



THE LAUNCESTON NATURALIST

Volume LIII No.6 August/September 2020

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 Forteach
President	:	Mrs Prue Wright, 0438 410 192
Hon. Secretary	:	Mr Phillip Brumby, 0407 664 554
Hon. Treasurer	:	Mrs Karen Manning, 0363 442 277

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

October

- Tuesday 6 Meeting - Guest speakers Mike and Helen Statham - Volunteering on Deal Island**
- Friday 16 Field Trip - Spring visit to Curries River Dam & Mount George with APS members**
- Wednesday 21 Field Trip - North Scottsdale Regional Reserve with APS members for plant survey with Mark Wapstra**
- Sunday 25 Skemps Day and Annual General Meeting (1.30pm) followed by General Meeting**

November

- Tuesday 3 Meeting - Guest speakers Dr Kerry Bridle – Natural Values in the Midlands**
- Wednesday 4 Field Trip – Northern Midlands with Dr Kerry Bridle to look at orchids, wildflowers and invertebrates**
- Wednesday 4 Community involvement - Catch it in the Catchment, assist Prue and the Girl Guides at Swan Point, from 6 to 7.30pm**
- Sunday 8 Community Involvement - Catch it in the Catchment, Club site location at Kings Meadows Rivulet. Meet in carpark behind Kings Meadows Hotel from 9.30am**
- Sat 14 –
Mon 16 Weekend Trip – Rocky Cape National Park**
- Saturday 28 Skemps Day - Spring Clean at the John Skemp Centre**

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

Annual General Meeting

The 2020 Annual General Meeting of the Launceston Field Naturalists Club will be held at the John Skemp Field Centre, Myrtle Bank, on Sunday 25th October, commencing at 1.30pm.

Nominations for the positions of President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and x3 Committee members should be lodged with the Public Officer no later than 10 days prior to the AGM using the **Nomination Form** available on the “**Publications**” page of the website. Due to possible delays with postal deliveries, it would be preferable for members to deliver their completed forms to our Public Officer Tom Treloggen at 68 Mulgrave Road, South Launceston as noted on the form.

Further details will be provided closer to the date in regards to lunch and afternoon tea arrangements.

Message from the President

At the last General Meeting, Prue Wright asked members to consider taking on a small (or a little larger) job within the Club. At the moment almost all these (essential) jobs are taken on by already pushed to the limit Committee Members. Not because they want to, but because no-one else will put up their hand. These include: **NEWSLETTER EDITOR** – Collate the Club newsletter and send to all members every 2-3 months. **REPORTERS** – report on our Field Trips and other articles for the newsletter. **LIBRARIAN** – looking after our Library at Skemps – you even get to buy the odd new book! **SUPPER SUPERVISOR** – Looking after our Supper Roster and making sure of supplies for our monthly meetings. **BOOKING OFFICER** – taking bookings for “outside” people and members who want to stay at Skemps. It involves looking after an email address. **SOCIAL MANAGER** – organising occasional Club dinners & social gatherings, and member nights such as our “The Year that Was”. **PROGRAM MANAGER** – organising the speakers and field trips for the year. (Helen and Jeff have offered to do this one for the coming year). **MEMBERSHIP OFFICER** – welcoming and keeping an eye on new members. **OCCASIONAL FIELD TRIP LEADER** – manage the organising of some Club Field Trips in liaison with Program manager. **ASSETS OFFICER** – keep the register of all our assets, where they are kept and who is using them. **SKEMPS MANAGER** – Look after the team of volunteer workers at Skemps, plan with them what the jobs to be done are & see that all work is being carried out in a safe manner. **SAFETY OFFICER** – look for safety risks and report on any issues at Club meetings, Skemps and Field Trips. **PUBLICITY OFFICER** – Publicise our Club wherever possible. **WEBMASTER** – Look after our webpage on the internet. **SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGER** – keep an eye on our Facebook page. The list goes on.....

For further information on any of these positions, please speak to a Committee members. Your help would be greatly appreciated.

