

# Launceston Historical Society Inc.

## Newsletter No 183

April 2022

ISSN 1036-7950

PO BOX 1296 LAUNCESTON TAS 7250

*Bringing together people with an interest in history*

### Welcome to the Committee Members for 2022

Thank you to everyone who attended the Annual General Meeting on Sunday 20 February 2022. John Dent took the chair while the new committee for 2022 was elected.

Marion Sargent was re-appointed president. The other executive committee members are Kelli Schultz (vice-president), Leonie Prevost (treasurer and public officer), Prue McCausland (correspondence secretary), Catherine Pearce (minute secretary). The re-elected committee members are Karin Lê, Brad Wood, Sue Bell, Wendy Roberts, and Carol Fuller. We welcome one recruit, Phil Page. Thank you to Jordana Lory who has stepped down from the committee after one year. Marion, Leonie, and Catherine have all held those same positions for 11 years, Prue for nine, and Kelli for four.

The 2021 Annual Report can be read online: <http://launcestonhistory.org.au/publications/annual-reports/>

### AGM Guest Speaker: Richard Mack



**Rosalie Young and Richard Mack at the February meeting.**

After the AGM Richard Mack presented a thoroughly engaging talk on his aunt, the intrepid physio Margaret Mack. Born in Victoria in 1915, she gained a Diploma in Massage, Medical Electricity, and Medical Gymnastics in 1936. With her mother Daisy and sister Josephine, Margaret came to Tasmania in January 1937 to work at the Launceston General Hospital. Among her patients were children with polio. In 1940 Margaret joined the AIF as a masseuse and spent time in the Middle East. Her diaries show that she worked in the mornings and spent the afternoons socialising and doing chores. She wrote that war injuries were nothing after polio. In 1946 she was back at the LGH, and in April 1949 opened rooms at Holyman House. She retired in July 1992 after 55 years as a physiotherapist.

Margaret travelled widely, was a Soroptimist, on the Board of St Giles, in the Light Car Club, played bridge, and was the recipient of several awards including an Order of Australia and a place on the Honour Roll of Women for services to the Community and Health. She died on 19 June 2005 aged 90.

Richard Mack is hoping to write a biography of his aunt, the intrepid Miss Mack.

## John West Memorial Lecture: Dr Alison Alexander

The 34<sup>th</sup> John West Memorial Lecture, held at UTAS, Newnham campus on Thursday 3 March 2022 presented by Dr Alison Alexander, on *John West and the battle to end convict transportation* was excellent.

It took nine years from John West's first call to end the practice of sending Britain's prisoners to far-flung colonies. Using his skills as an orator from the pulpit, and his pen writing powerful editorials for *The Launceston Examiner*, he led the fight against the might of the British Empire to see the end of the brutal system in VDL in 1853.

President Marion Sargent was MC, Professor Dominic Geraghty from UTAS introduced Dr Alexander and Secretary Prue McCausland offered a vote of thanks.



The lecture is available with slides on the UTAS [Island of Ideas SoundCloud Channel](#) and the LHS website [launcestonhistory.org.au/activities/previous-john-west-memorial-lectures](http://launcestonhistory.org.au/activities/previous-john-west-memorial-lectures), or as a City Park Radio Podcast under Community Stories.

## April Meeting

**Sunday 10 April 2022 – 2pm at the Meeting Room, Queen Victoria Museum at Inveresk**

**LTCOL Mark Cameron, *Tasmanian Artillery from Federation to Gallipoli***



This is the story of 140 volunteer gunners from across Tasmania who, with their 125 horses and their four prized 18-pounder field guns sailed to war in September 1914.

It is not a story of heroics or glamour but rather a story of endurance and perseverance in doing *their bit*.

**Lieutenant Colonel Mark Cameron** RFD, JSSC, RAA, Retired, enlisted in the Australian Army's 6<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment (City of Launceston) as a Gunner in 1965. He retired in 2000 to take up the honorary appointment of Colonel Commandant of Artillery which he held until 2006.

In his forty years' service as a reservist, he has commanded Reserve units in both Tasmania and the Northern Territory. Under his command, the Launceston-based 16<sup>th</sup> Field Battery twice won the Mount Schanck trophy as the top Reserve Artillery Unit in Australia.

His military assignments have included, South Vietnam, Japan, Brunei, the Philippines, and with the Honourable Artillery Company, City of London.

He is a graduate of the Department of Defence's Joint Services Staff College and holds post-graduate qualifications in strategic studies.

Following his service in artillery, training, and personnel appointments, he was posted to the Australian Army Staff College at Fort Queenscliff, Victoria. As part of the Directing Staff, he was involved in the military component of the joint College/Deakin University's Master of Military Studies program and the integration of Reserve programs through distance learning.

