

THE LAUNCESTON NATURALIST

Issued to members of the Launceston Field Naturalists Club as a contribution to club activities.



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

Volume XLVI I No. 5

June/July 2014

Patron	:	Professor Nigel Forteach
President	:	Mr T Treloggen, 68 Mulgrave St Launceston, 0408 341 397
Vice President	:	Ms J Handler, 52 Entally Rd Hadspen, 6393 6603
Hon. Secretary	:	Mr N Manning, 46 Robin St Newstead, 6344 2277
Hon.Treasurer	:	Ms K Manning, 46 Robin St Newstead, 6344 2277
N'letter Co-ordinator	:	Ms K. Manning
Librarian	:	Ms T McGlynn
Committee	:	Ms Campbell, Ms McGlynn, Ms Wright, Mr Warren

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

PROGRAM

AUGUST

- Tuesday 5** **Guest Speaker: Lee Walters**
Tasmanian Land Conservancy
- Saturday 8 -** **Field Trip: Maria Island**
Sunday 10
- TBA** **Field Trip: Geology on Poatina Road**

SEPTEMBER

- Tuesday 2** **Guest Speaker: Dr Tanya Bailey**
Eucalypt regeneration
- Saturday 13** **Outing: Marion Simmons garden**
- Saturday 20** **Skemp Day: Water Monitoring**

OCTOBER

- Tuesday 7** **AGM Dinner Meeting: Kain's Restaurant, Launceston,**
6pm for 6.30pm. RSVP essential
- Sunday 12** **Field Trip: Badger Head**
- Saturday 18 -** **Australian Naturalists Network get-together. Hosted by**
Monday 27 **Tasmanian Field Naturalists Club, based in Hobart**

NOVEMBER

- Sunday 2** **Landcare activities @ Skemps**
- Tuesday 4** **Guest Speaker: Jane Elek**
Intertidal Marine Life
- Friday 7 -** **Federation of Field Naturalists gathering. Hosted by**
Sunday 9 **Burnie Field Naturalists Club, based in Somerset**
- TBA** **Field Trip: Henry Somerset Reserve, native orchids**
- Sunday 30** **Skemps: Bug Day Out with QVMAG**

To see the full July to December program visit

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

COMMITTEE/GENERAL MEETING

Skemp Report - Following discussion with Committee members, an associate group of the Club, Tamar Valley Masters Hash, headed by Alan Burke has visited Skemps and installed some steps on the walkingtrack to the Ferngully. The steps have made it easier to access this area. Many thanks to Alan and his group. John had been remarking some of the tracks with new tapes and Noel and Grant had been collecting and storing firewood. Recently the Northern Venturer Scouts stayed at the property. During the visit with the Club's approval, they removed a dead tree, chopped it up for firewood and stacked it for drying so it can be used for fires in the Centre next winter.

Puggle

June - Alma McKay asked members the original name of the Sidling area. John Elliott correctly named it as Meredith Range and Meredith Park named after an artist and writer

July - In John Elliott's absence, Tom Treloggen presented the puggle. He asked members to guess the circumference of the base of the big tree on the Skemp property. There were many guesses, but Tom McGlynn was nearest to correct with 10.6 metres. The circumference is 11 metres.

Sightings

June - Linda reported eastern spinebills and yellow tailed cockatoos at Sumerhill. Alma McKay had seen 23 eastern rosellas at Bridport on Sunday, John Elliott saw a Hoary headed grebe at Queechy Lake, Peter Ralph had seen two wedge tailed eagles being harassed by lapwings and Tom saw magpies at Franklin House and grey fantails at Mulgrave Street Launceston.

July - Tom Treloggen had seen three wedge tailed eagles at Skemps on Skull-diggery Day. Prue Wright had seen a white goshawk feeding on road kill on the road north of Beaconsfield.

Library Report

Tina McGlynn reported that the last of the Ruth Upson book bequest had been added to the library and that she was identifying and marking books with a special sticker that contained Tasmaniana. Due to member interest, Tina was also looking at creating a geology section in the library

GENERAL MEETING JUNE - GUEST SPEAKER Tineke Morrison

Kayaking Macquarie Harbour and Lake Pedder

Peter Warren introduced friend and guest speaker Tineke who was to talk on her kayaking trips on Macquarie Harbour and Lake Pedder.

Tineke told us that her background is a teacher and that she had bushwalked all her life and skied all her adult life. When her children became independent she was looking for something new and interesting and chose sea kayaking. Her first trip was to the Gordon and Franklin Rivers with her son Aiden as she had been involved in the campaign to save the Franklin in the early eighties and Aiden had done an assignment

on the campaign at school.

From this trip she became interested in the history of Macquarie Harbour and having read a lot about it, decided that she needed to go back to visit the sights she had learnt about and to photograph the historic places which still existed. It took five kayaking expeditions to visit the main places she was interested in although she did not go to the Huon Pine camps in the upper reaches of the Gordon because it is too difficult to access requiring her to go up the rapids.

In 2007 she spent four days visiting the Gordon and Franklin Rivers with her son Aiden and in 2009 did a ten day solo trip covering all of the harbour, Birches Inlet and the lower Gordon River. In 2012 she did a nine day trip with daughter Andrea and the DVD she showed is based on photos from this trip. Over Easter 2012 she did a quick trip to visit Sarah Island and in 2013 a ten day trip with her son-in-law.

The DVD we were to see was first seen in October 2013 and may end up as part of the Launceston Walking Club's *Do You Know Tasmania* (DYKT) program.

