

Launceston Historical Society Inc.

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PO BOX 1296 LAUNCESTON TAS 7250

Bringing together people since 1988 with an interest in history

Private William Gow

On 12 April 2015 Julian Burgess gave a talk on his book *William Gow's Anzac Diary: Serving with the 3rd Field Ambulance at Gallipoli*. Born in 1893, William Edwin By was orphaned at three years of age and adopted by his aunt and uncle, William and Elizabeth Gow of Trevallyn. A member of a militia unit in Devonport, 21-year-old Bill Gow volunteered for military service in Europe on 20 August 1914. It was a matter of pride for the nation and Empire that so many young men rushed to join what they thought would be the adventure of a lifetime. Two months later he was on the *Geelong* sailing towards Egypt and the horrors of the Gallipoli campaign. Gow tended the sick and wounded until he contracted typhoid. Evacuated to Egypt in late October 1915, he arrived back in Australia in February 1916. As an accountant Bill Gow was involved in many organisations after the war, most significantly Launceston Legacy. Proceeds from book sales are going to this organisation to help them continue their work looking after veterans' families. Our member Keith Adkins can be justly proud of his grandfather.



Speaker Julian Burgess.
Photo: Marion Sargent



Catherine Pearce and Anne Neale.
Photo: Georgia Fountoulaki

Prince's Square to the War Memorial

On 17 May 2015 cultural historian Dr Anne Neale, as part of the National Trust Heritage Festival, presented a virtual walk along Charles Street, from Prince's Square to the Cenotaph in Royal Park. In a great visual setting Anne explored the themes of conflict and compassion in Launceston, which were up-folded through the historic past of the buildings and monuments, whether existing or not. Dr Neale's specialization in architectural history attracted people's attention and intrigued their interest by providing information on both the construction of the buildings and the particular issues raised around them. The display of a well-organized and precious visual material, especially where buildings have been demolished, sharpened this comparison. The audience had the chance to hear about Anne's latest attempt to put Launceston on the international map, being the author of a chapter entitled 'International Exhibitions and Urban Aspirations: Launceston, Tasmania in the 19th Century', which will feature in the forthcoming book *Cultures of International Exhibitions 1840-1940: Great Exhibitions in the Margins*.
By Georgia Fountoulaki.



Pictured at the Pugh Day Lecture, from the left, are Dan Huon, Dr John Paull, guest speaker Dr Rod Westhorpe and Dr Lachlan Doughty. Photo: Marion Sargent.

Pugh Day Lecture: From etheriser to anaesthetist

On Sunday, 21 June 2015 Dr Rod Westhorpe delivered the fourth successful Pugh Day Lecture. About 80 people enjoyed hearing about the development of anaesthetics from the first use of ether in 1846 through to the highly specialised profession it is today. On 7 June 1847 Dr William Russ Pugh was the first medical practitioner to use ether on patients at St John's Hospital in Launceston. Pain management has come a long way since then. See *The Examiner*, 22 June 2015, page 7, for a report on the lecture, 'When surgery crossed the pain barrier'.

July Talk

John Paull: *Count Strzelecki: World Traveller and Amazing Explorer of Van Diemen's Land, 1840-1842*

Sunday 19 July 2015 – 2.00pm at the Meeting Room, QVMAG at Inveresk

Born in 1797 in Poland, Strzelecki's early life is somewhat mysterious. What we do know is that he left Poland for London in 1825. He left London in 1834, crossed the Atlantic, visited North and South America, crossed the Pacific and arrived in NSW in 1839. Governor Gipps commissioned him to explore the Eastern parts of NSW from Sydney to Wilson's Promontory, assessing agricultural and mineral resources on the way, and then to proceed to VDL with the same objective.

He arrived in Launceston on 24 July 1840 and with Franklin's enthusiastic support began his trek of some 2,000 miles (3,200 km) around VDL. When in Launceston he stayed in the Governor's cottage and at Dr Pugh's home. He surveyed and measured the elevations of a large number of lakes, rivers and farming properties, with a view to advising the government to improve the productivity of VDL by introducing irrigation schemes.

