

Launceston Historical Society Inc

Newsletter No 117

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PO BOX 1296 LAUNCESTON TAS 7250

"Bringing together people with an interest in history"

The Old Van Diemen's Land Company Track

Brian Rollins' illustrated talk on 19 July 2009 recounted a fascinating journey of the creation of the original track which was cut through towering, tangled, wet, muddy and dark rainforests to provide a stock route and means of communication between Launceston and the VDL Co headquarters at Circular Head. In February 1828 Joseph Fossey cut a track from Launceston, through Mole Creek, across Middlesex Plains to Burghley where he met Henry Hellyer, who had carved a track from Emu Bay. Fossey then continued along the coast to Circular Head. The first person to walk the whole length of the track was Joseph Dixon, a clerk who was sacked from the VDL Co in October 1829.



Dianne Cassidy and Brian Rollins. Photo: M Sargent.



Larissa Von Stieglitz, Elspeth Wishart and Linda Clark. Photo: M Sargent.

Convict Clothing in Australia

On 23 August 2009 Elspeth Wishart gave a talk on the history of convict clothing, while Linda Clark spoke about the actual collections in Australia. It was interesting to discover that in Australia only 109 items of convict clothing – excluding shoes – survive. Clothing worn by convicts changed over the years, with the seasons, and between classes. Those with a secondary conviction wore the "party colours" of half black and half yellow outfits (the popular image of convicts). It was a means of humiliation, and made it much more difficult to abscond!

LAUNCESTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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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 in colour)

September Talk

Please note change of speaker for September

Sunday 27 September 2009 – 2.30pm at the Meeting Room, Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, Inveresk.

John Hall: Sundials – 41.5 South 147.1 East

Biography:

My interest in Sundials probably started many years ago growing up in Uganda, when I stood astride the Equator. I became conscious that the world had two hemispheres. Night and day were clearly defined in this part of the world. It was light at six o'clock in the morning, the first hour to the locals. It was dark by six o'clock in the evening, the twelfth hour. Afternoon tea was at ten o'clock; time and times were interesting! School in Scotland, with light until eleven o'clock at night was another revelation. The sun was often in short supply but the country was littered with sundials.

The real passion developed when I started to study architecture in the late 70s after an early career in computers. Solar geometry became one of the subjects I taught for many years to students of architecture. Becoming a member of the British Sundial Society and the North American Sundial Society put me in touch with enthusiasts around the world. There is still much to learn about Tasmania's few sundials, as I have searched over the past twenty years, and certainly more to discover.

Synopsis:

How old are sundials, a brief history. How do they work? How accurate are they? How big or small are they? What were they used for? Where should you look for them? Where do you find them in Tasmania?



Nick Clements, a PhD student at UTAS, will speak for five minutes on the Aboriginal/Settler clash – the Black War – in the settled districts of Van Diemen's Land between 1824 and 1832. There are more details about Nick's talk on page 6.

October Talk

Sunday 18 October 2009 – 2.30pm at the Meeting Room, Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, Inveresk.

Brad Williams: Archaeology in Northern Tasmania – recent developments, and where to from here?

Brad Williams is an Historical Archaeologist who has worked in Tasmania for the last six years. As a member of the Tasmanian Heritage Council, he chairs the Council's Archaeological Advisory Panel. And he is the Director of the firm Praxis Heritage Consultants, who specialise in historical archaeology and conservation planning.

Brad is scheduled to give an overview of recent archaeological works in Launceston, and to examine the potential and possibilities of further archaeological investigations in the north of the state. He will discuss the current position of the historical archaeology industry in Tasmania, and the role of the Tasmanian Heritage Council. Finally, Brad will propose ways in which stakeholders with an interest in historical archaeology may work together to manage more efficiently Tasmania's rich legacy of archaeological resources.

Advance Notice of Activities

Friday 25 September 2009: Deadline for the Launceston Historical Society History Prize “Objects of History”.

Tuesday 29 September 2009: **Launceston Historical Society Archaeology Committee** will meet at 1.00pm in the Phil Leonard Room, Launceston Library, Civic Square.

