

# Launceston Historical Society Inc.

## Newsletter No 188

April 2023

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PO BOX 1296 LAUNCESTON TAS 7250

*Bringing together people with an interest in history*

### Welcome to the Committee Members for 2023

Thank you to everyone who attended the Annual General Meeting on Sunday 19 February 2023. Louise Zarmati took the chair while the new committee for 2023 was elected. There were no changes from last year; all 11 committee members were re-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, Carol Fuller, and Phil Page.

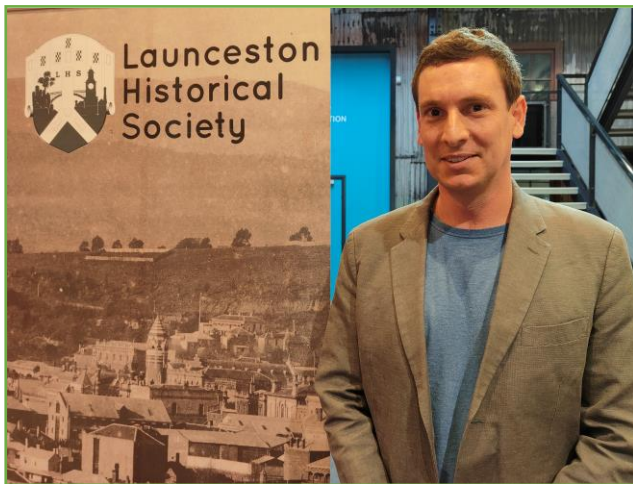
The 2022 Annual Report can be read online: <http://launcestonhistory.org.au/publications/annual-reports/>

### AGM Guest Speaker: Geoff McLean



After the AGM Geoff McLean gave a fascinating talk on the significance of the Tamar Valley/Launceston region for Tasmanian Aboriginal people who have lived here for 35,000 years. When the first people came here, they spread around the coastal areas and followed the rivers and streams in search of food. The Tamar Valley, with the kanamaluka / ponrabbel flowing through it, provides a sheltered area to live with plenty of food in season such as the kangaroo apple, native currents, native cherries, wattle tree seed pods for making damper, wallabies, and numerous water birds and eggs. Geoff is pictured with a freshwater oyster shell which were plentiful in the South Esk River before the Trevallyn Dam was built. The shells had many uses, for example as drinking vessels. Geoff touched on the ochre trade and uses, marriage customs, cremation, adornments and gathering sites. He concluded by telling us about an aboriginal man, Eumarrah, who had worked for Hugh Murray, absconded from GA Robinson's party at Trial Harbour, presented himself to the authorities in Launceston, joined the Black Line, gained intelligence on movements, attacked the colonists from behind, died in Launceston, and was buried in the Cypress Street cemetery on 26 March 1832.

## John West Memorial Lecture: Nick Brodie



Nick Brodie presented an excellent analysis of the Aboriginal section of John West's *History of Tasmania* at the 35<sup>th</sup> John West Memorial Lecture on 19 March 2023.

West's *History*, published in 1852, provides a comprehensive overview of the first fifty years of British settlement. However, Brodie warns us that the use of primary and secondary sources is blurred. It appears that West depended on earlier histories of Tasmania, for example by Henry Melville, and even accuses him of plagiarism. The problem with using secondary sources is that stories tend to be repeated so often that they become 'fact' in the minds of readers. Nick says that Tasmanians have a love affair with mythic histories. One such 'fact' that piqued his

interest in Tasmanian history was the mediaeval window said to be installed in the Buckland Church. Nick's thorough research proved that it dates from the nineteenth century – but who wants to ruin a good story? John West's passion was to end the transportation of convicts to Tasmania. He wrote with intent – an anti-transportation text that suggests degenerate convicts caused most of the violence and atrocities against the Aboriginal people. Nick suggests historians shouldn't rely too much on West's version of the so-called "Black War". [Read the lecture on our website](#) and listen to the [City Park Radio podcast](#).