He and Pugh performed complex analyses of coal samples in Pugh's chemical laboratory, at the rear of Pugh's house.

After his departure for Sydney in September 1842 the citizens raised a fund of £500 to support the publication of Strzelecki's report of his findings in 1845. Franklin personally contributed £100. Whilst more than 20 geographical features on the mainland and in Tasmania bear Strzelecki's name, and there are some ten memorials to his passage through Gipps' Land no plaque or statue commemorates his remarkable and productive sojourn in VDL.

Dr John Paull, a retired anaesthetist, is the author of *Not just an Anaesthetist: The remarkable life of Dr William Russ Pugh MD*.

August Presentation (DVD)

John Shepherd: *A Tourist's Walk with Max Oldaker through Central Launceston*

Sunday 16 August 2015 – 2.00pm at the Meeting Room, QVMAG at Inveresk

Take a walk through central Launceston in the early 1970s with the singer, actor and matinée idol Max Oldaker (1907-1972). The photographs on the DVD have been compiled by John Shepherd from the Northern Tasmanian Camera Club, Launceston LINC, QVMAG and John's personal collection. He joined the NTCC in 1960. The words were read by Ray Sangston, local actor and former announcer on ABC radio.

Members' column

New members:

The President and Executive welcome to our Society the following new members: Graham Baird, Betty and Muriel Bissett, Helen Connor, Mevlut Kilinc, Karin Le, Estelle Ross, Helen Stuart, Anita Swan and Irene Taylor.

Archaeology Group: Email enquiries to John Dent: john.dent@pda.com.au.

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.

- 20 September** **Nic Haygarth**, *Historic Tasmanian Bushmen*
- 18 October** **John Watts**, *Low Head Leading Lights*
- 15 November** **Anne Neale**, *Horace Bennett, Architect of the Launceston Town Hall*
- Book launch:** *Duck Reach and the electric light, Launceston*, Original TCAE thesis by Mark Kozakiewicz, book version edited by Julian Burgess
- Marion Sargent**, *Charles St John David, Launceston City Engineer*
- 29 November** **Excursion to Devonport**, Visit the Bass Strait Maritime Centre and Home Hill.

Oral History Tasmania: Seminar

10.30am – 3.30pm, Saturday **26 September 2015**, Meeting room, Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, Inveresk

Dr Thomas Gunn, *Reel or real? Writing the history of the Launceston Film Society*

Dr Terry Whitebeach, *From Loa to Launceston & from Kenya to Kingston: An Oral History Project with South Sudanese Refugees (Tasmania 2011–2014)*

Jai Paterson, *Launceston's Gasworks site, or oral history without recordings*

Cost \$25. Enquiries: president@oralhistorytas.org.au or phone Jill on 0418 178 098

From the Past

***The Examiner*, Tuesday, 23 October 1928, page 4:**

NOT A PENAL RELIC.

Sir, - With reference to the par in your issue of Wednesday, 17th, "Relic of Penal Days," I do not think the foundations found by the council's workmen on the Sandhill were the remains of a sentry-box, but undoubtedly they were the remains of the first toll-gate house. On August 14, 1846, an act was passed authorising the erection of toll gates on the Hobart Town-road, and fixing the scale of charges, which were, briefly, as under: - For every horse, mare. etc., 4d; mule, ass, cattle, 2d; sheep, per score, 4d; ditto, less than a score per head, 1/4d; swine, per score, 4d; ditto, less than a score per head, 1/4d; two-wheel cart, drawn by one horse, 8d; ditto drawn by two horses, 1s; four-wheel cart, up to four horses, 1s; ditto, more than four horses, 1s 10d. The first toll-gate was erected near the boundary of the town in 1848.

