

Launceston Historical Society Inc

Newsletter No 118

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PO BOX 1296 LAUNCESTON TAS 7250

"Bringing together people with an interest in history"

Sundials in Tasmania

John Hall presented a fascinating talk on the history of sundials, and on the 12 that he has discovered in Tasmania. These range from decorative junk or neo dials to elegant works of art, which accurately tell the time. The audience was intrigued that there is a sundial on the corner of the Masonic Centre in Brisbane Street, Launceston. It is reputed to have come from Launceston in England for placement on the former Government Cottage in City Park, and has connections with William Paterson. Actually it is designed to be used at latitude 51 degrees north, somewhere in the south of Wales! See a photo and article on the talk in *The Examiner*, 28 September 2009, page 12.

John is interested to hear from anyone with more information on Tasmanian sundials. He can be contacted on 6331 2486.



John Hall presented a lecture on sundials.
Photo: M Sargent



Ross Smith, Brad Williams and Jon Addison at Brad's talk on archaeology. Photo: M Sargent

Archaeology in Tasmania & the Launceston context

Brad Williams' talk on archaeology made us realise that with all the thousands of historical sites identified in Tasmania, very few have been subject to an archaeological dig. Some local examples that have been are the Launceston Gas Works, Boag's Brew House, Cocked Hat Hill, York Town and the Launceston treadmill site. The LHS archaeology group can assist by undertaking historical research and publicising the results. See the photo and article in *The Examiner*, 19 October 2009, page 11.

LAUNCESTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

President	Marita Bardenhagen	6334 4490
Vice-President	Marion Sargent	6331 4890
Minute Secretary	John Dent	6331 4099
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Society Website: www.launcestonhistory.org.au (A copy of this newsletter can be found on this site in colour)

Presentation of History Prizes

Friday 13 November 2009 – 3.30 – 5.30pm at Milton Hall, Frederick Street, Launceston.

The Deputy Mayor, Frank Nott, will present book vouchers to the 19 prize-winners and will give certificates to those students of the 115 participants who attend. All 110 entries will be on display at the Hall. The topic this year was "Objects of History". Refreshments will be served. LHS members are invited to attend. Please RSVP by Tue 10 November to Carol Fuller 6331 1158 or 0419 116 636.

November Talk

Sunday 15 November 2009 – 2.30pm at the Meeting Room, Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, Inveresk.

Jon Addison: The Development of Leisure Transport in Northern Tasmania



Jon Addison, History Curator at QVMAG.

Synopsis:

Transport for pleasure has undergone enormous change in Northern Tasmania since European settlement. This talk will focus on changes in concepts of leisure and transport for leisure, and will examine changes in attitude to the purpose of travel, modes of transport, and class perceptions of travel and 'leisure' time. And it will pinpoint changes in attitude towards the natural world, with the birth and development of the conservation movement and its focus on how changing modes of transport have influenced the nature of the movement.

Biography:

Jon Addison studied Classics at the University of Adelaide, before completing an MA in Museum Studies at the University of Sydney. Since then he has worked in a number of museums around Australia and the world, including the Western Australian Maritime Museum, (where he worked on the development of the new Maritime Museum), the London Transport Museum and the Scottish Maritime Museum, before taking up the post of History Curator at the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery here in Launceston, where he intends to stay for the foreseeable future. He practises a number of obscure and slightly pointless hobbies!

Advance Notice of Activities

Tuesday 24 November 2009: Launceston Historical Society Archaeology Committee will meet at 1.00pm in the Phil Leonard Room, Launceston Library, Civic Square.

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, *Tasmanian Women and War.*

Excursion Reports

Unfortunately the trip Nic had organised to the **Zeehan Gem and Mineral Fair** on Saturday and Sunday 7-8 November 2009 has been cancelled due to insufficient numbers. Those who have paid a deposit will have their money refunded shortly. Watch out for exciting day trips currently being planned.

