

# Launceston Historical Society Inc.

## Newsletter No 194

July 2024

ISSN 1036-7950

PO BOX 1296 LAUNCESTON TAS 7250

*Bringing together people with an interest in history*

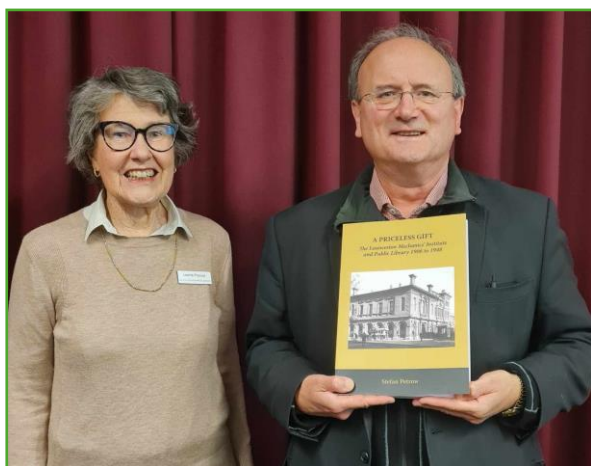
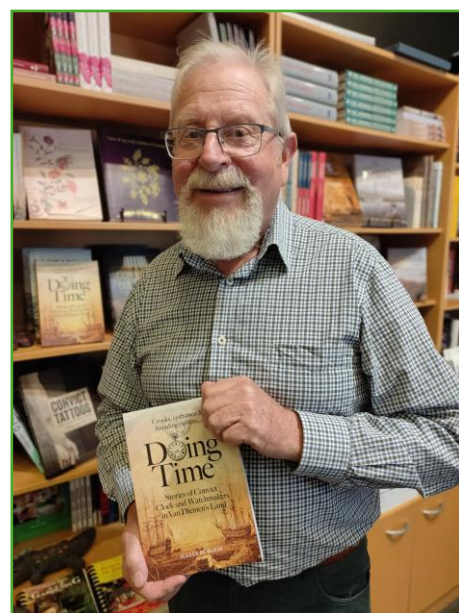
### ***Crooks, Craftsmen and Gold Diggers!***

On Sunday 21 April, Julian Burgess presented a rollicking good story about Italian and French jewellers and watchmakers transported from Britain to Van Diemen's Land during a tumultuous time in the penal colony.

The talk focussed on Italians Charles (Carlo) Brentani and Ferdinand Riva and Frenchmen Alexandre Julien Duchene and Jean Joseph Cicare Doiron.

They all set up businesses in Charles Street, Launceston in the 1840s. There were friendships and business partnerships among the men, but also accusations of poaching customers and assault. All except Riva moved to Melbourne and were caught up in the gold fever that was about to hit Victoria. Riva bought gold for cash and in 1853 he was robbed of nuggets and dust worth £1000.

A Plomley Research Grant from the QVMAG assisted with the compilation of a database of 600 clock and watchmakers, of which 150 or so were convicts. Julian is pictured with his book *Doing Time: Stories of Convict Clock and Watchmakers in VDL*.



### ***Joseph Reginald Forward and the Making of the Launceston Public Library 1906 to 1948***

On Sunday 19 May, Emeritus Professor Stefan Petrow presented a fascinating talk on Joseph Reginald Forward and the Making of the Launceston Public Library 1906 to 1948. The talk focused on the background, role and efforts of librarian Joseph Reginald Forward as well as an in depth look at the attitudes of the members of the library and their reading choices during the time.

From 1906 to 1948 Joseph Reginald Forward was the Librarian in charge and largely responsible for modernising the library and creating what many regarded as the best library in Tasmania. A leading figure and mentor, Joseph was a hardworking and patient librarian,

who kept up to date with modern British librarianship and promoted refreshing ideas of change.

The subscription library has a reputation for the high quality of its collection. During the unsettled period of time Joseph Reginald Forward was librarian, tastes in reading preferences changed and libraries were torn between providing fiction and nonfiction works for subscribers. During the 1930s there was an active reading culture in Launceston and demand grew for biographies, books on travel and world ideas. Mystery thrillers and crime novels were also popular.