## April Meeting

**Stephen Cornish, Anzac theme, *The accidental historian***

**Sunday 16 April 2023 – 2pm, Meeting Room, Queen Victoria Museum, Inveresk**



Commander Stephen Cornish RAN is a 6<sup>th</sup> generation Tasmanian. He is a graduate of the Royal Military College, Duntroon, the City University Business School, London, and the Australian National University. After a 14-year career as an artillery officer he qualified as a lawyer and transferred to the Navy Legal Branch as the Navy's operations and international lawyer. He is admitted as a practitioner in the Supreme Courts of Tasmania and New South Wales and in the High Court.

His career highlights as an operational lawyer included Australia's implementation of the 1982 Law of the Sea Convention and the ratification and implementation of the Additional Protocols to the Geneva conventions. He was active in training Navy members in the Laws of Armed Conflict and International Humanitarian Law. He was active with the Australian Red Cross in advancing its humanitarian law objectives. He was the operations

law adviser to Navy in the first Gulf War.

After he and Jill 'retired' to Wynyard in December 2015 he was invited to take on the role of a part time Assistant Inspector-General of the Australian Defence Force and remains so engaged today.

The presentation describes a journey kicked off by a scant piece of information, or rather a scrap of family folklore. His Grandfather's older brothers were part of the 1<sup>st</sup> AIF. The eldest, Staff Sergeant Cyril Parry was a paymaster and his second older brother, Gunner Athol Parry was killed on Gallipoli. At the outset of the journey – that's all he knew. The War was never talked about when he was growing up. But there was a constant reminder in his grandparent's home that sparked an interest.

He was fortunate to meet one of the men you will meet today in a nursing home in the 60s, but sadly was too young to realise the significance. Fortunately, his late Mother kept their letters which helped prepare for this lecture.

As the story unfolded there were many twists and turns and a few surprises, and indeed the odd similarity with his own military career. What was not much more than idle curiosity at first developed into a fascinating journey that continues today.

## May Meeting

### Maureen Martin Ferris & Sandra Duck, *Tasmanian Pictorial Church Index*

**Sunday 21 May 2023 – 2pm, Meeting Room, Queen Victoria Museum, Inveresk**

For the past 30 years, Sandra Duck and Maureen Martin Ferris have been photographing and researching Tasmanian churches for the Tasmanian Pictorial Church Index.

**Sandra Duck** joined the Genealogical Society, now The Tasmanian Family History Society, in 1985 as a Duty Officer for the Launceston Branch.

She later went on to transcribe and type indices for the following publications: *The Examiner*, Shipping, Walch's Almanacs and *Illustrated Tasmanian Mail*.

Today Sandra is involved in digesting over 50,000 information cards onto a data base for the Launceston Branch as well as collaborating with Maureen on the Tasmanian Pictorial Church Index.

**Maureen Martin Ferris** was born in Launceston and lived at Kings Meadows and Youngtown until she moved to Pontypool, Little Swanport on the East Coast in 2004.

For over 40 years, she has been researching Tasmanian history, with a special focus on East Coast history. Her efforts have led to the publication of several books and participation on the panel of the Tasmanian Family History Society's publication *Tasmanian Ancestry*. Collaborating with others, she has indexed Tasmanian church registers, shipping arrivals and departures. Currently, she holds the position of Senior Vice President and Research Officer of the Glamorgan Spring Bay Historical Society, having previously served as President. She is a member of the publishing committee.

Additionally, Maureen is a member of various historical societies, including the Tasmanian Historical Research Association, the Female Convict Research Centre, Digital History Tasmania, Launceston Historical Society, and the newly formed Launceston History Centre group. She is also a member of the Irish and Glasgow Historical Groups.

In 2007, she researched for and appeared on SBS' 'Who Do You Think You Are' Australian series (Kate Ceberano) as well as the 2013 BBC series 'Coast Australia' with Neil Oliver. She was a consultant on the BBC's 'Who Do You Think You Are' (Anne Reid) and helped Dr John Carter, a Canadian historian, on North American Political Prisoners.

