

# THE LAUNCESTON NATURALIST

Volume LIV No.6 August/September 2023

**The aim of the Launceston Field Naturalists Club is to encourage the study of all aspects of natural history and to support the conservation of our natural heritage**

**Patron : Prof. Nigel Forteach**

**President : Mr Jeff Campbell, 0432 470 311**

**Hon. Secretary : Mr Andrew Smith, 0402 893 378**

**Hon. Treasurer : Mrs Karen Manning, 0363 442 277**

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

## **Program:**

### **October**

**Tuesday 3**

**Club night - Members presentations: Helen Tait on *Sandstone Country* and Jeff Campbell on *Burren in Ireland***

**Thursday 5**

**Monthly Walk - Queechy Lake Reserve for water birds, meet at 10am**

**Saturday 7/Sunday 8**

**Field Trip - Combined excursion with the Tasmanian Field Nat's to Chauncy Vale.**

**Entry to Chauncy Vale is \$2 pp, staying at Dysart (further information pages 7 & 8)**

**Saturday 21**

**Skemps Day - COTA Open Day - Macroinvertebrate monitoring and Walks**

### **November**

**Thursday 2**

**Monthly Walk - Trevallyn Reserve - meet first carpark RHS in from the northern entry to the Gorge**

**Tuesday 7**

**Annual General Meeting, followed by General Meeting**

**Saturday 18**

**Skemps Day - Spring Clean at the John Skemp Field Centre**

### **December**

**Tuesday 2**

**Meeting - Members Night – *The Year That Was*: please bring a plate of food to share**

**Saturday 9**

**Skemps Day - Members Christmas Get-together & JFNC presentations**

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

## Skemps Report – August/September:

Thanks to Andrew, Caitlin, Geoff (new member), Jeff, Karen, Rob and Rod much has been achieved at Skemps, then recently Mother Nature stepped in and made our work much harder.

I recently contacted neighbor Greg to tell him that two of his naughty boys were roaming around Skemps. He went to the property unable to find his young bulls though he did report there was a major fall near the far end of Skemps Road. When we arrived the following week we found another large tree had fallen behind the Centre just missing the building and presenting the five in attendance that day with quite a lot of work.

Jeff suggested we start on the road fall which we did only to have the chainsaw play up. Returning to the Centre we got it started and worked on the other tree which was being trimmed by Caitlin and Karen with loppers, doing a good job to make it easier to get to the bigger branches with the chainsaw which was



still being temperamental.

After an expensive service including the replacement of an electrical component the chainsaw was working well. It seemed to run faster and with much more power and the sharpened chain cut through branch after branch of the fall behind the Centre with that being cleared over two Tuesdays. We then returned to the other fall and managed to clear enough to get a car past with one day's work.

Jeff and I worked fast at cutting limbs behind the Centre leaving quite a mess then the last Tuesday we went to the fall on Skemps Road. When we returned for lunch Karen had done a great job of tidying up, clearing the leaf and twig litter and neatly stacking the fire wood ready to move into storage.

There was another major fall near the Bedfordia trail a few weeks back and one just below the top pond, the latter at least not blocking our way and providing much needed dry fire wood and all these falls, though hard work to clear, will add greatly to our fire wood stocks.

National Tree Day was a washout and the junior field naturalists were unable to plant the trees so kindly donated by Rosemary (V) of the Australian Plant Society Tasmania Northern Group. Four of us spent a Tuesday planting the 30 plus trees and added guards and they are so far doing well with recent rains attending to their thirst.

Using the Gravograph I made a sign for the trees planted for Al Pegler and also one requesting people not to move the old inner spring mattresses. Visitors feel the need to move mattresses and



Tree fall at Bedfordia Track



Road cleared (photos Noel M)

volunteers end up with the task of replacing these heavy items to their proper home in the bedrooms. One at least is not in good enough condition to be moved frequently.

With the reeds in the top pond growing again in the overflow channel the water level was close to the top of the spot where it breached the bank before. Three of us worked on building up the wall and I dug the overflow channel a bit deeper, a job made easier using waders rather than the gum boots used on the previous occasion.

These jobs have meant the track maintenance has been neglected and we know that some are in desperate need of a check at least. If you can help get in touch with me or your committee and I will add your name to the contact list.

Noel Manning

### Day-time Meeting - Tuesday 1 August – Queen Victoria Museum, Inveresk

Members arrived at the Museum today at 10am to look through the exhibits on display and to attend a Planetarium session in the early afternoon.

We enjoyed looking through the photographic display of early member H.J. King called “*Cameras and carburettors*” where we saw images of the motorcycles, cars and aircrafts that he used to access parts of Tasmania that would have been otherwise inaccessible. We also viewed the Wildlife Photographer of the Year exhibits and listened to a screening in the theatre of some of the photographers discussing what it took for them, to take one of the winning images.

