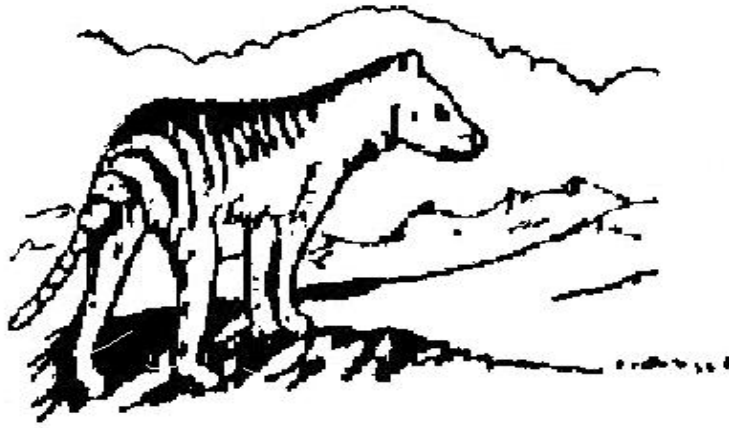


THE LAUNCESTON NATURALIST

Issued to members of the Launceston Field Naturalists Club as a contribution to club activities.



The aim of the Launceston Field Naturalists Club is to encourage the study of all aspects of natural history and to support the conservation of our natural heritage.

Volume XLII No 6

August/September 2009

- Patron** : Mr Chris Tassell, AM
- President** : Mr N Manning, 46 Robin St Newstead, 6344 2277
- Vice President** : Ms E Montgomery, 6 Cleary Ave Young Town, 6344 3989
Mr J Campbell, 42 Herbert Street Launceston, 6331 7269
- Hon. Secretary** : Mr J Elliott, 64 Penquite Rd Newstead, 6344 9303
- Hon. Treasurer** : Ms K Manning, 46 Robin St Newstead, 6344 2277
- N'letter Co-ordinator** : Ms K. Manning
- Committee** : G Cameron, A Pegler, J Simmons,
M Simmons, R Skabo, T Trellogen

Meetings 1st Tuesday of month, Feb-Dec at Scotch-Oakburn College, Penquite Rd Newstead

Subscriptions: Year 2008-2009 \$25 Single, \$30 Family, \$2.50 Junior, \$35 Associate. Due and payable on or before 4 Nov 2008

PROGRAM

OCTOBER

- Tuesday 6** **Civic Reception 60th Anniversary**
- Saturday 10** **Field Trip: Mt Barrow Nature Trail**
- Sunday 18** **Skemp Day - Water Monitoring**
- Friday 23 -** **Weekend trip to East Coast including Bluff River**
Sunday 25 **Gorge walk**

NOVEMBER

- Tuesday 3** **AGM & General Meeting**
Speaker: Douglas Kershaw - *Dung Beetles*
- Sunday 8** **Field Trip: Bridport area re Dung Beetles**
- Friday 13 -** **Federation Weekend at South Mt Cameron Field**
Sunday 15 **Centre hosted by NE Field Naturalists Club**
- Saturday 21** **Skemp Day**

DECEMBER

- Tuesday 1** **Members night**
- Saturday 5** **Christmas party at Skemps**

Late changes to the program can be viewed on the Club website
<http://www.lfnc.org.au/meetings.htm>

COMMITTEE/GENERAL MEETING

Skemp Report

August: John Elliott told the meeting of progress in the revegetation of Skemps Creek and the removal of dead trees around the garage and barn and the inspection of the Field Centre.

September: All the seedlings have been planted. John Simmons said that he would be re-timbering the garage. He had also bought a new docking saw and made some tree stakes. Many fallen trees on tracks have been removed.

Puggle

August: John Elliott asked the meeting to identify four birds he had sighted from pictures that had been cycling on the screen. Prue Wright correctly identified the birds: Red-Capped Plover, Hooded Plover, Pink Robin, Chestnut Teal.

