

# Launceston Historical Society Inc.

## Newsletter No 158

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PO BOX 1296 LAUNCESTON TAS 7250

*Bringing together people since 1988 with an interest in history*

### Digging in a Flanders Field

On 9 April Bradley Wood gave a fascinating presentation on the archaeological dig he was accidentally involved with when remains of an Australian soldier from World War One were found in a Flanders field near Ypres in 2013. Meticulous research could not identify the digger, but he was most likely from the 19<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup> or 28<sup>th</sup> Battalions and killed in action on 9 October 1917. See *The Examiner* 10 April 2017, p. 7.



**Speaker Bradley Wood and Terese Binns dressed as a WW1 nurse.**

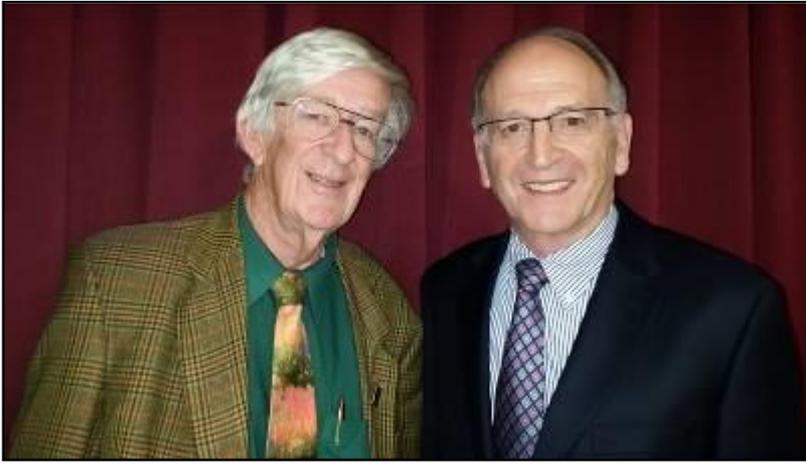


**Steven Jones relating stories of Royal Park.**

### Royal Park Precinct Walk

It was a perfect Autumn day on 21 May when eighty or so people enjoyed a video and talks by Amanda Smith at the old gaol site at Launceston College before walking around Royal Park listening to snippets of historical stories from Committee members. The many layers of history included the Military Barracks which became the Invalid Depot and gardens, treadmill, Wellington Square School, Court House, Victoria Baths,

Launceston Technical College, Museum, Cenotaph, King Edward VII statue, A.B. Biggs' observatory, sporting clubs, gardens, flood levee and the Bathurst Street extension. Afternoon tea and a photographic presentation compiled by Catherine Pearce were enjoyed later at Launceston College. This event was part of the National Trust Heritage Festival. An excellent article by Julia Hoffner was published in *The Examiner Weekender* on 27 May 2017, on pages 23, 26 & 27, *Royal Revolution: A Park fit for a Royal Tale*. An historical timeline of Royal Park and its surrounds can be found on the Launceston Historical Society's website: <http://launcestonhistory.org.au/activities/history-walks/>



Dr John Paull with Prof. Milton Cohen at the Pugh Day Lecture.

### What would Pugh say?

A very successful Pugh Day was enjoyed by nearly 80 people at the QVMAG on 18 June. Professor Milton Cohen, a specialist pain medicine physician from Sydney, delivered an amusing lecture on pain management with reference to what Dr William Russ Pugh might have said (or done) 170 years ago. Dr Pugh was the first person to administer ether as an anaesthetic in Australia, right here in Launceston.

## July Talk

**Jenny Gill: *The controversial clock of St John's Anglican Church – Why was it so?***

**Sunday 16 July 2017 – 2pm at the Meeting Room, Queen Victoria Museum at Inveresk**

Jenny Gill has many passions within her research into Launceston's history. One of these surrounds St John's Church, its fabric and its people.

Jenny's fascination with the history of Launceston began while working as Archivist for St John's Church, at a time when the convict tower needed clearing out. Later she was Archivist for the Launceston Church Grammar School for 19 years. Jenny has presented several papers for the Launceston Historical Society and other local groups.



## August Talk

**Louise Zarmati: *Why do kids hate Australian history, and what are we doing about it?***

**Sunday 20 August 2017 – 2pm at the Meeting Room, Queen Victoria Museum at Inveresk**

What are kids learning about in history today? How much do they know about Australian history, and how much *should* they know? In this presentation, we will examine recent research on kids' attitudes to learning Australian history, and discover what they're learning in the new Australian Curriculum. Find out what young teachers know (and don't know) about Australian history, and test your own knowledge with a fun, (and revealing) history quiz.

