

Launceston Historical Society Inc.

Newsletter No 181

December 2021

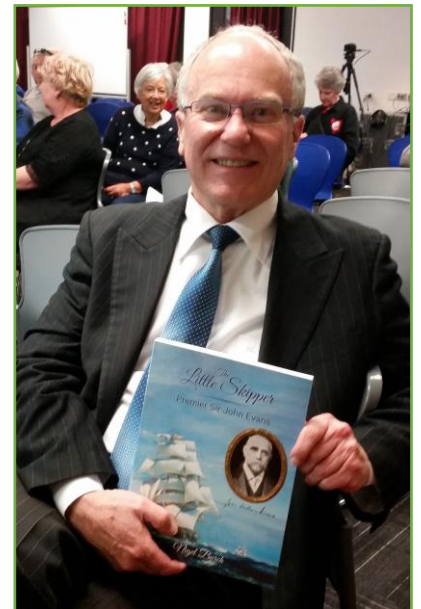
ISSN 1036-7950

PO BOX 1296 LAUNCESTON TAS 7250

Bringing together people with an interest in history

The Little Skipper: Sir John Evans

Nigel Burch presented a fascinating talk on 17 October 2021 on the little skipper, Captain Jack Evans, who progressed from cabin-boy to Premier. He followed his father to sea, worked his way up to become the captain of many ships, and suffered a couple of disasters. In 1883 the ss *Tasman* struck submerged rocks and went down so fast the piano went through the roof. With his ticket re-instated three years later, he was on the bridge of the *Esk* when it hit Hebe Reef. This time it was his fault, and Evans became suicidal. His father-in-law, James Harcourt, saved him by giving him a job in his ironmongery business. He went on to have a wonderful life – working hard as Captain of the ss *Huon*, Hobart's Master Warden, and in community work, as well as being an MHA for 40 years, including a reluctant Premier from 1904 to 1909. He championed full suffrage for all adults, free education, better school buildings, teacher training and decent salaries for teachers. The Upper House opposed him in all this, and Evans lamented in his memoirs that if only political leaders co-operated the community would benefit from progressive developments much earlier. Nigel is pictured at the lecture with his book *The Little Skipper: Premier Sir John Evans*.



Around Tasmania with Spurling

At the last Historical Society meeting of the year on 21 November 2021 Graeme Williams entertained us with a rollicking good tour of Tasmania with Stephen Spurling's postcards around 1914. The trip started when "John" took the tram from Trevallyn into the city of Launceston to meet up with "Marion" and "Gus" who came in on the Newstead tram. We motored up the East Tamar where "Rod" was spraying apples in an orchard, and onto Low Head, Bridport and Scottsdale. "Gus" nicked a few apples from Hazelmere's Orchard before heading to Crawford's Federal Hotel. "Gus" and "John" enjoyed a beer in the bar, while "Marion" had a small sherry in the ladies' lounge. You get the drift. The tour continued to the East, South, West, North-West, Central Highlands and back to Launceston. It was a fitting end to a wonderful year of monthly talks. We raised \$188 in our Christmas hamper raffle which we have donated to the ABC Giving Tree. Thank you to everyone who attended our meetings during 2021 and hope to see you all again next year.

Swansea Excursion



A bus load of happy members had a great day out to Swansea on 1 November on the annual Launceston Historical Society excursion. We watched school children parading in colonial costumes, visited the East Coast Heritage Museum, walked around the streets admiring the beautiful old buildings, and visited two cemeteries with stunning views towards Freycinet Peninsula. Maureen Martin Ferris told us about the Museum collections and gave us a tour of the Glamorgan Spring Bay Historical Society rooms. Terese Binns drove the Veterans & Community Bus while Steve Radford provided historical commentary. The weather was beautiful, and we had a delicious lunch at the Artifakt Gallery & Café.

Historical Treasure Hunt



On 18 November class 1/2 Jales from Glen Dhu Primary School bussed to Prince's Square for a morning of history and fun. After identifying, from old photographs, numerous historic buildings and churches around the square, they plotted Dr Pugh's walk to work through the square from his home *Nelumie* to St John's Hospital, now *Morton House*. They read information about the many different uses of the area, including a clay pit for making bricks for St John's Church, a rubbish dump, a parade ground and finally a beautiful park which we can enjoy today. Together they decided that the spikes on the top of the D'Osne fountain are not a pineapple but in

fact a bunch of bull rushes, most fitting for the water theme of the structure.

Leaving the square and proceeding down St John Street, the children identified several historic buildings along the walk including the Jewish synagogue, Shepherd's bakery, Crabtree Corner, St Andrew's Church and the City of Launceston coat of arms. The children were excited and busy learning that when walking around Launceston one must look up to see the history of our beautiful city. Carol Fuller.

History Prize

14th Primary History Prize



There were 12 entries from three schools – Mowbray Heights, Invermay, and Evandale Primary Schools. The usual presentation ceremony in the Town Hall was not held again this year, but each school recognised the students in their own assemblies. Every child received a certificate of participation. Book vouchers from Petrarch's Bookshop totalling \$495 were presented to nine children. The third Rebecca Phillips Memorial Prize of \$50 was awarded to Shakira Walters from Mowbray Heights Primary School for her imaginative project on people who helped shape Tasmanian history (pictured). The History Prize sub-committee of Kelli Schultz, Carol Fuller and Brad Wood judged the entries.

Members Column

The President and Executive welcome to our Society the following **new members**: Geoff Counsell, Carol D'Amici, Gabrielle Driscoll, Leslie Jowers and Sarah Trousdale.