Sunday 25 October 2009: The **Relbia Ramble** with Lucille Gee. See a map of the tour on page 4. Contact Marion Sargent for further information about this exciting free tour of Relbia's historic past by phoning 6331 4890 or marionsargent@bigpond.com

Saturday-Sunday 7-8 November 2009: **Zeehan Gem and Mineral Fair Trip**. More information is on pages 8 and 9. Contact Nic Haygarth by phoning 6398 1334 or emailing lakelea22@yahoo.com.au

Sunday 15 November 2009: **Jon Addison**, Democratisation of leisure transport in Northern Tasmania.

Sunday 29 November 2009: **Christmas BBQ**, at the York Town Historic Site. Meet at the monument at 11.00am for a guided tour of York Town. Lunch will be from 12.30pm. Please BYO food and drink.

Friday 12 March 2010: *The Examiner*-**John West Memorial Lecture**, Prof Tim Flannery.

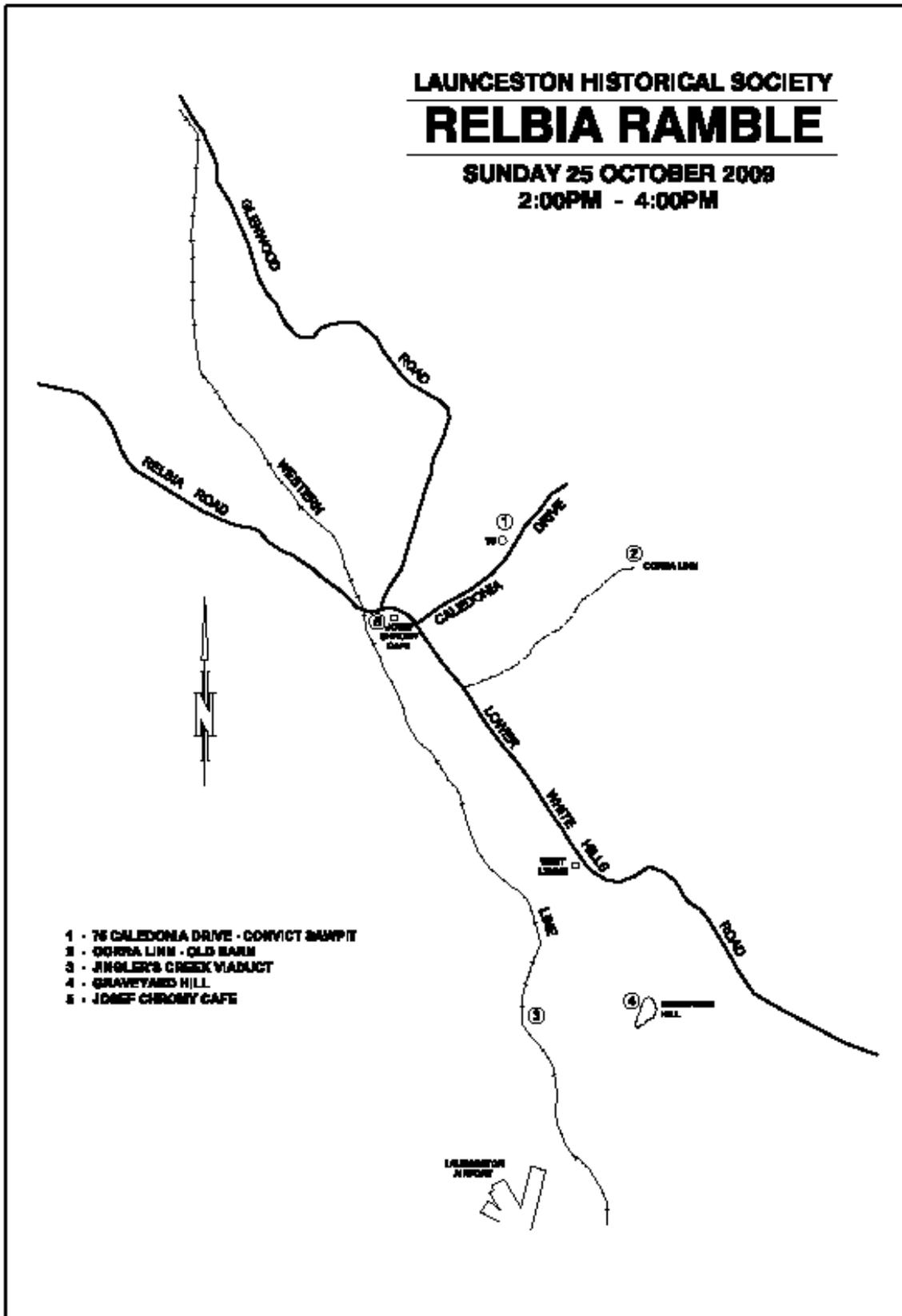
Saturday 17 April 2010: **Launceston Historical Society Symposium**, *Tasmanians and War*.

