



**THE LAUNCESTON NATURALIST**  
**Volume LI No. 1 October/November 2017**

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 Forteath  
President : Mr Tom Treloggen, 0408 341 397  
Hon. Secretary : Mr Phillip Brumby, 0407 664 554  
Hon. Treasurer : Mrs Karen Manning, 0363 442 277

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

**Program:**

December ~ Tuesday 5  
Members Night ~ *The Year That Was* and Photographic Competition

December ~ Saturday 9  
Christmas get-together at Skemps (further information page 2)

January ~ Friday 19 to Monday 21  
Ben Lomond (further information page 14)

February ~ Saturday 3  
Tamar Saltmarsh Monitoring starts for 2018 with NRM North (further information page 14)

February ~ Tuesday 6  
General Meeting ~ Guest Speaker Helen and Mick Statham ~ *10 days at Spitzbergen*

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

## **Skemps Report, October - November**

The Centre looks good after a spring clean, including washing of windows and brushing away the cobwebs. The furniture has since been returned to the proper place and mattress covers washed and put back on to finish the job. Thank you all those who put in the effort at such short notice. Using recent falls we are working on restocking our fire wood supplies and this is going well and John is happy with a fancy device he made from Internet instructions to make it easier to split wood. Thanks to Grant the mower has had three runs in November, although this month also included a minor break down and a service.

As you may know a wombat was relocated to Skemps for its own safety late in September and there is evidence that it has stayed. I have seen wombat scats on the dam wall of the top pond, near the gate of the Federation Corridor and on the Bedfordia Nature Trail and there appears to be a burrow there as well. Our wildlife camera captured what I assume is a wombat at the top pond and unfortunately it has twice photographed a feral cat as well.

On Wednesday 22 November, members of the Australian Plant Society (APS), Northern Group that included 6 members of our Club, visited Skemps to look at eucalypts. This field trip was a follow-up to a talk given by Alan Gray the evening before. Alan is an Honorary Botanist at the Tasmanian Herbarium; is an expert on Eucalypts and has discovered and named several species.

During our walk on the Forest track, Alan shared his knowledge of the eucalypts as well as other plants and explained the origins of the names. An impressive walk which gave us more information on the eucalypts at Skemps and Alan brought to our attention the misidentification of one of the eucalypts, requiring a change to the name tag.

Noel

### **Sightings**

**November** ~ John had seen an Eastern water rat as road kill near Queechy Lake and an Eastern Rosella in Norwood. Daphne reported an eastern barred bandicoot feeding on their lawn in daylight, also eastern spinebills trying various blossom in their garden before returning to his/her traditional favourite – bottlebrush. Tina reported a great cormorant at Queechy Lake trying to pierce the skin of a dead eel too big to swallow, then sloshing it around in the lake to “soften” it.

### **Christmas at Skemps, Saturday 9 December**

Members are reminded that they are welcome to invite their family and friends to join them at the end of year function at Skemps.

If you and your guests would like to participate in the Secret Santa (optional), please provide an appropriate wrapped gift up to \$10 to put under the tree and ensure your name is placed on Santa's list when you arrive at the Centre. Please label your gift 'male' or 'female' if it is gender specific. If you bring a child you may place a gift for them under the tree. This gift should be well labeled with their name and will be given out separate to the secret Santa and we hope that Santa will make an appearance prior to afternoon tea. Every adult attending will go in the draw for the lucky door prize so get your ticket on arrival.

Please bring your own lunch and a plate of food to share for afternoon tea would be appreciated. The barbeque will be lit for those who choose to cook their lunch and hot drinks will be provided.

### **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING ~ 3 October 2017**

Thank you to the twenty six members who showed their support by attending the AGM dinner meeting at the Plough Inn in Launceston.

Judith Handler started the evening by presenting her report for 2017.

“Good evening, for what will be my only report as president of the Launceston Field Naturalists Club. As most of you will know, I am not renominating as we aim to move south. If I looked back for highlights it is perhaps the increasing move towards citizen science. Fortunately we are also increasingly being shown opportunities to link this data to broader studies.

We were blessed with two Skemps memorial lectures this year, courtesy of the delay caused by last year’s floods, both were on the dire challenges facing shorebirds. Our December presentation was by Jennifer Lavers on migratory birds, and our May 2017 presentation by Eric Woehler on resident shorebirds. Both speakers had selflessly dedicated their resources as well as their working lives to the study of these birds, and we are all indebted to them, but they also showed us opportunities to assist by reporting our own monitoring and findings to relevant sites.

Of our other birds presentations, Helen and Mick Statham’s March presentation on the orange bellied parrot in the Melaleuca area shared what can be achieved by involvement in formal bird monitoring, plus enough on the unique nature of the Melaleuca area to prompt some members to plan a trip, possibly for next year. In August James Pay described the challenges of monitoring eagles and the vast distances they may cover, and our Patron Nigel Forteach reminded us of birds in our own area.

In June John Harris showed us efforts to preserve wombats from sarcoptic mange infection, and Karen added to this at our July members night with a presentation of how we can link our wombat sightings to the WomSAT website. Neither are plants exempt from these challenges, as highlighted by our most recent presentation by Tanya Bailey on climate change and implications for revegetation.

Field trips in which our members participated in structured citizen science activities included January surveys of shorebirds and saltmarsh plants with NRM North’s Tamar Saltmarsh Surveys, (8 members), and in late January, (with many of the same members) the annual monitoring of crowded leek orchids at Surrey Hills. Here they learned valuable techniques for monitoring the numbers and density of small plants. We have also continued our water monitoring and tree planting, maintenance, and monitoring at Skemps. For wildlife monitoring at Skemps we have purchased a wildlife monitoring camera, and five members attended a NRM North workshop on the use of these cameras.