As the inaugural curator of the East Coast Heritage Museum in Swansea, she was responsible for setting up the museum. Working for the Glamorgan Spring Bay Council from 2010 until her retirement in December 2022, and she also volunteered from 2007-2010. She is administrator of several Facebook pages and groups, such as Tasmanian Genealogy and History, Tasmanian Convicts, and Tasmanian Pictorial Church Index.

Maureen is now working for herself as a private museum, history, and genealogical consultant.



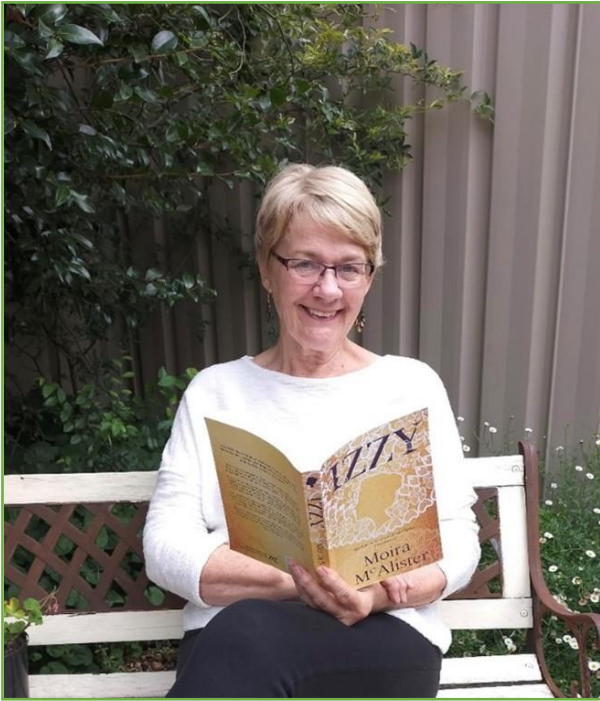
Elegant row of former churches in Frederick Street, Launceston, 2021. Photo: M Sargent

## June Meeting

**Moira McAlister, *The Tricky Business of Fact and Fiction***

**Sunday 18 June 2023 – 2pm, Meeting Room, Queen Victoria Museum, Inveresk**

In 2015 Moira McAlister published the biography of her great, great grandfather, Dr Barry Cotter who was the first doctor in Melbourne as a website ([drbarrycotter.com](http://drbarrycotter.com)). His was an interesting story, full of adventure and surprises and well documented in newspapers and public records. Moira noticed too, some fascinating inconsistencies regarding his wife, Inez Seville Fitzgerald. Inez, like most women of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, left little evidence of her life and Moira decided that in order to tell her story, she would have to employ fiction. Based heavily on fact, but always in the interests of great storytelling, Moira published *Izzy* in November 2021. Treading the path between fact and fiction is always a tricky business.



Launceston played a vital part in the story of Dr Barry Cotter and Inez and features in both the factual and fictitious accounts. Dr Cotter left from Launceston with John Batman in November 1835 on the *Norval* to form the first, and illegal, settlement of Port Phillip on behalf of the Port Phillip Association. Inez was also a resident of Launceston as she describes in a later letter that she was companion to Mrs Arundel Wright, wife of the first post-master in Launceston and governess to their children.

Moira has spent most of her life in the classroom, either as a teacher, a teacher-librarian or as a student. It was while studying for her Masters in Writing and Literature that Moira first developed an interest in writing historical fiction. Moira also writes book reviews, short stories, rhyming stories and stories for children, some of which can be found on her website ([moiramcalister.com](http://moiramcalister.com)). Moira is part of a large and busy family and she and her husband enjoy the best of all worlds, alternating between Canberra and Batemans Bay on the beautiful south coast of NSW.

