

Royal Society of Tasmania
Northern Chapter



Northern Chapter Notes August 2015

Upcoming Launceston Lectures:

August 23rd - *Making Waves: The Science of Light*,
Mr Martin George

September 27th - *Maatsuyker, Deal and Bruny Islands - A Lighthouse Caretaker's Perspective*,
Mr John Watts

October 25th - *The Use of Genetic Science in the Advancement of Agriculture*,
Dr Tony Fist

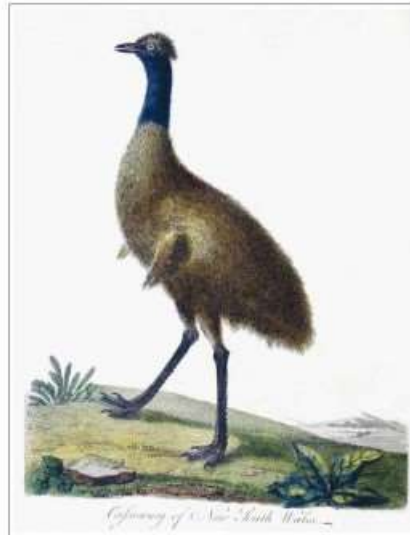
** To facilitate organisation please let us know if you are coming –phone the Museum on 6323 3798, or email bookings@qvmag.tas.gov.au

General News:



- There are still places left for our **excursion to the AMC Maritime Simulator** on the 18th August. The tour will last approximately half an hour, and promises to be a 'moving' experience, simulating the on-board passage of a freight ship through Sydney Harbour, accompanied by astoundingly life-like vision of the Harbour itself. If you would like to participate, please email your name, and a contact phone number to the Secretary, Chel Bardell: cj.bardell@bigpond.com
- We regret to inform you of the sad loss of our long-term member, and former Chair of the Northern Chapter, **Mollie Campbell-Smith**. A tribute to Mollie, written by our Immediate Past President, Dr Eric Ratcliff, is included below.

- **2015 SUBSCRIPTION REMINDER** - Reminders have been sent out to members who have not yet renewed for 2015. Please forward your subscriptions to the Hobart office as soon as possible. Your society relies on your membership to support its lecture program and publications. This is your last chance to renew your membership for 2015.



The Royal Society of Tasmania
2016 CALENDAR

- **2016 CALENDAR “A Curiosity Cabinet, Gems from the RST Collections”** - Stocks of the 2016 Calendar are now available, at our new **sales table**, on display before and after each lecture. Single copies are \$19.95rrp in the shops but if you buy from us they are only \$18.00 each at QVMAG. Bulk purchases of ten or more are \$15.00 each. The Calendar will fit in a B4 envelope and only cost \$2.10 to post within Australia. These calendars make excellent Christmas presents. Also available on our Sales Table are **sixteen new greeting cards**. These are A6 in size and post as a standard letter. They are priced as follows: Single cards \$5.00 each. Pack of 5 mixed cards \$20.00. Pack of 10 mixed cards \$40.00. All 16 cards for \$60.00 - a saving of \$20.00 on individual card prices.



An Interesting Historical Snippet in Royal Park, Launceston.



Stone erected to commemorate astronomer and inventor, Alfred Biggs and also mark the site of the observatory which was operated by him.

In 1877, Biggs learned of the invention of the telephone and he then constructed a pair of telephones and had them connected between Launceston and Campbell Town, successfully transmitting sounds between the two locations. It has been claimed that this was the first telephone connection in Australia.

His continuing interest in astronomy led to the construction of an observatory in the western part of Launceston. Despite the small size of his telescopes--his instruments were then a 2-inch (51-mm) and a 3-inch (76-mm) refractor--Biggs was a diligent and pedantic observer, becoming known as Launceston's 'Astronomer Royal'. He contributed reports to the local newspaper and from 1884 papers to the Royal Society of Tasmania, of which he was that year elected a fellow. He made observations and measurements of comets, double stars, eclipses and transits of Mercury and Venus.

"We are here because we wish to honour the memory of a distinguished citizen of Launceston, and to mark permanently a very important position in relation to our city," said the president of the Northern branch of the Royal Society (Mr. A. L. Meston, M.A.), in an address before unveiling yesterday afternoon in Royal Park a memorial marking the site of the observatory of the late Mr. A. B. Biggs. In his observatory Mr. Biggs did much valuable scientific work, including the determination of the latitude of Launceston (41-26-1 south) and longitude (1.7-7-49.5 east)." *Examiner (Launceston), 19th September 1935.*

<http://monumentaaustralia.org.au/themes/people/science/display/70497-alfred-biggs>

OBITUARY

Mollie Campbell-Smith AM, MBE 1917-2015

Mollie was the elegant Chair of the Northern Branch for some years during the 1990s, and retained her interest in the Society until her death a few weeks ago, attending the most recent Northern Chapter Lecture a few days before her death.

She was one of a small group who kept the Branch alive and active during a difficult period, and laid the foundations for the present success of the Chapter.

She was active in many fields, as a teacher (science) and school counsellor, developing a course in human relationships that was widely used. She was a Girl Guide Commissioner, a senior member of the National Council of Women, and president of the Federation of University Women, an enthusiast for education, her interest continuing to cover all periods of life, involved in bodies concerned with mental health, suicide prevention and provision for the aged. She held many life memberships, and as a frequent commentator in the media on the many matters within her interest, she never really retired. As one of her sons said in her eulogy, 'Death was not on her agenda.'

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Dr E. V. R. Ratcliff

O.A.M., B.B., B.S., F.R.A.N.Z.C.P.