



LAUNCESTON BRANCH NEWSLETTER

Library Hours:

Tuesday

10am–3pm

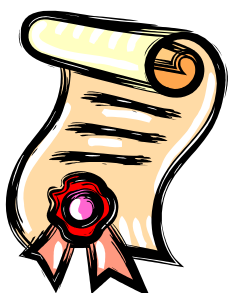
**Monday -
Thursday:**

By appointment

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**Christmas  
Dinner**

**Friday  
21st  
November**

7pm



**Launceston Family History Library:** 45-55 Tamar St, Launceston  
P.O. Box 1290, Launceston 7250  
Telephone: (03) 6344 4034  
Email: Research: [ltntasfh@bigpond.com](mailto:ltntasfh@bigpond.com)  
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Web: [www.launceston.tasfhs.org](http://www.launceston.tasfhs.org)

**President:** Russell Watson  
**Editor:** Betty Bissett

**No. 43  
November 2014**

## From the Library:

### Christmas Dinner:

This year the Branch Christmas Dinner will be held at the Colonial Motor Inn, 31 Elizabeth St on **Friday 21st November** – 7pm.

3-course meal, pay on the night. A booking form is available at the library – numbers are required by *Tuesday 18th*.



### The Stables library will be closed for the holiday period:

**Tuesday 9th December** at 3pm, reopening **Tuesday 20th January 2015**.

### Working Bee at the Library

**Monday 19th January** – from **9.30am**. Volunteers are required to help to get the Library for the opening on Tuesday 20th.

### Launceston Branch Annual General Meeting

**Tuesday 21st April** – 7pm at the Harry Abbott Scout Hall, St George's Square.

Local historian, Marion Sargent will be our guest speaker, her topic: "Old Cemeteries of Launceston." All positions will be declared vacant. Nomination forms will be available at the Library in February, Members are urged to volunteer and get involved.

**Branch Workshop – Wednesday 18th March**, 2pm, "Irish Research", to be held at the Branch Library, 45 Tamar St. Fuller details will be in our next Newsletter

### The Society Conference and Annual General Meeting

To be held at Swansea on **Saturday 20th and Sunday 21st June**.

Accommodation packages, the programme and speakers are in the process of being finalised. In the meantime make a note in your Diary and plan to attend.

### New Resource Material and Acquisitions

When you are in the Library, ask the Duty Office to show you the latest research resources and acquisitions.

### Duty Officers

Duty Officers are again in short supply; if you can help it will be much appreciated. Training is available.



# British Interest Group



Meetings on the 1st Wednesday of the month  
at Phil Leonard Room, Launceston LINC, from 2:00 to 4:00.

We are a small group of enthusiastic members of the Tasmanian Family History Society Inc., Launceston Branch, with an interest in anything associated with researching in Britain. The meetings are generally of an informal nature, designed to enable the discussion of either a specific subject, current problems being encountered, or more usually, both.

New members are always welcome, so if you are researching British ancestors and their families, why not come along and join us?

Although the above shows us meeting at the Phil Leonard Room, this will no longer be the case, as the Linc Building at Civic Square is due to undergo major renovations. Hopefully, we will be returning to the building mid- 2015, but we are unsure of where we will be meeting for the first half of the year at this stage. As and when we have further information, a notice will be put on the notice board and changes made to the website.

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I came across this article when researching through the British Newspaper Archives website. It just happened to be on the same page as an article about an ancestor of mine.

The Nottingham Evening Post – Page 3, 26th April 1934

FLYING DOCTORS. NATIONAL SCHEME LAUNCHED AUSTRALIA.

Establishing six wireless stations and appointing flying doctors, a scheme to provide an efficient medical service for settlers in remote parts of Australia has just been launched, with the formation in Melbourne of the Aerial Medical Services of Australia (Victoria section). The Service has been arranged the Rev John Flynn ("Flynn of the Inland"), at whose instigation the Presbyterian Inland



Mission inaugurated the first "flying doctor" service at Cloncurry six years ago. Operating from the six bases by aeroplane over an average radius of 400 miles, the huge territory could be effectively covered by doctors working in conjunction with resident practitioners, until improved aeroplanes become standard equipment for all country doctors in sparsely settled areas. Mr. Flynn has found that the wireless station has become the flying doctor's consulting room. It has been demonstrated in Queensland that wireless consultation at the first sign of illness might render a personal visit the doctor

unnecessary, or, in cases of emergency, the wireless could summon a doctor in time to save life.

