

Launceston Historical Society Inc.

Newsletter No 169

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PO BOX 1296 LAUNCESTON TAS 7250

Bringing together people with an interest in history

A history of laughing gas

On 16 June 2019 our Pugh Day speaker, Prof. Paul Myles, presented a lecture on the vexed history of laughing gas. Discovered by Joseph Priestly in 1772 and first experienced by Humphry Davy in 1799 with grave effects, it was not until 1844 that Horace Wells realised that it may be useful in dentistry. Laughing gas is arguably the most important discovery in the history of medicine because surgery would not have been possible without it. It's no longer used in surgery but could be a beneficial treatment for depression. The lecture was held in conjunction with the LGH Historical Committee. See the article in *The Examiner*, 19 June 2019, page 6.



Dr John Paull and Prof. Paul Myles.



July speaker, Duncan Grant

Smaller churches of Northern Tasmania

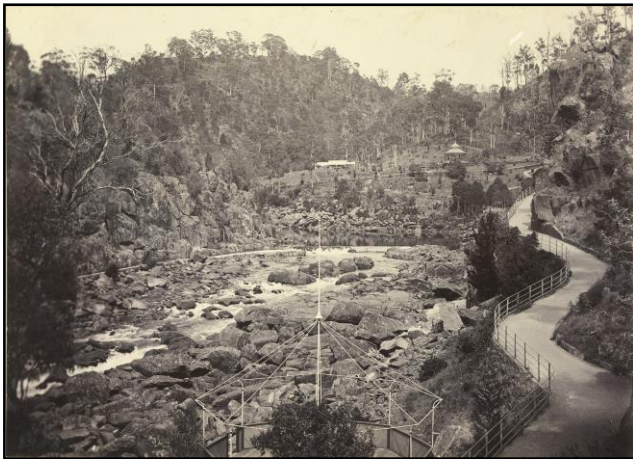
We had a great turnout for Duncan Grant's talk on 21 July 2019 on smaller and lesser known churches of Launceston and Northern Tasmania. Duncan illustrated his talk with numerous photographs taken around the area as he seeks out hidden and long-forgotten churches, Sunday schools, church halls and mission houses. These were interspersed with historic photographs of buildings that no longer exist or are vastly different today.

Many churches have been converted to other uses or simply disappeared from the landscape through neglect. Churches have become homes, businesses, barns and sheds or moved to another place. But on closer inspection, you can often tell that buildings were once churches by their distinctive architecture.

Duncan is particularly fascinated with the role the churches played in the provision of welfare, the transmission of culture, the regulation of values and norms and the empowerment of women. Read Duncan's blog here: <https://www.churchesoftasmania.com/>

Sunday 18 August 2019 – 2pm at the Meeting Room, Queen Victoria Museum at Inveresk

Marion Sargent, *A brief history of the Cataract Gorge*



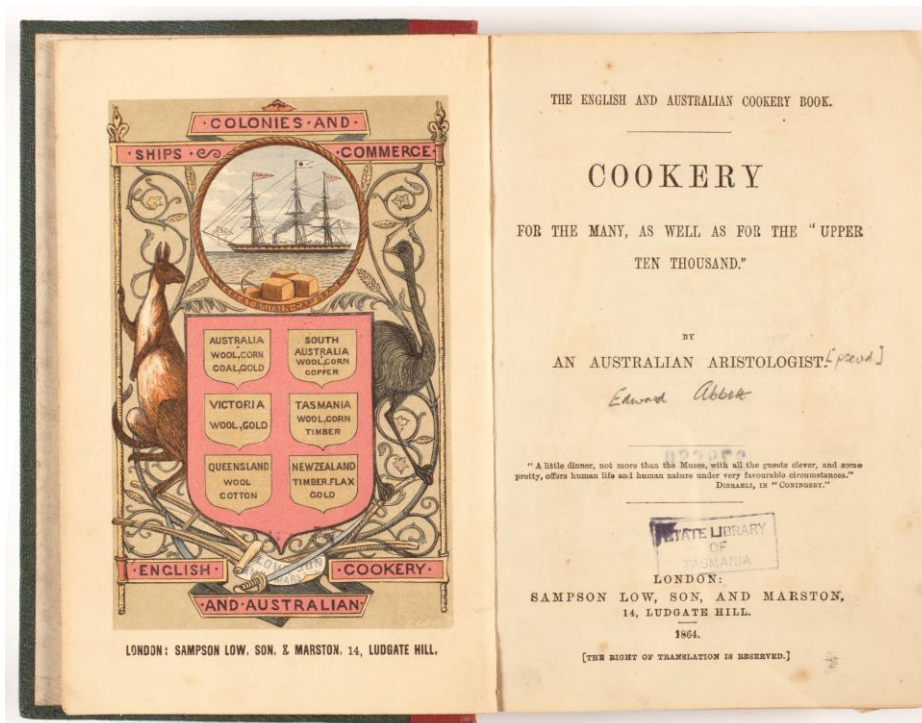
Pathway to the Cliff Grounds, HB Brownrigg, circa 1896-97, LPIC 21, NTCC, Album 2.