Just to add to the diversity, other activities included a trip to East Beach at one of the very low tides, two opportunities to visit Ben Lomond, one of which was the Easter Federation weekend organised by the Tasmanian Field naturalists, a trip to the Steppes looking at alpine vegetation and geology, the usual fern and fungi hunts (plus snails), the radio telescope open day at Cambridge, and a winter visit to the Queen Victoria Museum collections. Insects also got a mention with Simon Fearn’s talk on drivers of variation in Christmas beetles across its range.

Thus a large proportion of our talks involve challenges to our plant or animal life as a result of climate change and/or other human activity, and a large proportion of our activities already involve data collection which could form the basis of monitoring. This move to participation in citizen science can only help to rejuvenate the club and help it re-engage with like minds currently in a fragmented network of clubs and working groups. Those of us who were lucky enough to attend Dr Claire Hawkins’ Royal Society’s presentation on citizen science at the QV Museum recently heard of increased efforts to link and facilitate these networks to provide robust data to assess these challenges, and their responses. This includes an excellent phone app **I Naturalist** that I would recommend, to immediately record GPS data for your photos and send these to appropriate sites, and tell you what else has been seen in the area. I am sure that this move will provide a most interesting future, to augment the identification studies that have served the club so well in the past, and which continue to contribute to club publication.

I wish you well in these endeavours, but first I must thank a few people. Firstly the committee, but also other contributions. The work of the Tuesday group at Skemps, especially Noel and John, John’s role as booking secretary, the working group including Roy and Marion who are reviewing our plant

book, and the effort that goes into production of our calendar and Year That Was presentations, other member presentations. These are all essential components of the club. I thank you all, and it has been a privilege to work with you. Thank you”

### **Election of Office Bearers for 2017/2018 Financial Year.**

Nominations for the following positions were received by the Secretary prior to the AGM and as there were no other nominations, the positions were declared filled.

President : Tom Treloggen  
Vice President : Philip Brumby  
Treasurer : Karen Manning  
Secretary (Correspondence) : Philip Brumby  
Committee Members : Prue Wright, Lois Ralph, Peter Ralph and Peter Warren

The following nominations were accepted from the floor and as there were no further nominees, they were declared elected.

Committee Members : Jill Campbell and Noel Manning

Members approved the motion, that all memberships remain the same as the previous financial year, junior \$5.00, single \$30.00 and family \$50.00 and that the Associate group membership be increased to \$55.00.

Nigel Forteath was nominated as Patron and honorary memberships were proposed for G and G Hanson, J and C Green, and N and M Forteath. J Battersby was nominated as Auditor. There were no objections and all were accepted by members.

Noel Manning thanked Judith on behalf of members for her leadership during her time as President and wished her and Mike well with their move.

### **FIELD TRIP ~ Friday 13 to Sunday 15 October**

**~ Wombat Monitoring at Barnbogle, Orchid hunt at Ansons Bay with NE Field Nats  
& visit to Winifred Curtis Reserve**

### **Barnbogle Lost Farm Golf Course, Friday 13 October**

A wet Thursday had postponed our volunteering with Wombat Rescue so we headed off early on the Friday to get the job done along the way to our east coast field trip. Ann arrived just behind us at the golf course car park and we were soon joined by Allison from Wombat Warriors and headed to the workers shed at the Lost Farm links.

We were assigned two Toro work trucks and headed out to the grounds with Ann driving Karen while I was in with Allison and her gear. We stopped near the driveway to the work shed and after a short walk over the rough grounds found our first wombat burrow. Allison told us the number of the gate, emptied out the rain water, checked for signs that the hole was being used and replenished the Cydectin. She also scraped away the scats and tracks so that on the next visit she would know that the burrow was being used.

We travelled extensively over the course checking all known burrows and topping up the Cydectin with some gates being removed as the burrows were obviously unused. At one area near a farm fence we walked some distance along the boggy ground between the fence and a dune finding two new burrows. Gates were added to these and the location marked and noted in the log book.

We marvelled at the tenacity of the golfers as they walked the windswept golf course which was often quite cold. Having checked all marked burrows we had a late lunch in the workers crib room.

After lunch we headed to an area one dune away from the beach to spend the last hour looking for burrows not yet in the register. The wind seemed to have strengthened and in the more exposed places whipped sand into our faces. I regretted not bringing my gaiters as we clambered over the steep dunes with grass up to a metre high obscuring the ground and I did see a snake, a small copper head I think. I headed for the higher parts in the hope of seeing evidence of new burrows from the sand thrown out by the wombat only to find the wind stronger. During an hour of searching we found no new burrows, no scats or the familiar well used trails left by foraging wombats.

Back at the shed we parked our trucks in the rapidly filling shed, said our thanks and goodbye to the workers and headed to our cars. After a chat with Allison about the day and future trips with her, Ann, Karen and I decided to have a coffee at the Lost Farm Restaurant. We sat behind the huge glass windows with an outstanding view out over the golf course to the sea and watched the birds and a boat being buffeted by very strong winds. Rested and refreshed we departed to our respective accommodation for the weekend, with Karen and I doing a side trip to the Mt Paris Dam. A kilometre out from the dam we saw a small healthy wombat and as we returned to our car after looking at the dam we saw a large healthy wombat wondering around in the carpark. Noel

### **Ansons Bay, Saturday 14 October**

Seven LFNC members met at the shack of the Bicanic family from the NE club for our morning drink, a chat with the other field naturalists in attendance and to listen to an introduction to the walk. Birds around the bay were identified during the walk and we headed off identifying plants along the way and looking for orchids already spotted by our hostess.

As we headed south along the foreshore track Roy was kept busy identifying the rarer plants and all known orchids in the area were found along with one or two others. We turned west along the shore of the Ansons River for a short walk and then through the bush back to the shack for lunch and to compare notes on our finds. This was a wonderful wild flower walk with an impressive variety of plants. Everything seeming to be at its best and the display included all colours, shapes and sizes.