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### Norfolk Plains Historical Society

There is another little museum recently opened in the grounds of Clarendon, which is part of the National Trust and was located before this, at Longford. It is the Norfolk Plains Historical Society and it houses a number of items celebrating the history of that region, they also have family records from the early days of Longford. The museum is open Wednesday to Friday.

*Irene Taylor*

## **FIFTY YEARS AGO – Launceston in the Seventies (By “Incognito”)**

### **People and Their Doings**

Judging by the excellent illustrations in the “Weekly Courier” depicting Launceston of 1929, it appears marvellous that such a transformation should evolve in the space of fifty or sixty years. During that period, the virgin bush land of Trevallyn has been filled with stately homes. What were grazing pastures in South Vancouver are now well laid out streets giving it access to comfortable residences. Electric trams conveniently carry you on your thoroughfares; electric lights have superseded gas illumination; your city hums with the energy of a vibrant race of progressive people reinforced by the latest scientific aids; you have grown up to “man’s estate.”

But just as antique furniture, old chinaware, ancient tomes and pictures of old masters have their fascination, it might be of interest to recall incidents of the past and refresh our memories of personages who once walked the streets and played their part in Launceston’s march towards prosperity. Memories are precious relics, especially those of the time when youth sat in the saddle and rode joyously over every obstacle and if I should be able to throw upon the screen pictures of the days when the grandparents of some of you were my boy playmates and these pen pictures should interest and give you pleasure, I would feel myself well recompensed.

Of course, it would be difficult for the younger generation of Launcestonians to visualise a period which was ante-electric, ante-radio, ante-auto, and ante almost everything which are to you daily adjuncts of living.

Being a port we had to have a wharf. There was only the one, which extended from the foot of Charles-street and at right angle thereto down to about Inveresk bridge, or at all events to the foot of George-street. The Charles-street portion was mainly used by small craft such as fishing smacks, as an extensive mud flat extended quite a distance out at low tides.

The conveyance of passengers from the steamships to their domiciles was accomplished by one and two horse cabs. “Cab, sir! Cab, sir! Take you up town for a bob!” was the passenger’s landing salutation. To accommodate these cabs there were regulation cab stands in various parts of the town in the middle of the roadway; for journeys further afield there was a train to Hobart and one as far as Deloraine. Leisurely concerns these, which permitted of the conductor or guard pulling up at intervals to attend to his kangaroo snares. Quite considerable travel was done by means of BURBURY and PAGE’S coaches, the extensive yards and stables of both proprietaries, being in Cameron-street.

### **Upkeep of Roads**

The upkeep of roads was partially provided for by income from toll gates which were numerous; one was quite close to the south entrance of the Cataract bridge, and another close to Hobbler’s bridge. We had but the one park proper, to which the principal entrance was from Tamar-street. It was called in those days the “People’s Park,” and a weatherboard structure built for flower shows, etc., therein was known as “The Pavilion.”

Next in importance was Prince’s Square, where your beautiful fountain stands. All other open spaces for public use such as games, circuses, hurdy-gurdys, etc., were designated “greens,” except of course Windmill Hill and Cox’s Hill. Games for which one had to pay an entrance fee to see were played on the Launceston Cricket Ground. Most of our swimming was done in Ackerman’s Baths, Charles and Cameron streets, for which privilege we had to pay a small fee, but it was a great convenience. Mr ACKERMAN was an experimenter in mechanics (perpetual motion and things of that kind), and his emporium was a miscellany of curios where he seemed to have a bit of everything. For free swims we hiked it over to the First Basin by devious routes. There was also baths, moored out between the Cataract Bridge and the boat sheds.

There were only two entertainment halls in those days, the Town Hall and Mechanics’ Institute. Being so close to Melbourne, we had no lack of visiting entertainers. Besides these we had plenty of local talent. Concerts, oratorios, spelling bees, and etceteras too numerous to mention were continually to the fore. Launceston has been the birthplace of leading singers and renowned organists, to wit – Amy SHERWIN, Cissie ARCHER, Jane O’MEARA, Kate HARVEY, and others. Professor SHARP’S talented sons, William and Frederick, became famous organists in the other colonies. There used to be a little house two doors down from Chalmers manse, perched on top of a steep embankment – later levelled for the site of the new Congregational Church – that little house was the hatchery for the world famous “Pollard’s Lilliputians,”

### **Musical Talent**

Probably the late Mr Alexander WALLACE did more than anyone else in bringing to light and developing local musical talent, and was in all likelihood the best known musician in Launceston. Church organs in those days were operated by bellows worked by hand lever after the mode of the obsolete blacksmith’s

bellows, and many a stoppage in the musical part of a church service was caused by an inattentive juvenile blower who probably left off to blow his nose.

