



## THE LAUNCESTON NATURALIST

Volume LVI No.4 April/May 2023

**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 : Jeff Campbell, 0432 470 311**  
**Hon. Secretary : Noel Manning, 0458 030 767**  
**Hon. Treasurer : Karen Manning**

**Meetings 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of month, February-December (except Jul & Aug – daytime get-togethers) at Scotch-Oakburn College, Senior Campus, Penquite Rd Newstead**

### **Program:**

#### **June**

**Tuesday 6**

**Guest speaker: Judy Rainbird from QVMAG – *What Mammal Skulls Can Tell Us***

**Thursday 8**

**Short Walk – Heritage Forest Gardens – meet at carpark at Conway Street at 10am**

**Saturday 24**

**Skemps Day – Rock Identification with Peter Warren**

#### **July**

**Tuesday 4**

**Explore the QV Museum, meet at Wellington Street at 10am and bring lunch**

**Thursday 6**

**Short Walk – North Esk ‘Ribbon of Blue’ – meet at carpark at Hoblers Bridge at 10am**

**Saturday 15**

**Field Trip – Swan Point to Supply River – meet in carpark at Swan Point at 10am**

**Saturday 29**

**Skemps Day - National Tree Day – assist Junior Field Nat’s group to plant trees**

#### **August**

**Tuesday 1**

**Planetarium session at QV Museum, meet at Inveresk at 10am and bring lunch**

**Thursday 3**

**Short Walk – Kate Reed Reserve – Meet at carpark under Kings Meadows Connector Rd**

**Saturday 26**

**Skemps Day – Members Day**

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

## Skemps Report - April and May 23

Skemps Working Bees progress with weeds, track clearing and firewood the biggest tasks. Rob and Jeff are still getting useful quantities of firewood from the big tree putting in much work to cut, split, move and stack this before the rot sets in. It has produced some impressive fungi though, especially in the early days.

While Karen and I were clearing the track to the Top Falls near the end of the Forest Trail we found a large eucalyptus had come down blocking the track completely. Knowing that Andrew had offered help one Tuesday Karen texted him that it was a fall we could not easily go over, around or under so we would need to through it with a chainsaw. Although Andrew drove us as close as possible it was still an uphill climb from the paddock then a long way down to the fall with a hard slog back carrying the chainsaw.

Using skills from my chainsaw course I cut my way into the tree, a job made easier as the tree was rotten and hollow on the inside. Rather than cut it in two we made a step into it and used the pieces from the cut to add steps to climb to the cut. It is worth noting that fungi were growing inside the tree including fruiting bodies in the hollow space. Another fall at the high point of the Mini Forest Trail has been cleared and we ended up with about three trailer loads of fire wood. This was hard work as each requires five barrow loads to get the trailer filled once. Many of these rounds split when dropped near the barrow.

The pipes under the road at the creek crossing and the boom gate have both been cleaned out with the one at the entrance being an issue as it is partially blocked with a build-up of silt held back by what looks like an incursion of roots from local trees. The side shed on the west of the building floods during big downpours and we have worked on the drain along the building making it deeper. The overflow from the top pond it blocking up with weeds and will need further work before long.

As well as keeping the Centre and grounds clean Caitlin, Karen and Jeff have been sorting and culling the library resources finding a treasure trove of photographs and slides, one featured John Skemp with a platypus in his arms.

There is still some track clearing to do and others to walk to check for blockages and if you can help please make contact and we will find something for you to do. Noel Manning

## Vale – Kath Clarke and Alison Green

It is with great sadness that we note the passing this year of Kath Clarke in March and Alison Green in May. Kath and Alison were of the few remaining older members we met in 2000 when our family joined the Launceston Field Naturalists Club.

