

Tasmanian Field Naturalists Club Inc.

BULLETIN

Editor: Geoff Fenton EMAIL fenton@southcom.com.au

Quarterly Bulletin

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The Tasmanian Field Naturalists Club encourages the study of natural history and supports conservation. People of any age and background are welcome as members.

For further information, visit our website <http://www.tasfieldnats.org.au>; write to GPO Box 68, Hobart, 7001; or phone our president, Janet Fenton, on (03) 6239 6443.

Programme

General Meetings start at 7:45pm 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 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, please check details. Phone Janet Fenton (03) 6239 6443 as unforeseen changes sometimes occur.

Thu, 2 Aug	Meeting 7.45pm in Life Sciences building, University of Tas. Our guest speaker will be Bill Brown , talking to us on <i>Raptors of Tasmania</i> .
Sun, 5 Aug	Excursion with Bill Brown to his Lucaston property (in Tasmania's Huon Valley) where he rehabilitates raptors such as Wedge-tailed Eagles and Goshawks.
Thu, 6 Sept	Meeting 7.45pm in Life Sciences building, University of Tas. Peter MacFie will talk on the history of Recherche Bay and the French garden.
8 or 9 Sep	Excursion ; details yet to be finalised.
Thu, 4 Oct	Meeting 7.45pm in Life Sciences building, University of Tas. Ecologist and TFNC member Mark Wapstra will tell us about the rare <i>Thismia rodwayi</i> .
6 or 7 Oct	Excursion with Mark, looking for <i>Thismia</i> on the slopes of Mt Wellington.
Thu, 1 Nov	Meeting ; with Krystyna Saunders presenting <i>Diatoms in core sediments</i> .

Excursion to Lachlan, 6 May 2007

Report by Michael Driessen

15 members including four children met at the museum car park at 9.30am on a chilly Sunday morning. The mountain could not be seen for the thick grey clouds and rain was likely to fall at any moment. We took some comfort from the forecast that the weather would improve during the day. Our next rendezvous was at Lachlan, 45 minutes later, where we met Ian Picken and his son Jake who took us to the property of John and Colleen Graham. John and Colleen had planted a rainforest garden nearly 30 years ago. It was a very picturesque setting with the rainforest nestled around one side of a pond and there were buildings made of split shingles.

The rainforest was dominated by manferns *Dicksonia antarctica* and included many common rainforest species such as myrtle *Nothafugus cunninghamii*, celery-top pine *Phyllocladus aspleniifolius*, sassafras *Atherospermum moschatum* and a one-metre tall huon pine *Lagarostrobos franklinii*. There was an impressive 4m tall *Richea pandanifolia* and cushion plants. A maze of foot paths weaved through the rainforest. Ian told us that Lachlan is in Mt Field's rain-shadow and the garden was made possible by a natural spring. The weather was brisk and light drizzle fell throughout the visit highlighting the colours of

the rainforest. Alas few animal observations were made. A flock of five green rosellas *Platycercus caledonicus* settled on the manferns, masked lapwings *Vanellus miles* and native hens *Gallinula mortierii* were observed in the adjacent paddocks. Kevin, who captured the interest of Jake, found the following snail species: *Pernagera tasmaniae*, *P. kingstonensis*, *Paralaoma halli*, *P. caputspinulae* and *Arion intermedius* (introduced slug). The find of *P. tasmaniae*, which was common, extended its known range boundary in the area westward by about 4km, but further extensions to this boundary are likely.

Eventually the rain fell and we drove to Ian, Doris and Jake Picken's house where we had lunch on their verandah, which had spectacular views of Collins Bonnet and Mt Faulkner. A juvenile crescent honeyeater *Phylidonyris pyrrhoptera* and a flock of New Holland honeyeaters *Phylidonyris novaehollandiae* (referred to as native starlings by Anna when describing their behaviour to Bob) were observed in the garden. Jake and Qug collected a giant springtail (Collembola: Uchidanurinae) from the surfaces of Jake's frog pond.

