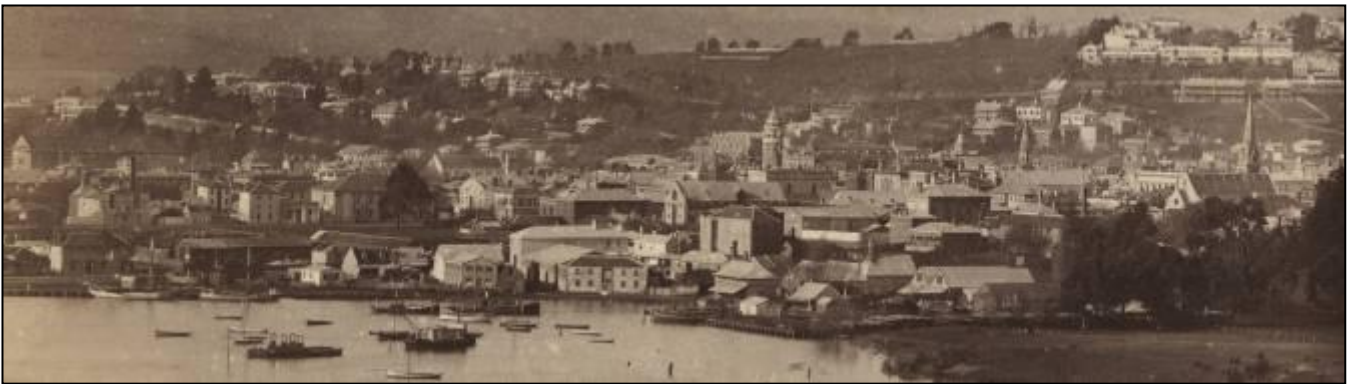


Launceston Historical Society Inc.

"Bringing together people with an interest in history"

Annual Report

for year ending 31 December 2024



Alfred Coleman Bonner, 'Launceston from Trevallyn', 12 March 1890. Launceston Library, LPIC 21, NTCC Album 6, No 171

**Presented at its Annual General Meeting held at the
Meeting Room, QVMAG Museum at Inveresk
Sunday 16 February 2025**

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Introduction

As President of the Launceston Historical Society (LHS), and on behalf of the members and visitors here today, I acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land on which this event is taking place.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is my privilege to present the Annual Report of the Launceston Historical Society for the financial year ending 31 December 2024.

John West Memorial Lecture



On Sunday 17 March 2024 Dr Kristyn Harman presented the 36th John West Memorial Lecture with the topic *A good riddance: The Inception of Criminal Deportation in Colonial Australia*. This insightful lecture was well received by an appreciative audience at the Meeting Room at the Queen Victoria Museum at Inveresk.

This year the John West Memorial lecturer, Professor Hamish Maxwell-Stewart will speak on *Networks of resistance: Mapping a convict road gang in northern Van Diemen's Land 1829-1839* at the Meeting Room, QV Museum on Sunday 16 March 2025 at 2pm.

Monthly meetings

Once again, we hosted a variety of knowledgeable speakers who presented papers at our monthly Sunday meetings in 2024. At the Annual General Meeting in February our guest speaker, John Dent, gave a fascinating talk on *100 years of the Rotary Club of Launceston*. In April Julian Burgess presented an intriguing story of *Crooks, Craftsmen and Gold Diggers! French and Italian convicts in Launceston in the 1840s*, and in May Stefan Petrow told us about *Joseph Reginald Forward and the Making of the Launceston Public Library 1906 to 1948*.

In June Professor Hamish Maxwell-Stewart presented a fascinating insight into *Constructing a Convict Memorial for Tasmania*. In July Catherine Pearce and Wendy Roberts took us on a *Virtual Walking Tour of Launceston's CBD* and in August Bradley Wood told us the real story of *Henry Rice – From Calcutta Convict to East Coast Explorer* at the fourth re-instated Mead, Smith, von Stieglitz Memorial Lecture.

In September Dr Louise Zarmati recounted the story of *Maria Campbell: 'a woman of color'*. In October Emeritus Professor Lucy Frost presented a paper on *Children at Work: Orphan School apprentices in Launceston and the Tamar Valley*. The final speakers for the year, Darren Watton and John Dent, revealed their findings from the *Perth Gaol Archaeology Dig*.

We appreciate the support of the Queen Victoria Museum, Inveresk, for making the meeting room available to us. And thank you also to Bent Eared Records who looked after our audio-visual needs. Our lectures have been recorded and will be available to listen to on our website.



Committee members: Marion, Sophie, Prue, Karin, Carol, Wendy, Phil, Leonie, Sue, Catherine and Bradley.

