



# LAUNCESTON BRANCH NEWSLETTER

## Library Hours:

**Tuesday**  
10am – 3pm

**Monday - Thursday:**  
By appointment  
(Fees may apply)

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## Tasmanian Family History Society Inc. Launceston Branch

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## August is National Family History Month!

Reactivate your interest in family history or find help in tackling that 'brick wall' that has been blocking you for ages by participating in one of the activities or events on offer during August.

Check out Libraries Tasmania events for August – the Hobart library offers some with Zoom access <https://www.eventbrite.com/cc/national-family-history-month-2024-3487079>

TFHS Launceston Branch will be opening the City Park Stables library from 12 – 2pm each Saturday in August to provide access to our many resources, including one-on-one help from one of our assistants. For work and family reasons, some members are unable to attend in person on our usual opening day, Tuesday, so this opportunity is for them, or anyone else, member or non-member who would like to see what we have on offer.

No need to book, just call in on any of the following  
Saturdays – 3<sup>rd</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> August



## Successful Annual Conference and AGM

Launceston Branch hosted the TFHS 44<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference and AGM held at the Windsor Community Centre on 15 June 2024 where 56 members and friends from around the State were informed and entertained in a warm, pleasant venue. The speakers were varied with Graeme Williams' virtual tour around Tasmania in the 1920s, using Spurling postcards, providing many laughs, sometimes at the expense of the audience. Jai Paterson and John Dent provided some stories from the 1827, 1828 and 1832 court records that the Launceston Branch have transcribed, and will soon be



Conference Speakers (L to R) Graeme Williams, John Dent, Sophie Appleby and Jai Paterson with TFHS President Robyn Gibson (centre).

publishing, as an index listing the people involved. Their presentation emphasized the colour and detail in these records, highlighted in examples of contemporary language of the time. Some information in these records is not easily obtained from other sources. In a very well researched and entertaining presentation, Sophie Appleby told the story of her ancestor, convict Robert 'Harlequin Bob' Cowburn whose colourful and long life, included among other events, escape from Macquarie Harbour, in company with 'the Pieman'.

Following the speakers' program, Andrew Cocker presented a brief outline of *DigiVol*, an opportunity for online volunteers to assist with essential transcription work necessary for the digitization of historic records held by museums and libraries Australia-wide. Detailed information on this project and how to volunteer will be in the next edition of *Tasmanian Ancestry*.

Catering was expertly coordinated by Mary Landers with her team of Sue, Daphne and Lucille, with food largely provided by Sue from The Oak Tree Café (opposite our Tamar Street library. Book sales by Mersey and Launceston Branches were available on the day as well.

The day concluded with the State AGM where the winner of the Lillian Watson Award was announced, the President and Treasurer's reports were tabled and office bearers for 2024/25 were elected. A pleasant meal at the Riverside Hotel was held that evening with 25 members and friends attending.

The Sunday activity commenced with a cuppa, then a walking tour led by John Dent, from the City Park Stables library along Cameron Street, looking at the historic buildings and hearing about the ones that are there no longer. While sunny, there was a very cold wind funneling along the street and the 23 participants moved quickly towards the end.

Overall, it was a very successful weekend, with many positive comments from attendees. Thanks go to all those who organized the weekend and assisted on both days as well as members and friends who attended from across the State.

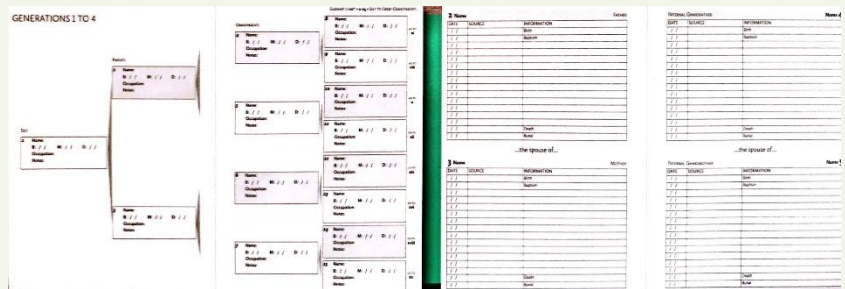
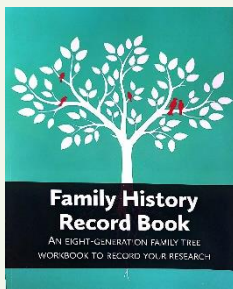






