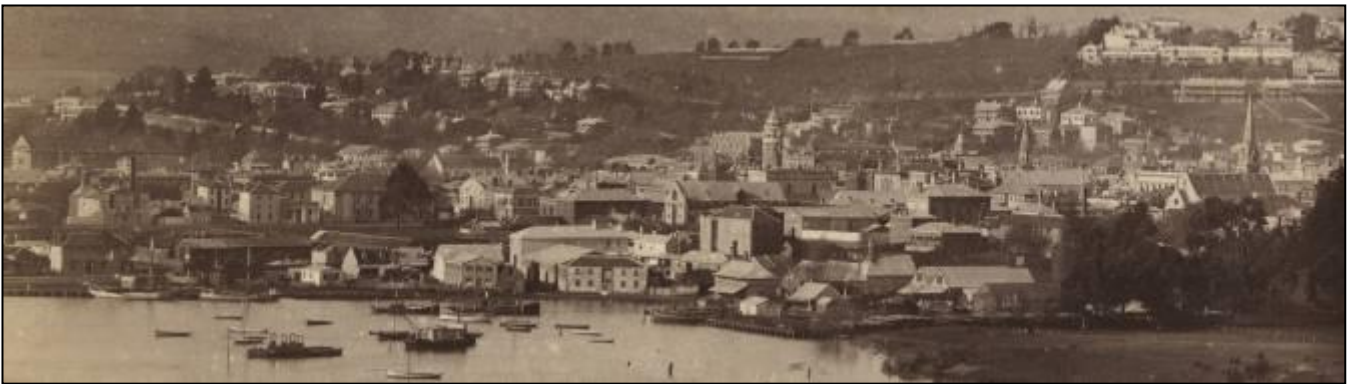


# Launceston Historical Society Inc.

*"Bringing together people with an interest in history"*

## Annual Report for year ending 31 December 2023



Alfred Coleman Bonner, 'Launceston from Trevallyn', 12 March 1890. TAHO Launceston, LPIC 21, NTCC Album 6, No 171

**Presented at its Annual General Meeting held at the  
Meeting Room, QVMAG Museum at Inveresk  
Sunday 18 February 2024**

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## Introduction

As President of the Launceston Historical Society (LHS), and on behalf of the members and visitors here today, I acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land on which this event is taking place.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is my privilege to present the Annual Report of the Launceston Historical Society for the financial year ending 31 December 2023.

## John West Memorial Lecture



On Sunday 19 March 2023 Dr Nick Brodie presented the 35<sup>th</sup> John West Memorial Lecture with the topic *The Long Shadow of John West's War*. This excellent lecture was well received by an appreciative audience at the Meeting Room at the Queen Victoria Museum at Inveresk. This was the first year that we changed the venue and time to our usual Sunday slot instead of at night at the University. It worked well for everyone concerned.

This year the John West Memorial lecturer, Dr Kristyn Harman, social historian, author, and Professor of History at UTAS will be speaking on the topic *A good riddance: The*

*Inception of Criminal Deportation in Colonial Australia* at the Meeting Room, QV Museum on 17 March 2024 at 2pm. President Marion Sargent is pictured with Dr Nick Brodie.

## Monthly meetings

We once again hosted a variety of fascinating speakers who presented papers at our monthly Sunday meetings in 2023. At the Annual General Meeting in February our guest speaker, Geoff McLean, gave an enlightening talk on the significance of the Tamar Valley/Launceston region for the Tasmanian Aboriginal people. In April Steve Cornish presented an interesting address on a journey into his family's military history, and in May Sandra Duck, Maureen Martin Ferris and Toby Martin told us about their church indexing project.

In June Dr Moira McAlister presented an account of her great-great grandparents who ventured from Launceston to Port Phillip in the 1830s. In July Jacqui Triffitt gave a great talk on the rise of Tasmanian women's cricket and in August Tabatha Badger gave us an insight into the life of bushwalker and botanist Florence Perrin.

In September Marion Sargent presented the third Mead, Smith, von Stieglitz Memorial Lecture on Johannus Martyn Haenke who designed some significant buildings in Launceston. In October Prue McCausland told us about the Albert Hall and the Tasmanian Exhibition of 1891-92. The final speaker for the year, Michelle Blake, drew the largest audience with her presentation highlighting several residential areas of Launceston and the changes that have taken place over time.

We appreciate the support of the Queen Victoria Museum, Inveresk for making the meeting room available to us. And thank you also to Bent Eared Records who looked after our audio-visual needs. Our lectures have been recorded and will be available to listen to on our website.

