

TASMANIAN FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB INC.

established 1904.

BULLETIN

<http://www.tased.edu.au/tasonline/tasfield.html>

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The Tasmanian Field Naturalists Club encourages the study of natural history and supports conservation. We issue our journal *The Tasmanian Naturalist* annually in October. People with a range of ages, background and knowledge are welcome as members.

Contact Genevieve Gates (6227 8638) for further information or write to GPO Box 68.
Hobart, 7001.

Programme

General Meetings start at 7.45 p.m. on the first Thursday of the month, in the Life Science Building at the University of Tasmania. Outings are usually held the following weekend, meeting outside the to the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery entrance in Macquarie Street. Bring lunch and all? Weather outdoor gear.

If you are planning to attend an outing but have not been to the prior meeting, phone to check as to the timing of the excursion (with Genevieve Gates; 62 278 638 or Don Hird; 62 289 702). Unforeseen changes sometimes occur.

Thurs. 5 February 7.45p.m.: Simon Groves, a club member, will speak on *Forests & Forestry in the Pearl of Africa: Memoirs of a Conservation Trainer in Uganda*.

Sat. 7 OR Sunday 8 February excursion 9.00a.m. Depart from the Museum for Hartz Mountains National Park. This is a general excursion in a subalpine area in the south of Tasmania to look for a variety of species including fungi and invertebrates. The day of the excursion will be decided on Thursday evening when the weather forecast is known. Come prepared for adverse weather in any case.

Thurs. 4 March 7.45p.m.: **AGM & Presidential Address.** Genevieve will address the topic of *The Tasmanian Naturalist: 100 Years of Captured Images*.

Sat. 6 OR Sunday 7 March excursion 9.00a.m. Depart from the Museum for Mount Wedge. This is a general excursion to a subalpine area to look for a variety of species including fungi and invertebrates. The day of the excursion will be decided on Thursday evening when the weather forecast is known. Come prepared for adverse weather in any case.

Thurs. 1 April 7.45p.m.: Club members Amanda Thomson and Kevin Bonham will speak to *Escape to Three Hummock Island* and *Conservation of Tasmanian Land Snails* respectively. These talks have been held over (due to computer glitches) from the December Members' Night.

Good Friday – Easter Monday. 9-12 April Easter Camp: This has been organised partly as a recognition of the earlier club tradition of Easter Camps in this our Centenary Year. See details below.

Easter Camp:

We have booked accommodation at Koonya (Tasman Peninsula). We will visit Bangor (Lagoon Bay, venue for first ever TFNC Easter Camp) en route Friday 9th, go botanizing at McGregor's peak on Saturday; Sunday will be a free day with a diagnostic hunt for Easter Eggs and on Monday we will visit Brown Mountain / West Arthur Head and Crescent Bay. Cost is \$16 /adult bed/night (children \$10); camping and use of facilities \$10 /site/night. Come for all or part or a day.

Excursion Reports

Outing to Esperance River — 8th November, 2003

Janet Fenton

Sixteen naturalists headed south on a sunny Saturday for the Club's annual BBQ, this year at the Esperance River picnic ground west of Dover. The Esperance River drains the Hartz Mountains and Adamsons Peak areas, and the river flows into Port Esperance between the towns of Raminea and Strathblane. This district supported a major timber industry from the 1870s onwards and the old Raminea tramway formations are still clearly visible on the northern side of the river near the bridge. The carcass of “Jingle Bells”, a loco used on the line between 1940 and 1958, lies there in the bush.

The river runs over wide dolerite rock platforms, and a pleasant track winds through rainforest along the northern bank opposite the picnic ground. Here we spied a number of orchids in flower — *Chiloglottis gunnii*; *C. triceratops*; *Corybas diemenicus*; *Caladenia cracens*; *Pterostylis nutans* and *P. pedunculata*. Other orchids were in bud — *Pterostylis scabrida*(?); *Chiloglottis cornuta* and *Thelymitra* sp. while *Pterostylis nelagramma* was over. Many of these orchids were flowering later than the same species seen around Hobart. It is of course cooler in this district, and the location is a rain-forested south facing riverbank.

