



Launceston Historical Society Inc.

Newsletter No 150

September 2015

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PO BOX 1296 LAUNCESTON TAS 7250

Bringing together people since 1988 with an interest in history

'Count' Strzelecki

On 19 July 2015 Dr John Paull gave a fascinating talk on Sir Paul Edmund de Strzelecki, the international traveller and Van Diemen's Land explorer. In 1840-42 this extraordinarily talented man spent two years in VDL, walking 2,000 miles measuring, observing and analysing the landscape. In Launceston he initially stayed with Dr Pugh, using his laboratory to analyse coal and soil samples. He later stayed in Government Cottage in City Park.

An article was published in *The Examiner* on Monday, 20 July 2015, page 8: with the title 'Strzelecki achievements revealed'.



President Marion Sargent with speaker Dr John Paull.



Max Oldaker's house at 149 George Street, Launceston. Photo: M Sargent

Max Oldaker's tourist walk through central Launceston

On 16 August 2015 an enthusiastic crowd enjoyed watching a DVD of a walk through Launceston's central district written in the early 1970s. A collection of photographs compiled by John Shepherd illustrated Max Oldaker's words, ably narrated by Ray Sangston. The photographs covered a wide time period, and matched the places and people mentioned in the script. Sadly John Shepherd died on the day after our meeting.

The text for this walk is included in Max Oldaker's papers held at the Launceston LINC. By all accounts Max was quite a character. He came back to Tasmania in 1959 to care for his parents after a career as a matinée idol in England and on the mainland. He spent the last couple of years of his life renovating his home at 149 George Street. He was a neighbour of founding members of our society, Eric and Patricia Ratcliff; and the house is now owned by our committee member, Robyn Jones.

An article was published in *The Examiner* on Monday 17 August 2015, page 4, called 'City walk a step back in time'.

September Talk

Marion Sargent: *Old Cemeteries of Launceston*

Sunday 20 September 2015 – 2.00pm at the Meeting Room, QVMAG at Inveresk

At least 21 burial places have been identified in Launceston. Now only one remains in use – Carr Villa, which opened on 1 August 1905. The old cemeteries were supposed to have been closed for burials on 31 December 1905, but people were slow to use the new cemetery as it was so far out of town; it was more expensive and difficult to travel to. Family plots in the earlier burial grounds could be used for 20 years. The old cemeteries finally closed in December 1925. Ten early cemeteries will be covered in this talk. These were located in High, Cypress, Charles, Pedder and South streets, Connaught Crescent, Rose Lane, Vermont and Quarantine roads. Hardly any trace of these can be seen today.

Marion Sargent was born in Wynyard and raised in Devonport. She has also lived in Hobart, Burnie, Smithton, England, and since 1991, in Launceston. After starting a teaching degree, spending six years as a clerk with Telecom, and working as a nanny, Marion eventually returned to study. She has a Bachelor of Arts majoring in History and Geography from TSIT, and a Graduate Diploma in Librarianship from the University of Tasmania.

Now retired, Marion was a librarian for 26 years. She is President of the Launceston Historical Society and editor of the Society's *Newsletter*. Marion is a keen cyclist and conducts history rides.

Marion has historical articles published in *Tasmanian Ancestry*, *On the Tide*, *Launceston Family Album*, *The Tasmanian Exhibition 1891-92*, *Way Back When*, and *Effecting a Cure: Aspects of Health and Medicine in Launceston*. She has written stories on the history of cemeteries and cycling for the yet-to-be published *Fabric of Launceston*.

October Talk

John Watts: *Low Head Leading Lights*

Sunday 18 October 2015 – 2.00pm at the Meeting Room, QVMAG at Inveresk

Surveys and charting of the Tamar River commenced with Matthew Flinders in 1798 and have occurred at regular intervals since that time. The first leads with which vessels can align themselves were installed by John Lort Stokes of the HMS Beagle in 1842. These were replaced by unlit stone towers in 1849. The first lighted leads were the current She-Oak Point towers erected in 1882 and these are still in use. Some channel re-alignment resulted in two lit triangular leads erected at the south end of Lagoon Beach in 1964, and these are also still in use. The presentation describes these leads, some of the river surveys and some of the discussion that occurred at the time. It only deals with the area from the Tamar Heads to She-Oak Point.

