



THE LAUNCESTON NATURALIST

Volume LII No. 2 December 2018/January 2019

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

Patron : Prof. Nigel Forteath
President : Mr Tom Treloggen, 0408 341 397
Hon. Secretary : Mr Phillip Brumby, 0407 664 554
Hon. Treasurer : Ms Karen Manning, 0363 442 277

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

Program:

February - Tuesday 5

General Meeting – Guest Speaker Andy Taylor, *the Life of Eels*

February - Wednesday 6

Field Trip – Trevallyn Dam to see the workings of the elver ladder with Andy Taylor

February - Sunday 24

Skemps Day

March - Tuesday 5

General Meeting and field trip to an evening outdoor event with BYO picnic tea,
further information later

March – Sunday 31

Skemps Day

For further program details visit <https://www.lfnc.org.au/meetings.htm>

Skemps Report

The new tank has been installed and I would like to acknowledge the efforts of those involved. Grant, John and I moved the old tank, Rob brought a load of sand up to the site in a 4WD flat tray. John did a remarkable job of setting a smooth base and the truck driver delivering the tank helped move it into place.

During the November Skemps Day I found enough bits and pieces to plumb it in and with luck on our side heavy rains not long before the installation saw it filled within a few days.

Since then I have added pipes around the tops of the tanks so that they fill from the overflow from the first tank. This means the tanks will fill even if disconnected from the system and I am looking at adding one way valves so that a breached tank will not drain the others.

Weeds, track clearing and small maintenance jobs seem to occupy most of our Tuesdays and the mower has run hot keeping the grass down. The ride on broke down recently and Grant let me use his flat tray to take it in for repairs and a service. I spent Christmas Day mowing during one of the best growing seasons of the last few years while Karen, Karl and Claire spent part of their Christmas break dealing with foxglove along the roadway bordering the property and on the Watergate Track.

I have added better handles to the doors of the outside toilet so that people cannot be locked in and there is a tap outside to allow campers to access the roof water tank.

Big Bertha, the large drum fire place in the Centre, has had its day with holes appearing at the back. We have a new 40 gallon drum and this is another task for the near future.

The Committee recently approved the purchase of 20 secondhand conference chairs for Skemps and a large table to be installed where the eight ball table sits. Thanks to Lois, Peter and Karen the chairs have been cleaned and tidied up. A single can of paint has the legs looking a lot better and we are expecting new protective tips to arrive any day. These are sturdy metal chairs from Sebel called Romance. A good number of matching chairs is one of the last practical items of improvements suggested by John Simmons.

As usual we still need volunteers to help at Skemps on Tuesdays, if you could make yourself available for a few hours, it would be most appreciated. Contact me if you can help in any way.

Noel Manning

Christmas Breakup – Sunday 2 December 2018

A few members arrived early on a fine summer morning to find a tree for our Christmas at Skemps. A limb from a *Leptospermum* was trimmed and the stray smaller branches were tied in close to make for a reasonable Christmas tree which was decorated by Peter's (W) grandchildren.

With the tree sorted it turned into the usual social occasion with noisy chatting as we waited for the barbecue to be lit for lunch. Some members went on walks to admire the *Styloidium graminifolium* (triggerplant) which was impressive following a few years with very few plants flowering. The tables were decorated after lunch in preparation for the afternoon tea while the children waited impatiently for Santa.

Santa turned up and the secret Santa gifts were distributed before it was the turn of the excited children to receive their gifts. The lucky door prizes were drawn and won by Lynne and Caitlin.

A large spread provided an excellent afternoon tea and after more chatter and walks we cleaned up and left for home looking forward to a new year and what it had to offer the field naturalists of our Club.

Noel Manning



Stylidium graminifolium, triggerplant (KM)

General Meeting – Tuesday 4 December 2018

Year That Was and Photographic Competition

Following a few short notices, the last meeting for 2018 started with the 'Year That Was' powerpoint presentation; images from field trips and other activities held throughout the year. Peter Ralph did a wonderful job putting the 15 minute presentation together and his choice of the haunting pan flute music in the background was a great finishing touch.

This was followed by members placing their votes for the photographic entries which were considerable less in number than previous years, with Prue Wright and Karen Manning winning the prizes. A big thank you to members for contributing sweet and savoury items for supper. Karen

Field Trip – Sunday 9 December 2018

Lake Mackenzie

Six members and a friend departed Launceston early to travel to the Central Plateau to look at the vegetation regrowth in areas that we had visited earlier in the year. The sky didn't look the best as we headed up the plateau and was still clouded over when we stopped to get our walking boots on at Lake Mackenzie. On our approach to the carpark we realised that the lake's water level was higher than normal and that we would have to walk around the lake to the hut, rather than walking directly over the normally dry area of the lake to the hut.

