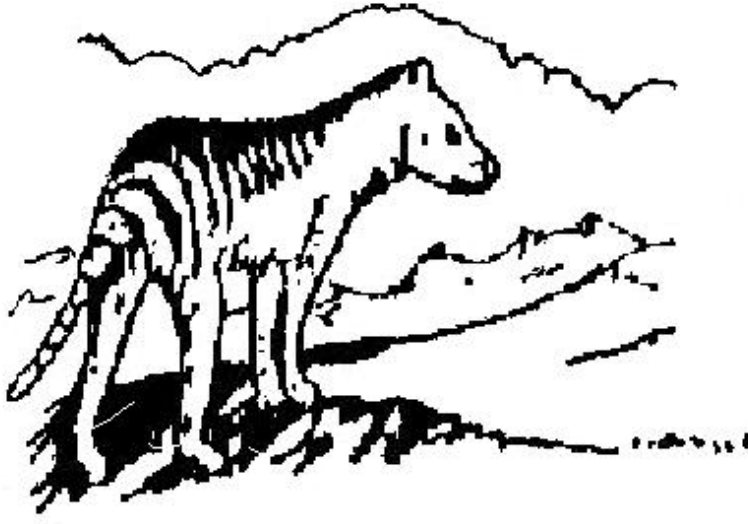


THE LAUNCESTON NATURALIST

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 XLV No 1

October/November 2011

- Patron : Mr Chris Tassell, AM**
- President : Mr A Pegler, 37 Maroney Rd Kings Meadows 6344 1076**
- Vice President : Mr T Treloggen, 68 Mulgrave St Launceston 6343 4043**
- Hon. Secretary : Mr N Manning, 46 Robin St Newstead 6344 2277**
- Hon. Treasurer : Ms K Manning, 46 Robin St Newstead 6344 2277**
- N'letter Co-ordinator : Ms K. Manning**
- Librarian : Ms T McGlynn**
- Committee : E Montgomery, J Handlinger, P Wright,
M Clarke, P Warren, P Ralph**

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

PROGRAM

DECEMBER

- Tuesday 6** **General Meeting - Speakers: Mick & Helen Statham -
*Native Rodents***
- Saturday 10** **Christmas at Skemps (see later in newsletter for more
detail)**

JANUARY 2012

- To be advised** **Overnight at Ben Lomond (see later in newsletter for
more detail)**

FEBRUARY

- Monday 6** **School for Seniors group visiting Skemps (see later in
newsletter for more detail - members help on the day
would be appreciated)**
- Tuesday 7** **General Meeting - Speaker: Guy Westmore - *Insects***
- Sunday 19** **Skemp Day - Collecting and identifying insects and
spiders**

MARCH

- Tuesday 6** **General Meeting - Members night**
- Sunday 18** **Field Trip : Weld River, prospecting and bushwalk**
- Monday 19** **Social Evening: venue to be confirmed**
- Saturday 25** **Skemp Day**

**The complete February to June program will be on the
website shortly.**

<http://www.lfnc.org.au/meetings.htm>

GENERAL / COMMITTEE MEETING

Puggle

November J Elliott asked members where sex was invented. J Campbell correctly stated that it was in Australia and J Elliott gave details of a 380 million year old fossil from Australia which indicated copulation which had resulted in internal fertilization.

Sightings

November P Warren had sighted two platypus on Thursday, P Longman a mountain devil (lizard), A Peglar had 3 photos of a small ant taken through a microscope and J Handler stated that grey fantails had hatched near her window

Library Report members approved the purchase of *Mungina Bitta's Country, Flora & Fauna at Panatana & Marshalls Hill* by Sarah Lloyd for the Library.

General

Tasmanian Landcare Association - The Club provided a display for the Tasmanian Landcare Association conference which was held at Stanley on 8-9 October. The Conference was profiling clubs that have been established for over 20 years. The display provided covered activities conducted at Skemps including revegetation, water-monitoring and fungi search, and included photographs of the flora and fauna. Vicki Campbell from Landcare advised that our display was well received by attendees.

Non Committee Positions - The following members have agreed to fill positions which have been arranged by the Committee following the recent AGM.

Tina McGlynn as Librarian, John Simmons as Assets Manager, Prue Wright as Program Coordinator and Karen Manning as Newsletter editor.

Saturday 10 December - Members were advised that a secret Santa would be held at the Christmas get-together. For further details see later in this issue.

Calendar - We have decided to have another calendar for 2013. Members are asked to consider submitting their images from January 2011 onwards and not just those from LFNC outings, conditions of entry are as in the past with full details next newsletter.

Club Publications for Sale - 2012 calendars are still available for purchase at \$5 each and copies of the *Guide to Flowers and Plants of Tasmania* for \$21. Both items would make ideal gifts. See Karen or contact her on 6344 2277, to arrange purchase.