After lunch Ian lead us on walk along swamp road through dry forest, although parts were on the wetter side of dry. The children, led by Jake, were obsessed with collecting grasshoppers in the early part of the walk. Six species were recorded: wingless grasshopper *Phaulacridium vittatum*, disappearing grasshopper *Schizobothrus flavovittatus*, southeastern Austroicetes *Austroicetes vulgaris*, swamp cricket *Bobilla* probably *tasmani*, pygmy grasshoppers *Tetrix collina* and *Parvotettix argillaceous*. Bob spotted a scarlet robin *Petroica multicolor*. Qug found climbing blueberries *Billardiera longiflora* with black coloured fruit instead of the usual blue. Kevin found *Caryodes dufresnii*, *Paralaoma halli*, *Helicarion cuvieri*.

Despite the cold damp weather and enjoyable trip was had by all. We thank the Pickens and the Grahams for allowing us to visit their properties and particularly Ian and Jake for showing us around the area and providing us with somewhere dry for lunch.

Lachlan Plants List [Anna McEldowney]:

Rainforest garden of Colleen and John Graham-

They have been planting since about 1981 in a south facing area that includes a spring. Water is directed into a series of small ponds and it enables them to constantly water their rainforest, which is sheltered by a thick planting of *Dicksonia antarctica*. All the usual rainforest species are there and are looking very healthy. The small people found the maze of paths and the bird watching shelter fascinating. Thank you Colleen and John for allowing us to see your garden in your absence.

Braeside Nursery – with Ian and Jake Picken-

The nursery is high above Lachlan in a rain shadow area of mudstone with very little soil. The main eucalypt species is *E. tenuiramis* blending to *E. obliqua* with *Pultenaea juniperina* and *Acacia terminalis* dominated understorey but the Pickens have managed to cultivate a native bird-friendly garden dominated by grevilleas and banksias.

Moss Beds Rd & Swamp Rd-

A walk higher up Moss Beds Road led us to a gully where we had much discussion about whether it was the dry end of wet sclerophyll or the wet end of dry! At the top end was a mix of *E. obliqua*, *E. tenuiramis*, *E. viminalis* and *E. cordata* with *Leptomeria drupacea*, *Pultenaea juniperina*, *Pultenaea gunnii*, *Acacia terminalis* and *Billardiera longiflora* (some specimens with very large dark fruit). As the track moved into a more shaded and sheltered area with a southerly aspect *Acacia verniciflua*, *Olearia argophylla*, *Dianella tasmanica* and *Coprosma quadrifida*, *Bedfordia salicina* and *Olearia viscosa* appeared in the understorey. *Pterostylis* (from the *longiflora* group) was starting to appear on shady banks with *Eucalyptus globulus*. Back on Swamp Rd the road banks were lined with mosses and *Notelaea ligustrina*, *Senecio linearifolius*, *Bedfordia salicina* and *Olearia phlogopappa*, and *Dianella tasmanica* were the understorey to *E. obliqua*. An interesting area much affected by the recent dry conditions that had caused the death of mature *E. obliqua*.

Excursion Petrol Money — reminder

We usually car-pool traveling to and from excursions. Passengers, please remember to reimburse some petrol money to your driver. Each passenger usually gives \$5 for a short trip of less than 100km return, and \$10 for a longer trip.

Excursion to Summerleas, June 2007

Report by Janette Smith

Saturday 9th June was one of those clear winter days when frost and ice linger on the high reaches and gullies of the mountain while the lower land is bathed in bright, almost warm, sunshine. Thirteen naturalists and two children, James and Emily met at the Fern Tree Tavern to regroup before traveling to Attila Vrana's property that lies between Summerleas Road and Brown's River. Attila met the group at his house on the ridge and after handing out maps that showed the series of paths that he had cut throughout the land he, and his canine companion Eccles, led the way. We initially passed through dry sclerophyll forest that gradually became wet forest as we descended approximately 250m down into the shaded gullies.

Half way down the hill Attila showed us the remnants of a cottage that now lies beneath a swathe of Periwinkle. Pointing out the mound that had once been the chimney he told us some of the history about the family who had lived there. Mrs Street, he said, had survived hard times when her husband was fighting in WW11 by taking in ironing to provide for her five children. The freshly ironed garments were pushed back up the hill in a pram.