Executive Committee

The extent of events and activities conducted by the Historical Society would not be possible without the many hours of work undertaken by a dedicated team of volunteers. Thank you to the members of the Executive Committee who have helped the Society continue to do so well.

In February 2024, the following committee members were re-elected: Marion Sargent (President), Wendy Roberts (Vice-President and Representative of the City of Launceston Heritage Advisory Committee), Leonie Prevost (Treasurer and Public Officer), Catherine Pearce (Minute Secretary), Prue McCausland (Correspondence Secretary and History Prize), Karin Lê (Publicity Officer), Bradley Wood (History Prize and YouTube), Sue Bell (archaeology), Carol Fuller (History Prize), Phil Page (Launceston History Centre representative). Sophie Appleby joined the team and took on publicity and LHC representative.

Karin Lê is stepping down from the committee after eight years of valuable service.

History Prizes

The 17th annual **Primary History Prize** in 2024 received 43 entries submitted by four primary schools: Evandale, Mowbray Heights, Exeter, and St Thomas More's, and one individual. A total of \$594 in book vouchers from Petrarch's Bookshop was awarded to 12 children. Every student received a certificate of participation and a volume of Anne Green's *Stories in Stone* which were presented at their school assemblies. A selection of entries was displayed at the Launceston Library in November 2024 and will be at the AGM in February 2025.

Thank you to Carol Fuller, Prue McCausland, Brad Wood, Sophie Appleby and Marion Sargent for organising and judging the awards.

The annual \$500 Launceston Historical Society History Prize was awarded to Franklin Barker at the **University of Tasmania** for the best History essay written in 2024 by a student enrolled at Launceston in first year History.

Spring Excursion to Latrobe



A group of 18 members enjoyed our Spring excursion to Latrobe on Thursday 7 November 2024. We visited Bells Parade, *Sherwood Hall* and the Courthouse Museum. Catherine and Sophie conducted a guided walk along Gilbert Street pointing out numerous historic buildings. We hired a bus from Calow's Coaches again this year. (Full report in the December Newsletter)



Archaeology Group

The Archaeology Group completed a dig at Mountford Cottage in the week of 28 October 2024. Twenty-five LHS members participated including four archaeology students from La Trobe University. Fifteen St Patrick's College students and three from the Sheffield homeschooling group spent one day experiencing a real-life dig.

The site was the remains of a farm cottage abandoned in 1970. Large stone foundations and a brick chimney were uncovered. Many items were found, including building materials, bottles, coins, toys, ceramics, pins, and other interesting objects which indicate that the building was most likely in existence from about the 1840s. The artefacts will now be cleaned, dated, and catalogued.

Darren Watton from Southern Archaeology will prepare a detailed report for participants, the landowner, and LHS. Darren and John Dent will give a talk at the LHS meeting in October 2025 about this exciting archaeological dig.

The Examiner ran a fabulous two-page article with several photographs on 31 October 2024.

John Dent, convenor, LHS Archaeology Group (Full report in the December Newsletter)

Launceston History Centre

The Launceston History Centre was formed on 23 May 2022. The incorporated body brings together three independent history groups – the Launceston Historical Society, Tasmanian Family History Society (Launceston Branch), and Friends of the Launceston Mechanics' Institute. The LHS representatives are Phil Page, and Sophie Appleby who replaced Marion Sargent in September.

The exciting news is that the LHC has found a home. The old Kindergarten at 56 Frederick Street is being leased from the City of Launceston. An open day on 7 February 2025 will provide an opportunity to look over the 1836 building before it is converted into a history centre.

Publications

The **'Our History'** series has come to an end. For seven years LHS members contributed 341 articles of historical interest to *The Examiner*. In 2024 seven members submitted stories and pictures. Up until the end of April the articles were run weekly, and then once a month until December. The final one was by Prue McCausland on the mysterious theft of the Glover medal from the Museum. The stories are also available to read on our [Facebook](#) page.

The two free audio apps with **'Cya on the Road'** – *A Walk Along Historic Cameron Street* and *Launceston City Walk* are still popular. They were both created by our committee members Catherine Pearce and Wendy Roberts, but ownership of the latter was transferred to Launceston Central in April 2024.

We thank the staff at Simon Wood's office for printing the Newsletters and Annual Report.

Membership

The Historical Society had 210 financial members at the end of 2024, a 15% increase from 2023. There were 39 new members; 14 joined to take part in the Perth Cottage dig.

Conclusion

Once again, thank you to my dedicated Committee whose expertise and energy ensures that this Society remains strong and vibrant. And thank you also to members who attend our meetings and excursions and support the Society in so many ways.

Marion Sargent
President 2024