



### A Message from the President



Dear Members,

The RST **Clive Lord Memorial Medal** is intended to recognise leading Tasmanian scientists and historians. It is offered every three years and alternates between the two disciplines. This year, the medal was offered for the history discipline. Tasmania is blessed with a significant cohort of eminent historians whose research has a focus on the state.

At the October meeting, the RST Council resolved to award the 2022 Clive Lord Memorial Medal to **Emeritus Professor Stefan Petrow** (pictured below). Professor Petrow has made an outstanding contribution to diverse aspects of Tasmanian history through prolific research, teaching, post-graduate supervision and public engagement sustained for more than 30 years.



The **RST Art Collection** is again in the spotlight. Honorary Curator, Dr Anita Hansen has begun planning a public exhibition intended to run for a few months towards the end of 2023.

Please note that nominations for the annual **RST Doctoral Awards** for 2022 close next week – details follow in this Newsletter.

The **November lectures** in Hobart and Launceston (see pp. 2–3) will be closely followed by the **RST Christmas Dinner** in Hobart on 8 December. Dinner reservations are now open – the acceptance form is provided in this Newsletter on p. 5.

Finally, welcome to **new members** Associate Professor Rebecca Carey and Dr Mike Pook.

Best regards,

Prof Jocelyn McPhie,  
President

### Contents:

- 2 [RST lecture and webinar: \*Truth telling and treaty as it relates to Tasmania now\*](#)
- 3 [Northern Branch lecture: \*QVMAG: A catalyst for cultural activation\*](#)
- 4 [Report on RST lecture by John Williamson](#)
- 5 [RST Christmas Dinner Presenter acceptance form](#)
- 6 [Book launch by the Hon. Craig Farrell MLC](#)
- 7 [RST YouTube Channel](#)
- 7 [A Beautiful Halo: Aurorae and The Royal Society of Tasmania by John Williamson](#)
- 8 [A Beautiful Halo \(cont'd\)](#)
- 9 [A Beautiful Halo \(cont'd\)](#)
- 10 [Last call for Nominations for the RST Doctoral \(PhD\) Awards 2022](#)
- 10 [RST Library information](#)
- 11 [Recent RST Publications](#)
- 12 [RST books and papers with member discounts](#)
- 13 [The Society's Art Collection: \*John Skinner Prout \(1805–1876\)\*](#)
- 14 [John Skinner Prout \(cont'd\)](#)
- 15 [John Skinner Prout \(cont'd\)](#)
- 16 [John Skinner Prout \(cont'd\)](#)
- 16 [RST Membership Renewal](#)
- 16 [Suggestion Box](#)
- 17 [TMAG links and information](#)
- 17 [Links to RST social media](#)
- 17 [Donate to our Society](#)
- 17 [General Society contact information](#)

## RST Lecture and Webinar

Dear Royal Society of Tasmania members and supporters,  
You are invited to a lecture at the IMAS Aurora Lecture Theatre, Castray Esplanade, Hobart:

**Tasmanian Aboriginal leader, Rodney Gibbins**

will present a lecture entitled

**“Truth telling and treaty as it relates to Tasmania now”**

**When:** Sunday 13 November, 2022 at 3:00 pm.

**Registration:** If you will attend in person, [please register](#) before 3 pm Saturday 12 November.

Alternatively, you may view the lecture remotely via Zoom. Please register in advance to ensure that you receive an email containing instructions for joining the webinar on the day of the talk. [Click here to register for Zoom.](#)

Admission is free for RST members; \$6 general admission; \$4 students, QVMAG or TMAG Friends and members of Launceston Historical Society.

For 60,000+ years the palawa people had sovereignty across this land lutruwita. All of this changed with the arrival of the white man. The invasion radically changed us in a very short period of time, our culture was interrupted, our language and freedoms were taken from us. This has resulted in continuing contemptuous views and actions by successive governments that have rendered us almost voiceless and powerless in our own country.