## Executive Committee

The extent of events and activities conducted by the Historical Society would not be possible without the many hours of work done by a dedicated team of volunteers. Thank you to the members of the Executive Committee who have helped the Society continue to do so well.

In February 2023, all 11 committee members were re-elected: Marion Sargent (President, Newsletter, Our History series, website, Facebook and Launceston History Centre representative), Kelli Schultz (Vice-President and raffle), Leonie Prevost (Treasurer and Public Officer), Prue McCausland (Correspondence Secretary and History Prize), Catherine Pearce (Minute Secretary), Karin L  (Publicity Officer), Bradley Wood (History Prize and YouTube), Sue Bell (archaeology), Wendy Roberts (Representative on the City of Launceston Heritage Advisory Committee), Carol Fuller (History Prize) and Phil Page (Launceston History Centre representative).

Kelli Schultz is stepping down from the committee after seven years of valuable service.

## History Prizes

The 16<sup>th</sup> annual **Primary History Prize** in 2023 received 93 entries submitted by five schools: Evandale, Mowbray Heights, and Exeter Primary Schools, St Thomas More's, and Launceston Christian School. A total of \$673 in book vouchers from Petrarch's Bookshop was awarded to 17 children. Every student received a certificate of participation which was presented at their school assemblies. A selection of entries was displayed at the Launceston Library.

Thank you to Carol Fuller, Brad Wood, and Prue McCausland for organising and judging the awards.

The annual \$500 Launceston Historical Society History Prize was awarded to Lena Diddams at the **University of Tasmania** for the best History essay written in 2023 by a student enrolled at Launceston in first year History.

## Spring Excursion along the East Tamar

A group of 23 members enjoyed our Spring excursion along the East Tamar on 6 November 2023. We visited Hillwood Berries, Lefroy, George Town, Low Head, and the St Matthias' Church at Windermere. Steve Radford provided historical commentary along the way. We hired a bus from Calow's Coaches this year.



## Archaeology Group

The archaeology group had two digs at the Perth Gaol site during the year. In November, 18 members plus seven students from St Patrick's College spent a week excavating the old Perth Gaol. A second dig was arranged over four days in December for another 12 members. The gaol was in operation from at least 1829 to 1844.

We found large stone foundations around the gaol and a brick-lined drain. Most participants uncovered something during the dig, which included nails, buttons, pipes, broken glass, ceramic, and surprisingly, some jewellery. The most interesting find was an 1827 coin. Everyone enjoyed themselves and some are either doing or planning to do, archaeology courses.

The dig was made possible by the generosity of the landowner who let us dig up his lawn and vegetable garden (it was all backfilled) and our archaeologist Darren Watton of Southern Archaeology who gave his time to supervise the dig and helped participants find out more about archaeology. We thank Darren for his generosity and his shared expertise. He will be preparing a detailed report for all participants and the owner. Darren and I will be giving a talk at the LHS meeting on 17 November 2024.

John Dent, convenor, LHS Archaeology Group

## **Launceston History Centre**

The Launceston History Centre was formed at a public meeting held on 23 May 2022. The incorporated body brings together three independent history groups – the Launceston Historical Society, Tasmanian Family History Society (Launceston Branch), and Friends of the Launceston Mechanics' Institute. The committee meets every two months under the chair of President John Dent. We are still looking for a suitable premises.

## **Community Outreach**

The Society has assisted individuals and community organisations in various ways throughout the year. I gave seven talks to other community groups, including presenting my lecture on the architect JM Haenke at the Ipswich Library in October.

In 2023 seven members submitted articles on various aspects of the region's past for the popular 'Our History' series in *The Sunday Examiner*. They are also available to read on our Facebook page. At the end of December these numbered 316, and contributions continue to be submitted after six years. Nigel Burch is still the most prolific contributor with 34 stories in 2023.

## **Publications**

The two free audio apps with 'Cya on the Road' – *A Walk Along Historic Cameron Street* and *Launceston City Walk* – were viewed a total of 16,885 times during 2023, well up on last year.

We thank the staff at Simon Wood's office for printing the Newsletters and Annual Report free of charge.

## **Membership**

The Historical Society had 182 financial members at the end of 2023, including 33 new people. One member, Judith Hollingsworth, sadly passed away in 2023.

## **Conclusion**

Once again, thank you to my dedicated Committee whose expertise and energy ensures that this Society remains strong. And thank you also to members who attend our meetings and excursions and support the Society in so many ways.

Marion Sargent  
President 2023