

# **Launceston Historical Society Inc.**

# **Newsletter No 141**

September 2013

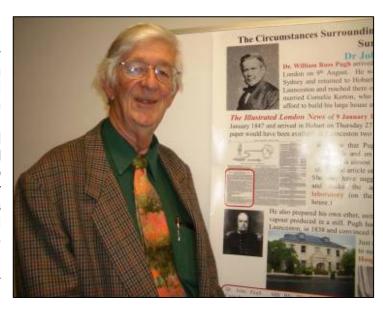
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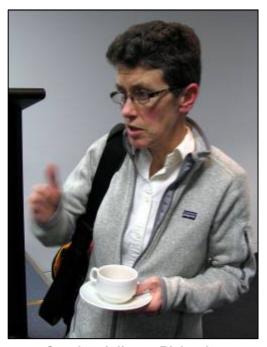
"Bringing together people with an interest in history"

### Walking with Dr Pugh

The second Pugh Day lecture, presented by Dr John Paull on 16 June 2013, was a resounding success. A capacity audience was enthralled by tales of the walk Dr Pugh undertook from Hobart to Launceston with his companion Harry Nicholson in February 1836. They stayed with several settlers on the journey. Pugh had been presented with a choice of career to pursue – medicine or mutton. Fortunately for Launceston he chose to set up a doctor's practice. Parts of Pugh's diary were published in the *Illustrated Tasmanian Mail* on 6 December 1934. An article in *The Examiner* on 17 June 2013 wrongly states that this was a Royal Society lecture!



Pugh Day speaker, Dr John Paull. Photo: M Sargent



Speaker Julianne Richards.

#### **War Service Homes in Newstead**

On 21 July 2013 fifty people attended Julianne Richard's thoroughly-researched talk which gave a moving insight into the lives of returned servicemen in Launceston after WWI. Julianne is collating information about the lives of the first returned servicemen who lived in a cluster of War Service Homes in David, Abbott and Malabar streets, Newstead. A list of these men and their wives is included in this newsletter. Julianne is keen to talk to anyone who has information or photographs of these people, their families and their homes. The *Home from War* project is being undertaken by volunteers for the National Trust of Australia (Tasmania) with assistance from the Commonwealth Government's *Your Community Heritage* program.

Contact Julianne by email <u>gillings.richards@bigpond.com</u> or telephone 0407 055 111.

#### LAUNCESTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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War Service Homes under construction. Weekly Courier, 15 April 1920 page 21.

#### The first people to live in the War Service Homes in David, Abbott and Malabar streets, Newstead

Hazel and Melville Goodman
Myrtle and Percy Westbrook
Jessie and Dennis Beckett

Jack Westbrook

Philby and William Conlan Mary and William Everett

Leonard Smith

Isla and Albert Lester

Caroline and Timothy Heath

Florence and Ronald Stewart

Annie and William Searle Margaret and Charles Chilcott

Lucy and William Wright

Gwen and William Rigney

Helen and George Every Mary and Edgar Barnard

Margaret and John Hall

Doris and John McGannon Dorothy and George Riley

James Welsh

Florence and Phillip Welch

Edward Fox

Maud and Robert Coningsby Dora and Norman Colson

Doris and Edward Whyman

Emma Adams

Elizabeth and Percy Simmonds

Lily Conway

Hannah and Charles Illman Vera and Malcolm Spottswood

Eva and David McDonald Kathleen and William Moir

Elvie and William Williams

May and John Edwards

Winifred and Norman Swinton

Mabel and John Henry Millie and Leslie Beckett



Jill Cassidy and speaker Dr Alison Alexander.
Photo: M Sargent.

#### The Ambitions of Jane Franklin

Dr Alison Alexander presented her talk on 18 August 2013. The audience was intrigued to discover that Jane Franklin deplored the usual pastimes expected of women. One of her ambitions was to live life to the full, which she did. The other was to make her husband famous. The explorer and ex-governor of Van Diemen's Land, Sir John Franklin, had led an expedition to find the Northwest Passage, from which he never returned. Jane devoted ten years of her life trying to find out what happened to him. Although he had not achieved his goal, Jane had statues of Sir John erected with the false claim that he was the "Discoverer of the Northwest Passage".

# September Talk

### Rohan Wilson: Fictionalising the Launceston Railway Riots of 1874

**Sunday 15 September 2013 – 2.00pm** at the Meeting Room, QVMAG Museum at Inveresk.

When the Launceston and Western Railway Company collapsed in 1873, the Innes state government imposed a levy on every citizen living near the Launceston-Deloraine line in order to fund a bail-out – an action that announced the emergence of the new age of capitalism on the island. While familiar enough to us today, at the time a bail-out was considered radical, so much so that it caused rioting and other acts of civil disobedience in Launceston and the outlying districts.

The Tasmania of 1874 was a post-frontier society experiencing rapid change. The government intervened more and more into the lives of its citizens and, with the emergence of a professional police force, found ever more authoritarian ways to control them. But the old frontier sensibilities would not be left behind easily, and the deep resentment felt by many towards the government was brought to a head when the railway levy was enforced.