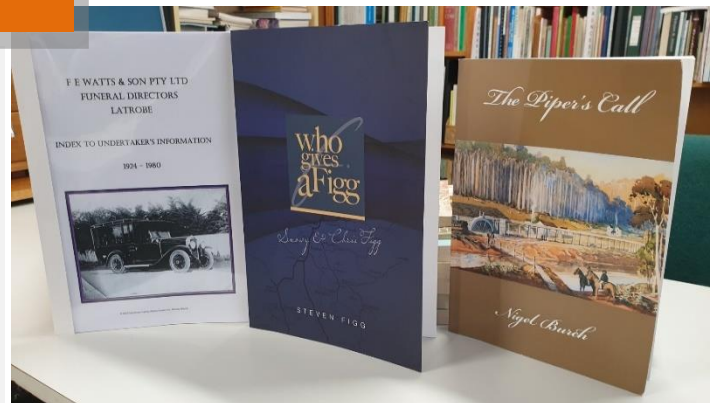
# Library Jottings

- We had hoped to have published the *Index to Births, Deaths and Marriages Vol 16, Parts I & II 1966 - 1970 Births*, compiled from the Examiner newspaper, by now, but have experienced some hold-ups with printing. This publication will consist of two books, owing to the large number of names indexed, and will be released over the next few weeks. Cost and availability will be advised. We will keep you posted.
- The Launceston History Centre (of which TFHS Launceston Branch is an integral constituent) is continuing discussions with the Launceston City Council regarding the lease and essential works at the historical former Frederick St Kindergarten at 56 Frederick Street. This is a slow process but, from time to time, we will advise members of progress.
- If you are beginning your family history research, want a workbook to write your basic findings or a means of passing hard-copy information on to relatives you might be interested in the eight-generation Family History Record Book we have available for sale in our library. A sample of the inside pages is below. Cost \$25



## New on the Library Shelves

- ❖ *FE Watts & Son Pty Ltd, Funeral Directors, Latrobe, Index to Undertaker's Information: 1924-1980* compiled by TFHS Inc. Mersey Branch
- ❖ *Who Gives a Figg: Snowy & Chris Figg* by Steven Figg
- ❖ *The Piper's Call* by Nigel Burch



## British Interest Group (BIG)

BIG meets on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday monthly, between February and November and new members are always welcome (\$10 to join). Meetings are generally of an informal nature, designed to enable the discussion of either a specific topic, current problems being encountered, or more usually, both.

Please contact us by email [ltntasfh@bigpond.com](mailto:ltntasfh@bigpond.com) or phone 0490 826 863 for further information.

### Meeting dates and topics for the remainder of 2024:

- 2pm Wed 14 August: Find your Ancestors in Historic Newspapers
- 2pm Wed 11 September: Welsh Research
- 2pm Wed 9 October: Parish Registers
- 2pm Wed 13 November: Brick Walls



## DNA Discussion Circle

**Please Note:** Instead of the usual discussion group, a workshop conducted by Ros Escott will be held on Thursday 26 September and open to all members and friends. See details on page 6

# Check it Out

## ➤ New Release of Church Records from ScotlandsPeople

Nearly 4,000 volumes of records from the Church of Scotland, equating to around 300,000 images have been added to the ScotlandsPeople website. These new uploads include over 3,000 kirk session records, complementing those already accessible online, alongside records of the General Assembly, synods and presbyteries, all of which have been made available on ScotlandsPeople for the first time and are ready to be explored. Covering almost 350 years of Scottish history, from the 1560s to 1900, digital images include minute books, accounts and cash books, communion rolls, seat rents, poor relief and education records, as well as a wide variety of other records created by church courts. All of these can be searched and viewed for free. <https://tinyurl.com/44epwr3n>