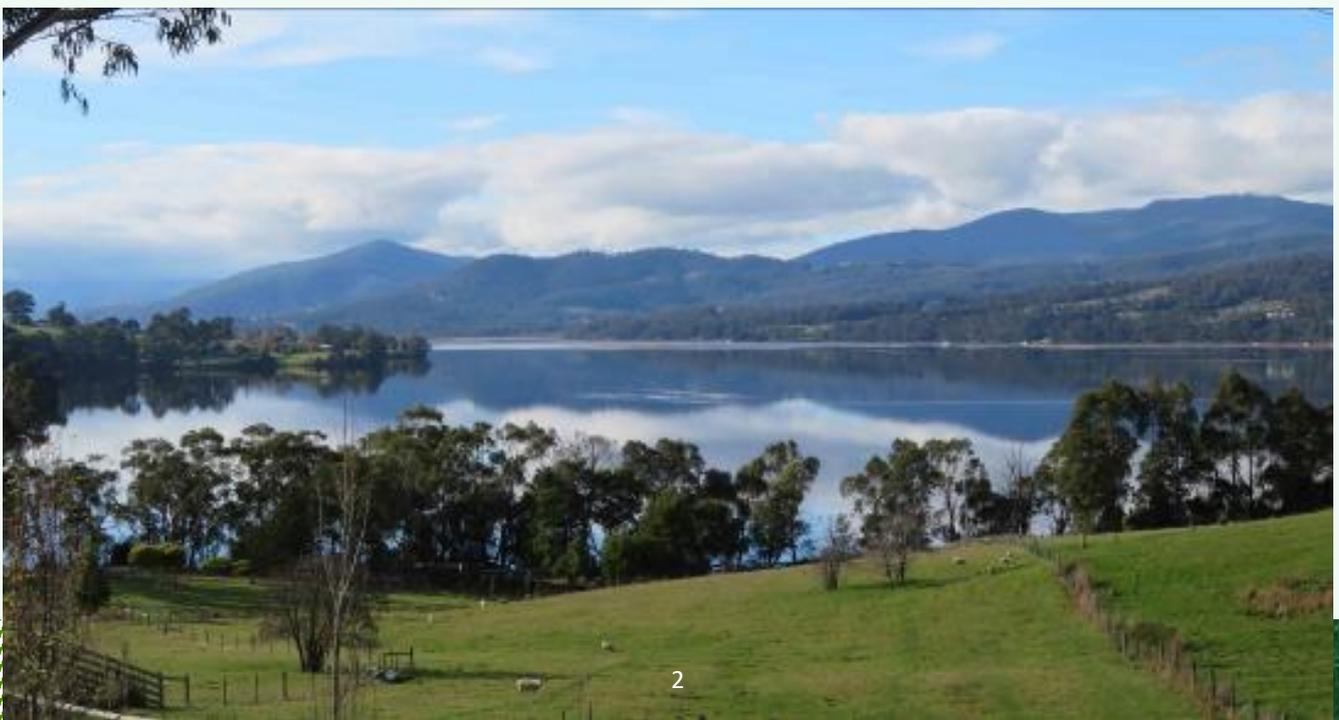
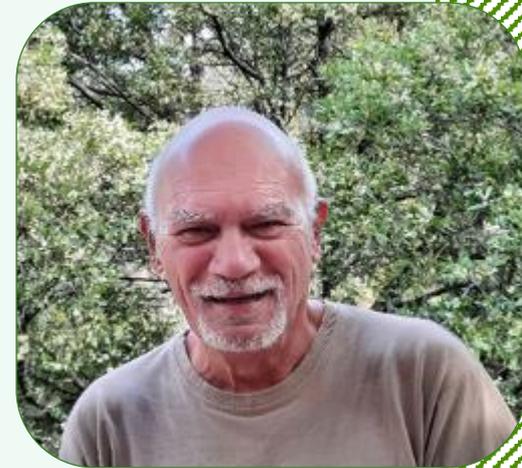
We began the fight back in the early 1970s. We developed our own political movements and rallied as a people. Five years ago, the *Uluru Statement* was released. It was a forerunner for states and territories to develop their own policies towards treaty and truth telling.

