

November 2015 Newsletter

TASMANIAN ASSOCIATION OF LABORATORY MANAGERS

www.talm.org.au

Hi Everyone

Did you attend the extraordinary Cradle Conference? Many thanks to the committee – Gaylene Veith, Dorota Hamon, Tanya Adams, Nicole Thorpe, Coen Smit, Colin Lawrence, Andrew Reid, Sheryn Johnson, Sharon Harvey and Salley Emmerton. To see more photos go to the facebook page 'Tasmanian HS Laboratory Managers'. This is my last Newsletter. Thank you to all of you who have contributed. If anyone is interested in taking over from me please talk to Andrew Hull or myself for more information. Tootles! Joy. ☺



My Cradle Conference

*A personal recollection
by William*

Setting off from Launceston on that Wednesday morning in July, carefree and light of heart, I headed for Reece High School. For the first time in about five years the responsibility for, and all of the work attached to organising and running, our annual conference lay with others and not with me. A deliciously sly feeling of irresponsibility stole over me as I drove north-west.

In the Reece car park was Coen's thumping diesel V8 off-roader: a conveyance with attitude to be sure. As colleagues assembled we ate Dorota's morning tea and then the union people talked. As I ate some more morning tea Andrew Reid said something about a weather station. I didn't listen because I was busy digesting my morning tea. Sorry Andrew.

We went to the Bass Strait Maritime Centre for lunch in a bowl. The nice little museum part was more interesting when the ancient mariners weren't trying to tell me how much stuff they knew. I wanted to tell them that I could read the panels for myself.



Driving inland to Cradle Mountain via Forth is an easy and always pleasant trip. En route, the navigational combination of GPS and wife behind the wheel created an intriguing excursion for one well-known family.

My shared cabin was easily located in the bush (but 4 big what?). TALM's exclusive use of the camp kitchen for two days might have put some other guests' noses out of joint but, hey, those two roaring log fires were good to gather around. Dinner was a repast of BYO sausage and a sip of red wine for me. What others ate varied interestingly.

It must be said that the weather was absolutely appalling over the three days of the conference. No snow. No ice. Hardly any rain. The sun shone for quite a while. The Cradle road was dry and clear at all times (shouda stayed in Lonnie). Taken overall, conditions were disappointing for winter at Cradle Mountain.

At some stage on Wednesday night tedious administrative detail was sorted and we got up close to Tasmanian Devils, wallaby carcasses in various states of decay, and other denizens of the icy night. Later, in our shared cabin, Dorota produced a bottle of Polish buffalo grass vodka and the cold vanished. (one day I might steal that girl).

Next morning more tedious administrative detail surfaced and got dealt with (Andrew Hull is one on the ball President). Back at the fireside there was a veritable kaleidoscope of colourful fruit and vegetables, the eating of Dorota's morning tea, and the packing of Dorota's lunch.



Free entry to the Cradle national park is not granted lightly by Parks but we pried special passes out of them and met Dick Burns (how he can talk!) at the Dove Lake car park. This was the start of a short ramble back to Waldheim. The way was packed with geology, flora and fauna (wombats bite viciously), and the best salad roll in the known universe. Thanks Dorota.



At the Cradle Mountain Hotel, staff relegated us to their buffet area for the Conference Dinner (too scruffy probably), and it sure was a long walk to find a drink. Sam Cleland delivered a comprehensive exposition of the activities at his Cape Grim air monitoring station. He was a very entertaining presenter and they have some serious bits of kit out there. Afterwards we found a gallery where you could do your own art work but somebody had hidden the textas.



Later in the same evening I was happily relaxing back at the cabin when suddenly the room was full of strange animals. A hasty review of my day's ethanol intake ruled that out as a probable cause. Clearly something strange had happened to Dorota and Richard. None of my business really. So, at that stage, it seemed prudent to barricade myself in my bedroom and let nature take its course (the photographs I took were taken away. Honestly.).

Friday morning saw the company back around those lovely fires and, bugger the rain outside. Several people showcased good things and we ate Dorota's morning tea followed by Dorota's lunch. Alright; some other kind people might have also prepared food. It was all yummy and wholesome thank you.