Kath was a regular at meetings, field trips and Skemps days and along with Geraldine and others, ensured the afternoon tea was always nicely set out on Club days at the property. In 2002 they catered for 100+ members and mainland visitors at the luncheon for our 2002 Australian Naturalists Network gathering at Skemps ensuring everyone received a good feed. During her send off in early April, we learnt the energy Kath brought to the Club in her active days was also evident in her dancing and general enjoyment of life, even in her later years. I first met Alison Green through my work when she returned to Launceston and was one of the many familiar faces I saw when attending my first meeting of the Field Naturalists in mid-2000. Alison was also a regular at meetings, Skemps days and field trips adding to our knowledge of what we saw. On a trip to the Tom Gibson Reserve, I remember her teasing a wolf spider from its hole asking Karen to photograph it. **(See image next page taken on 10 October 2010).** Alison also contributed to the Club with talks at general meetings and by writing for the *Launceston Naturalist*, including articles on nature and notes on field trips and guest speakers.

The Saturday Mercury of May 13 had a wonderful tribute to Alison from friends and colleagues at the Tasmanian Museum where she was a zoology curator from 1968 to 1991. It included the quote 'Alison's legacy is evident in the rich collections she curated'.

Although unable to attend meetings in later years, these two supported the Club by their continued membership for some years after their active participation and I know they followed our activities in the Newsletter. Their efforts made our Club great and they will be remembered for their positive contribution to everything we stand for.



Noel Manning

### **General Meeting - Tuesday 4 April – Club Night – Dale Luck – Geomorphology of the Tamar Valley**

Andrew introduced Dale and the third talk in our geomorphology series. While Ian Blayden concentrated on the rocks, Ian Thomas told us of the fauna and flora influence on our earth and Dale spoke of our little corner of the world from an engineer's perspective.

Dale introduced himself by telling us that he was a civil engineer, that his work was on the ground and he wanted to know what was under the ground. His interest in the subject started from fourth year university doing Geology 1 under Sam Carey. He was not interested in the chemistry behind the subject though he wanted to go further than the normal civil engineer because the subject was so fascinating.

He then described geology as the study of why the land is the shape it is and that it is the building block of all that we do as people interested in the natural environment. To Dale it is important to know what is underground, why it is there, what it is and just a general overview of it all. His talk took in from the lower Midlands, across to the other side of the Ben Lomond area and over to the Great Western Tiers and covered what he called the recent period, the last 200 million years of the central north of Tasmania.

The actual talk started with the makeup of the world. We live on the thin outer crust with an average depth of 32 kilometres and beneath that is the semi solid mantle which becomes liquid if it breaks through the crust and this material forms the rocks of the earth.

With volcanoes the magma reaches the surface and forms basalt which cools quickly forming small crystals. In Tasmania many of the magma incursions lacked the force to make it to the surface, were trapped below the surface rock and cooled slower forming dolerite or granite, which allowed larger crystals to form.

Much of Tasmania is made up of Jurassic dolerite from around 180 million years ago and locally we see it as Mounts Arthur and Barrow and Ben Lomond. A map showed the dolerite in our area as lines running north-west to south east, three lines for the mountains just mentioned, and two for the west Tamar and another for the western Tiers.

Dale mentioned the horst and graben forming the Tamar Valley lakes which were infilled with the silt from the uplifted dolerite. If you dig down into the clays of the lower parts of the Launceston area you will eventually get to the original dolerite though this could be hundreds of metres below the surface. The newer soft silt deposits of the Inveresk area are around 20 to 30

metres deep. As well as the obvious outcrops of dolerite forming the mountains there are smaller incursions such as the hills to the west of Kings Meadows, the fissure of Punchbowl Reserve and others out around St Leonards. Launceston sits on a base of dolerite, mostly overlaid with Tertiary clays up to 30 million years old and with the Quaternary soft sediments around Invermay.

Dale asked how many of us had been in a car at the Forster Street and Invermay Road intersection and felt a large truck going past, telling us that this was the soft silt compressing. This area is suitable for roads and light weight ware houses while bigger buildings will need deep footings. Maps and diagrams showed the fault lines still to be found in this area though he pointed out these are thankfully now stable.

The talk moved onto the South Esk with Dale showing the present course on a map and explaining that instead of the 180 degree turn at Evandale it once continued north to join the North Esk at Corra Linn. During the volcanic activity of 30 million years ago the lava from a volcano near Breadalbane flowed south to Cambock Lane at the northern extremity of the residential development in Evandale and immediately blocked the South Esk. The remnants of that volcano have been long worn down to form Cocked Hat Hill to the north of the airport.

