

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

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December 2012 / January 2013

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President	:	Mr T Treloggen, 68 Mulgrave St Launceston, 6343 4043
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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, T McGlynn, P Ralph, P Warren

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

PROGRAM

FEBRUARY

- Tuesday 5 General Meeting Guest Speaker Simon Fearn - *Snakes*
- Sunday 10 Field Trip with Simon Fearn
- Sunday 24 Skemps Day - Seed and Insect Collection

MARCH

- Tuesday 5 General Meeting - Member's Night
- Fri 15-Sun 17 Field Trip - West Coast
- Saturday 23 Skemps Day - Time Team dig
- Monday 25 Social Night - Steve's Grill, Riverside, 6 for 6.30 pm
(see details later in newsletter)

APRIL

- Tuesday 2 General Meeting speaker to be confirmed
- Sunday 14 Field Trip
- Sat 27/Sun 28 Skemps Weekend - Water Monitoring and Astronomy

MAY

- Tuesday 7 John Skemp Memorial Lecture
Guest Speaker to be confirmed
- Sunday 12 Field Trip
- Sunday 26 Open Day at Skemps - participating in National Trust
Heritage Festival

JUNE

- Tuesday 4 General Meeting speaker to be confirmed
- Saturday 15 Field Trip
- Sunday 23 Skemp Day - Fungi and ferns

Full half year program should be available shortly at
<http://www.lfnc.org.au/meetings.htm>

COMMITTEE/GENERAL MEETING

Puggle: Prue Wright asked for the identity of a tree in bloom at the moment. After some incorrect answers and refining of the question, Lynne Mockridge correctly answered that it was *Acacia mearnsii* (Black Wattle).

Sightings: Daphne Longman saw two White-faced Heron chicks, *Egretta novaehollandiae*, in a nest in her garden at Dilston and a Blotched Bluetongue lizard, *Tiliqua nigrolutea*, sunbaking in straw. Peter Warren saw five Little Corellas, *Cacatua sanguinea*, at Nutgrove Park Sandy Bay, Prue Wright saw a Masked Lapwing, *Vanellus miles*, sitting on nest at Gravelly Beach which is very late in the season, also a large number of Tall Potato-orchids, *Gastrodia procera*, up to 1.3 metres tall at Yorktown and a Little Wattlebird, *Anthochaera chrysoptera*, with an orange crown at Gravelly Beach. Maureen Johnstone has seen Australian Pelicans, *Pelecanus conspicillatus*, at the Tailrace and Neil Hardstaff had seen lots of Tasmanian Waratah, *Telopea truncata*, on his way to the West Coast.

Library Report: Tina McGlynn advised that the copy of *Tasmania's Natural Flora* had been purchased and was available to borrow, but she was still waiting for *Beasts, Bush and Bugs: a Field Guide to North East Tasmania* to arrive.

General:

Puggle - Following discussion at a recent Committee meeting, members were advised that as most Puggles were being done by three members, that in future members who had won during the year, were banned from answering the question.

Ben Lomond field trip - Peter Warren gave information on what to bring to Ben Lomond for an overnight stay at Borrowdale Lodge. He was also the contact for the trip which would be on Tuesday 15 and Wednesday 16 January next year.

Mattresses - Following a motion moved by Noel Manning, members approved the purchase of new foam mattresses for Skemps to the value of \$800. With 16 mattresses needing replacement, the amount approved would cover the cost of eight mattresses, with another purchase to be approved at a later date.

New Members - We would like to welcome Tony and Christine Geeves to the Club and look forward to them joining us at meetings and other activities.

GENERAL MEETING - December - Member's Night

Prue Wright read a letter from Lyndel Poole and Michael Bennett who thanked members for their company and enthusiasm during the Club's recent visit to the property *Kingston* at Nile that they manage, and look forward to our visits in the future.