Skemps Report: August - September

Repairs over the last two months included shoring up the sagging ducting from Big Bertha to the small bedrooms, repairing the stand for the fire hose and turning the badly damaged wood barbecue into a fire place. After the snow fall from early August the driveway was cleared of fallen spars and all nature trails have been checked and cleared of blockages, including a full morning walking some trails with a chainsaw. Much work has been done on track 15, from lower down Targa Hill Road to the bottom waterfalls, including rerouting it more into the bush and adding steps. Most work here has been done by Matthew and Roy. Work has been started on improving the signage on all the nature trails. At Prue's suggestion we are improving the outdoor facilities for campers by moving a seat and eventually we will have a fire pit nearby as well. Noel Manning

Saturday 8 August - Holwell Gorge

7 members arrived at the northern Holwell Gorge car park on a cool Saturday morning. After waiting until just after 10 o'clock we set off down the track which, according to the sign at the start, is suitable for experienced walkers only due to hazards. The three who went right through can attest to the latter, some sections having ropes provided to allow safe progress because of a landslide and some logs which were too dangerous to cut out of the way.

Progress to the main bridge was very slow and it took us over an hour to get there. Orchid plants and fungi abounded slowing progress. Two orchids were in flower, one fairly abundant. Sassafras at the bridge provided an opportunity to get a close photo of the flowers. Also in flower was Victoria's floral emblem, *Epacris impressa*. Ferns and fungi were the main focus of interest between the bridge and the first falls, with greenhood rosettes in abundance scattered along the track.

Lunch was taken in the sun, and very welcome it was, on the rocks at the falls. We all continued on to where the track started to deteriorate where three members decided to turn back. We continued on finding more of everything until Noel decided he would turn back and drive down to the southern end to pick us up when we arrived.



The track became more and more hazardous from this point on, some sections had ropes provided to allow safe passage. A landslide area was particularly hazardous but there was an alternate route along the creek but with the increased flow we decided not to risk it. A few logs, which were too dangerous to cut a section out, also had ropes to help negotiate them. From the middle falls up to the track down to the third falls began to climb fairly steeply. The final section provided a few more plants in flower as the canopy opened up.

Noel as promised was waiting for us and drove us back to the northern car park where we caught up with the rest of the party. Karen brought a list of plants on the Club's last visit to the gorge and we were pleased to add many more to it to round off an interesting day. Jeff Campbell

Dicots: - *Acacia dealbata*, silver wattle; *Acacia melanoxylon*, Blackwood; *Acacia verticillata*, prickly moses; *Allocasuarina littoralis*, black oak; *Aristotelia peduncularis*, heartberry; *Astroloma humifusum*, native cranberry; *Atherosperma moschatum* subsp *moschatum*, sassafras; *Banksia marginata*, silver banksia; *Bedfordia salicina*, Tasmanian blanketleaf; *Beyeria viscosa*, pinkwood; *Billardiera* sp., apple berry; *Bursaria spinosa*, prickly box; *Coprosma hirtella*, coffeeberry; *Coprosma quadrifida*, common native-currant; *Correa lawrenceana*, mountain correa; *Correa reflexa*, common correa; *Drosera peltata* ssp. *auriculata*, tall sundew; *Epacris* sp., heath; *Epacris impressa*, common heath (white & pink flowered species); *Exocarpos cupressiformis*, common native-cherry; *Gonocarpus teucrioides*, forest raspwort; *Goodenia lanata*, trailing native-primrose; *Goodenia ovata*, hop native-primrose; *Leptospermum* sp., teatree; *Lomatia tinctoria*, guitar plant; *Monotoca glauca*, goldey wood; *Muehlenbeckia gunnii*, forest lignum; *Notelaea ligustrina*, native olive; *Nothofagus cunninghamii*, myrtle beech; *Olearia argophylla*, musk; *Olearia lirata*, forest daisybush; *Pimelea* sp; riceflower; *Pittosporum bicolor*, cheesewood; *Pomaderris apetala*, common dogwood; *Pomaderris elliptica*, yellow dogwood; *Senecio linearifolius*, common fireweed groundsel; *Urtica incisa*, scrub nettle; *Viola hederacea*, ivy leaved violet; *Zieria arborescens* subsp *arborescens*, stinkwood;