Stefan followed his presentation with responses to a variety of interesting questions regarding borrowing trends around the state and book choices of women and children. By Sophie Appleby



## Constructing a Convict Memorial for Tasmania

On Sunday 16 June 2024, Hamish Maxwell-Stewart presented a fascinating insight into the Digital History Tasmania project that links together 2,500,000 digitized records from various historical sources. Anyone can join, it's free, and as more information is added the database changes. It started with convict records, as these are comprehensive and available online. Police Gazettes, absconder lists, court records, death records, and numerous others are included. In many instances, a person's whole lifespan can be traced.

The project has found about 14,000 places where Tasmanian convicts worked, demonstrating the huge impact they had on our landscape. Their free labour built the country and led to the trade union movement here. One example given was the Chartist William Cuffay who was transported to Van Diemen's Land where he could freely agitate for the rights of working people.

So far, the project has been concentrating on Hobart linking information about the owners and occupiers of each building, property, street, block, and geographical features to understand the history. Hamish wants to do Launceston as well. The potential for interpretation of the collected records is extraordinary. Artificial intelligence is being used to create images of the convicts, with Linus W Miller even 'reading' parts of his own narrative, "Notes of an Exile to Van Diemen's Land".

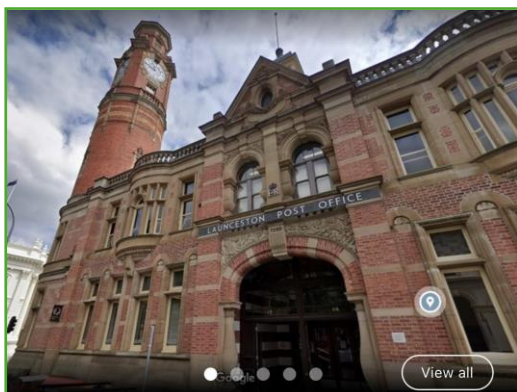
The collected information is on display at "Unshackled: The True Convict Story" at the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery until 28 July 2024. Information on any Tasmanian convict can be found at "Unshackled: Hobart Penitentiary" at 6 Brisbane Street, Hobart, open from Wednesday to Sunday. Individuals can join this exciting project by emailing Hamish on [hmaxwell@une.edu.au](mailto:hmaxwell@une.edu.au).

## July Meeting: Catherine Pearce & Wendy Roberts

### Boot up for a Byte of History

### A virtual walking tour of Launceston's CBD with 'Cya on the Road'

Sunday 21 July 2024 – 2pm, Meeting Room, Queen Victoria Museum, Inveresk



### Launceston City Walk

Price: Free  
Est. Distance & Time: 1.1km / 58 mins

Location: Launceston, TAS, Australia

Map

Itinerary

In 2021 Amanda McEvoy of Launceston Central approached the Society about creating a self-guided history walk around the CBD. She was inspired by the Society's established walk along Cameron Street, delivered via a smartphone app called Cya on the Road.

This app was created by Fred Meng and his partner Stacy of Sydney. It can be downloaded for free from the App Store or Google Play.

Wendy and Catherine agreed to take on the project. Wendy is a trained architect with a knowledge of building styles and construction methods. Catherine has a background in local history and experience in using the app.

With input from Historical Society committee members and President Marion Sargent, they planned the route, researched the buildings, wrote the script, and located historical photographs. The walk and its companion along Cameron Street have proved very popular with visitors and locals alike.

Join Wendy and Catherine on a virtual stroll around some of the buildings featured in the walk. This 'taster' will introduce you to the exciting travel world of Cya on the Road.

