



Tasman Peninsula Historical Society Inc.

Newsletter

Volume 3. Issue 1

January 2021

Happy New Year to our members and friends

The last few months have been busy! (I promised a December newsletter but didn't quite make it).

Graham led a walk on 17th October taking in Port Arthur and Stewarts Bay which I heard great comments about. The Isle of the Dead tour scheduled for November was postponed (until restrictions on numbers, due to COVID, have been lifted). This was more than made up for by the great day on 12th December when we followed the launch of Chronicle 20 with an interesting tour of Koonya, led by Don Clark and Dr. Philip Thomson. A highlight for many was a look through the Rectory and I thank the Thomson family for generously allowing this access. To end the day we had a very enjoyable BBQ for members - thank you once again to James Parker for his culinary expertise.

Pete Hay's speech to launch Chronicle 20 was very fitting. It was especially nice to hear of the close connection he has with Peter MacFie and the recognition he gave to Peter. We had a great band of willing helpers - setting up, cleaning chairs, preparing afternoon tea, selling chronicles and managing COVID safety. Thank you to everyone who contributed to the success of the Chronicle and its launch, including Phil Hallam for his photographic artistry.

Our next meeting will include the **AGM on Monday 8th February** when election of office bearers will take place. I flagged at the December meeting, and at the launch day, that we need to give some consideration to reviewing the constitution of our Society. More about this by email to members shortly.

Denise Jeffrey has contributed another wonderful article for our enjoyment. Livestock sales used to be held regularly at both Nubeena and Koonya. Denise writes about those held at Nubeena - see page 3.

In the midst of road widening controversy, we conclude this newsletter with some thoughts from Ted Leeson about whether management of the Eaglehawk Neck Historic Site should transfer to Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority.

See you at the AGM.

Anne Hoyle President

Dates to remember:

- 8 Feb TPHS AGM and business meeting
- Feb Point Puer & Safety Cove Farm walk
- Mar Isle of the Dead walk



PROJECT UPDATE: Local Heritage List

Anni and Fay have completed their work checking *TPHS Chronicles* for additional inclusions. These now have to be incorporated into the *draft* list which will eventually be published on our website (rather than published in the Chronicle as previously advised). It is intended to be a 'live' document that can be continually updated.

PROJECT UPDATE: Convict Trail Map and Interpretation Panels

Our applications for Tasmanian Community Fund (TCF) grant funding were unfortunately not successful. Discussions with various project stakeholders are ongoing.

The first run of the Tourist Map has been achieved from TPHS funds and is now available. It looks fantastic (see image left).

Local History Walks

Two more walks have been enjoyed since last newsletter:

Coming up (details to be confirmed):

- February - Point Puer and Safety Cove farm
- March - Isle of the Dead

- 17th October - Port Arthur and Stewarts Bay walk led by Graham Speight on 17th October.



Port Arthur Military precinct



Port Arthur Dockyards and start of Stewarts Bay trail

Images by Denise Jeffrey

- 12th December - Koonya township walk led by Don Clark and Dr. Philip Thomson



Old Hospital, Cascades, Koonya



Don Clark's museum, Cascades, Koonya



The Rectory, St. Albans, Koonya



St. Albans church interior, Koonya

Images by Anne Hoyle

Nubeena Sale Day

Contributed by Denise Jeffrey



Jack Suckling, Dorothy and Robert Burden late 1930s.

These potatoes are most likely bound for the Nubeena sale. Ernest Bond was the first auctioneer when the sales commenced in 1923. Roberts and Co. and A. G. Webster conducted the auctions from 1926 onwards. Fat livestock, property and farm and dairy produce changed hands at the sale which doubled as a social event for the locals.

The first Nubeena sale occurred in late September 1923 with Mr Ernest Bond of Hobart as auctioneer. There was a heavy yarding of stock and sales were brisk. A large crowd attended, many whom arrived on the steamer *Togo* that sailed from Hobart, calling at Brown's River, South Arm and Badger Creek. Mr Fred Spaulding had charge of the luncheon.¹

Auctioneering rights at the sale passed to A.G. Webster and Sons and Roberts & Co. sometime in 1926.² Sales continued until the late 1950s and were a focus for the community. Neil Noye remembers that Steve Bresnehan sold a steer at most sales that was usually bought by Ernie Cooper, the local butcher.

The Country Women's Association (CWA) capitalised on sale crowds and held fund-raising stalls for various charities. In September 1943 £7.12.0 was raised for the Australian Comforts Fund by helpers Mrs A. J. Suckling, Miss M. Plummer, Mesdames C. L. Robinson and F. L. Rogers.³ After 1945 fund-raising shifted to post-war relief for the United Nations Appeal for Children⁴ and the Food for Britain appeal. Miss Clarke and Mrs F.

