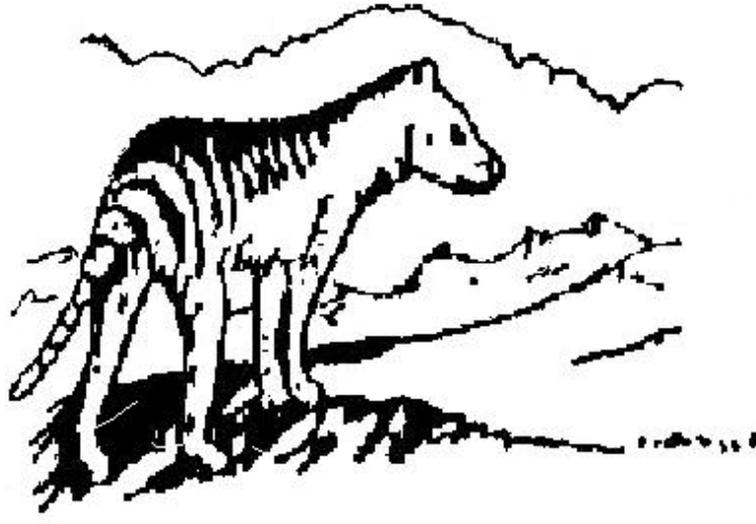


THE LAUNCESTON NATURALIST

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



Volume XLII No 5

June/July 2009

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- N'letter Co-ordinator** : Ms K. Manning
- Committee** : G Cameron, A Pegler, J Simmons, M Simmons,
R Skabo, T Treloggen

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

Subscriptions: Year 2008-2009 \$25 Single, \$30 Family, \$2.50 Junior, \$35 Associate.
Due and payable on or before 4 Nov 2008

PROGRAM

AUGUST

- Tuesday 4** **Speaker: Andrew Rozefelds - *New Fossil Species in Tasmania***
- Sunday 9** **Field Trip: to be advised**
- Saturday 15** **Skemp Day**

SEPTEMBER

- Tuesday 1** **Speaker: Mike Douglas - *Rocks and Plants, Bridport***
- Sunday 6** **Field Trip: Granite Point, Bridport**
- Saturday 12** **Skemp Day**

OCTOBER

- Tuesday 6** **Civic Reception 60th Anniversary (Date to be confirmed)**
- Saturday 10** **Field Trip: Mt Barrow Nature Trail**
- Sunday 18** **Skemp Day - Water Monitoring**

NOVEMBER

- Tuesday 3** **AGM & General Meeting**
Speaker: Douglas Kershaw - *Dung Beetles*
- Sunday 8** **Field Trip : Bridport area re Dung Beetles**
- Friday 13 -** **Federation Weekend at South Mt Cameron Field**
Sunday 15 **Centre**
- Saturday 21** **Skemp Day**

DECEMBER

- Tuesday 1** **Members Night**
- Saturday 5** **Christmas Party at Skemps**

Late changes to the program can be viewed on the Club website
<http://www.lfnc.org.au/meetings.htm>

Skemp Report

June - Revegetation of Skemps Creek: Wire has been purchased and Grant Hanson has started making tree-guards. John Elliott has started making weed mats out of old carpet. Seedlings may be bought in a week or so. A number of wasp nest have been located and poisoned.

July - Wire cages are being made and weed mats have been cut ready for use when the *White gum, Blackwoods and Banksia* seedlings arrive for the revegetation on the creek. One crossing on the Fern Gully-Bottom Falls track has been completed. The foundations have been put in for the crossing on the Bottom Falls-Road track.

Puggle

June - Graeme Briton asked the meeting to name the animal from which the bristles in camel hair brushes come. No-one knew the answer – squirrel. He then asked why the Canary Islands were so named. John Elliott gave the correct answer: from the dogs found there.

July - held over to next month

Sightings

June - John Elliott had seen a seal and a penguin in Bell Bay and Musk Lorikeets feeding on apples in Herring St. Tom Trelloggen reported seeing an Eastern Spinebill in his garden. Alison Green had seen White Cockatoos. Noel Manning had seen the remains of an eagle and a dead possum in Elphin Rd. Peter Warren reported seeing Grey Butcher-birds, wrens, Black Cockatoos, Green Rosellas and Silvereyes at St Leonards. Jeff Campbell had seen wattlebirds. Julie Nermut reported an unusual sighting of a Masked Owl in town.

