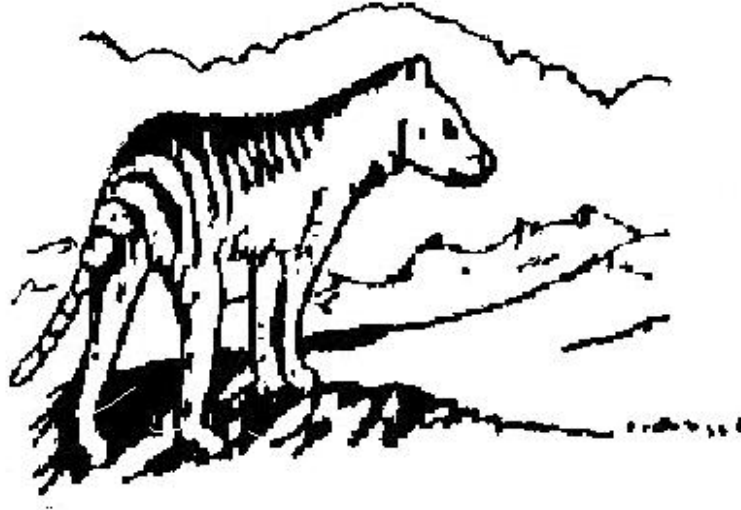


THE LAUNCESTON NATURALIST

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 XLIII No 2

December 2009/January 2010

- 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
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- 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
- Librarian** : Ms T McGlynn
- Committee** : G Cameron, L Mockridge, A Pegler, J Simmons,
M Simmons, R Skabo

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

Subscriptions: Year 2009-2010 \$25 Single, \$30 Family, \$2.50 Junior, \$35 Associate. Due and payable on or before 2 February 2010

PROGRAM

FEBRUARY

- Tuesday 2 **Members Night**
- Sunday 7 **Skemp Day / Seed collection**

MARCH

- Tuesday 2 **Speaker : To be confirmed**
- Sunday 7 **Field Trip : To be confirmed**
- Monday 15 **Social dinner : Duke of Wellington Tavern 6 pm**
- Saturday 20 **Skemp Day**

APRIL

- Tuesday 6 **Speaker : Peter Warren *Telescopes and their uses***
- Saturday 17 **Skemp Day / Seed collecting during the day and
viewing the night sky in the evening**
- Sunday 18 **Skemp Day / Water Monitoring**

**Half year program should be available shortly at
<http://www.lfnc.org.au/meetings.htm>
Hard copies will be made available once speakers have been confirmed**

COMMITTEE/GENERAL MEETING DECEMBER

Skemp Report : A large bough has fallen out of the pine tree. Gunns will be using the road soon when they harvest a plantation beyond Skemps. As they use the road, they are also responsible for the safety of users. John Simmons has contacted them and their representative will visit the property to inspect the tree. The Club will warn other road users and put a barrier up to restrict access under the tree. John gave an update on repairs to the barn and cutting and splitting of timber near the barn.

Puggle : Peter Ralph passed around an object he had found near the east coast of Flinders Island. It was semi-fossilised whale bone. John Elliott identified it as bone.

Sightings : Peter Warren had seen black cockatoos at St Leonards. Elizabeth had shared her breakfast with seven magpies. Peter Ralph had heard magpies imitating children and cars. Maureen Johnstone reported Green and Gold Frogs at Hawley and Alison Green had also seen some at Tamar Island. Elizabeth Montgomery thought that the native trees were flowering earlier this year. Noel Manning had seen a black cockatoo trying to get something from a pine cone on the footpath beside High St. John Elliott reported that a swift parrot had been recorded in the Punchbowl reserve during acoustic bird monitoring.

Library Report : The latest *Tasmanian Naturalist* published by the Tasmanian Field Naturalists Club includes an article by Roy Skabo 'Resurrecting *Hibbertia rufa* (brown guineaflower)'. A copy of this journal is held in the Skemp Library. The Club will purchase a copy of Marion Simmons book *Wattles of Tasmania*.