A couple of Tas Water people turned up and they talked a lot about water. What they didn't explain was why all the purported efficiencies deriving from the amalgamation of Tasmania's water suppliers into one entity results in my paying more than ever for the stuff that comes out of my taps. Perhaps I lack a proper understanding of "efficiencies". Perhaps I should have listened.

Since I was feeling pretty tired by then fond farewells were said and the college car took me home. It did so uneventfully but in a bland, unexciting G plated kind of way.

For me to attend a TALM conference without having an organising role was novel and a real pleasure. This conference was also made memorable by the additional company of several spouses who were clearly enjoying the ambience of Cradle Mountain's environs. The further presence of a full gamut of offspring, from dreadlocked youth to toddler at the breast, underscored the family friendly nature of our unique association. As they weaved in and out of adult activity variously getting lost, encouraging wild animals to bite them and otherwise exasperated respective parents I beamed benign thoughts. None was mine so I loved all of them. Oh, and did I mention the good food?



Science week 2015

Clarence High – Ilona Jacobson

On Thursday 20 August, 120 Grade 5/6 students from Bellerive and Howrah Primary Schools came to Clarence High to spend an hour in our science labs for National Science Week. This year's theme was "Making waves; the science of light" and each of the 4 activity groups in the Science labs was set up around this theme. There were approximately forty CHS students from years 8 to 10 leading the activities and encouraging the primary students. Fun was had by all!



Queechy High – Maryanne Simpson and Stewart Simpson

The laboratory managers at Queechy High organised science week activities. Take a look at this screenshot from the Queechy High Newsletter which they also organised.

NATIONAL SCIENCE WEEK

Queechy High School held activities during the week 15th-23rd August celebrating this year's schools theme, 'Making waves-the science of Light'.

A range of activities were arranged by the Laboratory Technicians, Mrs & Mr Simpson with an emphasis on the spectrum of light.

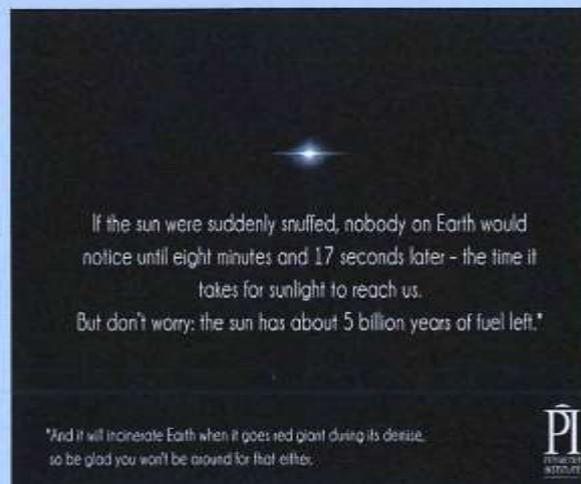
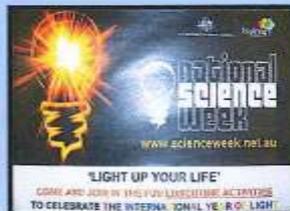
Those students who attended were amazed by a multitude of engaging hands on experiences including:

- Making their own colour wheel to spin and watch all the colours disappear to leave just white.
- Check their colour vision with an Ishihara chart
- Being mystified by the optical illusions
- Shown under UV light, how out of date sunscreen really does not work
- The magical changing colours of fibre optics

By far one of the most popular was how 'Cooties spread'. A harmless moisturiser containing particles which glow under ultra violet (UV) was offered to students to rub on their hands before entering the room. After a while they were shown using the UV torch, just how much this had spread from their hands to their pockets, to their faces, phones, benches etc. Some tried to wash it off and realised just how difficult it is to rid yourself of these stubborn germs. It gave rise to a whole new understanding of why surgeons spend so much time scrubbing their hands. The UV light also added entertainment in everyone checking out whose shoes glowed the most and how bright their teeth were.

Some lucky students won prizes for guessing what Glows under UV light, designs of the Colour Wheel and the entertaining Bulbhead drawings.

A wonderful time was had by all and I'm sure these students are more enlightened to the wonders of LIGHT.



Sorell School – Joy Arnott

Science Week kicked off with a Grade 6 excursion to the Festival of Bright Ideas in Hobart. We saw a talk on southern sea life, then a quick look at the following stalls – CSIRO, Hobart Hackerspace and Tas Water. We sat down to enjoy a specky show about light and fire before heading up to The Springs for lunch and a massive snow ball fight.