Ferns: - *Asplenium bulbiferum*, mother spleenwort; *Asplenium flabellifolium*, necklace fern (image above by K Manning) ; *Blechnum nudum*, fishbone water-fern; *Blechnum wattsi*, hard water-fern; *Dicksonia Antarctica*, soft tree-fern; *Grammitis billardierei*, finger fern; *Histiopteris incisa*, batwing; *Hymenophyllum* sp., filmy fern; *Hypolepis rugosula*, ruddy ground fern; *Phymatosorus pustulatus*, kangaroo fern; *Polystichum proliferum*, mother shield-fern; *Pteridium esculentum*, bracken; *Sticherus tener*, silky fan fern; *Tmesipteris obliqua*, common fork fern

Fungi/Slime Moulds: - *Anthracoephyllum archeri*, orange fan; *Byssomerulius corium*, crust fungus; *Dentipellis leptodon*, spine fungus; *Fuligo septica*, dogs vomit; *Ganoderma australe*, bracket fungus; *Geastrum triplex*, earthstars; *Leotia lubrica*, jelly baby; *Mycelium*; *Postia punctata*; *Ryvardenia campyla*; *Schizophyllum commune*, split gill fungi (**image on right by K Manning**); *Stereum ostrea*, golden curtain crust; *Trametes versicolor*, turkey tail



Orchids: - *Acianthus caudatus*, mayfly orchid; *Chiloglottis* sp., bird-orchid; *Corybas aconitiflorus*, helmet orchid; *Pterostylis atriola*, snug greenhood; *Pterostylis grandiflora*, superb greenhood

Lichen & Mosses: - *Cladonia pleurota*; *Hypnum cupressiforme*; *Polytrichum juniperinum*, juniper haircap moss; *Usnea* sp

Monocots: - *Dianella tasmanica*, forest flaxlily; *Gahnia* sp.; *Lepidosperma* sp., swordsedg; *Lomandra longifolia*, sagg; *Luzula* sp., woodrush

Birds: - *Acanthiza pusilla*, Brown thornbill; *Acanthorhynchus tenuirostris*, Eastern spinebill; *Cacomantis flabelliformis*, Fan-tailed cuckoo; *Calyptorhynchus funerus*, Yellow-tailed black-cockatoo; *Colluricincla harmonica*, Grey shrike-thrush; *Pachycephala pectoralis*, golden whistler; *Phylidonyris pyrrhoptera*, Crescent honeyeater; *Rhipidura albiscapa*, grey fantail

Snail: - ? *Tasmapheria sinclairi*, Sinclair's carnivorous snail

Sunday 30 August – Skemps Day

Eleven members attended the property today with a forecast of early showers. A group of five, wishing to visit the newly reconstructed walk into the Bottom Falls from Targa Hill Road, carpoled out to the beginning of the walk. Noel walked us through the new part explaining the work he, Roy and Matthew had undertaken to construct the track. He returned to the car when we neared the bottom falls knowing that we could find our way from there to the Centre. We could hear the water cascading over the fall before it came into view and as we walked along we removed foxglove.

The recent snow in the area brought many tree limbs down at the base of the waterfall which we managed to drag out before continuing up the track toward the Top Fall. Kaye, who had not walked the track before, took the lead and led us the track past all the markers, to the seat at the native olive where we explored the large rocky outcrop noting the numerous lichens, liverworts, mosses and ferns growing there.

The first sprinkle of rain caught us in an open patch of bush at the Top Falls, so we soldiered on back to the Centre along Skemp Creek only to find that the power was out. Warming up our lunch and heating water for a cuppa had to be done on the barbecue, the wood heater or the gas stove, taking longer than the good old microwave or jug.

While we were away Noel had attended to a few repair jobs, including securing the wobbly fire hose, and had lit the barbecue. Following lunch, Noel and Prue used post-hole diggers to set the old seat from behind the outdoor toilet into a new location for future campers.

At the time of leaving the power was still out and we passed two TasNetwork vehicles on Targa Hill Road. Another successful working bee with time to also look around the property. Karen Manning

Tuesday 1 September – Meeting with Guest Speaker Scott Carver – The ecology and control of sarcoptic mange in wombats

Prue introduced Scott and his talk on wombats and the efforts to control sarcoptic mange, Scott checked that his online audience could hear and see his presentation, and then launched into what he described as his favorite subject, wombats, and the research into these animals.

We first learnt that there are three wombats in Australia, the bare-nosed wombat, also called the common wombat, and the southern and northern hairy-nosed wombats. The hairy-nosed wombats prefer arid regions with the northern one critically endangered and restricted to a small area in central Queensland and the map showed the southern one residing in the central and eastern coastal area of the Great Australian Bight.