New Members

We would like to welcome the following new members to the Club : Tamar Valley Masters Hash (Associate Group membership) and Mark and Susanne Pennington, Andrew Carter and Elizabeth Bond (General memberships).

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - 4 October 2011

Presidents speech: -“ This year has not been personally productive as far as I am concerned as President. My activities have been mainly only to chair Committee and General meetings and enjoy visits to Skemps. Activities with our excursions and maintenance work at Skemps have been restricted due to my increasing inability to take part in those activities as I used to, so this report is biased to what I have observed going on around me by members such as John Simmons, John Elliott, the Manning family, our stalwart Skemps

worker Grant Hanson, Roy Skabo and his subcommittee for programs and those members who have been able to take part in the tree planting program and the water monitoring throughout the year, to name just a few activities and the Committee.

To see the work performed on the old, nearly collapsed barn by John and helpers has been little more than amazing. To see it now in a very useful and imaginative second work room condition is something that I earlier thought as hopeless. However what it must have is a name. What is it to be.

I don't know what drives John Elliott to work so hard besides his secretarial duties, carrying the pack of chemicals to eradicate weeds unless it be due to his background as a veterinary. This also must be due to his interest in the water monitoring and routinely reporting. Noel Manning's track (trail) care when the weather creates difficulties is also reportable, and his meetings contribution setting up and monitoring computer lecture equipment and assisting guest speakers and assisting as all good immediate Past Presidents do.

The work carried out by Committee and members in maintenance of our valuable building is never-ending. This is of special note when considering the poor state it is left in by some of the non member people allowed to rent it. A few have been quite vandalistic without a care for the privilege granted to them.

I believe that the perseverance with which the Committee husbanded Skemp's income to accumulate sufficient assets to secure the "Imlach" property at Auction in about August-September 2010 has been a real milestone. I think that we always regarded the small piece of land as ours anyway, and to think of it being secured by some other party for other purposes was quite unacceptable. Was there really only one other bidder at the auction and was he not one of "the family"? I know that there was another real-estate agent who believed that it could be of value to her clients but she did not bid. That most of it is also now secured by a Covenant is laudable. I think that a few members might have wondered why we continued to accumulate so much finance in the club assets, but they surely must now appreciate why. We had to be vigilant and careful in the process of watching the ownership changes with caution to protect the Club's interests. John Simmons being Property Manager has been the prime mover for a considerable time protecting our interests in the new property section and the Covenant.

I applaud the efforts of the other two members of our Executive, John Elliott (Secretary) and Karen Manning (Treasurer). The work that John has done in expert secretarial and other communication with all members, including passing on messages from other organisations of interest to most of us has been valuable. Karen as Treasurer, also produces the newsletter and a number of other valued related activities. They both have made the tasks of management so much easier. The Committee has been just what good Committees members should be, supporting the Executive and good Club Management. John and Marion Simmons, Geraldine Cameron, Michael Clark, Roy Skabo, Noel Manning, Lynne Mockridge, Elizabeth Montgomery, Tom Treloggen and Peter Warren. Tina McGlynn although not a committee member has carried on very valuable work as Librarian.

We should be and I know we are, proud of our Club and its philosophy of care for the environment. There are not many organisations that can currently boast of such relatively good meeting attendance. Thirty to forty members regularly attending our General meetings out of about a hundred odd financial membership is something to brag about. I often hear of the difficulty many organisations have getting members just to attend their regular

meetings. Over the last 16 years while Dianne and I have been members there have been many changes and improvements to the Skemps property, some of which we have been able to participate in and one way or other and the whole place has quite visibly changed in many ways, and of course with John Simmons lead as Property Manager.

Should I have been negligent in not referring to other members' contributions, even for just being members, may I be forgiven?"

Al Pegler, President (2010-2011)

Election of Office Bearers

As no nominations had been received by the Secretary, nominations were received from the floor at the Annual General Meeting with the following members being elected to positions for the 2011/2012 period.

President - Al Pegler
Vice President - Tom Treloggen
Treasurer - Karen Manning
Secretary - Noel Manning

Committee Members - Michael Clarke, Peter Warren, Prue Wright,
Elizabeth Montgomery, Peter Ralph, Judith Handlinger

It was resolved on the Treasurer's recommendation that subscriptions would not change.

FIELD TRIP - Sunday 9 October - Launceston Reserves for wildflowers

Today members visited the Carr Villa Nature Reserve, Punchbowl Reserve and a reserve near the Cheltenham Estate at Prospect. During our trip we noted many species were found in each of these reserves and there were many that were specific to an individual location. Lunch was at Punchbowl Reserve between showers and the day was finished with coffee and cake at the Casino Watergarden. A very enjoyable day.

