



Launceston Historical Society Inc.

Newsletter No 184

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PO BOX 1296 LAUNCESTON TAS 7250

Bringing together people with an interest in history

Tasmanian Artillery and Gunners

Lieutenant Colonel Mark Cameron presented an Anzac-themed talk on 10 April 2022. He gave an overview of Tasmanian Artillery from 1856 to WWI, focussing on the 9th Battery under Major William Burgess, a New Zealander living in Hobart, and Second Lieutenant Richard Gee from Launceston.

The 9th Battery marched from Pontville to Hobart and boarded the first ships to head off to WWI – the *Geelong* and *Katuna*. The 140 gunners, 125 horses, four guns, and all their equipment sailed to Egypt for more training, before arriving at Mudros Harbour on Lemnos on 20 April 1915. They landed on Gallipoli on 26 April straight into machine gunfire.

The first Tasmanian gunner killed was Athol Wynne Parry, shot by a sniper's bullet on 11 May 1915. The 9th was known as the 'Lucky Battery' as there were no more deaths, and only 17 wounded. The remainder of the unit stayed on the Gallipoli Peninsula suffering from fever, cold, and exhaustion until their withdrawal. Major Gee, by then in charge, was amongst the last to leave. They blew up the last gun, disconnected the phone, and deserted that desolate place on 20 December 1915.



Coping with infectious diseases

On 15 May 2022, Stefan Petrow presented a fascinating look back at how communities coped with shock infectious diseases in 19th-century Tasmania. The causes of diseases such as typhoid and cholera were not understood until the end of the 19th century. It was an uphill battle to get local councils, after 1856, to spend money on preventative measures such as improving poor sanitary conditions. Salmonella typhi bacteria in water, milk, shellfish, food, sewers and direct infection caused typhoid fever, which resulted in around 2,000 deaths in Tasmania in the 1800s. Hospitals filled up and undertakers were kept busy during outbreaks of the disease, while newspapers and sanitary officers such as JG Bushman tried to have roads paved and drained, cesspits removed, sewers and water closets installed, rubbish removed weekly and deposited in the Invermay Park tip. It was ironic that the use of WCs increased typhoid because the contents emptied straight into the Tamar. Cholera was feared and often diagnosed. A quarantine station on Middle Island was deemed to offer some defence against infectious diseases.



Dr Michael Cooper with Dr George Merridew.

Pugh Day Lecture

Dr Michael Cooper presented an excellent overview on the history of anaesthesia and surgery in Antarctica for the 10th Pugh Day Lecture on 19 June 2022. Surgeons and doctors face many difficulties trying to operate in one of the most hostile environments in the world. From surgeons on early voyages of exploration to the modern day, limited resources, equipment, and medically trained people make safe operations dangerous. An example was the makeshift “operating theatre” and equipment used in 1915 when one of Shackleton’s men stranded in the ice had frost-bitten toes amputated. The conditions were filthy, but they managed to heat the upturned lifeboat to 26° so the chloroform could vaporise. Before 1847 surgeons had to operate without any sort of anaesthetic. It’s not a place to get sick.

July Meeting – Mead, Smith, von Stieglitz Lecture

Sunday 17 July 2022 – 2pm at the Meeting Room, Queen Victoria Museum at Inveresk

John Dent & Darren Watton, *Annandale Community Archaeology Dig*

Over one week in April 2021, there were 23 participants in a Community Archaeology Dig organised by the Launceston Historical Society Archaeology Group. The volunteers had paid to be part of the dig to experience first-hand what it is like to be part of an archaeological excavation. The building is a 25 by six-metre long two-storey stone building on private land between Perth and Pateena.

In 2018 after publicity on the Kerry Lodge Road Station dig, John Dent was asked by the owner to have a look at the building as he believed it was either a military barracks or another convict road station. The land was granted in the 1820s to Theodore Bryant Bartley. Subsequent owners were George Palmer Ball, Charles Chilcott (1840), William Mason (1873) and the Hughes family since 1920. The building could have been built by any of the first three owners or possibly by the Government. Historical research has so far failed to identify who built it or when it was built.

