



Launceston Historical Society Inc

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PO BOX 1296 LAUNCESTON TAS 7250

"Bringing together people with an interest in history"

Simon Leslie Brown, Founding Headmaster of Scotch College, Launceston

Keith Sykes kept the audience enthralled with his tale of Mr Brown (1852-1902), the first headmaster of Launceston's Scotch College. The name of Keith's paper, "Gentle in manner, resolute in execution", describes the man who left his mark in the field of education from Scotland, to New Zealand, New South Wales and finally Tasmania. He purchased the City School in June 1899 and opened his new college at 31 York Street on 21 January 1900. Brown was in Launceston for only two and a half years before he died on 2 January 1902. A monument to his memory stands near the entrance to the Scotch Oakburn Chapel, Penquite Road. Keith is also researching Horton College, which is now visible from the Midland Highway just south of Ross. Keith is pictured delivering his lecture at the QVMAG on 14th September.

(Photo: Marion Sargent)



Convict Labour at 'Brickendon'

Andrew Gregg's talk will now be held on

Sunday 26th October

at the QVMAG meeting room at 2.30 pm.

This change is necessary due to unforeseen circumstances;
we apologize for any inconvenience caused.

LAUNCESTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

President	Marita Bardenhagen	6334 4490
Vice-President	Jenny Gill	6331 1150
Minute Secretary	John Dent	6331 4099
Correspondence Secretary	Rosalie Kelly	6340 2965
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All correspondence should be sent to: PO Box 1296 LAUNCESTON TAS 7250 or launcestonhistory@gmail.com

Society Website: www.launcestonhistory.org.au (A copy of this newsletter can be found on this site)

Presentation of History Prizes

Friday 7 November – 4.00pm at 'Egremont', 20 Welman Street, Launceston

The inaugural Launceston Historical Society History Prize was a success, with 68 entries in the story, essay and poster competition, addressing the topic of "Why study history". Thank you to the participants from West Launceston and Norwood Primary Schools, John Calvin School and Launceston College. As there were no entries in some categories, the prize pool was extended to include some highly commended entries. Thank you to the judges: Carol Fuller, Jenny Gill, Nic Haygarth, Dorothy Rosemann, Marion Sargent and Gwenda Webb, who had the difficult task of deciding the winners.

All members of the Society and the students who contributed items to the competition along with their teachers and families are invited to attend the presentation of finalists' book voucher prizes by Professor Henry Reynolds at 'Egremont' on Friday 7 November. Afternoon tea will be served. Please reply to Marita Bardenhagen if you wish to attend, by email mbardenh@bigpond.net.au or phone 6334 4490.

November Talk

Sunday 16 November 2008 – 2.30pm in the Meeting Room, Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, Inveresk.

Peter Cox: On the Trail of William Paterson

Peter Cox graduated from the University of Tasmania with Honours in History. He taught History, Geography and Social Science for 35 years in Colleges and High Schools. Since retirement, he has undertaken research into Tasmanian History as well as being involved with the Low Head Pilot Station Museum and George Town's Watch House. He is Secretary of the George Town and District Historical Society, and was involved in the *Way Back When* project.

Earlier this year he travelled to South Africa and Britain. During his travels he undertook research into the earlier life of William Paterson before he came to Australia. This is the subject of his talk.

Christmas at 'Egremont'

Sunday 21 December 2008 – 2.30pm

Once again Marita Bardenhagen and Alex Thomson invite all Launceston Historical Society members to 'Egremont' for our Christmas function. Please bring a plate for afternoon tea. Since last year, the house has been refurbished. See how it has been transformed into a beautiful Bed & Breakfast establishment. <http://www.egremonttas.com/Site/Home.html>

The Sublime and the Celestial

North-Eastern day trip on Sunday 12 October 2008

Excursion to the Derby Tin Centre, Anchor Mine stampers, St Columba Falls and the Mount Paris Dam.