The following species were seen at each of the Reserves.

Acacia dealbata, Silver wattle; *Arthropodium strictum*, Chocolate Lily; *Banksia marginata*, Silver banksia; *Bursaria spinosa*, Prickly box; *Chamaescilla corymbosa*, Blue stars; *Clematis aristata*, Mountain clematis; *Daviesia latifolia*, Hop bitterpea; *Dianella revoluta*, Spreading flaxlily; *Diplazium moraea*, White flag-iris; *Drosera sp.*, Sundew (tall); *Exocarpus cupressiformis*, Common native-cherry; *Helichrysum sp.*, Everlasting daisy; *Lomandra longifolia*, Sagg; *Stackhousia monogyna*, Forest candles.

The following species were seen at two of the Reserves (CV = Carr Villa, PB = Punchbowl and C = Cheltenham)

Acacia genistifolia, Spreading wattle (CV & C); *Billardiera mutabilis*, Green appleberry (CV & C); *Brachyscome spathulata subsp glabra*, Blue daisy (CV & PB); *Brunonia australis*, Blue pincushion (CV & C); *Chiloglottis triceratops*, Threehorned bird-orchid (PB & C); *Caladenia fuscata*, Dusky fingers (CV & C); *Comesperma volubile*, Blue lovecreeper (CV & C); *Epacris impressa*, Common heath (CV & C); *Glossodia major*, Waxlip orchid

(CV & C); *Goodenia lanata*, Trailing native-primrose (CV & C); *Hibbertia riparia*, Erect guineaflower (CV & C); *Hovea heterophylla*, Winter purplepea (CV & C); *Kennedia prostrata*, Running postman (CV & PB); *Lissanthe strigosa subsp. subulata*, Peachberry heath (CV & PB); *Oxalis sp.*, Woodsorrel (CV & C); *Pimelea humilis*, Dwarf riceflower (CV & PB); *Platylobium obtusangulum*, Arrow flatpea (CV & PB); *Pterostylis nutans*, Nodding greenhood (CV & C); *Pterostylis pedunculata*, Maroonhood (CV & C); *Thysanotus patersonii*, Twining fringelily (CV & PB); *Wurmbea dioica*, Early nancy (CV & PB).

Carr Villa only: *Caladenia sp.*; *Chiloglottis sp.*, Bird-orchid; *Cyrtostylis reniformis*, Small gnat-orchid; *Diuris pardina*, Leopard orchid; *Diuris sulphurea* (in bud), Tiger orchid; *Gompholobium huegelii*, Common wedgepea; *Gonocarpus sp.*, Raspwort; *Nemacianthus caudatus*, Mayfly orchid; *Persoonia juniperina*, Prickly geebung; *Platylobium formosum* (round leaf), Handsome flatpea; *Poranthera microphylla*, Small poranthera; *Pteridium esculentum*, Bracken; *Pterostylis curta*, Blunt greenhood; *Rhytidosporum procumbens*, Starry appleberry; *Stylidium graminifolium* (leaves), Triggerplant; *Tetratheca pilosa*, Hairy pinkbells; *Thelymitra spp.*, Sun orchids; *Viola hederacea*, Ivyleaf violet.

Punchbowl Reserve only: *Acaena pallida*, Dune buzzy; *Allocasuarina littoralis*, Black sheoak; *Bulbine bulbosa*, Golden bulbine-lily; *Burchardia umbellata*, Milkmaids; *Cotoneaster sp.*; *Dianella tasmanica*, Forest flaxlily; *Leptorhynchos squamatus*, Scaly buttons; *Melicytus dentatus*, Spiky violetbush; *Olearia lirata*, Forest daisybush.

Cheltenham only: *Acaena novae-zelandiae*, Common buzzy; *Adiantum aethiopicum*, common maidenhair; *Allocasuarina verticillata*, Drooping sheoak; *Bossiaea prostrata*, Creeping bossia; *Caladenia sp.*; *Carex sp.*, Sedge; *Clematis gentianoides*, Ground clematis; *Corybas sp.*, Helmet Orchid; *Craspedia glauca*, Common billybuttons; *Dichondra repens*, Kidneyweed; *Epacris impressa*, Common heath; *Eucalyptus amygdalina*, Black peppermint; *Olearia myrsinoides*, Silky daisybush; *Pterostylis melagramma*, Blackstripe greenhood; *Ranunculus sp.*, Buttercup; *Senecio longipilus*, Longhair fireweed; *Viola hederacea*, Ivyleaf violet.