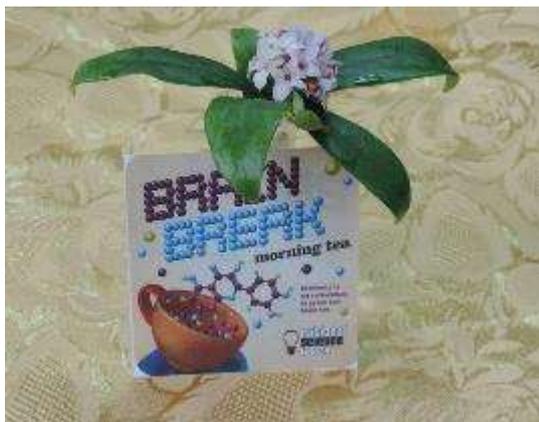
All grade 10 students had the opportunity to attend the Pennicott Wilderness Tours Tasman Island Cruise. It was a cold, wet exhilarating adventure and one many will never forget. Luckily I did not attend this outing!

9A enjoyed a very interesting look around the Raptor and Wildlife Refuge near Kettering. . Fiona from National Parks and Wildlife gave a wonderful talk and Craig gave a tour of the birds that were presently living at the refuge. We had an interesting look at the life of Raptor Birds. . For more info: www.raptorrefuge.com.au



All grade 8 classes were involved in the Science Fair. This was a day of goo, bubbles, fire, rockets and many more exciting and inspiring science demonstrations attended by many of our Primary School and High School classes. For preparing 30 individual demos that were to be done 72 times and coming in on my day off I was rewarded with chocolate and flowers!





Science Week 2015

Burnie High School

The history of Brain Break morning tea was commenced two years ago in BHS and at this time I took on the voluntary position of coordinator for this event.

The Year 2015 event was entitled 'Making Waves

-The Science of Light'.

The decision was made that our Grade Teams would have pleasure in preparing meals in a range of colours: white, yellow, red, purple and green. The group's leaders took a lucky vote to determine their colour and encouraged their colleagues to prepare a healthy and tasty



dish in this colour.

I used a Quiz I comprised by the WA National Science Week Coordinating Committee to sugar-coat our meeting and for the best participants in the games I purchased mystery boxes as prizes.

An energetic 25 minutes went quickly and enthusiastic Burnie High School workers left the staffroom.

See you in August 2016!

Dorota

Dover High School - Requests the services of a laboratory manager on a temporary part time basis in 2016. If you are interested contact me joy.arnott@education.tas.gov.au for the relevant contact details

NW Professional Development Day during October holidays. By Gaylene Veith

A good morning session at St Brendan-Shaw College with chemicals (and wonderful morning-tea provided by Sally!) was followed by an enjoyable sunny BBQ lunch at the *Forth Valley Nursery and Gardens*.



Southern Professional Learning Day By Miriam McFarlane

17 lab techs gathered at Tarooma High School on 6th October on a very warm day to find out a few IT tips and to learn about Seismometers in Schools. There are 3 schools in Tasmania with Seismometers fitted. Large earthquakes such as the ones this year in Nepal and Chile are large enough to register on the Tarooma High School digital seismogram. These large earthquakes take less than 45 minutes from the time they start to register on the Tasmanian seismometers!

<http://www.ga.gov.au/earthquakes/initRecentQuakes.do> Use this website to look at the date, location and magnitude of recent earthquakes

<http://ausis.edu.au/> Use this website to access seismographs from seismometers installed in Australian schools. Tarooma's code is AUTAR.

Then we looked at how to customise labels in Chemgold FFX. On the left hand side of a normal search page in ChemGold FFX there is a list of about 5 icons, one of which is called D-Gen. This is the place to go for making custom labels, however it's a bit of a process after that, which needs practice and some notes. If interested, contact Nicky Lynch on nicole.lynch@education.tas.gov.au at Rose Bay High School for some guidance.