Linda Clark is showing members at the August meeting samples of convict clothing held by the QVMAG. These are a “party coloured” vest and a chequered neckerchief. Photo: M Sargent



LAUNCESTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY
RELBIA RAMBLE

SUNDAY 25 OCTOBER 2009
2:00PM - 4:00PM



The Relbia Ramble, with Lucille Gee

Meet at 75 Caledonia Drive, Relbia, on Sunday 25 October at 2.00pm.

Members' Column

New Members: The President and Executive welcome to our Society the following new members: Maureen Bennett, Helen Cameron, Nick Clements, John and Catriona Hall, Peter and Kaylene Hewlett, Noel Kennedy and Barbara Myles.

Dr Nic Haygarth gave a paper on 'Tasmania's Mount Bischoff Tin Mine: Dolcoath of the Antipodes?' at the 8th International Mining History Congress in Redruth, Cornwall, England in June 2008. And in the same month he also presented a paper called 'Pen Pushers With Pans: 20th-Century Osmiridium Mining in Tasmania' at the National Association of Mining History Organisations (NAMHO) Conference at Matlock, Derbyshire, England.

Jenny Gill was featured in Alison Andrews' "My Place" in *The Examiner* on 14 July 2009. The article is entitled *Historian uncovers lessons from past*. It describes how Jenny, since 1989, has been seeking to identify early private schools and their teachers. She has a database of hundreds of teachers and photographs of schools and is keen to hear from anyone who may be able to provide her with more information.

Recent Publications by Members

Garry Richardson, *Half a lifetime, 39 years in forestry*. This is a personal account of Garry's working life in the forest industry. He kept diaries from the time he was a junior forest ranger until he retired as safety and environment officer in 2005.

Catherine M Pearce, 'A suitable girl: the Tasmanian Emigration Agency and female migration, 1858-1862', in THRA P&P, Vol 56, No 2, September 2009, pages 120-139.

UTAS Post Graduate Students

Tasmania – New Zealand Connections

Jai Paterson: Member's PhD topic

Thank you to everyone who talked to me after the July LHS talk – I was given some interesting references, which I will follow up over the next few months. As I stated at the meeting, I have begun a PhD at the University of Tasmania, to look at people who travelled backwards and forwards between Tasmania and New Zealand in the nineteenth century (specifically 1840-1914). I will be focussing in on Launceston and Dunedin because of their similarities, such as their early prominence as commercial capitals, their mining booms and the Scottish roots of many of their citizens.

I am very keen to hear from anyone who has letters and diaries from the past that talk about people going to and coming from New Zealand, as I want to base as much of this research as possible on the first-hand accounts of the people concerned. I am interested in the reasons people crossed the Tasman, and even whether or not early immigrants might have seen Tasmania and New Zealand as interchangeable destinations. Did New Zealanders become virtually 'invisible' once they settled in Tasmania, as New Zealand has claimed of the Australians who settled there – and how much did nineteenth century people see themselves as 'Australasian'? Were native-born Tasmanians more likely to return 'home' than those who had come from Britain to Tasmania and then on to New Zealand (or vice versa). There's a lot to think about and it's going to be really interesting to piece together all the stories of people's expectations and how reality panned out for them, whether they ended up in Launceston or in Dunedin.