We folk of Launceston always did consider ourselves of importance. Even H.R.H. the Duke of Edinburgh paid his respects to us in a transient visit. For the honour of seeing him we received a medal and a currant bun. Tom Thumb and his wife, Commodore KNUTT and his wife, Minnie WARREN, drove about our streets in their tiny pony cart. Circuses and hurdy-gurdys plied their trade on our greens, but our day of days was Queen's Birthday, which we celebrated on Windmill Hill with all military salutes and éclat, our volunteer troops being marshalled and dominated by Major Alfred HARRAP in all the glory of gorgeous military raiment – a most imposing figure.

Secular education was plentiful and besides the Launceston Church Grammar School, under the headmastership of the talented Rev WH SAVIGNY, and Horton College at Ross, under the erudite headmastership of William FOX for the higher branches of learning, we had excellent private day schools, a public city school presided over by Mr and Mrs KIDD, and the "infant school." There were several girls' schools, of which probably the chief was Mrs MATHESON'S on the Windmill Hill. Many of your grandfathers, who were later the trade and commercial elements of the city life, owed their sound business education to the tuition received at the private schools of Mr George BAKER and Messrs. LEECH, DAKIN and HOGG.

Our local and general news we received (most of it) from our daily newspapers, the Launceston "Examiner," edited by Mr Henry BUTTON and the "Cornwall Chronicle," edited by Mr TC JUST. The father of F. and W. STEWART, the jewellers, Mr GM STEWART, was the editor of the "Daily Telegraph," and to his eldest daughter, who married Richard GEE, the bookseller, many are indebted for a sound musical education.

Book reading matter was supplied us through Messrs. Richard GEE, J.W. WALCH and Sons, and HUDSON and HOPWOOD, also the Public Library under Librarian Alex. JOHNSTON.

The spiritual needs of the community were attended to by such able clergy as Archdeacon HALES, Canon BROWNRIGG, Revs BARKAWAY, Charles PRICE, William LAW, LINDSAY, VANCE, WHITE, HARCOURT, BENNETT, and Pastor WHITE. Adults in those days took religion very seriously, which made it rather irksome for young people, to whom Sabbath exercises were much more onerous than their secular weekday obligations. The latter were at least alleviated by a period of play, but the former were devoid of all permissible exuberance of spirits, and such suppression tended to make religion distasteful, both then and in after years.

### **The Hospitals**

The sick and suffering were looked after at the Launceston General Hospital. (There were no private hospitals.) The future generation were ushered into their terrestrial environment and the physical disorders of young and adults looked after by such eminent practising physicians as Drs. RANSOME, MADDOX and MILLER. If our teeth needed extraction we either lassoed the offending ivory to a door knob and incontinently slammed the door shut, or hide ourselves away to either of the professional dentists, Messrs. FIGGIS and HALL, and submitted with an oh! augh! to their grab and yank process, as no pain deadeners were then in vogue.

There was an organised system of alleviating the needs of the indigent through the medium of the Invalid Depot, a comfortable asylum for old men, opposite the gaol, and where you now have a lovely park. The Launceston Benevolent Society composed of prominent townsmen, and the ladies' Dorcas Society.

I suppose that every civilised community has its "angel of mercy," but it would be difficult to find one so universally known and appealed to as Launceston's outstanding representative, Mrs George BAKER. Wealth to her, was but one more useful instrument to her perfumed satchel of love and mercy, and many a soul, stretching its wings for its flight into the crimsoning west, has found her encouraging voice whispering to it; "Be of good cheer! Be not afraid!" A dear, unaffected woman crowned with the majesty of self-sacrifice.

*The Examiner*, 5 December, 1929

### **Some Omissions (To the Editor)**

Sir, – With many others I like to read of early Launceston, but most of the writers do not always give the real facts when referring to places and people. Among Thursday's list of clergy I do not see the Rev J.LYLE, Dean BUTLER, or Father GLEESON's names. The other omission is in reference to toll gates, three being left out, one on Invermay-road near Mayne-street, one on the Hobart-road on the city side of the *Swan Inn*, at King's Meadows, and one at Prospect above Mount Pleasant gate. I hope "Incognito" will not mind me filling in the gaps. I hope he will continue writing, as it reminds us all of the good days that are past, – Yours, etc., OPENI No. 2.