Salisbury Excursion Report, by Nic Haygarth

On Sunday 3 October, 40 people enjoyed the West Tamar Historical Society's day at the Salisbury Goldfield near Beaconsfield, marshalled by John Dent and Kelvin Beams and expertly guided by Ron Gregory. Several gold adits, machinery sites and open cut workings from the late 19th century were visited, including an example of Ron's favourite mining technology, a puddling machine. This used horsepower to separate gold. The washdirt was placed in a circular pit, to which water was added. The horse turned a centrally-mounted shaft which dragged a rake through the washdirt, freeing the gold in a slurry. Then the water was removed or dried away, leaving the gold behind. In 1880 two such machines operated at Salisbury and a third was under construction.



Ron Gregory demonstrates the working of a puddling machine on Salisbury Hill near Beaconsfield. Photo: Nic Haygarth



A puddling machine in action west of Waratah. JH Robinson photo courtesy of Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Hobart.

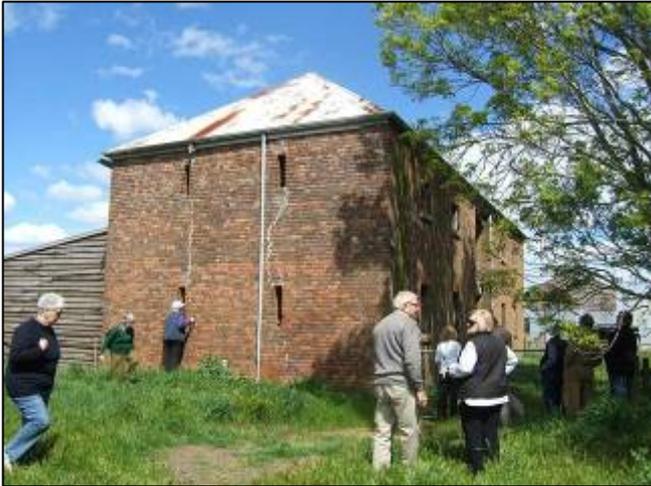
During the afternoon, the Salisbury and Beaconsfield Hydraulic Sluicing Company site and water-race were visited, enabling us to see the effect of training a high-pressure hose on a gold-bearing rock face. This mine operated in the years 1892-94 as part of the hydraulic gold mining craze that swept Tasmania, disastrously, on the strength of successful hydraulic gold sluicing in New Zealand.

Ron's practical knowledge of the field and John's archival research were greatly appreciated.

Keith and Megan Darke kindly provided a lunch venue at their nearby hilltop home.

The Relbia Ramble, by Marion Sargent

Led by Lucille Gee, 34 people enjoyed glorious weather, magnificent scenery and a dip into the past during the ramble around Relbia on Sunday 25 October. We began at a re-constructed sawpit in Caledonia Drive where Lucille and Ian Gasking showed us how the logs were cut across the pit, with the origin of the terms top notch, top dog and underdog being explained.



**Circa 1848 convict building at 'Corra Linn'.
Photo: Jill Cassidy.**



**Margaret Tassell in the Briarly Creek culvert.
Photo: Jill Cassidy.**

The next stop was at 'Corra Linn' to see the circa 1848 convict building and very old slippery elm tree. There was some discussion about the original use of the substantial two storey brick building. Had it been a barn to store food or grain, a police station, or convict barracks? On one end only it has small slits for defending the building from bushrangers, and an outside door on the upper level as well as the one below.

Our final destination involved a ramble across the paddocks of 'West Lynne' to the well-hidden brick culvert through which Briarly Creek flows. The Western Railway Line travels over the top. The walk across the rain-sodden paddocks saw the writer (Marion) slip over in the mud, which dashed any prospect of going to Josef Chromy's for afternoon tea! Then Lucille ended up in the creek at the entrance to the 10-foot high brick viaduct. Despite these setbacks, most of us braved a walk along the length of the tunnel. A great afternoon was had by all. Thanks go to Lucille and the property owners for allowing us access to these interesting sites.