Jai Paterson, Mobile: 0417 915 462, jeanp1@postoffice.utas.edu.au

UTAS Post Graduate Students (continued)

Aboriginal/Settler Conflict

Nick Clements will present an outline of his project at the Sunday meeting on 27 September.

Outline of my PhD project:

I am undertaking a comprehensive study of the Aboriginal/Settler conflict in the settled districts of Van Diemen's Land between 1824 and 1832. The following questions underlie my investigation:

- What sort of war was it? How did the conflict compare with other small colonial wars? I am attempting to map-out the conflict chronologically, geographically and demographically. What relevance and urgency did the conflict hold, at its various stages, for the Empire, to the local authorities, to individual settlers and to the Aborigines?
- Settlers: What were the attitudes of Europeans towards Aborigines and upon what were these based? What sorts of emotions did the conflict arouse? What sorts of moral, religious and legal restraints were in place and how did these influence the course of the conflict?
- How much can we know about the attitudes and motives of the Aborigines?

I am particularly interested in hearing from those who have historical documentation of past incidents; even obscure archival stuff that is unlikely to be known about. I am convinced there is more out there hidden away in shoeboxes or on dusty archive shelves and would be greatly appreciative of any leads people might have.

Nick Clements npc@utas.edu.au

Dame Enid Lyons' Radio Broadcasts

Larissa Von Stieglitz' synopsis of her talk on 23 August.

For the past months, as part of my honours degree, I have been researching the life and career of Dame Enid Lyons. Dame Enid's political achievements are well known. She was a candidate in the 1925 state elections and as the wife of a Prime Minister she campaigned with her husband, gave speeches and delivered radio broadcasts on issues that were important to her; and she was actively involved in public political life. Later of course Dame Enid would enter the realm of federal politics in her own right as the first woman to be elected to the House of Representatives in 1943, and then in 1949 being made the first female member of an Australian Cabinet.

Having looked so closely at Dame Enid's impressive political achievements I was led to the age-old question of how she balanced this with her domestic responsibilities as a wife and mother of twelve. I found that rather than simply *balancing* her domestic and political duties Dame Enid used her domestic skills and homely experiences to her advantage, allowing them to influence her politics and using her image as a mother to bring attention to issues she was passionate about. One example of this that I have been focusing on is the radio broadcasts that Dame Enid delivered regularly throughout her career. Indeed, both she and Joe were instrumental in introducing radio as a political medium to Australia. Many of the broadcasts Dame Enid delivered were from 'Home Hill', the Lyons' family home in Devonport. At one stage the study at 'Home Hill' was linked by cable to 7BU in Burnie and the ABC in Launceston, which allowed Dame Enid to deliver national broadcasts from her home.

This fact – that she was working and contributing to the politics of the nation while fulfilling her domestic duties – is just one example of the main argument of the thesis, that the success of Dame Enid's political career was in part motivated by her experiences as a wife and mother and her concern for domestic and family life.

WEST TAMAR HISTORICAL SOCIETY Inc.

We invite anyone who is interested in mining history to a site tour on:

Sunday 4 October 2009

Salisbury Town & Mines

The tour will be guided by WTHS members.

- 10.00am Meet in the car park of the Beaconsfield Gold & Heritage Centre in Weld Street.
- 10.30am Leave for Salisbury (about a 10 minute drive).
- 12.30pm Lunch (bring your own cut lunch).
- 1.00pm Explore Salisbury.
- 3.00pm Return to Beaconsfield.

Salisbury was the name of a town and gold mining area about 6km south of Beaconsfield. Gold was discovered at the southern end of Blue Tier in December 1878. Some of the mines were Salisbury, Tamar Extended, Victoria, Blue Tier, Gladstone, Welcome Invermay, Practolus, Marquis of Lorne, Who Can Tell, Belhive, Duchess of York and Santa Claus. The town lasted from 1880 to 1884 and boasted a hotel and a post office.

We will explore some of the old mine workings and try to locate remains of the township.

Note: There will be a bit of walking on rough tracks and in bush (generally flat); so be prepared!