Vale: Sadly, two of our long-time members have passed away recently – Roger Valentine and Jenny Gill. Jenny was a foundation member, vice-president for six years and wrote 25 articles for 'Our History' series.

Membership Form

A membership form is available on our website: [Membership Form.pdf](#). Sunday meetings are free for LHS members, and \$4 for visitors. **Renewals for 2022 are due on 31 December 2021.** We encourage members to pay by direct debit to our Commonwealth of Bank of Australia account: BSB 067 003 A/C 2804 8638, by mail with a cheque or cash at the next meeting on 20 February 2022.

LHS Activities 2022

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

Free for members, visitors are welcome to attend at \$4 each. Bring some cash for a chance to win a fabulous prize in the raffle. For enquiries email launcestonhistory@gmail.com.

All visitors to the QVMAG are required to check in with the Tas App by scanning the QR code displayed in the foyer. If you do not have a smart phone the staff can check you in on the QVMAG device.

The meeting will be livestreamed on Zoom. A link will be provided to members closer to the date.

Earlier talks are available on our website, so catch up on ones you missed or listen to them again: <http://launcestonhistory.org.au/lhs-lecture-series/>

20 February	AGM + Richard Mack , <i>Physiotherapist Margaret Mack</i>
3 March	Alison Alexander , John West Memorial Lecture, <i>End of Convict Transportation</i> (Thursday, 8pm, Sir Raymond Ferrall Centre, UTAS, Newnham)
10 April	Mark Cameron , <i>Tasmanian Artillery from Federation to Gallipoli</i>
15 May	Jeanette Thompson , <i>The Knave of Diamonds, Opera Singer</i>
19 June	Michael Cooper , Pugh Day Lecture TBC
17 July	John Dent & Darren Watton , Mead, Smith, von Stieglitz Lecture, <i>Annandale Archaeological Dig</i>
21 August	Jai Paterson , <i>Launceston Hotels</i>
18 September	Louise Zarmati , <i>Scrimshaw Cane from an Oatlands' Dig</i>
16 October	Duncan Grant , <i>Lesser-known Launceston Churches and Missions</i>
7 November	Excursion to Beaconsfield (Monday long weekend)
20 November	Nick Clements , <i>Tongerlongeter: First Nations Leader and Tasmanian War Hero</i>

Other Events of Interest

George Town & District Historical Society: Boatshed, Low Head Pilot Station, BBQ prior to talk, 7.30pm, 17 January 2022, Brian Stace, *History of the Coromandel*; Hillwood Hall, 7.30pm, 21 February 2022, Hillwood Garden Club. Email: info@gtlhs.com

Tasmanian Historical Research Association: Legacy Function Rooms, 159 Macquarie St, Hobart on the second Tuesday of each month at 8pm. 14 December 2021, Kristyn Harman, *New Zealand Convicts in VDL*. Email: info@thra.org.au

Iodine Deficiency Symposium: Postponed until 9 April 2022. Registrations are still being accepted: <https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/iodine-symposium-tickets-157426901099>

Our History

These stories on Launceston's history and beyond have been contributed by our members. You are welcome to send articles of 470 words, with at least three pictures, to the president marionsargent@bigpond.com. Read the stories in *The Sunday Examiner* or on [Facebook](#).

We are preparing a book of some of these stories, each with a photograph – more information to come.

No	Date	Page	Author	Title	Topic
202	10 Oct 2021	43	Mike McCausland	Innovation hallmark of leadership in Phil Leonard's library	Early days of the Northern Regional Library
203	17 Oct 2021	29	Mike McCausland	How library books travelled to remote readers in the north	NRL into the 21 st century
204	24 Oct 2021	29	Nigel Burch	Passionate fight for women's suffrage	Tasmanian women's suffrage
205	31 Oct 2021	31	Nigel Burch	A century on and the mystery of Arthur Payne continues	Mystery of Golden Valley
206	7 Nov 2021	39	Julian Burgess	How West influenced the hearts, minds and souls of a city	Rev. John West and Milton Hall
207	14 Nov 2021	29	Nigel Burch	Bruno was the lord of Tamar Island for 20 years – no bull	Bruno – Lord of Tamar Island
208	21 Nov 2021	29	Nigel Burch	New hospital offered Launceston children state-of-the-art care	Launceston Children's Hospital
209	28 Nov 2021	27	Prue McCausland	An extraordinary exhibition really put Tasmania on show	Opening of the Tasmanian Exhibition 1891
210	5 Dec 2021	33	Prue McCausland	Roll up, roll up to celebrate Tasmania's glory and grandeur	Visiting the Tasmanian Exhibition 1891-92

Libraries Tasmania Transcriptions

Letter Book of Charles James Weedon, April 1831 – February 1836, Series Number: [NS7176](#)

The 68 letters provide an insight into the economic history of early Van Diemen's Land and Weedon's life in 1830s Launceston. Charles Weedon emigrated to Van Diemen's Land in 1831 aboard the *Thomas Laurie*. He was a merchant, prominent community member and a Member of Parliament.

Beware of Mrs Browne, Series Number: [NS7195-1-1](#)

The diaries of Harriett Gore Browne, Tasmanian Governor's wife, 1861 – 1869. She accompanied the Duke of Edinburgh to Launceston during his Royal Tour of January 1868. Her assessments of the people she met along the way are detailed and often amusing.

Launceston Historical Society

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Deadline

Items for the next *Newsletter* should be sent to the editor by **1 Feb 2022** at marionsargent@bigpond.com or PO Box 1296 LAUNCESTON TAS 7250.