General :

Supper co-ordinator : A volunteer is required to organise the supper roster for the monthly Tuesday meetings. This is not a hard task, the roster is usually passed around for members to nominate when they will be available to help at the first meeting of the year. The co-ordinator then contacts the rostered person prior to their night to remind them of their commitment. Please contact a Committee Member if you would be prepared to undertake this role.

Constitution : A sub-committee was appointed to look at rewording our constitution during the holiday break and present a proposed final draft to the Committee to discuss in the New Year.

MARION SIMMONS

Congratulations to Marion on the publication of her new book *Wattles of Tasmania* released late in 2009. Marion is regarded as Australia's leading authority on acacias and has also written *Acacias of Australia* a two volume set and *Growing Acacias*.

Marion's new book features 20 species of wattle that are native to Tasmania, and includes four introduced wattles. Each plant is described and illustrations are provided showing foliage, flowers and seed pods. Marion also provides information on growing wattles from seed or cuttings.

Wattles of Tasmania is available at bookstores for \$19.95.

GENERAL MEETING December - Member presentations

Karen Manning provided images of fungi, ferns and an Engaeus tower taken at Skemps and images taken during October's field trip to the East Coast where members visited Bluff River Gorge, Wielgata Forest Reserve and the Bushland Native Garden. Prue Wright's images were of the birds and animals seen during her trip to the Galapagos Islands. John Elliott's images were from his visit to the Territory Wildlife Park near Darwin. Peter Ralph showed photomicrographs of Tasmanian rocks and minerals from the West Coast and Brighton quarry, and images of flora from the West Coast. Peter also showed an image of a parasitic growth which was on a stand of *Allocasuarina* at Southport. Noel Manning provided short movies taken of a sea lion on the beach front of Winifred Curtis Reserve and members at Frog Lagoon, Bridport. John Simmons showed members a map of the Skemp property and discussed the proposed purchase of nearby land.

CHRISTMAS BREAK-UP AT SKEMPS – 5 December 2009

About thirty members attended the annual function although numbers were down on previous years. It was a lovely day and most present enjoyed taking different walks during the day. We had hoped to spot a platypus in the pool near Bob's Bog but no luck! Members also inspected the re-built lean-to at the end of the barn that had been badly damaged by the wind. The new track to the Bottom Falls from Fern Gully was checked out.

This year it was decided to change the format of the day and that we would not have 'secret Santa' or the small presents as we have done for a number of years. At lunch time the majority cooked a barbecue. John and Anne Grey, friends of the late John Skemp, joined us for lunch and later in the afternoon entertained members with anecdotes and memories of their visits with John.

The Greys donated books to the Club that had been given to John Grey by John Skemp who had invited him to select any books he would like from his library. They also brought along an early painting by John Skemp of Mt Arthur to show members and allowed the Club to photograph it (a copy is now held at the property)

More walks followed and later we enjoyed a delicious afternoon tea provided by those present with the tables decorated in the Christmas spirit. Marion Simmons

Errors in Newsletter and Club History

Apologies for the following errors : -

Newsletter October/November 2009 : paragraph 7 of the article on Douglas Kershaw's talk *Dung Beetles in Australia* by Alison Green, it refers to 'dung mite balls', this should read 'dung into balls'.

Club history : reference is made to Dr Winifred Curtis (2nd last page) continuing as Patron 'until her death in 2005 in her 104th year', this should read '101st year'. In the Conclusion on the last page it refers to 'mediation', this should read 'meditation'.

NORTHERN CHILDREN'S NETWORK GROUP AT SKEMPS - 15 January 2010

On Friday January 15 a few of our members hosted a group of 50 primary school age children from a Launceston vacation care centre, the Northern Children's Network

(NCN). The visit resulted from the Field Day we held at Skemps last October, when we hosted about 30 children and their parents and teachers as part of our 60th anniversary celebrations. One of the participants on that occasion enjoyed it so much that she recommended a visit by the NCN.

