

# **Launceston Historical Society Inc.**

## **Annual Report for year ending April 2012**

**Presented at its Annual General Meeting held at the Meeting Room,  
QVMAG Museum at Inveresk,  
Saturday 21 April 2012**

### ***Marion Sargent***

As acting president and vice-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 the 31 January 2012, but including events up until today's Annual General Meeting. It is with great sadness and regret that due to ill health our president Dr Marita Bardenhagen is not able to deliver the Annual Report today.

#### **Monthly Meetings**

Once again we have had an interesting and varied number of speakers who gave their time and expertise to present papers at our monthly Sunday meetings. In 2011 these included Dr Angela McGowan, who presented a paper on historical archaeology in Tasmania. Dr Jillian Koshin spoke on Lamont's Cottage, which is about to undergo a transformation into a ski museum and café. We look forward to the publication of Dr Anne Neale's guide to Launceston's architecture; and to Associate Professor Hamish Maxwell-Stewart's research into the health of Tasmania's convicts.

Robyn Lake told of her research on convict cabinetmakers; Andrew Gregg presented a paper on the conflict between Roderic O'Connor and William Bryan; while Steve Radford celebrated 150 years of the Holyman Empire. The year ended with Richard Mulvaney presenting the history and development, over the last 170 years, of the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery.

In February this year Jai Paterson regaled us with tales of Tasmanians in New Zealand. Thank you to all those wonderful people who entertained us with their particular topics of historical interest.

#### **Excursions**

The occasional excursion adds another dimension to our knowledge of local history. In February 2011 Marion Sargent led a tour of Carr Villa, presenting the site's history, which goes well beyond its use as a cemetery.

In October Steve Radford organized and conducted a fascinating tour to Oatlands. Thank you also to Terese Binns who drove the bus; and to our hosts, members of the Oatlands District Historical Society.

I shall include here excursions which were held during the Macquarie Celebrations in December. Although the Society did not organize any of these events, some of our members assisted in other capacities.

#### **Archaeology Group**

John Dent continues to chair the Archaeology Group's meetings every second month. A working bee was undertaken at Kerry Lodge in January 2012. Twenty-nine artefacts were recorded and photographed at the 1830-40s convict accommodation, probation station and hiring depot. Thank you to all of those who took part in this work. John hopes to organise excavations at a couple of new sites in the future.

## **The Examiner-John West Memorial Lecture**

Professor Cassandra Pybus delivered the 2011 *Examiner*-John West Memorial Lecture outlining the colourful life of Gilbert Robertson.

In 2012 Dr Carmen Lawrence spoke on *Development at any price? The case of Australia's Indigenous heritage*. Almost 200 people attended the lecture at the Sir Raymond Ferrall Centre at the University. Carmen was introduced by Martin Gilmour, Editor of *The Examiner*; and Professor Henry Reynolds offered a vote of thanks.

On both occasions we were grateful to *The Examiner* for its sponsorship and to the University for the use of its lecture theatre. Also, members of the Committee and other guests dined with Carmen at *Egremont* before the lecture. This was to be the final LHS event to be held at that special place before Marita and Alex sold it.

Currently, we are awaiting a response from our proposed lecturer for 2013. As the traditional date of the John West lecture clashes with the John Glover Art Prize opening night at Evandale, it has been necessary to change the date of the lecture to the third Friday in March.

## **Annual Symposium**

The Society's Annual Symposium, 'The Indian connection with Tasmania', held on 16 April 2011 at the QVMAG Museum at Inveresk, embraced six interesting papers. The keynote speaker, Dr James Broadbent, spoke on military, mercantile and family links with India. Linda Clark gave the audience an insight into the colonial trade with India, focussing on the cargo that was on board the *Sydney Cove*. Dr Paul Edwards regaled us with tales from his family which encompassed war, greed and love.

Dr Marian Walker told how the salubrious climate of Tasmania was exploited to attract settlers and tourists from India. Dr Nic Haygarth related the story of Theophilus Jones who had come here from being a harbour pilot in Bombay. The final speaker, Lionel Morrell, demonstrated the influence many Anglo-Indian settlers had on Tasmania. These papers have been published in the 2011 *Papers & Proceedings*, along with Cassandra Pybus' John West lecture.

## **History Prize**

The 2011 Launceston Historical Society History Prize focussed on the topic 'Australian Women Building Our Nation'. Eighty-four students – from grades 3 to 6 from four Launceston schools – submitted 79 entries, nearly double the number from the previous year.

The standard was so high this year that the judges decided to award 21 prizes with a total \$775.00 worth of book vouchers. The Eric & Patricia Ratcliff Prize for outstanding research and presentation was awarded to Anneliese Gulliver, a grade 4 student from the West Launceston Primary School for her PowerPoint entry on May Gibbs.

The Launceston Historical Society Prize of \$400 has been established at the University of Tasmania. The prize is awarded for the best History essay written during the year, as determined by the History lecturers at the Launceston campus. Those eligible are first-year History students from Launceston who are intending to make History their degree major.