In this lecture, I will outline the responses of successive governments to Aboriginal issues and consider the needs and ambitions of the Aboriginal community in the development of a treaty and the truth telling process.

### About Rodney Gibbins

My name is Rodney Gibbins. I am a 70-year-old palawa man born in Launceston. As a child, I experienced constant physical and racial harassment. This was the experience as well of most, if not all, my community and this harassment was a direct consequence of the subjugation by the broader white community towards the Aboriginal community.

I have been actively involved in Aboriginal politics since the early 70s and served in both the state and Commonwealth governments as a Senior Aboriginal Program and Policy Officer for over 30 years. I am currently retired.





THE ROYAL  
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THE ADVANCEMENT  
OF KNOWLEDGE

The Royal Society of Tasmania  
invites you to a public lecture by

**Shane Fitzgerald**

## Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery: A catalyst for cultural activation

**When:** 1:30 pm Sunday 27 November 2022

**Full COVID vaccination and the wearing of face masks are highly desirable.**

**Where:** Meeting Room, QVMAG at Inveresk.

**Admission:** free for members of the Royal Society of Tasmania, \$6 general admission, \$4 for students, QVMAG or TMAG Friends, and members of Launceston Historical Society.

For Zoom webinar, [register here](#).

**Abstract:** How can QVMAG become a sustainable, dynamic and accessible cultural and economic driver for Launceston, the northern region and the state? Join Shane Fitzgerald, City of Launceston General Manager Creative Arts and Cultural Services, as he discusses the recently released *QVMAG Futures Plan* and shares insight into this imaginative and bold vision for one of Launceston's most treasured institutions.

**Biography:** Shane Fitzgerald holds a Masters in Visual Arts and several qualifications in Museum Studies. He has held leadership roles in museums and art galleries in Victoria, Queensland and New South Wales, most recently as Head of Production at the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences in Sydney. He is a strong advocate for making culture accessible to all audiences.

*Generously supported by*



## ***Bang, Fizzle, Pop: Case studies of the interactions between volcanoes and magma with the ocean***

Associate Professor Rebecca Carey is a volcanologist at the School of Natural Sciences, Utas; a former Australian Research Council DECRA Fellow; Tasmanian Tall Poppy Scientist of the Year; and the 2020 winner of the Australian Academy of Science Dorothy Hill Medal.

Dr Carey's lecture on Sunday 16 October was also an opportunity for RST President Prof Jocelyn McPhie to present Dr Carey with her M. R. Banks Medal for a scholar of distinction in mid-stage academic career (- see right).

Her lecture had the marvellous title of "Pop, Fizzle, Bang: Case studies of the Interactions between volcanoes and magma with the ocean" and it delivered great videos of submarine volcanoes (which account for 70% of volcanic activity on the earth's surface), clear maps of mid-ocean ridges and lines of undersea stacks and very new explanations of just how much volcanic material is deposited on the sea floor after eruptions.

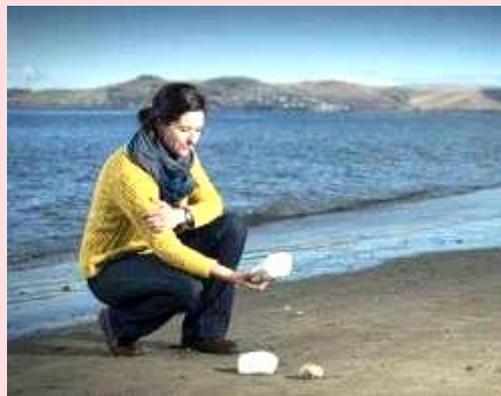
Dr Carey's lecture provided a fascinated audience with reviews of very recent research work in this field. We felt as if we were treated to a master class in Volcanology. A series of excellent questions from the informed audience allowed Dr Carey to expand on some of the important themes of her lecture.