The group, having arrived by bus, were soon split into groups and engaged in the activities our members had prepared for them.

John Elliott and Alison Green took one group down to the pond, where John demonstrated the sampling technique for macroinvertebrates and then, like a modern day Pied Piper, he led them back to the Field Centre where they were soon absorbed in sorting out all the creatures brought back from the deep.

Meanwhile another Piper, Noel Manning, took another column of children on a walk during which he showed them, amongst other wonders, the burrowing crayfish tunnel entrances. The group was also lucky enough to meet up with an echidna.

The third group were amused and educated by Prue Wright and her teacher-daughter Jo who had done an immense amount of preparation for their activity. The children collected specimens of plants, arthropods and anything else that caught their sharp eyes and brought them back for examination and discussion. A highlight of this activity was Prue's Christmas present, a microscope which connected to her laptop computer on which the object of interest could be shown at up to 200x magnification, in full colour and detail. Photos or videos of the object could be produced instantaneously. (Those members present were so impressed by this piece of technology that I suspect it won't be long before there is a motion to buy one for LFNC.)

At the end of the day each child was given a package of information about the LFNC and Skemps in the hope that one or more of them might encourage their families to consider joining us or at least hire our facility.

They were a delightful bunch of children, well behaved and fascinated by what they saw at our wonderful property.

Roy Skabo

BEN LOMOND FIELD TRIP

On 23 and 24 January, several of us took advantage of Peter Warren's offer of a weekend at a Ben Lomond ski lodge. Noel and Karen Manning, Tom Treløgen, John Elliott, Maureen Johnson and Irmgard Rosenfeldt stayed overnight. Roy Skabo was there on Saturday but fled home before nightfall, for fear of having to share the bunkroom with snorers.

A family of four who had attended the Schools Field Day at Skemps in October and nine members of the north-west coast Plant Society also arrived at the ski lodge, although many of them only stayed for the day.

Before lunch, most of us (except Tom, who hadn't arrived yet, not all that unusual) walked from the ski village to Hamilton Crag, trying to identify the alpine flowers and admiring the wonderful view when we got there.

After lunch, we split into several groups to climb Legges Tor. Roy and the family group got under way very smartly as usual. Tom had arrived by then. Some crossed wires about setting out, unpacking Tom's car and having lunch meant that Irmgard and Maureen set out looking for the rest of us while Tom, Karen and I dithered inside.

Nevertheless, everyone climbed the second-highest peak in Tasmania, even if it is not much more than the hill behind the ski village. Karen, Tom and I might have set out last

but our walk took us to the top of the tor, where Tom finally had lunch. Then down the other side to the old ski village, across the Plains of Heaven and the Land of Little Sticks, part way to Carr Villa, then back again, returning to the ski village via the road. We noted signs telling us that skating on the sewerage ponds was not recommended.

Dinner, then off to bed in the bunk room. No-one snored.

Next morning was foggy. Breakfast was enlivened when the north-west coasters fried their bacon till it was crisp, black and smoking. Not a good idea when there is a smoke alarm up in a cathedral ceiling.

Karen and Noel were sidelined by injuries. We others were puzzled by the mist. Being Ben Lomond, it could clear in the next 10 minutes or stay clagged in all day. Gradually it lifted. Maureen and Irmgard went down to Carr Villa to walk back up from there. Tom and I decided to take a chance and follow the snow-poles of the cross-country ski trail along Meadow Vale towards Little Hell. Gradually the mist burnt off. By the time we got to Little Hell, it was a glorious day. We could see Stacks Bluff and the lakes that are the source of the Nile River.