Judith Handler presented a slideshow of insect images taken following the collection day at Skemps in February earlier in the year. We were then shown a selection of Tom McGlynn's images of John Simmons, while Elizabeth Montgomery read a eulogy written by Jeff Campbell. Prue Wright then presented a selection of images from all the outings and Skemp Days during 2012 called '*The Year That Was*'. Many thanks to Judith, Tom and Prue for their time and effort.

Members then judged the photographic competition while enjoying supper that members supplied. Tom Treløgen presented the gift vouchers to the winners:-

1st Karen Manning - *Olearia Obcordata*

2nd John Elliott - *Dillwynia sericea*

3rd Peter Longman - Kookaburra with a starling in it's mouth

CHRISTMAS AT SKEMPS - Sunday 9 December

Twenty members and six guests attended the annual Christmas get-together at Skemps today, the first one held on a Sunday since I joined the Club. A couple of members arrived nice and early to cut down a Christmas tree which had been spotted on the property recently, to erect and decorate in the Centre. There were many helpers to place the baubles and tinsel, so the tree was decorated in no time, and the gifts were then placed under the tree.

Following the usual morning cuppa, a small group walked the Forest Track and then went into the Top Falls where we found the entrance from the paddock overgrown with Bat's Wing Fern and with Bracken Fern at the exit to the junction of the Top and Bottom Falls walks. We then walked up to the roadway past the Scotch Oakburn site, which is growing well, and wandered back to the Centre, stopping to admire the Waratah's near the river, which had many flowers.

After lunch, members walked to the Federation corridor to check on the growth of the trees, and the barn and old homestead site. Another group walked the Zig-Zag Track stopping at the engaeus mounds nears the board walks, the Federation Tree and saw Gunn's Heath which had almost finished flowering in the paddock at the exit from the walk.

Back at the Centre afternoon tea was set up and Santa arrived as promised and handed out the gifts after which we enjoyed the yummy cakes and sandwiches that members had brought along. The winners of the lucky door prizes were Peter Warren and John Elliott.

After perfect weather for the enjoyable walks and our Christmas celebration, we headed home.

Karen Manning

INTERNATION GIRL GUIDES JAMBOREE - QUERCUS PARK - 7 January 2013

Tasmania hosted the 2013 International Girl Guides Jamboree with the Agfest site at Quercus Park being a major venue. 1700 girls from all states of Australia and ten other countries experienced Tasmania, although not at its best. The fires and high temperature made life uncomfortable at the beginning and strong winds caused problems later on as well, although the articles in the Examiner suggested all went well and the girls enjoyed themselves.

There were trips away from Quercus Park and many activities awaited the girls at the site and I saw a climbing wall and trapeze set up for the intrepid amongst the visitors. There was a dearth of toilets for men at our end of the site as all had been relabelled for the mainly female visitors.

As part of the jamboree Prue Wright had suggested that various groups be invited to highlight nature and many other aspects of our beautiful state in a similar way to our display for 'Be a Scientist' as part of Science Week last year. The Launceston Field Naturalists Club, the Australian Plant Society (Northern Group), Parks and Wildlife Service and many other groups were also represented and helped to put on three and a half hours of activities for the girl guides.

On a very hot Sunday members Karen, Noel, Prue and Rhys spent the afternoon setting up a display of Tasmanian native fauna and birds in one of the craft sheds at the Agfest site. Thanks to the generosity of the Queen Victoria Museum and Art

Gallery nine stuffed birds, two reptiles and nine Tasmanian animals would sit in a recreated bush setting for the guides to study and ask about.