A new hands on display was **Australia in Space**, which was very engaging and explained Australia’s contributions to space exploration and how these activities contributed to the space industry. The museum was overrun with school children enjoying the space exhibits. Unfortunately due to the sheer numbers of children using the Planetarium, we were unable to attend our booked showing.

We spent until late afternoon enjoying all the different exhibitions and although disappointed to not have a Planetarium session, we had a great day.

Karen Manning

### Monthly Walk – Thursday 3 August – Kate Reed Reserve

On a rather overcast morning members met at the Kings Meadows end of the reserve using the boardwalks and muddy paths to view or listen to the birds and note the quoll scats. Our keen eared members heard green rosella, grey shrike-thrush, kookaburra, fantail cuckoo, wattle bird,



sulphur crested cockatoo, golden whistler most of which were heard rather than seen as they hid high in the trees and native hens. We enjoyed our walk, taking yet another track not visited before noting only *Acacia dealbata* in flower this early in the season. As usual we collected any rubbish seen along the way.

Karen Manning



**Flora:-** *Acacia dealbata*, *Acacia melanoxylon*, *Acaena novae-zelandiae*, *Allocasuarina verticillata*, *Astroloma humifusum*, *Banksia marginata*, *Cassytha*, *Clematis*, *Eucalypt* with broad leaf and red stem, *Eucalyptus amygdalina*, *Eucalyptus cupressiformis*, *Goodia lanata*, *Hibbertia*, *Kidneyweed*, *Leptospermum ericifolia*, *Olearia common*, *Ozothamnus sp. dusky* daisybush, *Senecio sp*  
**Orchids:-** leaves of *Chiloglottis* and *Pterostylis nutans*

**Grasses:-** *Juncus kraussii*, *Lomandra longifolia*, *Poa labillardierei*, *Sagg*

**Ferns:-** *Blechnum minus* fishbone fern, *Pteridium esculentum*

## Skemps Day – Saturday 19 – Members Day Memorial to Al Pegler

Seventeen members met at Skemps to remember life member Al Pegler and allow his family to see our memorial to him on this pleasant late winter day. Arriving before 10 am Caitlin, Karen and I opened up, prepared the items for hot drinks and set a fire which took some time to warm the Centre. First drinks were in the warmth of the sun where it was far more pleasant than inside. Jeff arrived next with Dianne, Al's son Grant and his wife Pauline and others trickled in over the next hour or so.

Our guests were impressed with the property and Grant compared our birds to those seen in his home state of Western Australia, with Forest Ravens similar in size to their Australian Raven, however their Raven is a soprano to our bass Forest Raven.

They were also shown around the Centre and took particular interest in the many photographs adorning the walls with Grant recognizing the Simmons who he had met during a previous visit some years ago.

I finished the sign to identify our little area devoted to Al and Karen accompanied me to put it in the ground near one of the Blackwood's planted in his memory. We checked our National Tree Day plantings along the way noting that some may need water.

After lunch the last members arrived and those able to headed off to look at the planting for Al. After a short time of personal contemplation and posing for photographs for Tom (M), Jeff said a few words and we then shared memories of Al finding many connections through various organisations. Of particular note was his involvement with the Colour Society with most



wondering about the aims and purpose of such an esoteric group, and the Launceston Environment Centre.

Back at the Centre the afternoon tea treats were set up for some serious snacking and chatting before the Pegler family, who had planned a night out, were the first to leave and it was not long before the rest followed.

After cleaning up and locking the Centre we headed home around 4 pm after one of the best attended Skemps Days for some time.

Noel Manning



Article images Tom McGlynn

## General Meeting/Members Night – Tuesday 5 September – Don Wing Lecture Theatre

For her Puggle, Helen said words and asked members to say something to go with each word. There were contributions from new member Geoff followed by Andrew, Matthew, Roy, Jeff, Louise, Tom and myself. By putting the first letter of each talk together Louise eventually gave the answer to the Puggle as Rainbow.

Rod Holden explained his aspirations for the Junior Field Naturalists group within our Club starting with his views on how different age groups interact with clubs. He explained how well interactions had worked so far, thanking those members who had contributed to date to engage the children. He also showed us a mockup of his internet design for the group, expressed his hope for a much bigger membership and a few ideas for a possible program.

Matthew gave an interesting talk on his recent trip to South America which included three months in Columbia. He first showed a map detailing where the country is and the small connection to the Amazon in the south east corner, noting that there were no roads on the map for that area. He took a two hour flight to get there although it could be accessed by river. He explained that he went to an interesting zoo in Brazil with exotic animals he would not expect to see in the wild, even on a jungle safari, including a jaguar.