Mundy were appointed Nubeena sale stallholders at the 1947 annual meeting.

The sale became a political forum in April 1950 when both sides turned up to "press the flesh" and address the crowd. The politicians took turns starting with the Minister for Agriculture (Mr. Dwyer) and then Messrs. Jackson and Neilson, MHAs. Feelings ran high as each attacked the preceding speaker's remarks.⁵

The Nubeena sale ceased operation in the late 1950s-early 1960s after which Jack Suckling and other local producers travelled to Sorell to sell surplus produce on the sale day stalls. Occasionally, my grandfather Robert Burden and my brother Phillip Jeffrey and I went along for a day out. I remember a sedate drive from Nubeena to Sorell in Jack's green HR Holden station wagon with a load of fresh raspberries and bags of new potatoes on sale day.

¹ *Mercury*, 2 October 1923, p. 4

² *Mercury*, 24 July, 1926, p. 2

³ *Mercury*, 17 September 1943, p.4

⁴ *Mercury*, 10 May, 1947, p. 20

⁵ *Mercury*, 22 April 1950. p. 2

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Eaglehawk Neck Hall and Historic Site management

In 1925, the then Governor of Tasmania Sir James O'Grady, Knight Commander of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George, did by the power and authority vested in him proclaim 'exempt from sale and reserve the said land to His Majesty for the purpose of ... a Public Hall.' Said land was an area of "OA, 2R. OP." i.e. 2 rods (about 50 square metres) on the Eaglehawk Neck site.

Some 92 years after the hall's official opening on 1 December 1928 it continues to 'serve' its intended purpose. Unusual for a 'public' hall this one is not only operated by the local community, but is *owned* by the community NOT by the local council. Hence, all operating costs must be met by the association set-up to manage this community asset.

Somewhere along the line the proclamation mentioned above was 'revoked' (in 1986 it appears) and a lease arrangement was entered into and is now held by the Eaglehawk Neck Community and Hall Association Inc. The lessor is none other than the Parks and Wildlife Service of Tasmania which also has responsibility for the Eaglehawk Neck Historic Site (EHNHS) on which this hall is located. Under this lease the Hall Association is restricted in its activities which includes permission to run monthly markets but all other outdoor activities must be approved well in advance. Fortunately, the local PWS Tasman Field Office at Taranna manages the site and is most reasonable in consideration of requests such as mowing, removing fallen trees, attention to pot-holes or other activities such as the memorial service held last year for Dave Moser.

Having said that, given that the period of the hall's service to the local community is nearly three times the length of time that soldiers guarded the narrow land connection to the Tasman Peninsula convict penal area, I wonder why some in the upper echelons of PWS remain of the view that the hall should be moved. Such 'beliefs' have impacted input to State

Roads design of the widening of the highway across the Neck, in so far as turning lanes were not agreed despite it being the only place for tourist buses to park so their patrons can safely visit the Dog Line and/or the oldest standing wooden military structure in our nation – the Officers' Quarters Museum.

PWS wonders why the State Government expects it to manage convict heritage! Until recently, attempts to have EHNHS transferred to PAHSMA have been thwarted by distractions such as Maria Island. Now most would appreciate that the heritage there is much, much wider than its convict story. So up before the Legislative Council's Government Business Scrutiny Committee 'B' did three representatives of the community front on 14 December to support the case for the site's transfer.

What might become of the hall and the EHNHA site should PAHSMA take over the management responsibilities? Suffice to say that the local community has faith in the Board with such members as our esteemed former Mayor Roseanne Heyward and new local Mel Percival, not to mention former Premier and local Michael Field. But there you have it, the current Premier responding to ENACT's request for the transfer saying earlier this year that the Government is 'open' to the consideration.

Now what some parties within the Aboriginal Community might say about such a take-over of this piece of culturally sensitive land is not known, except to say that the local Parrdarrama Pungenna Aboriginal Corporation are very fair minded and open to speaking with others in the local community. Much remains to be seen, including the re-work of the State Road's design of this crossing site – due to recent media coverage.

Ted Leeson
Eaglehawk Neck
Tasmania

Preserving yesterday's history for tomorrow's generations

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

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

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

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

Tasman Peninsula Historical Society Inc.
1 Jones Road
PREMAYDENA TAS 7185
Website: tphs.org.au
Email: tasmanhistory@gmail.com

Other committee members: James Parker (Public Officer), Anni McGinniss, Roseanne Heyward, Ted Leeson, Graham Speight