



Launceston Historical Society Inc.

Newsletter No 140

June 2013

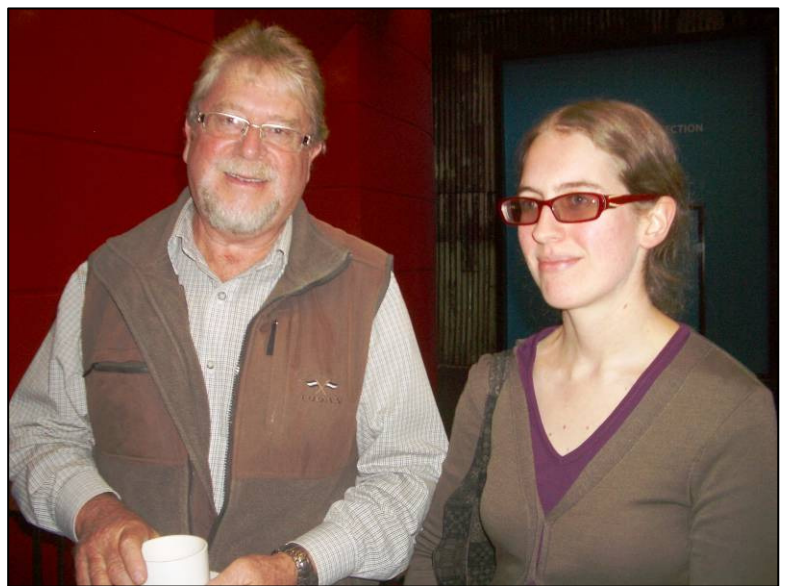
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PO BOX 1296 LAUNCESTON TAS 7250

"Bringing together people with an interest in history"

Textile Workers' Strike

On Sunday 21 April 2013, PhD student Phoebe Kelloway spoke on the Launceston textile workers' strike which occurred over 16 working days in August to September 1932. Thousands of people were employed in the textile industry in Launceston. They were mainly young women who laboured long hours under difficult conditions. Their pay was much less than the men's. So when the Depression hit, and their wages were cut three times in less than 18 months, the workers were ready to strike. It was the first time this had occurred in this city's textile industry. The community was polarised. To the horror of conservatives, a meddling outsider from Sydney came down to support the strikers! "It was a remarkable episode in Launceston's history – and should be remembered," said Phoebe.



Julian Burgess and speaker Phoebe Kelloway.
Photo: M Sargent.



Gus Green relating some history of Cameron Street to the crowds. Photo: M Sargent.

From Albert to Victoria

Our Heritage Festival walk along Cameron Street on 19 May 2013 was a resounding success! Approximately 125 people turned up to hear Robyn Jones and Committee members tell stories about the buildings along this historic street. I feel confident that we all learnt something. At the end of the walk, afternoon tea was served at '1842'.

Apologies to those who missed out on a flyer; it will be reprinted and loaded on our website. A collection of Cameron Street photographs are in the process of being added to the fascinating new website Historypin: <http://www.historypin.com/channels/>. Many thanks to Catherine Pearce for collating the photographs in printed folders, producing the flyer and a PowerPoint show; and creating our own channel on Historypin.

LAUNCESTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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June: Second Pugh Day Lecture

Dr John Paull: *Walking with Dr Pugh from Hobart to Launceston in 1836*

Sunday 16 June 2013 – 2.00pm at the Meeting Room, QVMAG Museum at Inveresk.

Abstract:

Early 19th century diaries reveal that a number of Van Diemen's Land immigrants, after arriving in Hobart, walked to Launceston. Conserving capital was important and meeting settlers and graziers along the way informed the traveller about opportunities in the new colony. Dr Pugh was no exception. After finding no opportunities to begin medical practice in either Hobart or Sydney, he returned to Hobart. With a companion, in February 1836, he then walked to Launceston. Many of the homesteads at which he stayed on the month-long journey are still standing. The isolated settlers would welcome travellers, who brought news and company.

