

THRA

TASMANIAN HISTORICAL RESEARCH ASSOCIATION

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NEWSLETTER NO. 124

August 2025

MEETING CALENDAR 2025

12 August	Theresa Sainty Interpreting Palawa Ngini voices from the past through colonial documents: Staying faithful to culturally embedded meaning
9 September	Imogen Wegman Edward Foord Bromley's disappearing New Town
14 October	Alan Townsend Scandal & Graft: the outrageous career of George Duffield
11 November	Jody Steele Public history and interpretation
9 December	John Dent Launceston: the first twenty years – a difficult birth

NEW and RETURNING MEMBERS

Robert & Erin Bell of Mount Stuart	Joanna Hopkins of Montagu Bay
Miranda Burton & Christian Barnes of Howrah	James Melville of Port Sorell
Keith Corbett of Fern Tree	David & Anne Kernke of Claremont
Graeme Corney of Rose Bay	Paul Sofronoff of Alphington, Victoria
Bill Cromer of Taroona	Stephanie Wagner of Louisville, Kentucky, USA
Neil Hawthorne of Battery Point	Doug Watts of Devon Hills

MEMBERSHIP FEES 2026

In 2026, membership of THRA will be increased by \$5. The new fees will be:

Individual membership (Australia) – \$65	New Zealand & Pacific membership – \$85
Student membership (Australia) – \$40	Other overseas membership – \$100
Household membership (Australia) – \$75	Life membership (renewals only) – \$60

This small increase reflects the impact of inflation on printing Papers and Proceedings and the cost of printing the journal in full colour. Our last membership increase was in 2022 and this is part of the Committee's commitment to careful stewardship of both the Association's resources and members.

THRA GIVEAWAYS

THRA has for disposal a large **80-inch portable projection screen with tripod stand** in excellent condition it no longer requires and is available at **no cost**. It is suitable for home theatre, movie or data projection use.

Please contact Brian Rieusset on rieusset@westnet.com.au for information re collection.

At the next **three THRA meetings**, we will be giving away surplus copies of some **THRA publications**. Including *Rambles in Western Tasmania* and *Railways of Western Tasmania*.

UPCOMING EXCURSION: GEORGE AUGUSTUS ROBINSON'S BIG RIVER

In late 1831 George Augustus Robinson, accompanied by fourteen Palawa (Tasmanian Aboriginal) guides, spent two and half months traversing central Tasmania during his so-called Friendly Mission to persuade Palawa living on Country to abandon their resistance to invasion and colonisation.

Join historian, photographer and author **Ian Terry** on this day-long coach tour to visit some of the places Robinson wrote about in his journal and to investigate how colonisation has impacted the Tasmanian landscape. Places that Ian highlighted in his book *Uninnocent Landscapes* and his talk to THRA in late 2023. This all day excursion will be held on **Saturday 18 October**. The coach will leave **Cornelian Bay at 8.30am** and **return between 5.30 and 6.00pm**. We will have stops near Bronte Lagoon (with a 1km flat walk), Bronte Park for lunch, the Five Rivers Reserve on the Marlborough Highway, Miena, the Lagoon of Islands (with another short walk) and Bothwell. It will be a self-catering excursion, although there is a shop at Bronte Park where some food can be bought.

The cost of the excursion is \$50. If you are interested email Ian at iterry@iinet.net.au or ring him on 0498 635 064.

UPCOMING EXCURSION: SOUTH of BOTHWELL

On **Saturday 29 November**, members of THRA are invited on an excursion to properties south of Bothwell. This excursion will be by bus **from Hobart, leaving at 9am**. We will start with morning tea at Rathmore, then visit properties and a historic church, between Hollow Tree and Bothwell.

Lunch is provided, but please bring your own drinks. We will **return to Hobart by about 6pm**. This excursion is for THRA members only. The cost is \$75 per person. Please email Alison.Alexander@utas.edu.au if you would like to come or if you have any queries.

EXCURSION REPORT: UTAS RARE and SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

On a cold day in early July, we had a THRA indoor excursion to the University of Tasmania to visit the **Special and Rare Collections** and to see objects from the **Waterworth Optical Collection** at the *John Elliot Classics Museum*. The latter was a real highlight as these objects are not usually on display and many of us were unaware of the extraordinary contribution Tasmania made to the war effort in the 1940s – possibly because it was a top-secret wartime project. After hearing the fascinating story about how the company and collection came into existence in Tasmania, we were able to inspect prisms, lenses and equipment from The Eric Waterworth Collection. It was a unique and fascinating opportunity.

At the Special and Rare Collections we visited the stacks and learnt about the collection and some of the rare books that it contains. They have the *Royal Society of Tasmania Library Collections* and a large Quaker collection held on behalf of the *Society of Friends*, considered to be the finest collection of Quaker materials in the Southern Hemisphere. There is also a *University Records collection* – we were shown samples of interesting photos of the University's Sandy Bay campus from when it was being built. There was a print of a meticulously detailed map of the 'Canal Dentrecaesteaux' drawn in 1792 by the French explorers, and a rare book which had a coloured crayon sketch of Ernest Shackleton looking strong and determined.

The excursion was very popular and had a long wait list, so we plan to repeat it next year.

PETITION to REPEAL THE JOB READY GRADUATES SCHEME

The news has recently reported that universities around Australia are reducing their Humanities programs (among other cuts). Some of the pressure comes from the **2021 Job Ready Graduates Scheme** introduced by the Morrison Government that increased the cost of Humanities degrees.

The **Australian Historical Association** has launched a petition and campaign asking the government to repeal this scheme. You may be interested in learning more and signing the petition: openpetition.org/!repealjrg

OPEN HOUSE HOBART 2025

Many of you may have enjoyed exploring historic and modern properties during the annual **Open House Hobart** weekend over the years. This year, the event is hosting an additional weekend in the **Southern Midlands**.

Properties in the Southern Midlands will be open on the weekend of **1–2 November** and in Hobart and surrounds on **8–9 November**. Head to openhousehobart.org to find the full program of events, to book into special events, and maybe even offer to volunteer!