Dale told us that during one bad flood a pilot had seen the South Esk topping the hills to the north of Evandale and causing havoc and the Midlands Council considered building a levee. To gain a couple of metres throughout such a large part of the Northern Midlands was impractical and the idea lapsed.

As this new river flowed west and north it joined the Macquarie River at Longford and the Meander River at Hadspen for a total catchment of 9,000 square kilometres. This huge volume of water created the gorge as we know it today which greatly shapes the nature of Launceston and surrounds.

During question time Dale gave an explanation of landslip stating that dry clay is usually stable while the wet is unstable. He said that an old engineer - chemist told Dale that water does to dry clay what it does to good whisky, it ruins it. The removal of the overlay of gravel and the removal of trees increases the moisture content of the clay and causes the problem. The gravel seals the clays from water while trees remove water and the root system forms a mechanical interlock on the face of the slope. The opposite happened in the Beaconsfield area where the removal of large quantities of water for the mine caused damage to the land.

Dale told us that the high clay content gravels are excellent for unsealed roads while sealing these trapped the moisture causing the rocks to break down and the road to quickly deteriorate. His last comment was in relation to the silt in the upper Tamar, stating that silt has been flowing in for thousands of years though probably worse now due to logging. Also, those clay particles of less than two microns will never sink and if you could mix clay in a glass of water it would not clear as the particles would remain in suspension. When these suspended particles reach Legana the salt water may cause some to flocculate, to combine with other particles to become heavy enough to sink though the incoming tide would simply bring these back upstream.

I thanked Dale on behalf of the members and led the acclamation.

Noel Manning

## **Field Trip – Thursday 6 April – Tamar Island Wetlands**

Four members met at the Wetlands Centre on this mild autumn day to note the birds and anything else of interest. After a chat with Amber and the two volunteers in attendance we noted the birds in the aerial lagoon with 14 royal spoonbills the stand out among the other species, mainly ducks.

We headed off along the board walk seeing many purple swamphens, including some on the wing and as we headed through the Phragmites to Tamar Island we stopped on each bridge to note the birds. With the incoming tide well below its maximum a small island was visible to the south of the third bridge with many birds resting on it or feeding in the water nearby. Amongst the many ducks and lapwings there were a few silver gulls, around 10 little black cormorants, one little pied cormorant and a pied oystercatcher. We also noted what appeared to be a Fluker Post set onto the south eastern side of this bridge which was yet to have its QR code.



At the bridge to the jetty we were told there was an eagle on a post to the north and upon closer inspection, through binoculars, we decided it was probably a juvenile sea eagle. Another eagle was on the wing and by the time we moved closer to the post this bird had flown off and we watched two in the air for some minutes, although we were not sure that the resting bird was one of them.

On our return, at the far end of the last board walk, Tina spotted a copperhead snake which stayed around long enough for all to see and a photo to be taken before disappearing into the long grass. Back near the Centre an eagle flew overhead.



With the weather appearing to close in we said our farewells and headed home after two hours in this impressive reserve and after noting a wide variety of birds.  
Noel Manning

#### Images Tom McGlynn

**Birds:** - Australian Pelican (3), Australian Shelduck, Black Swan, Black-fronted Dotterel, Blue Wren, Chestnut Teal, Forest Raven, Grey fantail, Grey Teal, Little Black

Cormorant (10), Little Pied Cormorant, Masked Lapwing, Tasmanian Native-hen, Pied Oystercatcher, Purple Swamphen, Royal Spoonbill (14), Silver Gull, Wedge-tailed Eagle (2), Welcome Swallow, White-faced Heron **Fauna:** - Gambusia, Copperhead snake, Cricket, Small lizard

### April 29 – Skemps Day – Macroinvertebrate monitoring on Skemps Creek

Today we undertook our autumn macroinvertebrate monitoring on Skemps Creek to check the health of the water. We were joined by members of our junior group and their parents, who walked down to the site where the sample was being collected from a riffle on the Creek near the Top Falls. All eyes were on Noel as they watched the process of sweeping the creek with the net to obtain as many critters as possible, which included from under overhangs and off the bottoms of rocks.