Tineke described herself as neither a photographer nor an historian, rather an adventurer. She also detailed the books and authors who had influenced her interest in Macquarie Harbour starting with a university of Tasmania Associate Professor Hamish Maxwell-Stewart and his book *Closing Hell's Gates* and Richard Davey who wrote the play *The Ship That Never Was*.

Tineke passed around maps showing the places she visited and while the video was being set up she recounted a story about an odd noise she heard at Murders Beach on Macquarie Harbour opposite Sarah Island which involved a loud and regular thumping noise. She was alone the first time she heard it, with her daughter the second time and with her son-in-law on a third occasion. She has returned to the area since and decided not to use that camp again.

Tineke then showed the DVD starting with the Macquarie Harbour trip which was a series of stills with her commentary. The images were mostly from her 2012 trip with daughter Andrea. Question time followed starting with the geography as people tried to relate the names mentioned with the maps Tineke had handed out and then questions about the types of kayak she used, the speed she could attain and safety aspects of the trip.

After considerable technical difficulties associated with the sound we saw the next section of the DVD which covered Lake Pedder. The first part of the DVD was devoted to historic footage of people getting to and enjoying the lake, this was followed by stills from a trip Tineke undertook to the area of the original lake.

Noel thanked her and members showed their appreciation.

Noel Manning

SKEMP DAY - Fungi with Bruce Fuhrer - Saturday 7 June

Members headed out to Skemps today to look for fungi. We were privileged to have Bruce Fuhrer join us for the day. Bruce was a friend of member Rob Mitchelson and was visiting the Launceston area. Rob had taken Bruce to a few areas around the north known for good fungi and invited him to visit the Club's property to look at fungi.

Bruce gave a talk along with a slideshow presentation of images on his interests: fungi, lichens, mosses and insects. Following this talk we headed up the Power Track to

look for fungi, finding quite a few *Mycena* species, *Scleroderma* puffballs and *Hygrocybe* along the way. On the way back down the driveway, we found many other species including a couple which tested Bruce's memory for names.

Following lunch we walked to the bush area above the Top Falls finding golden jelly bells, more species of *Mycena*, pagoda fungus, bracket fungus and a small white capped fungi that Bruce had never seen before. Branches of an old rotting tree were lined with *Lentinellus pulvinulus* which looked spectacular.

Walking back we noted large areas of *Cladia retiporia*, reindeer lichen and collected bones for the upcoming Skullduggery day. Back at the Centre we all had a late afternoon tea, before some members headed home.

Rob and Bruce, were joined by John and Alma for an overnight stay at Skemps and would head to the Blue Tiers the next day to look for more fungi, mosses and lichens.

Karen Manning

Power Track - *Artomyces* sp., coral fungi; *Chlorociboria aeruginascens*, blue wood staining fungi; *Clavaria amoena*, yellow coral fungus; *Discinella terrestris*, orange-yellow disc; *Heterotextus peziziformis*, golden jelly bells; *Hygrocybe chromolimonea*; *Hygrocybe pseudograminnica*; *Hypoloma* sp; *Laccaria* sp; *Lentinellus pulvinulus*; *Leotia lubrica*, jelly baby; *Marismus* sp, purple grey colour; *Mycena interrupta*, pixies parasol; *Mycena kuukacea*; *Mycena subgalericulata*; *Mycena viscidocruenta*; *Mycena* sp, small white; *Mycena* sp, brown; *Psathyrella* sp; *Pseudohydnum gelatinosum*, toothed jelly; *Psilocybe subaeruginosa*; *Russula* sp; *Scleroderma cepa*, puffball; *Stereum illudens*, leathery shelf fungi; *Stropharia semiglobata*; *Thaxterogaster* sp., purple.

Top Falls - *Amauroderma rude*, hard brown polypore; *Ascocoryne sarcoides*, purple gelatinous discs; *Byssomerulius corium*, white crust fungi; *Cladia retiporia*, reindeer lichen; *Clavaria amoena*, yellow coral fungus; *Collybia eucalyptorum*; *Cortinarius clelandii*; *Crepidotus* sp; *Heterotextus peziziformis*, golden jelly bells; *Lactarius eucalypti*; *Macrolepiota* sp; *Mycena hispida*; *Mycena* sp; *Mycena vinacea*; *Pleurotopsis longinqua*; *Podoserpula pusio*, pagoda fungus; *Psathyrella* sp; *Ryvardenia cretacea*, solid polypore; Slime mould; *Stropharia semiglobata*; White coral club.

FIELD TRIP - East Beach - Saturday 21 June

A small group of people met at the Inveresk carpark to make the journey to East Beach to meet up with members living closer to our destination. Just before George Town the rain started, which was predicted, however by the time we arrived at East Beach it had stopped. The sun was shining and as we had arrived early decided it was 'tea o'clock' and in Campbell style had a hot drink while we waited as other members arrived.

We then proceeded to the rocky headland at the Low Head end of the beach to look in the rock pools and under rocks for marine species. We found a striped conniwink and ribbed top-shell at the edge of the rocks and waratah anemones at the base of rocks awaiting the incoming tide. We wandered around the headland for a

couple of hours checking out all the rock pools finding different coloured sponges and seastars, and seaweeds, shells and crabs. With the sky darkening and the rain clouds heading closer we headed back for lunch, not quite making it back to the carpark before it rained.

We lunched undercover and then returned to the beach, this time heading along to the right, to look for petrified wood. The children ran ahead while we strolled along not having much luck. It was on our return that we found a few small pieces among the pebbles and larger stones.