**John Williamson**



**Above:** Dr Rebecca Carey was presented the M.R. Banks Medal by RST President, Prof Jocelyn McPhie. Photo by Marley Large

**Left:** Explosive volcanic activity. Courtesy utas.edu.au



**Left:** Dr Rebecca Carey was asked to investigate the source of large amount of pumice washing up on beaches in Australia and New Zealand. Courtesy utas.edu.au

## **RST Christmas Dinner Presenter**

**Chris Webster AM** (pictured right) will talk on the topic of ***50 years in the law: A few chocolate frogs amongst the jelly*** which will give an overview of his career and discuss four high profile cases in which he has been involved as a lawyer and magistrate.

Chris graduated from the University of Tasmania in 1974 and practised as a barrister and solicitor from 1974 until March 2006 when he was appointed a Magistrate. He is still a Magistrate.

Whilst a solicitor in private practice, he held a number of government appointments including: Hearing Commissioner of the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission; Senior Member of Administrative Appeals Commission; Chairman of the Parole Board; and member of the Medical Council of Tasmania. He was President of the Law Society of Tasmania in 1994.

He is involved in Rotary, and has a long-term Board involvement with Community-Based Care (a Life Member) and the Hobart Community Legal Service.

Chris was President of the Association of Australian Magistrates until 2021 and is a Life Member of the Australian Judicial Officers Association. In 2021, he was appointed a member of the Order of Australia (AM) in recognition of his contribution to the Law, and the Community.



**Above:** "Frog in a Pond" desserts of gold-dusted chocolate frogs 'swimming' in jelly were served at the Art Gala at Government House in September and were inspired by a painting featuring frogs seated in a circle by Louisa Meredith titled 'A Cool Debate'.



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# INVITATION

The President and Council of  
The Royal Society of Tasmania  
warmly invite members and friends to the

## 2022 Christmas Dinner

on **Thursday 8 December 2022.**

Members and guests are requested to be seated by 5:45pm  
in the Bruni Room, Royal Yacht Club of Tasmania,  
Marieville Esplanade, Sandy Bay.

An entertaining talk will be presented by

**Magistrate Chris Webster**

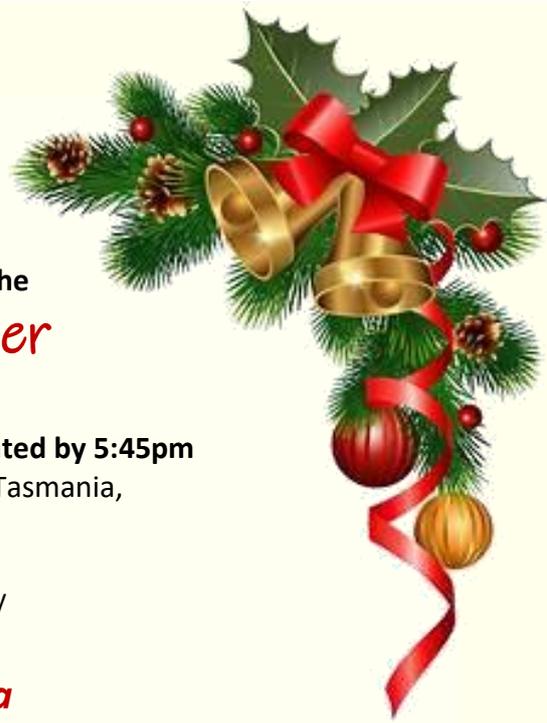
***50 years of law in Tasmania***

which will be followed by a two-course plated meal\* (\$70 per person).

A welcoming drink will be available on arrival.

Additional wine and beer will be available for purchase.

\*If you have special dietary requirements, please contact the office.



## The Royal Society of Tasmania Christmas Dinner 2022

### Acceptance Form

Number of people attending \_\_\_\_ @ \$70 each. Total payment \$ \_\_\_\_\_

NAME(S): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

#### PAYMENT METHOD:

- Cheque       Bank Deposit Commonwealth Bank BSB 067 000 A/c. 00800763  
 Credit card      (leave name and "dinner" as the reference)

Card number: \_\_\_\_\_ Expiry: \_\_ / \_\_

Name on card: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ (if posting)

**RSVP:** Please return the completed form to [admin@rst.org.au](mailto:admin@rst.org.au)  
or post to: The Royal Society of Tasmania, GPO 1166, HOBART TAS 7001  
to arrive by **16 November 2022**





## Book Launch

The Honourable Craig Farrell MLC invites you to attend the launch of two books by Paul A C Richards AM.