*The Examiner*, 6 December, 1929

## Launceston in the Seventies (No.2) (By "Incognito")

Mr S.J. SUTTON was proprietor of the Coffee Palace and the Mayor of the city. His confections sold – at a price – in the old shop opposite SMITH and HUTCHINSON'S, was as much a Mecca for children with insatiable appetites as the town gasometers were the like Mecca for children with uncontrollable whooping cough. I expect in these advanced times inhaling of gas for the latter is supplanted by some other remedy, but to ease the vacuum in a boy's stomach one has to resort to the old, old method of three-cornered tartlets and sausage rolls.

A pork pie shop in Elizabeth-street was another epicurean resort. The juxtaposition of Old WEBB'S "Holloway Pills" dispensary exactly opposite thereto might appear significant, but I am sure it was not premeditated.

Bakeries in those days accommodated too-busy housewives by baking joints, geese, fowls, etc., for them – at a price – in their long brick ovens in which they deposited and withdrew the said edibles with an extremely long handle shovel. How the bakers distinguished Mrs UNDERDONE's shoulder of lamb from that of Mrs BAKEWELL, was, I suppose, known only to the initiated.

Launceston was always well supplied with water. Our streets were kept free of dust in summer time by hydrant watering and many a venturesome youngster received a ducking by getting in the way of the forcible output.

Fires were fairly numerous, caused principally by chimneys choked with soot. We had two fire alarm towers, one where Wellington-street merges into Wellington-road, and the other in Brisbane-street, between Charles and Wellington-streets. The look-out or watchmen were on constant qui-vive for a blaze, and upon sighting it the bell would be clanged the number of times which stood for the district or quarter of the town in which the fire was, and this signal was followed by continuous clanging for two or three minutes. Then the same signal interval strokes would ring out again, and if the fire was a serious one both alarm bells would be rung. As the code signals did not notify particular streets it will be perceived what a wave of trepidation would occur at a public gathering among those who lived in the designated district, who, of course, would "fold up their tents like the Arabs and as silently steal away." We were only possessed of man-pulled hose reels, but there was always plenty of willing helpers to aid the firemen.

I expect the abattoirs are segregated from the residential portion of the town. Our only one was not. It operated at the northern end of Margaret-street, on the western side, or just about in that vicinity, but was kept in good sanitary shape by the respective superintendents, Messrs. THOMPSON and CONINGSBY.

## The Woollen Mills

It afforded me great pleasure to observe the immense development of the Waverly Woollen Mills at Distillery Creek. As I was intimately acquainted with the late Mr Peter BULMAN, its founder, I was present at the laying of the foundation stone, and witnessed the first weaving hand shuttle pulled, I suppose it is quite in order that I should note its development with such sincere gratification. Mr Robert HOGARTH, Mr Bulman's brother-in-law, was associated with the mill from its inception, and I presume his sons now assist him in the management.

In the 70's Launceston must have been fairly prosperous, for we had but one pawn-broking establishment, conducted by Mr James MATTHEWS. I had no occasion in those days to investigate the modus operandi of such places.

Perhaps it would be of interest to the fair sex to know how the ladies of 50 odd years ago dressed. Their dress was distinguished by the utmost regard for concealment of any limbs they possessed. Scalloped flouncing, done by hand with a pinking iron and hammer, and lace trimmings were the mode. Extremely compressed waists – through steel and whalebone corsets – were the insignia of elegance, if they deemed it so. It is incomprehensible why they spoilt the effect by an uncouth dromedary hump attachment rearward, yclept a "bustle."

We had our share of notable characters in the lowlier ranks of life, and maybe oldtimers will recognise this one: A short, stodgy, elderly man, with a long, clean-shaven face, and wearing a faded grey high beaver hat and a loose, seedy-looking Prince Albert coat, slowly trudges along the street. A programme or notice paper is carried in one hand, and in the other he holds a huge bell with a wooden handle. At intervals he stops, vociferously rings the bell, and afterwards, in stentorian tones, announces an auction sale, some property lost, someone's cow impounded, or a concert or flower show to take place. From street to street he goes, repeating the performance. That was "Chequers," our town crier.