Prue had other tasks on the Monday and we were joined by Jill mid-morning for the final setting up, mainly the placement of the animals and the final touches to our bush setting. Rhys was unwell and left early while the rest of us stayed till 5:30 to help pack the museum's animals. For our display a base of beige shade cloth covered with leaf litter and dotted with rocks, branches, moss, bones and other forest detritus and surrounded by potted grasses, dianellas and offcuts from various trees, formed a forest setting for the animals. These items mainly came from Prue's place and Skemps with a few offcuts from trees, a CD player and much needed extra leaf litter from the Manning's. A piece of blue tarp covered with clear plastic to give it a watery sheen and surrounded by rocks and patches of grass and moss made a less than believable water feature from where the platypus was emerging while a white faced heron waited nearby to feed. A CD of bird calls, set on continuous play and hidden behind the plants, gave that little extra realism to our bush setting.

The two smaller birds were placed on a table for their own protection with the superb fairy wren getting much attention and comments about his beauty and he was photographed often. Also on the table were bones, including a variety of skulls, scats, three types of bird nest, a variety of feathers and a lizard skin. While the shy, elusive and often nocturnal Tasmanian animals are not always seen in the wild we pointed out that these items were signs of what was out there. For the delicate amongst our visitors we had Peters paddle pop sticks to move the scats about. These came from a treat given to the hot and tired volunteers the previous day. One young wit, having sampled Tasmanian honeys on paddle pop sticks before getting to our table, asked if she was meant to taste the scats.

While many walked by or quietly looked at our table and took photographs others asked questions and volunteered their thoughts on the items on display. The 45 cm wedgy feather and the lizard skin were of particular interest while the bones prompted questions and the scats caused many comments.

I believe that the fires had stopped scheduled visits to Tasmanian zoos to see the native fauna and perhaps this was why our display was so well received and we were told that it looked impressive.

In the huge main marquee Peter Warren had a display of minerals and gems from Tasmania with two hand lenses for those who were interested in a closer look. A small glass vial of gold, a piece of Crocoite, a polished slice of jade from Trial Harbour, a piece of almost black and very shiny smoky quartz, a large clear quartz crystal, galena, sapphires from the Weld River, fossilised wood, shell and man fern, an Aboriginal knife of basalt from Ulverstone and two other knives of unknown material from Trial Harbour were amongst the most popular, asked about and photographed items. Peter's table was very popular giving him little time to sit and there were enquiries as to whether the items were for sale.

Older guides and leaders were on hand to help us keep things running smoothly and watch the younger girls, although this was hardly necessary as they were well behaved and at the end of the day Peter still had his gold, small gems and hand lenses.

This was a successful day promoting Tasmania and an interest in nature.

Noel Manning

BEN LOMOND VISIT - Tuesday 15 & Wednesday 16 January 2013

Twenty one people travelled to Ben Lomond on 15 January. There were fourteen members and seven friends.

Tuesday was sunny with a stiff cold breeze. Arriving ahead of our host Peter at the ski village, Roy, Louise and Noel headed off along the overland ski track which seemed drier than the same time last year with the flowers way beyond their best, Noel returning for lunch, the others in the early afternoon.

Peter arrived to open our accommodation just as most members were arriving. After settling in and an early lunch, John, George and Jan skirted Legges Tor and headed in a northerly direction to the Carr Villa Track and later to Hamilton Crags to take photographs, while another group of eleven started walking along Meadow Vale where we found the tarns encountered during previous trips on this occasion not filled with water and tadpoles as many lay either dry or as mud patches, a testimony to the very dry summer. The walk concluded at a rather rocky basin like area which was surrounded by massive granite boulders sitting precariously as the basin sides. After admiring the views from as far north as the hills of St Helens to the Fingal Valley in the south, we headed back across the valley to the foothills of Hamilton Crags, where six members of the group decided to depart and walk back to the Lodge along the valley. Neil, Tony, Christine, Karl and Karen head up the Crag rock hopping in the large boulder fields. A few picturesque tarns were seen completed with differing numbers of tadpoles. The small cave located in the rocks that would hold three people, did not appear to be used by animals as there were no scats. They arrived back at the Lodge around five, followed shortly after by the photography group. The evening meals were followed by some day trippers leaving for home and others arriving late for the next day's walk. Many took the short walk up into the ski village to have a look around with some proceeding down the ski field past the dam to watch the sunset. There was lots of chatter back at the accommodation, the sharing of stories and photographs, card games and with a very clear night, star gazing where the planet Jupiter could be clearly seen and also a shooting star.