His ongoing interest in military history has seen him visit battle sites including Turkey, the Western Front, Eastern Europe, Greece, Timor, and the Pacific.



## May Meeting

Sunday 15 May 2022 – 2pm at the Meeting Room, Queen Victoria Museum at Inveresk

**Stefan Petrow, *Coping with shock infectious diseases: Typhoid and cholera in nineteenth century Tasmania***



Typhoid and cholera were the shock infectious diseases of the nineteenth century (rivalled only by smallpox) and most areas of the world suffered death and sickness from their dreaded appearance. In Tasmania typhoid had the most impact, killing nearly 2,000 people from 1839 to 1899, many in the prime of their life and during the many epidemics that occurred put much pressure on hospitals and nursing staff (sound familiar?). Public health reformers argued that typhoid was preventable if municipal councils cleaned up the environment, inspected insanitary houses and dairies and encouraged personal cleanliness to limit the chances of disease-poisons arising and spreading.

How this was done in Launceston will be a focus of the talk. Contrary to typhoid, 'King Cholera' as it was called had limited impact on Tasmania and its hospitals. Harder for local doctors to diagnose than typhoid and to distinguish from diarrhoea and

dysentery, different strains of cholera had killed only 225 Tasmanians by 1899. An acute bacterial infection of the intestine, cholera could spread quickly so quarantine was the first line of defence to stop ships bringing it into Tasmania, but improved sanitary measures were also needed, especially to deal with contaminated food and drinking water. While typhoid had largely been contained by the early twentieth century as a shock disease and cholera is rarely diagnosed in Australia today, since 1961 the world has been experiencing its seventh cholera pandemic and we can never be sure that cholera will not pierce our quarantine defences in a future climate changing world.

**Emeritus Professor Stefan Petrow** taught Australian, Tasmanian, European and family history at the University of Tasmania until his retirement in June 2020. His research interests include aspects of Tasmanian history, but he has had a longstanding focus on health, urban and town planning history of both Launceston and Hobart. Of his five books, the ones most relevant to his talk include *Sanatorium of the South? Public Health and Politics in Hobart and Launceston 1875-1914* (1995) and (with Carey Denholm) *Dr. Edward Swarbreck Hall: Colonial Medical Scientist and Moral Activist* (2016). He has completed a book manuscript called *Tasmanian Anzacs, Families and The Impact of World War One: Volume 1: The 12th and 52nd Battalions*, has almost completed another book tentatively entitled *Look After The Missus and Kids: A History of Hobart Legacy 1923-2023* and has begun research on the history of Launceston Legacy.

## June Meeting – Pugh Day Lecture

Sunday 19 June 2022 – 2pm at the Meeting Room, Queen Victoria Museum at Inveresk

**Dr Michael Cooper AM, *Antarctica – not a place to get sick!***

Dr Michael Cooper graduated from the University of NSW in 1982 and is based in Sydney. After a fellowship at Harvard in Boston, he has worked as an anaesthesiologist at St George Hospital and The Children's Hospital at Westmead for over 30 years with interests in paediatric pain medicine and airway management. Michael has also been involved in anaesthesia education and support in Papua New Guinea for 20 years and is Adjunct Professor of Anaesthesiology at UPNG.

His other academic interest is in the history of medicine especially relating to anaesthesia and surgery. He was fortunate enough to visit Antarctica in late 2018 and will talk on the history of anaesthesia and surgery in Antarctica – not a place to get sick!



## New Members

The President and Executive welcome to our Society the following new members: Carla Baker, Darren Fairbrother and Elizabeth Taylor.

## Launceston City Walk

Catherine Pearce and Wendy Roberts have created another *Cya on the Road* historic walk, this time from the Town Hall, along St John, Paterson, George, and Brisbane streets, around the Quadrant Mall to St John Street and into the Brisbane Street Mall. Download the free app and take a walk along the streets or enjoy it from the comfort of your home. Photos and text about historic buildings is included, as well as a voice recording. Download here: [Launceston City Walk](#)

## LHS Activities 2022

Launceston Historical Society meetings are usually held at the meeting room, Queen Victoria Museum, Inveresk, on the third Sunday of the month at 2pm, unless otherwise notified.

Free for members, visitors are welcome to attend at \$4 each. Bring some cash for a chance to win a fabulous prize in the raffle.

The meeting will be livestreamed on Zoom. A link will be provided to members closer to the date.

