

THRA

TASMANIAN HISTORICAL RESEARCH ASSOCIATION

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NEWSLETTER NO. 125

December 2025

MEETING CALENDAR 2026

10 February	Annual General Meeting Eldershaw Memorial Lecture - Clare Wright Näku Dhäruk The Bark Petitions – in conversation with Greg Lehman
10 March	David Stuart A handful of Americans in Hobart Town: Richard Hazard, Samuel Rodman Chace and Elisha Hathaway
14 April	Graeme Broxam Competition vs Cooperation: The Holyman Story
12 May	Helene Chung A Tasmanian Life
9 June	Kathy Rundle Early Quakers in Tasmania and the establishment of The Friends School
14 July	Grant Finlay Returning Fire to Country: the role of history in supporting Aboriginal burning in the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area
11 August	Dean Greeno Pakana connections to country and sea
8 September	Alessandro Antonello Coal in Antarctica: an unignited history
13 October	Alison Alexander Not so squeaky clean after all: William Sorell in Van Diemen's Land
10 November	Louise Zarmati Who was Wauba Debar?
8 December	Bill Lawson The Tasman Bridge disaster and its aftermath

THRA EMAIL COMMUNICATIONS

Are you one of our members who doesn't receive our regular emails? We send out notices ahead of each month's meeting, links for their recordings, information about upcoming excursions, and occasional other announcements. If you don't have an email address but would like to be kept in the loop between these newsletters, please send a note to THRA, PO Box 441, Sandy Bay, 7006 or talk to a committee member at a Tuesday meeting. We are considering several different options for ensuring all our members receive regular updates.

If you believe you should be receiving these emails already but aren't, please check your email's spam, junk, or promotion folders (depending on your email provider) and add thra@thra.org.au to your safe sender list. You can also update your email address with us by emailing this address or logging into your account at thra.org.au.

NEW and RETURNING MEMBERS

Robyn Gibson of Perth, Tas
Christophe Illien of Dodges Ferry
Ian and Leslie Kilgour of Battery Point
Ian Leader-Elliott of Plympton Park, SA

Luke O'Connor of Glenorchy
June Pongratz of Lenah Valley
Graeme Wood of Lindisfarne

EXCURSION REPORT: GEORGE AUGUSTUS ROBINSON'S BIG RIVER



Thirty-eight hardy THRA members boarded the coach for a THRA excursion with a difference on 18 October. With cool weather and occasional showers forecast we travelled up to the Central Plateau to investigate sites visited by George Augustus Robinson's Big River Mission in late 1831. We inspected a property being restored as a Tasmanian Aboriginal cultural landscape as well as others severely degraded in the two centuries since colonisation.

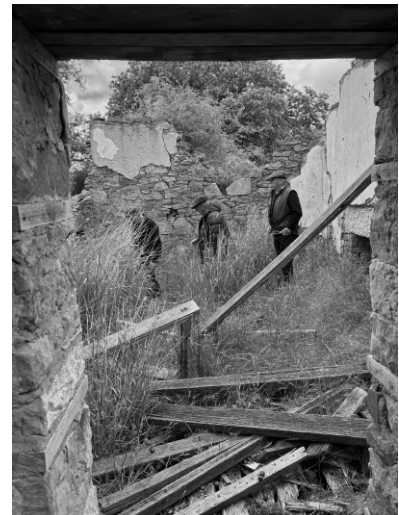
We also visited the vicinity of the historic meeting between Robinson and the survivors of the Big River and Oyster Bay nations which spelt the end of significant resistance to English colonisation in Van Diemen's Land.

EXCURSION REPORT: HOLLOW TREE

On Saturday 29 November, 38 THRA members enjoyed a day excursion to historic properties at Hollow Tree (south of Bothwell), organised by Mary Ramsay. This followed neatly the recent excursion to the Central Plateau looking at the landscape in Aboriginal times, as this was the next stage, British settlement (and Aboriginal expulsion).

Our first stop was Rathmore, built in the 1830s by Henry Torlesse. It has been beautifully restored and we examined it inside and outside, as well as enjoying morning tea. Next came the fascinating ruins of remote Sherwood and its outhouses beside the River Clyde. The owners, the Hallett family, were very helpful, not only telling us about the property but driving some people in and out in utes – other people walked the 2.5 km.

We had lunch on the lawn at Llanberis, with a beautiful view, then visited the ruins of Montacute, with its beautiful little church way out in the wilderness, surely the most remote church in Tasmania. Katrine Vale must be one of the most remote farms, with a Georgian stone house replete with evil-avoiding carvings and signs. Our last stop was beautiful Hollow Tree House, recently renovated sympathetically by the owners, with a stunning native garden.



Thanks to Mary and Richard Ramsay, the Hallett family, our skillful bus driver Peter, and all the property owners for their help in this very enjoyable and interesting day.

EXCURSIONS in 2026

The Committee has been planning an exciting program of excursions for 2026 with fabulous new locations for everyone to explore, and some repeats of popular outings from the last two years.

We are always eager to hear your ideas for tours. If you know of somewhere in Tasmania that would captivate THRA members for a few hours or a day, please email us or talk to a committee member.

LIBRARIES TASMANIA FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

The State Library and Archives of Tasmania has just opened applications for their 2026 Fellowships Program. Offering Research, Aboriginal and Writing Fellowships to researchers and creatives, this program offers a generous opportunity for individuals to develop their work with the support of our public library and archives.

To learn more about previous recipients, this year's categories, and how to apply, go to Fellowships on the Libraries Tasmania website: libraries.tas.gov.au/slat/fellowship