His diary tells us that, at almost every property where he stayed, the owners told him that there were no prospects for medical practice in the colony. Instead, he was encouraged to take up sheep farming. Fortunately for anaesthesia, he resisted these offers and set up his own successful surgical practice in Launceston. This presentation will introduce the audience to the properties where Pugh stayed and the people he met.

Your next trip between Hobart and Launceston may be more interesting as a consequence.

Biography:

Dr John Paull graduated MB BS from the University of Melbourne 52 years ago, and spent three years at Alfred Hospital, initially entering physician training. After a four-year spell as a GP on Nauru Island in the Central Pacific, he returned to the Alfred and commenced anaesthetic training in 1969. He was awarded a Fellowship of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons, Faculty of Anaesthetists, in 1971. He then gained a Diploma in Education, with an emphasis on tertiary education, from Monash University. A 19-year period was spent working at the Royal Women's Hospital in Melbourne, the last 11 years as Director of Anaesthetics and Theatre Services. This was followed by nine years at Box Hill Hospital in Melbourne, the last six as Director of Anaesthetics. He then moved to Tasmania, married Denise and was appointed a consultant anaesthetist at the Launceston General Hospital – a position held for eight years. Dr Paull retired in September 2007

When Dr Phil Ogden introduced John to Dr William Russ Pugh, the interest in the 19th century doctor grew uncontrollably. John is now seven years into researching the life and times of this remarkable doctor. The resulting biography of Pugh will be published in September this year.

Dr Paull is currently a University Associate in the School of Humanities at the University of Tasmania.

This lecture is to be held in conjunction with the Launceston General Hospital Historical Committee and Department of Anaesthetics.

July Talk

Julianne Richards: *Home from War: The Newstead War Service Homes Project*

Sunday 21 July 2013 – 2.00pm, at the Meeting Room, QVMAG Museum at Inveresk.

As you pass through Newstead, have you ever wondered about the distinct cluster of 1920s cottages in David, Abbott and Malabar Streets? These small houses have a big story to tell. They were amongst the thousands of houses built around Australia as part of the War Service Homes scheme.

Much consideration of Australia's war-related history has focussed on the periods of conflict. The impact on individuals and society, however, does not end with the fighting. Those who returned from the First World War had to cope with its impact on their lives in a society struggling to provide the services and support they needed. The post-war period also was one of social change and uncertainty. The Great Depression brought challenges and hardship to many. Then, the generation who lived through the First World War faced the prospect of their children serving in the Second.

Home from War aims to explore this period through the stories of one group of War Service Homes and the lives of the first families who lived in them.

The project is being undertaken by volunteers for the National Trust of Australia (Tasmania) with assistance from the Commonwealth Government's *Your Community Heritage* program.

Julianne Richards studied history at the University of Tasmania and currently is working as the Collection Curator at the Beaconsfield Mine and Heritage Centre. She has edited two books – *Living on the Land: glimpses of a community working with wool*; and *In All Those Lines: the diary of Sister Elsie Tranter 1916-1919*.

August Talk

Alison Alexander, *The Ambitions of Jane Franklin*

Sunday 18 August 2013 – 2.00pm, at the Meeting Room, QVMAG Museum at Inveresk.

Jane Franklin was the wife of John Franklin, governor of Van Diemen's Land from 1837 to 1843. She had two ambitions. One was to live life to the full, and so she climbed mountains, went exploring, built a Greek temple in the bush, tried to eradicate snakes, adopted an Aboriginal girl, and so on - a fascinating catalogue unlike anyone else's activities.

The other ambition was to support her husband and make him a hero. Sir John was no administrator, but his wife's help with his work, vital to him, contributed to his recall by London. However, she succeeded in both her aims, turning him into a hero of exploration as the discoverer of the North-West Passage.

