

# THE LAUNCESTON NATURALIST

Volume LVII No.5 June/July 2024

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

Patron : Prof. Nigel Forteath  
President : Andrew Smith, 0402 893 378  
Hon. Secretary : Noel Manning, 0458 030 767  
Hon. Treasurer : Karen Manning

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

## Program:

### October

Saturday 26

Field Trip – Tom Gibson Reserve at Epping Forest for wildflowers, meet at the Reserve at 10am

### November

Tuesday 5

Member Speaker Jeff Campbell – Native Orchids

Thursday 7

Monthly Short Walk – APS Garden at Heritage Forest, meet in end carpark 10am

Saturday 9

Field Trip - Powranna Nature Reserve, meet at Reserve at 10am

Saturday 23

Excursion - Arboretum at Eugenana for 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, catch up with Central North Members who are holding a [Mini-Nature Expo](#)

Saturday 30

Social Meal – 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Lunch (12 noon for 12.30pm) at the Olde Tudor Hotel in Prospect (See RSVP details page 10)

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

## Skemps Report June/July 2024

Thanks to Andrew, Caitlin, Geoff, Ian, Jeff, Karen and Rob the usual tasks have been dealt with, though maintaining tracks to the south-eastern corner has been neglected. We do not have the time to go that far with so many other things to do, including seven falls to be chain sawed over these two months.

I had noticed pit marks in the dirt below the first water tank and decided to investigate eventually finding a small hole near the wall to the left of the tank. This proved difficult to plug as the brass screw I tried was too small and ended up opening the hole further by cleaning out the accumulated dirt. A silicone plug worked though I think something more permanent is needed and I wonder how this hole ended up in what I think is a fibreglass tank.

A very dry season saw the water stop flowing from the settling tank on many occasions and this means a visit to the low point of the pipe near John's memorial to bleed the air out to restart the flow. The other user of the tank does not have a float valve, instead letting the overflow go into a dam.

Karen moved the paddock pancakes from the grass near the Centre as these are unsightly and would be a nuisance when using the ride on mower. Neighbour Greg informed me that the cows were gone and that he found far more than the five we had seen.

A new man from ETCS did our test and tag ably assisted by Karen who helped to find the items for this job and a few items did fail and will be repaired or replaced. I measured the flues to buy the two different brushes needed for cleaning and made some chalk board cleaners at home using a small offcut of wood covered in a piece of felt used as weed suppressant in the tree guards. I check the CO and smoke detectors at irregular intervals as I need to get the ladder, climb up to them and bring them down, then twice move the ladder and repeat. An onerous task with the detectors so far from the floor.

Ian and I tried unsuccessfully to unblock the pipe under the road at the boom gate only to realise the pipe is broken and blocked with rocks and silt. During heavy rain evens the water goes over the road instead of through the pipe and causes erosion. This has been reported to the council though as this was just after the damaging winds we will need to wait for a fix. Contact a committee member if you would like to volunteer at the property and I will add you to my text message group.

Noel Manning



Water needing to be swept out of the BBQ area (KM)

## General Meeting –Tuesday June 4 – Presentation by Roy Skabo – Secrets of the LFNC

Andrew introduced our guest speaker, member Roy Skabo, and his talk on the secrets of our Club, nothing salacious, just information on the species found on the property and while out and about on field trips.

Roy then told us that fellow member Geoff, our May presenter, had made the valid point that most, if not all, of the information garnered by members over the last 75 years is not available to the public, although there are lists of sightings in the newsletter and a book recording what has been seen by members. He had images of one folder of the herbarium created by life member Geoff Martin and showed us how beautifully prepared the over 100 specimens are. He noted that while the three-volume herbarium is available to all who visit the Centre, few people make use of it.

An image from the Tasmanian Government Natural Values Atlas (NVA) site for Skemps showed only eight plant sightings and some were duplicates. The NVA map for a 500-metre radius around Skemps showed no raptors yet the Tuesday volunteers often report sightings. The 5,000-metre radius map showed 12 raptor sightings with none very close to the property.

Roy then posed the question ‘Why is it important that the public should have access to this sort of information’ and he gave us reasons why these records are important. If he visits somewhere for the first time, he will use the NVA, or similar, to note what he might expect to find, especially if it is of interest, such as threatened species or something he has not seen before. The other reason for such a record is to use as a base line, a list to be compared to lists of what is here in another 75 years to see if numbers are in decline or growing. It is also of use to researchers, allowing them to know where their research targets might be found.