Then back to the lodge, lunch, helping Peter clean up and home again. Thank you Peter for a great weekend. John Elliott

John compiled the following list of flora and fauna seen during the weekend

Plants

Baeckea gunniana (alpine heathmyrtle), *Bellenden Montana* (mountain rocket), *Leptospermum rupestre* (mountain teatree), *Orites revolutus* (revolute orites), *Richea scoparia* (scoparia), *Richea sprengelioides* (rigid candlestick), *Drosera arcturi* (alpine sundew), *Euphrasia collina ssp diemenica* (plain tufted-eyebright), *Gentianella diemenensis ssp plantaginea* (Ben Lomond gentian), *Astelia alpine var alpina* (pineapple grass), *Brachyscome spathulata ssp glabra* (blue daisy), *Leptorhynchos squamatus ssp alpines* (billy buttons), *Orites acicularis* (yellow orites), *Tasmannia lanceolata* (mountain pepper), *Ozothamnus spp* (everlastingbush), *Wahlenbergia spp* (bluebell), *Geranium potentilloides* (mountain cranesbill), *Coprosma nitida* (mountain currant), *Oreomyrrhis spp* (caraway), *Celmisia saxifrage* (small snowdaisy), Mullein, *Senecio leptocarpus* (western groundsel), *Senecio pectinatus* (yellow alpine groundsel), *Senecio gunnii* (mountain fireweed), *Olearia spp* (two species), *Acaena novae-zelandiae* (buzzy), *Chionohebe spp* (Ben Lomond cushionplant), *Pentachondra pumila* (carpet frillyheath)

Birds

Strepera fuliginosa (Black Currawong), *Hirundo neoxena* (Welcome Swallow), *Anthus novaeseelandiae* (Richard's Pipit), *Phylidonyris pyrrhoptera* (Crescent Honey-eater), *Aquila audax fleayii* (Tasmanian Wedgetail Eagle)

Mammals

Macropus rufogriseus (Bennett's Wallaby)

CONSTITUTION

Your committee is in the process of reviewing the Club's constitution. Members are invited to contribute to the final draft of our new constitution which will go to the vote midway through this year at a special general meeting. With this newsletter are copies of the original constitution, the present draft of the new constitution and a summary of the changes with an explanation of the reason for these changes.

The constitution is an important document for our Club. We have not taken on the onerous and lengthy task of attempting to update it lightly. I therefore urge you to take the time to read all the documentation, think about what we are proposing and let us know if you disagree with some aspect of the change or if you have other suggestions about the update. Let's get it right.

Please forward your written comments, suggestions and concerns about the proposed new constitution to the committee by the March general meeting to allow the Committee time to discuss any changes.

Noel J Manning

CLUB SOCIAL DINNER - 15 March 2010

The Club dinner will be held at the Duke of Wellington Tavern (247 Wellington Street Launceston) on Monday 15 March at 6.00 pm. There is a general menu which should cater for all tastes and a pizza menu for pizza lovers. Entrees from \$4.50, mains from \$16.00, pizza from \$11.50 and desserts are also available.

Access to the venue is from Wellington Street only, drive in at the bottle shop entrance and continue through to the parking at the rear. The tavern can be entered from the carpark.

RSVP to Karen Manning on 6344 2277 or email family_manning@yahoo.com.au before 12 March please.

Thank you to members who answered my call for venue suggestions for this social evening.

FEDERATION WEEKEND - May 22 & 23 at Blue Tier

The Central North Field Naturalists (CNFN) are hosting the next Federation of Field Naturalists weekend in May. This will be combined with a Fungimap expedition to the Blue Tier. Put these dates in your diary, further information will be advised as received.

CNFN now have a website <http://www.disjunctnaturalists.com/>

AUSTRALIAN PLANT SOCIETY MEETINGS

LFNC members are welcome to attend APS meetings held on the third Tuesday of the month, at Max Fry Hall, Gorge Road Trevallyn at 7.30 pm. The dates for the next two meetings are 16 February and 16 March, as yet no further details on their program.

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