A bus load of enthusiastic members enjoyed a big day out following the trail of the tin dragon. After a scrumptious morning tea at the Derby Tin Centre, we watched the fascinating wide-screen movie depicting the history of tin mining and the disastrous 1929 flood at the Briseis Mine. Across the road at the Painted Door Café a superb lunch was followed by a visit to the remnants of the Anchor Mine stampers buried deep amongst the tree ferns at the base of the Blue Tier. Our local guide Leon Kohl explained the workings to the group. Afternoon tea preceded a walk down to the base of the spectacular ninety-metre-high St Columba Falls. A drive past the Pyengana Dairy and Pub in the Paddock brought us to the Mount Paris Dam. This amazing concrete structure has been placed on the Heritage Register as it was the only dam built in Australia by the buttress and slab method – all by hand. Bill Deacon, a cousin to LHS member Margaret Deacon, was our guide here. Thank you to Nic Haygarth for organising the trip and to Stan the bus driver who did "Stan and deliver" us safely back to Launceston.



(Photos: Marion Sargent)



Anchor Tin Mine stampers.



Roger & Barbara Valentine.



Alison Green & Leon Kohl.

Advance Notice of Activities

The Captive Singer day trip to Marakoopa Cave will be held over until 2009. Watch out for further information in future newsletters.

Van Diemen's Land Company establishments in the Far North West: The VDL trip is to be held on the long weekend of 1-3 November 2008. **There are still a couple of vacancies.** Contact Anne Bartlett if you wish to attend and have not already paid the \$200.00 deposit. Total cost of \$375.00 includes coach hire, two nights' bed, breakfast, lunch and dinner at Stanley and Burnie, 'Woolnorth' and 'Highfield' Tours. There is a \$20.00 single supplement. A separate notice has been sent out to the people who have already indicated that they wish to go on this tour. Anne's phone number is 6344 5258.

Friday 13 March 2009: *The Examiner*-John West lecture, UTAS, Newnham.

Saturday 18 April 2009, Symposium: *Non-Conformists in Northern Tasmania* and the Annual General Meeting. Speakers to be advised.

Members' Column

New Members: The President and Executive welcome to our Society the following new members: Jennifer Gillings, Heather Hogan, Julianne Richards and Joy Spence.

Library publications: Committee member Peter Richardson recently accepted the award "Library Stars: Best of the Best" from the Australian Library and Information Association conference at Alice Springs. A number of LHS members have contributed to the local history publications that the Launceston Library and Friends of the Library have produced. These are the *On the Tide* series, the *Launceston Family Album*, *Voyages in a Caravan*, *The Journals of Charlotte Cleveland* and *A fortune may be made... Launceston's 19th Century Breweries*. See the photograph and story in the *Launceston Times* on 14 October 2008, page 5.

Tasmanian Heritage Icons: Since the call has gone out to identify Tasmanian icons, our member and historian Jai Paterson has nominated Launceston's Royal Park. Her selection was featured in *The Examiner* on 15 October 2008, page 2. Jai has researched the Park and its contribution to the community. It was the site of the military barracks, a courthouse, hospital and invalid depot as well as gardens. Nominations close on 24 October 2008, but there will be another chance next year.

Ross and AFL records: Member Ross Smith's website "Sport and History" details his research into the history of Australian football and can be seen at <http://au.geocities.com/sportandhistory> and the direct link to the disputed facts is at <http://au.geocities.com/sportandhistory/research/footballupdate.html>.

Fuller Papers: Research is continuing into the people, buildings, places, ships, streets, roads and miscellaneous items mentioned in George Fuller's letters regarding the history of Launceston in the 1840s. If you can help, please contact Anne Bartlett on 6344 5258 or haambar@gmail.com.

Recent Publication by Members

Jennifer Gillings and Julianne Richards (editors), *In all those lines: the diary of Sister Elsie Tranter 1916-1919*. New LHS member Julianne was the guest speaker at the National Book Council meeting on Wednesday 15 October. Elsie Tranter joined the Australian Army Nursing Service in 1916 and spent her War nursing in France. As well as giving us a vivid account of her experience of the Western Front, the diary also brings to life the voyage from Australia and the energy of a young woman seizing the opportunity to see something of the world. It is an account that brings those years to life through her insight, humanity and vivacity. In 1922 Elsie married Launceston-born woodcarver William Gordon Cumming, whom she had met in France. He had served with the AIF in various field ambulance and hospital units. They made their home in Forster Street, Invermay, and after the flood of 1929 moved to higher ground in Newstead. Miraculously, the diary survived and now has been made available for all to read. Copies of the book will be on sale at the next meeting for \$35.00.