September: Prue Wright asked the meeting to identify a small seed eating bird off the coastal areas of the southern states of Australia and Tasmania. It is usually seen in singles, sometimes in pairs, or in small colonies such as at Melaleuca. It's seen less these days due to the clearing of the habitat. Prue's rhyme gave additional clues :

Feathered I am, in drab grey and brown paint
Fine barring to the edges, makes me look rather quaint
Add a bright red lipstick and I don't come up too bad
Though some would think I sound rather sad
With a long drawn-out mournful call
I'll wear a mask and be 'bella' of the ball
For I am really quite stunning when I fly up from the ground
With my tail on fire I'm just 'Beautiful' all round.

Margrit Korosi correctly identified the bird as a Firetail Finch, which is also known as a Beautiful Firetail (*Stagonopleura bella*).

Sightings

August: Wendy Cowell had seen a Lapwing. Peter Warren reported seeing Magpies and Lapwing chicks

September: Maureen Johnstone believed that a couple of months ago she had seen a flock of Swift Parrots attacked by Noisy Miners near the Riverside Golf Course. She had also seen a number of Black Cockatoos. Peter Warren reported seeing nesting Magpies. Prue Wright had seen Shelducks at Hagley. Alison Green reported that Masked Lapwings had started nesting near the Punchbowl Centre. Jan Everett had seen Green Rosellas. Margrit Korosi said that Black Cockatoos had been throwing fir cones near the Aquatic Centre. Margrit had also seen a Bluetongue and Kangaroos near Legana. John Elliott said that two species of

greenhood orchids, *Acacia genistifolia*, *Pimelea pumilis* and *Wurmbia dioica* were flowering in the Punchbowl.

Library Report - The *TreeFlip* identification tool published by School of Plant Science UTAS, was approved for purchase and is now available to borrow from the Skemp library. The photograph of Skemp family members at the Myrtle Bank School donated recently by Iris Meek is now on display at the John Skemp Field Centre.

60th Anniversary

Launceston City Council have confirmed Tuesday 6 October as the date for the Civic Reception to celebrate the Club's 60th Anniversary. The LCC will send invitations to members. Could members attending please wear their Club badge. If a new badge is required please contact Karen on 6344 2277 before Monday 5 October.

Club Calendar

The calendar is with the printer and will be available for purchase shortly. Don't forget Christmas is coming up; these A5 sized calendars are the right size for posting overseas, interstate or even within Tasmania and at \$5.00 each they would make an ideal gift. The calendar features Tasmanian plants, wildlife and scenery with photographs taken by Club members. To ensure your copies place an order at the next meeting or contact Karen on 6344 2277.

A Guide to Flowers & Plants of Tasmania, 4th Edition

The above Club guide would also make an ideal Christmas gift. Copies are available from John Simmons or Karen Manning at \$21.00 each.

AGM Meeting - Tuesday 3 November

This years AGM will be held at Scotch Oakburn College. A General Meeting will follow with guest speaker Douglas Kershaw's talk on Dung Beetles.

Reminder to members that all Committee positions will be declared vacant at the AGM, therefore nominations are required for the positions of President, Vice-President, Secretary, Newsletter Editor, Treasurer, Librarian and 6 Committee Members. A nomination form is enclosed with this newsletter. It is required that the form is signed by two members and accompanied by the candidates signature. Forms must be received by the Secretary 10 days prior to the AGM. Please mail your completed forms to PO Box 1072 Launceston 7250.

New Members

We welcomed Prue Wright to the Club in September.

General

Bob Montgomery will represent the Club at the Private Forests Dinner in August, where there will be guest speakers talking about 'Fires in forests and plantations'.

Roy Skabo suggested that there could also be a weekend event at Skemps, to which groups such as schools, scouts and other field naturalists could be invited. Roy Skabo, Elizabeth Montgomery and Marion Simmons will contact groups and draft a program if there is interest.

Annual building maintenance inspection has been completed. Some minor improvements have been recommended. These are currently being undertaken.

Purchase of materials for Waterwatch activities have been approved.

MEMBERS CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Could members who change their home or email address please contact Karen on 6344 2277 or family_manning@yahoo.com.au so your contact details can be kept up to date. Thank you.

GENERAL MEETING 4 August - SPEAKER Andrew Rozefelds

The talk at this meeting was given by Andrew Rozefelds who is Deputy Director at the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery in Hobart, working in the collections and research area.