Here comes along the footpath a personage carrying a bundle of stout rod joints, upon one of which is fastened a large circular bristly brush. He is of sooty blackness, and his white teeth gleam from out of his ebon visage, but no strolling Negro minstrel is he. He has just done some notable work, and is out after another job. A lady opens her front door, beckons him, and the black man walks right in. The job has been found – “Buck,” our white, town chimney sweep.

Darkness is approaching, when a long, lean individual comes swinging along the side walk, shouldering a small, white ladder; he reaches a lamp-post, stops, places the ladder against its extended arms, mounts it, unfastens a swinging glass panel of the lamp, inserts over the gas jets a small bull’s eye lantern, a sudden light explosion, and there appears for a short distance around a so-called illuminated street. Again he jogs on and repeats the like performance at every lamp. That is “COLLINS,” the town lamp lighter!

One of the well-known men among the horsey fraternity in the 70’s was old Harry Davey PARR, who kept a superior hotel, racing and bait stables on the site whereon was afterwards built Mrs Henry REED’s Christian Mission Memorial Church, in Wellington-street. He was of the typical John Bull sporting squire type – big, bluff and hearty – and was noted as the owner of a celebrated breed of old country spotted carriage dogs, and was also the owner and trainer of many racehorses of that day. On a Sunday following the Launceston Cup about 200 children were assembled for morning preaching service in the old Margaret-street Sunday school (Wesleyan). A local preacher ascended the pulpit, bowed his head in silent prayer, and then waiting until the school’s eyes were fixed upon him, shouted out, “Strop won the Cup.” Did the eyes of those children pop? Did they stand on the toe-tips of expectancy with ears keenly alert for details? T’was surely so, but alas! blank disappointment. He, having gained attention, calmly announced his text and proceeded from firstly to ninthly. If that wasn’t “obtaining under false pretences,” I’m surely vastly mistaken.

### **Paterson-street Church**

If you had attended Paterson-street Wesleyan Church in the 70’s on any Sunday morning you would not have failed to observe sitting in one of the open side pews at the head of the church (free pews reserved for the poor of the congregation) a most brilliantly attired old lady of plump proportions. Had you been there when she entered the church, you would have noticed that she wore the old fashioned hoop skirt, profusely be-flounced and belaced, and a poke Mother Hubbard bonnet gaily ablaze with artificial flowers. You see her stop suddenly, make a deep obeisance of acknowledgment to the congregation, then pursue her way to her usual seat. Who is she? Well, if you must know, she is no less a personage than “Queen Victoria,” in her own defective mind. Every time the Queen’s name is mentioned from the pulpit she rises from her seat and smilingly bows to all and sundry, to the huge delight of the young folk.

If you had attended the service at night you would have seen the caretaker or sexton – (I doubt me if he were ever young) – in all his importance. He had looked after things for so long a time that he appeared to think that to him belonged “the church, the steeple, and all the good people.” He used to arm himself with a twelve foot wand for lighting the gas chandeliers. Small boys were his pet abomination, and along about the middle of a sermon, armed with a wand, he would perambulate the aisles seeking for victims in the shape of sleeping youngsters. Having sighted his prey, he would tap him viciously on the noddie with the twelve foot’s point, and scare him to wakeful watchfulness. Solicitous mothers would pinch their offspring’s awake if they heard his approach. Grown-up boys who may read this will doubtless sighingly paraphrase Shakespeare, and murmur, “Alas! Sour –, I knew him well.”

We in this part of the globe are reputed to have produced the fastest short distance human runner in the world, but unknown to ourselves in Launceston has the distinction of having possessed a celebrity unsurpassable anywhere! One Saturday afternoon in the 70’s a lady asked two little chaps (brothers) to go to the orchard of a Scotsman friend of hers in Launceston suburbs to pick a couple of buckets of cherries, of which fruit his orchard abounded. Your celebrity stood under the cherry trees from which we picked, and made us whistle all the whole time the operation was being performed, so that we should have only the quantity of cherries required by his lady friend, and none for ourselves. I have told this true story in various parts of the world, and all sources are agreed that Launceston has the distinction of having produced a Scotsman who “outscotches the Scotch.”

*The Examiner*, 6 December, 1929

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New East Perth Cemeteries Website Launched.

A new website has been made available giving details of 9,056 of the estimated 10,000 individuals buried in the East Perth Cemeteries between the foundation in 1829 and closure of the cemeteries in 1899.

www.eastperthcemeteries.com.au