The following morning was overcast and windy. John, George and Jan headed along Meadow Vale to the notch between Hamilton Crags and Ossian's Throne for another photography session and Neil, Noel, Karl, Debra, Sarah, Jill, Lauren and Karen headed up Hamilton Crags and found the area where we could walk through to the back of the Crag to take in the view and also look at the magnificent deteriorating granite outcrops that were in the valley below. They then walked up to the cairn which provided a wider picture of the Ben Lomond plateau, which has given ideas for future field trips. Many a photo was taken to prove they had climbed to the cairn in a wind that was difficult to walk in, then headed back down the crag searching for and locating, a small cave that had been found during last years trip.

After lunch everyone helped tidy up the accommodation, thanked our host Peter Warren and headed back to Launceston, following a very pleasant mid-week stay.

Thanks to John Elliott and Roy Skabo for their help with the list of flora seen during our trip:-

Astelia alpina, Pineapple grass; *Bellendena montana*, Mountain Rocket; *Craspedia alpina*, Billy Buttons; *Drosera arcturi*, Sundew; *Euphrasia collina ssp. diemenica*,

Eyebright; *Ewartia catipes*, Diamondherb; *Gentianella diemensis* ssp. *plantaginea*, Ben Lomond Snowgentian; *Leptospermum rupestre*, Creeping Tea-tree; *Oreomyrrhis* sp., Caraway; *Ozothamnus rodwayi* sp., Alpine Everlastingbush; *Richea Scoparia*, Scoparia; *Stylidium graminifolium*, Triggerplant; *Tasmannia lanceolata*, Mountain Pepper; *Chionohebe ciliolata*, Ben Lomond Cushion Plant; *Celmisia saxifraga*, Small Snow Daisy; *Orites revolutus*, Revolute Orites; *Orites acicularis*, Yellow Bush; *Olearia* sp.; Daisybush; *Baeckea gunniana*, Alpine Heathmyrtle; *Neopaxia australasica*, White Purslane; Brachyscome *spatulata* ssp. *glabra*, Blue Daisy; *Leptecophylla juniperina* ssp. *parvifolia*, Mountain Pinkberry; *Senecio pectinatus*, Alpine Groundsel; *Senecio* sp., Groundsel; *Coprosma nitida*, Mountain Currant; *Pentachondra pumila*, Carpet Heath; *Richea ? acerosa*, narrow leaf Candleheath; *Lomatia tinctoria*, Guitar Plant.

CLUB SOCIAL DINNER - Steve's Grill

This will be held at on Monday 25 March, 6.00pm for 6.30pm. Steve's Grill has a good grill menu but there is also a comprehensive general menu which caters for all tastes.

To get to Steve's go down the West Tamar Road past the Trevallyn Power Station and turn right past the apartment blocks. Keep in the right hand lane for about 100 metres then turn right in to the area in front of the apartments. There are a few parking places on your left but if these are occupied keep going under the archway and there is more parking at the rear of the building.

If you would like to attend the dinner please RSVP to Noel or Karen on 6344 2277 or family_manning@yahoo.com.au by Thursday 21 March.

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 first meeting for 2013 will be held on 19 February. Their program can be viewed at <http://apstasnorth.org/pages/program.html>

QVMAG EXHIBITIONS

The following natural history exhibitions will be held soon at the Royal Park site, for more information visit the [QVMAG](#) website.

9 February to 24 March 2013

Looking at Landscape: An exhibition of Glover Prize Winners

16 March 2013 to 16 February 2014

Into the Wild - Wilderness Photography in Tasmania

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>

Email : secretary@lfnc.org.au