird    | Forest Raven           | Skylark           |
| European Greenfinch | European Goldfinch     | Welcome Swallow   |
| Silvereye           | Common Blackbird       | Common Starling   |

**Additional birds** noted at Narawntapu on 12 November by Dorothy Maguire

|                      |                        |                          |
|----------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| Black Currawong      | Black Swan             | Caspian Tern             |
| Collared Sparrowhawk | Crested Tern           | Eurasian Coot            |
| Grey Butcherbird     | Grey Currawong         | Grey Fantail             |
| Little Wattlebird    | Little Black Cormorant | Hooded Plover            |
| Pallid Cuckoo        | Yellow Wattlebird      | Bronzewing Pigeon's nest |

**Birds** recorded at Skemps 14 November by Sarah Lloyd

|                            |                         |                     |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|
| Brush Bronzewing           | Green Rosella           | Pallid Cuckoo       |
| Fantailed Cuckoo           | Shining Bronze-Cuckoo   | Superb Fairy Wren   |
| Spotted Pardalote          | Striated Pardalote      | Tasmanian Scrubwren |
| Tasmanian Thornbill        | Yellow-rumped Thornbill | Yellow Wattlebird   |
| Yellow-throated Honeyeater | Eastern Spinebill       | Scarlet Robin       |
| Flame Robin                | Dusky Robin             | Oliver Whistler     |
| Golden Whistler            | Grey Shrike-thrush      | Satin Flycatcher    |
| Grey Fantail               | Grey Currawong          | Forest Raven        |
| Welcome Swallow            | Silvereye               | Bassian Thrush      |

**Fungi** recorded at Skemps 14 November by Sarah Lloyd

Amanita muscaria  
 Hygrocybe sp (yellow)  
 Scutellinia aff. Margaritaceae  
 Mycena sp (bleach scented)

**Shells** Recorded throughout the Get Together Period by Dorothy Mahler

(Full details of Family, Genus & Species, Beach and date are available on request, the list being too extensive to reproduce in full).

|                          |                              |                           |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Red Ear Shell            | Rugose Slit Limpet           | Slit Limpet sp            |
| Orange-edged Limpet      | Variogated Limpet            | Tall-ribbed Limpet        |
| Flamed Limpet            | Delicate Limpet              | Imbricated Pearl Shell    |
| Jewelled Top Shell       | Choice Sea-weed Shell        | Rainbow Kelp Shell        |
| Ribbed Top Shell         | Top Shell                    | Wavy Top Shell            |
| Adelaide Top Shell       | Checked Top Shell            | Wavy Clanculus            |
| Keeled Top Shell         | Banded/Silver Kelp Shell     | Wavy Turbo                |
| Gruner's Turbo           | Star Shell                   | Golden Star               |
| Painted Lady             | Swollen Pheasant             | Black Nerite              |
| Blue-banded Periwinkle   | Striped-mouth Conniwink      | Torrid                    |
| Atkinson's Screw Shell   | Gunn's Screw Shell           | Latticed Screw Shell      |
| Tasmanian Screw Shell    | New Zealand Screw Shell      | Common Mud Whelk          |
| Granulated Wentle-Trap   | Conical Horse Hoof           | Shelf Limpet              |
| Foliaceous Bonnet Limpet | Conical Sand Snail           | Common Sand Snail         |
| Brown Cowry              | Compton's Cowry              | Southern Ribbed Cowry     |
| Half-grained Helmet      | Pear Helmet                  | Distorted Rock Whelk      |
| Sand Whelk               | Warted Sand Whelk            | Parkinson's Whelk         |
| Flag Triton              | Mestayer's Truncated Spindle | Three-shaped Murex        |
| Mussel Drill             | Wine-mouthed Lepsiella       | Reticulated Lepsiella     |
| Triton Purple            | Dog Winkle/Cartnut Shell     | Lineated Cominella        |
| Banded Nassarius         | Nassarius                    | Tulip/Short Spindle Shell |
| Flame Spindle Shell      | New Holland Spindle Shell    | Margined Ancilla          |
| Southern Ribbed Mitre    | Dark Brown Mitre             | Glabra Mitre              |
| Wavy Volute              | Grained Cancellaria          | Waved Cancellaria         |
| Quoy's Turrid            | Anemone Cone Shell           | Angas's Philine Shell     |
| Fragile Air Breather     | Common Mangrove Air Breather | Solid Air Breather        |
| Blue Siphon Shell        | Van Diemen's Land Siphon     | Corded Siphon Shell       |
| Hairy Ark                | Striated Dog Cockle          | Beaked Mussel             |

|                           |                                  |                       |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Port Melbourne Mussel     | White-ribbed Horse Mussel        | Butterfly/Wing Shell  |
| Little Black Horse Mussel | King's Scallop                   | Fan/Doughboy Scallop  |
| Common Mud Oyster         | Pacific Oyster                   | Trigonia/Brooch Shell |
| King Island Crassatella   | Thin-ribbed (Heart) Cockle       | Thetis Cockle         |
| Blue-tinted Dosinia       | Dosinia                          | Feathered Tawera      |
| Banded Venerid            | Placid Venerid                   | King's Notocallista   |
| Tasmanian Notocallista    | Frilled Venerid                  | Smoked Venerid        |
| Ridged Venerid            | Stepped Venerid                  | Peron's Venerid       |
| Venerid                   | Exotic Boring Venerid            | Little Bean           |
| Milkstone                 | Smooth-toothed Triangle          | Wedge Shell           |
| Narrow Wedge Shell        | Eryx Wedge Shell                 | Shining Wedge Shell   |
| Little Triangle           | Oval-shaped Trough Shell         | Reddish Trough Shell  |
| Double-rayed Razor        | Port Jackson Trough Shell        | Pipi                  |
| Purple Sunset Shell       | Little White Tellin/Sunset Shell | Triangular Tellin     |
| Aust. Borer/Angel Wing    | Razor Shell/Chinese Fingernail   | Rounded Lantern Shell |
| Tongue-shaped Angel Wing  | White Cleidothaerus/Rock Shell   |                       |

**Orchids** recorded during the Get Together by Jeff Campbell

Bridport Reserve 6 November

Prasophyllum ?apoxychilum      P. ?robustum      Diuris sulphurea

Caladenia alata

Halls Falls 6 November

Chiloglottis cornuta      C. grammata      Pterostylis nutans

Scamander 7 November

Diuris sulphurea      Thelymitra juncifolia      T. simulata

Cape Tourville 8 November

Gastrodia sesamoides      Thelymitra rubra      Dipodium roseum

Coles Bay 9 November

Dockrilia striolata      Paracaleana minor      Dipodium roseum

Swan Point 11 November

Thelymitra pauciflora

Archers Knob 12 November

Calochilus robertsonii      Thelymitra truncata      T. juncifolia

Caladenia carnea

Liffey Falls 13 November

Pterostylis pedunculata      Chiloglottis grammata      C. triceratops

Arthur River 20 November

Sarcochilus australis      Chiloglottis cornuta

Lake Chisholm 21 November

Pterostylis scabrida      Sarcochilus australis

Dip Falls Road 22 November

Thelymitra cyanea      T. erosa      Cryptostylis subulata