Walking back to the Centre we watched on, as a Wedge-tailed Eagle flying very low along the paddock, was being harassed by Forest Ravens. Back at the Centre the children were very enthused to start the sorting process even though the water sample was not quite settled. However, one keen eyed junior, spotted a Water Penny very quickly and later a couple of small snails were found.



The list of macroinvertebrate for today were, Water Penny (Coleoptera), Freshwater snails (Gastropoda), Chironomid larva (Diptera), Whirligig Beetles (Gyrindae), Mayfly nymphs (Ephemeroptera), Segmented worms (Oligochaeta), Stoneflies (Plecoptera) and Cased caddis (Trichoptera).

With 8 taxa, our signal 2 score was 5.6. The interpretation of this is “good quality, little or no environmental degradation” and our water quality was therefore “excellent”.

A big thank you to our junior group and parents for their assistance today and to Claire for taking the photos through the microscope.

Karen Manning

## May 2 – John Skemp Memorial Lecture – Guest Speaker Tabatha Badger – Florence Perrin (1884-1952) Wilderness to Seaweed



**Florence Perrin, the Examiner, September 1936 (CC BY-SA 3.0)**

Helen introduced Tabatha Badger and her talk on the little known and little recognized field naturalist Florence Perrin. During the introduction Tabatha explained that she was inspired to research Perrin when she realised that so little could be found when Googling such a pioneering wilderness photographer.

Tabatha started by saying that it was fortuitous to be presenting on Perrin at this venue as she had attended the Launceston Ladies Methodist College, now incorporated into Scotch Oakburn College, and that she was a founding member of the Launceston Field

Naturalists. She also told us that Perrin led a full and eclectic life with many interests too numerous to cover in a short presentation so she would stick to those of interest to our Club.

Tabatha went on to explain that she would divide the talk into four segments; the formative years, including the relationship between her grandfather Thomas W Monds and James 'Philosopher' Smith and how that helped her achieve what she did, secondly her wilderness explorations around Cradle Mountain and Lake St Clair between 1914 and the late 1930s and the influence her discoveries had on the National Park there, thirdly her scientific studies, predominantly into orchids and seaweeds and finally how she shared her discoveries through lectures and that this all had an impact on Tasmania.

Tabatha posed the question could there be two further contrasting elements of the natural world that bears one's name than a specimen of Australian seaweed and an ancient dolerite massive in Tasmania's wilderness heritage area connected by the Forth River. The Forth has its origins in the subalpine areas of Perrins Bluff then flows 95 kilometres NE to Bass Strait where you can find the green algae, *Codium perrinae*. The Forth had a strong influence on Perrin through her grandfather TW Monds who went timber getting with his widowed mother and two siblings up the Forth. At the time the then 9yo Thomas was not impressed with the Tasmanian wilderness stating, *"I always had the idea that I was not destined to remain as I was in the bush"*. He eventually moved and while working along the Don River he was seen by a mill owner from the Tamar who offered him a millwright apprenticeship. Against his mother's wishes he took up the apprenticeship where he met another apprentice, James Smith. They attended school together and shared an interest in poetry, literature and the natural environment, with Smith also having an interest in geology.

We were shown a picture of a familiar building at Carrick which was Monds successful mill and he had a shop front alongside what is now Boag's Brewery. The ill-disciplined and fiery tempered Smith preferred the Tasmanian bush and founded the tin venture at Mount Bishop near Waratah. With his love of literature and the ability to stay in the bush for weeks prospecting with minimal supplies he acquired the mythical title of James Philosopher Smith.

On the 16 February 1884 Florence Dawson was born to the second daughter of Monds. Her father died when she was only two and she moved with her mother and recently born brother William to the Monds' mill with her grandfather and young uncle Charlie acting as father figures who instilled the idea of the well-off giving back to the community.

At 13 Florence moved with her family and grandfather to Launceston attending school there and in her final year in 1901 received a university certificate for junior science research, the start of her scientific journey.

Over summer many of the business people of Launceston spent time at Low Head shacks, made possible by their money, the time for holidays and often motor vehicles, which were the easiest way to access Low Head. It was rumored here that Florence met George Perrin and they were married in 1907 when she was 23 and he was 26 and had two daughters in 1908 and 1911. With their shared interest in botany their garden quickly developed with some of it surviving at their home at 115 High Street and in 1910 they were pivotal in founding the Launceston Horticultural Society.

