



Launceston Historical Society Inc.

Newsletter No 128

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PO BOX 1296 LAUNCESTON TAS 7250

"Bringing together people with an interest in history"



23rd The Examiner-John West Memorial Lecture

**Friday, 11 March 2011 – 8.00pm at the Sir Raymond Ferrall
Centre, University of Tasmania, Launceston.**

Professor Cassandra Pybus, the Australian Research Council Professor of History at the University of Sydney and author of 12 books, will present this year's Lecture:

**'a perfect miscreant equally devoid of principle and feeling':
The colourful life of Gilbert Robertson, Aboriginal hunter,
True Colonist editor, agriculturalist and perpetual litigant.**

Gilbert Robertson Esq. was connected to one of the best families in Scotland and very well-educated. He arrived in the colony in 1822 carrying a personal letter of recommendation from Lord Bathurst. In 1828 he was a gentleman farmer with 1500 acres on the Coal River and president of the local Agricultural Society when he led the first of the roving parties to round up the Aborigines. However his intimacy with Aborigines, and his view that they were patriots rather than murderous savages, alienated him from most free settlers.

In the twenty years he spent in the colony of Van Diemen's Land, Gilbert Robertson was never out of trouble; he was always in the courts, suing or being sued and, as the editor of the *True Colonist*, he endured several lengthy gaol terms for libel against the governor. By the time he died in 1851, in the middle of a heated election campaign for the new colony of Victoria, he was just about the most notorious public figure in Port Phillip.

What was never publicly said about this mercurial fellow was that he was a black man, the son of a slave woman from the colony of Trinidad in the West Indies.

Membership Renewals

The annual subscriptions for the Launceston Historical Society were due on 31 January 2011.

Thank you to those who have paid for another year of membership.

A renewal form was enclosed with the last newsletter.

LAUNCESTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

President	Marita Bardenhagen	6334 4490
Vice-President	Marion Sargent	6331 4890
Minute Secretary	John Dent	6331 4099
Correspondence Secretary	Leonie Prevost	6391 5511
Treasurer	Carol Fuller	6331 1558
Editor of Newsletter & Publications	Marion Sargent	6331 4890
Speaker Coordinators	Leonie Prevost & Margaret Tassell	6331 2280
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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

Carr Villa Tour



**Marion Sargent relating a story of Carr Villa.
Photo: Barney Reynolds.**

More than 70 people joined Marion Sargent for a tour of the Carr Villa Cemetery on Sunday 20 February. They heard stories of John Knight and the building of his Georgian home on the Carr Villa Estate; of Susannah Knight and the Carr Villa Establishment for Young Ladies; Frederick Krushka and syndicate's attempts to subdivide and sell the land; William Garrard's residency; the sale of part of the estate to the State Government in 1890; plans for a new cemetery; the eventual handing over to the Municipal Council in 1901; and finally, the transformation into a cemetery, which opened on 1 August 1905.

The tour began in the Mortuary Chapel at the entrance and wound its way from the 1924 grave of Charles St John David, the City Engineer and Surveyor who designed the early buildings and layout of the cemetery, to the grave of Annie Scanlon, the first woman to be buried here in December 1905, past the memorial of Herbert James Stebbeings, the first caretaker, to the impressive monument to Jack Eugene Riva who died tragically in 1919 aged 20.



Among the gravestones. Photo: Dianne Cassidy.

The site of the Carr Villa House was visited, as well as section D2 where some of the old headstones from the earlier cemeteries and the Jewish section are located. The first person to be buried at Carr Villa, on the day the cemetery opened, was John Doran. Although this burial was in free ground, John Dunn, the monumental mason, placed the marble headstone over the grave at his own expense.

The grave of Lucy Garrard, one of the last people to live in Carr Villa House, was visited. The final memorial to be viewed was to James George, who

died in 1969. He worked for John Dunn for 60 years and erected the first headstone in this cemetery.

An article by Brianna McShane in *The Examiner*, on Saturday, 26 February 2011, pages 33-35, covers some of the stories told during the tour.

Advance Notice of Activities

Sunday 22 May 2011: Angela McGowan, *Historical Archaeology in Tasmania – an archaeliography*

Sunday 19 June 2011: Dr Jillian Koshin, *Lamont's Cottage*

Sunday 10 July 2011: Dr Anne Neale, *Guide to Launceston's architecture*

Sunday 21 August 2011: Associate Professor Hamish Maxwell-Stewart, *Sickness and death amongst convicts*

Sunday 18 September 2011: Robyn Lake, *Trade trails ... convict cabinetmakers transported during the Assignment Period*

Sunday 16 October 2011: Andrew Gregg, *"Of greatest service to the Norfolk Plains": The contrasting colonial careers of Roderic O'Connor and William Bryan*

Sunday 20 November 2011: Steve Radford, *Holymans – 150 years*

Members' Column

Archaeology Group: This year's meetings will be on 11 May, 30 August and 29 November 2011 at 1.00pm at the Phil Leonard Room, Launceston LINC.

