



Launceston Historical Society Inc.

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PO BOX 1296 LAUNCESTON TAS 7250

Bringing together people since 1988 with an interest in history

Old cemeteries of Launceston

On 20 September 2015 President Marion Sargent gave a talk on some of the old cemeteries of Launceston. Just two days before the talk, the caretaker's cottage at the old Anglican Cemetery in Cypress Street was demolished. The house was located on what is now Broadland Park, the sports ground for the Launceston Church Grammar School, junior campus. It was the last remaining building on any of the old cemeteries of Launceston. Di Cassidy is compiling a list of burials in this cemetery. She is finding some interesting anomalies in the existing records.



Dianne Cassidy with the speaker, Marion Sargent.



The old caretaker's residence at the Cypress Street Cemetery (Broadland Park) was demolished on 18 September 2015



Speaker John Watts.
Photo: M Sargent

Outer Leads of the Tamar River

On 18 October 2015 John Watts presented a talk on the development of leading lights in the Low Head area which enabled the safe passage of vessels into the Tamar River. From 1805 convict pilots guided ships until John Thomas, the first civilian pilot and harbour master, was appointed in 1812. It was not until 1842 that the first leads were erected. These were replaced in 1849 by unlit white-painted stone towers at Lagoon Bay. The bases of these towers are still visible. In 1882 Harry Conway designed two new towers and two duplex cottages for the four pilots. Local bluestone was used in the structures. J & T Gunn won the tender for the erection of the leading lights, stores and cottages for £2.050 – their first project at Low Head. Fixed lights were placed on top of the towers, now allowing boats to enter the river at night. Whale oil, rape seed oil, kerosene and acetylene were used progressively until 1949 when hydro electric power was connected. New leads were needed in the 1960s after the Western Channel was widened. In October 2015 the leads were taken off the power grid as solar panels, batteries and LED lights were installed.

ANNE NEALE

WILL SPEAK ON

A Rogue and Vagabond

the true story of Henry Bridges

[alias Horace Bennett]

Architect of the Launceston Town Hall

Sunday 15 November 2015

Mini Book Fair from 1.30 pm

Guest Speaker at 2.00 pm

MEETING ROOM, QVMAG MUSEUM AT INVERESK

Christmas afternoon tea & champagne will be served

November Christmas celebration

Anne Neale

A Rogue and Vagabond The True Story of Henry Bridges [*alias* Horace Bennett] Architect of the Launceston Town Hall

Sunday 15 November 2015 – 2.00pm at the Meeting Room, QVMAG at Inveresk

A man named 'Horace Bennett' appears in the annals of Tasmanian history, not always for the best reasons, from 1858 to 1864. During that period he launched a gold mining scam; entered into a bigamous marriage; conducted a notorious place of popular entertainment [referred to by critics as the 'Hell of Hobart']; was frequently subject to legal proceedings; and along the way provided designs for several notable buildings, including the Launceston Town Hall, and the Archer property, Northbury, at Longford.

Horace Bennett was in fact Henry Edwin Bridges [1820-1892] a London builder's son. Following a real estate lottery scam in Sheffield, Yorkshire in the late 1840s, Bridges was officially charged as a 'rogue and vagabond', but characteristically evaded serious consequences. He arrived with his family in Australia in 1854, initially setting up shop as a painter and hardware merchant in Fitzroy, Melbourne.

His subsequently infamous career, characterised by constant reinvention of himself, repeated insolvency and shady dealing, meant that he rarely remained in one place for more than a year or two. Before and after his time in Tasmania, towns and cities in Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland were subject to his dubious schemes, and almost all attempts to hold him to legal account failed.

Henry Bridges, *alias* Horace Bennett, was truly a 'rogue and vagabond'!

DR ANNE NEALE is a cultural historian and was formerly Coordinator of History & Theory in the School of Architecture & Design at UTAS where, though officially retired, she remains an adjunct researcher.

Dr Neale was responsible for numerous entries on Tasmanian subjects in *The Encyclopaedia of Australian Architecture* (Melbourne 2012) and her research into Launceston's public parks is summarised in *The Oxford Companion to Australian Gardens* (Melbourne 2002).