Florence purchased property at Low Head for her brother who died while away in Africa. She kept this land and she and George added to it so that eventually they basically owned the entire peninsular which became known as the Perrin Farm Precinct. Some of this land was donated back to the community, and shared it with family and local business friends, Fred Smithies, Stephen Spurling (II and III), William Twelvetrees (the government surveyor), Jack Branagan, Reg Hall, HJ King and the different generations of the Smith family. Again with financial freedom and the ability to have time off work these people could indulge their love of exploration and curiosity of Tasmania's natural world.

Tabatha acknowledged that George was also active in exploration with Florence supporting him and George supporting her in her later studies. It was George in 1909 who first went into the wilderness of the upper reaches of the Forth River and Barn Bluff with Stephen Spurling, photographing in the Murchison Valley and they checked out the Barn Bluff coal mine. In 1913 he took horses up the Mersey River for the first time with guide Paddy Hartnett and with Spurling taking the first film of the area. A recently discovered manuscript, creatively titled 'The adventures of Paddy's gang', had the first record of a wilderness trip by George and Florence in 1914/15 as part of a large group heading for Lake St Clair. The group's women were likely the first females, post colonization, to climb Mount Ida, Mount Gould and Castle Mountain. Although women of the time wore long skirts even in difficult terrain Florence could button hers up and had long pants underneath. George noted that he and Florence made annual summer trips to this region from 1914 to 1921.

A manuscript by Florence related to their 1920 trip to Perrins Bluff was the first uncovered by her and demonstrated her botanical interests, observations of the area and an insight into her personality. Prior to that most writings are attributed to George and with many it is unclear who the author was. It was their first trip up the Forth River to the Mount Oakleigh Wolfram Mine founded by Paddy Hartnett in 1916 and subsequently rumored to be sold for a bottle of whiskey. Florence made some extraordinary observations including a tall stand of King Billy pines at Frog Flats and curiously she suggested these would be suitable for exploitation rather than conservation. On this trip they had intended to summit a lot of the peaks in the area though the weather was horrific and there was a large bushfire creating smoke and obscuring the views. They did the summit of what Hartnett would name Perrins Bluff in honour of their exploration of the area.

Tabatha posed the question 'Were the Perrins pioneering explorers or tourists?' They were paying for a service, assisted by horses and camp was set for them. She suggested they were simultaneously the first tourists and the last pioneering explorers by naming some of the geographical features including Lakes Jean and Eileen, named after their daughters, Hartnett Falls and Creek and Perrins Bluff. While the Perrin idea of floating King Billy pines down the Forth was impractical, they did use their influence to help stop the proposed road to the west coast going up the Forth, from Frog Flats verging near Barn Bluff and through Murchison. While the details are unknown Tabatha told us of the wonderful natural values of the area with a staple of classic endemic Tasmanian species, ancient Pencil Pines and phenomenal dense stands of fagus.

Trips to the Cradle Valley, first by George and later by Florence leading many female only excursions, convinced them to join the efforts to have the area declared a scenic reserve. As the area was only easily accessible in the summer Florence came up with the idea to introduce snow sports to mitigate the seasonality of the area and in 1929 organised a trip with Smithies, Branagan and her family to meet with Weindorfer. Having found areas to ski and enjoying a good season that year they returned to Launceston and founded the Tasmanian Alpine Club. Unfortunately there followed years with little snow and the Club almost failed.

Gustav Weindorfer died without a will leaving the King Billy forests around his Waldheim Chalet open to logging. The Perrins and friends out bid the forest industry to save this area which was later added to what would become a national park and they also financed the first ranger to look after the property.

When not in the mountains Florence was ardently studying and by the mid-1920s had established herself as a well-known collector of botanical specimens and supplying seeds to various British consulates around the world. While her field work with orchids and seaweeds is well documented she also studied ferns including in tropical northern Queensland. She sketched the ferns, made notes and sent them to George with the Mercury noting in 1935 that she had an impressive collection with many rare ferns from all parts of Australia. During the 1940s she

presented many lectures on ferns, including to the Royal Society, but mainly the Country Women's Association (CWA).