Alison Alexander is a Tasmanian historian, author of 24 books including *Tasmania's Convicts: how felons built a free society*, and her most recent book, *The ambitions of Jane Franklin: Victorian lady adventurer* (Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 2013).

Advance Notice of LHS Activities

Launceston Historical Society meetings are held at the Meeting Room, QVMAG Museum at Inveresk, at 2.00pm, unless otherwise notified.

15 September 2013: Rohan Wilson, *The Launceston Railway Riots of 1874*

20 October 2013: Eric Ratcliff, *The sinister steeples of Alexander North*

17 November 2013: Stephen Dando-Collins, *First World War topic to be advised*

Tony Robinson's Time Walk

Thank you to all the members who gathered at Princes Square on Saturday 27 April as extras for the British TV historian Tony Robinson's anti-transportation Time Walk scenes. The large number exceeded all expectations! Also, thank you to those who helped with the Railway Riots auction scene in Charles Street on Sunday. We all had a great time. The producer, Alice Ford, sent this message of thanks: "The footage we took in Launceston looks fantastic – so full of life and colour – and we are really looking forward to editing the program soon. It was a very special experience to have so many members of the community come out and support us".



President Marion Sargent with Tony Robinson at Princes Square. Photo: Emily McClarron.

Members' Column

New Members: The President and Executive welcome to our Society the following new members: Bridget Blades, Virginia and Bill Greenhill, Rebecca Phillips, Colin Rowley, Peter and Ann Serisier and Jillian Twells.

Spring Tour to Forth: The Committee is planning a bus trip for members to Forth on Sunday 13 October 2013. The Forth Valley History Group will provide a tour of the district's historic cemeteries and Braddon's Lookout. The cemeteries contain the tombstones of well-known identities, including James Fenton, Sir Edward Braddon, Philosopher Smith and ex-army officers who retired to this area after serving in the British Army in India in the 1800s.

A soup and sandwich lunch will be provided in the Forth Community Hall where we can browse folders containing information and photographs relating to the local history. Jot this date in your diaries now. More information will be provided in the next newsletter.

Archaeology Group: Enquiries to John Dent, email: john.dent@pda.com.au.

Fiona McIntosh, author of the new book *The French Promise* – partly set in Tasmania – has acknowledged the help she received from our members:

Recreating Launceston of the 1950s presented an unexpected challenge but I had a troop of dedicated seniors in northern Tasmania who allowed me to plumb their memories so I could learn about life in a much sunnier, happier part of the world in post WWII. I would like to thank the Members of the Launceston Historical Society ... who provided childhood recollections.

New Books

Compiled by Prue McCausland and Marion Sargent, *The Tasmanian Exhibition 1891-92: with over 1000 biographies from the Launceston Family Album* will be launched by the Mayor of Launceston, Albert van Zetten, at the Town Hall on Wednesday 26 June 2013 at 5.00pm. Members are invited to attend. RSVP by 19 June to mmccausl@yahoo.com or 6336 2642. Limited edition of 200 copies, price \$60.00.

Eric Ratcliff (Ed.), *A little compendium of archiquotes*, is a collection of *bons mots*, slogans and jibes on architecture, the forerunner of a major work on Tasmanian architecture. \$24.95.

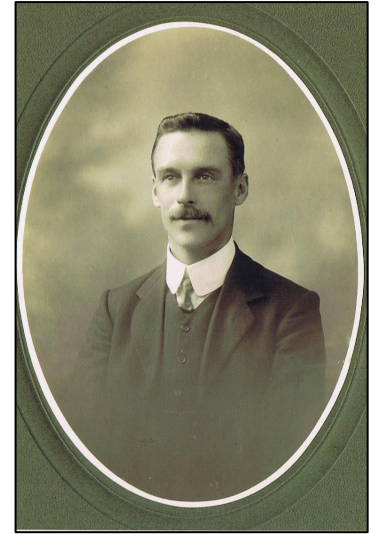
Paul A.C. Richards, Barbara Valentine, Tom Dunning & Dan Huon (Eds), *Launceston General Hospital Celebrating 150 Years of Caring* was launched on 14 May 2013.