Attila took us on a detour along an overgrown path to where two gullies met. Once the slopes had been planted out with raspberry canes but the surrounding forest had long since reclaimed the land. At the point where we stopped to admire two large symmetrical *Dicksonia antarctica*, Robyn noticed numerous wolf spider burrows in a mossy bank, and though vibrations were created with a tiny stick none could be enticed to venture out. Back onto the main track, Mark showed the group the tiny reflexed hooks on *Uncinia riparia* that aids the sedge to spread its seed by attaching to the fur or socks of passing traffic. (see photo below)

The charm of the river flats were enhanced by the sight of three riders astride dark horses. The horse's breath mingled with the mist and filtered sunlight in the gully. As the riders headed uphill we examined fungi that Robyn affectionately calls chocolate tops and ginger nuts, and recent diggings thought to be made by potoroos. We crossed the river to look at the old swimming hole further downstream and here Janet searched in the river and found a rock to show us a very mobile Stonefly nymph, Mayfly nymphs and tiny Trichopteran larvae that had attached themselves into a crevice on the rock.

With the promise of a sunny spot to stop for lunch, Attila led us along a track cut into the bank above Browns River where more discoveries of fungi kept Geoff busy with his camera. At the lunch stop young James discovered a skull, thought to be the remains of a common brushtail possum.

Throughout the day we crisscrossed the land, forded streams, pushed our way through undergrowth and followed tracks both open and intimately narrow. We climbed over and under fallen logs, we went downhill and uphill and all the while Attila shared stories about his land and local history. The bird life stayed mostly out of sight but we did hear some activity including a Dusky Robin, a Golden Whistler and Yellow Throated Honeyeaters. Robyn found a tiny nest made of twigs and moss that had been dislodged in the wind. The ever changing vegetation brought questions to mind such as, how do the vines reach high into the canopy without growing up the trunk? Why is this bank almost completely covered in Kangaroo fern when we have seen very little of it elsewhere? And what makes the Native current grow so thickly in the gullies where once men covered the slopes with their cultivated plots of small fruit?

At the end of a five hour walk we ascended to the higher ridges to once again see the mountain, almost obscured by a pale blue haze created by the late afternoon sunshine. Sore feet and leeches aside, the day was a wonderful experience of both private and shared discoveries and for those who could linger a little longer, was finished off with more of Attila's generous hospitality of coffee and nibbles by the fire and the comfort of a weary but happy Eccles with his nose snuggled into a lap.

Geoff's excursion photo of *Uncinia riparia*.



It is from the Cyperaceae family (same family as *Gahnia* and *Gymnoschoenus* and *Lepidosperma* belong to). Uncinate is a botanical Latin term meaning hooked (specifically a recurved hook) and riparia means "of the river". The species often forms massive swards along flood flats of rivers but is also common in wet sclerophyll forest on slopes.

[Mark Wapstra]

Summerleas Fungi List [Identified from excursion photos by Genevieve Gates]

Some nice photos amongst these. The most beautiful is *Entoloma panniculum*, a dark purple-blue—see the excursion photo on our website. *E. panniculum* has claim to fame: it was the first *Entoloma* ever described from the Australasian region—by Berkeley in 1859.

<i>Oudemansiella radicata</i>	<i>Mycena vinacea</i>	<i>Oudemansiella radicata</i>
<i>Clitocybe sp.</i>	<i>Mycena</i> or <i>Hemimycena sp.</i>	<i>Hypholoma fasciculare</i> var <i>armeniicum</i>
<i>Entoloma panniculum</i>	<i>Lepiota sp.</i>	<i>Hypholoma fasciculare</i> var <i>armeniicum</i>
<i>Marasmius sp.</i>	<i>Cortinarius sp.?</i>	<i>Cortinarius sp.?</i>
<i>Mycena austrofilopes</i>	<i>Lepota sp.</i>	
<i>Mycena vinacea</i>	<i>Lepista nuda</i>	
<i>Entoloma panniculum</i>	<i>Clitocybe sp.</i>	
<i>Mycena</i> or <i>Collybia?</i>	<i>Amanita sp.</i>	

Field Trip to Peter Murrell Reserve — Sat 7 July 2007

Report by Jane Catchpole

On a bright showery morning about a dozen of us gathered at the Penrhyn Ponds car park entrance ready to explore this area. The 277 hectare Peter Murrell Reserve is situated between Blackmans Bay, Kingston and Howden, and encompasses a diverse range of forest, buttongrass and heathland communities. The dominant vegetation is of black peppermint (*Eucalyptus amygdalina*). *Eucalyptus viminalis* grows along Coffee Creek and this supports a population of the endangered forty spotted pardalotes. Small areas of grassland, open heath, sedgeland and wetland are also found. The reserve contains one of the highest densities of orchid species found anywhere in Tasmania, with 37 species found and also provides important habitat for a number of mammals, reptiles, amphibians and bird species.