Rather than typically boring details of his travels he tabled four wooden animals and two small colourful and intricately woven baskets, hand crafted by local tribes people. His talk was a detailed description of each animal, including their habitat in the Amazon region.

At 2.5 metres and 150 kilograms the pink dolphin subspecies is the largest fresh water dolphin in the world and he was lucky to have seen it on a ferry trip on the river. These mammals have a gestation period of 11 months, are weened at 12 months and are not full independent till three



years of age. He also told us that he dolphins have an organ in their head called a melon that is a bio-sonar echo location system for finding their way in the murky waters. The pink dolphin also has an unusual sexual dimorphism for dolphins in that the males are larger than the females.

He gave a few details of the other dolphin, the grey, which he had also seen on the boat trip, including that it was around half the size of the pink one, had a smaller melon as it favoured the river rather than the murkier side channels and lakes. It was also faster and was more sociable tending to be in pods of up to 30 compared to the three or four in the pink dolphin pods.

The talk then moved on to the manatee with Matthew telling us there were three species with one off West Africa and the other in the West Indies. Although he did not see this herbivore he described it and the difference to the similar Dugong of the Torres Strait. The Amazonian manatee can weigh between 400 and 550 kilograms, can be over 2.5 metres in length, live to 50 years, their 12 teeth will renew and their intestine is 45 metres in length. The manatee tail is paddle like while the dugong tail is more whale like, and after a member question we learnt that the dugong is a salt water creature while the manatee is a fresh water creature that can survive in both fresh and salt water. Matthew introduced us to the crepuscular telling us that it refers to an animal that is seen or is active around twilight.

The talk next moved to the land with the 21 species of armadillo, an interesting creature of the Americas and the armor like covering is bone covered with keratin scales. They are known to curl up when disturbed as they do not have protection on their belly area, live alone in single entrance burrows and feed on insects, grubs, invertebrates, ants and termites. In size, species vary between 85 grams to 60 kilograms, have poor eye sight and a good sense of smell.

Matthew told us he had forgotten his carving of the piranha then went on to tell us the 25 species get an unwarranted bad press. Matthew told us they are a timid creature, preferring to congregate in numbers and not very aggressive. He did warn us that it was not wise to be in the water though if you were bleeding.

The other items he had were small dishes made from the foliage of the *Chambeyronia* palm tree and were quite beautiful, woven artifacts.

Matthew passed his artifacts about and gave a promotion for Columbian travel before Helen thanked him and led the acclamation.

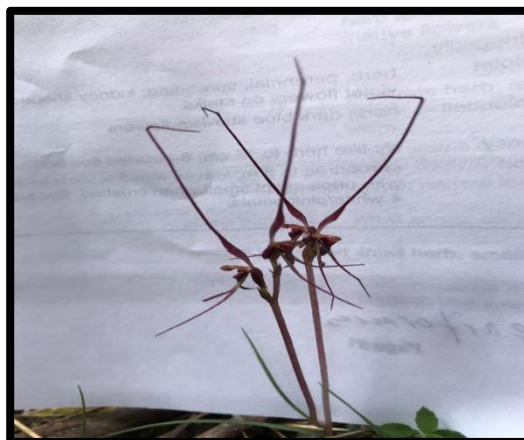
Noel Manning

## Monthly Walk Thursday 7 September – Carr Villa Flora Reserve

Seven members met at the Reserve to look for



wildflowers and orchids. The day was sunny and warm. We noted on arrival that the ivy which had been growing on trees around the entrance on previous visits appears not to have returned, following removal.



Walking around the tracks we were happy to see large areas of orchids growing, *Acianthus caudatus*, mayfly orchid (pictured

**above right**); *Chiloglottis gunnii*, tall bird-orchid; *Diuris sulphurea*, tiger orchid; *Diuris chryseopsis*, common golden moths; *Glossodia major*, waxlip orchid; *Pterostylis nutans*, nodding greenhood (**pictured left page 6**) and *Pterostylis pedunculata*, maroonhood and the following flowering plants: *Acacia genistifolia*, spreading wattle; *Allocasuarina littoralis*, black sheoak; *Billardiera mutabilis*, green appleberry; *Brunonia australis*, blue pincushion; *Comesperma volubile*, blue lovecreeper; *Daviesia latifolia*, hop bitterpea; *Dianella revoluta*, flax lily; *Drosera macrantha*, climbing sundew; *Epacris impressa*, common heath; *Exocarpos cupressiformis*, common native-cherry; *Goodenia lanata*, trailing native-primrose; *Hibbertia riparia*, erect guineaflower; *Hovea heterophylla*, winter purplepea; *Pauridia* sp., yellowstar (**pictured right**); *Pimelea humilis*, dwarf riceflower; *Platylobium obtusangulum*, common flatpea; *Wurmbea dioica*, early nancy.



