

Launceston Historical Society Inc.

Newsletter No 146

October 2014

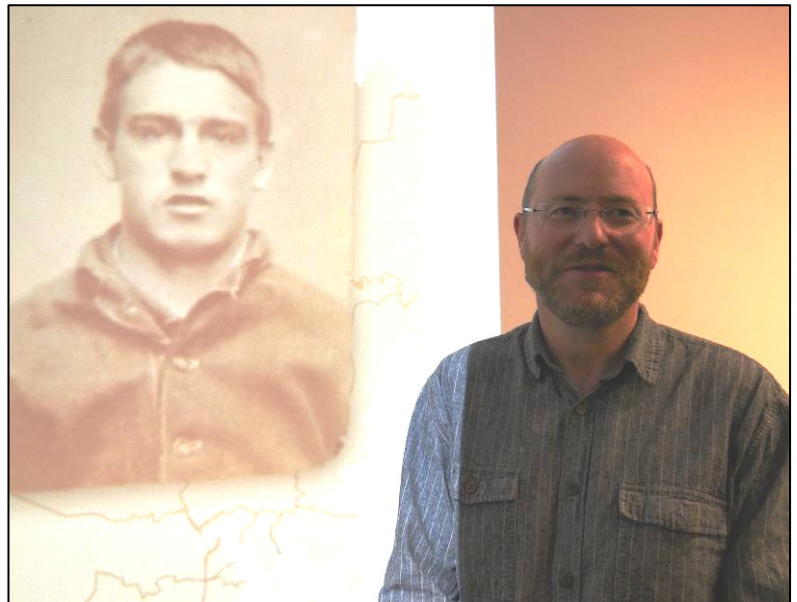
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PO BOX 1296 LAUNCESTON TAS 7250

"Bringing together people with an interest in history"

Imprisonment and the Family

On 17 August 2014 Dr Hamish Maxwell-Stewart presented an interesting paper on the effects of imprisonment on nineteenth-century families. Seth Marley of Inveresk was a prime example of how a disadvantaged family lived a difficult life. Both his parents were convicts, and family members were frequently in the courts, sometimes for minor crimes such as stealing apples. Convict records provide researchers with a vast amount of data that is being used to evaluate the impact of environmental and genetic influences on the descendants of convicts. Apparently Launceston had the shortest population in Tasmania!



Dr Hamish Maxwell-Stewart with a portrait of Seth Marley.



Anne Green and Tom Gunn who spoke on writing the history of St Giles. Photos: M Sargent

History Seminar

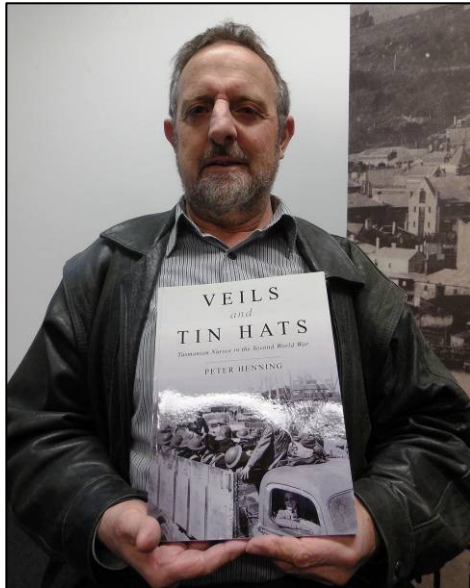
The History Seminar held on the 21 September 2014 in conjunction with the Oral History Association was a resounding success.

The first speaker was Peter Henning whose research stemmed from the "Singapore Teddy" his mother Mollie brought back from World War Two. While the nurses went about their duties caring for sick and injured soldiers they were largely invisible and on their return home rarely spoke of their experiences. Peter's mother said that she had three separate lives: when she was young; as an army nurse; and after the war.

History Seminar (continued from page 1)

Anne Green presented a paper on the origins of St Giles. The organisation was established as a result of the Polio epidemic which spread throughout Tasmania. The first case was reported in *The Examiner* on 8 November 1937. From February to May 1938 a fundraising campaign with the slogan “It might have been your child” raised £10,000. A house purchased in Amy Road formed the nucleus of today’s complex. Tom Gunn told us the stories of several people who spent time at St Giles and Self Help. As one mother said, “I would never have managed without them”.

The final speaker for the day was Alis Wood who entertained us with stories and audio segments of Jessie Luckman who died in May this year aged 104. Jessie was talented and active in many spheres; especially as a pianist, bushwalker and political activist. The QVMAG has on display a Luck-Hook made by Jessie’s husband Leo. Mary Hoggett was the winner of a box of chocolates in the lucky draw after she found and correctly named the item – a piece of wire used to remove billies from the fire.