John Watts was born at St Marys, raised in Deloraine, and worked for 38 years as a metallurgist (materials engineer) at Comalco's aluminium smelters at Bell Bay (1964-2001), but including a period at Tiwai Point in N.Z. (1971-78). The main roles were either technical in nature, or as a production superintendent, but also secondments to service, support and systems projects at Bell Bay, Melbourne and Brisbane.

Since gratefully accepting a voluntary redundancy in 2001, John and his wife Willemina, have spent considerable voluntary time working on a variety of projects with Parks and similar organisations, often in remote and challenging areas. They have also travelled widely in outback and remote Australia.

John is very involved with the Low Head Pilot Station Maritime Museum and is a member of the George Town & District Historical Society. He has also been engrossed with his own family history research.

Members' column

New members:

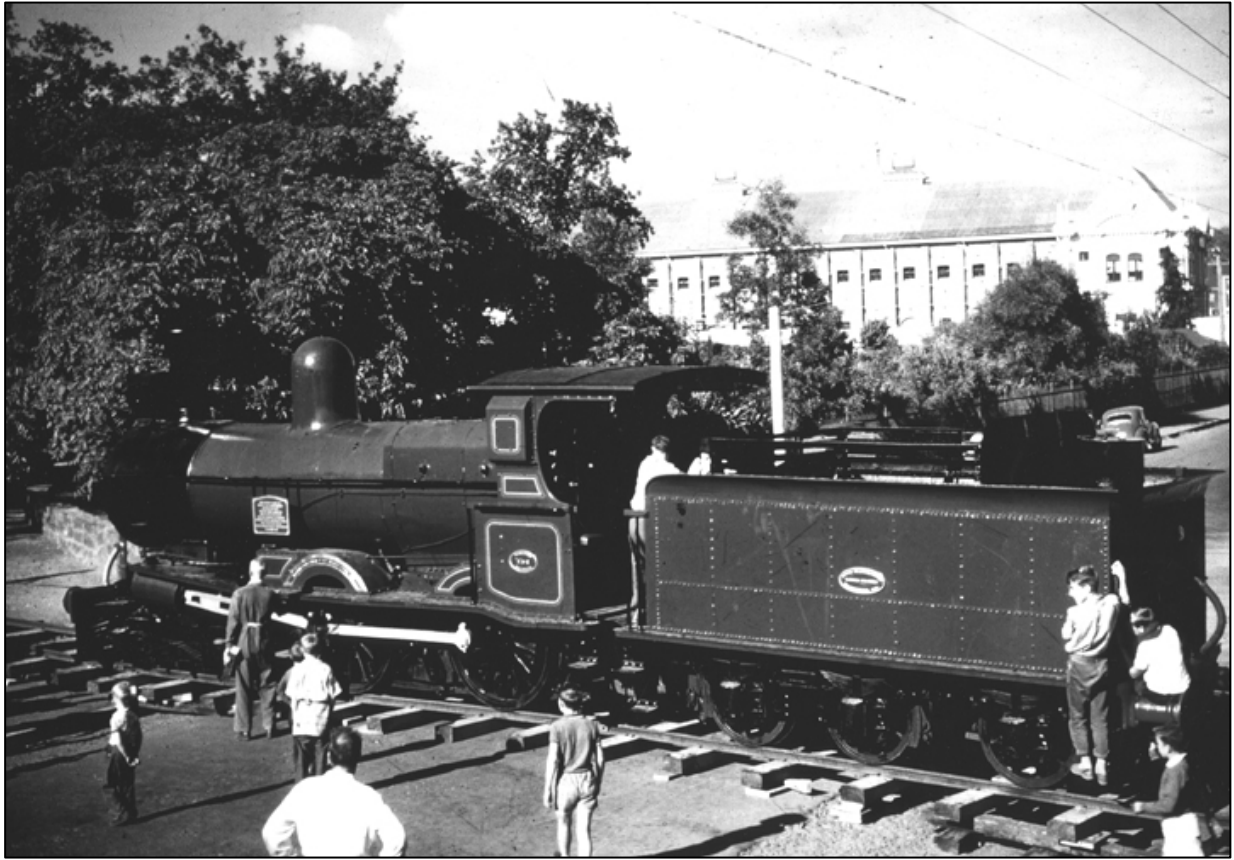
The President and Executive welcome to our Society the following new members: Deidre Arendt, Richard (Dick) James and George Meridew.