The common wombat prefers the moist areas of south east Australia, including all Tasmania, and mange affects the southern and common wombats, particularly the common wombat for a variety of environmental reasons.

Scott moved onto the mite which caused the mange which he described as looking like a brain with legs sticking out when seen through a microscope. A slide showed the life cycle of the mite with the female, after mating, digging burrows and laying eggs continuously for one to two months. The eggs hatch into a larvae mites which burrow out of the skin, go through a nymph stage and as adults repeat the cycle.

The disease is a skin infection with the symptoms driven by the animals' immune system, in many ways like an allergy. There are several types of mange disease, or scabies in humans, and the wombats get a severe form of this immuno-compromising disease, their skin thickens up then cracks then they lose body condition and weight. Death is usually caused by environmental bacterial infection rather than the mite itself.

Scott described wombats as solitary creatures, grouchy to each other. They spend four days plus in a burrow then move to another using a bedding chamber within the burrow. Then another wombat moves into the first burrow picking up mites left behind, thus spreading the infection, which occurs throughout their range.

He then gave us the history of the disease in Australia, which he described as fascinating. A King Island animal that was taken to a Paris zoo where it picked up the disease and later died. This was the first recorded case of mange in a wombat and the diagnosis came from the animal's preserved pelt. Doctors diagnosed scabies in convicts from around 1820 and it was known to be in dogs at this time as well and in 1895 was recorded in wombats in Australia.

In 1937 a major outbreak of mange caused a serious decline in wombats. This was the first outbreak of mange recorded in any animal anywhere. Mange is known to infect nearly 150 different species of mammal worldwide and at any one time 100 million people are affected by scabies making it an important disease globally. In Australia it has been documented in foxes, dogs, humans, koala, southern brown bandicoot, ringtail possum, dingo and two wallaby and two wombat species.

The talk moved on to the evidence for mange having been introduced to Australia from Europe with a slide showing the work of a student with the genetic connections from different animals, many areas of Australia and different parts of the world. This incredibly complicated diagram had provided an inconclusive result, though Scott suggested the mite had been introduced to Australia multiple times by humans.

Scott then told us he had come to Tasmania looking to do research and ended up studying wombat mange. He started a study of marsupials in Narawntapu National Park, a former farm taken over by Parks in the 1970s, and as the farm had a lot of pasture it supported many marsupials. He regularly took undergraduate students there to study the animals and noticed a decline in wombats, a decline starting in the east and moved west. The disease was also easy to study in wombats as it has an external manifestation and a student had devised a system to score the severity of mange in individual animals.

Scott also wondered why wombats are so badly affected by mange. When he was infected handling the animals, he would get a few red spots and some itching, then a few more red spots before the immune system cleared it away. While the disease in wombats is little understood there are a range of physiological,

behavioral and immunological aspects to the disease. Using a thermal imaging camera it was noted that mangy wombats can lose up to five times more heat energy compared to healthy animals.

Unhealthy wombats have an increased metabolic rate to counter the loss of body heat and while healthy wombats spend two to four hours a day foraging and the rest in the burrow the unhealthy ones are out foraging for up to 14 hours a day yet are still losing body mass and dying. An accelerometer was attached to the animals which accurately indicated activity including walking, running, grazing, standing still, rolling over and other activities. Using this information showed that although the unhealthy wombats are out four times as long, due to the discomfort and irritation of the mites, they are not eating all the time, and they cannot meet increased metabolic demands.

A map showed us the position of the approximately 130, 10 kilometre long transects where animal populations have been counted annually since 1985 and a graph showed that wombat numbers had been increasing. This information had been compared to other on the ground surveys showing a good correlation. There are variations over the different meteorological areas of Tasmania with numbers stable in the North West and declining in the Central North (Narawntapu) though overall on a statewide basis the numbers are going up.

The talk moved to mathematical modelling showing four steady state wombat population dynamics. Narawntapu is an area where wombats have nearly died out from mange, at Cradle Mountain mangy wombats are occasionally seen though mange does not persist and there are areas in the north where mangy wombats are continually seen, though the wombat population does not change. The fourth model is an unstable coexistence with the numbers of wombats well down, though this situation has not been noted. Factors contributing to these differences are the abundance of animals, the level of burrow sharing, how long mites survive in the environment and how many mites are shed in the environment. Mite survival seems to be the most important factor and students are working on this and a robot, which Scott called a 'wombot', is being developed to help inspect burrows.