Earlier talks are available on our website, so catch up on ones you missed or listen to them again: <http://launcestonhistory.org.au/lhs-lecture-series/>

- 17 July**                    **John Dent & Darren Watton**, Mead, Smith, von Stieglitz Lecture, *Annandale Archaeological Dig*
- 21 August**                **Jai Paterson**, *Launceston Hotels*
- 18 September**           **Louise Zarmati**, *Scrimshaw Cane from an Oatlands' Dig*
- 16 October**              **Duncan Grant**, *Lesser-known Launceston Churches and Missions*
- 7 November**             **Excursion to Beaconsfield** (Monday long weekend)
- 20 November**          **Nick Clements**, *Tongerlongeter: First Nations Leader and Tasmanian War Hero*

## Our History

These stories on Launceston's history and beyond have been contributed by our members. You are welcome to send articles of 470 words, with at least three pictures, to the president [marionsargent@bigpond.com](mailto:marionsargent@bigpond.com). Read the stories in *The Sunday Examiner* or on [Facebook](#).

We are preparing a book of some of these stories, each with a photograph – more information to come.

No	Date	Page	Author	Title	Topic
218	6 Feb 2022	33	Nigel Burch	Corra Linn scene of colonial crime to swindle ex-soldier	A crime at Corra Linn
219	13 Feb 2022	31	Rod Oliver	Launceston surgeon a cut above in service to the community	John Ramsay: Not just a surgeon
220	20 Feb 2022	31	Nigel Burch	Music store struck the right chord in radio revolution	Radio 7LA
221	27 Feb 2022	33	Julian Burgess	Ex-convict turns a seven-year sentence into seaport success	The seaport legacy of Jonathan Griffiths
222	6 Mar 2022	43	Nigel Burch	Family harmony secret to talented trio	The Singing Kettles: To the memory of Max
223	13 Mar 2022	43	Richard Mack	Helping hands touched so many lives	Margaret Mack: Intrepid physio
224	20 Mar 2022	31	Members of Tatlers	In their own words – a safe creative space for female authors	Tatlers women writers: 60 years
225	27 Mar 2022		Rod Oliver	Tasmania's unsung hero of aviation was one out of the box	David Warren and the black box
226	3 Apr 2022		Nigel Burch		Constable Murnane

## 180 years of *The Examiner*

A special publication celebrating 180 years of *The Examiner* published on 12 March 2022 features articles written by, or including information supplied by, LHS members:

- Julian Burgess, *A story of survival over 180 years*
- Mike McCausland, *Mechanics of a long-lasting bond: Partners in social progress*
- Marion Sargent, *From Government Garden to City Park*
- Julian Burgess, *Launceston full of firsts: City has batted above its average*
- Prue McCausland, *State's biggest ship disaster*
- Stefan Petrow, *The disaster that slowed the state's capital*
- Stefan Petrow, *Electric Eric's visionary power plan*

The history article in the Autumn edition of *Northern Exposure* inserted in *The Examiner* on 18 March 2022 is also entitled *From Government Garden to City Park* by Marion Sargent. This article is a shorter version of the original one submitted.

## Other Events of Interest

**George Town & District Historical Society:** The Grove, on the third Monday of each month at 7.30pm. 18 April 2022, Anne Batt, *The Shifting Sands – the story of marram grass*; 16 May 2022, Peter Cox, *Tamar Quarantine Stations*; 20 June 2022, John Evans, *Norfolk Island*. Email: [info@gtdhs.com](mailto:info@gtdhs.com)

**National Book Council:** Launceston Library, Wednesday, 20 April 2022, 1.15pm, AGM and Michael Roach from Just Tassie Books within The Book Cellar at Campbell Town. Non-members \$5. RSVP: [nationalbookcounciltasmania@gmail.com](mailto:nationalbookcounciltasmania@gmail.com)

**Oral History Tasmania:** An Oral History workshop will be held in Launceston on Saturday 21 May 2022. The workshop will be conducted by Jill Cassidy and will cover all aspects of oral history practice. Topics include interview technique, possible pitfalls, use of digital recorder, ethics, transcription and publication. Participants will be able to listen to interview excerpts and do practice interviews. Full details and a registration form can be found at [www.oralhistorytas.org.au](http://www.oralhistorytas.org.au)

**Royal Society:** QV Museum Meeting Room, Inveresk, on the fourth Sunday of each month at 1.30pm. 24 April 2022, Kathryn Medlock, *Sharing the Bounty: The fate of a single thylacine (Thylacinus cynocephalus)*; 22 May 2022, Andrew Bishop, *A Brave New Biosecurity System: Over the Horizon Musings*; 26 June 2022, Dr Charles Connor, *Identifying the source with Forensic Science*. Email: [apcachris@gmail.com](mailto:apcachris@gmail.com)