Her two most well documented interests were orchids and seaweeds both to be readily found at Low Head. She started with orchids in 1920 by which time she was a multi-award winning horticulturist celebrated for her home garden specializing in rhododendrons, azaleas and wisteria. In Tabatha's words '...but nothing quite caught her attention like dainty orchids'.

In the mid 1920's she met the new minister Reverend H.M.R. Rupp at St Aiden's, the church her family attended and where George was the warden for over 40 years. Rev Rupp had a great interest in botany and was considered an authority on orchids and his family was invited to spend summers at Low Head with the Perrins. With her keen mind Florence made an excellent research assistant and it was at the Perrin Farm Precinct the pair recorded early observations of four rare and endangered species. By the early 1930s Florence had collected and documented 90 of the 98 species then known in Tasmania making a black and white sketch and a water colour painting rather than pressing the flower. It is surmised that bush walking friends may have assisted with the collection and she added several orchids from Lord Howe Island to the collection and in 1940 she discovered a new species of sun orchid at Low Head, *Thelymitra grandiflora* (now *aristata*).

The Tamar was considered, pre the 1955 Trevallyn Dam, the richest source of seaweed collecting in Australia with collecting and research started in 1855 with Prof Harvey the only extensively published authority on seaweeds until Perrin and Arthur Lucas. The Perrin method for preserving a seaweed specimen was to put it on special mounting paper, soak it daily in fresh water for 14 days then press it between newspaper and cloth. Collecting seaweed was promoted by Queen Elizabeth as a popular pastime. By 1935 collecting from just south of Hobart, right up the east coast and along the NW as far as Stanley, Florence had the largest collection of Australian seaweed in existence and was the only Tasmanian researcher in the field.

In 1920 Prof Arthur Lucas came to work in the mathematics department of the University of Tasmania though he had been researching seaweed since 1912. He left Tasmania after two years returning each summer for three months following storms up the coast with Florence. With funding in 1931 from the Australian Science Council, Lucas and Perrin went to Low Island, Queensland, to study seaweed mounting over 200 species, 60 of which had not been documented before. The following year they received another grant to return this time studying the industrial potential of seaweed, including as a bonding agent. On the 10 June 1936 Lucas died having caught a chill while chasing storms around Warrnambool, Victoria, coincidentally the day his book on green and brown seaweed was published. Florence continued the research and in 1947 successfully published the second book on red seaweed.

Florence mentored many students from across the world who stayed with her at Launceston and Low Head and collected specimens. In later years, as the study of seaweed became popular and more formalised, she was heavily criticized for her collection and research for not being a real scientist just a collector who simply duplicated the work done by Prof Harvey. Today she, with Lucas, and Harvey are the most quoted and referenced researchers on seaweed there is in Australia.

As the work she was doing was unique she shared her knowledge through lectures to Rotary, the 50,000 Society and she was the first female invited to present a scientific lecture at the northern branch of the Royal Society. The CWA also provided a platform for her to speak as an organization not dominated by men. It was a 1949 meeting of the northern branch of the Royal Society that she and others decided to found the Launceston Field Naturalists Club. The Club became very active making recommendations for conservation around the whole of the state. Florence was heavily involved in the efforts to save areas newly added to the Mount Field National Park from logging by Australian Newspaper Paper Mill suggesting that logging would

increase the level of wildfires. Another argument was that there were better pulp alternatives such as the faster growing bamboo and seaweed.

Florence also suggested numerous wild flower reserves around Launceston to go with urban sprawl. Notley Fern Gorge and the Mount Barrow Reserve came about from those who followed her ideas.

By 1949 she was 65, on at least 14 committees, over worked and her health was suffering. When she passed away in 1952 she donated all her seaweed and orchid specimens to the Queen Victoria Museum, as promised though, these have been dispersed to the Australian Herbarium, the Royal Society and Botanical Gardens Hobart.