- ★ All participants must be members of the WHTS (for \$15 you can sign up on the day), or
- ★ Non-members must sign a waiver.

No RSVP necessary; just turn up.

Please contact John Dent: 6331 4099 (w) or
0408 133 656 or
john.dent@pda.com.au for more details.

Note: If the day is wet, we probably will postpone the tour. If occasional showers, it will go ahead. If unsure, ring John Dent's mobile to check.

Silver City to the Southern Ocean

Zeehan Gem and Mineral Fair Trip

Saturday and Sunday 7- 8 November 2009

Places are still available for the Launceston Historical Society's two-day coach trip to Zeehan and its old mining port of Trial Harbour. The trip will coincide with the Zeehan Gem and Mineral Fair on Saturday 7th and Sunday 8th of November 2009. Saturday night will be spent at Zeehan's historic Central Hotel.

These and other questions will be interrogated:

- Did Dame Nellie Melba actually perform at Zeehan's Gaiety Theatre, or was she too queasy after a day on the Emu Bay Railway? Were Tasmania's first 'talkies' really screened here?
- What is crocoite, and how did it become Tasmania's geological emblem?
- Did Zeehan boast more pubs than people?
- Who was Frank Long, and why did he need the support of clog dancers?
- What is the plan for a West Coast geo-park? Will Silver City come back as fossicker central or a tourist hub?

Highlights include:

Gaiety Theatre and West Coast Pioneers' Memorial Museum

The Wild West opulence of Zeehan's 1898 flagship theatre is now fully restored. Renowned for its prize fights, gas lights, highly charged public meetings and its battle of the silent screen with the rival Royal Theatre, the Gaiety Theatre still features a pipe organ presented by the 'King of Zeehan', Montana mine manager John Craze. The West Coast Pioneers' Memorial Museum is the Hermitage of West Coast lore and memorabilia. Lose yourself in the historic School of Mines building...or press on down the road to the Frank Long memorial.

Zeehan Pioneer Cemetery Safari

Pith helmets and machetes are optional. The inmates are mostly restful. Although perhaps not Mount Read hotelier Thomas Goldie, who was swindled out of the Hercules mine, one of Tasmania's most successful. Appropriately for a mining town, graves in this cemetery had to be blown out of boggy button grass ground using explosives.

Tasmanian Smelting Company site

Zeehan's silver lodes were equally shallow. This is one reason that the Tasmanian Smelter, with its three-storey villa built for the brilliant metallurgist Max Heberlein, was not a success. Heberlein, Zeehan's answer to Robert Sticht, was able to make the Hercules mine profitable by separating its lead, silver and gold, but its zinc hit the waste dump until James Gillies devised flotation — and so was born the Electrolytic Zinc plant in Hobart...

Trial Harbour History Room

Trial Harbour, Reminé — call it anything you like...except a port. Yet this impossible harbour was Zeehan's early lifeline and the port of the Heemskirk tin field before that. Serial practical joker Gamaliel Webster was among those who called it home. Many who traipsed the boggy pack-track past Mount Agnew into Zeehan had other names for Trial Harbour. Shirley Smith's one-room extravaganza bends to the breath of the Southern Ocean. Time permitting, the sprit of a lonely grave will get a surprise audience with a coach-load of tourists.

The Zeehan Gem and Mineral Fair

usually features more than 30 stalls of gems, jewellery, minerals, crystals, opals, beads and fossils, including crocoite, Stichtite, serpentine carvings, pyromorphite, quartz and tourmaline from local mines and fossicking sites. Fabulous specimens will be exhibited for competition.

The cost

is \$180 per adult and \$160 per child. It covers coach fare, accommodation and continental breakfast at the Central Hotel, BBQ lunch on Saturday at the Central Hotel, admission to the West Coast Pioneers Museum and Gaiety Theatre, admission to the Gem and Mineral Fair plus morning teas on Saturday and Sunday, dinner on Saturday and lunch on Sunday. *It does not include afternoon teas.* (Admission to the Trial Harbour History Room is by donation.) Numbers are limited to 23.