**Tasmanian Aviation Historical Society:** RSL, Wellington St, South Launceston, Saturday, 25 June 2022, 12.30pm, Aviation Seminar, *In the Air*. Enquiries: Paul Richards, [pacrichards1@bigpond.com](mailto:pacrichards1@bigpond.com)

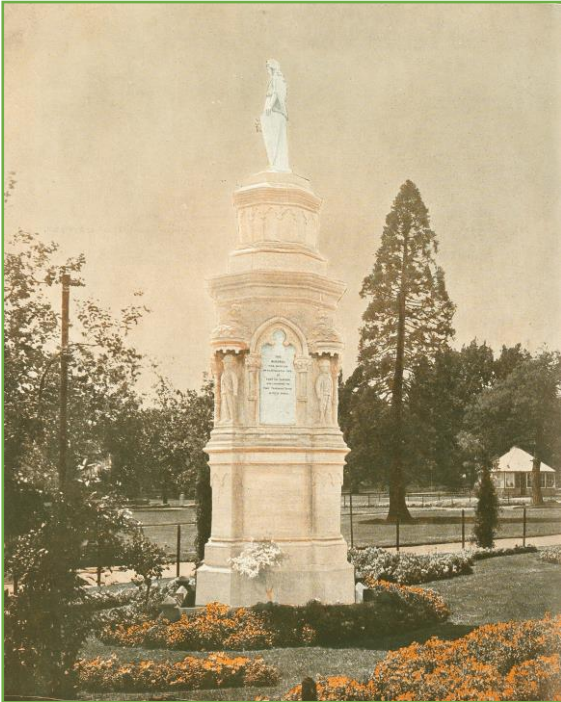
**Tasmanian Historical Research Association:** Legacy Function Rooms, 159 Macquarie St, Hobart on the second Tuesday of each month at 7.30pm. 12 April 2022, Eldershaw Lecture: Michael Bennett, *Keeping Tasmanians Safe: Smallpox, quarantine and vaccination in nineteenth-century Tasmania*; 10 May 2022, Richard Tuffin, *Port Arthur workshops historical archaeological investigation*; 14 June 2022, Marina Ladaniwskyj, *Ukrainian Migration to Tasmania after 1945: Identity and transition*. Email: [info@thra.org.au](mailto:info@thra.org.au)

## Membership Renewals Now Overdue

If you wish to remain a member and be informed of historical events, please renew your annual subscriptions for the Launceston Historical Society which were due on 31 December 2021. The [Membership Form](#) is on our website. Pay directly into the Society's CBA bank account BSB 067-003 A/C No. 2804 8638 (put your name in the reference field), by cheque or cash. Please email your details to [launcestonhistory@gmail.com](mailto:launcestonhistory@gmail.com), or hand the form to Leonie Prevost at the next meeting, or post to: Treasurer, Launceston Historical Society, PO Box 1296, LAUNCESTON TAS 7250



## Boer War Memorial



The Boer, or South African War Memorial is tucked away behind the monkey enclosure. A ladies' committee began fundraising in November 1900, and by August 1902 Mayor FK Fairthorne considered it unseemly to delay the placing of a memorial to fallen soldiers any longer.

A meeting of 18 subscribers decided that City Park would be the best place to erect the memorial because the first contingent had been presented with colours and a bugle there before leaving on 27 October 1899.

Sculptor Silvanus Wilmot was chosen to design and construct the monument, which he carved from three shades of Ross freestone – pink, grey, and brown.

Four soldiers representing an officer, a sergeant, a bugler, and a private were placed halfway up, carved in white freestone.

The white marble figure of 'Australia' on the top came from Italy and is the only female figure to adorn any monument of its kind in Australia.

The foundation stone was laid by the mayor in November 1902, but the memorial took much longer to erect than anticipated. *The Examiner* followed its progress and in June 1903 work was almost at a standstill. Mr Wilmot had been waiting six months for the military authorities to send him photographs of four soldiers so he could faithfully reproduce good likenesses.

The names of 31 Tasmanian soldiers who died in the war are carved into a white marble panel. They are divided into those who were killed in action, died of wounds, and died of disease. The Latin inscription at the bottom of the panel translates to "It is sweet and honourable to die for your country."

Finally, on 20 February 1904, the monument was unveiled by Lieutenant Colonel Cameron in memory of those gallant soldiers who had laid down their lives for their country, king, and Empire. *Marion Sargent*

The picture of the Boer War Memorial is from the *Weekly Courier*, 12 March 1930.

### Launceston Historical Society

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### Deadline

Items for the next *Newsletter* should be sent to the editor by **1 July 2022** at [marionsargent@bigpond.com](mailto:marionsargent@bigpond.com) or PO Box 1296 LAUNCESTON TAS 7250.