



Launceston Historical Society Inc.

Newsletter No 142

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PO BOX 1296 LAUNCESTON TAS 7250

"Bringing together people with an interest in history"

Launceston Railway Riots 1874

On 15 September 2013 the award-winning novelist Rohan Wilson held the audience spellbound with his talk on fictionalising the Launceston railway riots of 1874. A classic tale of tragedy will be told in his new book recalling the coming of the railway to Tasmania. In the beginning the people were enthusiastic; 4000 had tickets to ride the six miles from Launceston to St Leonards. But when a tax was imposed on landowners to fund the railway, some refused to pay. An auction was held to sell goods seized by the bailiffs, but no-one made a bid. "Larrikin classes" ran riot through Launceston breaking windows and looting shops. These events will be re-imagined and brought to life through the eyes of fictional characters.



September's speaker, Rohan Wilson. Photo: M Sargent



Speaker Dr Eric Ratcliff with LHS Vice-President Catherine Pearce. Photo: Sue McClarron

Alexander North's Church Steeples

On 20 October a crowd of more than 80 people packed the QVMAG meeting room to hear Dr Eric Ratcliff's thought-provoking and entertaining talk about architect Alexander North and his church spires. The audience learned about North's up-bringing, education and stylistic influences. His signature 'witches-hat' steeples adorn churches from Launceston to Exeter, Beaconsfield and Mangana. All present agreed it was a privilege to hear an erudite lecture on the subject by an acknowledged authority. This year will see the publication of Dr Ratcliff's much-anticipated book on building and architecture in Van Diemen's Land and Tasmania from 1803-1914.

At the conclusion of the talk, members celebrated the **25th anniversary of the LHS** with champagne and a cake cut by Dr Ratcliff – a member of the Society's first committee. Jenny Gill, also a member of the original committee, was presented with a bouquet of flowers in recognition of her many dedicated years of service. By Catherine Pearce.

Excursion to Forth



A group of LHS members thoroughly enjoyed a trip to Forth on Sunday 13 October 2013. Our wonderful hosts, the Forth Valley History Group, served a scrumptious morning tea on arrival, as well as lunch and afternoon tea. We found the history boards at the Memorial Hall gave a fascinating insight into the lives of the early settlers, more recent personalities, buildings and rural industries. The Group also provided guided tours of the old Church of England and Congregational cemeteries. Some well-known pioneers of the district are buried there. In the afternoon we headed up to an extremely blustery Braddon's Lookout for superb views of the Forth Valley. Thank you to Terese Binns for driving the Veterans and Community Bus. Despite the inclement weather, the day proved to be a most enjoyable and informative excursion.



Speaker Stephen Dando-Collins, Louise Dando-Collins and LHS Secretary Robyn Jones. Photo: M Sargent

Sir Henry Parkes

Stephen Dando-Collins was our guest speaker on 17 November – the last Sunday meeting for 2013. He presented a fascinating insight into Sir Henry Parkes, a giant in the Australian political landscape. His humble start in life as a bone-turner in England inspired him to seek a better life in Australia. He became involved in politics; had a shop in Sydney; and established his own newspaper, *The Empire*. He was a fierce competitor of the *Sydney Morning Herald* and a bitter foe of its editor, Rev. John West, formerly of Launceston. Parkes had three wives and at least 17 children, all the while trying to make ends meet, introduce social reforms and drive Australia towards Federation.

Annual General Meeting + Guest Speaker

Sunday 16 February 2014 – 2.00pm, at the Meeting Room, QVMAG Museum at Inveresk.

The **2014 AGM** will be held at 2.00pm. See the separate notice of meeting which includes a nomination form for the committee. 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, 7 February 2014**. Now is the time to join the Committee to help your Society run its active and vibrant program of talks, excursions and the general promotion of history.

The [AGM notification](#) is available on our website or is enclosed with the printed Newsletter.

A PowerPoint show of the past year's activities will run throughout the short AGM.

Stefan Petrow: 'Developing the highest moral instincts': Protecting Animals in Launceston 1879 to 1923.

Abstract:

Settled as Australia's second colony in 1803, Tasmania began life as the island penal colony of Van Diemen's Land and gained a reputation for brutality in the treatment of convicts and the Indigenous population. But brutality did not stop with humans. Settlers to the island, accustomed to animal cruelty in Britain, continued this practice in Tasmania. For example, in 1832 the editor of *The Independent* daily observed in Launceston 'lamentable scenes of cruelty too shocking to relate'.