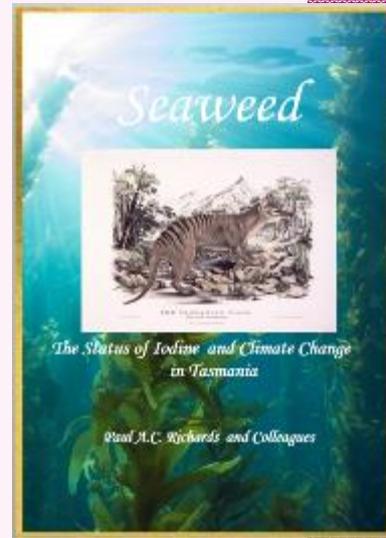
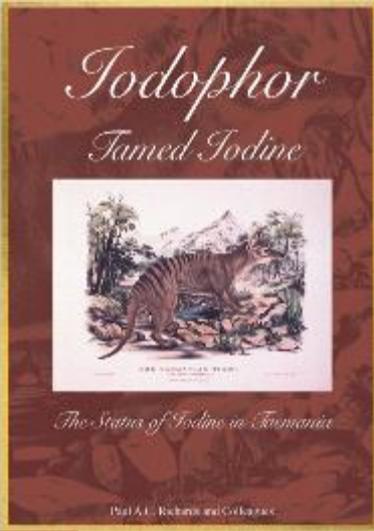
*Iodophor: The Status of Iodine in Tasmania*  
*Seaweed: The Status of Iodine and Climate Change in Tasmania*

To be launched by  
Her Excellency the Honourable Barbara Baker AC,  
Governor of Tasmania

Monday 12 December 2022  
at 11:00 am President's Suite, Parliament House

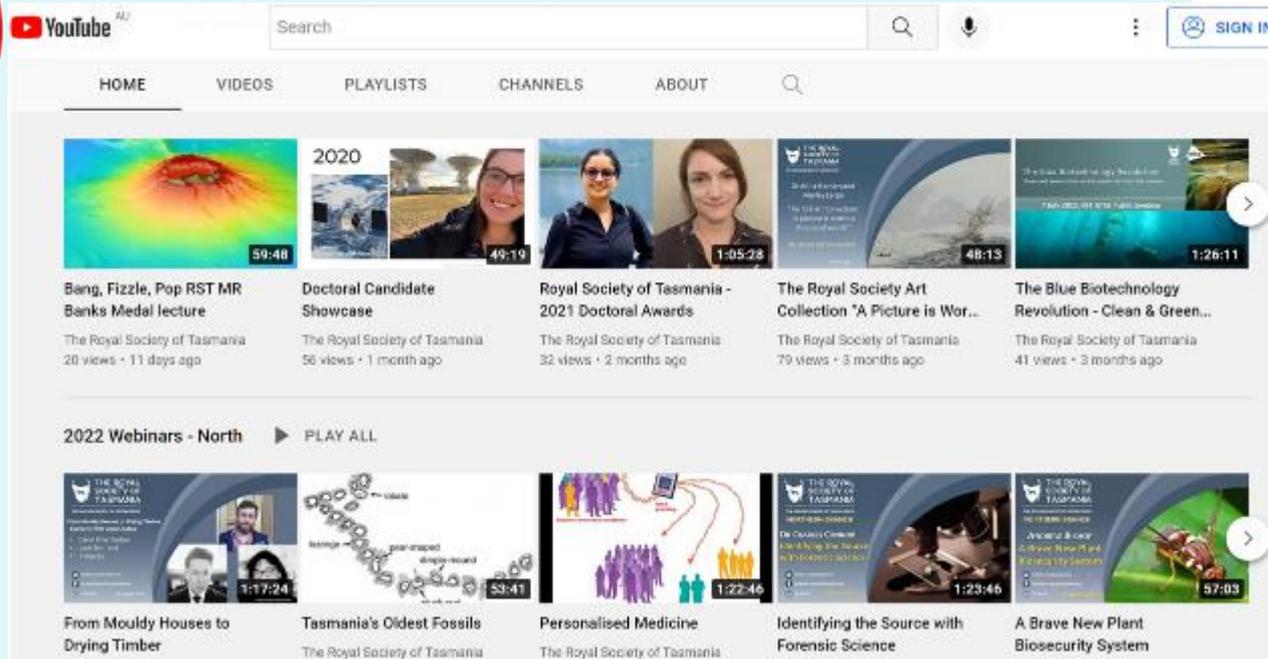
RSVP to: Office of the President, Legislative Council, Parliament of Tasmania – email: [sandra.phillips@parliament.tas.gov.au](mailto:sandra.phillips@parliament.tas.gov.au)