My new novel examines from ground level the events of the riots and the persistent Vandiemonian spirit that sparked them. What can fiction reveal that history cannot? What are the pitfalls and possibilities of writing fiction about the past?

Rohan Wilson is the author of the award-winning novel *The Roving Party*, based on John Batman's brutal search for Aborigines in Van Diemen's Land in 1829.

#### **October Talk**

# Eric Ratcliff: The sinister steeples of Alexander North

Sunday 20 October 2013 – 2.00pm, at the Meeting Room, QVMAG Museum at Inveresk.

Alexander North, who practised chiefly in Launceston, was one of the few outstandingly original architects in Australia during the stylistic period now commonly called *Federation*. His work frequently includes features that represent an extreme expression of established forms, and draw attention to some little-noticed characteristics of the period. Prominent among these is a series of church spires that North designed between 1893 and 1927 that evoke peculiar associations in the minds of many who notice them. Those associations, which depend largely on graphic works that were published during the same era, were far from the architect's intention. They provide evidence for an *associationist* theory of aesthetics that has been largely superseded, leaving a salutary reminder that architectural historians, like all writers of history, must seek to see through the eyes of their period and not the projections of hindsight.

## **November Talk**

# Stephen Dando-Collins: A warts and all look at Sir Henry Parkes, and Australian colossus

**Sunday 17 November 2013 – 2.00pm,** at the Meeting Room, QVMAG Museum at Inveresk.

Born in Launceston, and spending several decades out of the state, Stephen returned to Tasmania in 2004, and lives and writes in a former nunnery in Beaconsfield.

He is the author of 30 books, mostly historical, but including several adults' and children's novels. His subjects range across the history of ancient Greece and Rome, Britain, America, France and Australia; and his works have been translated into a dozen languages – from Italian to Korean – and most recently, Russian.

Of his Australian histories, *Pasteur's Gambit* won a Queensland Premier's Literary Award and was shortlisted for the Victorian Premier's Literary Awards. *Captain Bligh's Other Mutiny* is a 'justly acclaimed' contribution to Australian history in the view of noted historian Professor Ross Fitzgerald. And former Governor General of Australia, Major General Michael Jeffery, has described *Crack Hardy*, Stephen's bestselling World War One memoir of his three Tasmanian great-uncles the Searle brothers of Westbury, as 'a beautifully scripted expose of one family's experience of war'. The *Sydney Morning Herald* calls it 'a fine and important book.'

Stephen and his wife Louise are co-founders of the Festival of Golden Words, a writers' festival which will run in the Tamar Valley for the first time in March next year. The Festival will have a strong history stream, with historical authors including Professor Henry Reynolds (UTAS) and Professor Peter Stanley (ANU) in attendance.

At the November meeting of the Launceston Historical Society, Stephen will be discussing his latest book on Australian history, the biography *Sir Henry Parkes, the Australian Colossus*, which is to be published by Random House in November. In a foreword to the book, the Governor of New South Wales, Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir, says, in part, 'The detail of Parkes' legacy to the nation is recounted magnificently in this fine biography.'

# Launceston Historical Society's 25th Anniversary

The Launceston Historical Society was formed to recognise both the bi-centenary of Australia (1788-1988) and the centenary of the city of Launceston (1888-1988). The late Patricia Ratcliff OAM was the driving force behind the formation of the Society, which was launched at a public meeting held at the Town Hall on 25 October 1988. It is fitting that the speaker at our meeting on 20 October this year is Dr Eric Ratcliff who will present a paper on church steeples designed by architect Alexander North during the Federation period. Champagne and a special celebration cake will be served for afternoon tea.

The newly formed Society held its first function at the Northern Regional Library (now Launceston LINC) on Tuesday evening, 29 November 1988. Paul Brunton, manuscript librarian at the State Library of NSW, presented a lecture and exhibition on *The Letters of Newton Fowell 1768-1790*.

The original executive committee members were: president, Dr Charles Fahey; vice-president, Richard Lewandowski; secretary and interim treasurer, Patricia Ratcliff; and minute secretary, Dorothy Rosemann. The committee consisted of Graeme Beams, Dennis Hodgkinson and Adam Tement. The Society's headquarters were located at the QVMAG's Maritime Museum in the Johnstone and Wilmot building on the corner of Cimitiere and St John streets (now '1842'). Membership was \$10.00 for adults and \$5.00 concession. By November 1988 there were 25 members.

Professor Henry Reynolds was the inaugural John West Memorial Lecturer. His paper, *Tasmania's Forgotten Treaty*, was presented on Thursday 16 March 1989 at the new lecture theatre at the TSIT (now UTAS). We still hold this annual event in the same theatre with continuing sponsorship by *The Examiner*. The Pilgrim Hall was the venue for the first symposium on Saturday 18 March 1989. The topic was *Launceston in the 1840s*.

After 25 years, the Launceston Historical Society continues to be a vibrant and active group in the community. Patricia Ratcliff's vision of "bringing together people with an interest in history" has been perpetuated with our monthly talks, annual lecture and excursions keeping the history of our region alive.