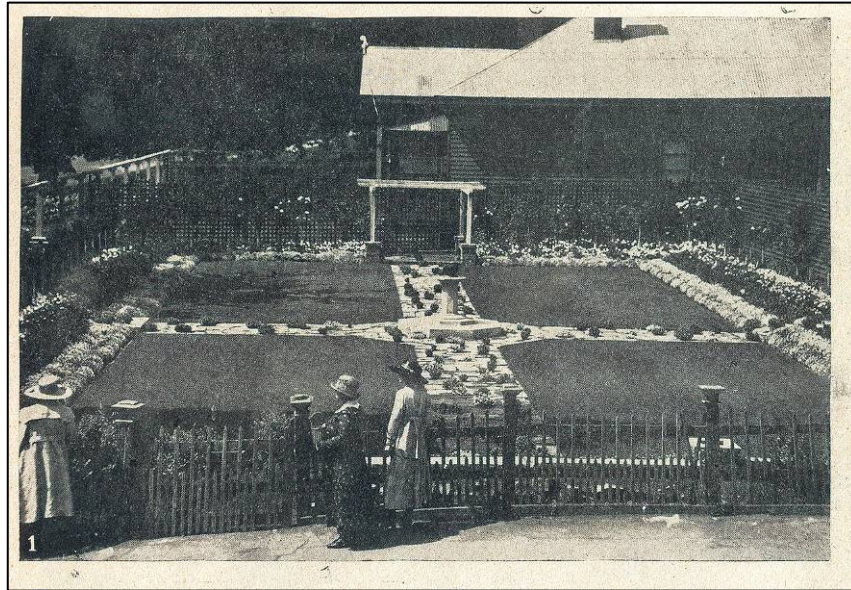
In the "Hobart Town Gazette" of April 22, 1851, there is a notice that it was to be removed from the boundary of Launceston, one mile and fifty-seven chains further out, to near the Sir George Arthur Inn. It is generally known that the toll-gate was at King's Meadows, somewhere about where Quigley's store is now. The Sir George Arthur Inn stood on a bank on the town side of it. The measurements given in the "Gazette" will be approximately the distance from where the old foundation was unearthed last week.

The first two toll gates erected in Tasmania were both on the Hobart Town-road – one near the boundary of Launceston and the other near the boundary of Hobart Town (about New Town). Not long after that a number were erected in different parts of the country, and the road trusts erected a number. There were also toll gates on several of the bridges. The one on the Cataract Bridge was the last one in Tasmania. - Yours, etc. E. J. SIDEBOTTOM

Monuments & Monkeys: a walk in historic City Park

The Dutch Garden

By Sue McClarron



The Dutch Garden on the site of the old chapel, as laid out by William McGowan. Photo: *Weekly Courier*, 16 February 1922, p. 19

After the Tamar Independent Chapel was demolished, work was carried out over 1921-22 to establish the Dutch Garden. This garden was the idea of William McGowan senior, Superintendent of Public Reserves. The style of garden known as a 'Dutch Garden' was popular in the early 20th century in professional gardening circles. The term had been coined earlier in England and the idea came from gardens in Holland that were of necessity small and densely planted due to lack of space. The 'Dutch Garden' was a rectangular enclosed small garden, densely planted with brightly coloured flowers. It had a geometric design within it and was often, as in this case, a garden within a garden. McGowan claimed that this was the first Dutch Garden in Australia. Like the Dutch Garden at Hampton Court, it has a symmetrical cross shape, crazy paving and raised beds and fencing to give the effect of a sunken garden. It closely resembles the Dutch Garden in Hampton Court in other respects and it's almost certain that McGowan followed the Hampton Court example in his design.

The Dutch Garden in City Park has undergone several changes since it was established. In 1946 an entrance was put in directly off Tamar Street.¹ The Grecian-style urn was originally in the Pioneers Garden, or Garden of Remembrance, which no longer exists. The urn was installed in City Park in 1958 and is said to have been made by Henry Reed of Mt Pleasant. It was donated to the Launceston City Council by the Holyman family. It is made of concrete and weighs more than a ton. The Pioneers plaque on the northern side of the Dutch Garden was also originally in the Pioneers Garden. The Senses Garden was set up in its place in 1979, so the Pioneers plaque was probably moved about this time.²

The marble headstone was originally over Rev. Price's grave in the Launceston General Cemetery in Charles Street. A letter to the editor of *The Examiner* on 25 February 1943 raised concerns about the condition of many graves including that of Rev. Price. The General Cemetery was closed and work was begun in 1946 to convert it to Ockerby Gardens, so it is most likely that the gravestone was moved to City Park about this time.