He noted that Karen’s lists in the newsletter of what is seen during field trips tells us that one seaweed species seen during our rock pool hunt at Low Head is not listed as being there. Also, our water monitoring data is not readily available outside the Club and could be useful to someone studying water quality around the state.

While the NVA is the site for consultants looking at developments, Roy described it as not very user friendly, though it is being completely redeveloped and the new version should be available next year. He described iNaturalist as the best site for amateurs, such as us, and it can all be done with a smart phone. With the iNaturalist app on your phone the camera and inbuilt GPS allow us all to be citizen scientists recording what we see for all to share.

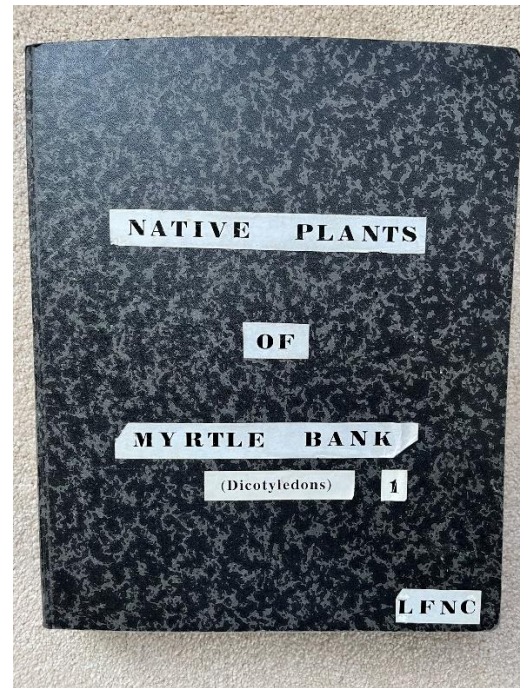
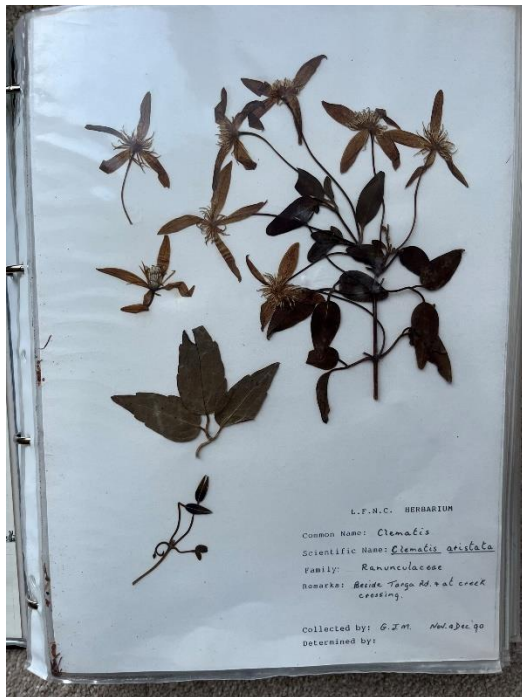
Roy then showed us a recent record he had uploaded of a stinkwood at Skemps and described the process, doing this test of the app so he could accurately describe it to us. Although he knew it was *Zieria arborescens* he could have put shrub or just possibly. stink wood. You then can expect someone to get back quite quickly confirming the identification and this did happen with one contributor, call it *Z. arborescens ssp. arborescens*.

While you can add sightings to the NVA you can also add them to iNaturalist where these will be harvested to the NVA every six months or at least annually. He went on to tell us that only research grade sightings are added to the NVA although he described the standard for this classification as rather low. With no confirmation it is a casual addition, needing two confirmations to be classed as research grade.

As an example of positives of the app he told the story of a young woman walking up Ben Lomond from Carr Villa and finding and photographing a violet then adding it to iNaturalist where it was identified as a mainland species not seen before in Tasmania.

During the Q & A session it was mooted that perhaps our herbarium could be uploaded to iNaturalist and Roy told us that we can have a Skemps project on iNaturalist so that sightings can be added specifically for the property. Kirstin raised the idea of doing a Bioblitz at Skemps with Andrew suggesting a thorough database of sightings at Skemps could be used to promote the property for nature studies. Roy agreed stating that the substantial variety of ferns and eucalypts on the property could be valuable for identification courses.