The Reserve is a multiuse area, with the fire trails around the periphery being used for horseriding, dog walking, and mountain biking. A nature trail, for walkers only, loops around the heart of the area through which flows Buttongrass Creek. The gently sloping hills lead down to Coffee Creek and two large ponds, which are home to various waterbirds and, apparently, platypus!

We set off alongside the ponds at a very leisurely pace, spotting a black swan, a couple of Chestnut Teal and Australasian Grebes and flock of geese on the water. Up in the trees flitted New Holland, Strong-billed and Black-headed honey eaters, whilst lower down Superb Blue Wrens and Grey Fantails darted amongst the banksias.

The nature trail joined the track and led upwards through heathland. We had a good look at an Epacrid, (*Styphelia adscendens*) with its pale green flowers, growing low to the ground on the path, and admired the buttongrass as we crossed the creek and headed to the top of the track for lunch. At the top we spotted a Scarlet Robin. Spiders then seemed to feature prominently on the walk! A badge huntsman (*Neosparassus*) with very smart black spots on its underbelly was the star attraction at lunch, and soon afterwards a tiny spider was admired under the lens. As we walked back down the trail we noticed many spider webs fringing the path. Shiny silvery drops of rain water were captured on the fine meshed web hammocks of the trampoline spiders. Another spider's lair was examined and found to contain, amongst other delicacies, the iridescent wing of a jewel beetle together with a little jumping spider apparently helping himself to the leftovers of the meal

We crossed to the other side of Coffee Creek on our way back hoping maybe to spot a few forty spots in the trees. No luck. Just a family of native hens racing towards the water. Just before we reached the cars the rain came down. Pretty good timing!!

Species Lists and Observations

Fungi [by Lynne Forster]:

- *Dermocybe austroveneta* (Cortinariaceae) these green fungi were abundant.
- *Omphalina chromaceae* (Hygrophoraceae) bright yellow
- *Mycena* 'small white' (Tricholomataceae)
- *Laccaria* 'rust red' (Tricholomataceae) see excursion photos
- *Ramaria sp.* (Clavariaceae) buff coral
- *Hypholoma* 'dark brown with white rim' (Strophariaceae)

- *Galerina* sp. 'honey' (Cortinariaceae)

Snails & Millipedes [Kevin Bonham]:

- *Paralaoma mucoides* (just one native snail in more than four hours!)
- *Tasmaniosoma armatum* (millipede)

Beetles [Lynne & Kevin]:

- *Prostomus murinus* (Curculionidae) a large 20mm weevil in rolled bark on the ground.
- *Sarothrocrepis inquinata* (Carabidae) under bark of a standing dead tree.
- *Diphucephala colaspidoidea* (Scarabaeidae), 8mm. Remnants of this iridescent green beetle with white hairs underneath were found in the messy tangle of a spider nest in *Leptospermum scoparium*. The pitted elytra also matched the single wing cover Kevin found during lunch. The beetle feeds on tea tree flowers in late January and is a coastal beetle not found above 300m (Peter McQuillan, pers com).
- *Tychiinae* sp. TFIC 22 (Curculionidae), a small pretty weevil found deep in eucalypt bark
- *Agrypnus* sp. TFIC 04 (Elateridae)
- *Isopteron triviale* (Tenebrionidae)

The rare scarab known from the reserve was elusive. Peter McQuillan informed Lynne that it is *Xylonicus eucalypti*, a late winter flying, yellowish green beetle with white hairs underneath.