Please note: Single, twin (2 single beds) and double (1 double bed) rooms are available at the Central Hotel but there are no ensuite facilities.

Please RSVP to PO BOX 1296 LAUNCESTON TAS 7250 with full payment and contact details, using the bookings form below. Only the first 23 bookings will be accepted. For insurance purposes, all participants must be fully paid-up members. There will be a \$20 cancellation fee if you are unable to attend and we cannot find a replacement for you. **Anyone with special dietary requirements (vegan etc), please contact the organiser, Nic Haygarth, as soon as possible** (ph 6398 1334, lakelea22@yahoo.com.au). **Please direct any other enquiries related to the trip to Nic.**

Day 1: Saturday 7 November

Depart Launceston 8.00am sharp
Morning tea Sheffield
Check in at Central Hotel, Zeehan
Lunch Central Hotel, Zeehan
Gem & Mineral Fair
West Coast Pioneers Museum
Afternoon tea Zeehan
Gaiety Theatre
Possibly Zeehan-Montana mine
Dinner Zeehan

Day 2: Sunday 8 November

Breakfast Central Hotel, Zeehan
Trial Harbour History Room
Morning tea Trial Harbour
Zeehan Pioneers Cemetery
Lunch Zeehan
Tasmanian Smelter site
Afternoon tea Rosebery or Tullah
Home

The cost of the Zeehan trip is \$180 per adult and \$160 per child.

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Zeehan Gem and Mineral Fair trip, 7-8 November 2009	Return to
Name:	LHS Inc
Address:	PO Box 1296
Phone: Mobile	LAUNCESTON TAS
Email:	7250
Single Twin Double	

Character from the Past

Launceston Examiner, 2 June 1859, page 3.

John Breeze, the junior town crier, was charged with using obscene language. The apprehending constable said Breeze was using very bad language, near his own house, last night, and he cautioned him without effect before taking him in charge. Breeze called witnesses who swore they did not hear him use any obscene language or swear. He was discharged.

Other Items and Events of Interest

The **Community History Centre** at the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, Inveresk, is open 10.00am-1.00pm, Tuesdays to Saturdays. Visitors can browse the museum's catalogues of archives, oral history recordings, photographs and some video. Cost is free. For appointments outside these times call 6323 3777.

In a Global Context: Australasia's archaeological evidence of the Globalisation process: The Australasian Society for Historical Archaeology/AIMA annual conference will be held at the Tram Shed, Launceston, 24-26 September 2009. For enquiries email Denise.Gaughwin@dier.tas.gov.au. The full programme is on the website: <http://members.iinet.net.au/~jodysteele/schedule.htm>

Antiques Show and Tell: Franklin House, Saturday 3 October 2009, noon to 4.00pm. The entry fee of \$10.00 will give you access to Franklin House and its garden, as well as valuation of up to three items by one of many antique specialists. Lunch and Devonshire teas will be served. There will be a "bring and buy" stall with jams, preserves, cakes and white elephant items. This is a joint project by Friends of Clifford Craig Medical Research and the Friends of Franklin House in support of Professor George Razay's research into treatable dementia.

Manufacturers and Traders of Van Diemen's Land 1820-1860: Hobart Town (1804) First Settlers Association's 10th Biennial Tasmanian Local History Conference. To be held on 9-10 October 2009 at Wrest Point, Hobart. For enquiries email hobarttown1804settlers@hotmail.com, phone (03) 6272 8737 or write to PO Box 337 GLENORCHY TAS 7010.

Friends of the Library, Launceston: Guest speaker for the October Coffee Morning is Scott Millen, director of Tulloch's Auctions for 25 years, speaking on *Antiques in Tasmania, where from and where to?* Wednesday 14 October 2009, 10.15am, Phil Leonard Room, Launceston Library, Civic Square, Launceston. All welcome. Gold coin donation.

Deadlines

Members wishing to place items on the Agenda for the 13 October 2009 LHS Committee Meeting are requested to have these to the President by **1 October 2009**. Items for the next Newsletter should be sent to the Editor by **1 November 2009** at marionsargent@bigpond.com or PO Box 1296 LAUNCESTON TAS 7250.