After suggestion he and Roy could help people put the app on their phone Andrew gave the thanks and led the acclamation. Noel Manning



Thank you to Roy Skabo for allowing usage of these images

## Monthly Short Walk – Thursday June 6 – Hands-on practice with iNaturalist

Following the Skemps Memorial Lecture in May, and the June Meeting on using digital data recording, Roy joined 6 other members of LFNC to encourage us to use phone applications to record our sightings.

On a still and cold morning, we set out towards the Pipers River track stopping for Karen and Faye and Noel to clock up their first records. About 15 items of fungi and plants were added to iNaturalist and Karen had lots of fun exploring the app. and adding more.

There was a good range of fungi species to see on the ground. Black and white cockatoos, kookaburras, green rosella and new holland honeyeaters in the trees. Locally common ferns and plants including the leaves of two Pterostylis species.

We enjoyed lunch, coffee and a sociable time in the Timber Tops Centre. Conversation turned to the location of the old house site and pond that some of us remembered visiting with Professor Forteach some years ago, so we set off and found the remains of the pond and a rock-walled storage impoundment. We were fascinated with the skeleton of a big old oak tree that is host to attractive colonies of kangaroo fern and fungi. We enjoyed being amongst



the size, shape, leaf form and colour range of big Northern hemisphere pines and cypresses and their history at Holly Bank.

Dare I finish by saying that a *good time was had by all?* It really was ... Helen Tait

## Field Trip – Thursday 27 June – QVMAG Planetarium (Birth of Earth)

Twelve members and Helen's friend Scott braved the winter cold on this fine Thursday to visit the QVMAG and the Planetarium in place of the July meeting.

Our host Johnnie, the resident astronomer, checked our tickets, introduced himself and started the show, a multi-billion-year timeline showing the formation of our galaxy and eventually our patch of it, planet earth and our sustaining star, the sun.

The big takeaway from this was the various coincidences that led to a planet being in the Goldie Locks zone where life could develop and be sustained. A planet called Thea bumped into the developing Earth and this resulted in our moon contributing so much to our lives.

When this fascinating show was finished, we were introduced to the night sky starting just after sunset. We saw the position of the Southern Cross and the pointers, and it was explained how these could be used to find south if we had a clear night. We were shown the three brightest stars in the night sky and where these would be tonight as well as the visible planets.

We were told of the unimaginable distances to even the nearest star, Proxima Centauri, was about 4.2 light years, while our galaxy, the Milky Way, is 87,000 light years from end to end.

After a long Q & A session we went to the UTAS library cafe for a welcome drink and snack with a little field naturalists' planning thrown in for good measure. This very interesting show filled us with wonder and warmed our hearts if not our hands and feet. Noel Manning



## Skemps Day – Saturday June 29, Ferns and Bryophytes

This Skemps Day was not looking promising as it had rained all night, and the forecast was certainly not encouraging. Having slept in we still managed to arrive about 9:30 only to find the Field Centre awash both inside and out.

I set the fire while Karen mopped inside, set a few buckets in the worst spots then headed outside with a big broom to clear the pooling water from all the paved areas. She then worked on blocked drains and thinking the heater was struggling I lit the solid fuel stove as well then joined Karen to clear another blocked drain.

Karen donned her wet weather gear and headed out to find some ferns and soon

returned with a reasonable collection to be studied and identified.

Ian turned up, soon followed by Andrew, then Jon, and Tom and Tina and this made it a reasonable showing. Andrew made another foray returning with more ferns to be studied with he and Karen doing most of the identifying work while Andrew recorded the find. We all wandered over to look at the collection at various stages.

After lunch I walked to the top pond as the overflow had become blocked in the past and the water running over the dam wall had caused serious erosion. With the strong flow all over the property this pond had about 2 inches to go before it would start to spill again. It was only grassy earth clods added when we discovered the issue that was stopping another spill. More work for our Tuesday mob.

The rain eased then stopped not long after lunch when we no longer needed to go outside so we cleaned up as best we could, damped down the fires and headed home. The science was good with seven species identified and the company was enjoyable.

In a perverse twist there were sunny patches to be seen as we drove home to the point where sunglasses were needed. Tasmanian weather for you. Noel Manning

**Ferns:** - *Cyathea australis*, rough treefern; *Dicksonia antarctica*, soft tree fern; *Gleichenia microphylla*, scrambling coral fern; *Histiopteris incisa*, batwing fern; *Microsorium pustulatum*, kangaroo fern; *Polystichum proliferum*, mothershield fern; *Pteridium esculentum*, austral bracken.