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

Monuments & Monkeys: a walk in historic City Park

Children's playground and trains

By Catherine Pearce



A4 locomotive being moved to City Park. Photo courtesy of QVMAG, QVM 1992_P_1408.

Even before there was a playground, this area was attractive to children. The *Launceston Examiner* of 18 January 1862 reported that two boys were had up before the Police Magistrate – for stealing plums from trees growing here in what was part of the old Government garden.

A playground, known as the John Hart Children's Playground was established in 1948. In 1960 it was redeveloped to incorporate A4 an old steam engine aka the Royal Train.

A4 was built in Scotland in 1891. The visit in 1920 of the Prince of Wales, later King Edward VIII, (who abdicated to marry Mrs Simpson) was her first Royal engagement. During 1927 the Duke of York, later King George VI, the Queen's father, was her second Royal passenger. In 1935 she carried out her third and final Royal Tour with the Duke of Gloucester.

The 1950s saw the end of the line for A4. Destined to be cut up and sold for scrap metal, she was rescued by the Launceston Rotary Club. She was repaired, painted dark green with red trim and one fine morning in February 1960 hauled from main line yard, across Cimitiere Street into City Park where she sat amongst the trees and flowers, just a stone's throw from the railway yards that had been her home for 30 years.

In 1990 A4 was removed by the Van Diemen Light Railway Society (now trading as Don River Railway) and taken to Don for restoration – which at the time was estimated to take 5 years. As of now, 24 years later, the engine is still at Don – dismantled and listed on the Railway's website as a "long-term restoration project". However the Royal Carriage that carried the Duke and Duchess of York, the Queen's parents, in 1927 has been fully restored – it's magnificent and you can see it at the Don.

The present train, 'Hutch' is a diesel shunter, named after Launceston identity and railway enthusiast Dr David Hutchinson, a volunteer at Don, who died suddenly in 1998 aged just 62.

Monuments & Monkeys: a walk in historic City Park

John Hart Conservatory

By Leonie Prevost



Interior of the John Hart Conservatory. Photo: Marion Sargent

There has been a long history of conservatories and pavilions in City Park. The Horticultural Society's first pavilion in 1841 took the form of a cross. It was extended in 1843 and replaced in 1873 by a pavilion designed by Peter Mills. Mills' structure was used as the main entry and fernery for the 1891-92 Tasmanian Exhibition, but in 1910 it had succumbed to senile decay and was removed.

In November 1860, a conservatory funded by the merchant Alexander McNaughton, was built containing over 500 plants, including some from McNaughton's own conservatory.

In 1931, it was decided that this conservatory should be replaced and in 1932 a new one was built at a cost of £2,000 using funds donated by the late Mr John Hart. The design was modelled on Melbourne's Fitzroy Gardens Conservatory but embraced many improvements including elegant cement decoration by local master craftsman W G Cumming. A plaque commemorates the bequest. It contained the following plants: tuberous rooted begonias; then cinerarias, calceolarias, schizanthus and hydrangeas; then back to begonias.

The Conservatory was extensively adapted in 1981 as a more permanent rainforest type display including a water feature, plant stands and a viewing platform. Gardeners reduced the number of annuals. In 1985 Dick and Freda Frelek donated a little golden boy fountain with donations in the pond below the fountain going to St Giles.