Decisive steps to stop this brutal behaviour did not emerge until the 1870s: branches of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals were formed in Hobart in 1878 and in Launceston in 1879. This paper will examine the aims and methods of the Launceston branch of the SPCA and assess how successful it was in ending or minimising cruelty to animals.

Biography:

Stefan Petrow teaches Australian history and is Program Director in the History and Classics Program, School of Humanities at the University of Tasmania, Hobart. He researches all aspects of Tasmanian history, but specialises in legal and planning history. Recently he has published on Launceston's planning history. His latest book, co-authored with Alison Alexander, was titled *Growing With Strength: A History of the Hobart City Council 1846-2000* (2008).

Membership Renewals

Annual subscriptions for the Launceston Historical Society were due on 31 December 2013.

A [membership form](#) is enclosed or on the website

Please return to the treasurer, Leonie Prevost, at the next meeting, or post to:

Treasurer, Launceston Historical Society
PO Box 1296 LAUNCESTON TAS 7250

History in our Streets

As part of our celebration to mark the 25th anniversary of the Society, we are facilitating the printing of the second edition of *History in our Streets* written by esteemed member Dr John Morris, and Donald Morris. Written 25 years ago, 500 copies will be produced with an updated supplement and a new cover. Members will receive a separate invitation to the launch which will be organised by the Clifford Craig Research Trust. Pre-ordered books will cost \$30.00, while the RRP is \$34.95.

26th *The Examiner*-John West Memorial Lecture

Professor Philip Payton

From Launceston to Launceston – perspectives on the Cornish in Australia

Friday 14 March 2014 – 8.00pm at the Sir Raymond Ferrall Centre, UTAS at Newnham.

Philip Payton (Retired Professor of Cornish and Australian Studies, University of Exeter, UK) will present the 2014 *The Examiner*-John West Memorial Lecture this year.

Prof. Payton will be a Visiting Scholar at UTAS during March 2014. He has retired recently after having made an enormous contribution to studying historical connections between Cornwall and Australia. He is a Royal Navy officer and a Fellow of both the Royal Historical Society and the Royal Society of Arts. He is also President of the British-Australian Studies Association.

His numerous publications include:

'Australia will be there!' Australia and the First World War (forthcoming);

The Cornish Miner in Australia (1984);

The Cornish Farmer in Australia (1987);

The Cornish Overseas: A History of Cornwall's Great Emigration (2005);

AL Rowse and Cornwall: A Paradoxical Patriot (2007);

Making Moonta: The Invention of 'Australia's Little Cornwall' (2007);

DH Lawrence and Cornwall (2009);

John Betjeman and Cornwall: 'The Celebrated Cornish Nationalist' (2010);

Regional Australia and the Great War: 'The Boys from Old Kio' (2012).

This Memorial Lecture will be followed by a one-day conference at the same venue on Saturday 15 March – '**Tasmania, Australia and Cornwall: Historical Connections**' with papers presented by Professor Alexandra Walsham (University of Cambridge); Professor Mark Stoye (University of Southampton); Professor Matthew Spriggs (Australian National University); Professor Pam Sharpe (University of Tasmania); Dr Nic Haygarth (Heritage Tasmania); Dr Tim Jetson (University of Tasmania); Dr Keir Reeves (Monash University); and Dr Charles Fahey (La Trobe University).

For further details please contact Professor Pam Sharpe, School of Humanities, University of Tasmania pam.sharpe@utas.edu.au

Members' Column

New Members: The President and Executive welcome to our Society the following new members: Jennie Bales, Diana and Andrew Cameron, John Heathcote, Don Morris, Anne Neale and Carol Ralph. Corporate member: Launceston City Council.

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

Vale Don Barker (1939-2013) The Launceston Historical Society committee and members were saddened to hear of the sudden death of our valued member Don Barker who passed away on 23 September 2013. Don loved delving into history and joined the LHS committee in October 2012.