Today her physical legacy includes 6,330 preserved specimens, Perrins Bluff is protected in the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area and there is Perrins Drive at Low Head. Tabatha wonders about her philosophical and value legacy of preserving nature for its own sake. A critical part of the Perrin farm Precinct a biodiversity corridor with its threatened orchids found in the 1920s and a healthy Tasmanian devil found in 2022 has been subdivided into land for shacks. Her argument that old growth forest clearing would promote wild fires 80 years ago is being used by conservationists today. The use of kelp for carbon capture and seaweeds for industrial uses promoted these days as revolutionary was written in papers by Perrin and Lucas in 1932. New wilderness walks are proposed for areas of delicate sub-alpine vegetation using the Philosopher (Smith) name for an area he did not prospect in. And a wilderness hut originally built by Reg Hall for family and friends is leased to private developers for \$20 per week. When Gustav Weindorfer declared that Cradle Mountain should be made a national park was he really suggesting infinite growth. Although the road to Cradle Mountain was necessary to facilitate travel there, by the 1970 Fred Smithies and George Perrin said they regretted that decision as the area had become little more than a scenic picnic place dominated by cars.

Tabatha suggested that the legacy of Florence Perrin and her friends persists today in the organisations devoted to the preservation of nature. They had such foresight and vision into the potential of Tasmania and in many ways her story is not over yet as everything she stood for is ongoing.

Roy gave the thanks on behalf of the members and led the acclamation. Noel Manning

## May 4 – Monthly Walk – Windsor Precinct

Six members met at the far carpark of the Windsor Community Precinct for a look at the various gardens managed by the West Tamar Council and designed by an Australian Plant Society honorary member, Tony Roberts. While plants were our focus it was the birds that first caught our attention with the two large grey animals on the soccer oval turning out to be Cape Barren Geese.

With the large number and variety to be seen, birds soon became a major interest as you can see from the list below. We first walked the well-made roads as near to the Tamar as the Phragmites allowed taking two dead ends with the second ending at a bird hide with the estuary 100 metres or so away. Across the mud flats to the water's edge the swans, native geese and Eurasian Coots dominated. Tom found a dead juvenile pacific gull and we were surprised at the large wing span and it was in excellent condition for a few photos. There was a seat in front of the hide which we mainly used as a platform to see over the





Phragmites though I did note that with seating for three and one facing backward it suggested a love seat for a ménage a trois.

Having finished the Tamar walk we moved into more open areas with small clumps of trees, shrubs and grasses, mostly sitting on mounds above the grasses areas, with some fungi in the neatly cut lawns. We were not sure the plants were all Tasmanian natives though knowing the designer these probably were. Going past the community garden we marvelled at the mural behind the work shed, maybe six large panels of native flora and fauna in typical Tasmanian settings. We spent some time identifying what we could, a sort of where's the frog, echidna, quoll etc. rather than Wally. I was disappointed not to see a snake or the artist's signature.

Next our walk took us into a playing field edged by gardens of native trees and shrubs and we soon separated finally ending up in the cafe. After drinks and treats we said our goodbyes agreeing that these Thursday walks were an excellent addition to our program and wondering how we could involve more members.

Noel Manning

**Article images Karen Manning**

**Bird List:** - Native hens, Pacific gulls, Lapwing, Galah, Black Swans, Fairy wrens, Butcherbirds, Eurasian Coots, Forest ravens, Starlings, Cape Barren Geese

## **May 11 – Bell Buoy Beach – Combing the beach wash-up**

Six members enjoyed a morning stroll along the beach after exploring the rocky headland for seaweed and other beach critters. There were the usual seaweeds, shells, cuttlefish 'bone', barnacles, starfish and sea urchins were found.

There had not been the ocean storm that we were hoping for so there was no beach wash-up for us to look through for interesting treasures from the ocean.

The day was overcast to start but not cold. As the morning progressed the sun came out and the birds headed for the sand looking for sand worms. We could see their trails in the wet sand and managed to catch one.

Helen spotted a slim peninsular of columnar basalt extending out into Bass Strait further down the beach, so we took a closer look, finding groups of tiny chitons and sea lice. Walking back we contemplated how the wave power sorted the pebble size on the shingle sections of the beach and a resident pair of black headed dotterel were also a delight to observe.

Roy led a side excursion behind the beach and identified the plants there and a few more were added from our walk along the sand dunes.