For afternoon tea we reconvened at the Low Head Pilot Station Café for drinks and a sweet treat before heading to our homes after an enjoyable day. Karen Manning

Anemones - *Actinia tenebrosa*, waratah anemone; *Anthothoe albocincta*, white striped anemone.

Barnacles - *Catomerus polymerus*, surf barnacle; *Chamaesipho tasmanica*, honeycomb barnacle; *Chthamalus antennatus*, high tide rock barnacle; *Epopella simplex*, simple volcano barnacle; *Ilba quadrivalvis*, stalked barnacle; *Lepus australis*, goose barnacle

Coral/Seaweed - *Callophyllis rangiferina*, red branch weed; *Celleporaria cristata*, lace coral; *Hormosira banksii*, Neptune's necklace; *Ecklonia radiata*, common kelp; *Caulerpa brownie*, green algae; *Coralina officinalis*, red algae; Coralline algae (segmented branches) possibly *Jania pulchella*; Coralline Algae possibly *Metagoniolithon radiatum*; *Rivularia* sp, dark green algae cushions; *Symploca* sp, hairy irregular patches on rocks; *Seirococcus axillaris*, bristled crayweed; *Tsengia feredayae*, brown (red algae) thallus continuously subdivides by twos

Crabs - *Lomis hirta*, stone crabs; *Notomithrax ursus*, decorator crab; *Petrolistes elongates*, porcelain half crab; Blue crab, one arm

Fish - *Palaemon* sp. Shrimp

Limpets - *Cellana solida*, orange-edged limpet; *Montfortula rugosa*, rough notch limpet; *Emarginula candida*, white notch-limpet; *Patelloida alticostata*, tall-ribbed limpet; *Siphonaria diemenensis*, common siphon-shell

Marine worms and slugs - *Galeolaria caespitosa*, calcareous tubes polychaete worms; Marine worm; *Onchidella patelloides*, intertidal slug.

Seastars - *Meridiastra* sp, 6 arm seastar; *Meridiastra calcar*, 8 armed cushion star; *Parvulastra exigua*, 5 armed cushion star; Starfish (maroon with raised honeycomb white shapes); *Smilasterias multipara*, (black and white seastar).

Sponges - *Aplysilla rosea*, pink sponge; *Sphaciospongia purpurea*, purple sponge; Rockpool sponges - reddish brown, greenish-yellow; Encrusting sponge – pinky/purple, thickly wrapping around stems of seaweeds. Shiny surface.

Shells - *Austrochochlea constricta*, ribbed top-shell; *Austrochochlea concamerata*, wavy top-shell; *Austrolittorina unifasciata*, blue periwinkle; *Bembicium nanum*, striped conniwink; *Chlorodiloma odontis*, chequered top shell; *Cominella lineolata*, lined cominella; *Diloma concamerata*, wavy top-shell; *Ethminolia vitiliginea*, blotchy top-shell; *Haliotis* sp, abalone shell; *Ischnochiton australis*, southern chiton; *Limnoperna pulex*, flea mussel; *Nerita* sp, black nerite; *Phasianella australis*, painted-lady pheasant-shell; *Phasianotrochus eximius*, choice kelp-shell; *Sypharochiton pelliserpentis*, snakeskin chiton.

Urchins - *Heliocidaris erythrogramma*, red/purple sea urchin

SKEMPS DAY - Skullduggery @ Skemps - Sunday 29 June

Today's weather was thankfully sunny following the miserable cold and wet of yesterday. Members arrived at Skemps with their skulls and bones hoping to identify them, and other members bought in interesting bones they had collected over the years for possible identification.

Simon Fearn bought in his interesting collection of skulls that he had found and collected when roaming in the bush. These included a tawny frogmouth, tiger quoll, pelican, platypus, albatross, sulphur crested cockatoo, devil and echidna to name a few, Simon also had borrowed a model of a cast of a thylacine skull to show us.

Tina and Tom had bought in a ram skull complete with beautiful horns, and skulls of a cow, sheep and goat, all found on their farm.

The children took a quick look at the skulls and proceeded outside to run around leaving the adults to identify them; with such a beautiful day who could blame them.

With help from a copy of the *Illustrated Key to the Skulls of the Mammals in Tasmania* by Bob Green, members confirmed the identification of some skulls that had been collected on the Skemp property which Tina then name tagged. There was a wombat, rabbit, bettong, bushy tailed possum, ring tailed possum, bandicoot and Bennett's wallaby, but I may have missed some.

Just prior to lunch we were visited by representatives from a group who were enquiring about the hire of the Skemp Centre. They were shown through the facilities and given instructions for accessing gas and hot water, directed to maps of the walks and individual pamphlets, to ensure their stay was comfortable and stress free.

After lunch a couple of small groups headed off in search of fungi following the particularly wet season which is ideal weather for their growth. Our group, which included two visitors, walked the Forest Track to the Fern Gully and returned by the Tyre Track. We found red and yellow corals, *Geostrom triplex*, *Mycena* species, *Lentinellus pulvinulus*, *Hygrocybe mavis*, *Pseudohydnum gelatinosum*, *Cortinarius* species, brackets and leathery shelf fungi. Other members went further afield walking through Fern Gully to the Bottom Falls where they also reported a good variety of fungi.

It was late and rather cool when the last of us left, but we agreed it had been an interesting day.