Not long after we headed off the sun appeared from under the clouds and we spotted our first local, who quickly slithered behind a rock to hide, but the tiger snake was nice enough to poke his head back out for some photos. We found many plants to photograph while making our way around the lake and once at the hut, sat down to refuel, before wandering around to see what else we could note and photograph.

As we were about to start the return walk, one of the party wandered into a section of bush that we hadn't explored and soon came out saying he'd seen a Tasmanian Devil, it had run in front of him

and gone into hiding amongst the rocks. We all went over to see if we could spot it again, but it wasn't to be. Heading back at our own pace, the back members spotted another snake or possible the same one from before. We all regrouped at the cars and changed our shoes before splitting up, with one group heading to Devils Gullet where they enjoyed a walk and the vistas at Devils Gullet until after 7pm and the others straight home. All up a great day. Claire Manning



Lake Mackenzie looking across flooded walkway (KM)

Dicots: *Acaena montana*, mountain buzzy; *Athrotaxis cupressoides*, pencil pine; *Bellendenia montana*, mountain rocket; *Boronia citriodora* sp., lemon boronia; *Brachyscome spathulata*, spoonleaf daisy; *Caladenia alpina*, alpine finger-orchid; *Celmisia saxifraga*, small snowdaisy; *Coprosma nitida*, mountain currant; *Drosera arcturi*, alpine sundew; *Epacris serpyllifolia*, alpine heath; *Eucalyptus coccifera*, snow peppermint; *Euphrasia collina* sp., purple eye-bright; *Gentianella diemensis*, Tasmanian snowgentian; *Geranium potentilloides*, mountain cranesbill; *Gonocarpus micranthus*, creeping raspwort; *G. montanus*, mountain raspwort; *Grevillea australis*, southern grevillea; *Lagenophora stipitata*, blue bottledaisy; *Leptecophylla parvifolia*, mountain pinkberry; *Leptospermum rupestre*, mountain teatree; *Montia australasica*, white purslane; *Orites revolutus*, revolute orites; *Oxylobium ellipticum*, golden shaggy pea; *Plantago gunnii*, bolster plantain; *Pterygopappus lawrencei*, sage cushionplant; *Ranunculus collinus*, mountain buttercup; *Richea acerosa*, slender candleheath; *R. scoparia*, scoparia; *Senecio* sp., fireweed; *Sprengelia incarnata*, pink swampheath; *Tasmannia lanceolata*, mountain pepper; *Telopea truncata*, Tasmanian waratah; *Veronica nivea*, snow speedwell; *Viola bentonicifolia*, showy violet

Ferns and fern allies: *Asplenium bulbiferum*, mother spleenwort; *A. flabellifolium*, necklace fern; *Blechnum pennamarina* subsp. *alpina*, alpine waterfern; *Lycopodium* sp., clubmoss

Lichen: *Cladia* sp., coral lichen

Monocots: *Carex appressa*, tall sedge; *C. breviculmis*, short stemsedge; *Carpha alpina*, alpine strawsedge

Fauna: *Carinascincus* sp., skink; *Macropus rufogriseus*, Bennett's wallaby; *Notechis scutatus*, tiger snake; *Sarcophilus harrisii*, Tasmanian devil; *Tachyglossus aculeatus*, echidna, unidentified Grasshopper

Other plants noted on way up to the lake: *Bedfordia salicina*, Tasmanian blanketleaf; *Blechnum nudum*, fishbone waterfern; *Clematis aristata*, mountain clematis; *Dicksonia antarctica*, soft tree-fern; *Nothofagus cunninghamii*, myrtle beech; *Olearia lirata*, forest daisybush



Caladenia alpina (CM)



Notechis scutatus, Tiger Snake (CM)



Grasshoppers (CM)

Field Trip - Ben Lomond National Park - Friday 18 to Sunday 20 January 2019

Arriving at Borrowdale ski lodge on the Friday morning the weather was overcast with a strong, cold wind. Peter (W) and Prue had the fire going and members Peter (R), Lois and visitor Barbara were chatting and enjoying hot drinks and sweets cooked by Lois. In all 21 people joined us for the weekend including eight guests.

After lunch we decided to go for a walk close to the Lodge and headed to the ski village carpark and then along the road to look at the plants noting that the scoparia was showing both flowers and fruit. It was surprisingly cold providing relief from the recent heat of Launceston and everyone was either rugged up or wishing they were.

Late Friday afternoon while some snoozed others walked around the ski village visiting the site of the May 2018 fire that raised the public shelter, public toilets and hotel just prior to the ski season. They also had a closer look at the temporary facilities that had been installed to provide for visitors to the area and saw the remains of a burnt out safe, which was presumably from the hotel.