Archaeology Group Excursion on the North Esk River, by Marion Sargent

On Monday 2 November John Dent led an interested group of about 20 people on a walk around the early settlement sites of Paterson's Plains on the North Esk River. We explored the location of Dr Jacob Mountgarret's October 1805 grindstone, huts and farm at 'Killafaddy'. And we surmised that stones we saw in a creek marked the likely spot for the river crossing of the first settlement. We found the site of George Hobler's 1832 bridge and road. Then after passing a flock of hissing geese, we wandered amongst the magnificent flowering hawthorn trees along the river flats on our way back to the car park.



John Dent with group at 'Killafaddy'. Photo: M Sargent



Jill Cassidy climbing a fence. Photo: M Sargent

We crossed the river to look at Alexander Riley's grant (on the north of Hobler's Bridge Road). The Norfolk Island settlers almost certainly were farming the land over the river near Distillery Creek by December 1806. We drove past the site of Riley's 1807 house. Richard Dry's 'Elphin Farm' was built later in the same spot, and still stands today.

The next stop was at the St Leonard's Picnic Ground where we pondered the location of Clarke's Ford. John pointed out the probable area of Windsor and Jones' 1807 houses. Our convoy then proceeded to Old Mac's Farm, the site of the December 1805 stockyards. We enjoyed our picnic lunches on the banks of the North Esk, before heading home.

Members' Column

New Members: The President and Executive welcome to our Society the following new members: Yvonne Adkins, John Archer, Julie Gough and Margaret Stephenson.

Rosalie Kelly has resigned from the LHS committee and position of Correspondence Secretary as she has begun working at the National Museum of Australia in Canberra as a Documentations Officer in the Registration Department. **Jai Paterson** kindly has stepped in to take Rosalie's place until the AGM next year.

John Dent has been nominated as the Launceston Historical Society's representative on the Launceston City Council's Heritage Committee.

Dr Nic Haygarth presented a paper at the Annual Conference of the Australian Mining History Association in Lithgow, NSW: *Observation and the amateur geologist: the success of 'self-culture' in Thomas Hainsworth's exploration of the Mersey Coalfield, Tasmania.*

Dr Nic Haygarth will be the guest speaker at the Friends of the Library, Launceston, Coffee Morning on Wednesday 11 November 2009 at 10.15am at the Launceston Library. See below for more details.

Anne Bartlett, former President of the LHS, is a finalist in the Qew Orchards Outstanding Achiever Award part of the Community Achievement Awards. A Gala Awards Presentation dinner will be held at Hotel Grand Chancellor in Hobart on Saturday 14 November 2009 at 7.00pm. We wish Anne all the best.

Jon Addison and Ross Smith were featured in an article promoting the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery's Community History Centre which is now open without appointment from Tuesdays to Saturdays, 10.00am to 1.00pm. The centre has a large collection of archives, photographs, ephemera and documents, which are invaluable for historic and family research. See *The Examiner* 10 September 2009, page 15

Dr John Morris' dedication to the medical profession was honoured by the naming of the John Morris Diabetes Centre at the Launceston General Hospital. See *The Examiner* 30 September 2009.

Peter Cox, as Chairman of the Low Head Pilot Station Support Group, was in the news celebrating 150 years since the first telecommunication was sent between Tasmania and the mainland on 29 September 1859. See *The Examiner* 30 September and 6 October 2009.

Professor Henry Reynolds had a conversation with Sydney-based choreographer Francis Rings and Tasdance artistic director Annie Greig, focussing on culture and identity. See *The Examiner* 3 October 2009.

Kim Polley, Northern Midlands Mayor, was at the launch of the digitised collection of photographs at the Norfolk Plains Heritage Centre, 11 William Street, Longford. The photos can be accessed online at www.nationaltrusttas.org.au. The Heritage Centre is open from 11.00am to 4.00pm on Wednesday and Thursdays and from 2.00 to 4.00pm on Sundays. See *The Examiner* 6 October 2009.

16th National Conference, Oral History Association of Australia

Congratulations to LHS member **Jill Cassidy** and the local OHAA team (including members **Jan Critchett**, **Dorothy Rosemann** and **Gill Morris**) for a wonderfully successful September conference at the Tram Sheds in Launceston.