## Monthly Short Walk – Thursday July 4 – Duck Reach to the First Basin

A lively group Jeff C, Karen, Noel, Tom and Helen set out on the -4 degree frosty morning of a clear blue-sky day, to walk the track from Duck Reach to the First Basin.

Turning ourselves around in the car park we first of all identified a goodly amount of native plants established in the garden of one of the Corin St Cottages where, keen growers of local natives, had previously lived.

We were very pleased to be taking the sunny track above the river, when, well below us the rocks were covered in deep frost that looked almost like snow. We spent some time debating as to whether some edges and back eddies of the river were iced over. Certainly, some pools in the rocks were well frozen!

Where the sun reached, the moss reflected a brilliant green, and the water sparkled. The recent drought has probably caused the death of some *Correa* and *Pomaderris* plants.

The invigorating air and sunshine on the track made for a cheery walk, and we discussed and





recorded many more local plants and animals. Coffee-time at the Basin Cafe provided more time for conversation and winter warmth. Helen Tait

**Plants:-** *Acacia melanoxylon*, Blackwood; *Acacia mearnsii*, black wattle; *Acacia mucronata* ssp caterpillar wattle; *Allocasuarina littoralis*, black sheoak; *Astroloma humifusum*, native cranberry; *Beyeria viscosa*, pinkwood; *Bulbine bulbosa*, golden bulbine-lily; *Bursaria spinosa*, prickly box; *Callistemon pallidus*, yellow bottlebrush; *Callitris oblonga* subsp *oblonga*, South Esk pine; *Carpobrotus rossii*, native pigface; *Cassinia aculeata*, dollybush; *Cassytha pubescens*, downy dodderlaurel; *Cheilanthes austrotenuifolia*, rock fern (**pictured page 6 - KM**); *Clematis clitoroides*, pleasant clematis; *Coprosma quadrifida*, native currant; *Correa reflexa*, green correa; *Correa reflexa*, pink correa; *Dianella revoluta*, spreading flaxlily; *Dianella tasmanica*,

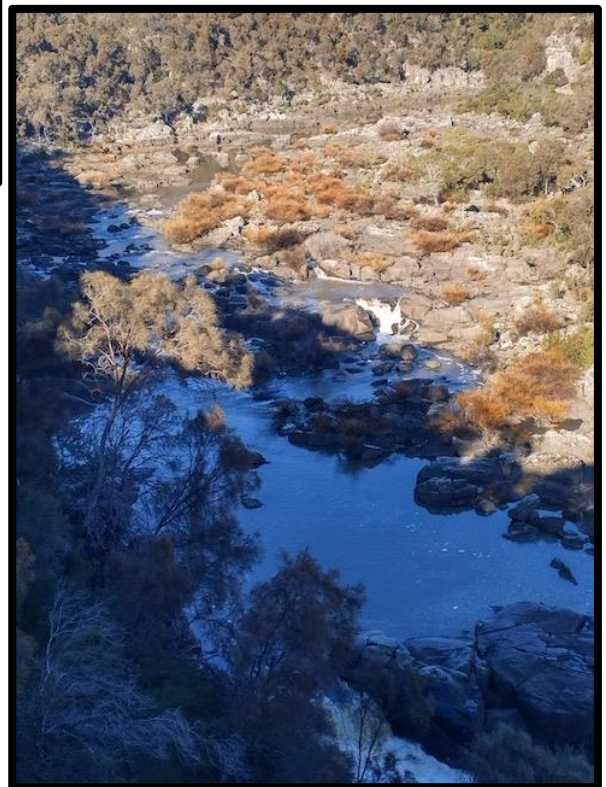


forest flaxlily; *Dodonaea viscosa*, broadleaf hopbush; *Eucalyptus viminalis*, white gum; *Exocarpos cupressiformis*, common native-cherry; Forget-me-nots; *Hakea* sp., needlebush; *Lomandra longifolia*, Sagg; Moss unknown; *Notelaea ligustrina*, native olive ; *Olearia argophylla*, musk daisybush; *Olearia phlogopappa*, dusty daisybush; *Pelargonium australe*, southern storksbill; *Poa labillardieri*, silver tussock grass; *Pomaderris apetala*, common yellow dogwood; *Pomaderris pilifera*, hairy dogwood; *Prostanthera rotundifolia*, roundleaf

mintbush; *Solanum laciniatum*, kangaroo apple (**pictured above KM**); *Themeda triandra*, kangaroo grass.