Characters from the Past

William Webber and his Herbal Remedy



In his talk on Scotch College, Keith Sykes mentioned that John Cunningham retired from his position as principal of the City School in June 1899 to become a snake-oil salesman. The herbal remedy that he was employed to sell was invented by one William F Webber (pictured here). Born near Kea in Cornwall, England, in 1850, he established his business in Launceston as a grocer and hop beer manufacturer. In 1887 he had developed a herbal remedy to treat himself for an indisposition. It proved so effective that he kept a bottle on the mantelshelf at all times, and began to share it with his friends and customers. In 1894 he patented the medicine, calling it Vitadatio. By 1899 he had established a network of distributors throughout the colonies and beyond. John Cunningham was one of these. He was the agent for South Africa, Northern Ireland and Scotland. It was claimed that Vitadatio would cure a multitude of complaints such as gout, eczema, epilepsy, hydatids, diabetes, consumption, insomnia and piles. (Extracted from Peter Richardson's story in the

Launceston Family Album archival volume and at www.launcestonfamilyalbum.org.au)

The recipe for this amazing cure-all is recorded in John Rowland Skemp's book *Memories of Myrtle Bank*:

1 bucket of water, 1 handful tea-tree and (native) hops, ¼ pound sassafras bark, 3 or 4 pieces of brooklime, 2 pieces of hore-hound, 3 dock roots, 12 English dandelion roots, ½ stick liquorice, 2 tablespoons ginger, ¼ pound treacle, 6d. gin. Boil 3 hours – not fast – then strain, bottle and cork tight. Take a wineglass after every meal.

Can You Help?

Minnie Jessop

Does anyone know after whom the Minnie Jessop Reserve in Branxholm is named?

Button Brothers

We have had a query regarding the Button Bros drapery and general store in Oatlands. This was run by Henry Edwin Button (1857-1936) and Thomas Chilton Button (1860-1938). Their brother Charles Edmund Button (1867-1945) had stores in Zeehan, Launceston and Burnie. Also, information is sought on the Liverpool & London & Globe Insurance Co and the Tamar Valley Co-op. Please email the Historical Society on launcestonhistory@gmail.com if you can help.

More North-East Trip Photos



Bill and Margaret Deacon.



Mt Paris Dam.

Exchange Journals

The following journals are available for members to read at the next meeting:

- Channel Heritage Museum, *Newsletter*
- Cultural Heritage Practitioners Tasmania, *Newsletter* (email)
- Devonport Maritime Museum and Historical Society, *Time & Tide*
- Federation of Australian Historical Societies Inc., *FAHS Newsletter* (email)
- George Town and District Historical Society, *Newsletter*
- Glamorgan Spring Bay Historical Society, *Newsletter*
- Hobart Town (1804) First Settlers Association Inc, *Newsletter*
- National Trust Magazine and *Trust News*
- Royal Historical Society of Victoria, *History News*
- Tasmanian Historical Research Association, *Newsletter*

Other Items and Events of Interest

George Town and District Historical Society: 6th Biennial Conference, *The other half of history: Women in the history of the Tamar Valley*. Five LHS members will be presenting papers at the conference: Marita Bardenhagen, John Dent, Anne Gunn, Dianne Phillips and Peter Richardson. York Cove Centre, Sorell Street, George Town, Sunday 9 November 2008. Contact Peter Cox: 45 Tamar Avenue George Town TAS 7253; phone 6382 2046; mobile 0407 203 610; email pcox21@tasmail.com.

National Book Council of Tasmania: the speaker for November is Alison Andrews, author of *Ali's People*. Starts 1.15pm, Wednesday 19 November 2008, Phil Leonard Room, Launceston Library, Civic Square, Launceston.

Deadlines

Members wishing to place items on the Agenda for the 11 November 2008 LHS Committee Meeting are requested to have these to the President by **1 November 2008**. Items for the next Newsletter should be sent to the Editor by **1 Dec 2008** at marionsargent@bigpond.com or PO Box 1296 LAUNCESTON TAS 7250.