Marion Sargent, President of LHS since 2012, shares her interest in the history of our city and region by researching and writing articles and essays for publication in books, journals and newspapers. She also enjoys travelling and bike riding.

Marion's illustrated presentation will cover the history of the Cataract Gorge since 1804. Writers have waxed lyrical about its beauty, but access was limited to the hardy few until the paths and bridges gradually opened the area for all to see. A Victorian pleasure garden emerged from the rocky and swampy area of the First Basin. But natural bushland still surrounds it making this a special and unique place.

Sunday 15 September 2019 – 2pm at the Meeting Room, Queen Victoria Museum at Inveresk

Tony Marshall, *Edward Abbott senior & junior & Launceston connections*

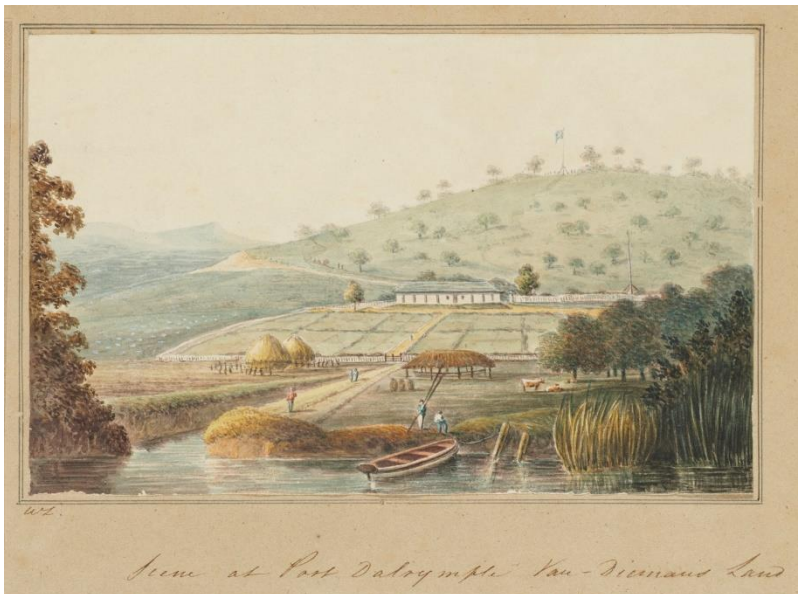


Two Edward Abbotts – father and son – each contributed to the development of Van Diemen's Land in their own ways. The senior Abbott was the first judge in the colony, and later the Civil Commandant of Launceston. Abbott junior established the *Hobart Town Advertiser*, served for decades as a magistrate, sat in the House of Assembly for nearly a decade and compiled Australia's first cookery book. What connected them over several decades (apart from family) was the land grant – 210 acres of the Launceston Swamp – offered to Abbott senior, rescinded by Governor Arthur and successfully fought for by Abbott junior for twenty-eight years.

Tony Marshall worked for 36 years in the heritage collections of the State Libraries of Victoria and Tasmania. He is now an Adjunct Researcher at the University of Tasmania. His interests are largely biographical, focussing on obscure, eccentric and unjustly neglected characters of the nineteenth century. Edward Abbott junior has been in his portfolio for nearly thirty years.

Sunday 20 October 2019 – 2pm at the Meeting Room, Queen Victoria Museum at Inveresk

Lynette Ross, *The house that William built: the story of Launceston's Government Cottage*



Lyttleton, William Thomas, Scene at Port Dalrymple, Van Diemen's Land, c. 1810-1814, Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales, SV6B/ Pr Dalr /1

Launceston's Government Cottage once stood in what is now the south-eastern corner of City Park. Its origins go back as far as the early years of the European settlement of Port Dalrymple when William Paterson had it erected as his official residence. Although its primary function was to house the administrative elite, over time changes in the management of the colony, which saw the end of separate government of the north and a centralisation of power in the south of the island, caused a marginalisation of its role. The failure to keep the building in good repair led both to its later inability to fulfil its main purpose and its final demise in 1885.

This lecture will reveal some interesting aspects of the history of the house and its value as both building and symbol.

Lynette Ross has worked in the fields of history and archaeology since the late 1980s. Her career includes positions at UTAS, at Port Arthur Historic Site as Heritage Officer and working as a private contractor. In the late 1990s she was engaged by the Launceston City Council to compile documentary resources and a history of Government Cottage. This work is now being revised and readied for publication. Lynette is currently a member of the Royal Society of Tasmania, the Launceston Historical Society and the Friends of QVMAG.