**Looking down to the frosty river (image TT)**

**Birds:-** *Dacelo novaeguineae*, Laughing kookaburra; *Malurus cyaneus*, superb fairy-wren; *Hirundo neoxena*, welcome swallow; *Rhipidura albiscapa*, grey fantail; *Vanellus miles*, masked lapwing; *Acanthiza pusilla*, brown thornbill



## Community Volunteering – Saturday 27 July – George Town Big Plant with Tamar NRM

In celebration of National Tree Day, five members volunteered to assist today with the planting of some of the 3800 native trees, shrubs, herbs and grasses intended for the George Town Waste Transfer Station. This 3-day event was working towards environmental restoration. Green waste from the tip had been mulched and used to prepare the area where they are planting, hoping to turn the old landfill area into a green space. Karen Manning

Helen planting (image KM)



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## Skemps Day – Sunday 28 July – National Tree Day – Track Clearing



Six members attended Skemps mostly for track maintenance with Karen, Andrew and me going to the southeast corner of the property to clear tracks off the main Forest Track which had not been visited for some time. After leaving Bottom Falls, we aimed to reach the Top Falls but were unable to find the track due to tree falls, so worked our way up as best we could. I did find a tall stand of old pine trees that I think were on the Skemps and explain the pinecones we often find deep on the property, well away from the known pine plantations. The tracks leading away from the bottom falls will need a lot of work to make the area accessible.

Noel Manning



**Fungi and ferns at the Bottom Falls (KM)**



# LFNC 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

**Saturday 30 November** - a function will be held at the Olde Tudor Hotel Restaurant to celebrate the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Launceston Field Naturalists Club. All members are invited to attend, meals and beverages will be at your own expense. Please arrive by 12 noon for a 12.30 pm start. The Restaurant's menu can be viewed below or online at [oldetudor.com.au/family-bistro/](http://oldetudor.com.au/family-bistro/)

RSVP by 15 November to [secretary@lfnc.org.au](mailto:secretary@lfnc.org.au) or mobile 0458 030 767

Starters	Price	Mains	Price	Steaks	Price
Oysters ④		BBQ Pork Belly	\$34	Served with Chips + Salad or Vegetables	
Half dozen	\$23	Served with Chips + Salad or Vegetables		250g Rump Steak ④	\$28
One Dozen	\$39	Tasmanian sourced		Tasmanian sourced	
Natural Kilpatrick		Roast of the Day Refer to the specials board		300g Porterhouse Steak ④	\$37
Creamy Garlic Prawns		Served with Chips + Salad or Vegetables		Tasmanian sourced	
Served on a bed of steamed rice		Half Serve	\$21	400g T-Bone Steak ④	\$41
Starter	\$19	Full Serve	\$26	Tasmanian sourced	
Main	\$31	Lamb Shank ④	\$33	300g Scotch Fillet ④	\$43
Buffalo Wings	\$15	Brisket in a rich tomato and red wine sauce with creamy mashed potato, seasonal vegetables		Tasmanian sourced	
Served with garlic aioli and mixed leaf		Tasmanian sourced			
Salt and Pepper Squid		Grilled Chicken Breast ④	\$30		
Served with garlic aioli and mixed leaf		With Garlic Prawns Extra \$10			
Starter	\$16	Served with Chips + Salad or Vegetables			
Main	\$27	Tasmanian sourced			
Vegetable Spring Rolls ✓	\$13	Beef Meatballs	\$28		
Served with sweet soy dipping sauce and mixed leaf		Served with creamy mashed potato and your choice of sauce			
Garlic Pizza ✓	\$16	Tasmanian sourced			
Garlic, herbs and mozzarella		Catch Of The Day Refer to the specials board	\$31		
Garlic Bread ✓	\$12	Served with Chips + Salad or Vegetables			
With cheese Extra \$2		Tasmanian sourced			
With cheese & bacon Extra \$3		Seafood Basket	\$35		
Wedges	\$11	Crumbed prawns, salt and pepper squid, battered fish, crumbed scallops			
Served with sour cream and sweet chilli		Served with Chips + Salad or Vegetables			
		Tasmanian sourced			
		Crumbed Scallops	\$33		
		One Dozen			
		Served with Chips + Salad or Vegetables			
		Tasmanian sourced			
		Honey Soy - Vegetable Stir Fry ✓ ④	\$26		
		Served on a bed of steamed rice			