Anna spotted an *Epacris impressa* of interest. The plant had distinctly double flowers, pink on the outside and white inside. Qug told us that this mutation has been found before and propagated in the Plants of Tasmania nursery at Ridgeway.

Geoff and Qug disappeared in search of a continuation of the track that we were sure we had followed some five years previously. They emerged from a scrub-bash some time later. After wallowing in the bush where the track disappeared, they eventually located rotted boardwalk and were able to follow it for about half a kilometre to another point on the river. This track was once a high-grade boardwalk and gravel track, presumably built by the Forestry Dept as a scenic walk, but since abandoned. Geoff declared that it was not a Field Nats' grade track as it was severely overgrown and disused!

Along the way Qug was delighted with a captive pool about four metres long on top of a giant fallen log, where mosquito wrigglers and copepods had taken advantage of this “container habitat”. The log fell five or more years ago, flattening about ¼ acre of other rainforest trees but the open area has now re-grown very densely with Pomaderris.

Later Qug delved in the river for freshwater fauna while the youngest boys indulged in other forms of aquatic recreation, including engineering!

Some of us explored the 4-wheel drive track downstream of the bridge where we saw a Native-hen by a pool on a branch track, and had a good view of a Pink Robin.

Everybody enjoyed the BBQ nicely prepared by Genevieve and David.

Freshwater fauna:

Mayfly (Ephemeroptera) and Stonefly (Plecoptera) nymphs and Caddisfly larvae were the most common as well as Ostracods. Harpacticoid copepods (only just visible to the naked eye), midge (Chironomid) larvae and an unidentified beetle larva were also present, and possibly some type of fly pupae clinging tightly to the rocks in fast-flowing stream areas.

Birds:

Black Currawong; Fantailed Cuckoo; Shining Bronze Cuckoo; Horsefield's Bronze Cuckoo; Tasmanian Thornbill; Olive Whistler; Golden Whistler; Crescent Honey-eater; Grey Fantail; Grey Shrike-thrush; Pink Robin; Tasmanian Native-hen; Superb Fairy-wren.

Plants in flower:

On road to Esperance River we enjoyed *Phebaleum squameum* (Tallow-wood) flowering in profusion as well as several of the yellow peas. *Eucalyptus obliqua* forest dominated, with myrtle *Nothofagus cunninghamii* rainforest along shaded parts of the riverbank. Here we enjoyed the new pink growth of myrtle and *Blechnum* (Hard Water-ferns), *Anopterus glandulosa* (Laurel) in flower and (*Aristotelia peduncularis* (Heart Berry) in bud. A branch of *Anadopetalum biglandulosum* (Horizontal) seemed to be affected by scale. As well as the orchids listed above, we saw *Clematis aristata*, *Beaura rubioides* and *Acacia riceana* in flower and in the more open areas *Pultenea juniperina*, *Viola hederacaea*, *Hibbertia scandens*, *Ozothamnus* sp. (Dolly bush), a species of *Pimelia* and even *Telopea truncata* (Waratah) in bloom.

Snails: Kevin

Caryodes dufresnii, *Helicarion cuvieri*, *Cystopelta bicolor*, *Tasmaphena sinclairi*, *Prolesophanta* sp. "Francistown" (sixth known locality for this scarce far-south endemic), *Paralaoma halli*, *Trocholaoma parvissima*, *Pedicamista* sp. "Chisholm", *Pernagera kingstonensis*, *Allocharopa legrandi*, *Roblinella gadensis* (striped form), *Elsothera ricei* (unusual colour form near species' southern boundary), *Mulathena fordei*.