Moira's book *Izzy* will be available for sale at the meeting for \$25. Cash or credit card accepted.

## LHS Activities 2023

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 \$5 each. Bring some cash for a chance to win a prize in the raffle. The meetings will no longer be livestreamed on Zoom, so come along to learn about our history.

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/>

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| <b>16 July</b>      | <b>Jacqui Triffitt, <i>On the front foot: The Rise of Tasmanian Women's Cricket</i></b>               |
| <b>20 August</b>    | <b>Tabatha Badger, <i>Florence Perrin</i></b>   |
| <b>17 September</b> | <b>Marion Sargent, Mead, Smith, von Stieglitz Lecture <i>JM Haenke's architectural legacy</i></b>     |
| <b>15 October</b>   | <b>Kate Bagnall, <i>Tasmanian Chinese History &amp; Heritage</i></b>                                  |
| <b>6 November</b>   | <b>East Tamar Excursion (Monday long weekend)</b>   |
| <b>19 November</b>  | <b>Michelle Blake, <i>Virtual tour of local heritage in Launceston: Why we live the way we do</i></b> |

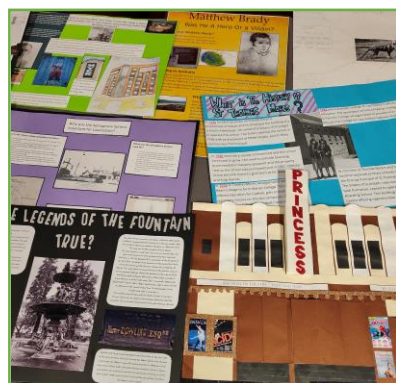
## New Members

The President and Executive welcome to our Society the following new members: Sophie Appley, Graham Baird, Elleni Caragianides, Geoffrey Harris, Julie Harris, Helen & Carmel Kiely, Charmaine Lowe, Iris Meek, Necia Ruthven, and Roger Taylor.

## Membership Form

Membership forms are available on our website in both PDF and Word formats. Sunday meetings are free for LHS members, and we have raised the visitor's fee to \$5. Renewals for 2023 were due on 31 December 2022. We encourage members to pay by direct debit into our Commonwealth Bank of Australia account: BSB 067-003 A/C No. 2804 8638, by cheque in the mail, or cash at the next meeting you attend.

## Primary History Prize 2023



The LHS Primary History Prize opens after Easter and completed entries are due on 20 October 2023. Students from grades 3 to 6 are invited to create posters, projects, essays or 3-minute videos depending on their grade. We encourage students to pose a question related to the history of Tasmania or Launceston. Some suggestions are a person, an object, a place, a building, or family history. The judging criteria will concentrate on originality of topic, accuracy of research, acknowledgment of sources, and visual and language presentation. Vouchers from Petrarch's Bookshop will be awarded to the best entries. Guidelines and entry forms will be sent to schools and placed on the LHS website.

For further information contact Carol Fuller: phone 0419 116 636 or email [carol.fuller@bigpond.com](mailto:carol.fuller@bigpond.com).

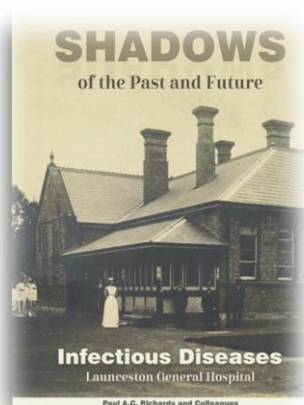
## Other Events of Interest

**George Town & District Historical Society:** The Grove, George Town, on the third Monday of each month at 7.30pm. 17 April 2023, Alice Stedman, *Restoration of old buildings*; 15 May 2023, Anne Batt, *William Gardner & John Cameron families at Newnham*; 19 June 2023, Ros Lawrence, *The Lawrence family in Tasmania*. Email: [info@qtdhs.com](mailto:info@qtdhs.com).