Schnitzels	Price
Served with Chips + Salad or Vegetables	
Beef	\$26
Chicken	\$26
Parmigiana Extra \$2	
House napoli & mozzarella cheese	
Hawaiian Extra \$4	
House napoli, ham, pineapple & mozzarella cheese	
Mexicana Extra \$4	
House napoli, pepperoni, beef, capsicum, onion, jalapeno, chilli flakes & mozzarella cheese	
Pepperoni Extra \$4	
House napoli, pepperoni & mozzarella cheese	
Meatlovers Extra \$4	
BBQ sauce base, bacon, ham, salami & mozzarella cheese	
Spicy Jalapeno Extra \$4	
House Napoli, pepperoni, jalapenos & mozzarella cheese	

Burgers	Price	Pizza-12"	Price	Salads	Price
Served with Chips		Margarita ✓	\$21	Greek ✓ ④	\$21
Cheese Burger	\$21	Tomato base, tomato, herbs		Lamb Extra \$6	
Tasmanian beef patty, double cheese & tomato relish on a toasted brioche bun		Hawaiian	\$22	Cos lettuce, tomato, cucumber, spanish onion, feta cheese and olives	
Vegetable Burger ✓	\$25	Tomato base, ham, pineapple		Caesar	\$26
Chickpea patty, cheese, lettuce, tomato, onion, aioli, tomato relish on a toasted brioche bun		Vegetarian ✓	\$24	Chicken Extra \$6	
Chicken Schnitzel Burger	\$26	Tomato base, capsicum, tomato, spanish onion, mushroom, olives, oregano		Cos lettuce, bacon, parmesan cheese, croutons, anchovies and egg	
Chicken schnitzel, bacon, cheese, lettuce, tomato, pineapple & aioli on a toasted brioche bun		BBQ Chicken	\$25		
Beef Burger	\$26	Barbecue base, chicken, spanish onion, mushroom, capsicum			
Tasmanian beef patty, bacon, cheese, lettuce, Tomato, aioli & tomato relish on a toasted brioche bun		Meatlovers	\$25		
		Tomato base, pepperoni, bacon, ground beef, ham			
		Mexicana	\$25		
		Tomato base, pepperoni, ground beef, capsicum, tomato, spanish onion, jalapeno, chilli flakes			
		Garlic Lamb	\$25		
		Tomato base, lamb, mushroom, spanish onion, capsicum, & garlic aioli			
		Gluten Free Bases Available \$2			
		\$2 Each Extra Topping			

Sides	Price	Toppers	Price	Kids Meal	Price
Creamy Mashed Potato ✓	\$10	Surf and Turf ④	\$13	Served with Soft Drink & Frog In A Pond	
Sweet Potato Chips ✓	\$11	Prawns and scallops in a creamy garlic sauce		Steak & Chips	\$14
Chips & Garlic Aioli ✓	\$11	Salt and Pepper Squid	\$13	Fish & Chips	\$14
Seasonal Salad ✓	\$11	Garlic Prawns ④	\$13	Ham & Cheese Pizza & Chips	\$14
Steamed Seasonal Vegetables ✓	\$11	In a creamy garlic sauce		Nuggets & Chips	\$14
Beer Battered Onion Rings & Garlic Aioli ✓	\$13				

Sauces	Price	Desserts	Price
Traditional Gravy	\$4	Served With Cream & Ice Cream	
Pepper Sauce	\$4	Chocolate Brownie	\$13
Mushroom Sauce	\$4	Cheesecake Of The Day	\$13
Creamy Garlic Sauce	\$4	Apple Crumble	\$13
		Banana Split	\$13



## 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, contact the Program Coordinator 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 given at the General Meeting prior to the event. Please contact the Program Coordinator to confirm details if you are unable to attend the meeting.

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

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

**Field Centre:** All members have access to the John Skemp Field Centre but should contact [secretary@lfnc.org.au](mailto:secretary@lfnc.org.au) 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/>

Emails: [president@lfnc.org.au](mailto:president@lfnc.org.au) [secretary@lfnc.org.au](mailto:secretary@lfnc.org.au)  
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