Recent publications by members:

Gill Morris, *His record is on high: The journal of Reverend William Henry Browne, LLD, of St John's Church, Launceston, VDL 23 May 1830 – 19 February 1845.*

John Paull, *Not just an anaesthetist: The remarkable life of Dr William Russ Pugh MD.*

Paul A C Richards, *Isotopes, Imaging and Identity: A History of Nuclear Medicine in Australia and New Zealand.* Copies can be purchased from: secretariat@anzsnm.org.au

Garry Richardson, *Tin mountain.*

History Prize Presentation 2013

Fifty-six entries were submitted from Riverside and Mowbray Heights Primary Schools and Scotch Oakburn Junior School for the LHS History Prize for 2013. Each entrant received a certificate, and eleven book vouchers were awarded to those judged the best by Carol Fuller and Robyn Jones. The award ceremony was held at the Town Hall on 20 November, with the Mayor Albert van Zetten handing out the prizes. Thank you to Carol for organising the award and Jenny Gill for printing the certificates.



The Mayor Albert van Zetten with students from Riverside and Mowbray Heights Primary Schools at the History Prize presentation at the Town Hall.

History Prize Winners 2013

Grade 4

All the grade 4 entries were from the Riverside Primary School:

Encouragement: **Jor-Ja Swan**
Highly Commended: **Alexandria Hansen**
First Prize: **Lakshana Sankaramoorthy**

Grade 5

Highly Commended: **Grace Maher** from Mowbray Heights Primary
Highly Commended: **Lucy Rivers** from Scotch Oakburn
First Prize: **Olivia Fletcher** from Riverside Primary.

Grade 6

All the grade 6 entries were from the Mowbray Heights Primary School:

Encouragement: **Harry Johns**
Highly Commended: **Jack Barrett**
Laura Brown
Amethyst Pennicott-Murray.
First Prize: **Shaynique Scott.**

The Senior Secondary Ratcliff Prize for History was awarded to six students, one each from Launceston College, Newstead College, Scotch Oakburn College, Launceston Church Grammar School, St Patrick's College and the Launceston Christian School. Each award of \$100.00 is given to a student selected by the school.

Library Book Fair

Launceston's biggest and best second hand book sale will be held at St Ailbe's Hall, Margaret Street, on Saturday 1 March 2014 from 9.00am to 1.00pm. Organised by the Friends of the Library.

Advance Notice of LHS Activities for 2014

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

- 20 April** **Australian Heritage Week – Jenny Gill, *Launceston Hospitals*.**
- 18 May** **National Trust Heritage Month – LHS Committee (walking tour), *Monuments and Monkeys: A walk in Historic City Park***
- 15 June** **Pugh Day – Dr Chris Ball, *Cobras, chloroform and consumption – the life and times of Joseph T Clover***
- 20 July** **Roger Kellaway, *Third Basin Gold Rush***
- 17 August** **Hamish Maxwell-Stewart, *Imprisonment and the Family***
- 21 September** **Oral History Seminar –
Prof Michael Bennett, UTAS, *Smallpox Epidemics*
Peter Henning, *WWII Nurses*
Tom Gunn and Anne Green, *Writing the History of St Giles***
- 19 October** **Nick Clements, *Frightened to Death: Colonists' Experience of Aboriginal Violence in Tasmania*.**
- 16 November** **Steve Radford, Shipping topic**

Other Items and Events of Interest

George Town & District Historical Society: Meetings are held at *The Grove*. 20 January 2014, BBQ evening at The Boat House, Low Head Pilot Station, Zanette Crowden, *Low Head Fog Horn*; 17 February 2014, Hillwood evening with the Hillwood Garden Club; 17 March 2014, Pipers River evening, Robert Colgrave and others, *Sawmilling in the Pipers River District*. Email: info@qtdhs.com. Web: www.qtdhs.com.

Tasmanian Historical Research Association: Meetings take place in the Royal Society Room, Custom House, TMAG, Hobart, starting at 8.00pm. 11 February 2014, Margaret Hicks, *Lady Ships and whaling wives: American and Australian women in the whaling industry, 1825-75*; 11 March 2014, Michael Bennett, *The life and opinions of William Bugby, c1852-1928*; 8 April 2014, Gillian Ward, *Olive Pink as an artist*.

LAUNCESTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

President	Marion Sargent	6331 4890
Vice-President	Catherine Pearce	
Minute Secretary	Catherine Pearce	
Correspondence Secretary	Robyn Jones	6331 2213
Treasurer	Leonie Prevost	6391 5511
Newsletter Editor & Publicity	Marion Sargent	6331 4890
Speaker Coordinator	Robyn Jones	6331 2213

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Deadline

Items for the next Newsletter should be sent to the Editor by **1 Mar 2014** at marionsargent@bigpond.com or PO Box 1296 LAUNCESTON TAS 7250.