**National Book Council Tasmania:** Launceston Library, Level 2. Wednesday, 12 April 2023, 1.15pm, AGM + Todd Alexander, *Over the hill and up the wall*. Members free; non-members \$5. RSVP: [nationalbookcounciltasmania@gmail.com](mailto:nationalbookcounciltasmania@gmail.com).

**Royal Society of Tasmania (Northern Branch):** Meeting Room, QV Museum, Inveresk on the fourth Sunday of each month at 1.30pm. 23 April 2023, Prof. Nick Shackel, *Liver Disease: The Good, the Bad, the Ugly*; 28 May 2023, Valeria Konyakova, *Artificial structures as marine habitats: challenges and opportunities*; 25 June 2023, Dr David Harris, *Hydrogen*.

**Tasmanian Historical Research Association:** Legacy Function Rooms, 159 Macquarie St, Hobart on the second Tuesday of each month at 8pm. 11 April 2023, Don Garden, *From another island far, far away: Tambora and Tasmania*; 9 May 2023, Alan Townsend, *Wallpaper and murder: luxury goods in nineteenth-century Tasmania and the demise of a paperhanger*; 13 June 2023, Eric Ratcliff, *A Tasmanian Life*. Email: [info@thra.org.au](mailto:info@thra.org.au).



**LGH Historical Committee:** Book launch at Foot and Playsted, 99-109 Charles Street, on Thursday, 18 May 2023 at 4.30pm. *Shadows of the Past and Future: Infectious diseases: Launceston General Hospital* edited by LHS member Dr Paul Richards with contributions from other members: Stefan Petrow, Julian Burgess, Catherine Pearce, Dianne Cassidy, Marion Sargent, and the late Barbara Valentine.

**The Marita Bardenhagen Memorial Award for Local History** is a biennial prize acknowledging outstanding original research in the field of local history with significant Tasmanian content. Entries open on 14 June 2023 and close 30 September 2023. How to apply: Application forms are available from Dr Dianne Snowden AM at [dsnowden@tassie.net.au](mailto:dsnowden@tassie.net.au).

## Our History

These stories on Launceston's history and beyond have been contributed by our members. You are welcome to send articles of 475 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](#).

No	Date	Page	Author	<i>The Sunday Examiner</i> Title	Topic
270	12 Feb 2023	29	Nigel Burch	Marching girls the epitome of precision, pomp and pageantry	Our marching girls
271	19 Feb 2023	31	Nigel Burch	The day Launceston booed a queasy Nellie Melba	The day we booed Nellie Melba
272	26 Feb 2023	31	Nigel Burch	Peters Ice Cream factory expansion a boon for our city	The old Peters Ice Cream Factory
273	5 Mar 2023	29	Geoffrey Harris	Motorsport right at home among the north's homesteads	Longford Motorama
274	12 Mar 2023	31	Nigel Burch	Fearless aeronaut delivers spectacle of state's first flight	First flight in City Park
275	19 Mar 2023	31	Julian Burgess	Scottish spinners get the ball rolling in new Launceston mill	Patons & Baldwins: Skilled mill workers arrive from the UK
276	26 Mar 2023	27	Nigel Burch	Super-sized Santa had a special place in young hearts	Father Christmas in Launceston
277	2 Apr 2023	47	Dianne Cassidy	Re-emergence of colourful convict after 137 years	The 're-emergence' of John McStay after 137 years
278	9 Apr 2023		Nigel Burch		The March King visits – John Phillip De Sousa
279	16 Apr 2023		Nigel Burch		The debacle of the Dalmayne Colliery

### Membership Renewals Now Overdue

If you wish to remain a member and continue to receive this Newsletter, please renew your annual subscriptions for the Launceston Historical Society which were due on 31 December 2022. 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

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

### Deadline

Items for the next *Newsletter* should be sent to the editor by **1 July 2023** at [marionsargent@bigpond.com](mailto:marionsargent@bigpond.com) or PO Box 1296 LAUNCESTON TAS 7250.