The Dutch Garden has high heritage significance "because it is possibly the earliest 'character' garden of its type to be found in a public park in Australia and it still retains much of its original concept and fabric".³

¹ Memo from Parks Superintendent Frank Dowse, QVMAG: LCC2. Reserves – City Park 43.3 1946-50.

² Launceston City Park Management Plan, vol.1 p. 39.

³ Launceston City Park Management Plan, vol. 1, Knaggs, Sheridan, Austral Archaeology & Skeggs, p.52.

Monuments & Monkeys: a walk in historic City Park

The Design Centre

By Georgia Fountoulaki



The Design Centre Tasmania, April 2015. Photo: Marion Sargent

In 1976 the Tasmanian Wood Design Centre, a new retail craft and design gallery, was opened by Gary and Pat Cleveland in Tamar Street. The original aim of the Centre was to stimulate a growing cottage industry of high quality craft and design produced by Tasmanians. At first the Centre had to supplement its stock with art supplies and materials from interstate; however, soon it developed a policy of stocking only Tasmanian items.

In the late 1980s Gary Cleveland worked with Andy Skuja, then Commissioner for Forests in Tasmania, to develop a new and exciting idea: the Tasmanian Wood Design Collection which was the first Australian museum collection of contemporary wood design. Finally, in 1991, the Tasmanian Wood Design Collection was formed as an independent not-for-profit organisation.¹ A series of open-entry biennial exhibitions of wood design were held and all Tasmanian designers and crafts practitioners working with timber were encouraged to enter. A panel of judges selected the best pieces to acquire for the new museum.

In 2002 new galleries were added to the renamed Design Centre, designed by David Travalia with consultative assistance from Sydney architect Rick Leplastier. The Design Centre retail gallery was converted into a not-for-profit trust in 2002. Proceeds from the Trust are directed towards the upkeep of the Museum and Temporary Exhibitions Program. In 2004 the extension was included in Phaidon's top 1000 contemporary buildings in the world.

The Design Centre, as a newly developed retail gallery, achieved a reputation for innovative and inspiring work. For many artists it provided the first portal through which their work could be viewed by and sold to the general public. Design Tasmania's vision is to sustain the wood design industry in Tasmania, to create an identity for Tasmania as a place of international significance and to inspire the world community with the potency of design.

¹ With Andy Skuja as its inaugural Chairman.

Other items and events of interest



The Friends of the Launceston Mechanics' Institute (FOLMI) have a new Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/launcestonmechanicsinstitute?ref=aymt_homepage_panel

Questions and comments are welcome.

Have a look at their blog as well at <http://launcestonmechanicsinstitute.blogspot.com.au/> for lots of information about the Mechanics' Institute, LMI books and library, the people connected to the Institute, and many more related topics. The above photo was taken in 1941.

George Town & District Historical Society: Meetings to be held at *The Grove*: 20 July 2015, **Joe and Janne Brown**, *Bonsai – History and Demonstration*; 17 August 2015, *Art and Craft in George Town*. 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: 14 July 2015, Eldershaw Lecture, Jacqueline Kent, *The pleasures and perils of writing biography* to be held at the Dechaineux Lecture Theatre, School of Art, Hunter Street, Hobart; 11 August 2015, Don Ranson, *The 1829 Mission of George Augustus Robinson and the other side of the frontier*; 8 September 2015, Members' Night: Michael Roe, *Cecil Malthus: academic Anzac, linking Tasmania and New Zealand* and Maree Ring, *Dr. Edward Swarbrook Hall: his family, their lives, achievements and Tasmanian legacy*.

Launceston Historical Society

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Deadline

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