Scott told us that it had been decided to intervene at Narawntapu to see if the mite could be eliminated on a population scale using Cydectin, a veterinarian treatment for sheep and cattle. The Cydectin lasts for about five days while the mite can persist for up to three weeks in the burrow creating the challenge of treating the animal over that period of time. He then described the burrow flaps and a map showed the 600 known burrows in the test area of which around 200 were active. One of Scott's students put in a huge amount of effort treating 200 burrows every week for 12 weeks and also monitored the disease in the population and a slide showed the improvement in the condition of two wombats over a short period.

While a video showed a wombat successfully being treated, we also saw another resisting treatment and Scott considered this to be very important as the treatment failures helped in understanding the ability to control the disease.

The team was hopeful that the mite had been eradicated from Narawntapu a month after the 12 weeks of treatment though this was not the case as the number of recoveries slowly went down, new infections went up and the population continued to decline with Scott wondering what could be done better.

Modelling was used to look at improving the outcome and the first issue was that only 33% of treatments appeared to successfully get to the wombat, using the burrow flaps, so a better delivery system was needed. Another way to improve the outcome was to use a longer lasting treatment and a veterinarian product called Bravecto, which had been tested for safety at Bonorong Wildlife Sanctuary, was found to be effective. The modelling also suggested using both methods together gave even better results.

After working out the appropriate dosage and further testing on mangy wombats, it was shown a single dose treatment, repeated from between one to three months, was very effective. Scott and his team was looking to improve the outcome as many people throughout Australia were putting a lot of effort into treating an individual or a small group of wombats then failing to control the disease.

The outcome of this research was important for our wombats though it was also of interest to conservationists in other parts of the world. While we do not care about the red fox, in Europe it does get the mange as well as the gray wolf in the Yellowstone National Park (USA), chamois in the Italian Alps and the black bear in North America and the research applies to other communicable pathogens as well.

Scott's talk moved onto something he described as 'a lot less serious', the cubed shaped faeces of the wombat. These are often stacked on rocks with the shape stopping them from rolling away and these are being left there for communication. While drinking with colleagues the group wondered how they could

study this for a bit of scientific fun, starting with a few hypotheses. To our amusement Scott told us his favourite hypotheses were wombats having a square shaped anus sphincter and that after defecation they pat them into shape. He was interviewed about this research on ABC radio and got more coverage than anything he had ever done.

Using the intestine from dead wombats it was noted the large intestine of these animals was up to nine metres long, nearly twice the length of the human equivalent, and that it takes nearly a week for food to get through their system compared to two days for us. Then colleagues from Georgia Tech in the USA contacted the team as they were studying quirky things, including the fluid mechanics of faeces, and could not believe that an animal could produce cubic faeces so they joined the research.

Scott described some of the research done into the subject finishing by noting that their work had been nominated for an Ig*Nobel. These awards are given for research which makes people laugh and also makes them think. Out of some 10,000 nominations their research was one of ten to receive an award, given by actual Nobel Laureates, at Harvard University. We saw an image of the team dressed as a wombat and a cubic poo. We also saw the trophy based on the theme of habit which featured a coffee cup, cigarette, a lottery card and other items.

Scott finished by reiterating the important points including that mange was probably introduced by Europeans, mange can have a range of severe physiological and behavioral impacts on wombats, control of the disease is challenging with scope for improvement, research into cubed poo is fun and gets international media attention and he then acknowledged the people and organisations involved in the research.

During around 18 minutes of questions, answers and comments Scott noted that Bravecto was not yet licensed to be used with wombats. Phil thanked Scott and gave him a copy of our book then handed over to Prue who led the thanks with the usual acclamation.

Noel Manning

Monday 14 September – Working Bee at Skemps Property

Six members attended the property today to make a start on the updating markers and signage on the walking tracks. There had been complaints that many markers had gone down with tree falls, were obscured by new growth or had lost their colour over the years. Jeff, Tom and Noel formed the male team heading for the forest and mini forest walks while Prue, Caitlin and Karen took on Watergate.