In an effort to find answers to these questions Darren Watton, the principal archaeologist at Southern Archaeology agreed to conduct a community dig. The results of the excavation, the artefacts that were found, the preliminary findings as to the date, and some possible uses for the building will be presented at the talk.

Darren Watton is an archaeologist with Southern Archaeology. He has extensive experience in all aspects of archaeological work and heritage management, specialising in historical research, archaeological assessments, method statements, heritage surveying, monitoring, excavation, cataloguing and report writing. Darren is on the committee of the newly formed Launceston History Centre.

John Dent is currently President of the West Tamar Historical Society, the Family History Society Inc (Launceston), and the Launceston History Centre, is a member of the Launceston Historical Society and is on the committee of the Friends of The Launceston Mechanics’ Institute. John has published numerous articles and given many talks on various aspects of northern Tasmanian history and has recently co-authored the book on York Town. He is a registered land surveyor in private practice and has used his surveying skills to uncover many aspects of our earliest history. John was awarded an OAM in 1996 and is a member of Rotary.



August Meeting

Sunday 21 August 2022 – 2pm at the Meeting Room, Queen Victoria Museum at Inveresk
Jai Paterson, *Researching Launceston's 19th-century hotels: Some patterns that emerge*



Jai Paterson has been writing up and adding to, previous research undertaken by David Radford and Barbara Valentine – not an easy pair of researchers to follow. This collation from three authors will attempt a thematic approach to the history of Launceston's 19th-century hotels, rather than the alphabetical and chronological formats that have appeared in the past. It is hoped that the Friends of the Library, Launceston will eventually publish this work under Radford's original title: *Licence Granted....*

Jai Paterson is a long-term member of the Launceston Historical Society and has published local history books on the Commercial Travellers' Association of Tasmania, Launceston's 19th-century breweries, and William Street in 1898. Jai came from the mainland over 25 years ago and has worked at the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery and as a roving curator for Arts Tasmania. Her interest in Tasmanian history recently extended to her completion of a PhD at UTAS on the movement of Tasmanians to New Zealand during the mid-19th century.

September Meeting

Sunday 18 September 2022 – 2pm at the Meeting Room, Queen Victoria Museum at Inveresk
Louise Zarmati, *The mystery of the Oatlands scrimshaw walking cane*

In January 2019, Dr Louise Zarmati led a team of five teachers in the excavation of the 1827 Oatlands guard house site. The aim of the excavation was to provide teachers with an immersive professional learning experience of working on an authentic archaeological dig. But what was expected to be a mundane, clean-up and training dig, suddenly changed on the last day when a beautifully carved scrimshaw walking cane emerged from the dirt and rubble that covered the demolition site. This is the story of the discovery of the scrimshaw walking cane and the mystery that surrounds its placement in a small military building in Oatlands.



Louise Zarmati is a Senior Lecturer in Education at the University of Tasmania. She has a Master's degree in archaeology and heritage management from the University of Cambridge and has excavated at sites in Greece, Cyprus, Belgium and Australia. Her most recent excavations in Tasmania have been at Willow Court in New Norfolk, Kerry Lodge and Oatlands.

Historic Walking Tours

The Launceston Historical Society and Launceston Central City (Cityprom) launched two 'Cya on the Road' self-guided historic walking tours of the city in the Quadrant Mall on 22 June 2022. *The Examiner* ran a story on it the following day, and the creator Catherine Pearce and Cityprom's Madi Biggelaar are pictured checking out the app on a mobile phone. Since the promotion the number of people downloading the app has increased substantially. Ron Camplin from City Park Radio narrated the text for both walks. The [Launceston City Walk](#) and [Launceston: A Walk Along Historic Cameron Street](#) can be downloaded for free.