After lunch we drove to a nearby street to look at the yellow rock orchid that was growing profusely on a huge granite boulder which appeared to be balanced precariously above a house. From here we drove to Policemans Point and went for a long walk along the beach and around the point from the sand bar entrance to Ansons Bay. This took us to a dry stony lowland area which may have been a lagoon and we were told that it had been full of water during the June floods of 2016. We saw a large midden and noted the sparse vegetation in the bare rocky soil. Animals climbing a sand dune had left strange but pretty patterns on the steep slope of the lee side of the dune. Back at the car park we thanked our hosts before heading back to our accommodation and our Indian evening meal with members who attended today and a few others who had made the trip to St Helens late today in preparation for our trip to Winifred Curtis tomorrow morning. Noel & Karen

### **Circuit walk in Anson's Bay**

**Flora:** *Acacia genistifolia*, spreading wattle; *A. mearnsii*, blackwattle; *A. melanoxyton*, blackwood; *A. terminalis*, sunshine wattle; *A. verticillata*, prickly moses; *Acaena echinata*, sheep's burr; *Acrotiche serrulata*, ant's delight; *Allocasuarina littoralis*, black she-oak; *Ampera xiphoclada*, broom spurge; *Aotus ericoides*, golden pea; *Astroloma humisfusum*, ant's delight; *Banksia marginata*, silver banksia; *Blechnum minus*, soft water fern; *B. nudum*, fishbone water fern; *Boronia pilosa*, hairy boronia; *Bossiaea cinerea*, showy bossia; *Bursaria spinosa*, prickly box; *Carex appressa*, swamp sedge; *Carpobrotus rossii*, native pigface; *Cassytha melantha*, dodder; *Clematis aristata*, mountain clematis; *Comesperma volubile*, blue lovecreeper; *Coronidium scorpioides*, curling everlasting; *Correa reflexa*, common correa; *Dianella tasmanica*, flax lily; *Dichondra repens*, creeping dichondra; *Dicksonia antarctica*, soft tree fern; *Diplarrena morea*, white flag iris; *Diuris orientis*, eastern wallflower orchid; *Dodonea viscosa*, hopbush; *Drosera macrantha*, climbing sundew; *D. peltata*, pale sundew; *Euryomyrtus ramosissima*, rosy heathmyrtle; *Exocarpos* sp., (shrubby) native cherry; *E. cupressiformis*, common native-cherry; *Geranium potentilloides*, mountain cranesbill; *Gleichenia dicarpa*,

pouched coral fern; *G. microphylla*, scrambling coral fern; *Glossodia major*, waxlip orchid; *Glyceria australis*, Australian sweetgrass; *Hibbertia procumbens*, spreading guineaflower; *H. hirticalyx*, bassian guinea-flower; *Histiopteris incisa*, bat's wing fern; *Kennedia prostrata*, running postman; *Lepidosperma concavum*, sand swordedge; *Leptomeria drupacea*, erect currantbush; *Leucopogon australis*, spike beard-heath; *L. virgatus*, common beard-heath; *Lobelia pedunculata*, matted lobelia; *Lomandra longifolia*, sagg; *Luzula campestris*, field woodrush; *Melaleuca ericifolia*, coast paperbark; *Micrantheum hexandrum*, river tridentbush; *Monotoca elliptica*, tree broomheath; *Olearia lirata*, forest daisybush; *Patersonia fragilis*, short purpleflag; *Pimelea linifolia*, slender riceflower; *Pomaderris apetela*, dogwood; *Pteridium esculatum*, bracken fern; *Pterostylis nutans*, nodding greenhood; *P. pedunculata*, maroonhood; *Pultenaea daphnoides*, heartleaf bushpea; *Pyrorchis nigricans*, fire orchid; *Ricinocarpos pinifolius*, wedding bush; *Rubus parvifolius*, native raspberry; *Stackhousia monogyna*, forest candles; *Stylidium graminifolium*, narrowleaf triggerplant; *Tetratheca pilosa*, hairy pinkbells, *Thelymitra* sp., sun orchid; *Thysanotus patersonii*, twining fringelily; *Viola hederacea*, ivyleaf violet; *Xanthorrhoea australis*, southern grasstree.

**Birds:** *Acanthiza pusilla*, brown thornbill; *Anthochaera chrysoptera*, little wattlebird; *Biziura lobata*, musk duck; *Chroicocephalus novaehollandiae*, silver gulls; *Colluricincla harmonica*, grey shrike-thrush; *Haliaeetus leucogaster*, white-bellied sea-eagle; *Larus pacificus*, pacific gull; *Pelecanus conspicillatus*, Australian pelican; *Phylidonyris novaehollandiae*, new holland honeyeater

**Miscellaneous:** *Lepispilus sulcicollis*, darkling beetle; *Prascinocyma semicrocea*, gum emerald moth; skink  
**Orchid Rock**

**Flora:** *Banksia marginata*, silver banksia; *Clematis aristata*, mountain clematis; *Comesperma volubile*, blue lovecreeper; *Dockrilla striolata* ssp *chrysantha*, yellow rock-orchid; *Indigofera australis*, native indigo; *Solanum laciniatum*, kangaroo apple.

**Bush area on way to Policeman's Point area**

**Flora:** *Acianthus pusillus*, small mosquito-orchid; *Allocasuarina littoralis*, black she-oak; *Calochilus* sp., beard-orchid; *Chiloglottis triceratops*, three-horned bird orchid; *Dianella tasmanica*, flax lily; *Eucalyptus* ? *amygdalina*, peppermint; *Lomandra longifolia*, sagg; *Pteridium esculatum*, bracken fern.