The only bird sighting at Carr Villa was an *Acanthorhynchus tenuirostris*, Eastern spinebill. At Punchbowl the following were seen, *Acanthiza pusilla*, Brown thornbill; *Anas platyrhynchos*, Mallard; *Anas superciliosa*, Pacific black duck; *Cuculus pallidus*, Pallid Cuckoo; *Gallinula mortierii*, Tasmanian native-hen; *Pachycephala pectoralis*, Golden whistler; *Petroica multicolor*, Scarlet robin; *Platycercus caledonicus*, Green Rosella and *Strepera versicolor*, Grey currawong, with no sightings at Cheltenham.

SKEMPS DAY - Sunday 23 October - Water Monitoring

Members arrived to a lovely sunny morning at Skemps. With water monitoring the focus of the day, John and Noel left the Centre early to collect the water sample so members could start checking for macro-invertebrate, after which they could take advantage of the perfect conditions and take a walk. The water sample provided many

different species which we sorted as best we could. A few were placed between slides and passed around for members to look at with hand lenses, a tiny crustacean was of particular interest.

Following lunch two groups seemed to form, one heading down into the Fern Gully via the Tyre Track and returning via the Top Falls and Bedfordia Walk and the other completing the Forest Walk.

Marion Simmons worked tirelessly all day in the storage area attached to the Centre where quite a mess had been made by four legged intruders during the colder months.

With all the walkers returned we enjoyed a late afternoon tea and headed home.

Birds seen today:

Wedge-tailed Eagle, *Aquila audax*; Laughing Kookaburra, *Dacelo novaeguineae*; Forest Raven, *Corvus tasmanicus*; Fan-tailed Cuckoo, *Cacomantis flabelliformis*; Brown Quail, *Coturnix ypsilophora*; Grey fantail, *Rhipidura fuliginosa*; Grey Shrike-thrush, *Colluricincla harmonica*; Superb Fairy-wren, *Malurus cyaneus*; Grey Butcherbird, *Cracticus torquatus*; Scarlet Robin, *Petroica multicolour*; Black-faced Cuckoo shrike, *Coracina novaehollandiae*; Striated Pardalote, *Pardalote striatus*; Tasmanian Scrubwren, *Sericornis humilis*.

A summary of John Elliott's water monitoring report

Taxa Found

Taxon	Common Name	Grade
Acarina	Water Mite	6
Amphipoda	Sideswimmers (crustaceans)	3
Coleoptera	Unidentified beetle larvae	5
Diptera	Chironomids, blackfly larvae & other unidentified fly larvae	3
Ephemeroptera	Mayflies	9
Hemiptera	Veliidae - true bugs with sucking mouthparts	2
Plecoptera	Stoneflies	10
Trichoptera	Cased and uncased caddis	8

Results

The Signal 2 score is calculated by totalling the grades for the taxa found and dividing by the number of taxa found. The Signal 2 score for the 8 taxa found is therefore 5.8. This score and the number of taxa found indicate a healthy waterway with little or no

environmental degradation. Almost all of our results cluster around the boundary between the quadrants associated with little environmental degradation or some degradation associated with agriculture.

The results for the last two years are summarized in the following table:

Date	Taxa	Score	Interpretation	Quality
14/04/10	8	5.6	Fair quality. Some degradation due to agriculture	Good
23/10/10	6	6.5	Questionable quality, Indications of disturbance or poor sampling	Fair
20/11/10	7	5.9	Good quality. Little or no environmental degradation	Excellent
10/04/11	9	5.3	Fair quality. Some degradation due to agriculture	Good
23/10/11	8	5.8	Good quality. Little or no environmental degradation	Excellent

FEDERATION WEEKEND - BRUNY ISLAND: 28 - 30 October 2011

Members arrived over much of Friday, settled into the accommodation and staked their claim to the kitchen facilities. The keen members walked to the beach before the evening meal while the younger members were much taken by the young working dogs.

Friday evening property manager Bruce Michael gave us information on Murrayfield, which was purchased in 2001, including information on productivity and cultural uses. Go to www.murrayfield.com.au for more information.

Afterwards Michael Driessen told us about a fauna survey he did not long after the property was purchased by the Indigenous Land Corporation (ILC). We were all amused by his story about the fact that quolls are unpopular on Bruny Island and DPIPW has been blamed for their introduction.

Saturday morning Rodney Dillon gave us a welcome to country and explained the significance of the property and its uses. It is a successful farm producing sheep for both lambs and fine wool as well as grain for the sheep. The property also provides youth training in farm skills, assistance for disadvantaged young people, shack like facilities to those unable to afford them while still allowing access to the public. The property has cultural and heritage significance to both the aboriginal peoples and to the early white settlement of Tasmania.

Although the weather was not promising a look at the radar image on the BoM site suggested that there was no rain on the way. This proved incorrect as we often stood around in the rain and the day seemed to get colder.