Spiders [by Lynne Forster]:

- *Neosparassus punctatus* (Heteropodidae) (features visible are the white eyebrows, white spots on exterior of femur and pair of short lateral white lines ventrally). Under bark of *E. amygdalina* at shoulder height.
- *Plexippus valipus* (Salticidae) (identifiable by the dark herringbone pattern posteriorly, pale bands on legs and white hairs between palps). (photo on web site)
- *Corasoides* sp. (Stiphidiidae - but currently being revised as possibly belonging to Amaurobiidae). Identification based on the scaffold web across low tussocks leading to a tunnel. Cannot specify the species without seeing the spider. It is unusual for a spider that is not a Mygalomorph or wolf spider to excavate burrows.
- *Amaurobiidae* sp. in a 4 cm bell-shaped web in *Leptospermum scoparium*.
- In rolled bark lying on the ground were 3 other species of Salticids;
- Two specimens of *Steatoda livens* (Theridiidae);
- A species of Amaurobiidae (spotty legs);
- A juvenile *Hestemodema* sp. (Zoridae);
- An orange-legged Zodariidae and a red legged Gnaphosiidae with a black sternum. They were all females.
- Under bark of a standing dead tree was the 2mm carapace of a Thomisidae.

There is a poem about the spider web in our website excursion photos that you may find interesting:

CORASOIDES AUSTRALIS by Phillip Hall

Breathtaking

The latticework of web suspended,
over the lower branches of a peach blossom tea tree,
by a labyrinth of threads
glistening with morning dew;
strings of bonsai pearls.

My breath caught, I was drawn down
through sheets of web
to the funnel-shaped retreat, down
through ground branches and grasses
to the burrow of this basement dweller,
Corasoides Australis,

the builder of this silken radio telescope.

The dish-platform a glistening, tactile waiting; listening
for any entangled struggle, a tripped vibration,
the giveaway signature of any predator or prey,
an extension of the spider's central nervous system,
the mask of Anancy.

[*Southerly*, Spring 1998 v58 n3 p242(1) Full text © 1998 English Association]

The Naturalist — last call for articles

The Tasmanian Naturalist is our annual publication, published in October, and includes a range of articles around the theme of natural history. Articles are needed now. They can range from short reports to extended scientific articles accessible to interested members of the general public. Refer to previous issues of the *Naturalist* for examples of style and content.

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Spring Federation Weekend — 16~18 November

Twice yearly, field naturalists clubs around Tasmania get together for an outing, and also to conduct Federation business. The Launceston Field Naturalists Club is hosting this year's Spring Federation weekend on 16, 17 and 18 November.

Plans are for an outing to the Winifred Curtis Reserve and the Douglas Apsley Park. Accommodation will be in the Seaview Holiday Park, Banksia Street, Bicheno. The bunkhouse sleeps 38 in 2x10 bunkrooms plus 2 single rooms and other smaller bunkrooms. Bring own bedding. Holiday units and motel units are also available.

Bunkroom tariff \$18 person per night. Powered sites are \$18 per night (1-2 people) and unpowered \$10 per night (1-2 people). For the Saturday night meal the Skyroom dining room is available; \$15 for 2 course, \$18 for 3 course option.

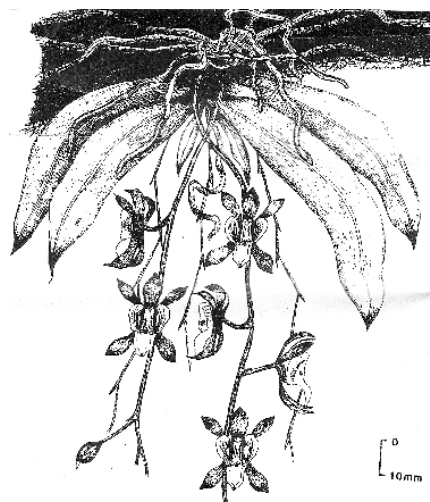
A great opportunity to go to the East Coast. Those interested, please let Kevin or Janet know at the August meeting, so that we can give the Launceston group some numbers for booking.

Sarcochilus australis — have you seen this plant?

Gunn's tree orchid *Sarcochilus australis* is Tasmania's only epiphytic orchid. The locations (detailed) of individuals and of populations (past and present) anywhere in the state are needed for a Uni of Tas honours project.

If you have information, please tell

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Excursion photos can be seen at <http://www.tasfieldnats.org.au/ExcnPhotos/ExcnPhotos.htm>.