Advance notice of LHS activity for 2019

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

17 November **Jill Cassidy, *Writing the history of Deviot***

Members' Column

New members: The President and Executive welcome to our Society the following new members: Roger Auton, David and June Burnet, Robin Bresciani and Alan Harris.

Membership Form + charge for visitors to attend meetings: A membership form is available on our website: [Membership Form.pdf](#). Sunday meetings are free for LHS members, and \$4 for visitors. A delicious afternoon tea is served after the talk.

Spring Excursion to Oatlands: Monday 4 November. We will enjoy the hospitality of the Oatlands District Historical Society at their excellent museum, with morning tea and a tour of the town by Peter Fielding included. After lunch (own arrangements) Brad Williams will explain the archaeological dig and restoration project at the military precinct. The bus will depart from the Eardley Street carpark (behind the RSL) at 9am. Cost is \$50 per person. See the registration form on page 5.

Primary School History Prize: Primary school students in the Launceston area are encouraged to enter a piece of historical research presented in a variety of formats. Entries for the History Prize are now open, to be submitted by 30 August 2019. More information: <http://launcestonhistory.org.au/activities/history-prize/>

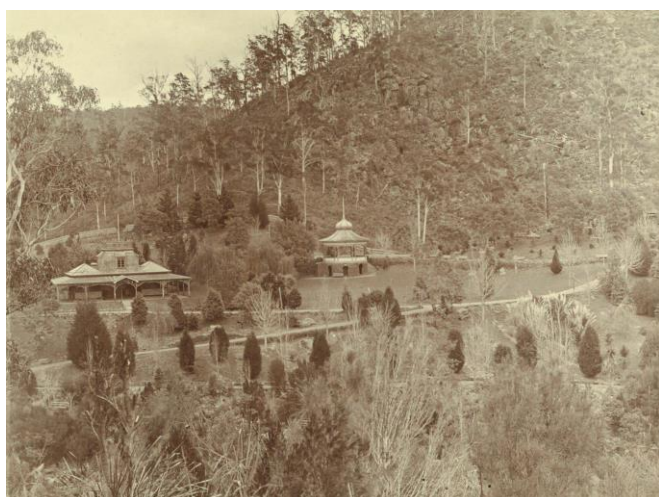
LHS Archaeology Group:

Contact John Dent: john.dent@pda.com.au.

Our History

These stories on Launceston's history have been contributed by our members. You are welcome to send articles of 420 words, with four landscape pictures, to the president marionsargent@bigpond.com. Read the stories in *The Sunday Examiner* or on [Facebook](#).

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80	9 Jun 2019	32	Julian Burgess	Revelling in a state of peace	WWI peace celebrations
81	16 Jun 2019	32	Jenny Gill	Building a colony's legacy	John Lee Archer, architect
82	23 Jun 2019	34	Marion Sargent	A right royal connection	King's Bridge
83	30 Jun 2019	34	Catherine Pearce	Multipurpose monument	Children's Jubilee Fountain
84	7 Jul 2019	32	Prue McCausland	A city's haunting heritage	Ghost signs
85	14 July 2019	34	Marion Sargent	Our right royal celebration	Royal visit 1927
86	21 July 2019	32	Marion Sargent	Gorge's recreational edge	Cliff Grounds tea rooms
87	28 July 2019	34	Julian Burgess	A scholar's academic idyll	Scotch College move in 1917
88	4 Aug 2019	34	Dianne Cassidy	City's lawless slum of sin	Alsatia
89	11 Aug 2019		Catherine Pearce		Hangings in Launceston
90	18 Aug 2019		Marion Sargent		Woodpecker: Cataract Gorge



Cliff Grounds

The photograph of the tea rooms, band rotunda and gardens in the Cliff Grounds at the Cataract Gorge is from an album of photographs of Launceston and surrounds collected by Dennis Hodgkinson. The main path from Trevallyn reached the area in 1893 and the paling fence marked the Cliff Grounds boundary until 1943 when the bushland beyond was donated to the City Council. The band rotunda, constructed at the end of 1895, is now an interpretation centre. The tea rooms, built at the end of 1898 by the City Council, had the verandahs added in 1900. (Launceston Library Collection, LPIC 50-31-1-25)

***The Examiner*, Monday 14 June 1943, page 2**

GIFT OF LAND AT BASIN. The acquisition of 170½ acres of land adjoining the present Cliff Grounds at First Basin, thanks to the gift to the City Council of the purchase money, will mean that the whole of the First Basin area will be permanently protected from encroachment. The superintendent of Reserves (Mr. W. McGowan) said on Saturday morning that when the purchase had been completed the council would own practically all the land visible from the Basin, and there would be no possibility that at some future date any of the slopes leading down to the Basin might be stripped of their trees or rendered unsightly in any other way. At present the council owns only about 37½ acres on the tea rooms side of the Gorge and First Basin, comprising the narrow strip running up the Trevallyn side of the Gorge, and a not very extensive area on each side of and behind the tea rooms. The acquisition of the additional 170½ acres will mean that the council's property will run back to the skyline along practically the whole distance from the Trevallyn bridge round behind the tea rooms and right to the suspension bridge. In addition, the council will control all the valley running up behind the tea rooms.