Just after 9:00 we headed off further south on the property to the ruins of an Anglican Church at Variety Bay and then on to the Glue Pot, a sink hole, possibly formed from the collapse of a sea cave. We lunched here surrounded on three sides by the waters of Storm Bay. From here we moved to the ruins of the pilot station and a long walk down to the small beach which seemed to be full of fossil bearing rocks.

It was then off to the airport to check nesting boxes where a pigmy possum and a black rat was found followed by further plant exploration in the bush at the north eastern edge of the runway. Around 17:00 in cold and wet conditions we headed back to Murrayfield where a fire was soon warming us and we enjoyed the excellent BBQ and salad evening meal prepared by TFNC members.

Still being miserable and cold I chose not to join a night trek to the Neck Game Reserve. This was a mistake as there were between 40 and 50 penguins seen as well as many Shearwaters.

Sunday saw us off to another part of the property to visit a protected area featuring grass trees. The place has a sand quarry and a variety of other plants, including orchids, as well as bugs and birds to keep everyone interested and weather was much better.

Most of the group seemed to choose the 12:35 ferry back so we all caught up again. While waiting for the ferry we lunched on the waterfront near the terminal and discussed the weekend.

Noel Manning

Thanks to Anna McEldowney (TFNC) we have the following list of plants seen over the weekend;

'Murrayfield' property & Neck Game Reserve (29/10/2011) *Thelymita rubra*, *Glossodia major*, *Patersonia fragilis*, *Hibbertia procumbens*, *Euro-myrtus ramosissima* subsp. *ramosissima*?, *Lycopodium deuterodensum*, *Epacris impressa*, *Epacris* spp??. *Pimelea humilis*, *Boronia pilosa*, *Dillwynia glaberrima*, *Goodenia lanata*, *Calytrix tetragona*, *Lomatia tinctoria*, *Leptomeria drupacea*, *Daviesia ulicifolia*, *Lissanthe strigosa* subsp. *subulata*?, *Monotoca glauca*, *Pultenaea daphnoides* var. *obcordata*, *Pultenaea juniperina*, *Allocasuarina monilifera*?, *Eucalyptus amygdalina*, *Eucalyptus tenuiramis*, *Eucalyptus obliqua*

Gluepot - *Correa reflexa*, *Goodenia ovate*, *Olearia phlogopappa* var. *phlogopappa*, *Olearia argophylla*, *Polytrichum*, *Dicksonia antarctica*

Airstrip - *Sprengelia incanata*, *Pomaderris elliptica* var. *elliptica*, *Melaleuca squarrosa*, *Melaleuca gibbosa*, *Acacia verticillata* var. *verticillata*, *Gahnia grandis*

Grass tree reserve – 'Murrayfield' (West) (30/10/2011) - This list is incomplete as I had left my notebook in the car and it was too much of a performance to leave the reserve and come back in again!

E. viminalis, *E. amygdalina*, *E. obliqua*, *Caladenia*?, *Kennedia prostrate*, *Leucopogon virgatus*?, *Xanthorrhoea australis*, *Xanthorrhoea bracteata*.

GENERAL MEETING 1 November - SPEAKER - Lesley Kirby Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens

Roy Skabo welcomed Lesley Kirby and introduced her to the members.

The gardens were established in 1718 and over that nearly 200 years, have changed both physically and in its purpose. These changes mirror the changes in the wider world of botanic collections. The main change is going from a collection of curiosities to plant ark, although our gardens still contain many curiosities. While the furred and feathered threatened species get the attention, without the plants these will have no habitat and be part of a downward spiral.

Botanic garden are defined as an institute holding a documented collection of living

plants for the purposes of scientific research, conservation, display and education. Over time each of these has taken the spotlight with the RTBG being involved in a much broader range of activity than people think.

The first known botanic garden was the university garden of Pisa, Italy, in 1443 and the first recognised as a botanic garden the university garden of Padua, Italy, in 1545. There are 2,500 recognised botanic gardens in the world with new ones being established. The former Russian states are recognising their own unique plants or even establishing gardens for tourism.

The 16 and 17 centuries gardens provided material for medical research while the 17 and 18 century saw the development of the colonial garden to display the wonders brought back by the botanists who accompanied the explorers. These were both economic and ornamental plants. In the 18 and 19 century the Linnean gardens started with the development of taxonomy and this influenced the layout of gardens into species groups which persists to this day. In the 19 and 20 century came the specific and specialist garden, even ones devoted to an individual species such as orchids while in the 20 and 21 century we have the sanctuary or conservation garden. These provide genetic protection for threatened species and species with economic or ecological importance.