Much of the roof was replaced in 1990 and was repainted in 2011. The Conservatory is floodlit at night which creates a sense of drama when viewed through the large trees.

The John Hart Conservatory is of heritage significance as a fine example of an interwar classical building for a public garden.

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.

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*
Mini Book Fair: LHS authors who have published a book are invited to bring copies to sell at the Christmas mini book fair. Book sales will start at 1.30 and continue after the launch. RSVP please to marionsargent@bigpond.com.

29 November **Excursion to Devonport**, Visit the House of Anvers, Bass Strait Maritime Centre and Home Hill. For more information see the form on page 6.

Other items and events of interest

The Launceston Family Album website www.launcestonfamilyalbum.org.au has recently been updated. Extra information has been added for some entries and two have had their identities changed because of information coming in from people accessing the site. Searching has also been made more convenient. Over 2,000 hits a month have been reported by local company Island Hosting, which maintains the site for Friends of the Library, Launceston.

The site incorporates photos and short biographies of over 1,000 individuals who had season tickets to the Tasmanian Exhibition held in Launceston in 1891-92 and is a valuable resource for historians and family researchers.

George Town & District Historical Society: Meetings to be held at *The Grove*: 21 September 2015, **Paul Hodge**, *Masonic Lodge*; 19 October 2015, AGM + **Des Wootton**, *Hotels of George Town*. 16 November 2015, **Keith McLaughlin**, *Waverley Woollen Mills*. Email: info@gtlhs.com.

Tasmanian Historical Research Association: Meetings take place in the Royal Society Room, Custom House, TMAG, Hobart, starting at 8.00pm: 13 October 2015, **Tony Marshall**, *Henry Butler Stoney: author soldier settler*; 10 November 2015, **Ian Terry**, *'Making disloyal statements': the case of Dr Fritz Noetling, engineer, anthropologist, spy?*; 8 December 2015, **Tony and Janet Fenton**, *The cryptic history of Port Davey*.

Launceston Historical Society

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Correspondence Secretary	Prue McCausland	6327 2540
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Deadline

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

Devonport Excursion

Sunday 29 November 2015

The Launceston Historical Society's Spring Excursion

- 9.00 am Veterans and Community Bus departs from the car park behind the RSL Club, corner of Wellington and Eardley streets, South Launceston. Travel on the Bass Highway to Latrobe for our first stop.
- 10.00 am Arrive at **House of Anvers** for a take away drink, chocolate and truffle. Enjoy the gardens while you have your drink. Explore the Anvers Tasting Centre.
www.anvers-chocolate.com.au
- 11.00 am Arrive at the **Bass Strait Maritime Centre**, Devonport, for a guided tour by a volunteer. Discover the stories and events of Bass Strait's natural history, exploration, shipwrecks, settlement and trade. Test your skills on a simulated 1910's steamer and face some of the challenges of Bass Strait as you enter the Mersey River or Port Phillip Bay.
www.bassstraitmaritimecentre.com.au
- 12.30 pm Lunch at the Maritime Centre.
- 1.45 pm Depart for Home Hill, Devonport.
- 2.00 pm We will enjoy a guided tour of **Home Hill**, a National Trust property that was home to Tasmania's only Prime Minister Joseph Lyons and Dame Enid Lyons.
www.nationaltrust.org.au.
- 3.00 pm Afternoon tea at Home Hill.
- 4.00 pm Depart Devonport.
- 5.00 pm Proposed arrival back at RSL car park.

Please fill out and return the slip below with **\$40.00 for members and \$50.00 for non-members** to: The Treasurer, Launceston Historical Society, PO Box 1296, Launceston, TAS 7250, or hand in at a Sunday meeting. Enquiries to Leonie Prevost: reljprevost@bigpond.com or Marion Sargent: marionsargent@bigpond.com, phone 6331 4890.

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Devonport Excursion, Sunday 29 November 2015	Return to:
Name.....	LHS Inc.
Address.....	PO Box 1296
Phone.....Mobile.....	LAUNCESTON TAS 7250
Email.....	\$40.00 for members
	\$50.00 for non-members