July - Roy Skabo showed the meeting a specimen of *Cordyceps gunnii* and explained the link between the fungus and a caterpillar. Marion Simmons reported Musk Lorikeets and Black Cockatoos in her garden. The resident Magpies were upset by the cockatoos. Margrit Korosi had seen some unidentified raptors over the Tamar. Peter Ralph had seen a Grey Currawong. Tom McGlynn had seen large flocks of Sulphur-Crested and Black Cockatoos at Westwood.

General

Newsletter April/May 2009 Error - In the article for Skemp Day on 19 April it was reported that Helen Jones had found an earthstar fungus on the Skemp driveway that could not be identified and that a photo was to be sent to Fungimap for identification.

The fungus found was a deformed *Amanita muscaria*. It being an earthstar had been discounted prior to leaving Skemps that day, and therefore a photo was not sent to Fungimap for identification as suggested.

Federation Get-together - This will be at South Mt Cameron on November 13 – 15, hosted by North-East Tasmanian Field Naturalists Club. More information page 10.

Purchase of acoustic bird monitor - Birds Tasmania are using these to monitor bird populations throughout the State. The meeting resolved to purchase a monitor. Owning a monitor will enable long-term monitoring of bird populations on Skemps. It would also be made available to members who wish to monitor other sites.

Iris Meek has been given a copy of the 1906 Myrtle Bank school photo and she has donated a copy of the 1902 school photo to the Club.

Seed collection days at Skemps are being considered for the program during January and February. The seeds will be grown for planting on the property.

Walk to Bluff River Gorge - The suggestion of an extra-program walk for fitter members was well received. The gorge is near Buckland and has extensive sandstone formations and should be a good place for heath wildflowers in Spring. Could be made into a weekend and other places could be visited, there is a botanical park near Buckland.

60th Anniversary Civic Reception - Still awaiting confirmation of date proposed.

Club Constitution - This is currently under review and has been discussed at the last two Committee meetings.

New Members - We welcomed Daphne Habibis, Lynn and Rod Dowling to the Club in June, and Judy and Mike Handler in July.

NEIL DRURY

With regret we have accepted the resignation of Neil Drury from the LFNC Committee and would like to thank him for his support and participation in Club activities. Neil has been an active Committee member, Vice President, President, Past President and again a Committee member since 1998 until this year. He has supported our efforts at Skemps in many different ways, for instance through arranging equipment for checking levels, supply of materials for fencing, rock fill for the overflow from the ponds and with Bob Montgomery erecting the roof on the workshop. In 2003 he put together the paper, 'A Way Forward' a map of suggestions for the Club to follow into the future. Thank you Neil.

WELCOMING VISITORS—Yes we were all once new to the Club.

Hopefully many of you will remember what it was like to join a new group or club such as ours, especially on that first night when you did not know any one. I would like everyone to keep an eye out for new faces and try to make them feel welcome whether they are new members or guests and therefore prospective new members. A cheery welcome when they arrive or a chat at the start of the tea break could make all the difference to whether they choose to return and become a new member. Please mention that the supper is free to all our guests and is a great way to break the ice.

GENERAL MEETING 2 JUNE - Guest Speaker Ross Smith

Local historian, Ross Smith gave an interesting presentation on Lieutenant Governor William Paterson, titling it *Seeking Paterson From Afar*. Ross works at the QVMAG Community History Centre. From a young age he enjoyed reading and history, encouraged by his mother who was a teacher.

William Paterson was born in Montrose Scotland in 1755. He was interested in botany at an early age and trained in horticulture. In 1777 he travelled to South Africa to collect plants for Lady Strathmore's estate in England and wrote an account of his experiences following another three trips, which he published in 1789 and dedicated to Sir Joseph Banks.

Paterson joined the military in 1781 and served in India. When this was disbanded he returned to England, where he married Elizabeth Driver in London in 1789.