The RTBG is more than a park of pretty plants. The horticulture and cultivation side allows for the maintenance of the living collection and the production of plants for degraded sites. The RTBG is working with mining companies and their old sites assessing them for the plants needed, establishing them at the site and monitoring them into the future. There is now a seed bank which allows threatened species to be stored for hundreds of years with greater genetic diversity than would be possible with those in the gardens. The RTBG has an herbarium initially related to field work and collections within the gardens but now with the seed bank as well. Research is done at the gardens in conjunction with the university as well as collaborating with institutions around the world. Education in the gardens is not just about children but includes sustainability, plant conservation, the relationship between human evolution and plants and allowing people to see how plants influence their lives.

The RTBG was established in 1818 on a former farm and there is evidence of aboriginal occupation by the Mouheneenner tribe, and both the site and the collection is listed on the national estate, while around 200 individual trees are listed on the register of significant trees.

In 1806 governor Collins gave former convict John Hangen 50 acres and governor Sorell resumed the land in 1818 for a government garden to supply food for the military and free settlers of Hobart. In 1827 Governor Arthur wrote to the colonial secretary and stated that he wished to establish a botanical garden at the domain site of the former farm and this is why our gardens are called the botanical gardens when most others are called botanic gardens.

The first supervisor was William Davidson and through his efforts the gardens flourished and during his time the internally heated Arthur wall was built to provide a micro climate to help establish plants from warmer climates. It was only used for a few years because the Tasmanian climate was milder than Davidson had assumed. Although economic crops remained important, collections of Tasmanian plants began in 1830 with 130 species in cultivation and specimens and seed were already being sent overseas. In 1832 the first hive of honey bees in the colony came to the RTBG and did so well that a

stocked hive was sent to Sydney within a year. This was the start of the Australian honey industry and there are still hives in the gardens today with honey sold under the RTBG label.

There was an effort in the early days to establish familiar plants from the homeland around Tasmania and the Salmon Pond, Cataract Gorge, Port Arthur and Richmond feature these exotic trees provided by the gardens. Today we have come full circle with an emphasis on the planting of Tasmanian natives where possible.

Unfortunately the gardens fell into a period of stagnation when Davidson left in 1834, receiving a small revival in 1837 when Governor Franklin increased the annual allowance from 300 to 800 pounds. It was not until 1843 when Governor Wilmot put the gardens under his proposed Van Diemen's Land Horticultural and Botanical Society, which eventually became the Royal Society of Tasmania, that the gardens once again advanced with hothouses and a more professional approach to garden management. Public access was limited to two days per week at this time while members of the society were not only allowed unlimited access but were allowed to take plants resulting in some magnificent gardens on midlands properties.

The arrival of Superintendent Newman in 1845 saw a shift in focus from the ornamental and display plants to the taxonomic work. A public outcry saw the aesthetic values retained while balancing the important scientific work and by 1848 the gardens were again fully open to the public. Newman also started the first catalogue of the plants and in 1857 there were around 2,000 plants recorded and by 1875 there were some 7,000.

Following the death of Newman in 1859, Francis Abbott took over and instigated many changes including a waterfront promenade where the rail line now is. The waterfront land has been returned to the gardens and there are proposals to incorporate this into the gardens.

He also started propagating plants to swap for overseas plants having great success with Norfolk Pines and tree ferns and the exotic collection in the gardens owes much to him. The first public toilets were not added till 1904.

World War one saw work at the gardens halt with scientific research resumed at the end. The great depression saw a return to the colourful displays perhaps to brighten the lives of the public.

Following the appointment of the gardens longest serving supervisor, Ira Thornicroft, in 1936 significant changes were made including the conservatory, an emphasis on colourful annuals and new tea rooms.

In 1960 an act of parliament separated the botanic gardens from the museum and in 1967 Queen Elizabeth granted permission for the prefix Royal to be used by the gardens. The requirements for an organisation to be granted this are that it be of eminence in its field, be of long standing and secure financial position and be devoted to significant community, educational, charitable or scientific objectives.

Subsequent superintendents added other features such as the tropical (now the cactus house) and Japanese garden, the fernery and the easy access garden.

In 2000 there was a threat to close the gardens due to a lack of finances. The subsequent review considered the role of the gardens and whether it should remain a true botanic garden or just for public display. Common sense prevailed and the funding was increased to allow the gardens to meet its responsibilities both as a scientific institute and a community resource.

With 400,000 visitors per year it is the most visited site in Tasmania getting more visitors than Port Arthur or the museum. Among the varied collection these visitors will see the largest collection of conifers in the southern hemisphere including some where there are only two or three known specimens. Visitors can also see the only sub Antarctic plant collection.