Papers and Proceedings: The LHS 2009 Papers and Proceedings are available for sale at \$12.00.



Leonie Prevost, Secretary

Work

Librarian at Launceston LINC, currently responsible for the Local Studies Manuscript Collection.

Also a Justice of the Peace.

Interests

History, reading, travel, gardening and bushwalking.

Family

Married, with three adult children and one grandchild due in March 2011.

April Symposium

The topic this year is *The Indian Connection with Tasmania*.

A registration form for the Annual Symposium to be held on Saturday, 16 April 2011, from 9.00 am to 2.45 pm is available on our website. The cost is \$25.00 for members and \$30.00 for non-members. Morning tea and lunch are included. Registrations close on Friday, 8 April 2011. Please print the form and post to the Treasurer: <http://www.launcestonhistory.org.au/symdoc.pdf>

Note that there will be an AFL game at York Park on this day, but we have been assured that Museum patrons can park as normal in the car park before 10 am.

Annual General Meeting

The 2011 AGM will be held from 11.45am to 12.15pm at the Annual Symposium on Saturday, 16 April 2011, at the Meeting Room, Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, Inveresk. The notice of meeting is available on our website: <http://www.launcestonhistory.org.au/agm2011form.pdf>

Nominations are sought to fill all eleven positions on the Executive: President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer and seven Committee Members. Nominations should reach the Executive on or before Friday, 8 April 2011. Now is the time to join the Committee to help your Society run its active and vibrant programme of talks and excursions.

Can You Help?

The Examiner will be celebrating its 170th birthday on 12 March 2012. To mark this milestone a 100-page History Supplement will be published in mid-November, provisionally entitled "Launceston 1842". The editor invites historians and researchers to provide their stories of people, organisations and businesses in northern Van Diemen's Land during the 1840s. Articles of 300-500 words are welcome. The deadline for material is mid-October 2011. Please send articles to Julian Burgess, Associate Editor, jburgess@examiner.com.au.

Other Items and Events of Interest

National Book Council: Guest speaker for the March meeting is Chris Sayer, author of *Embracing detours*, his story about his motorcycle accident in Turkey in April 2009. Wednesday, 16 March 2011, 1.15pm, Phil Leonard Room, Launceston LINC, Civic Square.

George Town and District Historical Society: The next three meetings for 2011 will be: 16 May, Roger Broomhall, *The New Chum Mine at Lefroy*; 20 June, John Watts, *The Hainsworth Letters*.

Tasmanian Historical Research Association: Upcoming meetings are to be held at the Royal Society Room in the Custom House, TMAG, starting at 8.00 pm. 10 May, Leonie Mickleborough, *Sir John Eardley Wilmot*; 14 June, Andy McKinlay, *Time gentlemen, please: turrett clocks*. www.thra.org.au

The Dead Centres of Launceston Ride: Join Marion Sargent on another history ride during Bike Week, this time exploring the old cemeteries of Launceston. Start at Royal Park on Sunday, 13 March 2011 at 10.00 am and finish with a coffee at Seaport about 12.00 noon. This is a Tamar Bicycle Users Group outing. Enquiries: Marion Sargent: phone (03) 6331 4890; email marion.sargent@bigpond.com; www.tbug.org.au

Library Book Fair: To be held on Saturday, 19 March 2011, 9.00am – 1.00pm at St Ailbe's Hall, Margaret Street, Launceston. The Book Fair is a community project involving the Riverside Lions Cub, Friends of the Library and Launceston LINC.

Australian Heritage Week: A new annual national celebration of Australia's unique heritage, to be held on 14-20 April 2011. <http://www.environment.gov.au/heritage/about/heritage-week>

From Lamingtons to Lasers – Our Agricultural Heritage: The Tasmanian Heritage Festival will continue daily throughout the month of May 2011. The Festival programme is available on the National Trust of Australia (Tasmania) web site: www.nationaltrusttas.org.au

History at the Edge: The Australian Historical Association Regional Conference will be held from Monday 4 to Friday 8 July 2011 at the University of Tasmania, Inveresk Campus, Launceston. Several of our members plan to present papers on various topics. The registration form is available here: <http://www.ahahistoryattheedge.org/index.html>

Bringing Together: The inaugural conference of the Australian Council of Professional Historians Association Inc, will be held in Adelaide, South Australia, on 5-6 August 2011. http://www.historians.org.au/acpha/whats_on/index.shtml

In perspective: rethinking South Australia's history: 20th State History Conference, 5-7 August 2011, National Wine Centre, Adelaide, will mark 175 years since the official foundation of the Province of South Australia.

Two new websites which may be of interest to members are: www.bornintheforties.com.au and www.borninthefifties.com.au

Deadlines

Members wishing to place items on the Agenda for the 12 April 2011 LHS Committee Meeting are requested to have these to the President by **1 April 2011**. Items for the next Newsletter should be sent to the Editor by **1 May 2011** at marionsargent@bigpond.com or PO Box 1296 LAUNCESTON TAS 7250.