In 1789 he was chosen to command troops to Botany Bay. Following recruitment of the troops, he arrived in Sydney in October 1791 accompanied by his wife. He then travelled to Norfolk Island where he was in command of a detachment from November 1791 until March 1793 when he returned to Sydney. He wrote a memoranda, *Natural History of Norfolk Island*.

In 1797 he was elected a fellow of the Royal Society which he had longed for.

He was Lieutenant Governor of the north of Van Diemen's Land between 1804 and 1808. In 1804 he led an expedition to Port Dalrymple as he had been instructed to establish a new settlement there. He explored the Tamar River and North Esk River extensively and selected a site which he named York Town. This was where Paterson recorded seeing a Thylacine in 1805. In 1806 he formed a new settlement where Launceston is today, but his headquarters remained at York Town.

In 1808 Paterson was replaced by Lachlan Macquarie as he had been found to be unsuitable to continue in the position of Governor. He had been a weak ruler and was easily influenced by others. His health had been deteriorating for some time and he was drinking heavily. Paterson sailed for England in May 1810, but died at sea around Cape Horn.

During his overseas service Paterson kept in contact with Banks and other scholars in England, and sent specimens to them from India, Norfolk Island, New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land.

During his talk Ross read from articles which gave details of Paterson's life and desire to collect natural history, which he had found during his research. Ross also made reference to the National Library of Australia who have a digitised collection of newspapers and manuscripts etc., which includes information on Paterson.

Ross gave some helpful hints for those interested in research and recommended a visit to the Community History Centre at QVMAG for information on local history. Visiting the Centre is by appointment only. For opening times and contact details visit

<http://www.qvmag.tas.gov.au/communitycoll.html>

Karen Manning

Iris Meek who had come specifically to hear Ross' talk, thanked him on behalf of members and visitors in attendance.

FIELD TRIP 6 June - Tasmanian Slate Mine, Pipers Brook

Six club members assembled at the Invermay Museum parking area, departing at 9.10 am and arriving at the slate mine at approximately 10.20 am. We were greeted by Gerry Izard the site operator. The appointment was approved by the owner Trevor Hookway.

The slate mine was originally commenced in 1874 and about 50 Welch and Cornish miners were brought from the UK to work it. The slate in this deposit is of the highest quality known for its cleavability, density and strength. Originally an underground operation was used where the actual mining and splitting was all underground, accessed through vertical shafts, access drives and stopes. Later it was found that it was more economical to operate as an open cut. The prepared slate was used locally for roofing and paving and in the early days an appreciable quantity was transported by horse and wagon

to the north coast and shipped to the UK as ships ballast then sold on to companies and to Sydney, Melbourne and Hobart. It is reported that shipping ceased when the wharf was burned down and never replaced. In later years the use of the slate as roofing was decreased when the use of corrugated iron sheets became more popular and more economical. It was reported that the whole area from Weymouth to Bangor is available for slate production of high quality, although not all easily accessible.

After many years closed the mine was reopened in 1978 by then partners T Johnson and T Hookway. Currently only the latter is the owner. The lease is of 87 hectares and includes gold mining and other minerals licenses. In early days some gold was produced from several small shafts on the property.

Our guide and host Gerry escorted us to the quarry working faces and stockpiles and demonstrated how the slate is selected and split using hammer and moil. He explained that they ceased using any explosives many years ago as regardless of how low power explosive was used as it was too destructive. Trevor Hookway transports split slate to Scottsdale where it is cut to produce shapes required in addition to the mainly triangular shapes produced at the mine site. Sometimes turquoise is found interleaved in the slate but it is seldom found in pieces useful to be produced as a precious stone for jewellery. The slate is removed from the quarry sides by excavator. The quarry side is about 30 metres in height and the slate layers are inclined at about 45° due to having been distorted from the original horizontal beds as deposited, by Earth crustal movements of faulting and folding. Members were able to take home samples. The slate is sold for \$15 per square metre from the mine site and at a premium from Scottsdale after shaping.

One benefit which the members received was an unexpected story of history (including scandal) of the mine and the region from Gerry, who was appropriately thanked by the members.