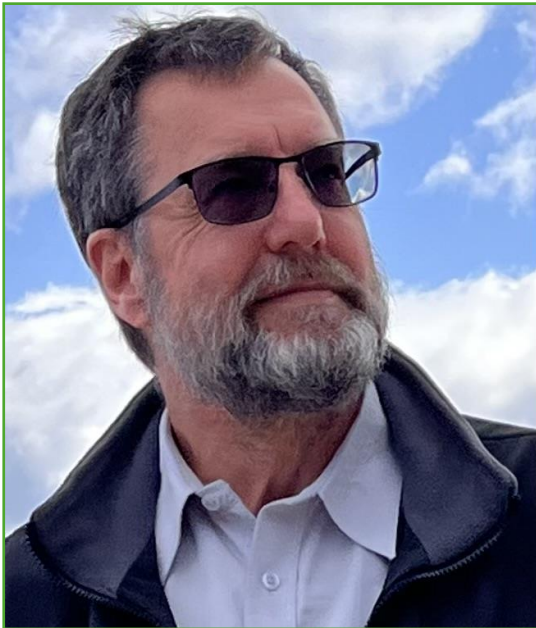


## August Meeting: Bradley Wood

Fourth Mead, Smith, von Stieglitz Memorial Lecture

**Henry Rice – From Calcutta Convict to East Coast Explorer**

**Sunday 18 August 2024 – 2pm, Meeting Room, Queen Victoria Museum, Inveresk**



In December 1820 a small expedition departed from Henry Rice's farm along the Coal River near present-day Richmond, to explore the East Coast of Van Diemen's Land for future settlement. Henry Rice led the party as an official explorer for the colonial government. Why did Lieutenant-Governor Sorell appoint ex-convict Rice to this important job? He had been a thief, sailor, prisoner, escapee and servant, and the merchant Roland Loane had once declared that 'if it cost him one thousand pounds sterling, he would hang Rice.' In this talk I will separate the real story of Henry Rice from the myth, solve some mysteries about his identity and provide a new perspective on the importance of this expedition.

**Bradley Wood** is a writer, historical researcher and partner in an education consultancy business that develops learning materials for libraries, museums, heritage sites and schools around Australia. He has worked on archaeological excavations in Sydney, Tasmania and in Ypres, Belgium. His most recent article was a finalist in the Forty South Van

Diemen History Prize 2020/21 and was published in *The Van Diemen Anthology 2021*, as "The Mysterious Journey of Captain Charles Bayley's Cane". Afternoon tea will be served.

## September Meeting: Louise Zarmati

**Maria Campbell: woman of color, a very intelligent female of 20 years of age**

**Sunday 15 September 2024 – 2pm, Meeting Room, Queen Victoria Museum, Inveresk**



The story begins in the Richmond courthouse on 30 May 1831 when William Harris, proprietor of the Red Cow inn at Clarence Plains was charged with harbouring a young woman "for the purpose of tipling on a Sunday".

The accused tippler was no ordinary young woman of Hobart Town. She was Maria Campbell, "a woman of color (sic), a very intelligent female of 20 years of age, whose father was an European and her mother an Aboriginal Native". During questioning by the Court, it became known that Maria's father had died leaving her valuable property which had been "withheld" from her. Consequently, Maria had become homeless, penniless and "cast onto the world without protection of any kind".

My presentation will reveal a complex Cinderella story of a ruthless, greedy, ex-convict stepmother and the struggle of a "young native girl" to claim the rightful inheritance that had been bequeathed to her in the will of her father, former *Calcutta* convict, Archibald Campbell.

**Dr Louise Zarmati** has had a varied career as a teacher, archaeologist and museum educator and now works as a Senior Lecturer in Education at the University of Tasmania. She has a PhD in History from Deakin University, a Master of Philosophy in Archaeology and Heritage from the University of Cambridge, and a BA, Dip.Ed. from the University of Sydney. Since 2019, Louise has been undertaking research with her husband Bradley Wood on the lives of *Calcutta* convict, Archibald Campbell, his "native woman", and their daughter Maria.

## LHS Activities 2024

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 \$5 each. Bring some cash for a chance to win a prize in the raffle. Come along to learn about our history.