The gardens are attempting to propagate *Lomatia tasmanica* which is a very charismatic plant with an enormous commercial potential. Conservation of Tasmanian endangered species could be funded if this plant could be propagated easily. Although not in a position to assist overseas gardens financially, the RTBG has helped other gardens by an exchange of staff. James Wood, the seed bank expert, has visited China to help establish the largest seed bank in the world. The gardens are a training institute as well, having just got the second intake of horticultural students in a partnership with a training organisation. There was a need for better education for horticulturists that was not being filled by the previous time spent assisting TAFE and the Polytechnic.

Cultural programs in the gardens are important and include concerts, theatre in the gardens, Shakespeare in the gardens and recently, Power Plant, a sound and light show, as part of 10 Days on the Island.

After nearly 200 years the RTBG remains relevant to Tasmania with ongoing programs of conservation, scientific research, education and displays of living plants.

Roy started the lengthy question time and thanked Lesley for her most interesting talk.

Noel Manning

EXCURSION TO HOBART – WEEKEND NOV 5TH & 6TH 2011

Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens (RTBG)

About a dozen members of the LFNC and APST enjoyed an excursion to the south of the state.

Saturday began with a “behind the scenes” of the RTBG including a visit to the Tasmanian Seed Bank and the plant propagation area.

James Wood from the Seedbank gave us an insight into how the Seedbank came into existence, its reasons for existence, what it does and what it has achieved in its short period of existence (since 2004).

The major idea behind the Seedbank is to provide an insurance stock of seeds which will allow species to survive, even if natural populations do not, e.g. in the case of climate change, habitat loss, disease, or other cause.

However, there are many other benefits offered by the Seedbank. These include allowing the RTBG to reduce the space which would otherwise be needed to conserve threatened species as living plants. A package weighing a few grams may contain seeds which will grow to thousands of plants with a considerable genetic diversity. Furthermore the seeds can be kept viable for hundreds or even thousands of years under the correct conditions. To do the same job with living plants would take a considerable area of nursery space and be very labour-intensive.

Apart from collecting the seeds, in itself a considerable task, the bulk of the Seedbank’s work is finding out how to propagate the seeds, many of which are

difficult to germinate. James gave us a fascinating talk on how the natural environment of the seeds is mimicked in an attempt to break the natural dormancy of some seed species.

Natalie Tapson showed us over the plant propagation area where many endangered plants are being grown, including the marvellous *Lomatia tasmanica*, King's lomatia, of which there is only one clone in existence.

We learned much of interest here, including many precautions needed to preserve the integrity of the work being done and to ensure the survival of the plants themselves, e.g. smokers must not touch the king's lomatia plants (because they are susceptible to a tobacco virus); two different species of the same genus will not be allowed to flower at the same time (to avoid the possibility of cross pollination).

The results of the Seedbank's work on germination are available on the RTBG's website and this is a useful source of information for gardeners and others.

Snug Tier

After lunch we met our guide for the afternoon, David Marrison, and followed him to Snug Tier, a short but steep drive to a sub-alpine environment west of Margate.

We were stunned to see hundreds of beautiful *Richea dracophylla* plants, many of them in flower, festooning the roadside bank.

Before we left the parking area at the end of the road Dave gave us a quick preview of what we would see. One of the main points of interest was that this area has a greater diversity of Eucalypt species than any other in Tasmania, including several which we do not see in the north of the state.

During our guided walk we saw many plants of interest, including a number of *Eucalypts* and some beautiful plants of *Westringia angustifolia*, *Hibbertia empetrifolia*, masses of *Bauera rubioides* and even *Telopea truncate* (waratah) in flower. We stopped for a snack and breather at a creek where the lowest (but unofficial) temperature (of -22 degrees) ever recorded in Tasmania had been reported by some researchers working in the area a few years ago. This creek runs past a stand of a *Eucalyptus gunnii* which is, not surprisingly, an extremely frost-hardy subspecies.

East Risdon Reserve

Sunday morning saw us gathered at the end of Saundersons Rd opposite the "Zincworks". A short walk from the end of the road took us into the Reserve and we climbed up the hill through a very dry sclerophyll bushland growing on very thin soil over shaly rocks. This area hosts a considerable number of threatened species of plants and most of the walk was beneath a canopy of *Eucalyptus risdonii* which grows only on the surrounding hills and many of the trees were in magnificent full flower.

The flowering peak of most species had passed but there were several interesting species in flower including, to Jeff Campbell's delight, a number of orchids in the *Thelymitra*, *Diuris* and *Caladenia* genera. Other flowers to impress were those of *Philotheca verrucosa*, *Tetratheca labillardierei*, *Pultenaea prostrata* among others.

Pontville - Ford Road

After lunch at the waterside where the vehicular ferry used to cross the Derwent and with the mercury climbing towards the 30C mark we drove to Brighton, where

our rendez-vous arrangements were thrown into slight confusion by the Brighton Show – there were so many cars there that we had some difficulty finding each other.