The last session was with Mark Long, a Science-Maths-IT Teacher from Tarooma High School. Mark gave us a quick run through of various tricks and shortcuts with Excel and Windows 8. Both the labelling and the Windows 8/Excel session have been ear-marked to run again during the TALM 2016 conference in Hobart. Longer time will be allocated so there will be more time for practice.

Northern Professional Learning Day by Rod Hutchins

Who? Kris, Jennifer, Bruce, Bill and yours truly.
 When? Friday 23rd Oct. 11.30am.
 What? Tour of Toxfree recycling facilities.
 Where? 27 McKenzie Street, Mowbray, Launceston.
 Why? Jemima invited us to party but didn't turn up! (lol)

No, the real story is that Jemima organized a tour of Toxfree's facilities but unfortunately couldn't attend herself. However, we the above mentioned, showed enough curiosity to front up and scrutinize the continued processing of the contents of Launceston's recycling bins and other industrial materials. An interesting if not important exercise in realizing there is a whole lot more to wheeling your bins out once a week and thinking that's that.

After meeting at Toxfree we were signed in and given a short safety induction. Donning some fashionable fluoro-vests and safety glasses Simon Casey, our tour guide and facility manager, introduced himself. On entering the work area, any perceived 'yuk' factor fell by the way as roof high bales of sorted plastic, aluminium cans and other recyclable materials

confronted us. Perhaps, most noted were the pallets of unopened cartons of beer and mixes, their only crime preventing them from a more palatable fate, being that they were past their use by date. I'm sure I glimpsed a tear in Bill's eye as we walked past. Into an adjoining shed we were assailed by a very noisy and somewhat dusty environment. A large front end loader fed scoops of freshly unloaded material into a huge hopper and onto conveyer belts that led to a variety of sorting mechanisms including a number of workers manually sorting items such as milk bottles into specific hoppers. An arrangement of magnets separated metallic items, while a huge rotating drum separated paper and cardboard. After the first run of separation, that which was left returned on more conveyer belts to go through the process again and the final remainder ended in a pile awaiting transfer to landfill. Sadly a fair proportion of this was due to contamination. Beneath the whirring machinery and whizzing conveyer belts hydraulic rams compressed the materials in the various hoppers into bales ready for storage and finally shipping to wherever they would be recycled. As we walked towards the exit the intoxicating smell of alcohol greeted us along with the not so pleasant sound of glass being crunched. We watched for a moment as those out of date bottles began their recycling journey. I couldn't see Bill, I think he was behind me but his short sob was just as audible as mine. Simon gave us an excellent account of the logistics of each of the processes and his explanations of all the processes were informative and interesting. He talked up the idea of school tours, indicating an excellent approach to the benefits of an early education regarding recycling. It was as it turns out an excellent and informative PD.

Profiles from President Andrew Hull and Treasurer Jemima Cooper:

I am **Andrew Hull**, TALM's current President. I live in Launceston and work at St Patrick's College. I am married to Vera and have three teenage children Sophia, Chiara and Joseph.

My career started as a Metallurgical Laboratory Technician 28 years ago at ACL Bearing Company in Launceston. I attended Launceston TAFE where I completed my certificates 4 in Food Science and later Metallurgy.

I worked at ACL in the Powder Metallurgy Laboratory for 20 years and eventually progressed to Team leader of the Laboratory Quality Control Team. I enjoyed my time at ACL and a highlight was a trip to Japan to attend a conference and conduct plant visits of Sumitomo Powder Metallurgy. When the ACL Bearing Company ship showed signs of 'sinking' I returned back to TAFE to update my qualifications to a Diploma of Laboratory Technology.

When I left high school I originally set out to become a school laboratory technician so when the position at St Patrick's was advertised I applied and have been there since. I joined TALM shortly after and attended my first end of year conference in Poatina and have attended most conferences since.

Jemima has to confess to a bad start to her working life, having trained as a Science teacher and taught at Rosebery (no techie there!) for a year, before running off to the big smoke and doing some more study - Materials Science. CSIRO then allowed her to operate a Hot Isostatic Press for a couple of years, a collaboration with ANSTO who were trying to find a way to hide nuclear waste. This all led to some exciting times buried in a basement for days doing electron microscopy (“Microscopists do it in the dark”). Strangely, she opted to leave the world of Science for a while and returned to teaching because it offered the opportunity to live in an idyllic tropical paradise amongst some delightful young Pacific islanders. The highlight here was having a local pig named in honour of her favourite aunt.