Two Anonymous Donors.

It has been learned that the acquisition of the land has been made possible by the generosity of two anonymous donors, who have agreed to share the cost equally. They have made it a very strict condition of their gift that their identities shall not be divulged. Mr. McGowan said that for the present he planned to develop the new area chiefly as a show place for autumn foliage. Next year 1½ acres would be planted in daffodils, but the detailed development of the gift would have to wait until it was possible to provide it with a water supply, which would probably not be until after the war. "Actually, the area is so large that we shall be able to develop it properly only over a period of years," said Mr. McGowan. "The important thing for the moment is that its ownership by the council will protect the amenities of the whole Cliff Grounds and First Basin reserve."



Oatlands Excursion

Monday 4 November 2019

The Launceston Historical Society's Spring Excursion

- 9.00 am Veterans and Community Bus departs from the Eardley Street carpark behind the RSL. Park in the bottom carpark.
- 10.30 am Arrive at Oatlands. A sumptuous morning tea will be provided by the **Oatlands District Historical Society** at their excellent museum, followed by a bus tour of the town led by knowledgeable local historian Peter Fielding.
- 12.30 pm Lunch at your choice of café or bakery or take some sandwiches and flask (cost not included in tour price).
- 1.30 pm Meet **Brad Williams** at the Commissariat Store where he will explain the archaeological dig and restoration project at the military precinct.
- 3.30 pm Depart Oatlands.
- 5.00 pm Proposed arrival back in Launceston.

Please fill out and return the slip below with **\$50.00 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: reljprevost@bigpond.com or Marion Sargent: marionsargent@bigpond.com, phone 0438 432 848.

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<p>Oatlands Excursion, Monday 4 November 2019</p> <p>Name.....</p> <p>Address.....</p> <p>Phone.....Mobile.....</p> <p>Email.....</p> <p>Dietary requirements.....</p>	<p>Return to:</p> <p>LHS Inc.</p> <p>PO Box 1296</p> <p>LAUNCESTON TAS 7250</p> <p>\$50.00 per person</p>
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Other items and events of interest

Oral History Tasmania Seminar: A reminder that a seminar will be presented by Oral History Tasmania on Saturday 21 September 2019. The speakers will be:

Garry Richardson, *Half a lifetime: thirty-nine and a half years in forestry*

Chris Goodacre and Barb Lypka, *An oral history of the Theatre Royal: performers and theatre makers*

Elizabeth Nickols, *The people you meet each day: a life experience of five ordinary people*

Venue: Meeting room, Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, Inveresk

Time: 10.30am – 2.30pm

Cost (includes lunch and afternoon tea): \$35 (\$25 students).

Enquiries: Jill Cassidy 0418 178 098; Lana Wall 6391 1086; president@oralhistorytas.org.au

Prior registration is essential. Full details and registration form can be found at:

<http://oralhistorytas.org.au/comingEvents.html>

George Town & District Historical Society: At The Grove, George Town on the third Monday of each month at 7.30pm.

19 Aug 2019, Ross Smith, *QVMAG's Community History Collection*;

16 Sep 2019, Dr Patsy Cameron OA, *A Narrative from the Colonial Sea Frontier*;

21 Oct 2019, Debbie Rainbow, *AGM & Revd John Youl – 200 years*.

Email: info@gtdhs.com.

Tasmanian Historical Research Association: Meetings take place in the Legacy Function Rooms, 159 Macquarie Street, Hobart on the second Tuesday of each month at 8pm.

13 Aug 2019, Libby Prescott, *One husband too many... Female Bigamists Transported to Australia*;

10 Sept 2019, Christine Goodacre and Barbara Lypka, *The Backspace: its role in the emerging culture of performance in Tasmania*;

8 Oct 2019, Stefan Petrow, Eldershaw Memorial Lecture: 'A Duty No Less Solemn': *Sir John Gellibrand and the fight for returned servicemen 1923-39*.

Website: <http://www.thra.org.au>; Email: info@thra.org.au.

Launceston Historical Society

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

Deadline

Items for the next *Newsletter* should be sent to the editor by **1 Nov 2019** at marionsargent@bigpond.com or PO Box 1296 LAUNCESTON TAS 7250.

Newsletter printed by courtesy of Peter Gutwein MP, Liberal Member for Bass.