Karen Manning

Aleurina ferruginea, cup; *Ascocoryne sarcoides*, pink/purple gelatinous discs/clubs; *Austropaxillus muelleri*, funnel shaped cap with forked gills; *Bisporella citrina*, small yellow discs; *Cortinarius rotundisporus*, blue with yellowish central disc; ? *Artomyces austropiperatus*, coral fungi (white); *Clavaria amoena*, yellow coral; *Clavaria miniata*, red coral; *Coltricia* sp., robust shaggy brown; *Coprinellus dis-seminates*; *Fomitopsis* ? *lilacinogilva*, bracket fungi; *Galerina* sp; ? *Ganoderma austral*; *Geostrom triplex*, earthstar; *Heterotextus peziziformis*, golden jelly-bells; *Hygrocybe mavis*, pure white; *Hygrocybe* sp; *Laccaria* sp, common brown; *Lentinellus pulvinulus*; *Lycoperdon pyriforme*, puffball; *Mucronella pendula*, icicle; *Mycena interrupta*, pixie's parasols; *Mycena subgalericulata*; *Mycena* aff *epipterygia*;

Panellus longinquus, shell fungi; *Pseudohydnum gelatinosum*, bracket jelly fungi; *Russula* sp., red cap; *Stereum ostrea*, golden curtain crust

GENERAL MEETING JULY - GUEST SPEAKER David Maynard ***Tasmanian Tiger: Precious Little Remains***

Noel introduced David, the curator of natural history at the QVMAG, who was to talk on the Thylacine. The talk would be based on his research for his book (co-authored with Tammy Gordon), *TASMANIAN TIGER Precious Little Remains*, and he said that this was the first time that he had spoken on the subject. He also stated that “I am going to talk today about the Thylacine and unlike *Beneath the Tamar* or even John Douglas, who you had recently with his spiders, I cannot show you cute cuddly photos or the animal in the wild because we simply do not have those images”.

David stated that he would talk about the thylacine and the little we know about it, then a little on its demise and the searches that occurred after 1936 once the last known animal had died. He would finish with the museums thylacine artefacts and what we have learnt from the loss of this animal.

The Thylacine is the largest carnivorous marsupials that lived in recent times. It is the last of the family Thylacinidae which dates back 25m years and there is evidence of 12 different species. The Thylacine dates back 4m years and its original distribution was across Meganesia, the single land mass of the last ice age around 18,000 years ago when Papua New Guinea and Tasmania were joined to main land Australia. A slide showed Meganesia 10,000 years ago when Tasmania was cut off by the rising waters at the end of the ice age. David stated that the Thylacine and the other top order predator, the Tasmanian Aboriginal, lived alongside each other in what was a fairly stable ecosystem, although it is likely the Thylacine was already a species in decline and struggling with climate change.

There were two migrations of humans into the broader Australian landmass and the last occurred around 3,500 to 3,800 years ago and the humans brought with them dingos and it has been hypothesized that the dingo caused the extinction of the Thylacine on the mainland. That is not the latest theory, it is likely that the rapid expansion of human activity, along with other factors, including competition for resources as well as the dingo were the cause.

A slide showed rock art of what was clearly a Thylacine from Burrup Peninsular followed by a slide with a mainland numbat and a Tasmanian devil which David told us were the closest relatives of the Thylacine. There are still a lot of people who do not appreciate that it is a marsupial, it has a pouch and is more closely related to our kangaroo and that some of the reasons they put together the exhibition and book were to clarify the mistakes made about the animal, show the museum’s collection and educate the community about their biology and role in the ecosystem.

We learnt that there was much that we do not know. Although two lived for 12 and 14 years in captivity it is unknown at what age they were captured. Although animals normally live longer in captivity Thylacines were kept in appalling conditions and it is not known if they benefited from captive living. It is assumed they lived in the wild

from 8 to 10 years.

Some of the things we know are that a male Thylacine weighed up to 30kg and was up to 1.6 metres long. The females were a little smaller and had a pouch and the animal's tail is stiff like a kangaroo rather than that of a dog or wolf. They had from 13 to 22 stripes from behind the shoulder onto the base of tail.

In terms of reproduction they were able to raise up to four joeys, carried by the mother through winter and into spring and then left in a den environment when they were too large. The mother would bring food back to them until they were large enough to participate in the hunt and groups of up to five were reported by early settlers, probably a mother and four joeys.

Their preferred habitat was wet and dry eucalypt forests, woodlands, grasslands and coastal heathland, however the dense rainforests of the south west of Tasmania were less favourable and David stated that this was important when he got to sightings and searches. Their home range was thought to be about 26 square kilometres. In captivity they ate all meats and in the London Zoo were known to capture live pigeons and it is assumed that in the wild they hunted the herbivores, including the macropods, as well as small rodents and some birds.

We know very little of their behaviour. We do know they were nocturnal although they were seen in the day time and it is likely they hunted in the morning and evening. Unlike a dog they would not chase down a prey over a short distance; it is likely they hunted an animal over a long distance and tired it out or ambushed animals at close range.

As reported in literature, in captivity, it was considered savage, lethargic, affectionate, shy, timid and dull and even stupid, a bit of a mixed message but again from animals in captivity not being happy. In terms of vocalisation it has never been recorded but there's literature stating they make coughing, hissing, wheezing, grunting, low growls, snarls, yelps and squeals. David imagines it made a sound similar to a devil.

David then moved onto the extinction event and he gave the answer first up. The Thylacine became extinct because of rapid ecological change, competition from Europeans with their new domesticated and invasive species, their animals, and over harvesting.