Peter Henning spoke on WW2 nurses.



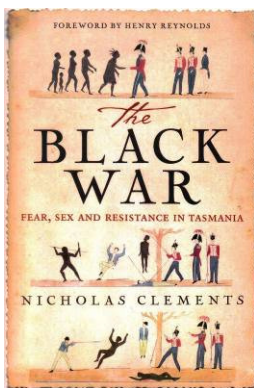
Alis Wood presented a paper and audio segments of Jessie Luckman.

October Talk

Dr Nicholas Clements,

Frightened to Death: Colonists' Experience of Aboriginal Violence in Tasmania

Sunday 19 October 2014 – 2.00pm at the Meeting Room, QVMAG Museum at Inveresk



Abstract

British colonists treated Tasmanian Aborigines abominably during the early decades of the nineteenth century. However, this has often led to their portrayal as the helpless victims of ruthless, even genocidal colonists. But colonists were victims too. Moreover, it is only by dispassionately interrogating colonists' experiences of Aboriginal violence that we can begin to understand what precipitated this tragedy. This paper focuses on colonists' fears and the ways they responded to them. It argues that fear – fear of financial ruin, fear for the safety of others, and fear for one's own safety – dominated the wartime experiences of frontier colonists. It will also demonstrate the influence of fear on colonists' attitudes and behaviours. This paper covers new ground, revealing the potent anxieties of the colonisers, and the deep psychological impact of Aboriginal resistance.

Biography

Dr Nicholas Clements is an honorary research associate in the School of Humanities at the University of Tasmania. Born in rural Tasmania in 1982, he now lives in Launceston. Nick is an avid rock climber and bushwalker whose passion for Tasmania's landscape and history inspired him to write *The Black War*.

November Christmas Celebration

Talk, Book Launch and Mini Book Fair

Steve Radford, *History of Telecommunications*

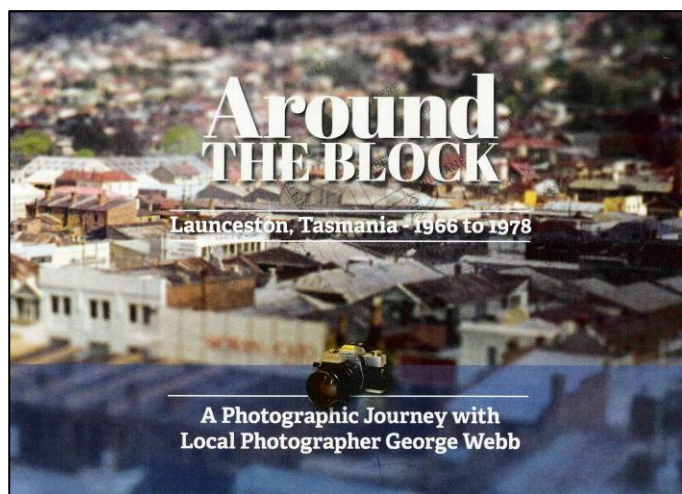
Sunday 16 November 2014 – 2.00pm at the Meeting Room, QVMAG Museum at Inveresk

Abstract

Steve's talk will start with the manual telegraph, followed by a brief outline of the discovery of electricity and subsequent development of the electric telegraph. Next he will comment on the rollout of telegraphy across the world and nationally with the overland telegraph line and also developments in Tasmania. Bell's invention of the telephone in 1877 allowed for speech to be transmitted along wires. Within 30 years the further discovery of radio waves and invention of electronic devices began the modern communications revolution. Development of telephone services in Australia, and especially in Tasmania, will be discussed in some detail up the mid 1990s when the fibre optic cable came ashore on the north coast and the Internet was in its infancy.

Biography

Steve began his working life as a Technician-in-Training with the PMG Department in Hobart in 1963. After one year at the training school he went out on field training for the next four years. During that time he worked at television and radio broadcast transmitters, microwave broadband sites and for a substantial period at the trunk line exchange located in the Launceston Post Office building. After graduation he was transferred to Flinders Island and worked on radio, telephone (exchange and subscriber) and teleprinter equipment. In 1972 he transferred to the Department of Civil Aviation as a Flight Service Officer, involved in communications with aircraft and associated ground stations for the next twenty two years across Australia.



Book Launch of *Around the Block: Launceston, Tasmania – 1966 to 1978*

After Steve's talk a new book is to be launched showcasing 94 colour photographs of central Launceston. Edited by Ann Power, they are from the collection of slides by her father George Webb (1916-1999) held at Launceston LINC (LPIC 33).

Priced at \$25.00 each, on Sunday 16 November only, a special offer of two for \$45.00 will be available. A limited edition of red leather-bound books for \$60.00 can be pre-ordered before 27 October by email: prossergreen@vision.net.au.