Nic Haygarth, *The Norfolk Plains—a history of Longford, Cressy, Perth and Bishopsbourne* will be launched by the Northern Midlands Council at Petrarch's Bookshop at 6.00 pm on Friday 2 August 2013. Please notify Petrarch's if you wish to attend: petlau@bigpond.net.au or phone 6331 8088.

Essay on Launceston

By George Clifton Coutts

The following essay was written by 13-year-old George Clifton Coutts as part of his studies at the Launceston High School in 1889. The essay was transcribed by Marion Sargent and the biography was contributed by Sue Milner, a great-niece of the young writer. Spelling errors have been corrected, but the original grammar and capitalization have been retained.



Dear Sir

I have been asked to state in as concise a manner as possible all I know of Launceston Tasmania its Institutions surroundings Etc. Although I have only been for about six years living in it I shall endeavour to my best ability to tell all I know. Launceston so named after one of the chief towns in Cornwall England is situated at the head of the River Tamar or confluence of the North and South Esk. Nominally it is only the second town in Tasmania but in reality is the first as far as prosperity and Commercial enterprise is concerned for the very good reason that it is the centre of the richest agricultural part of the Island Colony and also of all the Mining Industry which has made our adopted home so famous all over the World. It is owing to our energetic townsmen that Mount Bischoff or more properly speaking the Mount Bischoff Tin Mining Company the richest Tin Mine in the World as been developed numerous other instances I could give of what our business men have done for the advancement of the Town and colony generally.

Touching the local Institutions taking into consideration our population which is only between fifteen and sixteen thousand we are not behind or in fact are in advance of any other colonial City. The only draw back and I mention it with regret is the want of a Public library but I believe our legislators are going to take the matter in hand. We have an admirable mechanics institute connected with which there is a splendid collection of books but of course the advantages are limited to subscribers. There is also in the town a Workmen's Club conducted in a first-class manner and attached to which there is also a library. The low rate of subscription to the Institution places its benefits within reach of almost the poorest.

Churches we have innumerable all classes creeds and denominations as well represented and the attendance at each speaks well for the religious disposition of our people. Education is also well looked after we have Public and Private schools managed and conducted by gentlemen who have gained the highest possible scholastic honours. Principally I may name the Launceston Grammar School presided over by the Rev. Mr Champion. The High School Headmaster E. A. Nathan and the Collegiate Institute over which Mr Thos Hogg is the popular and efficient teacher. Each of those gentlemen are well assisted by a numerous Staff of assistants. There is also in the heart of the town a Public or State School attended by a very large number of scholars. The Principal ladies Schools are the Wesleyan Ladies College presided over [by] the Rev. S. Williams and assisted by an efficient staff of Lady teachers. The Presentation Convent presided over by the Nuns although a sectarian establishment is attended by all creeds which proves that the bitter feelings that in other places may actuate those of different religions has no footing in our midst.

The other Public Institutions that I can think of are the Benevolent Society managed by a Committee of Launceston Gentlemen and supported almost solely by subscriptions from local charitably disposed people. This Society assists with food and fuel those poor who are not altogether destitute and may wish to keep their home about them. There is also in the Town a Government Establishment, The Invalid Depot for the housing and maintenance of the aged poor. This place is surrounded by really magnificent grounds from which charming views of the River Tamar and scenery about may be obtained. The poor old men who are maintained here may be truly said to live in an Earthly Paradise for they are well looked after in every sense. Alfred Jones Esq. is the courteous Superintendent and is always pleased to show visitors round the place. The Industrial School must not be overlooked it takes charge of girls of tender years the children of bad Parents or orphans and educates them and when fit secures for them situations in whatever line of life they may be adapted for.