Thank you to Carol Fuller for organising the History Prize and for the time and effort of the judges: Leonie Prevost, Andrew Gregg and Robyn Jones.

## **Executive Committee**

The events and activities conducted by the Historical Society would not be possible without the many hours of work performed by a dedicated team of volunteers. The Executive Committee in particular must be thanked, but also other members who have contributed in various ways.

It has been a particularly difficult year for our president, Dr Marita Bardenhagen, who once again has been through many trials with her health. Despite this, Marita continued to give advice and directions from her sickbed, demonstrating her passion and enthusiasm for history, coupled with her devotion to the Society.

- Marion Sargent has presided over the committee meetings and Sunday talks since September 2011, as well as continuing to produce the newsletter, publicise events, oversee changes to the website, and other activities;
- Leonie Prevost once again has proven to be a competent correspondence secretary and History Prize judge;
- Catherine Pearce stepped in as the minute secretary in September when we urgently required someone in this position to replace Marita, who had been undertaking these duties;
- Jon Addison has maintained the Society's links with the QVMAG;
- Gus Green is the Society's heritage representative for the Launceston City Council and has been instrumental in having a cabinet constructed for the Alexander Patent Racket Company memorabilia to be housed at the PCYC;
- Mary Hoggett has retained responsibility for organising afternoon teas at our Sunday meetings;
- Carol Fuller, a dedicated treasurer for the past five years, is resigning from the Committee. However, she will remain in her role as organiser of the History Prize;
- Jenny Gill is resigning from the committee, on which she has served for 20 years. However, she will continue to assist Carol with the History Prize;
- Andrew Gregg, who has liaised with the University of Tasmania, was a judge of the History Prize. He is standing down as a Committee member;
- Terese Binns has helped with catering and driving the bus on excursions. She will not renominate for the Committee this year;
- Barney Reynolds resigned as our webmaster in February.

Special thanks also must be extended to our Auditor Karen Frost, who offers her services free of charge; to John Dent, who chairs the Archaeology Group and organises field trips; to Robyn Jones for judging the History Prize; and to Prue McCausland for spending many hours editing and formatting the 2011 *Papers & Proceedings*.

## **Publications**

In the last two Annual Reports the president stated that the *Way Back When* book was nearing completion and soon would be published jointly by the LHS, George Town & District Historical Society and the West Tamar Historical Society. Unfortunately, this still has not eventuated. Now our Society has handed over our share of funds for the publication of this book, having been assured that it will be printed shortly.

The publication of the long-awaited Fuller Papers will be progressed after *Way Back When* is completed.

As already mentioned, the 2011 *Papers & Proceedings* have been printed. Owing to the change in format in today's seminar, we will not be publishing *Papers & Proceedings* in 2012. Instead, Dr Carmen Lawrence's John West lecture and this Annual Report will be published on our new website.

Thanks must go to Phil and Matthew Stephens of StephensCreative who are helping us with the transition to the new WordPress website. It will be more interactive than the previous one – with a search facility and facebook.

I also thank Brian Wightman's office staff for printing the *Newsletter* free of charge.

## **Partnerships**

The activities of the Historical Society have been facilitated by the support and relationships we have with other organisations in the community.

*The Examiner* has been generous in advertising our Sunday talks. The number of people

attending increases dramatically when an article appears in the paper, such as the one by Alison Andrews on Steve Radford's talk on the Holymans. *The Examiner* is also the major sponsor for *The Examiner*-John West Memorial Lecture, and we say 'thank you' to our own newspaper for its continued support in providing transport and accommodation for each lecturer.

The 2011 Lecture was held once again at the University of Tasmania, and we thank them for providing the Sir Raymond Ferrall Centre lecture theatre free of charge as part of their community sponsorship.

A close relationship also exists with Launceston LINC, where we hold our committee meetings. Perhaps it has not passed unnoticed that the vice-president, correspondence secretary and the minute secretary, all work at the LINC, and committee member Terese Binns used to work there.

We appreciate the generous support of the Museum for providing this room for our monthly meetings and the helpful staff who attend to our every need. I also take the opportunity to thank Gavin Devine from Tasco Sound who provides technical support and records our meetings.

### **Award**

It is my privilege to offer formal congratulations to Barbara Valentine on having received an OAM in the Australia Day Honours. This award celebrates her outstanding service to the community, through the preservation of Launceston's history, and to the museums and galleries sector. Barbara has been a Launceston Historical Society member for many years.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, once again 'thank you' to Committee members, without whom this Society would not function. And also to the regular members and guests who support the Society's activities by attending our meetings, lectures, excursions and seminars.

As the Launceston Historical Society heads towards its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, which we will celebrate in October, the Committee looks forward to another exciting year of 'Bringing together people with an interest in history'.

Marion Sargent, Acting President, LHS