Prior to European settlement the Aborigines had been using fire to manage the landscape for at least 6,000 years. They would burn small patches of vegetation to produce a mosaic effect of new growth which would attract prey animals to the hunt. They would also hunt down animals that were moving away from the fire front and it is likely that Thylacines benefited from this as well being able to reside in the margins of the bush and coming out into the grasslands to feed. There is literature, historical journals and such, that record the regular burning and the first settlers that came into Risdon did state that it was parkland like and they could ride their horses through the trees as there was very little undergrowth. With the Europeans came the loss of the Aborigines and their influence on the landscape. The landscape went from a state of equilibrium where you had these two top order predators working within the food web and everything was sustainable. Animals had good and bad years but basically the populations were stable. In came this big change mechanism, suddenly the aborigines

could not do their burning, you had more undergrowth and you had hot fires as you see now and they get out of control.

A slide showed a graph of the extinction event with the number of aborigines, Thylacines, Europeans and sheep between 1803 and 1930 when the last Thylacine in the wild was shot. It is estimated that there were around 7,000 aborigines and between 2,000 and 4,000 Thylacines and it took the Europeans only 30 years to remove the aborigines influence from the landscape. The human population climbed steadily from the first 49 settlers to over 200,000 by 1930 while sheep numbers climbed dramatically to reach over a million by 1840. Tasmania went from a hunter gatherer lifestyle to intensive farming in a short space of time.

The Thylacine fared better than the aborigines and lasted for about 130 years till 1930. The Europeans came in, stopped the fire stick farming and hunted the Thylacines through fear and ignorance, and the belief that the animal was eating their sheep which were the lifeblood of the colony. You have the Thylacine in the landscape which has changed, the food is not available for it and it is driven off the native grasslands. The undergrowth is growing up, it has to catch wildlife in amongst overgrown bracken and it gets shot if it targets sheep and Europeans hunt wallabies for food as well.

The Thylacine was gone in a very short ecological time because it could not adapt to that pressure, it suffered competition for food and space and was driven from the native grasslands. Once convict labour was no longer free to help herd the sheep the farmers started fencing and this stopped the movement of macropods as well as the Thylacine "...and basically it was all going very wrong for them".

David described the Thylacine, like a large shark or an elephant, as a K-selective species, it is slow growing, it grows very large, it has very few young, it cares for those young, it is not like insects or rodents that can have lots of young and have a quick population turnover. So they just could not handle this sudden change.

The animals were hunted for the wrong reason. Sheep losses were probably due to wild dogs, theft or poor farming practices, but the Thylacine got the blame. In the mid 1800 there was a drive from landholders on the east coast to place a bounty on their heads. David named the organisation as the 'Buckland and Spring Bay Tiger and Eagle Extermination Association'. There was also the 'Ross and Oatlands Land Holders Association' and all these were offering their own bounty. Eventually in 1888, and up to 1912, the Tasmanian government bounty scheme started. An adult Thylacine could be presented to a police station for a bounty of £1, the equivalent of wages for only one week, a supplementary income only. Over the life of the bounty over 2 thousand animals were cashed in, not a lucrative trade but enough to have an effect.

There is a sudden decline in claims from 1900 and although this is thought to represent the start of the decline of the population it is more likely to show a change in the demand for the animal. The species was under threat and becoming rare and in demand for Victorian era museums, universities, zoos or the circus who paid up to £5 or £6 for a live animal. There was also trade in hides and a slide showed one of the most unique homemade artefacts in existence, an eight skin Thylacine buggy rug made by a Mr Stevenson, from the property Aplico near Blessington.

The species is gone in 1936. Although there is no verifiable proof it could have lived up until the early 1950s. In 1937 and 1938 the State Fauna Board of Tasmania sent bushman to the west and northwest trying to find evidence of the animal. They

thought they may have found footprints but no animals were seen. In the mid-1940s the biologist, David Fleay went to the south west trapping and he brought back plaster casts of footprints and scats. Scats are no longer accepted as evidence as these always turn out to be dog droppings. Eric Guiler searched in 1959 in the far north west where the animal was common and he was the first to use automated cameras and returned again in the early 1960s and the early 1970s. Between 1968 and 1972 the Thylacine Expeditionary Team, including James Malley and Dr Bob Brown, looked for the Thylacine. Their approach was to ask for information on sightings and to follow up on these. In 1982-83 a parks and wildlife officer had a convincing sighting which was investigated by Nick Mooney in the last government sponsored search. The QVMAG's collection officer, Judy Rainbird, was on an expedition in the early 1980s. Although each expedition brought back casts of footprints there was no credible evidence of the animal's existence. These casts of tracks are not proof as footprints from wet full depth mud might not hold its shape and from dry mud it might not be full depth. There is no credible evidence of the survival of the Thylacine. There were private bounties or rewards up to 2005, although the \$million plus bounty has never been claimed.

There are only 450 whole animals in universities and museums throughout the world, either taxidermy mounts or pickled in ethanol. There are 750 declared objects held in collections and Tasmania holds around 11% of the known Thylacine artefacts. The QVMAG holds 20 recent objects and 14 cave deposits, either fossils or sub fossils and holds a range of historic objects, including community history, photographs, oral history and artworks.

The QVMAG has five taxidermy mounts, which could have been six except that two were combined into one, 11 skulls or part craniums or mandibles with skin or hair associated with them, four post cranial skeletal sets and 14 cave deposits. There are often requests for the whiskers or hair as these can give information on the diet of the animal and information on the landscape of the time. All these requests are denied as this material may be valuable in the future as testing methods improve.

David asked what have we learnt from the past and asked us not judge the people on the way they did things. They were trying to get a colony established and were trying to make a livelihood. Tasmania is a sanctuary for animals now extinct on the mainland with our high quality wilderness areas which are relatively well protected. Extinction is still a real threat to many of our species and this is due to habitat loss, habitat degradation and invasive species, all from our activity. Tasmania currently has 600 species threatened in some way and David gave information on the way the Australian government can intervene if a species appears to be under threat.