Papers were presented by LHS member **Jai Paterson** *Interviewing a house: Home Hill, built for Dame Enid and Joseph Lyons*; and honorary member **Heather Felton** *Oral testimony, corporate history and story telling: creating a narrative for Hydro Tasmania*.

Highlights of the conference were of course the keynote speaker Richard Whiteing, Manager of the Robben Island Museum, who talked about the eighteen-year incarceration of Nelson Mandela, particularly from the testimonies of other gaol inmates and their reactions to the prison authorities and to Mandela as a leader within the prison. Another feature of this conference was the extremely strong focus on Aboriginal oral history, and a highlight for many local delegates was the presentation by Patsy Cameron, Aboriginal Elder and historian, and Linn Miller, from the University of Tasmania. They spoke and showed video footage of the *Telling Places in Country* project, where descendants literally followed in the footsteps of their ancestors using as a guide the Aboriginal stories collected by George Augustus Robinson. These were but two of the many papers that managed to bring a tear to the eye.

Recent Publications by Members

John Paull, 'Gilles vs Pugh and the lost letter', *Anaesthesia and Intensive Care*, vol. 37, Supplement 1, July 2009, pp. 42-6.

Peter MacFie, 'John Curtin – A Tasmanian connection', *Tasmania 40 degrees South*, Issue 54, Spring 2009, pp. 21-4.

Review by Jai Paterson: John Archer, *The Scott Letters*

Congratulations and a heartfelt thanks to John Archer for his mammoth effort in transcribing nineteen years' worth of correspondence from Northern Tasmania's renowned surveyor, James Scott, and his brother George, to Thomas Scott in Scotland between 1836-1855.

The Scott Letters contain considerable detail about Tasmania and its people during that period and is particularly valuable to anyone interested in social and family history. Because Thomas Scott had lived and worked in Tasmania from 1820 until he returned to Scotland in 1836, his brothers included all the local gossip of the day and some very interesting names are named!

This A4 book contains 151 transcribed letters as well as many of the diagrams and charts included by James to illustrate his surveying and business dealings. At 442 pages, with index, the book is a bargain at \$45.00 (plus postage), the transcriber being interested only in recouping costs. I understand copies are selling fast, so prospective purchasers are strongly advised to contact John to ensure a copy from his second print run.

The Scott Letters, VDL to Scotland 1836-55, transcribed by D J L Archer, Regal Publications, 2009, is available direct from John Archer at jsarch2@westnet.com.au or (03) 6425 3127.

Characters from the Past

Launceston Examiner, 6 January 1876. Police Court, Launceston.

An Old Feud. – Mary Whatnell charged Ann Brown with unlawfully assaulting her on the 30th ult. It appeared that Mary was standing in her own yard on the day in question, when she was hit in the back with a piece of Christmas pudding. She did not see who threw it, but as the defendant's yard adjoins her own, and she believed the defendant likely to have done the deed, she summoned her. Under these circumstances the case was dismissed. Costs 8s 6d.

The Cyclopaedia of Tasmania, Vol. 2, page 73.

Bank of Australasia, Cameron Street, Launceston, 1850s

Somewhere in the fifties Mr. Charles Thompson, the then manager had occasion to enter the strong room to obtain some documents, and having opened the door removed the key and placed it in his pocket. Whilst he was inside the door swung to and fastened to the spring lock, and Mr. Thompson was a prisoner, there being no means of opening the door from inside. Mr. Thompson naturally became excited, fearing he would be either suffocated or starved. He was, however, heard, but those outside could render no assistance. Expert locksmiths were sent for, but their efforts were of no avail, and as a last resource a man named James Powell, a character in his way, better known as "Jimmy the Tinker", was sent for. After he had had time to steady himself, for he was just recovering from a customary spree, he undertook the job, and with a piece of flexible iron got an impression of the wards of the lock, and eventually succeeded in releasing Mr. Thompson, who had been incarcerated for nineteen hours.

Can You Help?

Playing Launceston

Playing Launceston is a UTAS-based research project which aims to research Launceston's rich theatre culture. Our aims are to trace how theatre developed in this region, in connection with the evolution of the city, and to investigate its contemporary operation.