His talk '*New fossil species in Tasmania*' was centred around a discovery in southern Tasmania a couple of years ago. It all started when his friend sent an email asking him to identify fossils in an attached image. Andrew said he was really excited by what he saw. The image was of two beautifully formed skulls which looked similar to that of a flathead, although they would have been about 30 centimetres or more in length and belonged to quite a large animal.

The site of the fossil find is difficult to access, as it is under water at high tide, but work on the site has revealed further specimens; a mandible, a tusk piece, amphibian skulls, lungfish tooth plates and a row of small dark pebbles embedded in a light coloured rock which are the back bone of an animal. It was possible to cut under and around some of the specimens and remove these to enable further research and this meant that we were able to see many of the original specimens at the meeting.

Research has proved that the items are from the start of the Triassic period, some 240 – 230 million years ago, which means they are pre-dinosaur. Similar aged fossils have been found in Queensland and Western Australia.

Andrew said that although there are 10 other fossil sites in Tasmania, this particular find has placed Tasmania on the map in the fossil world.

John Elliott thanked Andrew for his very interesting talk.

K & N Manning

PRIVATE FORESTS DINNER

Bob Montgomery represented the Club at the above Dinner on 11 August where guest speakers Roger Underwood and David Geddes spoke to the theme 'Fire in Private Forests'. The talks were of particular interest to the Club as the John Skemp Field Centre combines native bush and open fields surrounded by plantations.

Bob gave a brief description of the talks at the September General Meeting and went on to quote from Roger Underwood's presentation '*Folly and wisdom: reflections on bushfire management in Australia*', about the phases in the 'Bushfire Cycle'.

Roger Underwood has provided a copy of his presentation and has given permission for this paper to be circulated to interested people. If you would like a copy please contact Karen on 6344 2277.

SKEMPS DAY 15 August

With all the rain of late, members heading out to Skemps were unsure of the type of day they were in for. The morning paper had said a fine day was to be expected, although most of us arrived during very heavy rainfall and gusty winds.

Once the morning had cleared up, John Simmons and I headed to the Pipeline Track as John was making notes for the new walking brochure. The track was covered with water in places, indicating the need for further sections of boardwalk. There was evidence of recent *Engaeus* activity in these wet areas. Other members went on walks to the wetland area, Forest and Bedfordia tracks.

The day ended early with the weather taking a turn for the worse, with the mist settling in around the hills and the temperature dropping, but we still had an enjoyable day.

Karen Manning

GENERAL MEETING 1 September - SPEAKER Mike Douglas

Mike Douglas gave a talk '*Natural Features of Bridport*' at the September general meeting. Mike has been a resident of Bridport for 38 years and is a member of the North Eastern Field Naturalists Club.

Mike spoke in detail about the three rivers in the area, the Great Forester, Brid and Little Forester. In the early 1920's the Great Forester River was diverted to flow into the bay east of Bridport so that water could be used for farming irrigation and to drain the wetlands to create more farming land.

The Brid River is the Bridport water supply. The banks of this river are muddy and there is little water flow and although it looks like environmental degradation Mike considers that it is natural.

The sand bar at the mouth of the Little Forester River is home to many shorebirds, although how long they will continue to go flock there is debatable. Parks and Wildlife notices indicate restrictions to people walking their dogs and the users of off-road vehicles in the area, but these are ignored.

The Great Forester River flows through blackwood and swamp paperbarks of McKerrows Marsh which covers 400 hectares surrounded by private forest.

200 kilometre an hour winds early in the year have destroyed many trees in the area. Grazing is also having an effect as well and landowners are fencing remnant forests to help keep animals out.

Mike read extracts from George Robinson's (1788 – 1866) diaries where he commented about the teatree forests in the area and that the Brid and Little Forester Rivers had deep muddy banks. He also showed slides featuring early photographs of the area, maps and recent photographs of the rivers and wetlands.

The Bridport Wildflower Reserve (which is part of the Granite Point Conservation Area) covers 73 hectares. There are 200 species of flowers and native animals there and this includes the Tasmanian Devil.

At Granite Point, Mathinna mud stone sediments were left some 400 million years ago. Few fossils are found in them. A band of migmatite has been exposed near the boulder fields on the coast. This is where the Mathinna mud stone beds and the granodiorite come into contact and is the only known location in Eastern Australian where this occurs.

