



Tasman Forestier History Group Inc.

Newsletter

Volume 3. Issue 3

August 2021

We finally did it!

After years of procrastination we have changed both our name and our stated aim to better reflect our preferred scope. We are now the *Tasman Forestier History Group*, and our aim is: *to research, record and share the history of persons, places, and events of the Tasman Forestier region across a range of significant eras*. We acknowledge the role of the original inhabitants of our region and Aboriginal family stories will be welcomed. We also acknowledge that the convict era is unavoidably connected to the free settlement era that followed. The article on Koonya and St. Alban's church (page 3) illustrates this fact beautifully.

We had a fantastic history walk for members and guests in March to visit Point Puer and Safety Cove Farm, and are thankful to our wonderful guide, Graham Speight, and landowners Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority (Point Puer) and Martin and Mieke Beck (Safety Cove Farm). Ideal weather allowed us to enjoy both locations in picture perfect conditions (see images page 2).

Coming up in September we have the opportunity to join Tasman U3A members for a guided tour of Narryna House in Battery Point, and view their exhibition of medical artifacts owned by Dr. Philip Thomson. Soon we have another history walk and talk, this time at Murdunna and led by Bob Millington.

With sadness I acknowledge the recent passing of two life members. Founding member Neil Noye needs no introduction, being well known for his outstanding contribution to the community, especially as Mayor during the period of recovery that followed the 1996 Port Arthur massacre.

Ethel Robinson was a stalwart of the history group. She and husband Len (dec) were the driving force behind the very popular Pioneer Heritage Shows held at Taranna during the 1980s and early 90s. A force to be reckoned with, Ethel will be remembered most fondly for her fierce commitment to our *Tasman Peninsula Chronicles* over many years.



Neil sharing a story at Eaglehawk Neck hall, (March 2015).



Ethel enjoying a cuppa at the launch of Chronicle 16, (November 2013).

We are also saddened to hear of Graham Speight's serious medical diagnosis. Graham is an energetic member of the history group having instigated many great projects, and led many wonderful talks. We hope his passion is sustained as we rally to help him complete the current *Convict Trail* project.

Anne Hoyle
President

Dates to remember:

Sat 21 Aug	Murdunna Walk & Talk
Wed 25 Aug	RSVP for Narryna visit
Mon 6th Sep	TFHG Business Meeting
Wed 8th Sep	Narryna House tour
Mon 4th Oct	TFHG Business Meeting

History Walk & Talk

Murdunna

Led by Bob Millington

10am Saturday 21 August

Meet: 9.50am at the foreshore park, corner of Arthur Hwy and Sommers Bay Rd.

Parking, toilets, BBQ, playground – at Jackson Park, just south of Murdunna Roadhouse

RSVP: anne.courtney@me.com

Guided tour of Narryna House & Collection of Medical Artifacts

103 Hampton Rd, Battery Point

Wednesday 8 September

10.00am - 12.30pm

\$20 per person

RSVP by 25 Aug:

marjeturner@outlook.com

Ph: 0474 208 585

Some images from our History Walk & Talk in March, led by Graham Speight.



Point Puer



Safety Cove Farm

St Albans Church - good news!

St Albans Koonya has been provisionally listed on the Tasmanian Heritage Register this month. Congratulations to those who worked so hard to lobby for its protection.

Statement of Significance: (non-statutory summary)	St Alban's Church and Cemetery demonstrates the importance of religious practice to the development of small, relatively isolated rural communities in Tasmania in the nineteenth century. St Alban's demonstrates the development of the Tasman Peninsula post-convict era, and the construction of community buildings as a focus for small settlements. St Alban's is a modest but highly intact weatherboard Gothic style church built in the Federation period. Constructed from locally milled hardwood, imported Baltic pine and materials salvaged from the remains of the nearby penal settlement, it is a good example of the simple, low-cost places of worship that were built by small, isolated and relatively poor rural communities with funds raised by the community.
--	---

The extract from a newspaper article below chronicles the development of the "pretty little church".

KOONYA

Some Historical Notes

An Interesting District

(By W. J. Rowlands)

Koonya was so named after an aborigine [sic] woman of Sorell, and its origin dates back to the penal days of Tasman Peninsula, when it was known as the Cascade Probation Station...

.... Koonya derived its original title from the small cascade in the stream that here enters Norfolk Bay. Most of the penal buildings were of brick, and some still remain; indeed, what was once the officers' quarters is now the fine brick residence of Mr. B. M. Clark, Warden of Tasman Municipality, whose property includes most of the old station.