Dr Neale's most recent publication, putting Launceston on the international map, is a chapter entitled 'International Exhibitions and Urban Aspirations: Launceston, Tasmania in the 19th Century' in the (Ashgate, London 2015) publication, *Cultures of International Exhibitions 1840-1940: Great Exhibitions in the Margins*.

Members' column

New members:

The President and Executive welcome to our Society the following new members: Maureen Martin Ferris, Pat Harris and Lana Wall.

Archaeology Group:

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

Art Project: Dr Karen Hall has prepared an exhibition of art work resulting from the dig at Kerry Lodge Probation Station earlier this year. Join Karen as she speaks about the exhibition **earthspoke** and the **Kerry Lodge Archaeology Project** on Saturday, 14 November 2015, 11.00am at the Sawtooth Gallery, level 1/160 Cimitiere Street Launceston. The exhibition ends on Saturday 21 November.

Archaeology Project: Eleanor Casella has arranged to be on site for another season of excavation at the Kerry Lodge Probation Station in March/April 2016. A public open day is planned for Saturday 2 April 2016. Contact John Dent if you wish to join the Archaeology Group and be involved in some way with this project.

History Prize:

The LHS committee has resolved to increase the annual prize money for UTAS and senior secondary students. The Launceston Historical Society – Dr Marita Bardenhagen History Prize is now \$500. A grade 12 history student selected from each of six senior secondary schools will receive a prize of \$200.

Sixty entries were received from primary school students. Mayor Albert van Zetten will present book voucher prizes at a ceremony at the Town Hall on 26 November.

Excursion to Devonport is fully booked:

A group of LHS members will be visiting the House of Anvers, Bass Strait Maritime Centre and Home Hill on 29 November.

Monuments & Monkeys: a walk in historic City Park

Government Cottage

By John Dent



**Plaque in City Park near the site of Government Cottage.
Photo: Joan Jacks.**

Government Cottage was erected by Lieutenant Governor William Paterson in 1807. The official residence in the north, it was known as 'Government Cottage' and served as a base for visiting dignitaries including Gov. Macquarie, Gov. George Arthur and Sir John and Lady Franklin. Between 1848 and 1885 it was rented to a succession of tenants before being handed over to the Launceston City Council. By this time the building was in serious disrepair. It was demolished and the site incorporated into City Park. (*City Park Heritage Trail*)

The wording on the plaque in City Park is incorrect. The first Government House in the north was at York Town from 1805 to 1808. It was rarely referred to as Government House in contemporary records, more often as Government Cottage. The one in City Park was commenced probably in 1806 by William Paterson and was definitely there in 1807 when Surveyor-General Grimes located its position. It was used by Paterson's successor John Brabyn and by a number of official visitors to Launceston, including Governor Macquarie in 1811. It was pulled down in 1885.

This plaque was one of several suggested by the 50,000 League to mark historical spots in various places around Launceston. References to the proposal are in *The Examiner* on 17, 21 and 25 July 1928. The Society is working with the City of Launceston to erect another plaque to correct the information on the present one, which is in itself of historic value.

Marking historic spots

The Examiner, 17 July 1928, page 6

MARKING HISTORIC SPOTS

Following on the address, "The Early Days," by Mr. J. Moore-Robinson at yesterday's 50,000 League luncheon, Colonel C. Evans suggested that those present inaugurate a shilling fund. The money so collected would be used to provide plates or other suitable markings to indicate spots of great historic value, such as the Cornwall Hotel, the site of the old Government cottage, and the site at George Town of the flag staff under which Colonel Paterson took possession of Northern Tasmania. The idea was heartily approved, and those present immediately subscribed a sum which totalled more than a shilling per head. This money was received by Mr. L. R. Reynolds on behalf of the League. Contributions sent to the League will be acknowledged in "The Examiner".