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 October**            **Lucy Frost**, *Children at work: Orphan School apprentices in Launceston and the Tamar Valley*
- 7 November**        **Excursion to Latrobe**
- 17 November**       **Darren Watton & John Dent**, *The old Perth Gaol Archaeological Dig*

## New Members

The President and Executive welcome to our Society the following new members: John Dean, Heather & Susan Dolbey, Jessica Horton, Janine Hosking, Shirley Linnell, Alistair Scott, John & Jo Toulson

## Membership Form

Membership forms are available on our website in both PDF and Word formats. Sunday meetings are free for LHS members, and admission for visitors is \$5. Renewals for 2024 were due on 31 December 2023. We encourage members to pay by direct debit into our Commonwealth Bank of Australia account: BSB 067-003 A/C No. 2804 8638, by cheque in the mail, or by cash or EFTPOS at the next meeting you attend.

## Other Events of Interest

**George Town & District Historical Society:** At the Grove, George Town, third Monday of the month at 7.30pm: 15 July 2024, Anne Batt, *John Cameron & William Lushington Goodwin*; 19 August 2024, Craig Dixon, *Whale Boat re-encactment*; 16 September 2024, Committee TBA. Email: [info@qtdhs.com](mailto:info@qtdhs.com).

**Book Council of Lutruwita/Tasmania:** Launceston Library, Level 2, third Wednesday of the month at 1.15pm. 17 July 2024, Helen Hayward, *Home Work: Essays on love and housekeeping*. Members free; non-members \$5. RSVP: [bookcouncillt@gmail.com](mailto:bookcouncillt@gmail.com).

**Royal Society of Tasmania (Northern Branch):** Meeting Room, QV Museum, Inveresk on the fourth Sunday of each month at 1.30pm. 28 July 2024, Ashley Bird, *Bush carpentry & the Jimmy Possum tradition*; 25 August 2024, John Dent, *York Town; then (1804 to 1806) & now*; 22 September 2024, UTAS PhD candidates, *Breaking New Ground*. Inquiries: Lois Beckwith, [loisbeckwith27@gmail.com](mailto:loisbeckwith27@gmail.com)

**Tasmanian Historical Research Association:** Legacy Function Rooms, 159 Macquarie St, Hobart on the second Tuesday of each month at 7.30pm. 9 July 2024, Richard Tuffin, *Revealing Maria Island's hidden convict past*; 13 August 2024, Anita Hansen, *Collecting History*; 10 September 2024, Zoe Rimmer, *Repatriation of Aboriginal cultural material*. Email: [info@thra.org.au](mailto:info@thra.org.au).

## Our History

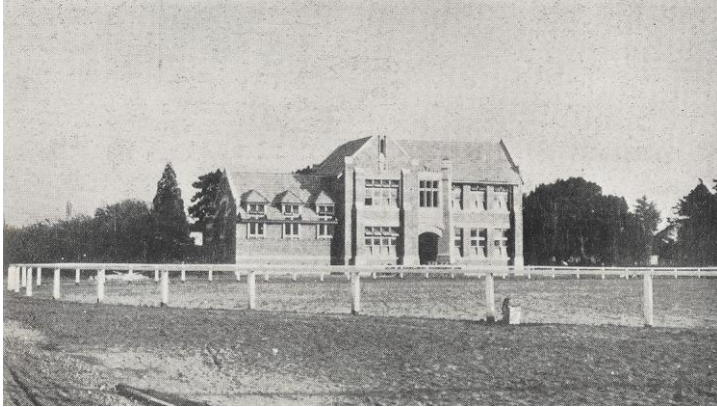
These stories on Launceston's history and beyond have been contributed by our members. Read the stories on the last Sunday of the month in *The Sunday Examiner* or on the Launceston Historical Society's [Facebook](#) page.