**Dr Louise Zarmati** has worked as a secondary history teacher, archaeologist and museum educator. She is currently a lecturer in Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Tasmania where she enjoys the challenge of teaching pre-service teachers how to teach history.



## Advance notice of LHS activities for 2017

Launceston Historical Society meetings are held at the meeting room, Queen Victoria Museum, Inveresk, on Sundays at 2pm, unless otherwise notified.

- 17 September      **Guy Burns & Eric Sargent**, *Clytie & Me* (Audio-visual presentation)
- 15 October        **Barbara Hatley**, *History of amateur theatre groups in Launceston*
- 19 November     **Christina Henri**, *Engaging the convict legacy: art's role as a means of understanding*

## Members' Column

### New members:

The President and Executive welcome to our Society the following new members: Michael Grove, Graham and Brenda Kent

### Archaeology Group:

Email enquiries to John Dent: [john.dent@pda.com.au](mailto:john.dent@pda.com.au).

## Major Thomas Ryan

By Barbara Valentine

Major Thomas Ryan of the 50th, or The Queen's Own Regiment, was appointed Commandant of Launceston in December 1835, remaining in command until 1839.

Before he departed Launceston in June to join the headquarters of his regiment in Sydney, he was presented with a farewell Address by 55 prominent citizens, including WE Lawrence MLC, WR Pugh, Richard Dry jun., JP, M Connolly, H Dowling, Baptist Minister, Phillip Oakden and Matthew Curling Friend JP.

In his reply, Major Ryan said it was pleasing the Address mentioned 'the lively interest I have always manifested for the interests of this Town' and that his 'earnest and sincere wish is, that prosperity may ever attend this interesting and flourishing Town; which from its geographical position, (with the mercantile enterprise and industry of its Inhabitants,) cannot fail of rapidly increasing in commercial importance, far beyond any other place in this Colony'.

Major Ryan left for India with his regiment in January 1841.

*Launceston Advertiser* 10 December 1835; *Launceston Advertiser* 27 June 1839; *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, 1967, vol.2, article on Thomas Ryan.

## Paterson Barracks



The King's Stores were built in 1828 by John Sprunt. In 1861 the Imperial British Government handed over the Commissariat store to the Colonial Government for use by the Volunteer forces. In June 1948, the site was renamed Paterson Barracks. In the next few years the Army and Air Force cadets will move out, allowing the complex to be opened up to the public and revitalised under the Launceston City Deal.

# Education, Flagellation and Recreation: The Story of Royal Park Launceston Cenotaph

By Prue McCausland



**Unveiling of the Cenotaph on Anzac Day 1924. *Weekly Courier*, 1 May 1924, p. 22.**

Just as happened all over Australia in cities and towns, the people of Launceston wanted a memorial to commemorate those who had died in World War 1. Immediately after 1918, services of commemoration such as those on ANZAC Day, were held at the Boer War memorial in City Park but in 1921 a war memorial committee was formed to establish a new memorial and determine where it would be. Some people wanted it in Royal Park, some in City Park or Windmill Hill and others near the public buildings and the Post Office in St John St.

A competition was held for a design and the winning designer would also be commissioned to supervise construction. The memorial could cost 2000 pounds and there was to be no statuary. The prize was 20 guineas; entries were anonymous. The 25 entries were judged by the professor of architecture at Sydney University.

The winner was A Harold Masters a well-known and well-established Launceston architect and principal of the Technical College. Masters had recommended red granite or white marble but the judge suggested grey granite which is what was built. It was described as 'a square tapered obelisk on an octagonal base on an octagonal sub-base stepped'. It has bronzed panels listing those who died in the service of their country.

The stonework was carried out in Melbourne and the completed cenotaph was consecrated on ANZAC Day, 25 April 1924. Records of other conflicts have been added since – World War II, The Malayan uprising, the Korean War, and on the memorial wall close by – Vietnam, Afghanistan.

When the northern outlet was put in, there were renewed efforts to move the cenotaph to another place, but there didn't seem to be anywhere notably more convenient or more appropriate than this, and so it remains.

The cenotaph is a very public reminder of those who died, and a space where large crowds can be assembled around it at times like ANZAC Day and Remembrance Day.



# Education, Flagellation and Recreation: The Story of Royal Park

## The Old Court House, Paterson Street

By Marion Sargent



The old Court House with the Depot Gardens behind. Detail of QVM1991-P-1342.