New Members

The President and Executive welcome to our Society the following new members: Roberta Blackwood-Beattie, Peter Henderson, Kim Polley, Janine Rodger, Judith Rose and Julie Walpole



Jill Cassidy's Local History Award

Our member Jill Cassidy was the winner of the 2021 Marita Bardenhagen Memorial Award for Local History for her book *Deviot Talks*. She was presented with \$1,500 on 8 April 2022 at a small ceremony at the Launceston Library with Dianne Snowden reading some lovely words from Marita's husband Alex Thomsom.

The Award was sponsored by the Launceston Historical Society, the Tasmanian Historical Research Association, the State Government, and the Professional Historians' Association of Tasmania. It commemorates the contribution to the study and writing of local history in Tasmania by our past-president Dr Marita Bardenhagen (1961-2012). The biennial prize acknowledges outstanding original research culminating in a published local history book with significant Tasmanian content. Picture: Dianne Snowden and Jill Cassidy with *Deviot Talks*.

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/>

- 16 October** **Duncan Grant**, *Lesser-known Launceston Churches and Missions*
- 7 November** **Excursion to Beaconsfield** (Monday long weekend) See page 5.
- 20 November** **Nick Clements**, *Tongerlongeter: First Nations Leader and Tasmanian War Hero*

Other Events of Interest

George Town & District Historical Society: The Grove, on the third Monday of each month at 7.30pm. 18 July 2022, Peter Ray, *The Berean and other steamers*; 15 Aug 2022, Jill Holland, *Fifteen years in New Guinea, part 2*; 19 Sep 2022, Brian Stace, *The Coromandel*. Email: info@gtdhs.com

National Book Council: Launceston Library, Wednesday, 20 July 2022, 1.15pm, book club members and Library staff: *Warm winter reading: under the doona with e-libraries or over drinks with friends*. Non-members \$5. RSVP: nationalbookcounciltasmania@gmail.com

Royal Society of Tasmania (Northern Branch): QV Museum Meeting Room, Inveresk, on the fourth Sunday of each month at 1.30pm. 24 July 2022, Dr Raj Eri, *Personalised Medicine: are we there yet?*; 14 Aug 2022, Dr Peter McGoldrick, *Tasmania's oldest fossil*. Email: apcachris@gmail.com

Tasmanian Historical Research Association: Legacy Function Rooms, 159 Macquarie St, Hobart on the second Tuesday of each month at 7.30pm. 12 July 2022, Nick Clements, *Tongerlongeter*; 9 August 2022, Carla Baker, *Exploring Hannah Fletcher's sheet music folios from 1834*; 13 September 2022, Kate Bagnall, *Mapping Tasmania's Chinese history*. Email: info@thra.org.au

LGH Historical Committee: Friday 23 September 2022, 11am at the Town Hall the Mayor Albert van Zetten will host the launch of three books – *Launceston and its Environs: A Sound History* (\$55), *History of St Paul's Church and Chapel 1854-2020* (\$35), and *The Giving Wall: LGH 1863-2020* (\$25). All three can be purchased for \$100. RSVP to Paul Richards: pacrichards1@bigpond.com.

Beaconsfield Excursion

Monday 7 November 2022

The Launceston Historical Society's Spring Excursion for Members

- 9.00am Veterans and Community Bus departs from the Eardley Street carpark behind the RSL. Park in the bottom carpark.
- 9.30am Travel via Rosevears Drive. Stop opposite Rosevears Hotel – **Rosevears** history and nearby landmarks.
- 10.00am Coffee and toilet stop at **Gravelly Beach** – Rivergrass Café or Singapore Baker's Café. (At own expense)
- 10.30am Drive on to **Swan Point and Paper Beach**.
- 11.00am **Supply River Mill** – 25 minutes return walk, and history of the mill.
- 11.45am Drive on to **Sidmouth Kirk** – the church will be open for us to see inside.
- 1.00pm Lunch at own expense in **Beaconsfield** – Moon Lily Café, Beaconsfield Bakery or Miners Gold Brewery. Signposted historic walk along Weld St for those who are interested.
- 2.00pm Guided tour of **Beaconsfield Mine and Heritage Centre**, short historic walk to an abandoned mine site.
- 3.30pm Begin return trip.
- 4.00pm Stop at **Bradys Lookout**.
- 4.45pm Home

Please post or email the details below @ **\$25.00 per person**.