The thylacine is an icon for extinction, every year the 7 September is International Threatened Species Day, the day the last tiger died.

There followed over 10 minutes of questions and an invite to the launch of the book. The answers to two questions are worth noting. The first was if there was any captive breeding to which he answered that none was ever reported although there may have been an animal carrying joeys taken to a zoo, again this is not recorded.

David stated that he expected to be asked about cloning the animals and his answer was that we cannot do it now but it may be possible in the next hundred years. He then said "But why, what would we do with it? It would be a freak; it would be in a zoo; it

would lead a horrible life.” He also stated that we typically need a minimum population of 500 mammals to maintain genetic diversity and we will not get 500 animals from the holding we have. David followed with “You really think we’re grown up enough to reintroduce a top order predator into the Tasmanian environment? I don’t think we would ever...the farmers wouldn’t have it... they would still be shot, I don’t think we’re mature enough”. Someone mentioned the wolves reintroduced to a particular environment and David stated that although they were good for that ecology people still hated them and feared them.

In answer to another question David said the Thylacine was in Papua New Guinea up to 3,000 years ago and that it was hunted for food and interestingly that humans generally do not eat carnivores.

Peter Warren gave the thanks and members showed their appreciation with the usual acclamation.

Noel Manning

FIELD TRIP: Created from Chaos trail & fungi/ferns at North Motton with Phil Arnold - Saturday 19 to Sunday 20 July

Tom and Tina, Tom, Noel and Karen, and Prue with grandson Toby met at Don Heads at 10.00 am to follow the tide out to explore our first site on the Created from Chaos trail (which covers 13 significant geological areas from Mersey Bluff through to Table Cape). The geology that we were looking at here at Don Heads had been formed during the Cainozoic period when volcanism also formed The Nut at Stanley and Table Cape at Wynyard.

The Don Heads coastal area has geological platforms of basalts and sea stacks, which have columnar and polygonal jointing. There were large potholes in the platforms that were homes to an array of seaweeds and other sea life.

We spent two hours exploring the rock pools and marvelling at the ‘chaos’ that had taken place, and came away with our thoughts on the area but also many unanswered questions.



Sea Stack at Don Heads

From here we travelled to North Motton to visit Phil Arnold who had invited club members to look over his property. After seeing some of Phil's inventions, including a Pelton Wheel for electricity production, we had a quick lunch in a cleared area near the creek which goes through the property. Freshwater crayfish have been seen in this creek. To start our exploration Phil showed us a patch of buzzy, *Acaena novae-zelandiae* writhing with hundreds of small blue beetles. Without an insect book with us we were unable to confirm an identity at the time, however, Tom suggested they were a flea beetle as they appeared to hop about. We have since identified the beetles as *Altica pagana*, commonly known as the blue metallic flea beetle which feeds on the buzzy.

We walked up into the bush along a track that Phil had created to access the higher sections of the property. He told us that the better fungi was over, but we would see some as we went along. The bush included browntop stringybark, peppermints and white gums, wattles, teatree, goldey wood, common native-cherry, daisybush and rough tree-ferns. In the gully there were *Dicksonia Antarctica*. We couldn't believe the amount of *Stereum ostrea*, golden crown crust, in the gully. Each cluster appeared better than the last we had seen. There was also *Engaeus* mounds.



***Stereum ostrea*, golden crown crust**

We walked to the dam near the top of the property where platypus live before making our way back to the house area. After some discussion on a future visit and having extended Phil an invite to Skemps, Tom gave our thanks and a small gift and those present individually showed their appreciation.

Our self-contained accommodation at the Willaway Motel Apartments in Ulverstone was both clean and comfortable, and a great place to rest our weary bones overnight. There was the usual discussion to identify what we had seen and planning for the next day.

On Sunday morning we headed to Goat Island, a fifteen minute drive from our accommodation. The tide was already well out and the day warming from the sun. Walking along the shore there was many interesting seaweeds and sponges washed up to the water edge. The walk across the rocks to the island was slow as we looked at the jagged rock structures and rockpools. Flora on the island consisted of coast wattle, hophbush, *Correa alba* (white and pink forms), pigface, woodsorrel, glasswort and native spinach, and two fungi.

We explored around the rocky island and climbed high up to get an overview of how it was set out. We found two caves as well as a swimming hole which fellow member Alma had told Noel about. Waist high at the deepest it was carved out of the rock and well above the low tide line. A large rock which appeared to be separate to the island was covered in black faced cormorants which we understand breed on the nearby Three Sisters group of islands.

It was hard not to stop to explore all the rockpools, as each had an amazing display of colour and sea life, which included sea weeds and grasses, waratah anemones, neptunes necklace, seastars of many colour combinations, the occasional starfish and crabs with limpets, barnacles and polychaete tubes on the surrounding rocks.

Back at the cars we had a late morning tea before heading to the Three Sisters Nature Reserve Lookout a few kilometres further toward Penguin. We were disappointed to find that even though the lookout was high above the beach we were unable to see all three islands and with the steep decline down to the beach, we could be putting ourselves at risk if we attempted the climb. We continued on but there were no more roadside pull-offs so arrived in Penguin and lunched at the Lions Park on the beach. When we first arrived there were many dogs and some were being hosed down after their swim.

Not getting to Penguin very often, five of us decided to spend a short time at the Penguin Market where purchases of icecreams, lollies and a book were made. Joining the McGlynn's back at the beach we decided to head back toward the Three Sisters and found that there was another carpark on the otherside of point from where the islands protrude called the Three Sisters-Goat Island Nature Reserve. We pulled over here but found that there was no clear pathway to the beach, members of the public having to bush bash their way to the beach to walk around the rocks to the island. The tide was now too high, so maybe on another trip we will make the walk.