Launceston's second Court House was on the corner of Paterson and Wellington streets. It was most likely designed by the Colonial Engineer, John Lee Archer.

Tenders were called in March 1837. The contract was awarded to John Moir from Hobart. He was assigned convicts at the end of November and the foundations were laid in December 1837. During construction, John Moir was fined 10 shillings for burning shavings in the street, and Richard Vaughan, a convict, had his sentence of transportation extended another two years for stealing tools from the contractor.

It appears that the Court House was first used on 13 March 1839 when cabinet maker William Ledgerwood was brought before Peter Mulgrave for insolvency. It was used for public meetings, the sale of crown land, the election of the first Municipal Council and every court except the Police Court.

The newspapers voiced their concerns: it was too small, cold and draughty in winter, hot in summer, had bad acoustics and was noisy from passing traffic. The accommodation for the prisoners was initially an outside pound. Later, a short underground passage was built connecting the dock with cells. But it often had two feet of water in it.

The newspapers also complained about the inconvenience experienced by judges, counsels, witnesses, jurors, onlookers and reporters.

Despite all the problems and criticisms made by the press and judiciary, the Launceston Court House was in operation for 91 years. The new Court House in Cameron Street was opened in June 1930. The old building was vacated and earmarked for demolition to make way for a new wing of the Launceston Technical School.

But, the financial crisis intervened and it was not pulled down. It was used by the School for nearly 10 years after a new floor was installed. In June 1933, the oak trees along Paterson Street were removed. And the porch at the front was demolished, revealing once more, the distinctive triple arches.

As the Technical School was built around it, the 102-year-old Court House was finally demolished by contractor Walter Reid in April 1940. All the convict-made bricks and sandstone steps were salvaged by Mr Reid and used to build his house in Wentworth Street, Newstead. Along the front, he re-created the triple arches. This is the closest representation we have of the old Court House through which many of our ancestors passed.

## Other items and events of interest

**Oral History Tasmania** will be holding a seminar between 10.30 and 3.00 on Saturday 5 August in the meeting room, Queen Victoria Museum, Inveresk. The speakers and topics are:

Ian Terry, *One hell of an inferno: oral history and the 1967 Tasmanian bushfires*;

Dr Jen Thompson, *The secrets of the Shakespeare ladies* (about the Wagga Wagga Shakespeare Club, the longest continuously-operating Shakespearean reading group in the world); and

Dr Nicolás Goc, *The migrant experience and oral history*.

The cost is \$30, or \$25 for students. Prior registration is essential. For further information and a registration form please contact Jill on 0418 178 098 or email [president@oralhistorytas.org.au](mailto:president@oralhistorytas.org.au).

**Queen Victoria Art Gallery, Royal Park:** *The Enigmatic Mr Strange: Creating a Past: the life and art of Frederick Strange c. 1807-1873*, on show until 5 November 2017.

*The First Tasmanians: Our Story*, the QVMAG's first permanent exhibition program exploring the culture and history of the Tasmanian Aboriginal people, from 8 July 2017.

**George Town & District Historical Society:** 19 June 2017, Peter Cox, *Norfolk Island*, 7.30pm at The Grove, George Town. Email: [info@qtdhs.com](mailto:info@qtdhs.com).

**Tasmanian Historical Research Association:** Meeting to take place in the Royal Society Room, Custom House, TMAG, Hobart at 8pm. 11 July 2017, Bruce Rosen, *'Murder Most Foul': The Death of an Overseer at Point Puer*;

8 August 2017, Eldershaw Lecture (location to be confirmed) Lucy Frost, *Indentured Children: Apprentices from the Queen's Asylum, 1860-80*. Website: <http://www.thra.org.au>; Email: [info@thra.org.au](mailto:info@thra.org.au).

**National Book Council:** Denis Lake, author of *The men who made the celebrated chairs: Windsor-chair making in Tasmania*, will speak on Wednesday 19 July 2017 at 1.15pm at Launceston LINC, Civic Square. Secretary, Marie Briggs, 6344 8298.

**The Dick and Joan Green Family Award** for a book on Tasmanian history is now open. Works of original research published between 1 July 2015 and 30 June 2017 are eligible for the \$25,000 prize. <http://greenfamilyaward.org/>

### Launceston Historical Society

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## Deadline

Items for the next *Newsletter* should be sent to the editor by **1 Sep 2017** at [marionsargent@bigpond.com](mailto:marionsargent@bigpond.com) or PO Box 1296 LAUNCESTON TAS 7250.