## ➤ Reassign: True Tales from the Grassy Woodlands

Reassign tells the stories of Tasmania's 'grassy woodlands' using a range of digital techniques to deliver surprising and thought-provoking outcomes. Tasmania's northern midlands was shaped by strong women and men: Aboriginal people, convicts, bushrangers, pastoralists, politicians, and soldiers. Reassign brings them back to life. The Reassign Project presents Aboriginal, colonial, and agricultural history in new and vibrant ways with augmented reality, video, music and podcasts. The past meets the future at <https://reassign.net.au/>

## ➤ Interviewing Elderly Relatives

For those of you who are blessed with living elderly relatives, you still have access to a treasure trove of memories, details and more when it comes to your genealogy research. You can supplement all your online and other methods of research with interviews specifically geared toward your elderly relatives so that you can hear their stories and gain valuable information about your family. <https://ourpublicrecords.org/interview-elderly-relatives/>

## ➤ Podcasts

Over 800 podcasts, hosted by the Institute for Historical Research in the UK, are available to listen to online. The topics covered can be filtered by period, geographical area, history type or event. In many cases abstracts and other material accompanying the talks can also be found. There is some very interesting material available here. <https://www.history.ac.uk/search-podcasts>

## ➤ Female Convict Research Centre (FCRC)

If one of your ancestors was a female convict who came to Van Diemens Land, she will be in the FCRC database. For the past 20 years FCRC, through its committed group of volunteers, has been encouraging research into the 13,500 female convicts transported to VDL for their crimes between 1803 and 1853. Its website <https://femaleconvicts.org.au/> database and seminars have been instrumental in this. Registration as a Guest

Researcher is free and entitles access to the Female Convicts in VDL database

<https://femaleconvicts.org.au/index.php/registration/how-to-register> Once logged in, you also have access to the podcasts of the 2022 and 2024 Seminars, both very interesting collections of talks about convict women, their lives, the Female Factories through which they passed, the staff who looked after them and the people for whom they worked.



## My Family's Story

*Short stories about family histories in Tasmania.  
Contributions of around 300-500 words are welcome.*

When Mary McNamara stepped off the *Earl Grey* convict transport in Hobart Town, she must have breathed a huge sigh of relief. Loaded aboard the ship in Dun Loaghaire near Dublin with 239 female convicts in December 1849, she had endured a six-month voyage and near shipwreck as the barque was blown off course into the Southern Ocean as she rounded the south coast of Tasmania and prepared to enter the Derwent River.

Mary was only 19 when she arrived in Hobart, sentenced to seven years transportation for stealing cloth from the Limerick Union and leaving behind three brothers, all soldiers, and a sister Margaret. She was no stranger to hardship having lived through two potato famines and time in Limerick and Grangegorman prisons.

Entering service in Hobart and Richmond, including Government House, she was put before a Magistrate for absconding from her employers on multiple occasions and presenting herself as a free woman. She was eventually banished from Hobart Town to service in Bothwell, her convict record stating that she was not to enter service in Hobart Town.

It was in Bothwell where Mary would meet and marry James Everett, a convict from Dorset, England, transported for sheep stealing and the theft of farm implements. James had been tried with his father who avoided transportation as he was a widower with 10 children. James "the younger" arrived in 1848 and was a shepherd at the Lagoon of Islands, close to the site of the Steppes homestead.

Mary and James married in Bothwell in 1854, remaining until after the birth of two of their nine children, moving first to Oaks, Westbury and then to Tongataboo, a settlement near Deloraine where they were among the first settlers of the area. Life was not without its challenges as Tongataboo at the time was heavily forested and required extensive clearing to create usable farmland for cropping of potatoes and corn for market in Deloraine, five miles away, a feat made much more difficult by a road in which horses could be trapped up to their bellies in mud after heavy rain. They managed to transform their land from swamp to pasture and built a house 'Woodcott' which is still standing.

The Everetts became part of a close knit community of largely Irish settlers in Tongataboo, their daughter, Matilda marrying Martin Tierney, son of a convict from Westmeath. In 1912 when the township was renamed Weetah, Matilda became the postmistress, processing mail from Woodcott. Her brothers, Theodore and Percival continued with farming pursuits, Percival also becoming a long serving councillor in Deloraine advocating for the road repairs and other needs of the Tongataboo/Weetah township for over 34 years. Other members of the family helped to build the Tongataboo School and established the Rubicon Bridge School at Elizabeth Town.