by Monday 5 December 2022



## Royal Society YouTube Channel

[Click here](#) to see the full list of recorded lectures available in our YouTube channel, such as:





**Above:** Cradle Mountain and Dove Lake. Photo Jai Moyle, 2017.

## A Beautiful Halo: Aurorae and The Royal Society of Tasmania

by John Williamson, October 2022

One of the great pleasures about living so far south is that, from time to time, we are rewarded by a night-time vision of the *Aurora Australis* – the ‘Southern Lights’. These lights in the sky have been a constant astronomical companion for Indigenous people who live in high latitudes in both the northern and the southern hemispheres. This article will provide a very brief history of how people have perceived Aurorae – especially in the southern hemisphere – and how they have attempted to explain them.

During the 19th century, members of The Royal Society of Tasmania were among the first to write accurately about the scientific causes of these wonderful lights in the sky.

What is an aurora? According to the Australian Space Academy it is, “...the name given to the light that is produced in the upper atmosphere when electrons and protons precipitate from the Earth's magnetosphere down into the lower regions of the upper atmosphere. This precipitation typically takes place along a ring which encircles the polar regions. Aurorae around the north pole are termed *Aurora Borealis* or Northern Lights, and around the south pole are termed *Aurora Australis* or Southern Lights.”

Another way of explaining it might be to say that when there is sunspot activity, charged particles from the sun reach Earth's magnetic field and, at the poles, these particles glow. Currently, the south geomagnetic pole is between Hobart and Antarctica, so even though Hobart is at a geographic latitude of 42° south, we are geomagnetically much closer to the pole. This gives us a better view of the *Aurora Australis* compared with South Africa or South America.

The ancient Greeks wrote descriptions of Aurorae as early as the 4th century BC and, to them, an aurora was named Eos, the Dawn goddess, who announced the coming of the sun and daylight. To the Romans, she was Aurora the goddess of the dawn. Seneca, the Roman administrator and Stoic philosopher, attempted to describe the location of these beautiful colours in the sky but he was not able to accurately determine whether the Aurora was above or below the clouds. The Māori of Aotearoa/New Zealand saw Aurorae (Tahunui-a-rangi) as the campfires of ancestors reflected in the sky. They believed that these ancestors sailed southward in their canoes and settled on a land of ice in the far south.

Aboriginal Australians in the southern part of the continent were used to seeing the *Aurora Australis* and watched in awe as their gods danced overhead. Aboriginal people commonly saw Aurorae as fires in the sky. To the Gunditjmara of western Victoria, they are described as Puae buae (“ashes”). In Indigenous traditions of eastern Victoria, Aurorae are bushfires in the spirit world and an omen of a coming catastrophe. The First Peoples of South Australia also see Aurorae as fires created by sky spirits.

In Tasmania, the word ‘nuyina’ means “southern lights” in palawa kani, the language of Tasmania's First People. This word was initially recorded by white settlers when George Augustus Robinson and Aboriginal Tasmanians watched Aurorae together in 1831 and again in 1837. Hamacher reports that “In 1851, Aboriginal people near Hobart said an Aurora made a noise like people snapping their fingers” – a phenomenon that is often reported.