**Sand dune circuit at Policeman's Point**

**Flora:** *Acacia longifolia* subsp *sophorae*, coastal wattle; *Atriplex* sp. saltbush; *Bursaria spinosa*, prickly box; *Carpobrotus rossii*, native pigface; *Ficinia nodosa*, knobby clubbrush; *Leucopogon parviflorus*, coast beardheath; *Lomandra longifolia*, sagg; *Olearia* sp., daisybush; *Polypogon monspeliensis*, annual beardgrass; *Tetragonia implexicoma*, bower spinach

**Birds:** *Arenaria interpres*, ruddy turnstone; *Haematopus longirostris*, Australian pied oystercatcher.



*Ricinocarpos pinifolius*, wedding bush



*Bossiaea cinerea*, showy bossia

**Winifred Curtis Reserve, Sunday 15 October**

Eight LFNC members arrived at the Reserve on a bright sunny morning. Our first observation when entering the reserve was that it was dominated by understorey, mainly bracken fern, and this appeared to be due to a lack of larger trees. The *Allocasuarina* trees especially had been destroyed

in the fire although some *Eucalyptus* species had survived and both trees were represented in the new growth. The area had experienced a bad dry spell, as confirmed by locals, and this and the thick understorey may have stunted the growth of the new trees. A small stand of trees had survived the fire and the understory was much thinner and similar to what we had seen during our first visit to the reserve. There were many *Comesperma ericinum* (heath milkwort) shrubs in this area and the occasional *C. volubile* (blue lovecreeper).

We did a circuit walk, starting along the edge of Henderson Lagoon. *Acacia verticillata* (prickly moses), *Melaleuca ericifolia* (coast paperbark) and *M. squarrosa* (scented paperbark) were in flower and there were many stands of *Allocasuarina littoralis* (black she oak) trees. Saltmarsh species included *Carpobrotus rossii* (native pigface), *Rhagodia candolleana* (coastal saltbush) and *Sarcocornia quinqueflora* (beaded glasswort). Also seen were a variety of grasses and there were many water birds on the lagoon.

At a fork in the track we continued right and walked to the ford at the end of the Old Coach Road, where we observed the birds in the lagoon while waiting for members to catch up. On our return we saw *Aotus ericoides* (golden pea), *Calytrix tetragona* (common fringemyrtle), *Euryomyrtus ramosissima* (creeping heathmyrtle), *Olearia lirata* (forest daisybush), *Pimelea linifolia* (slender riceflower), *Platylobium triangulare* (arrow flatpea) and *Tetradheca labillardierei* (glandular pinkbells) flowering along the track. There were a few *Xanthorrhoea australis* (southern grasstrees) with emerging spikes. As the day warmed, the grasshoppers became active and were jumping across our path, but not quite out of Taylor's reach as she caught a few for a closer look. These were probably the flightless Tasmanian grasshopper, *Tasmaniacris tasmaniensis*.

Following lunch in the carpark under the shade of the eucalypt trees, five of us continued along the coast calling into Falmouth and then at a beach a few kilometres further down the road. We walked along the beach to the rocky point, disappointed not to find any rockpools, although we did see some birds nesting on the beach.

We met up with Jill and Taylor again at St Mary's and had a cold drink and a snack at the Elephant Café before the final leg of our journey home.

Over the weekend ten members participated in activities at the three different locations and we enjoyed ourselves immensely. Due to the dry conditions we didn't find all the plants in flower we had hoped to photograph.

Karen

## **SKEMPS DAY ~ Sunday 29 October**

### **~ Macroinvertebrate Monitoring and Tree Decline Monitoring**

Arriving at Skemps this morning it was warm and windy. While Noel and Tom went out for the water sample, we set up the trays and other tools in the back porch out of the wind to allow the water sample to settle while we finished our cuppa. The area was a little cramped but worked for our needs finding 10 different species of macroinvertebrate.

Judith set up the microscope and using the macroinvertebrate key, identified the species and took photos should we need evidence to confirm our findings in the future. While this was being done Noel and Tom had taken cutting tools and gone down and trimmed the biggest Tasmanian Waratah planted by the late Jean Carins as it was looking rather poorly with many dead or dying branches.

During the afternoon we wandered down to the *Pimelea pauciflora*, poison pimelea which had been identified as a plant of note on the property's covenant. The pimelea was in flower and during our walk we found another three shrubs. We also checked our recent planting under the Forico plantation and all the trees looked good, although there was a little bit of burning on some Blackwood leaves, possibly caused by the plastic sleeves around them, which we will keep an eye on.

The resident Echidnas were out and about strutting their stuff, and paid no attention to our getting close and photographing them. Noel said he thought wombat scats were on a board walk

near the top pond. We all agreed that the herbivore scats were the appropriate oblong shape and we hope the scats belong to the wombat relocated onto Skemps last month.

The proposed tree monitoring was not carried out today due to the high winds. Karen

Macroinvertebrates identified were:

Tolerance ranking	Classification Group	Common Name
Very sensitive	Plecoptera	Stonefly larva
	Odonata	Dragonfly larva
Sensitive	Ephemeroptera	Mayfly nymph
	Odonata	Damselfly larva
	Trichoptera	Caddis fly larva
Medium	Veliidae	Small water strider
	Amphipoda	Side-swimmer (scud)
	Arachnida	Water mite
Tolerant	Simuliidae	? Black fly larva
Very tolerant	Culicidae	? Mosquito larva
	Chironomidae	Chironomid worm
	Oligochaeta	Segmented worm

#### VISIT BY CENTRAL NORTH FIELD NATURALISTS TO LAUNCESTON

On Sunday, 5<sup>th</sup> November members of the Central North Field Naturalists made a rare visit to Launceston to look at 'Birds, Water and a little Geology around Launceston'. An offer had been extended to LFNC members to join them but, because of the long weekend and the LFNC trip to Maria Island, unfortunately only 2 were able to attend.

18 CNFC members from as far afield as Boat Harbour, Turners Beach, Devonport and Sheffield arrived at Queechy Lake – for most of them their first visit. There was general surprise at the range of birds seen on what is really just a suburban pond. The highlight for some of the visitors was seeing Royal Spoonbills, which are fairly rare in Tasmania. Two pairs were nesting and another 3 provided a good photographic opportunity by wading and sweeping their bills through the water searching for food.

Considered the rarest waterfowl in Australia, we also saw some Freckled Ducks. Nearly 50 had arrived at the end of July at Queechy Lake. There appear to be about 30 still at the Lake but they're not easily seen during the day.