Leaving our charitable and benevolent Institutions I must turn to those of a commercial nature and I am sure from what I can see and have read that in no town of the same size in the Colonies or perhaps in the world are so well supplied. We have seven or eight Banks all doing a large business and paying

large dividends to their shareholders. Three building Societies in a flourishing condition and almost every English and Colonial Institution is represented. Some of the Banks and Insurance Companies transact their business in buildings of the most imposing structure and which are a credit to our local architects.

Our streets are well laid out and wide and in the business parts of the town the shops and business establishments are large and commodious and the contents go to prove what an extensive trade must be done. Following Brisbane Street the principal thoroughfare to the east you approach the Elphin and Newstead Roads the side of which are graced by comely houses and Villas the residences of our well to do business people. Another suburb is Invermay and as you might guess from the name is a place of beauty, immediately adjoining the Town and connected with it by a beautiful Iron bridge across the South Esk is the rural Township of Trevallyn situated on the side of the Hill and facing the Tamar. From the same bridge may be obtained not only a splendid view of the Town but turn your back on that and gaze up the Cataract gorge and a sight will meet the eye of the beholder that will well reward him for his short walk.

In conclusion I beg to apologize for having exceeded the number of words the Essay was limited to but feel that a paper double the length could not do proper justice to the subject.

I remain

Yours Respectfully

Geo. Clifton Coutts.

Biography:

George Clifton Coutts was born in Melbourne in 1876, the first child of George Coutts (1852-1932) and Louisa Martha Manning (1853-1919) who married in 1874. George senior had a thriving shoe shop and George Clifton was to follow into the same business; by 1901 he was working in a shoe shop in Pitt Street, Sydney. George Clifton became a traveller for Ross & Glendining, a large and important manufacturer of woollen goods based in Dunedin, New Zealand. In 1912 George Clifton was presented with an impressive gold pocket watch by his fellow employees. He had a gold fob attached which shows that he was a member of the Commercial Travellers' Association of Australasia. In 1919 George Clifton Coutts, who did not marry, died from Spanish influenza in Nelson, NZ. He was buried in the local cemetery, his grave graced by a fine granite headstone. George's essay was written circa 1889 while he was a pupil of Launceston High School, Milton Hall, Frederick Street; the original is held by the family. Both his parents are in the Launceston Family Album.

Other Items and Events of Interest

Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery: *Billycarts and Wheelchairs* is the history of St Giles and how a community galvanised to support stricken children. The symbols—billycarts for fundraising and wheelchairs for mobility—are the tools of doing whatever it takes to make a positive difference to the lives of children with disability. More than 200 items and photographs tell the story of 75 years of St Giles. The exhibition is at Inveresk from 8 June to 4 August. Admission is free.

George Town & District Historical Society: Meetings are held at *The Grove*. 17 June 2013, Des & Lorraine Wootton, *Genealogy & resources of the GTDHS & Pilot Station Museum*; 15 July 2013, John Tyson, *Apple case labels*. Email: info@gtdhs.com. Web: www.gtdhs.com.

Tasmanian Historical Research Association: Meetings take place in the Royal Society Room, Custom House, TMAG, Hobart, starting at 8.00pm. 9 July 2013, Betty Pilgrim, *'Tasmanian talent to the fore' – the legendary Pollard Opera Company*; 13 August 2013, Nick Clements, *'Frightened to death' – colonists' experience of Aboriginal violence in Tasmania*.

National Book Council: Guest speaker for the June meeting is Jan Kuplis, author of *Tom Pickering Jazzman*. Wednesday, 19 June 2013, 1.15pm Phil Leonard Room, Launceston LINC, Civic Square.

Deadline

Items for the next Newsletter should be sent to the Editor by **1 Sep 2013** at marionsargent@bigpond.com or PO Box 1296 LAUNCESTON TAS 7250.