Al Pegler

FIELD TRIP 6 June - Tasmanian Slate Mine, Pipers Brook

Six members departed Launceston for the Tasmanian Slate Co mine on Saturday 6 June in inclement weather. After a 60 kilometre journey we arrived at the mine to fine, mild and overcast weather.

The bush off the gravel road into the mine showed signs of the fires from October last year which came to within two or three kilometres of the mine property. Fresh foliage on the Eucalypts and Allocasuarinas showed the quick recovery from the fire which was obviously a lot less intense than the one that devastated the Winifred Curtis Reserve.

At the property we were met by Gerry Izard and we soon set off to the quarry above the mine buildings. Gerry demonstrated his skill for splitting the stone into the slabs used for paving and told us some of the chequered history of the mine, its workers and owners. We roamed the quarry looking for unusual shapes and colours in the rocks with Peter Ralph searching for evidence of semi precious stones, including Turquoise and Wavellite

The furthest part of the quarry had not been disturbed for some 5 years and had plenty of regrowth with some *Eucalypts* up to 4 metres and *Leptospermum sp.*

At the end of an interesting and informative tour we returned to the cars for a cuppa

and chat and we were joined by Gerry's daughter Shantelle who showed us a piece of slate with a picture painted onto it by a local artist. Noel J Manning

SKEMP DAY 21 June - Calendar Photo Selection

There was a great turn up considering it was such a miserable day, with 13 members and 2 guests gathering at Skemps to select photos for the Club calendar.

After morning walks and following lunch, including the usual wood fired BBQ, we settled down to look at the photos. After numerous viewings the difficult task of short listing the photographs submitted by members was accomplished and we look forward to producing a great calendar for 2010 to celebrate our 60th anniversary.

Thanks to John Elliott's idea and his ongoing efforts we will have another great way to celebrate this Club milestone.

A big thank you to all those who contributed photographs and to those who attended this day to shortlist the best. Noel J Manning

GENERAL MEETING 7 JULY - Guest Speaker David Blackwood

Mr David Blackwood, whose wife Lynne is a great, great grand-daughter of Ronald Campbell Gunn, gave a very interesting and well researched talk on the great naturalist. Mr and Mrs Blackwood are preparing a biography of Gunn.

Ronald Campbell Gunn was born in 1808 in Cape Town, South Africa, where his father, an officer in the British army, had been stationed since 1804. The family moved to other postings including the island of Reunion and finally Barbados, where his father died. Gunn worked in Antigua as a clerk but was eventually persuaded to move to Hobart where he joined his brother and worked as overseer of the penitentiary. After a period in Launceston he moved to Circular Head in 1836, as police magistrate.

This appointment was less demanding of his time than his earlier appointments and gave him the opportunity to pursue his botanical interests which had started when he met William Lawrence, amateur botanist and owner of the Formosa estate near Cressy. Through Lawrence, Gunn became a collector of specimens for William Hooker, professor of botany of Glasgow University and later director of the famous Kew botanical gardens.

Gunn travelled widely in Tasmania and made many trips through unexplored areas, adding to his collection as he went. While he is best known for his botanical work, he collected across the spectrum of living things including seaweed, fungi, animals and birds.

His botanical collection supplied much of the material for Joseph Hooker's *Flora Tasmaniae*, the first published flora of Tasmania, in which Hooker acknowledged his indebtedness to Gunn. Charles Darwin used Hooker's book to support his developing theory of evolution.

Gunn was an extremely prolific letter writer, conducting correspondence with most of the well known botanists of the time. He was also a leading figure in the scientific life of the colony, being one of the founders and editor for seven years of the *Tasma-*

nian Journal of Natural Science. He also contributed to the *London Journal of Botany* and in 1862 wrote the section on zoology in West's *The History of Tasmania* (Launceston, 1852).

Other noteworthy achievements included periods in the colony's Legislative and Executive Councils and the House of Assembly. He was a founder of the Launceston Horticultural Society and of the sister organisation in Hobart. In 1850 he was made a fellow of the Linnaean Society and in 1854 a fellow of the Royal Society.

Gunn's specimens are now widely distributed and are still used by researchers around the world. It is estimated that Gunn collected about 1350 out of the roughly 1800 known species of Tasmanian plants and about 150 of the 230 species of birds.