Back in Canberra to be re-civilised meant a job at the National Dinosaur Museum interpreting Jurassic fauna for a series of Grade 6 classes on tour of the capital (it’s a shame that Tassie kids are not on this circuit too). Then back to the lab, to create handmade solar cells in a race to improve efficiencies, before commercialisation. Working with conc. HF on a daily basis sharpened her powers of concentration nicely.

A return to Tasmania brought a bit more teaching (shout out to her old techie, Cheryl Petersen!), before the exigencies of building her strawbale house meant that a job in Launceston was top priority. She found herself following in the footsteps of Kris Szalai at KMHS, urgently calling upon Kris’ expertise for weird Biology pracs! This turned into the chance to work part-time with local legends Rod Hutchins, Tim Kent, Dorelle Ashford - and of course with Maryanne at Queechy. Having no techie training, she is forever grateful for the advice, support and example of established techies such as Bill Hardman, Geoff Stubbs, and Annette McCarthy. Back at KMHS 10 years later, still wondering how lucky are we, to be paid to do all this...

Gina Green – King Island District High School –by William Hardman

We Hardmans went to King Island for our holiday. Well, why not? Despite the fortnight costing more than a trip to Bali (where I don’t particularly want to go) or to the Gold Coast (which I’ve seen and couldn’t care less about going back to) it was a fine thing to do. Two weeks of bucolic bliss.

Because we flew there on Wednesday of the last week in term three I was able to call on Gina Green, the laboratory manager at King Island District School, on the last Friday.

Gina’s a native of the island whose working life started in the laboratory at Grassy’s Scheelite mine. Gina has worked at the school in Currie for quite a while where she also holds the position of MDT technical aide. I had previously met Gina in Launceston and we correspond from time to time.



Gina Green (left) with Marian Hardman

The well-kept school has generous grounds and far more space than is needed for its current enrolment. The facilities are good with a publicly shared gymnasium and indoor pool. Gina presides over a large modern laboratory. The fully utilised preparation and store rooms reflect her total involvement in the school community. As is typical on K to 10 campuses Gina finds herself doing all manner of things. We interrupted a paper plane flying competition (Grade IV if I remember correctly).

It was nice to meet Gina on her home ground and we were delighted to accept her invitation to Sunday dinner. It was the best roast lamb in the world. Dorper sheep I'm told. Thanks Gina.

Cheese Making Win for King Island District School– by Chris Green (Career Person at KIDS)

To paraphrase Samuel Johnson, “When a King Islander is tired of cheese, a King Islander is tired of life”. Of course King Islanders rarely tire of eating cheese but they can sometimes get a bit bored when the first thing anyone says to them invariably mentions the King Island Dairy and how delicious they find the camembert / brie / blue / smoked cheese.

However, the cheese-tag is something King Islanders have to live with as the King Island Dairy is the largest employer on the island with cheese being exported all over Australia and beyond. And it is delicious.

So when Gina Green, Lab Tech at King Island District High School, read about a program called Camembert in the Classroom her instinct was to learn more. “When I saw the email I thought it was a great opportunity because of our dairy and it gives our kids a new insight into a local industry.” Camembert in the Classroom is part of the Cows Create Careers program by Dairy Australia which aims to promote careers in the dairy industry.

Gina was quick to apply for the program and once accepted both Gina and the Home Economics teacher, Jenny Holbrook started planning their trip to Tasmania for some intensive training in the art of cheese-making. This highlighted another aspect of the program which appealed to Gina, "It was a very collaborative process across the school with the science teacher involved, cooking involved, careers involved and maths also being a big part of it".

Once armed with their new skills Gina and Jenny began to look for students to participate in the program. "All the kids had a choice of whether or not to get involved and they stuck with it, I'm very proud of them. It was a real team effort," said Gina.

Of course, being a King Islander working at the King Island high school and entering a cheese making competition brings with it a certain amount of pressure but luckily Gina's colleagues are a supportive and understanding bunch so they only reminded her once or twice a day of the shame she would bring on herself, her family, the school and the whole island if she didn't bring home the trophy which surely already had King Island's name engraved in it.