T.F.N.C. excursion to Kingston Beach on 5 December 2003

Report by Genevieve Gates

Eighteen members and friends gathered at the southern end of Kingston Beach for this excursion led by Keith Martin-Smith from the University of Tasmania School of Zoology. Keith, who had given us a talk earlier in the year on the weedy sea dragon, was now hoping to show us some live ones. Undeterred by the cool, overcast conditions, more than half of those persons present donned wetsuits and snorkels and plunged into the sea to look for specimens of *Phyllopteryx taeniolatus*. This brightly coloured weedy sea dragon is the only species of sea dragon in Tasmania and is quite abundant in the area where we were looking. Sure enough, Don spotted one after only a few minutes in the water and Keith was able to put it in a large container and swim over to those waiting on the rocks for a close-up view. We were overcome by the beauty and gracefulness of this little creature and as a bonus Keith had gathered other marine forms of life such as a huge sea anemone, several species of starfish and a male weedy sea dragon with a clutch of pink eggs. On the down side, *Undaria* sp., an introduced seaweed from Japan which had appeared for the first time in 2003, is becoming very abundant.

Many thanks to Keith for leading this excursion and to Amanda for making all the arrangements.

Species list:

Weedy Seadragon, *Phyllopteryx taeniolatus*

Shaw's cow fish, *Aracana aurita*

Patiriella spp.

Species of blenny

Biscuit stars

Stingray with a "tablespoon tail"

James and Ben Grove found the following in a rock pool:

Cyclograpsus sp.; a crab

Paleomon serenus, the rock pool shrimp

Petrolisthes elongatus, a half crab, and

Chiton pelliserpentis.

Weedy Seadragon *Phyllopteryx taeniolatus*

<http://www.dragonsearch.asn.au/brochure/brochure.html>

Obituaries

Kelsey Aves; died 19th September 2003

In his book *Hither and Thither* Kelsey wrote: "My love of nature really started in childhood growing up on the edge of Epping Forest, some 20km North East of London, and increased in my late teens rambling on the downs in Surrey. I brought this love with me when I migrated to Tasmania in 1940 and joined the Hobart Walking Club and Tasmanian Field Naturalists' Club."

What a valuable member he has been; his love of nature was passed on to others in his writing, talks on radio, and at all our club activities, in his friendly fun-loving way.

We thank his wife Margaret and daughters Susan, Gillian and Elizabeth for supporting him and joining in club activities.

Outings and weekend camps were educational and always lots of fun when he was in the party. We will always remember "bed time stories" and the tears running down his and the listeners faces as we heard the same stories repeated.

The club grew after the war, especially due to the Easter Camps, with the hard work of the small group and the fun for so many campers. Kelsey was part of the work and fun. At the camp fires in the evening we saw some of his love of music.

Kelsey was always keen to help the club in so many ways and made a wonderful president. He was given life membership in recognition of all he did.

Now free from all earthly old age problems, may his heaven be like the one he wrote about in *Hither and Thither*; as Cradle Mountain and the scent of *Boronia citriodora*. Contributed by Marjory Wall

Joyce Tagg; 1920-2003

It is hard to think of Joyce without her sister Mem as they worked as a team. They gathered so much natural history knowledge from the Ridgeway area where they lived and worked at "The Homestead", which was sadly burned in the 1967 bushfires and later rebuilt.

They were keen collectors and always ready to help with items of interest for club meetings and the displays at the S.G.A.P. Flower Shows.

Both sisters received the O.A.M. for the time they gave in working to assist many worthy causes in the community.

When Joyce and Mem "retired" to Sandowne they still had small gardens and Joyce made special friends with the birds who listened for her call to fly down for the biscuit crumbs she

gave them.

How they must miss her – as we do. Contributed by Marjory Wall

David Cowie

David will be best remembered by club members as the author and driving force behind *Tasmanian Jewel Beetles*, published by the club in 2002. Originally from England, David was a keen collector and correspondent with other experts in his fields of interest.

David's enthusiasm and the quality of his manuscript reflected his outlook on life; *Jewel Beetles* was to have been only the first volume of a larger work on Tasmanian beetles in general. David unfortunately did not participate directly in club activities as he didn't drive, but the specific blossoms which are the food plants for species of jewel beetle always remind of him.

David's enthusiasm was still clear when he told me of his illness in early 2003, but his remission was sadly not to last. David was justifiably proud of his high-quality contribution to the natural history his adopted Tasmania. Our sympathies are extended to Sylvia and his children. Contributed by Don Hird