His name was given to over 50 species of plants (now reduced to about 42) and to one genus (*Gunnera*).

Ronald Campbell Gunn started from fairly humble beginnings and, through amazingly hard work, intelligence and dedication, made an impact across many spheres of human endeavour. His range of friends, contacts and correspondents spanned the world.

Roy Skabo

John Elliott thanked the speaker and asked the members to show their appreciation in the usual way.

SKEMP DAY 18 July - Fungi At Skemps

20 members and 2 visitors attended the Skemp Day, when Helen Jones was leading members on a fungi search on the property. Following an early cuppa, 9 members headed off with their cameras in overcast conditions toward the Zig-Zag track finding the first fungus of the day just outside the Centre fence.

Helen was armed with a small mirror which enabled us to see the underside of the fungus. She explained that the colour, size and shape of the cap were not the only identifiers for mushroom shaped fungi. The following also had to be taken into consideration:

- colour, attachment and spacing of the gills
- size, shape, colour and surface texture of the stem
- whether there is a ring or covering over the gills

It is also a good idea to collect a sample of the fungi as in some cases these identifiers are not enough for positive identification and a spore print is required to establish this.

There are puffballs, earth stars, stinkhorns, jelly, coral and cup fungi just to name a few of the other varieties of fungi.

Above the top wetland, an area was found to have many clusters of tiny brown fungi. They appeared to be growing from remnants of burnt wood. The decomposing pile of removed willow was also home to many fungi.

On the Zig-Zag track we experienced intermittent rain, but this did not deter us. We found fungi of many shapes and sizes, growing in trees, leaf litter and along fallen trees. In true field naturalist style we checked the area thoroughly and by lunch time had only completed the first part of the Zig-Zag walk.

Following lunch a larger group headed along the Forest Walk. Again we saw many varieties of fungi in shades of brown, grey, orange, purple, red, yellow and green, they

were just amazing. Roy and Louise headed down the Fern Gully track, while the rest of the group headed into the bush and found other varieties. The rain started again and we headed back to the Centre following a very successful day.

Some of the fungi identified during our search were:

Aleurina ferruginea	? Antrodiella zonata
? Boletus erythropus	Cantharellus concinnus
Cheimonophyllum candissimum	Clavaria amoena
Clavaria miniata	Clavulina sp.
Cortinarius sp.	Discinella terrestris
Geopyxis sp.	Geostrom triplex
Hexagonia sp.	Hygrocybe lewellinae
Hygrocybe mavis	Laccaria sp.
Leotia lubrica	Mycena cystidiosa
Mycena interrupta	Pleurotopsis longinqua

Many thanks to Helen for her guidance during this very interesting activity.

Karen Manning

YOUR CLUB'S HISTORY

THE JOHN SKEMP MEMORIAL LECTURE— From 1967 and still going

Many members will be aware that John Skemp was both a founding member and a great contributor to the Launceston Field Naturalist Club. He also published five books about his life, family and local history, especially about where he grew up, and one called 'My Birds'.

As a tribute to John Skemps following his death, Tom Burns paid for a medallion for an ornithological presentation near the first anniversary of his death. The medal was presented to H J King for his talk given at the May general meeting of 1967 as listed below. The club decided to make this an annual event and so the Skemps Memorial lecture came to be. In 1977 the lectures were broadened to cover all natural history subjects. The following is a list of the recipients of the subsequent medals and their natural history subject:

1967	Herbert King	John Skemp's life and the birds, animals and plants they studied together
1968	Les Hill	The Avifauna of Bass Strait
1970	L E Wall	Wading Birds
1971	J R Napier	The Two Lesser Terns of Tasmania's East Coast
1972	David Thomas	The Many Facets Concerning Birds in Tasmania
1973	Ray Good	Islands of Bass Strait
1974	Trevor Waite	Birds of Rocky Cape
1975	Michael Sharland	Living with Birds
1976	Albert Rettke	Tasmanian Birds
1977	Eric Guiler	Tasmanian Devil
1978	R H Green	Maggs Mountain: It's Forest, Fauna and Future
1979	D Rounsevell	Sub-Antarctic and Antarctic Biology
1980	Cecil Bird	Birds - Design for Living