With this encouragement Gina and her colleagues threw themselves into the process and instilled in the students the need to work together to achieve success. "It was a real team effort, looking after our babies, I had to come back in to school at 11.30 on several nights to turn the cheeses as we had a couple of practice makes."

The judging took place in September with sixty camemberts and their 'parents' from across the state gathering at the East Devonport Conference Centre. Gina's heart sank as she saw the other students who were predominantly from Grades 11 and 12 whereas her trainee-cheesemakers were all from Grades 7 and 8. Gina personally felt very confident that her cheese looked good but her fear centred on whether the taste would be too salty so she was both surprised, delighted and relieved when the renowned international cheese Judge, Russell Smith tasted Team Legendairy's submission and declared "These are very well made cheeses, you can't do better than this...well done." And awarded them first place.

Gina is of course delighted with this win declaring the whole experience to be the highlight of her year but she's already thinking ahead to next year and knows that the pressure will be on once again to back up this famous victory with another win.



Tasmanian State Service Award: Salary and Career Structure for School Laboratory Technicians (Managers)

The story so far:

In 2007 most Tasmanian public sector employees were transferred from separate awards into one multi banded “single spine” salary structure.

School laboratory technicians (managers) at the top level of the former Technical Stream Award were transferred into band four and, subsequently, all of them ought to have progressed to the highest rung of that band (B4-R2-5, with a salary, effective 3/12/15, of \$75,410)

Those who had not arrived at the top level of their old award were transferred to an appropriate level in band three. They ought to have subsequently progressed to the top of that band (B3-R1-6 with a salary, effective 3/12/15, of \$ 63,226)

After 2008 all vacant school positions were advertised at band three. Newcomers commenced on an agreed level within band three and ought to have progressed towards B3-R1-6 from there.

In 2007 school laboratory technicians (managers) were encouraged to believe that individual progression from band three to band four would occur when it became due. This progression was seen as crucial to creating a meaningful career structure with incremental advancement spanning six years in band three and eight years in band four. Two promotion points were included along the way.

By 2015 it seemed that no-one in any school had succeeded in advancing by promotion from band three to band four. Attempts to advance to band four are reported to have been effectively rebuffed by the DoE. Furthermore no school vacancy had yet been advertised at band four.

A lot of people were ramped up at B3-R1-6. They have been denied advancement after just six years (in a lot of cases fewer than six years) in the job. They have been expected to perform the same work as someone in band four earning up to an extra \$ 12,184 per annum.

Looking ahead:

So! It's an iniquitous circumstance. What can be done about this? Who can do it? Who can be a friend along the way?

You B3-R1-6ers are being duded by the system. After 8 years on that level you will be underpaid by nearly twenty percent every year (12,184 less already) in comparison to B4-R2-6 people.

At your school you are performing the same duties to the same standard as a band four person (whether a position is held by a band three or a band four person is unrelated to that position).

Equity is valued in Australian society. Everyone says so. Employers say so. Unions say so. Often.

What can be done? Complain. Strategically, loudly and continuously. To whom? That's obvious and the more publically it is done the better.

Who can do it? You B3-R1-6ers. You own the disadvantage. Pull together on this.

Who are your friends? TALM, of course, and the public sector unions, School laboratory technicians occupy influential union positions. Union members have a right to their support. If you are not a union member then think seriously about political reality and how powerful the collective voice is.

Where are your cries of outrage? Come out of the wilderness. Make your plea loud enough to be heard in the right quarters.





**TASMANIAN ASSOCIATION OF LABORATORY MANAGERS
SEMINAR**

THE GRANGE CAMPBELL TOWN FRIDAY 4th DECEMBER 2015

Registration	9.30am
Session 1.	10.00 – 11.00 Open Executive Meeting
Morning Tea	11.00am – 11.20pm
Session 2	11.20am – 12.40pm
	Demonstrations by Bill Borland from Serrata Science Supplies.
	Information on the demonstrations will be updated soon.
Session 3	12.40pm - 1.00pm AGM
Lunch	1.00 pm – 1.45pm
	BQ Lunch including veggie burgers & salads.
Session 4	1.45pm – 3.00 pm
	Science Assist website with Kris Szalai
	Bring along a laptop or I Pad for this session.
Closing Session	3.00pm -3.30pm