By Saturday morning the weather had improved, including a lighter breeze, and we headed north past the Rover Lodge along the ridge above the Ben Lomond Road. We then headed left up the Summit Pass Track around the back of Legges Tor and returned through the ski fields above the village, noting that some of the old ski lodges seem to be falling further in to disrepair. John, a friend and visitor, made the effort to get to the top of Legges Tor as it was his first visit to Ben Lomond for walking. We all noted the interesting cloud formations during our walk, with visitor and artist Erika being impressed enough to want to paint them.

During the afternoon we walked south east along the overland ski run to the far end of Hamilton's Crag and climbed the rock field to take in the scenery. Those new to this walk commented about the spectacular views down into the valley below and out east to the coast. Views that included mountains such as Victoria and Albert, old growth forests, tree farms, large hills of dolerite blocks and farm lands.

On the Saturday eight visitors joined us for the day only while a core group of eleven stayed overnight, cooked an evening meal and socialised till bed time. A five year old copy of New Idea provided more than an hour of riotous entertainment as most joined in to complete the crossword. It started out as a challenge to identify the blurred picture of the celebrity in the centre of the crossword until the crossword itself took over. In case you are wondering the celebrity was the Australian actress Margot Robbie.

Although heard there was little bird life to be seen during the weekend while wallabies were plentiful and some had joeys. Also a pair of wedged-tailed eagles, two snakes and, red and black grasshoppers were seen as well as the usual skinks. Tadpoles inhabiting the small ponds not yet dried out, indicated that frogs still lived on the mountain while wombat scats showed us that they were about and hopefully healthy.

On Sunday we all mucked in to clean the lodge leaving the vacuuming to Prue and Peter before heading off after an entertaining weekend with newcomers impressed enough to promise to return. While some members headed home others stayed to socialise or take further walks.

Thanks to Peter and Prue we had another successful Ben Lomond weekend with great weather and impressive wildlife in wonderful company.

Noel and Karen

Dicots: *Acaena montana*, alpine buzzy; *A. novae-zelandiae*, common buzzy; *Bellendenia montana*, mountain rocket; *Brachyscome decipiens*, field daisy; *B. spathulata*, blue daisy; *Celmisia saxifraga*, small snowdaisy; *Coprosma nitida*, mountain currant; *Cotula alpina*, alpine buttons; *Craspedia macrocephala*, alpine billybuttons; *Cyathodes straminea*, spreading cheeseberry; *Drosera arcturi*, alpine sundew; *Epacris serpyllifolia*, alpine heath; *Eucalyptus coccifera*, snow peppermint; *Euphrasia gibbsiae* subsp. *comberi*, mountain eyebright; *Ewartia catipes*, diamond cushionherb; *Gaultheria*

tasmanica, Tasmanian waxberry; *Gentianella diemensis* subsp. *plantaginea*, Ben Lomond snowgentian; *Geranium potentilloides*, mountain cranesbill; *Leptospermum rupestre*, mountain teatree; *Microseris lanceolata*, highland yam daisy; *Montia australasica*, white purslane; *Olearia obcordata*, heartleaf daisybush; *Orites revolutus*, revolute orites; *Pentachondra pumila*, carpet frillyheath; *Pimelea sericea*, mountain riceflower; *Pterygopappus lawrencei*, sage cushionplant; *Ranunculus ? nanus*, dwarf buttercup; *Richea scoparia*, scoparia; *R. sprengelioides*, rigid candleheath; *Senecio* sp., fireweed; *S. gunnii*, mountain fireweed; *Tasmannia lanceolata*, mountain pepper; *Veronica ciliolata* subsp. *fiordensis*, Ben Lomond cushionplant; *Wahlenbergia saxicola*, mountain bluebell

Bryophytes: *Sphagnum ? cristatum*, moss

Ferns and Allies: *Blechnum penna-marina*, alpine waterfern; *Lycopodium fastigiatum*, fir clubmoss; *Polystichum proliferum*, mother shield fern

Monocots: *Astelia alpina*, pineapple grass; *Carpa alpina*, alpine strawsedge; *Empodisma minus*, spreading roperush



Cushionplant on Ben Lomond (KM)

Additional Information

Club Outings:

- 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.
- Provide your own food and drinks for the outing and wear/take clothing/footwear suitable for all weather types.
- When travelling by car in convoy, each driver is responsible to ensure that the vehicle behind is in sight immediately after passing a cross road or fork in the road.
- When carpooling, 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: Please wear your name tags to 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, but should contact our booking manager, Phil Brumby on 0403 845 000 or bookings@lfnc.org.au regarding availability and keys.

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