1981	Ken Harris	The Amateur's Contribution to the Advancement of Biological Science
1982	Dr Winifred Curtis	Monocotyledons
1983	Peter Duckworth	Birds and the Forest
1984	Dr Gordon Lyne	Reproduction, Growth & Physiology of Bandicoots
1985	John Simmons	Spiders
1986	Ron Kershaw	Conservation and Snails
1987	Bob Mesibov	Centipedes
1988	Norton Harvey	Photography
1989	Dr Geoffrey Sharman	All You Ever Wanted to Know About Sex
1990	Dennis Morris	What's in a Name
1991	Jeff Campbell	Orchids
1992	Mary Cameron	A Field Naturalist Club 1910-1922
1993	Ivan Ebdon	Shells
1994	Mary Page	Eucalypts in Tasmania
1995	Dr Paul Swiatkowski	Frogs
1996	Bob Mesibov	Velvet Worms & Other Creatures
1997	Dr Nigel Forteach	Dragons & Damsels
1998	Martin George	A Brief Tour of the Universe
1999	Chris Tassell	QVMAG into the next Millennium
2000	Prof Andrew Osborn	Limnology of Lake Pedder
2001	Dr Peter McQuillan	Insects on Mountains
2002	Dr Jean Jackson	Tasmanian Freshwater Fish
2003	Stephen Harris	Bass Strait Islands Flora
2004	Sarah Lloyd	Fungi
2005	Dr Brian Smith	Snails
2006	Jim Nelson	Freshwater Crayfish
2007	Not held	
2008	Gintarus Kantvilas	Lichens
2009	Dr Lisa-Ann Gershwin	Jellyfish

TASMANIAN FEDERATION OF FIELD NATURALISTS GET-TOGETHER:

Lou Brooker from North Eastern Field Naturalists Club (hosting club) recently supplied the following information:

“We will hold the get-together at the Field Study Centre at Mt. Cameron on the 13th, 14th and 15th of November. Here, in the Mt. Cameron Range with 25 square kilometres of eucalypt and sheoak woodland, wet sclerophyll gullies and patches of heath-land, there is a diverse flora and spectacular mountain scenery.

The Centre has two bunk rooms accommodating 16 and 14 and space for camping, hot water and a well equipped kitchen with fridge. The cost is \$20 / person / night.

Owing to its isolation, we are not able to cater for the Saturday night meal, but feel we could have a great meal if Field Natters could bring their own meat to cook on a barbeque and maybe something eg. a salad to put on the communal table. N.E. Field Nats. will provide desert.

I'm not sure what the special focus of the weekend will be, but we certainly have

engaged members of our club who know the area intimately and have been involved with the centre since its inception.”

LFNC members who are interested in attending please notify John Elliott who will provide you with additional information as it is received.

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 meetings will be on:

August 18 : **Micah Visoiu** (collects seeds for the Millennium Seed Bank Project) and **James Wood** (Manager of the Seed Conservation Centre at the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens) will talk about their involvement in the Tasmanian Seed Conservation Program and germination work on Tasmanian native seeds.

September 15 : Club night - Native Plant Identification Workshop

BENEATH THE WAVES: TAMAR AND TASMANIA'S NORTH COAST

This exhibition, at New Gallery on UTAS's Launceston campus (near Library), is open to the public until August 16. The gallery is open Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm and entry is free.

“A unique photographic exhibition is revealing the incredible underwater beauty of the Tamar River and Tasmania’s north coast.

Beneath the Waves: Tamar and Tasmania’s North Coast is the work of Australian Maritime College lecturer David Maynard.

Over several years, he’s been combining his work with a love of underwater photography to collect images from dives in the Tamar Estuary and along the northern Tasmanian coastline. The result is a stunning photo essay of Tasmania’s underwater secrets.

The 35 selected images show, for the first time, the rich diversity of marine animals and plants in northern Tasmania’s waters. It’s a rare glimpse into a world generally out of reach of most Tasmanians.” - From <http://www.amc.edu.au/node/2124>



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>

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