Armed with track markers, paint, hammers and nails we headed off. We were also prepared for cleaning moss and mildew from plant signs and we had track notes to check for needed updates. We spent about three hours putting in the markers and checking that the next marker was in sight, a time consuming task, as we had to check that markers were visible from both directions.

The sun was shining but there was a lazy wind and with recent snow and heavy winds, both groups found broken tree limbs and general tree debris littering the tracks. As our attention was on track signage we had limited ability for trimming branches and clearing major falls, instead we cleared what we could and noted bigger issues for the next working bee.

The Watergate track needed many additional markers in places where shrubs had grown large enough to obscure signs and also where tracks had been relocated due to plant growth. A misreading of the colour coding had the boys marking one track the wrong colour.

We were very happy with what had been achieved today.



Karen Manning

Monday 21 September – Field Trip to Notley Hills with Ralph Cooper to look at the birdlife

Today we met at the Bridgenorth Football oval to travel in convoy to a private property in the Notley Hills to listen for and record the birdlife in the area, with the help of Ralph Cooper.

Arriving at the property around 11am, our host Gilly welcomed us at the end of her road and guided us with parking along the rough verge on the road. Our first stop was on a little side walk to look at the tree orchids in her forest, before the job of recording birds. The walk was down a slight slope which was slippery due to recent rains, so we moved with much care. We entered the forest at a very large rock, many of the trees seemed to have low branches which required some bending to get to the area. It was a privilege to see this rare species of Tasmania's only epiphytic orchid, growing on tree trunks or their branches around head height, allowing those wanting a photo, easy access, and while we waited, there were many mosses and lichens to admire.

Once photos were taken, we headed back to the open area of Gilly's property where we could hear birds chattering in the trees and Ralph pointed out some lapwings further down the grassy bank. During the course of our early lunch sitting outside, we noted the birds calling and saw many flying amongst the treetops around us.

Later Gilly took us into a gully on the far side of her property. Walking through an area of bracken, we came across some very large leeches which we could see clearly on the ground, enabling most to avoid them, but not everyone from later reports. The gully had many lovely ferns, mosses and



towering trees. Negotiating many tree falls and low growing plants, we also had to be carefully where we stepped as we presume animals were responsible for the digging of multiple holes on a hillside. Gilly said that she would set up her wildlife camera to film what is happening there.

Continuing back to our lunch area, we noted more birds while having a hot drink and a final chat, with Ralph telling us about a new bird book that he was reading and recommended to people interested in reading about how they live and think, called *The Bird Way* by Jennifer Ackerman.

Prue thanked Ralph Cooper for coming along and assisting with the bird identification and Gilly for inviting us to her lovely property.

For more information on [The Bird Way](https://scribepublications.com.au/books-authors/books/the-bird-way) visit <https://scribepublications.com.au/books-authors/books/the-bird-way>

Birds: - *Acanthiza ewingii*, Tasmanian thornbill; *Acanthorhynchus tenuirostris*, eastern Spinebill; *Cacatua galerita*, sulphur-crested cockatoo; *Cacomantis flabelliformis*, fan-tailed cuckoo; *Chrysococcyx lucidus*, shining bronze-cuckoo; *Cracticus torquatus*, grey butcherbird; *Dacelo novaeguineae*, kookaburra; *Malurus cyaneus*; superb fairy-wren (M & F); *Nesoptilotis flavicollis*, yellow-throated honeyeater; *Pachycephala pectoralis*, golden whistler; *Pardalotus striatus*, striated pardalote; *Platycercus caledonicus*, green rosella; *Rhipidura albiscapa*, grey fantail; *Sericornis humilis*, Tasmanian scrubwren; *Strepera versicolor*, grey currawong; *Vanellus miles*, masked lapwing; *Zosterops lateralis*, silvereye

Dicots: - *Acacia dealbata* subsp. *dealbata*, silver wattle; *Acacia melanoxylon*, Blackwood; *Acacia verticillata* subsp. *verticillata*, prickly Moses; *Cassinia aculeata* subsp. *aculeata*, common dollybush; *Clematis aristata*, mountain clematis; *Coprosma nitida*, mountain currant; *Leptomeria drupacea*, erect currantbush; *Lomatia tinctoria*, guitarplant; *Melaleuca ericifolia*, coast paperbark; *Olearia lirata*, forest daisybush; *Pittosporum*

bicolor, cheesewood; *Pomaderris apetala* subsp *apetala*, common dogwood; *Pultenaea juniperina*, prickly beauty; *Senecio* sp., groundsel