Post a cheque to the Treasurer, Launceston Historical Society, PO Box 1296, Launceston, TAS 7250, or pay by direct debit BSB 067 003 A/C 2804 8638, and email Leonie Prevost: leonie.prevost@bigpond.com or Marion Sargent: marionsargent@bigpond.com, phone 0438 432 848.

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Beaconsfield Excursion, Monday 7 November 2022	Return to:
Name.....	LHS Inc.
Address.....	PO Box 1296
Mobile.....	LAUNCESTON TAS 7250
Email.....	\$25.00 per person
Entry to the Museum is included. Coffee and lunch at own expense.	

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. 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
226	3 Apr 2022	31	Nigel Burch	Healthy respect for state's law and order	Constable Murnane
227	10 Apr 2022	29	Nigel Burch	Early find ignited a burning desire for fossil fuel exploration	The flammable rocks of Latrobe
228	17 Apr 2022	31	Julian Burgess	A century on crash is still Tamar's worst marine accident	<i>Togo</i> and <i>Alice</i> collision
229	24 Apr 2022	29	Nigel Burch	Local hero honoured three times over for his amazing bravery	Leslie Dadson MC
230	1 May 2022	31	Nigel Burch	A high-flying notion helped put our city on the aviation map	Beginnings of Launceston Airport
231	8 May 2022	27	Nigel Burch	A dam fine project helped progress flow for Tasmania's north	Our Trevallyn Dam
232	15 May 2022	29	Nigel Burch	No one knows why the Hobart Express went off the rails	Campania train disaster
233	22 May 2022	31	Nigel Burch	TNT9 helped north of state find its voice...and it was loud	Launceston television turns 60
234	29 May 2022	33	Nigel Burch	Many tested their mettle prospecting for Tasmania's tin	Royal George Tin Mine
235	5 Jun 2022	31	Marion Sargent	Prestigious address a boulevard of great Australian dream	College Street, Newstead
236	12 Jun 2022	31	Marion Sargent	Countless newborns given warm welcome by dedicated nurse	St Ives Maternity Hospital
237	19 Jun 2022	29	Mike McCausland	A friendly labour of literary love that spans three decades	Friends for 30 years (FoLL)
238	26 Jun 2022	47	Julian Burgess	The auxiliary steam plant to the rescue during dry times	Auxiliary Steam Plant
239	3 Jul 2022	29	Nigel Burch	Uncovering the rich history of Tasmania's forgotten goldfield	Industry Road gold
240	10 Jul 2022		Nigel Burch		Jackson's Garage
241	17 Jul 2022		Nigel Burch		Tamar Cut

Launceston Historical Society

President and Newsletter Editor	Marion Sargent	0438 432 848
Vice-President	Kelli Schultz	0408 080 967
Correspondence Secretary	Prue McCausland	6327 2540
Treasurer	Leonie Prevost	0418 575 910
Publicity Officer	Karin Lê	0407 340 179 or 6334 0158

Postal address: PO Box 1296 LAUNCESTON TAS 7250

Email: launcestonhistory@gmail.com Website: www.launcestonhistory.org.au

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/launcestonhistory>

Deadline

Items for the next *Newsletter* should be sent to the editor by **1 Oct 2022** at marionsargent@bigpond.com or PO Box 1296 LAUNCESTON TAS 7250.