Mary outlived her husband and four of their children, dying in 1906 when she was 76. Mary's early life in Ireland remains a mystery to be solved but she and James were the beginnings of an extensive Everett family in Tasmania, a number of whom remained in the Deloraine area.

*Thank you to Mary Landers for this story*

## ***Focus on Industrial History of Waverley***

*Virginia Tunevitsch is looking for like-minded people who might be interested in researching, collating, and maybe publishing a narrative on the industrial history of Waverley. Areas of interest are Hobbler Farm or Hoblers Farm, Hobbler Bridge crossing, Killafaddy - sale yards and abattoirs, Tasmanian Board Mills and land lease arrangements, timber production, Country & Western Furniture etc., Tarmak and the building of the dinosaur, Waverley Woollen Mills, Distillery Creek and hydro electricity, Tas Water and the pipe bridges, social housing and anything else of historical interest about the various industries in the Waverley area.*

*If you are interested, contact Virginia on Ph. 0438 367 523*

## Upcoming Events of Interest



### What's New? Using DNA for Family History

with Ros Escott AM



Ros is a well-known Tasmanian family historian who has become an expert in DNA analysis for family research purposes. We are fortunate to have her lead a workshop for us this year. At this workshop, Ros will provide

- ❖ A brief review of some of the basics skills for using DNA for family history, especially those that underpin breaking down brick walls.
- ❖ What you get if you subscribe to Ancestry's new optional extra, Pro Tools, and when it might be useful.
- ❖ An explanation/demonstration of the new 'What Are The Odds Plus' (WATO Plus) tool on DNA Painter and why you might use it. It is so much easier to use and interpret than the old WATO tool.
- ❖ An example of using Pro Tools and WATO Plus to solve and then verify an adoption mystery.

**When: Thursday 26 September 2024, 2pm – 3.30pm**

**Where: Flex Room 216, Inveresk Library, University of Tasmania, 2 Invermay Road, Launceston**

(link to map <https://tinyurl.com/bdz5pefi> ) Paid parking close by at Inveresk Car Park, \$2.50/hr

Open to Members and Non-Members – **Bookings are essential**

Registrations and fee of \$5.00 are payable by Tuesday 24 September. Bookings can be made at our library in Tamar St; by mail to PO Box 1290, Launceston, 7250; Email [ltntasfh@bigpond.com](mailto:ltntasfh@bigpond.com) or Ph. 0490 826 863. Payment can be by cash, cheque or direct debit to Acc. No. 563150 BSB: 037-608. If paying by direct debit, please quote the reference: DNA and your surname and send an email with the names of attendees to reserve your place.

**Genealogical Society of Queensland  
Australasian Conference 2025**

#### **Connections**

**Past – Present - Future**

**When:** 21 – 24 March 2025

**Where:** Brisbane Technology Park, Eight Mile Plains, Qld

**Program:** 48 presentations in three themes: *Diaspora – Migration in all its forms; Looking ahead – what are the opportunities; Local History and its impact on our research*

**Featured Speakers:** Judy Russell, the Legal Genealogist ®

Dr Nick Barratt, Author, broadcaster and historian

Hamish Maxwell - Stewart, heritage and digital humanities professor at the UNE and CEO of Digital History Tasmania.

Full details <https://www.connections2025.org.au/>

### **Launceston Historical Society**

Monthly meetings are held from February to November, on the third Sunday of the month at 2pm in the Meeting Room, Queen Victoria Museum, Inveresk. Upcoming meetings are on:

**Sunday, 18 August 2024** Mead, Smith von Stieglitz Lecture, Brad Wood, *Henry Rice, East Coast Explorer*

**Sunday, 15 September 2024** Louise Zarmati, *Maria Campbell: woman of colour, a very intelligent female of 20 years of age*

**Sunday, 20 October 2024** Jen Thompson, *“Scenes that are Brightest”*

Bookings are not required and non-members are welcome (\$5). Bring some cash for the raffle. More information at <https://launcestonhistory.org.au/> or Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/launcestonhistory>