Christmas Mini Book Fair

LHS authors who have published a book are invited to bring copies to sell at the LHS Christmas mini book fair. Cash and cheque sales only. Authors must be self-sufficient with change, receipts, bags etc. Authors who plan to bring books to sell should RSVP to Gus Green or Catherine Pearce.

Book sales will start at 1.30 and continue after the launch. And enjoy Christmas fare for afternoon tea!

Velocipedes

The Mercury 29 June 1869, page 2

On Thursday next a velocipede race is to come off in Melbourne, the prospect of which is causing a great sensation. The mania is beginning to extend itself to Tasmania, and already we hear of bicycles having been ordered, which will probably arrive by the next trip of the *Southern Cross*. A photograph of these machines on the Victorian principle, can be seen, by those interested, at our office.

Members' Column

New Members: The President and Executive welcome to our Society the following new members: Dave Bright and Andrew Woodgate.

Springfield Excursion Reminder: Due to cancellations, four seats are available for the day trip to Springfield at \$20.00 each. The bus leaves the RSL car park, Eardley Street, at 9.30am on Sunday 26 October. Please let me know if you would like to join us: marionsargent@bigpond.com or 6331 4890.

Recent Publication by Members:

Julian Burgess, *William Gow's ANZAC Diary*.

Nic Haygarth and Simon Cubit, *Historic Tasmanian Mountain Huts: Through the Photographer's Lens*.

John Paull, "Dr Pugh and the myth of the illicit still", in *Anaesthesia and Intensive Care: History Supplement*, Vol. 41, July 2014, pp 41-44.

Monuments & Monkeys: A Walk in Historic City Park

Children's Jubilee Fountain

By Catherine Pearce



Until 1908 there was a bandstand on this site. The long bench above dates from this time; it was seating for the audience. In 1910 William McGowan had the fountain moved to this spot from just outside the main gates where he thought it could be "*seen to much greater advantage*". It is also much more convenient for thirsty park visitors. Originally it boasted four bronze drinking cups – it now has 2 chrome spouts.

In the late 19th Century the people of Launceston were great patriots, so Queen Victoria's Jubilees were very important events. This fountain is the children's official tribute to their Queen.

The idea had its origins in the celebration of Victoria's **Golden Jubilee** (1887). After feeding more than 6,000 children on cake and presenting them with medals there was still a little bit of money in the Juvenile Festival Fund. Alderman Sutton thought it would be a good idea to put it towards a grand children's project. This ornate fountain, costing £200, was ordered from Scotland. It arrived in Launceston in 1891 – and went straight to the Government Bond Store!

Children's Jubilee Fountain, Ebenezer Cumings, c.1890s. QVM1991_P_0551

Here it stayed – in limbo – or as *The Launceston Examiner* put it "up the spout" for years (2 Feb 1897 p.6). It was felt the fountain should not be erected until it was paid off –and that it was the duty of the children to make a contribution. But what could they do? In 1894 notification was given that the fountain would be sold unless customs charges were paid (*Examiner*, 25 Sep 1894 p.4 & 19 Oct 1894 p.7).

In 1897 Sutton came up with another idea – he proposed that a grand expose, the Tasmanian Juvenile Industrial Exhibition, be held that summer – the proceeds to go towards the fountain (*Examiner*, 2 Feb 1897, p.6). This thought was well received, and on 20 June 1897, almost 10 years after it was first thought of, the fountain was paid off and installed outside the main gates of City Park – just in time for Queen Victoria's **Diamond Jubilee**! To quote *The Launceston Examiner* on 8 Aug 1896 p.7: "A handsome monument of the Queen's Jubilee, nearly lost, but nobly rescued". It was lucky Victoria had – and still has had – the longest reign of any Monarch – more than 63 years!

Animals in the Park

by Marion Sargent

The first animals in the park were introduced by the Launceston Horticultural Society in January 1850 when a centrally located enclosure was erected for emus and kangaroos.

There were no animals in the park when it was handed over to the City Council in 1863.

A duck pond was constructed in that year and bird aviaries were built 10 years later.

Around 1879 Alderman Henry Button re-established a collection of native mammals and birds for the 'instruction and amusement' of the citizens. It was known by his opponents as 'Button's Menagerie'.

William McGowan, the Superintendent, traded Tasmanian tigers for exotic animals, which were more popular with the public. There was a total of at least 46 *thylacines* in this park between 1885 and 1913.