Although Little Pied and some Little Black Cormorants were also nesting in the willows, the Great Cormorants were still very few in number. They usually arrive later in November. However, one with a large dead eel, too big for it to swallow, was concentrating on trying to pierce the skin. Failing to achieve this while sitting on a gravel bank, the cormorant took to the lake and continued to try and soften the eel by dunking it in the water. It disappeared in the direction of the willow island so we never knew if it was successful. But, as one visitor remarked, the birds had put on a "good show".

From the Lake we all went to Punchbowl for lunch and "a little geology". The main objective was the sign-posted "Natural Fissure" where the Kings Meadows Rivulet falls between and over dolerite rocks. In times of heavy rain, this becomes a small but impressive waterfall. However, as it had been so dry, the flow was much more modest. Peter Manchester describes the Rivulet as having "etched" its flow along a fault line (Created from Chaos, p.11).

From there, most of us drove to the Tamar Wetlands where some of us walked to Tamar Island while others, with a long way to travel, turned back or spent more time in the Visitor Centre.

The weather had been perfect so I think it was a pleasant day for the visitors and it had shown them a part of Launceston most knew nothing about. I enjoyed it anyway! Tina McGlynn

### **FIELD TRIP ~ Saturday 4 to Monday 6 November ~ Weekend at Maria Island**

Participants in the Maria Island weekend were on the road at 7am to make the 2 ½ hour journey to Triabunna to catch the new larger ferry Encounter. Our trip across was very calm compared to previous trips in the smaller boats, although a rough encounter with the Darlington wharf resulted in a cracked window.

Arriving before 11am we were greeted by the Park Ranger and then made ourselves comfortable in the allotted rooms, our homes for the next two nights. After settling in Karl, Claire and I collected enough firewood for the group and had lunch, awaiting Prue's family who were arriving in the early afternoon. Once they unpacked, we all headed to the Painted Cliffs to take advantage of the low tide. Every crevice in the rocky platform was filled with the waratah anemone, Neptune's necklace, coralline algae and snakeskin chitons. The cliffs with their exquisite patterns were popular during the afternoon with many tourists visiting and taking photos and the East Coast Cruise boat from Triabunna also stopping for passengers to view the cliff. On our return to Darlington, we visited Howell's Cottage and Ruby Hunt's Cottage, which were former homes of early settlers on the island.

We talked to the ranger about the devils and she was very helpful in answering our questions about the introduction of them to the island and how they had adapted. In 2012, the fifteen devils that came to the island were fitted with radio-tracking devices so that they could be monitored closely. They had been bred in captivity and had no hunting skills and for an initial period were "given" wallaby carcasses until they adjusted to hunting for their food. They were regularly trapped to keep a check on their health during their adjustment. Display boards indicated that the female devils introduced in 2012 bred successfully with 20 offspring born during the first year. An additional 13 devils were released in 2013, they also adapted well to life on the island and it is believed that there were possibly another 30 to 50 offspring produced in 2014. There was a map showing devil sighting locations at the Information Centre, although the ranger said we would be very unlikely to see one during our stay, and did not suggest what the population number of devils was at this time.

At various times during the stay we all visited the Fossil Cliffs, an old quarry cut from the cliff face to provide lime for the large cement works. In the cliffs and the rocks strewn about the site the fossils have been exposed, including shells, sea fans and coral.

We also visited the Reservoir, a dam originally constructed by convicts and enlarged by later settlers, to supply water to the Darlington settlement and it is still in use today. Walking the roadway behind the Penitentiary, we passed the foundation remains of 12 small houses that were built for workers which are called the Twelve Apostles. Further up the road we saw blue gums in flower, and dogwoods, blackwoods and sunshine wattles. Crossing the creek and walking up hill on grass below the Reservoir, we noticed that the kangaroo and wombats outnumbered us by quite a bit and the groups of large kangaroo were rather intimidating as they stared at us.

The Oast House was another of the old ruins visited, accessed via a track through an open eucalypt forest and later forest with understorey of daisybush and prickly box. Black cockatoos could be heard calling and were later seen in the taller trees.

On the Sunday our family did a boat tour which took us out to the Ile des Phoques (Island of Seals) which is between Maria and Schouten Island. On the way we stopped to watch thousands of flocking short-tailed shearwaters ducking and diving into the water getting a feed after the long flight back from the Arctic region. At the island, we spent time observing the fur seals who swam out to the boat much to the joy of passengers wanting photographs and a large albatross floated nearby. Further round the back of the island the captain nosed the boat into both of the giant sea caves for us to see the greens, pinks and purple colours in the granite. As we left the island we watched as one of the pair of nesting sea-eagles took to the sky.

Back at Maria we stopped at the Fossil Cliffs to see the spring-fed waterfalls and then a short trip to the south west of the island to a quiet bay for our lunch. With magnificent views, knowledgeable commentary and finishing with an impressive meal we can highly recommend this trip with East Coast Tours.

On Sunday afternoon many of us took a leisurely stroll along the beach at Darlington Bay looking at the flotsam and jetsam, and then around to the pier to say goodbye to Prue's family who were heading home.

Later that night word got around that a Tasmanian devil had been seen at the foot bridge near our accommodation. Those who had finished their evening meal went to have a look but couldn't locate it. Prue had said that she had seen lots of devil scats further up the creek, so after dark, Jilly, Helen and Prue took their deck chairs to that area and waited for a devil in comfort. They reported that one devil appeared but only briefly and it scampered away, not giving enough time to get their camera out to get a snap.

It was wonderful seeing all the wombats and their cute babies roaming around the settlement area. We were under the impression that there was no mange on the island, but we did see some wombats that were obviously affected which was quite upsetting.

An enjoyable weekend with great weather in good company.

