

THRA

TASMANIAN HISTORICAL RESEARCH ASSOCIATION

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NEWSLETTER NO. 127

August 2026

MEETING CALENDAR 2026

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

NEW and RETURNING MEMBERS

Ian Anderson of Sandy Bay	Lynden Leppard of Kingston
Sharon Betridge of Blackburn South, Victoria	Darryl Massie of Lindisfarne
Stephenie Cahalan of Taroona	Ian McShane of Ascot Vale
Suzanne Curry of Lindisfarne	Helen Nicholson of Newtown, NSW
Sue Foster of Hilton, WA	Roslyn Nixon of Leslie Vale
Vanessa Freeman of White Hills	Peter Wood of Sandringham, Vic
Kit Hiller of Mt Hicks	Andrew Wright of Kingston

Introducing: Erica Burgess

Since our AGM in February, the Committee has grown by one.

Erica Burgess immigrated with her family to Australia in the 1960s and has lived mostly in Tasmania. She has had a long career in painting conservation and most recently was Senior Conservator of Paintings at the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery. She completed an undergraduate degree at the University of Tasmania and Master's degree at the University of Canberra. She worked at the National Gallery of Australia and a number of other organisations in Australia. Now retired she continues with research onto 19th century artists (particularly painters) and their materials and how this was influenced by social context. Obtaining quality artists materials was at times difficult in the 19th century which adds to the intrigue.

200th Anniversary of Mechanics' Institutes in Australia

At the end of March, 2027, the Friends of the Launceston Mechanics' Institute will be hosting a celebration of the 200th anniversary of Mechanics' Institutes in Australia. The program includes a walking tour of 'Lost Libraries of Hobart' and a series of talks in Launceston. For more information, contact John Dent at jdent8@bigpond.com.

Congratulations to Alistair Scott!

The Kay Daniels Award is a biennial prize recognising outstanding original research with a bearing on Australian convict history and heritage. The Dick and Joan Green Family Award for Tasmanian History is a biennial literary prize for published work that makes a significant contribution to an understanding of Tasmania's past.

This year both of these awards have been won by THRA member Alistair Scott for his book *Urchin convicts: the Point Puer boys in Van Diemen's Land*. Members might remember that Alistair gave a talk to THRA on this topic in 2019. We congratulate Alistair on this outstanding achievement.

Knopwood Diary on USB

In this edition of *Paper and Proceedings*, you will read an article by Brian Rieusset that relies heavily on the *Diary of Reverend Robert Knopwood*. This diary was transcribed by Mary Nicholls and published by THRA as a hardback volume in 1977. The physical edition is now out of print and a valued item on the second-hand book market, but THRA has a high-quality digital version available for sale.

Buy *Knopwood's Diary* as PDF on a handy USB, compatible with both USB-A (older) and USB-C (newer) sockets for \$30. These will be available at Tuesday evening meetings, or for order from our website: thra.org.au/publications/knopwoods-diary

Upcoming Excursions

State Library & Archives of Tasmania's Geilston Bay Repository

In 2022 the State Library and Archives of Tasmania moved more than 14 kilometres of archival items to the Tasmanian Archives Geilston Bay Repository, a state-of-the-art facility that is storing the state's archives into the future.

Led by State Library and Archives of Tasmania archivist David Bloomfield on **Tuesday, 15 September, 3–4:30pm**, this behind-the-scenes tour offers an opportunity to peek into the preservation of Tasmania's documentary heritage. Numbers are limited so please let Ian Terry at ittery@iinet.net.au if you would like to attend.

Markree House

Markree House Museum and Garden is a 1920s Arts and Crafts house and garden tucked away in Battery Point. Exploring the grounds and viewing the family heirlooms is like walking into an earlier time.

THRA will visit Markree on **Saturday 17 October at 2pm**, for \$10 per person.

Contact Ros Escott at escottros@esco.au to book and get info about pre-payment.

Government Gardens

THRA member Graeme Corney is organising tours of the Government House grounds on **14 and 15 November**. Numbers will be limited to 20 participants for each day.

The details for this excursion are still being worked out but if you are interested please contact Ian Terry at ittery@iinet.net.au or 0498 635 064 so we can let you know when they have been finalised.

Excursion report: Special Collections & Waterworth Optical Collection at UTAS



On a Wednesday morning in July, members of THRA had an engaging morning learning about the Special Collections and Waterworth Optical Collection held at the University of Tasmania.

Members enjoyed the chance to see some very rare texts and objects, and some will be back for research, we're sure.