Another relic of Koonya's early days is a tombstone, erected some little distance below the Anglican Church of St. Alban's, and bearing the following inscription:-

"Sacred to the memory of Nathan Jepson, late of the 51st Regiment of Light Infantry, overseer on this station. Died suddenly on February 13, 1844; aged 38 years. Prepare to meet thy God."

ST. ALBAN'S CHURCH

On July 23, 1894, a public meeting was held, and the initial steps were taken to erect an Anglican church at Koonya. Mr. J. R. McClymont kindly donated three acres of land for that purpose and for a cemetery. This was supplemented with a quantity of material. Several more meetings were held, and at the

beginning of the present century the pretty little church of St. Alban's was completed, the Rev. F. Taylor being vicar of Sorell at the time, and the visiting clergyman to the district.

In 1903 Mr. (now Rev.) M. J. May was appointed resident catechist of Tasman Peninsula, which comprises the districts of Koonya, Taranna, Eaglehawk Neck, Oakwood, Port Arthur, Nubeena, Premaydena and Saltwater River.

On March 6, 1904, the church was opened and dedicated to St. Alban by the Right Rev. J. E. Mercer, D.D., Bishop of Tasmania, and a portion of the church ground consecrated as a cemetery.

At a public meeting in October, 1904, the movement for the erection of a rectory materialised, and a suitable building was subsequently built on a site adjoining St. Alban's Church ground, and part of two acres of land given by Mr. and Mrs. Edward Brown for the purpose. For many years the rectory was occupied by the district clergyman, and afterwards used as a private residence for some time, but a resident catechist has recently been appointed, Mr. N. F. Browning, who now resides in it.

In 1926 a stained glass window was erected in St. Alban's Church, and dedicated by the late Robert H. Richard, Archdeacon of Hobart, to the memory of the late Rev. J. H. Wills, who was accidentally killed by a motor-car on the Port Arthur Road, and whose last labours were mainly confined to Tasman Peninsula.

The Mercury, Saturday 15 August 1931 p.10

Back page opinion

Oakwood town boundary

Letter to Tasman Council, October 2019

I'm writing to ask if the signs indicating Oakwood could be replaced closer to their original siting. Why? Historically, Oakwood was a reasonable sized little town with its own school and Post Office and because I had several family members who lived in this area, I would like the boundary indications to be a little more accurate. Another reason is that Michael Holmes, who has written 2 books to date on vanishing towns mentions Oakwood in one of these books.

Currently, there is one [sign] near Seascape and this should be closer to Port Arthur, near the Fox and Hounds. The other should be near Blink Bonnie.

There is a hand drawn map of Oakwood on the Tasman Peninsula Historical site and that along with census records show the Oakwood signs to be not quite accurately placed. My understanding is that the sign was moved past Seascape in order to accommodate Seascape being within the Port Arthur boundary. This was done when Port Arthur was being established as a prominent tourist site.

In 1914, there were approximately 20 different names of people living at Oakwood. The census records show the Rileys (opposite the Fox and Hounds), the Gathercoles (sawmill in front of the Fox and Hounds) through to Rogers (Coronation Road) and purportedly up to Blink Bonnie.

In 1922, the number of names has increased to 28; by 1954 the number is almost non existent, but the Rileys and my great grandfather, Joseph Arthur Palmer (6729 Arthur Highway) and my great uncle, Arthur Palmer (Blink Bonnie) are still on the census records as residing at Oakwood, not Carnarvon.

Lindy Mollineaux
Howrah
Tasmania

[Lindy received a positive response from Tasman Council - "*Council can change the location of the "OAKWOOD" signage if required as it is an unbounded locality and the Nomenclature Office hold a loose definition of the area only*"]

Preserving yesterday's history for tomorrow's generations

President: Anne Hoyle
Phone: 0458 290 521
Email: swrhoyle@yahoo.com.au

Treasurer: Keith O'Hara
Phone: 0429 190 367
Email: keith.ohara@hotmail.com

Secretary: Anne Courtney
Phone: 0437 995 923
Email: anne.courtney@me.com

Chronicle Distribution: Fay Odell
Phone: 6250 3500
Email: fayodell@yahoo.com.au

Tasman Forestier History Group Inc.
1 Jones Road
PREMAYDENA TAS 7185
Website: tphs.org.au
Email: tasmanhistory@gmail.com

Historical Research Officer: Denise Jeffrey
Email: tasmanhistory@gmail.com

Other committee members:

James Parker (Public Officer), Anni McGinniss, Roseanne Heyward, Ted Leeson, Graham Speight