Next stop was Braddons Lookout above Turners Beach where we spent some time looking at the information boards and making out the hills in the distance from their map. Through binoculars, what appeared to be cloud, was in fact Cradle Mountain towering above the surrounding mountains with snow clearly visible.

Our last stop was at Anvers Chocolate for hot drinks and cake, where we sat in front of the fire and chatted about the weather being kind to us and the interesting places and things we had seen during our travels.

Karen and Noel Manning

Don Heads

Shells and Barnacles:- *Austrochochlea constricta*, ribbed top-shell; *Bembicium nanum*, striped conniwink; *Catomerus polymerus*, surf barnacle; *Cellana solida*, orange-edged limpet; *Diloma concamerata*, wavy top-shell; *Epopella simplex*, volcano barnacle; *Haliotis* sp., abalone shell; *Modiolus* sp., black horse muscles; *Nerita atramentosa*, black nerite; *Notochlamys hexactes*, Tasmanian scallop shell; *Sypharochiton pelleriserpentis*, snakeskin chiton.

Seastars:- *Coscinasterias muricata*, eleven-armed seastar; *Meridiastra calcar*, cushion seastar various colours; *Parvulastra exigua*, small seastars in blue-green and pinkish.

Anemones:- *Actinia tenebrosa*, waratah anemone; *Cnidopus verater*, green anemone.

Miscellaneous:- *Caulerpa brownii*, green seaweed; *Coralline* algae; *Hormosira banksia*, Neptune's necklace; *Symploca* sp, black furry algae on rocks; encrusting sponges in beige and pinks; *Helicoidaris erythrogramma*, red/purple sea urchin; *Onchidella patelloides*, intertidal slug; Polycheate tubes; *Sepia* sp., cuttlefish.

Phil Arnold's property

Birds:-*Malurus cyaneus*, superb fairy-wrens; *Rhipidura albiscapa*, grey fantail.

Flora:- *Acacia* sp., wattle; *Cassinia aculata*, daisybush; *Clematis aristata*, mountain clematis; *Cyathea Australis*, rough treefern; *Epacris impressa*, common heath (red and pink); *Eucalyptus* sp., (browntop stringybark, peppermints, whitegums); *Exocarpus cupressiformis*, common native-cherry; *Gleichenia* sp., coral fern; *Histiopteris incisa*, bat's wing fern; *Hydrocotyle* sp., pennywort; *Leptospermum* sp., teatree; *Monotoca glauca*, goldey wood; *Muehlenbeckia* sp., lignum; *Nothofagus cunninghamii*, myrtle beech; *Pimelea nivea*, bushman's bootlace; *Pteridium esculentum*, bracken fern; *Solanum laciniatum*, kangaroo apple.

Fungi:- *Aleuria aurantia*, orange peel; *Aleurina ferruginea*, cup fungi; blue stain on wood from *Chlorociboria* sp.; *Coprinellus disseminates*; *Cortinarius* sp; *Discinella terrestris*, discs; *Heterotextus pezeziformis*, golden jellybells; *Hyprocrea sulphurea*, encrusted fungus; *Laccaria* sp.; *Leotia lubrica*, jelly babies; *Lycoperdon scabrum*, puffball; *Phelloden niger*, leathery spine fungus; *Pleurotopsis longinqua*, shell fungi; *Pseudohydnum gelatinum*, toothed jelly; *Scleroderma cepa*, puffball; *Stereum illudens*, bracket fungus; *Stereum ostrea*, golden curtain crust; *Tremella fuciformis*, jelly fungus;

Miscellaneous: *Altica pagana*, blue metallic flea beetle; *Engaeus* mounds.

Goat Island

Anemone:- *Actinia tenebrosa*, waratah anemone.

Birds:- *Cacatua roseicapilla*, galahs; *Phalacrocorax fuscescens*, black-faced cor-morants; *Zosterops lateralis*, silvereyes.

Flora:- *Acacia sophoraea*, coast wattle; *Carpobrotus* sp. pigface; *Correa alba* (white and pink forms); *Dodonaea viscosa*, hopbush; *Oxalis* sp. woodsorrel; *Phelloden niger*, leathery spine fungus; *Poa* sp; *Sarconia quinqueliflora*, glasswort; *Tetragonia implexicoma*, native spinach.

Seastars:- *Meridiastra calcar*, cushion seastar various colours; *Parvulastra exigua*, small seastar;

Miscellaneous:- Sea sponges; Bull kelp; Sea weeds and grasses; *Haliotis laevis*, greenlip abalone.

SKEMPS DAY - Planet Ark event: Tree planting - Sunday 27 July

Launcestonians woke to a thick fog this morning with a prediction of rain later in the day. Travelling to Skemps we wondered what the weather would be like there, but were pleased to find that once we were past the Abels Hill Road turnoff on the Tasman Highway, that we had risen above the fog and the sky was blue with brilliant sunshine.

Today we would be planting native trees and carrying out some maintenance on previous revegetation for Planet Ark's National Tree Day. Members and visitors arrived and chatted together while tools, plants, stakes and bags were put into wheelbarrows before we headed down to an area along the Creek. We spent a couple of hours removing some plants that hadn't survived from previous revegetation projects and replaced them with either *Leptospermum lanigerum*, woolly teatree; *Telopea truncata*, Tasmanian waratah; *Banksia marginata*, silver banksia; *Prostanthera lasiantha*, Christmas mintbush or *Callistemon pallidus*, yellow bottlebrush. Other plants were given a general tidy up.