The Examiner, 21 July 1928, page 7

NORTHERN NOTES

An Important suggestion which is being considered by the committee of the Launceston 50,000 League is the marking in a suitable manner of historic spots in the Northern city. One of these is the Cornwall Hotel in Cameron Street, and the mark probably will take the form of a small brass plate attached to the building. As the Union Bank and the Bank of Australasia had their origin in Launceston, it is likely that there will be a ceremony at each of these institutions also if the idea which was discussed at a committee meeting this week materialises.

The Examiner, 25 July 1928, page 3

50,000 LEAGUE PROPOSAL

In furtherance of the proposal of the Launceston Fifty Thousand League to inaugurate a movement having for its object the marking of some of the historical places in the North, a sub committee of the league met on Monday night.

The chair was occupied by Mr. J. S. Dean (chairman of the league), and there were present Messrs. George Cleaver, H. C. Abbott, and J. Moore-Robinson. It was decided to ask Mr. E. J. Sidebottom to join the committee, his interest in historical matters being well known. After discussion it was decided to launch all endeavour to mark the following places in that order: - (1) Site of the first building erected in Launceston, where the Brisbane Hotel now stands. (2) Site of the Government Cottage, in the City Park. (3) The Cornwall Hotel, in which meetings of great importance had been held, particularly the meeting which resulted in the establishment of the Bank of Australasia. (4) The old-time landing place on the rocks below the Gorge bridge. (5) The site on Windmill Point, George Town, where Governor Paterson took possession of Northern Tasmania. This particular site has on it now a leading light, marking the entrance to the Heads.

It was decided to follow the Melbourne example in regard to the site of the first building in Launceston, and arranged to have a large-size metal plate embedded in the footpath in front of the Brisbane Hotel, the plate to be suitably inscribed. It was resolved that the chairman should interview the Mayor to arrange for the co-operation of the City Council and to ask that the Mayor preside at the function of unveiling the tablet on behalf of the city.

Mr. Moore-Robinson reported that he had made enquiries as to the cost of the plate, and it was decided to prepare details and get a definite quotation. The question of financing the movement was considered, and the chairman reported that the shilling fund collection taken up at the Fifty Thousand League luncheon on July 16 resulted in 30s being obtained. A citizen had promised £5 5s towards the fund, and it was thought that a large number of people, would subscribe half-crowns and five shillings. It was decided to ask the proprietors of "The Examiner" to open a public subscription for the purpose. It was reported that many people had expressed cordial approbation of the idea regarding it as a slur on Launceston that there was nothing to identify places of supreme interest and importance connected with the establishment of Northern Tasmania. It was decided to make a certain suggestion to the City Council, with a view to suitably commemorating the action of public spirited citizens, such as the notable bequest of the late Mr. John Hart for the beautification of the city and its reserves.

Advance notice of LHS activities for 2016

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

- 21 February** **AGM & Tony Robinson**, DVD, *Tony Robinson's Tour of Duty: Launceston*
- 18 March** **Michelle Grattan**, *The Examiner*-John West Memorial Lecture
Friday, 8.00pm at the Sir Raymond Ferrall Lecture Theatre, UTAS, Newnham
- 17 April** **Craig Deayton**, *WWI Western Front topic* (Australian Heritage Week)
- 15 May** **John Dent**, *The Kerry Lodge Archaeology Project*
(National Trust Tasmanian Heritage Festival, 'Discovery and Rediscoveries')
- 19 June** **Pugh Day Lecture**
- 17 July** **Georgia Fountoulaki**, *Greek Culture: Tasmanian Connections*
- 21 August** **Susan Aykut**, *Turkish Baths in Launceston*
- 18 September** **Combined Seminar with Oral History Tasmania,**
Nicola Goc, *Migrant women*;
Christina Henri, *Engaging the convict legacy: art's role as a means of understanding*;
Another speaker TBA.
- 16 October** **Marion Sargent**, *Amy Sargent: An Adventurous Nurse*
- 20 November** **Anne Neale**, *City Park Fountain*

Launceston Historical Society

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Deadline

Items for the next Newsletter should be sent to the Editor by **1 Feb 2016** at marionsargent@bigpond.com or PO Box 1296 LAUNCESTON TAS 7250.