Noel & Karen



Cute little wombat



Painted cliffs are very popular

**Flora:** *Acacia melanoxylon*, blackwood; *A. siculiformis*, dagger wattle; *A. terminalis*, sunshine wattle; *A. verticillata*, prickly moses; *Aceana nova zelandiae*, common buzzy; *Allocasuarina littoralis*, bullock; *A. verticillata*, drooping sheoak; *Banksia marginata*, silver banksia; *Bedfordia salicina*, Tasmanian blanketleaf; *Bursaria spinosa*, prickly box; *Carpobrotus rossii*, pink pigface; *Eucalyptus globulus*, Tasmanian Blue gum; *Exocarpos cupressiformis*, native cherry; *Leptecophylla juniperina* sp., pinkberry; *Olearia argophylla*, musk daisybush; *O. lirata*, shrubby daisybush; *Pimelea nivea*, roundleaf riceflower; *Pomaderris apetala*, rough dogwood; *Tetragonia implexicoma*, bower spinach; *Viola hederacea*, ivyleaf violet; *Wahlenbergia* sp., bluebell

**Mammals:** *Bettongia gaimardi*, Tasmanian bettong; *Macropus giganteus*, Forester kangaroo; *Macropus rufogriseus*, red-necked wallaby; *Sarcophilus harrisii*, Tasmanian devil; *Tachyglossus aculeatus*, echidna; *Thylogale billardierii*, red-bellied pademelon; *Trichosurus vulpecular*, common brushtail possum; *Vombatus ursinus*, common wombat

**Reptiles:** *Egernia whitii*, white's skink; *Niveoscincus metallicus*, metallic skink

**Birds:** *Acanthiza chrysorrhoa*, yellow-rumped thornbill; *A. pusilla*, brown thornbill; *Alauda arvensis*, Eurasian skylark (i); *Anas castanea*, chestnut teal; *A. superciliosa*, pacific black duck; *Anthochaera chrysoptera*, little wattlebird; *Ardenna tenuirostris*, short-tailed shearwater; *Artamus cyanopterus*, dusky woodswallow; *Cacomantis flabelliformis*, fan-tailed cuckoo; *C. pallidus*, pallid cuckoo; *Calyptorhynchus funereus*, yellow-tailed black-cockatoo; *Cereopsis novaehollandiae*, Cape Barron Geese; *Colluricincla harmonica*, grey shrike-thrush; *Coracina novaehollandiae*, black-faced cuckoo-shrike; *Corvus tasmanicus*, forest raven; *Cracticus tibicen*, Australian magpie; *Dacelo novaeguineae*, laughing kookaburra (i); *Haematopus fuliginosus*, sooty oyster-catcher; *H. longirostris*, Australian pied oyster catcher; *Haliaeetus leucogaster*, white-bellied sea-eagle; *Larus*

*dominicanus*, kelp gull; *L. pacificus*, pacific gull; *Lichenostomus flavicollis*, yellow-throated honeyeater; *Malurus cyaneus*, superb fairy-wren; *Melithreptus* sp., honeyeater (small flock); *Microcarbo melanoleucos*, little pied cormorant; *Ninox novaeseelandiae*, southern boobook; *Pachycephala olivacea*, olive whistler; *P. pectoralis*, golden whistler; *Pardalotus punctatus*, spotted pardalote; *P. striatus*, striated pardalote; *Petrochelidon nigricans*, tree martin (flock of); *Petroica boodang*, scarlet robin; *P. phoenicea*, flame robin; *Phalacrocorax sulcirostris*, little black cormorant; *Phylidonyris novaehollandiae*, new Holland honeyeater; *P. pyrrhopterus*, crescent honeyeater; *Platycedrus caledonicus*, green rosella; *Rhipidura albiscapa*, grey fantail; *R. leucophrys*, willie wagtail (v); *Strepera fuliginosa*, black currawong; *Tachybaptus novaehollandiae*, Australasian grebe; *Thalassarche melanohris*, black-browed albatross; *Thinornis rubricollis*, hooded plover; *Tribonyx mortierii*, Tasmanian native-hen; *Tyto novaehollandiae*, masked owl (heard screech); *Zosterops lateralis*, silveryeye

## **GENERAL MEETING NOVEMBER ~ GUEST SPEAKER ~ DEBORAH HUNTER**

### **~ The central plateau fires of January 2016: how changes in the climate affect ecosystems and ecosystem services (landscape processes)**

Tom introduced Deborah (Deb) Hunter and her talk on how changes in the climate affect ecosystems and ecosystem services (landscape processes).

She started by asking how we perceived climate change and what it means for the places we love and told us her talk would be interactive. As it progressed she asked questions to see if we were familiar with some aspect of her talk, including if we knew that Tasmania's rainfall had changed in the 1970s.

We learnt that the Tasmanian wilderness is one of only three places worldwide that has seven of the 10 criteria for World Heritage listing with both natural and cultural values and many biological values are represented in the caves. A map showed the boundaries of the World Heritage area and most of the karst and its catchment were outside this due to tenure issues as land is privately owned or forestry managed.

A tourist photo showed lightning strikes from Devils Gullet and Deb explained that due to climate change we were seeing lightning resulting in fires as it is not associated with storms and rain. Another image showed the smoke from the fires taken from the Mole Creek Café and we learnt that these fires were some of the worst recorded in this area.

The Central Plateau peatlands are thought to have taken from 12 to 14 thousand years to form and that during the fires of January 2016 a great area of these had burnt over nine days. While some areas of the Central Plateau had burnt down to the rock, two light rains not long after the fires had reduced the damage to the peatlands. Hundreds of hectares of karst catchment also burnt and Deb explained that this was significant for the ecosystem. The first slide showed an area before the fires while the second showed the same place with a bleak landscape after the fires. Further images showed before and after pictures of areas affected by fire while others showed the devastation the fires caused in some places, including the bare rock and burnt cushion plants.

While we see the caves as pretty places to visit, the karst area of the Central Plateau and Western Tiers is a water catchment, a major tourism area and is habitat for many rare creatures, including living Gondwana fossils, which successfully found refuge in the caves during the long glacial periods over the last 2 million years. These caves include 13 endemic species and also have sediments which show the glaciation history of the area. We were treated to images of five of these endemics; *Hickmania troglodytes*, the common Tasmanian cave spider; *Pseudotyranochthonius typhlus*, the Mole Creek pseudoscorpion; an undescribed (spider) *Amaurobiidae* sp.; *Hickmanoxyomma gibbergunyar*, the Mole Creek cave harvestman (spider) and *Anaspides tasmaniae*, cave morph of mountain shrimp.