William, Noel and Tina help with tree planting

Planet Ark provided advertising on their website and the Secretary had received some expressions of interest to assist, but on the day only one group arrived and we appreciated their help. Everyone pitched in and multi-tasked, digging holes, planting the seedlings, watering, staking and bagging, or were running the spade, mallet or wire cutters between planting groups.

Around lunchtime the sky became grey as rain threatened, so we gathered excess stakes, tools, seedling tubes and rubbish, and headed back to the Centre for a late lunch.

After lunch some people went for walks, while others sat in the Centre and chatted. Christine and I walked to the pile of tree rubbish near the top pond and found quite a few different fungi species. One in particular was a very interesting looking jelly fungi, on a dead branch within the pile, which I had not seen at Skemps before. Checking my fungi books at home this deep orange gelatinous mass appears to be *Tremella mesenterica*.

Around 4pm the afternoon had become very overcast and with all the equipment returned to its place, and the Centre tidied up, the last few members headed home following a very productive day.

Many thanks to everyone who assisted.

Karen Manning

THE YEAR THAT WAS

At the December General Meeting, Prue Wright will present a slideshow of images from Club activities during 2014. Could members please submit images directly after activities so Prue can start putting the presentation together. Images of people, places and the focus of our activity, should be submitted on either CD or USB or by email to redgum101@gmail.com. Your support for this end of year presentation would be appreciated otherwise it won't happen and we won't be able to reminisce on the interesting activities we have participated in over the year.

NOTICE OF AGM DINNER MEETING - TUESDAY 7 OCTOBER

The Launceston Field Naturalists Club will hold its AGM dinner at Kains Restaurant at the Riverview Hotel Charles Street Launceston, meet at 6.00pm for 6.30pm. There is plenty of off-street parking behind the venue and in William Street. We will be ordering from their normal restaurant menu. Members who would like to attend should indicate their intention in the appropriate book at the next general meeting or contact Noel on 63442277. RSVP prior to 3 October please.

All four Executive positions (President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer) and six Committee positions will become vacant at this meeting. If you would like to volunteer yourself or nominate another member for a position, nomination forms are available at the general meeting and also from the Secretary if you need extras. The nomination form with the candidates written consent should be lodged with the Secretary no later than 10 days prior to the AGM.

FEDERATION GATHERING - Friday 7 to Sunday 9 November 2014

The Burnie Field Naturalists Club has advised that they will host this event. Program details are:

Friday evening meal (\$25) at Two Oaks Café (Beachside Caravan Park) followed by an illustrated talk by David Cooper on the amazingly varied geology of Wynyard.

Saturday David Cooper will conduct a tour of the various geological sites from Table Cape and Fossil Bluff to East Wynyard and Doctors Rocks. Orchid expert, Barry Dudman will lead a trip to either Rocky Cape or Fernglade, whichever has the best orchids.

Saturday evening dining at Seabrook Hotel, at own expense, own choice from the menu.

Sunday drive to Heybridge to visit Margaret Kinsey's famous garden of Australian native plants.

Accommodation: they have chosen Somerset Beachside Cabin and Caravan Park as there is a variety of accommodation.

Cabins (2 rooms) sleep 6: Double bedroom with ensuite, 2 bunks and a sofa bed in main room, towel, soap and bedclothes provided. Single person \$80, 2 persons sharing double bed \$85, two persons sleeping in separate rooms \$95, extra persons \$15 each.

Caravans and camp sites: Powered site \$27 per 2 adults, Unpowered site \$20 per 2 adults, Kitchen and toilets open 24/7, lounge-room.

You will need to take provisions for breakfasts, lunches and evening meals (if not attending the evening gatherings) and arrange accommodation direct with Somerset Beachside (ph 6435 2322)

Expressions of interest to secretary@lfnc.org.au as soon as possible, also advise if joining in the Friday night dinner and talk, so we can advise BFNC's contact accordingly.

AUSTRALIAN PLANT SOCIETY MEETINGS

LFNC members are welcome to attend APS meetings held on a Tuesday at Max Fry Hall, Gorge Road Trevallyn at 7.30 pm. The next meeting will be on:

August 19 - Janet Hallam will host a discussion regarding native gardens

September 16 - Margaret Killen will talk about her visit to New Zealand

Plant Sale:- The APS will hold their spring native plant sale at the Max Fry Hall on Saturday 11 October from 10.00 am to 4.00 pm. The plants, propagated by APS members and grown at the APS nursery, are available at very reasonable prices.

Additional Information

Club Outings:

1. All outings depart from Inveresk carpark (near Museum entrance) at 9 am unless otherwise specified. Internet site updated regularly to reflect short notice changes. Saturday all-day parking cost is \$3.00. Sunday parking free.
2. You need to provide your own food and drinks for the outing unless otherwise specified. Morning tea is normally provided by the bus company on bus outings.
3. When travelling by car in convoy, each driver is responsible to ensure that the vehicle behind is in sight immediately after passing each cross road or fork in the road.
4. When car pooling, petrol costs should be shared between all the passengers, including family of the driver, and based on other clubs the Committee suggested \$11 per 100 km. This is a guideline only.

Name Tags: Name tags are to be worn at meetings and on outings.

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

Field Centre: All members have access to the John Skemp Field Centre. Contact our booking manager, John Elliott on 6344 9303 regarding availability and keys.

Field Centre Phone Number - 6399 3361

Postal Address: PO Box 1072 Launceston 7250

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

E.mail : secretary@lfnc.org.au