No	Date	Page	Author	<i>The Sunday Examiner</i> Title	Topic
331	14 Apr 2024	27	Marion Sargent	Remembering the Norwood Avenue Tea House	Norwood Avenue Tea House
332	21 Apr 2024	23	Julian Burgess	Reverend's run-in with troublesome ship captain	<i>Marco Polo</i> and Rev. WH Browne
333	28 Apr 2024	23	Julian Burgess	Sister Charlotte's special place in church history	Charlotte Shoobridge: Tasmania's first Deaconess
334	26 May 2024	18	Julian Burgess	The founder of Harley-Davidson in Launceston	The founder of Harley-Davidson in Launceston
335	30 Jun 2024	24	Julian Burgess	The 1880s school that helped form Scotch Oakburn	Methodist Ladies College

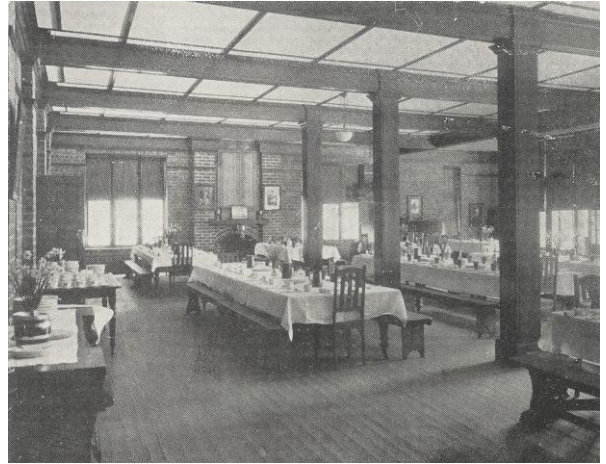


## From the Past

One hundred years ago Launceston Grammar, the oldest continuously operating independent school in Australia, moved from its Elizabeth Street premises to Stephenson's farm at Mowbray. It was established 78 years earlier in 1846 and needed more space for boarders and sporting grounds. Here are some photographs of the 'new' LCGS school from the *Weekly Courier*, 12 June and 27 November 1924.



**A view of the new school from the fine sports oval.**



**The dining room.**



**The interior of a classroom.**



**The boarders' recreation room.**



**Headmaster Rev. JW Bethune and school prefects.**



**The boarding houses.**



## From the Past

### Cornwall Chronicle, Monday 10 November 1873, page 2 (From Trove)

#### NEW BUILDINGS IN BRISBANE AND GEORGE STREETS.

We have seen the plans and front elevation of three new buildings, three storeys high, at the corner of George and Brisbane-streets. The design by Mr Peter Mills, architect, for these buildings, with plate glass shop fronts, is very rich and chaste. They are to be erected for John Fawns, Esq., who certainly deserves great credit for making such a valuable addition of our leading streets. First class buildings of this description always enhance the value of other property in their vicinity. George street, through which most of the traffic to and from the railway passes, is rapidly becoming of importance, and this elegant addition to its shops will give it a higher status than it has ever before attained. Tenders are invited by Mr Mills for the erection of the buildings, and will be received up to noon on Friday, 28th instant. Plans, specifications and full particulars can be obtained at the office of Mr Mills, Patterson street (sic).

### Launceston Examiner, Tuesday 2 December 1873, page 3 (From Tove)

Eight tenders were sent in, namely,—J. Sherlock, £3159 ; W. Titmus, £2951 3s; J. W. Lloyd, £2785 ; Galvin and Ellis, £2781; Gunn and Dean, £2654; D. Scott, £2587; S. Waugh, £2500; F. Lockie, £2474. The last tender was accepted, and the buildings are to be finished within six months.



Joseph's Corner, from 1925 until 1980s. LPIC33-4-69



Undergoing extensive renovations in 2024.

### Launceston Historical Society

President and Newsletter Editor	Marion Sargent	0438 432 848
Vice-President	Wendy Roberts	
Correspondence Secretary	Prue McCausland	6327 2540
Treasurer	Leonie Prevost	0418 575 910
Publicity Officer	Karin Lê	0407 340 179 or 6334 0158

Postal address: PO Box 1296 LAUNCESTON TAS 7250

Email: [launcestonhistory@gmail.com](mailto:launcestonhistory@gmail.com) Website: [www.launcestonhistory.org.au](http://www.launcestonhistory.org.au)

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

## Deadline

Items for the next *Newsletter* should be sent to the editor by **1 Oct 2024** at [marionsargent@bigpond.com](mailto:marionsargent@bigpond.com) or PO Box 1296 LAUNCESTON TAS 7250.