Climbing the insignificant and rather unprepossessing little hill (about a km east of Brighton), which is to become a flora reserve shortly, we were immediately spotting rare and beautiful plants. The endemic *Hibbertia basaltica* which grows only in this area was in full flower; *Cryptandra amara*, another rare plant was spotted a few seconds later and we found the delightful purple-flowered daisy *Vittadinia muelleri*, hundreds of a bulbine lily and of *Diuris sulphurea* both in magnificent flower. *Convolvulus angustissimus* was another striking presence with its large pink flowers.

An hour or so on this hillside with a hot wind blowing and the temperature still climbing was enough even for this intrepid band and we abandoned further pursuit of things we had not seen, including *Pterostylis ziegeleri*, so we climbed back down the hill to the carpark.

Roy Skabo

SKEMPS DAY - Sunday 20 November

Members arriving early at Skemps this morning were treated to sunshine and the flurry and chirping of the birds. Unfortunately the dark clouds and rain arrived along with those who turned up later so we decided to have an early lunch and to try our luck early afternoon.

With the sun shining after lunch we stretched our legs by walking the Forest Track exiting onto the open grassland then proceeded down into the Top Falls and out to the junction of the Bottom Falls Track, from there we proceeded up the hill passing the Scotch Oakburn adopt-a-patch and through the Bedfordia Track to the larva flow at the top of the property. At this point we could see that rain was on the way again so headed back to the Centre for a late afternoon tea before heading home.

Karen Manning

CHRISTMAS AT SKEMPS - Saturday 10 December

Members, their family and friends are invited to join in this end of year function. There will be a guided walk leaving the Centre around 10.30 am.

It was decided to hold a 'Secret Santa' at this get-together. If you would like to participate please provide an appropriate wrapped gift between \$4 and \$9, and ensure that your name is placed on Santa's list when you arrive at the Centre. Please label your gift 'male' or 'female' if the gift is gender specific. Everyone attending will go in the draw for the lucky door prize so get your ticket on arrival. If you bring a child you are invited to bring a gift for them, well labeled with their name, which will be given out separately.

Please bring your own lunch and a plate of food to share for afternoon tea would be appreciated. The BBQ will be lit for those who wish to have a hot lunch.

OVERNIGHT AT BEN LOMOND - January 2012

A field trip to Ben Lomond early in January 2012 is planned. It will be held on the weekend of either 7/8 or 14/15. It will be discussed at the December General Meeting

and voted on by members present who are interested in participating. The final date will be advised to members who are absent by email or mail.

If you would like to attend on the date notified, please contact Peter Warren on 6339 2671 or by email on pjwarrenjp@hotmail.com Peter will provide information about the accommodation, cost for stay and items to bring.

This is a very interesting place to visit, great photographic opportunities and the *Richea scoparia* should be looking good at this time of the year.

SCHOOL FOR SENIORS - Monday 6 February 2012

A group of people from the School for Seniors will be visiting Skemps on 6 February as part of their Summer School program. They will arrive around 9am and depart at 4pm. During the day it would be appreciated if LFNC members could be on hand to share their knowledge and host an activity. This could include nature rambles looking at the flora and fauna found on the property, a macro-invertebrate water monitoring exercise, identification of insects, flora and fauna using resources from the Club library.

Some help in the Centre would also be appreciated as we will provide tea, coffee and biscuits to our guests. The BBQ facilities will be made available for their use at lunch.

This is a the perfect opportunity to advertise our wonderful facilities and the interesting activities that we are involved in, which may lead to some of our guests considering membership. So please come along and help out on the day. Please contact John Elliott on 63449303 to discuss how you can help.

AUSTRALIAN PLANT SOCIETY MEETINGS

LFNC members are welcome to attend APS meetings held on the 3rd Tuesday of the month at Max Fry Hall, Gorge Road Trevallyn at 7.30 pm. Their first meeting in 2012 will be on Tuesday 21 February.

FUNGIMAP FESTIVAL 2012

Fungimap and NRM South are organising a Fungi Festival to be held in Hobart from Thursday April 26th to Monday April 30th, 2012. The proposed program is a Symposium on Conservation and Management of Fungi (Thursday and Friday) and then on Saturday and Sunday there will be workshops and forays about fungi, similar to past Fungimap conferences. The Monday session is tentatively set aside for training in the use of the Atlas of Living Australia for fungi records data. The following weekend (5th-6th May), Fungimap, in conjunction with Cradle Coast NRM, will be running some more forays and workshops in the Tarkine.

The following website: <http://www.rbg.vic.gov.au/fungimap/home> will be giving updated information about this event in the New Year."

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 : secretary@lfnc.org.au