In lower levels of the caves, below the parts we see when we visit them, there are places with permanent water which rises and falls with the wet and dry seasons. These waters also come to the surface as springs and Deb told us that the spring near Westmorland Falls stops flowing in the dry summer months, although anecdotally this had never been known to dry up as noted by five generations of the local Parsons family.

The fires removed much of the moorlands, including their cushion plants, and the peatlands which Deb described as a sponge, soaking up the big rains and releasing them slowly and with this sponge gone or damaged the heavy rains that followed the fires did a lot of damage to the caves as well as human infrastructure. We saw a picture of the entrance to Croesus Cave with rocks washed from the cave and resting against the entrance grate while another image showed the once fully canopied stream below Westmorland Falls as a wide boulder strewn river bed.

Caves in the area have had the entrance blocked by debris so that these no longer take the first of the flood waters which would reduce the impact downstream and as a result there has been a major change to the farm water supplies in the area.

During 15 or so minutes of questions and answers we learnt that it is not known how well the karst area will recover from the fires and flooding or whether it will become something different.

Judith thanked Deb for her talk and asked members to show their appreciation. Noel

### **SKEMPS DAY ~ Sunday 12 November ~ Spring Cleaning**

Eight members and one visitor arrived today at Skemps to a beautiful morning, perfect for a spring clean of the Centre. It was a small group due to the late notice although we found that it was a great size as we did not get in each other's way.

The cleaning of the fridge and bathrooms were the first tasks finished by Vivien and Claire. The annex bedrooms and two bunkrooms were next with dust and cobwebs removed. The sheets were stripped from the beds and were taken home by the Mannings for a wash knowing that there were a few days of fine weather forecast to get them dry. Noel started the vacuuming of these rooms but was soon told of essential repairs so others took over this while he was busy. As the work progressed the vacuum was emptied three or four times and eventually the carpet cleaner cleaned and filled three times.

Phil arrived with a small steam cleaner and cleaned around the tiles and taps at the sink, the gas cooker and the benches of the kitchen, and later Claire used this machine on the cork tile floors. A great little machine with accessories to do all kinds of jobs.

Arriving a little late Tom T started on the windows and was helped by Tina to quickly finish both inside and out. With the nice weather we decided to hand wash the continuous curtaining in the bunkrooms which we hung up outside to dry and later rehung. Tina and Vivien tidied up the skull display area, while Prue cleaned and dusted around the artefacts found in the old homestead site below the display cabinet. A women's only job saw many items thrown out including broken toys and duplicate bones.

At some stage we had lunch, the BBQ was lit as usual and we sat outside in the sunshine to eat.

The furniture was moved about, except for the eight ball table, and the dining/lounge area was vacuumed. Noel filled and started the carpet cleaner and Prue, Tina, Claire and Vivian did the hard work with it.

At end of the day all intended jobs were completed except for putting the furniture back in place. The Tuesday guys will have this task as the carpet will then be dry.

A big thank you to everyone for their effort today.

Noel & Karen

### **FIELD TRIP ~ Saturday 18 November ~ Tom Gibson Reserve for wildflowers**

Nine members met at the corner of the highway and Barton Road, Epping Forest on a fine, warm Saturday morning for a trip to the Tom Gibson Nature Reserve to see what the late spring had to offer in the northern Midlands.

Our first stop was just inside the gate and we had forgotten the basics. When on such field trips it is easy to forget that we may be in places visited by other people and we need to be careful about where we park our cars and not restrict access for others, even along Skemps Road.

Although we found many plants, including some rare ones, the dry conditions had reduced the numbers and there were few orchid species to be found. Near the entrance gate there were many tiger orchids and the interesting helicopter bush and the prostrate propeller plant were seen. Further along the drive where we made our second stop the area was dominated by larger helicopter bush and there were numerous small native cherry trees growing.

The third stop was at the old shearing shed for a late morning tea and a quick look in the immediate area before heading into the paddocks and down to the small farm dam with sulphur crested cockatoos wheeling in the distance and screeching their disapproval as we approached their nests. The din subsided nearer our destination.

Tom pointed out the strange change of plants where three paddocks met. We were in maybe an old sheep paddock with mostly open grasslands, sparse tussock grasses and dead trees shedding limbs. Further into the old farm was a paddock dominated by trees and a solid understorey of bracken while to the left there were as many trees and some grass with mostly tussock grasses. A pointer to different previous uses.

The dam had frogs, reeds and a weedy water plant while I spotted a bird which spent a long time on a broken tree limb. It disappeared into the hole in the trunk and was joined by another. I assume they were a breeding pair with a nest in the trunk. Over lunch I identified it as a striated pardalote from Tina's bird book and she told me that she had heard its familiar call while we were at the dam.

While we appreciated the shade of the shearing shed as we lunched, we were less than impressed by the smell from the sheep droppings that had accumulated under the building.

After lunch a difficult drive through multiple farm gates followed by a section overgrown with small limbs from the encroaching trees brought us to an open grassy area with a number of plants not seen during the other stops. It looked as though it had not been cleared since our last visit seven years ago.

In this area Roy found a *Lomandra nana* and Louise a *Boronia nana* to add to the growing list. A stop at one of the gates revealed an orchid not seen earlier and we noted the many wombat holes in the fence. Not only had the wombats pushed up or torn the netting wire, in some cases they had also moved the bottom strand.

A productive day despite the dry conditions and we headed off with two car loads stopping at the Epping Forest road house for afternoon tea.