# **Original Committee Members**

Four of our current members were part of the original Interim General Committee in October 1988. These are: Jenny Gill, Rhonda Hamilton, Eric Ratcliff and Noel Shaw. Congratulations on 25 years' involvement with the Society!

# History in our Streets

As part of our celebration to mark the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Society, we are facilitating the reprinting of the 1988 edition of *History in our Streets* written by esteemed member Dr John Morris, and Donald Morris. Published 25 years ago, 500 copies will be produced with an updated supplement and a new cover. We hope to launch the book before Christmas 2013. The cost will be \$34.95.

#### Members' Column

**New Members:** The President and Executive welcome to our Society the following new members: Glenn Chintock, Graham Kearney, Ros Lewis, Terry Neal, Joan North, Margaret Patterson, Peter Voss and Timothy Watson.

**Spring Excursion to Forth:** See the notice and reply slip on page 6 for information about the day trip to the historic village of Forth on **Sunday 13 October 2013**. Numbers are limited to 23, so don't delay in responding. Cost is \$27.00 per person. Meet the bus at the car park behind the RSL Club on the corner of Wellington and Eardley streets before 9.30am. The estimated time of return is 4.30pm.

Archaeology Group: Enquiries to John Dent, email: john.dent@pda.com.au.

#### Other Items and Events of Interest

**Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery: Peddle Chairs** The term "Peddle chair" has been bandied about for years in Tasmania in reference to a Windsor chair made in Tasmania and often associated with the Railways. It is Tasmania's best known antique and has touched the lives of many Tasmanians, not just antique furniture collectors.

George Peddle's name is well-known. This exhibition and the accompanying film use new research to introduce into the story a forgotten figure: his brother-in-law Harry Hearn who also made many of the "Peddle chairs". It illustrates the traditional craft of chair making and celebrates the successful mix of business and craft evidenced by the two men who created the Peddle story. QVMAG Museum at Inveresk until 29 August 2014.

**George Town & District Historical Society:** Meetings are held at *The Grove*. 21 October 2013, AGM, Gus Green, *Duck Reach Power Station;* 18 November 2013, Bruce Crerar, *Early architecture and building materials*. Email: info@gtdhs.com. Web: www.gtdhs.com.

**Tasmanian Historical Research Association:** Meetings take place in the Royal Society Room, Custom House, TMAG, Hobart, starting at 8.00pm. 10 September 2013, Patsy Graham, 'A Church for the perishing heathen' – the challenges of building Holy Trinity Church, North Hobart, 1835-50; 8 October 2013, Meredith Hodgson, 'At home at Rosedale' – domestic life in Tasmania's Midlands in the 1850s; 12 November 2013, Gwenda Sheridan, Mount Wellington and the Norfolk Plains: a cultural landscape vision of Arcadia; 10 December 2013, Julia Clarke, Vagabonds and railway thieves: crime and criminals in mid-19<sup>th</sup> century Britain.

**National Book Council:** Guest speaker for the September meeting is Professor Richard Davis, author of *Travels of William Smith O'Brien*. Wednesday, 18 September 2013, 1.15pm Phil Leonard Room, Launceston LINC, Civic Square.

#### **Deadline**

Items for the next Newsletter should be sent to the Editor by **15 Jan 2014** at <a href="mailto:marionsargent@bigpond.com">marionsargent@bigpond.com</a> or PO Box 1296 LAUNCESTON TAS 7250.

## **Forth Excursion**

#### Sunday 13 October 2013

The Launceston Historical Society's Spring Excursion is to be hosted by the Forth Valley History Group

9.30 am	Veterans and Community Bus departs from the car park behind the RSL Club, corner of Wellington and Eardley streets.
11.00 am	Arrive at the Forth Community Hall, Main Road, Forth.  Morning tea will be provided by the Forth Valley History Group.
11.30 am	Tour of local cemeteries which contain the tombstones of well-known identities, including James Fenton, Sir Edward Braddon, Philosopher Smith and ex-army officers who retired to this area after serving in the British Army in India in the 1800s.
12.30 pm	Lunch at the Forth Community Hall. The History Group will provide soup, sandwiches, fruit, cake, biscuits, tea and coffee.
	Browse through folders of information and photographs relating to Forth's history.
2.00 pm	Re-board bus to see other places of interest, including Braddon's Lookout which has colourful displays and photographs relating to the local history.
2.45 pm	Afternoon tea at the Forth Community Hall.
3.15 pm	Board bus and return to Launceston.
4.30 pm	Proposed arrival back at RSL car park.

Please fill out and return the slip below with **\$27.00 per person** to: The Treasurer, Launceston Historical Society, PO Box 1296, Launceston, TAS 7250, or hand in at a Sunday meeting. Enquiries to Leonie Prevost: <a href="mailto:reliprevost@bigpond.com">reliprevost@bigpond.com</a> or Marion Sargent: <a href="mailto:marionsargent@bigpond.com">marionsargent@bigpond.com</a>, phone 6331 4890.

http://www.theadvocate.com.au/story/1483210/a-mosaic-of-history/

Forth Excursion, Sunday 13 October 2013	Return to:
	LHS Inc.
Name	PO Box 1296
Address	LAUNCESTON TAS 7250
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