Karen Manning

## Friday 15 September – Wetlands - Exhibit at QVMAG

A large crowd met at the Queen Victoria Museum & Art Gallery, Inveresk, to view the new Wetlands exhibition. Having entered the building we were greeted by a large selection of food and drink before the official speeches and eventual look at the display in the big room opposite the reception counter.

After an introduction by the director, a talk by our mayor, a welcome to country and comments by Vishnu Prahalad, the Tasmanian authority on wetlands, we entered this impressive exhibition which includes photographs, interactive exhibits and a wealth of items associated with wetlands.

I would encourage everyone to visit the museum for this display which is open until 31 March 2024 and is free.

Noel Manning

## Skemps Day Saturday 23 September – Skemps Day Track Maintenance

Six members and guest Carol attended this event on a pleasant spring equinox day and most took a few short walks around the property.

With most of us having other commitments and limited time to spend at Skemps it was impractical to walk the tracks so Jeff and I worked on cleaning up the tree fallen behind the Centre, mainly continuing with the chainsaw to cut the limbs into firewood lengths. While we appreciate having such a large amount of fire wood available for next winter it will be a big job to finally clear up this mess.

Noel Manning

## 'Sandstone Country' Weekend excursion 7<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> October

Combined visit LFNC (Launceston Field Naturalists Club) and TFNC (Tasmanian Field Naturalist Club) to Sandstone Country around Dysart and Bagdad.

### Saturday 7<sup>th</sup>

Based at the Chauncy Vale Woodland Meeting Centre at Chauncy Vale.

Grahame Green of Southern Midlands Council will meet with us there at 10:00 am.

Easy walking about Chauncy Vale and viewing of the historical Day Dawn cottage, entry fee \$2.00 per adult.

An extended walk to the Tasmanian Land Conservancy Flat Rock reserve.

A shared evening meal and talk with members the TFNC.

Bunk room accommodation at Woodfield Adventure Park east of Dysart

### **Sunday 8<sup>th</sup>**

A range of walks with people with local expertise on private property and local reserves, including Lake Dulverton at Oatlands and Lake Tiberias at Stonor

Members and friends are welcome to join us for one or two of the days

For confirmation of attendance and accommodation arrangements if required, contact Helen on 0429 293 647 or email [htait@bigpond.net.au](mailto:htait@bigpond.net.au)

See <https://www.wildlifelandtrust.org.au/index.php/explore/sanctuariesyoucanstay/814:chauncy-vale-wildlife-sanctuary>

## **Invitation from Windsor Community Precinct – Seniors Week**

Seniors Week is a time to celebrate older Tasmanians and all the wonderful things they do in, and for, our communities. It's a chance to connect with community, try new things and come together.

We would love to extend the invitation to your members to join us for a scrumptious morning tea, activities and fun ahead of the week of celebrations for the 25<sup>th</sup> year of Seniors Week guides are out now and [https://cotatas.org.au/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2023/08/Seniors-Week-Program-2023\\_WEB-low-res.pdf](https://cotatas.org.au/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2023/08/Seniors-Week-Program-2023_WEB-low-res.pdf)

Date and Time: Sunday 15 October 2023 9.45am to 12.00pm at Windsor Community Precinct – Riverside Football Club

Please RSVP for catering purposes by 9<sup>th</sup> October, either directly to Brigid Wilkinson on 62347844 or via links below, and pass on far and wide!

<https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/launch-event-seniors-week-2023-tickets-716969173097?aff=oddtcreator&fbclid=IwAR0pn-w4met20VNeb7-m5g8sVRTi710iYbTuEgTex2V7o4FF5WdNvpdPjBg>

## **Information for AGM in November**

Please note that this year the AGM will be held on Tuesday 7th November, at the Scotch Oakburn Senior College, commencing at 7:30pm. It will be followed immediately by an ordinary members' meeting.

To make any nominations for committee member positions, you are required to submit a nomination form, signed by yourself, a seconder and the nominee - and all have to be paid-up LFNC members. Nominations must reach the Public Officer (Tom Treloggen) by midnight 28 Oct 23, to be valid. Nomination forms will be available at the October General Meeting.



## Additional Information

### Club Outings:

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

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

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

**Field Centre:** All members have access to the John Skemp Field Centre. Please contact our Booking Officer, Andrew Smith [bookings@lfnc.org.au](mailto:bookings@lfnc.org.au) or by phone on 0402                      regarding availability and keys.

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

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

Internet site:        <https://www.lfnc.org.au>

Facebook site:     <https://www.facebook.com/groups/527797787360157/>

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