Ferns: - *Blechnum nudum*, fishbone fern; *Dicksonia antarctica*, soft treefern; ? *Grammitis magellanica*, finger fern; *Hypolepis rugosula*, ruddy groundfern; *Microsorium pustulatum* subsp. *pustulatum*, kangaroo fern; *Polystichum proliferum*, mother shield fern

Monocots: - *Chiloglottis triceratops*, three-horned bird orchid; *Dianella tasmanica*, blue flax lily; *Lomandra longifolia*, sagg; *Microlaena stipoides* var. *stipoides*, weeping grass; *Sarcochilus australis*, Gunn's Tree Orchid (image on right by K Manning)



Fungi: - *Leotia lubrica*; *Stereum illudens*

Scats: - Kangaroo, Possum and Wombat

Saturday 26 September – Skemps Day

Ten members and three visitors attended the property today. Roy and Noel headed to the Top Falls to look at the possibilities of putting in a track to the bottom of the Top Falls. The report follows.

Jeff, Caitlin, Karen, Tom and visitor Mark headed to the Watergate Track to complete work started a few weeks ago, which had been marked with orange tape at the time, to enable quick relocation. All branches over the tracks where foliage was at face level were cut back or up, and fallen limbs were cleared. We were lucky to have Mark's assistance where higher broken branches needed lopping, as the rest of the group were vertically challenged and were unable to reach these higher limbs. Having appropriate tools, we were able to remove all the unrequired directional markers and additional plant signs were erected.

Near the end of the track, Jeff realised he had misplaced his safety glasses, so returned the way we had come. The rest of us completed the task of placing the new signs, except for one which we couldn't find, clearing foliage as required and removed any foxglove plants seen and returned to the Centre via the Federation Corridor.



While we were out, Tina walked the Power Track and cleaned plant name signs and cleared debris as required, advising that the track was in good shape and could not suggest any required work.

With everyone back at the Centre, Jeff reported he had not located his safety glasses, but had found our missing sign. After lunch Jeff, Karen and Caitlin walked the Watergate track both ways looking under all the removed foliage and again did not find the glasses, but we did install the missing sign. If anyone does find a pair of safety glasses on this track, please chat with Jeff.

Jill had invited her friend Carol to visit and took her on one of the walks before they left. We also had a visit from new member Estelle and her friend Gabby. Estelle told us she had left two bird nests at the door prior to our last visit for us to find and hopefully identify the bird responsible for their construction. We recalled finding only one nest and wondering

at the time how it had come to be there. After some discussion we decided this very small delicate nest, lined with *Dicksonia Antarctica* stem fibre and surrounded by what appeared to be spider web, was from a Robin and it has been placed in the Centre display cabinet. Karen Manning

Top Falls Survey

Today Roy and I looked at making a track to the bottom of the Top Falls to make it easier to see and photograph the falls. Parking Roy's car at the far end of the property, down Targa Hill Road, we walked to the Bottom Falls and then through to the Top Falls with the idea that getting out would be mostly downhill.

After more than 15 minutes of exploring around the falls it became obvious that it was too steep and dangerous to get to the bottom of the falls where I had suggested we could look for a safe and easy way back to a known track. We then returned to the Bottom Falls and when nearly there, and where we could see the creek, headed into the bush hoping to get to the falls that way.

At first we walked high above the creek, knowing that it would rise to meet us, until the going became too rough and we joined the creek and made our way along it. When this too became more difficult we crossed the creek, walked a short way then crossed back making little further progress. Our last crossing to the far side still presented difficult going and we could not see any landmarks to indicate we were near the falls nor could we hear them.

We decided to give up and return to the Centre by a steep climb to the ridge above where we would join the track from the Forest Trail to the Bottom Falls. We decided this too was not the way to cut a trail to easily access the falls leaving only a one way in and out along the creek as the best option.

We decided to talk to Prue about this, suggesting that this track would take too much time and resources from other maintenance issues to be pursued in the immediate future. Noel Manning

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 \$4.00. 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 0407 664 554 or bookings@lfnc.org.au regarding availability and keys.

Field Centre Phone Number: (03) 6399 3361

Postal Address: PO Box 1072 Launceston 7250

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