Noel

**Dicots:** *Acacia dealbata*, silver wattle; *Acaena echinata* sp., sheepsburr; *Allocasuarina* sp., sheoak; *Banksia marginata*, silver banksia; *Boronia nana*, dwarf boronia; *Brachyscome spathulata*, daisy; *Burchardia umbellata*, milkmaids; *Bursaria spinosa*, prickly box; *Convolvulus augustissimus* subsp *augustissimus*, blushing bindweed; *Coronidium scorpioides*, curling everlasting; *Dichondra repens*, kidneyweed; *Drosera peltata* subsp *auriculata*, tall sundew; *Exocarpos cupressiformis*, native cherry; *Geranium solanderi*, southern cranesbill; *Gompholobium huegelii*, common wedgepea; *Goodenia lanata*, trailing native primrose; *Hibbertia procumbens*, spreading guineaflower; *Hovea heterophylla*, winter purplepea; *Hypericum gramineum*, small st johns-wort; *Lagenophora stipitata*, blue bottledaisy; *Leptorhynchos squamatus*, scaly buttons; *Leucopogon virgatus*, twiggy beardheath; *Lissanthe strigosa*, peachberry heath; *Lomatia tinctoria*, guitarplant; *Oxalis corniculata*, yellow woodsorrel; *Pimelea humilis*, dwarf riceflower; *Platylobium obtusangulum*, common flatpea; *Poranthera microphylla*, small poranthera; *Pultenaea pedunculata*, matted bushpea; *Ranunculus glabrifolius*, shining buttercup; *Sebaea ovata*, yellow sebaea; *Siloxerus multiflorus*, small wrinklewort; *Spyridium vexilliferum* var *vexilliferum*, helicopter bush; *Stenanthemum pimeleoides*, propeller plant; *Stylidium graminifolium*, narrow triggerplant; *Triptilodiscus pygmaeus*, dwarf sunray; *Veronica gracilis*, slender speedwell; *Viola betonicifolia*, showy violet; *Wahlenbergia gracilis*, sprawling bluebell

**Ferns:** *Pteridium esculentum*, bracken fern

**Monocots:** *Athropodium strictum*, chocolate lily; *Caesia parvifolia* sp., grasslily; *Dianella revoluta* var *revoluta*, spreading flaxlily; *Diuris sulphurea*, tiger orchid; *Eleocharis sphacelata*, tall spikesedge; *Hypoxis hygrometrica*, golden weatherglass (hairy leaves); *Lomandra longifolia*, sagg; *L. nana*, dwarf mat-rush; *Poa* sp., grass; *Rytidosperma pilosum*, wallabygrass; *R. setaceum*, wallaby-grass; *Schoenus apogon*, common bogsedge; *Thelymitra pauciflora*, slender sun orchid; *T. nuda*, plain sun orchid

**Birds:** *Cacatua galerita*, sulphur-crested cockatoo; *Dacelo novaeguineae*, laughing kookaburra (i); *Pardalotus striatus*, striated pardalote

**Mammals:** *Macropus rufogriseus*, red-necked wallaby; *Tachyglossus aculeatus*, echidna  
**Miscellaneous:** *Bombus terrestris*, bumble bee (i); *Pollanis viridipulverulentus*, satin-green forester;  
 Caterpillar



*Coronidium scorpioides*, curling everlasting &  
*Pollanis viridipulverulentus*, satin-green forester



*Arthropodium strictum*, chocolate lily

**FIELD TRIP ~ Ben Lomond National Park**  
 ~ Friday 19 to Monday 21 January 2018

Members are invited to attend this two day field trip to Ben Lomond National Park where we will be staying at the Borrowdale Ski Chalet. If an overnight stay is not for you, come for the day and explore this interesting area.

There are many walks varying in length and difficulty, great photographic opportunities of an unusual terrain and the wildflowers will hopefully be looking good at this time of the year. Please contact Peter Warren on 0409 685 835 if you would like to reserve a bed. You will need to bring a sleeping bag or sheets and blankets, pillows and enough food and drink for your stay, the closest shop is approximately 50 kilometres away.

The cost of a day visit is \$3.75 and an overnight stay is \$11.25 per night. The temperature and weather can change quite quickly, so be prepared and don't forget your camera.

As this visit is to a National Park, all cars need to display a current Parks Pass.

**TAMAR SALTMARSH MONITORING 2018**

NRM North is seeking individuals and community groups interested in being involved in bird, plant and human impacts surveys of Tamar River estuary saltmarshes this summer. Dates at this time are:

Saturday 3 <sup>rd</sup> Feb	8.30 am	West Arm North (near York Town)
Tuesday 6 Feb	10.30 am	West Arm South (near York Town)
Tuesday 13 <sup>th</sup> Feb	9.00 am	Swan Point
Thursday 15 <sup>th</sup> Feb	10.30 am	Long Tom Reef (near George Town)

Registration is essential, to receive further details about other dates and location, what to bring etc., contact Megan Dykman (NRM North Facilitator) on 6333 7775 or email [mdykman@nrmnorth.org.au](mailto:mdykman@nrmnorth.org.au)

## 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. Provide your own food and drinks for the outing and wear/take clothing/footwear suitable for all weather types.
3. When travelling by car in convoy, each driver is responsible to ensure that the vehicle behind is in sight immediately after passing a cross road or fork in the road.
4. When carpooling, petrol costs should be shared between all the passengers, including family of the driver, and based on other clubs the Committee suggested \$11 per 100 km. This is a guideline only.

**Name Tags:** Please wear your name tags to meetings and on outings.

**Tea/Coffee:** A levy of 50c is currently charged for supper provided at meetings.

**Field Centre:** All members have access to the John Skemp Field Centre, but should contact our booking manager, John Elliott on (03) 6344 9303 or [skempbookings@yahoo.com.au](mailto:skempbookings@yahoo.com.au) regarding availability and keys.

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

**Postal Address:** PO Box 1072 Launceston 7250

**Internet site :** <http://www.lfnc.org.au>

**Email :** [secretary@lfnc.org.au](mailto:secretary@lfnc.org.au)

**Newsletter Items :** [newsletter@lfnc.org.au](mailto:newsletter@lfnc.org.au)

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