The Playing Launceston project was launched at a gathering in August, in which members of Launceston's Theatre community came together to share their experiences of doing theatre in Launceston. The day was insightful, hearing from representatives from Launceston Theatre groups, as well as individuals prominent in the local theatre scene. The gathering facilitated discussion between members of the Launceston Theatre community, and highlighted some of the challenges faced by those practising theatre in Launceston.

Currently, in conjunction with Theatre North and the Launceston City Council, we are researching the history of the Princess Theatre for a commemorative publication to celebrate the centenary of the Princess Theatre in 2011.

Still in its preliminary stages, we envisage that Playing Launceston will give rise to further research projects, some of which will involve community engagement.

We are grateful for the opportunity to share our project with members of the Launceston Historical Society and would welcome contact from any individuals who have collected research about Launceston's theatre history, from its inception to the current day. Information or knowledge of sources, relating to any live performances or community events, that may have taken place at the Princess Theatre between 1920s-1940s, would also be appreciated.

Please contact Danielle at Danielle.Grossman@utas.edu.au if you can assist.

Other Items and Events of Interest

Albert Hall Organ Recital by Dr Lindsay Hutchinson, the University of Melbourne's University Organist, to celebrate the 150th birthday of the Brindley Organ at the Albert Hall on Sunday 8 November from 2.00pm to 4.00pm.

Two Days on the Square: Celebrate the 150th anniversary of Prince's Square with an historic precinct walk, music, including the City Mission's "Choir of High Hopes", theatrical speakers' corner and more. On Monday 9 November 2009 it will be 150 years since the planting of the gardens and installation of the fountain. Earlier, the Square had been the site of significant and dramatic events in the history of both this city and the nation. Admission to this Launceston City Council event is free to all sessions on Sunday 8 November 11.30am-3.00pm and Monday 9 November 12.00 noon to 2.00pm.

Battle of the Flags: Anti-transportation League vs Eureka Stockade. As part of 'Two Days on the Square' a public debate will take place between Professor Henry Reynolds and Dr Michael Powell at Milton Hall, Frederick Street, on Sunday 8 November at 2.00pm.

Friends of the Library, Launceston: Guest speaker for the November Coffee Morning is LHS member Nic Haygarth, historian and author, speaking on *Alienation and disrepute: Surveying the verges of the 1837 Hughes map of Northern Tasmania*.

- Hear how a convict helped impose social order on a penal colony.
- Locate early land grants.
- Find out how to download a copy of this rare map, purchased by the Launceston Library in 1975 from the estate of the late Dr Clifford Craig.

Wednesday 11 November 2009, 10.15am for a 10.30am start, Phil Leonard Room, Launceston Library, Civic Square, Launceston. All welcome. Gold coin donation to cover cost of refreshments.

Let's Talk About Deviot: The Deviot Community Association is holding a conference at the Deviot Hall, 512 Deviot Road, Deviot, on Saturday 16 January 2010, from 8.45am to 5.00pm. Nine speakers, including four LHS members, will be presenting papers on various aspects of Deviot history, businesses and recreational activities. Enquiries: Jill Cassidy 6394 7677. See the separate flyer enclosed.

Outback & Beyond – The future of historic towns, industrial heritage and pastoralism: The Australia ICOMOS annual conference will be held at the Broken Hill Entertainment Centre, Blende Street, on 22-25 April 2010. Enquiries: stepowsk@tpg.com.au.

Tasmanian Heritage Festival May 2010: The theme for the National Trust 2010 Heritage Festival is "20th Century Heritage" with a title "*Deco to Digital – Our 20th Century Heritage*". This will provide the opportunity of exploring a wide range of issues including industrialisation, social change, twentieth century architecture and our changing appreciation of heritage. Enquiries: phone 6344 6233 or email admin@nationaltrusttas.org.au.

Deadlines

Items for the next Newsletter should be sent to the Editor by **1 February 2010** at marionsargent@bigpond.com or PO Box 1296 LAUNCESTON TAS 7250.