Mike was thanked by Tom Trelloggen for his very interesting talk which covered the flora, fauna, geology, geography, hydrology and the history of the area.

K & N Manning

FIELD TRIP 6 September - Granite Point Bridport with Mike Douglas

Fourteen members met up with Mike Douglas and Jay Wilson (Natural Resource Management Facilitator for Dorset) at the Old Pier carpark in Bridport on Sunday morning. Jay is overseeing a revegetation program in this area and spoke briefly about some of the problems encountered; boneseed, thistles and the asparagus fern which is smothering the shrubs and trees.

We spent an interesting morning walking among the coastal plants and the lichen covered boulders in the rugged Granite Point Conservation area. Members saw the seam of migmatite that Mike referred to during his talk at the Club's recent meeting and other interesting rock erosions and formations, during our return to the carpark via the rocky foreshore.

Following lunch we drove to the parking area at Granite Point viewing granite exfoliations which are due to fluctuations in temperature and more spectacular coastal lichens. We headed over to Adams Beach to see the damage by king tides to the sand banks, Mike saying that a recently built

platform and stairway to the beach had been swept away during one of these tides. We then left the beach and went inland to Frog Lagoon. The frog symphony grew louder as we approached, where we identified at least four different calls. Masses of frog eggs could be seen in the reeds and floating on the lagoon. The lagoon level had increased since Mike had visited it a couple of days before and we had to make our way through the bush to get back on the track to the carpark.

From here we travelled to Mike's home and looked at his garden and a reserve across the road from his home which he transformed into a native garden after the area was reclaimed following the closure of a through road by the local council. The native revegetation continues on the nature strip area around the corner of his property opposite the reserve and the footpath here goes through his plantings.

Noel thanked Mike on behalf of those present.

Plant

Sweet-scented Wattle (<i>Acacia suaveolens</i>)	White Gum (<i>Eucalyptus viminalis</i>)
Coast Beardheath (<i>Leucopogon parviflorus</i>)	Boobyalla (<i>Acacia longifolia</i> var <i>sophorae</i>)
Tea Tree (<i>Leptospermum scoparium</i>)	Coast Tea Tree (<i>Leptospermum laevigatum</i>)
Sagg (<i>Lomandra longifolia</i>)	Bracken (<i>Pteridium esculentum</i>)
Silver Banksia (<i>Banksia marginata</i>)	Silky Guineaflower (<i>Hibbertia sericea</i>)
Prickly Box (<i>Bursaria spinosa</i> subsp <i>spinosa</i>)	Goldey Wood (<i>Monotoca glauca</i>)
Heartleaf Bushpea (<i>Pultenaea daphnoides</i> var <i>obcordata</i>)	Coast Paperbark (<i>Melaleuca ericifolia</i>)
Showy Bossia (<i>Bossiaea cinerea</i>)	Common Native-cherry (<i>Exocarpus cupressiformis</i>)
Blue Lovecreeper (<i>Comesperma volubile</i>)	Drooping She-oaks (<i>Allocasuarina verticillata</i>)
Blackwood (<i>Acacia melanoxylon</i>)	Prickly Moses (<i>Acacia verticillata</i>)
Black She-oak (<i>Allocasuarina littoralis</i>)	Twining Glycine (<i>Glycine clandestine</i>)
White Correa (<i>Correa alba</i> var <i>alba</i>)	Climbing Lignum (<i>Muehlenbeckia adpressa</i>)
Forest Lignum (<i>Muehlenbeckia gunnii</i>)	Bower spinach (<i>Tetragonia implexicoma</i>)
Native oxalis (<i>Oxalis perennans</i>)	Native raspberry (<i>Rubus parvifolius</i>)
Common Maidenhair (<i>Adiantum aethiopicum</i>)	Coastal Saltbush (<i>Rhagodia candolleana</i>)
<i>Pimelea</i> sp.	Buzzy (<i>Acaena novae-zelandiae</i>)
Sea Parsley (<i>Apium prostratum</i>)	Pigface (<i>Carpobrotus rossii</i>)
Kangaroo fern (<i>Microsorium pustulatum</i>)	Mountain Cranesbill (<i>Geranium potentilloides</i>)
Shiny Swampmat (<i>Selliera radicans</i>)	Coast Everlasting (<i>Ozothamnus turbinatus</i>)
Grey Saltbush (<i>Atriplex cinerea</i>)	Yellow Dogwood (<i>Pomaderris elliptica</i>)
Dogwood (<i>Pomaderris apetala</i>)	Handsome Flat Pea (<i>Platylobium formosum</i>)
Redstem Wattle (<i>Acacia myrtifolia</i>)	Spinifex (<i>Spinifex sericeus</i>)
Coastal Spear Grass (<i>Austrostipa stipoides</i>)	
Forest Daisybush (<i>Olearia lirata</i>)	