Karen Manning

**Birds:** Blue Wrens, Black headed dotterel, Silver Gulls, Pacific Gull juvenile, pied cormorants on headland x20+



**Shells:** *Austrocochlea concamerata*, wavy top shell, *Austrocochlea constricta*, ribbed top shell, *Limnoperna pulex*, little black horse mussels clusters in rock crevices (image below), *Nerita melanotragus*, black nerites, and limpets *Montfortula rugosa* and *Siphonaria diemenensis*; Polychaete tubes

**Other:** *Mictyris longicarpus*, soldier crab, 5 armed Seastar orange with brown spots (image below), *Ischnochiton* sp., chiton; *Sypharochiton pelliserpentis*,

serpent head chiton; Limpets, black with white stripes, very small; Sand worm; *Celleporaria cristata*, lace coral; Sea Sponges; Cuttlebone; ? Sea louse (image below); *Mictyris platycheles*, soldier crab (image below); *Sypharochiton pelliserpentis*, serpent head chiton. **Spider:** Leaf-curling spider **Seaweeds:** *Corallina officinalis*, pink and white species (in image above); *Cystophora moniliformis*; *Caulocystis uvifera*; *Ecklonia* sp., *Zonaria spiralis*; *Posidonia Australis*, seagrass; *Posidonia* seagrass balls.



**Plants:**

thanks to Roy for the following list

*Acacia longifolia*, coastal wattle; *Acaena novae-zelandiae*, common buzzy; *Banksia marginata*, silver banksia; *Bursaria spinosa*, prickly box; *Ficinia nodosa*, knobby club-rush; *Lepidosperma gladiatum*, coastal sword-sedge; *Leucopogon parvifolius*, coastal beardheath; *Monotoca elliptica*, tree broomheath;

*Muehlenbeckia adpressa*, climbing lignum; *Myoporum insulare*, common boobialla; *Ozothamnus turbinatus*, coastal everlasting; *Pteridium esculentum*, bracken fern; *Rhagodia candolleana* subsp. *candolleana*, coastal saltbush; *Tetragonia implexicoma*, bower spinach; *Threlkeldia diffusa*, coast bonefruit



Article images Karen Manning

## May 27 – Skemps Day – Fungi Hunt on the property

We were joined today by Rod and three members of the junior group, who were very keen to look for fungus. We proceeded up the driveway and went into the forest on the left hand side and walked along the Little Forest Track. The children scouted around the area and started pointing out their finds, including small clusters of seeds on the ground, most likely regurgitated by birds. The fungus growing were small and few, except for the brick caps which were growing in their large clusters.

From the few species we saw today and the dryness of the area, there had probably been insufficient moisture for the species to obtain nutrients from the dead organic matter off which they grow.

Continuing along the track we came



across a large tree that had come down across the track, which we were able to climb over. We didn't find any further species before heading back to the Centre.

Later the children were shown the Fungiflip to see the variations of fungi, pointing out the differing cap shapes, cap margins, stem shapes, and variations in gills and how they connect to the stem.

Karen Manning



*Clavaria amoena*, coral; *Fistulina hepatica*, beef steak fungus (image above left); *Heterotextus peziziformis*, golden jelly-bells; *Hemenochaete* 'rusty'; *Hypholoma sublateritium*, brick caps; *Leotia lubrica*, jelly baby; *Mycena* sp. (image above right)

## Additional Information

### Club Outings:

- Are held during a weekend following the General Meeting. Until further notice, members should make their own travel arrangement to participate, contact the Program Coordinator if you require further details or wish to share a lift.
- Provide your own food and drinks for the outing and wear/take clothing/footwear suitable for all weather types.
- The program is subject to alternation at short notice. Notification of changes to field trips will be advised at the General Meeting prior to the event. Please contact the Program Coordinator to confirm details if you are unable to attend the meeting.

**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. Please contact our Booking Officer, Andrew Smith [bookings@lfnc.org.au](mailto:bookings@lfnc.org.au) or by phone on 0402 893 378 regarding availability and keys.

**Field Centre Phone Number:** (03) 6399 3361

**Postal Address:** 23 Skemps Road, Myrtle Bank 7259

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