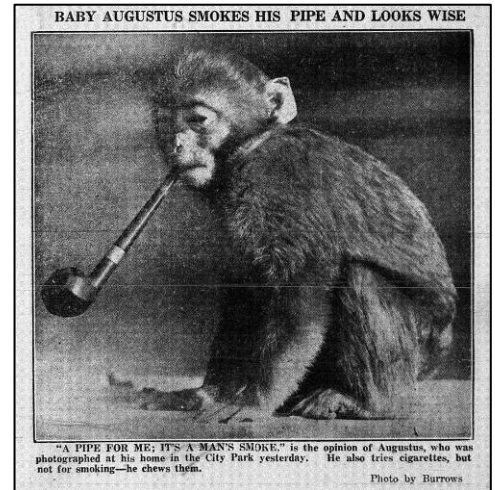
By 1919 most of the animals were either allowed to die out or were relocated interstate. Anonymous letters to the newspapers called for the ending of caged animals in the zoo. The smell, loneliness and cruelty of being confined in small cages upset animal lovers.

Monkeys were some of the most popular attractions at the zoo. However, in 1903 Jacko the African Monkey escaped through the roof of his cage and nearly attacked a woman and two children. They were saved by Mr Darcy, a visitor from Queensland, who grappled with the monkey until the zoo keepers arrived.

In 1931 Jack and Jill became the proud parents of baby Augustus, the first rhesus monkey to be born in the zoo. He was a great favourite with the children as they watched him swinging on his trapeze – and smoking a pipe! Later, he became bad tempered and was sent to the mainland.

The sole remaining rhesus monkey died in 1979. In 1980 ten macaque monkeys arrived from Japan and were housed in the first Monkey Island. The new monkey enclosure was developed in 2002.

The wallabies were removed from their enclosure in 1993.



Augustus, *The Examiner* 8 July 1932

Advance Notice of LHS Activities for 2015

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

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|--------------------------|---|
| 15 February | AGM + Tom Dunning, <i>The Virtues of Local History: the case for Launceston</i> |
| 13 March (Friday) | <i>The Examiner</i>-John West Memorial Lecture, Julian Burnside AO QC.
To be held at the Sir Raymond Ferrall Centre, UTAS, Newnham at 8.00pm. |
| 19 April | Julian Burgess, <i>Private William Gow's War Diary</i> (Australian Heritage Week) |
| 17 May | Walk or Excursion? (National Trust Tasmanian Heritage Festival) |
| 21 June | Pugh Day, Dr Rod Westhorpe |
| 19 July | John Paull, <i>Count Strzelecki in VDL 1840-42</i> |
| 16 August | John Shepherd, <i>Max Oldaker Walk</i> |
| 20 September | Nic Haygarth, <i>Historic Tasmanian Bushmen</i> |
| 18 October | John Watts, <i>Low Head Leading Lights</i> |
| 15 November | Anne Neale, <i>Horace Bennett, Architect of the Launceston Town Hall</i> |

Velocipede Practice

Cornwall Chronicle 14 August 1869, page 3

On Saturday afternoon the streets being unusually clear of vehicles, three or four amateurs practiced on tricycle velocipedes hired from Mr Ackerman's repository; and Mr George Easter on rather a rakish looking bicycle. Of course it was not of the species referred to by Hans Breitman as "the one that hadn't got no wheel before, and hadn't one behind." The bicycle had both, and the rider made them go at a rattling pace, even up the rise in St. John-street opposite the Town Hall. We have not heard of any accidents or mishaps having occurred to the adventurous amateurs.

Other Items and Events of Interest

Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery: *William Buelow Gould: The Macquarie Harbour Botanical Drawings: September – December 1832* exhibition from 1 November 2014 to 1 March 2015 at Gallery 8, Royal Park.

National Book Council: Guest speaker for the August meeting is Lucille Gee, author of *Relbia: Yesterday and Today*. Wednesday, 15 October 2014, 1.15pm Phil Leonard Room, Launceston LINC, Civic Square.

George Town & District Historical Society: Meeting to be held at *The Grove*: 20 October 2014, AGM + Debbie Rainbow, *David Chaplin Fund*. Biennial Conference to be held at York Cove Centre, Sorell Street, Sunday 9 November 2014, *World War 1 – Tasmanian Stories*, 9.00am – 4.00pm, \$35.00. 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: 14 October 2014, Scott Carlin, *House museums as public history*; 11 November 2014, John Short, *Travelling back into the history of the Bank Arcade site in Hobart's Liverpool Street*; 9 December 2014, Chris Leppard, *Sex sells: the anachronism of colonial prostitution*.

LINC Tasmania: *Tasmanian Names Index*. For the first time a variety of Tasmanian records can be found online from one search entry. Just enter a name in the search field and births, deaths, marriages, divorces, inquests, arrivals, departures, convicts, census, naturalisations, wills and a range of other digitized records will appear: http://linctas.ent.sirsidynix.net.au/client/en_AU/names

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Deadline

Items for the next Newsletter should be sent to the Editor by **1 Feb 2015** at marionsargent@bigpond.com or PO Box 1296 LAUNCESTON TAS 7250.