Birds

Yellow Wattlebird (<i>Anthochaera paradoxa</i>)	Welcome Swallow (<i>Hirundo neoxena</i>)
Pacific Gull (<i>Larus pacificus</i>)	Kookaburra (<i>Dacelo novaeguineae</i>)
Silver Gull (<i>Larus novaehollandiae</i>)	Grey Fantail (<i>Rhipidura fuliginosa</i>)
Little Wattlebird (<i>Anthochaera chrysoptera</i>)	

Frogs

Striped Marsh Frog (<i>Limnodynastes peronii</i>)	Spotted Marsh Frog (<i>Limnodynastes tasmaniensis</i>)
Southern Banjo Frog (<i>Limnodynastes dumerilii insularis</i>)	
Common Froglet (<i>Crinia signifera</i>)	

SKEMPS DAY 12 September

A dozen or so of the keenest club members went to Skemps on a fine and cool mid September Saturday and enjoyed the company, warming fire and lunch time BBQ.

It was great to see Prue Wright, a new member, turning up as well as Diane from Ulverstone.

John Simmons had some enlarged and laminated photos of flora and fungi as well as others that were a record of the ongoing developments at Skemps, including the felling of dead trees around the old buildings.

The wind must have been blowing in the wrong direction because not even a well lit BBQ could attract Tom who usually turns up around lunch time.

Little work was done, just another great Skemps day, including walks on recently added tracks which show aspects of the property not seen before. Noel J Manning

BLUFF RIVER GORGE TRIP (Friday 23 - Sunday 25 October)

Roy Skabo has arranged accommodation in Orford for participants who have indicated they are going. Other members and friends are welcome to join in, but will need to arrange their own accommodation.

The proposed program from Roy is as follows:

Friday - arrive at accommodation. Anyone who arrives before noon, can join the Skabo's on a walk in some local bush area.

Friday night - Own catering

Saturday about 9am - Leave the cabin park and head to Bluff River Gorge. We will meet at the cabins or you can join us at Buckland at say 9.30am. You will need to take lunch to carry with you.

Saturday night - Dinner together at fish (or other) fine dining establishment. We will need to know numbers for this eventually so think about it please.

Sunday morning, about 9.30am - Leave cabins (checking out) and going to the old convict road on the north side of the Prosser River. The parking area is along a track which leaves the Tasman Highway just north of the bridge. You will need to arrange lunch for today either byo or buy in Orford.

Sunday afternoon - Go to the Tasmanian Bushland Garden. Should be on the way home by about 3.30pm depending on how long you want to be at the garden. The Pulchella Nursery is next door, people might like to buy plants there.

If you would like any further details, please contact Roy on 6334 6787.

FEDERATION OF FIELD NATURALISTS GET-TOGETHER:

This get-together will be held at the Field Study Centre at Mt. Cameron from Friday 13 to Sunday 15 November, hosted by the North Eastern Field Naturalists.

The Centre has two bunk rooms accommodating 16 and 14 and space for camping, hot water and a well equipped kitchen with fridge. The cost is \$20 per person per night.

On Saturday evening there will be a BBQ, members should bring their own meat to cook and a salad to share. Our hosts will provide desert.

LFNC members who are interested in attending should notify John Elliott who will provide you with additional information as it is received.

CLUB HISTORY

On 21 October 1949 the Royal Society of Tasmania Northern Branch held a public meeting at the Public Library, with the view to forming a field naturalist club in the Launceston area. The first office bearers elected were Dr W Keverall McIntyre (President); Mrs GE Perrin and Mr H King (vice presidents); and Mrs GR Garner and Messrs T Burns, K Ligerwood, J Curtis, J Glennie and S Butler (Committee). It was reported in *The Mercury* that about 20 people joined the Club that night.

The first general meeting was held on 21 November 1949 at the Public Library, with addresses given by John Skemp on 'Bird Watching', Archdeacon Atkinson on 'Tasmanian Orchids' and Norman Plomley on 'Tasmanian Insects'. The minutes from this meeting state that there were 110 in attendance and the number did not include the Committee members present.

Meetings continued to be held at the Public Library until 1952, when the venue was moved to the Queen Victoria Museum, then in 1977 to the Launceston Matriculation College (now Launceston College) and in 1996 to Scotch Oakburn College Senior Campus.

The first president, Dr W Keverall McIntyre was elected first patron in 1950, he was followed by Lord Talbot de Malahide in 1968, Dr Winifred Curtis in 1974, and Chris Tassell in 2005.

AUSTRALIAN PLANT SOCIETY MEETINGS

LFNC members are welcome to attend APS meetings held on the third Tuesday in the month at Max Fry Hall, Gorge Road Trevallyn at 7.30 pm. The next meetings will be on:

October 20 - Club Night including Plant Identification Workshop

November 17 - *Patagonia*, guest speakers Keith and Sib Corbett

QUEEN VICTORIA MUSEUM & ART GALLERY

The Royal Society of Tasmania (Northern Branch) presents *Fox Eradication in Tasmania: Its Problems & Issues* to be presented by **Mr Nick Mooney**, Section Head, Monitoring and Management, Wildlife Management Branch.

To be held at the Nuala O'Flaherty Auditorium Inveresk on Monday 5 October at 7.30 pm

Admission: \$5 General Public, \$3 QVMAG Friends, \$2 Students, FREE for members of the Royal Society. Bookings essential. Phone 6323 3718 or email bookings@qvmag.tas.gov.au

Tasmanian Flora Information Online

The Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery's *Flora of Tasmania Online* <http://demo1.tmag.tas.gov.au/index.html> presents information on all flowering plants, native and naturalised, found in the State of Tasmania. Information includes descriptions, keys, taxonomic relationships, distributions and ecology. Also available is the Vascular Plant Census for 2009 <http://tmag.tas.gov.au/index.aspx?base=1273>

Ever wondered what that plant might be, the University of Tasmania's *Key to Tasmanian Vascular Plants* <http://www.utas.edu.au/dicotkey/> should help you to identify Tasmanian dicotyledonous plants. The site includes 'Family' pages with a brief illustrated description and keys to genera of a family of monocots or dicots, 'Genera' pages with a brief illustrated description of any Tasmanian genus flowering plants as well as keys to species and lists of species are given for genera with more than two species. It also explains the differences between dicots, monocots, conifers, ferns and fern allies. There is also help with common names and a link to the *Little Book of Common Names for Tasmanian Plants* [http://www.dpiw.tas.gov.au/inter.nsf/Attachments/LJEM-6K8W4N/\\$FILE/Common_names_booklet.pdf](http://www.dpiw.tas.gov.au/inter.nsf/Attachments/LJEM-6K8W4N/$FILE/Common_names_booklet.pdf), although this does not include some names in common use in Tasmania.

Additional Information

Club Outings:

1. All outings depart from Inveresk carpark (near Museum entrance) at 9 am unless otherwise specified. Internet site updated regularly to reflect short notice changes. Saturday all-day parking cost is \$3.00. Sunday parking free.
2. You need to provide your own food and drinks for the outing unless otherwise specified. Morning tea is normally provided by the bus company on bus outings.
3. When travelling by car in convoy, each driver is responsible to ensure that the vehicle behind is in sight immediately after passing each cross road or fork in the road.
4. When car pooling, petrol costs should be shared between all the passengers, including family of the driver, and based on other clubs the Committee suggested \$11 per 100 km. This is a guideline only.

Name Tags: Name tags are to be worn at meetings and on outings.

Tea/Coffee: A levy of 50c is currently charged for supper provided at meetings.

Field Centre: All members have access to the John Skemp Field Centre. Contact our booking manager, John Elliott on 6344 9303 regarding availability and keys.

Field Centre Phone Number - 6399 3361

Postal Address: PO Box 1072 Launceston 7250

Internet site : <http://www.lfnc.org.au>

E.mail : lfnc@bigpond.com