**Right:** *Aurora Australis* from Strahan. Photo Dietmar Kahles. All photos in this article are courtesy [Tasmania Aurora Australis: Where to See the Southern Lights in Tasmania \(2021\)](http://lapoftasmania.com.au) ([lapoftasmania.com.au](http://lapoftasmania.com.au))





**Above:** Tinderbox Beach. Photo Jase Jules Batey, 2017.

Although the cause of the sound is not known, some suggest that for Aboriginal people in southern Australia, this sound is the spirits of the dead trying to communicate with the living.

European references to Aurorae date from the middle of the 17th century when voyages of exploration in the Southern Hemisphere were more common. A Chilean Jesuit diarist noted a week-long Aurora in 1640. By the next century, there were written reports of Aurorae, February 1773, in the journals of scientific staff on Captain Cook's second voyage of Antarctic circumnavigation. In the ship's log, Cook described this auroral appearance:

*"In the night we had fair weather, and a clear serene sky; and between midnight and three o'clock in the morning, lights were seen in the heavens, similar to those in the northern hemisphere, known by the name of Aurora Borealis, or northern lights; but I had never heard of the Aurora Australis being seen before. The officer of the watch observed that it sometimes broke out in spiral rays, and in a circular form; then its light was very strong, and its appearance beautiful. He could not perceive it had any particular direction; for it appeared, at various times, in different parts of the heavens, and diffused its light throughout the whole atmosphere..."*

By the 19th century, many European scientists had observed and written about Aurorae but the origins of the phenomenon remained uncertain. During the middle years of the century, astronomers, mostly vigorous amateurs, began to note the concurrence of sunspot activity and Aurorae. Lieutenant J H Kay (1815–1875), a scientist and naval officer, had arrived in Van Diemen's Land with James Clark Ross' Antarctic Expedition in 1840. When that expedition left to explore Antarctica, Kay remained in Hobart as the Director of the Magnetic Observatory at Rossbank (in the grounds of the current Government House).

His work was part of the British Admiralty's efforts to establish a chain of observatories around the globe to investigate terrestrial magnetism. Kay regularly measured a range of components of the magnetic field, reporting his findings to the Royal Society (London). Kay was also a foundation member of The Royal Society of Tasmania and published several papers about solar radiation in their Papers and Proceedings. For example, in 1851:

*"The Secretary submitted the following extract from a note by Captain Kay, R.N., Director of the Magnetic Observatory, Hobart Town, in reply to an inquiry on the subject of the Aurora of the 4th and 5th of September last: "We have only observations recorded at 2 p.m., 10 p.m., and at 6 a.m. I cannot, therefore, tell you what may have been going on between these hours. The Auroral Light was very distinctly visible on the evening of the 4th; and on reference to the disturbance observations, I find that the magnets were all affected by it, and continuous observations carried on until after midnight, at which time the Aurora appears to have subsided."*

Another member of The Royal Society of Tasmania, Francis Abbott (1799–1883), made further progress in ascertaining the causes of Aurorae during the 1860s and 1870s. Abbott was born in England in 1799 and became a watchmaker in Derby. Allegedly guilty of obtaining two watches by "false pretence", he was sentenced to seven years' transportation in Van Diemen's Land. He arrived in Hobart in 1845 and, for some years, was a convict on the work gang at Oyster Cove and then was a servant in a private home.

He was granted a ticket-of-leave in 1849 and began a small business in Murray St as a watch and clockmaker. This business was successful and Abbott developed a good reputation in society. Kay gave him free access to the Rossbank Observatory and Abbott quickly became involved with the meteorological recording carried out there. When the British Admiralty ceased funding Rossbank in 1854, it closed and Abbott established his own observatory, beginning a career as an amateur astronomer and meteorologist.

At his home, he had astronomical facilities as well as a meteorological station in his garden. Regarding his astronomical observations, Abbot had acquired a wide range of telescopes and he examined comets, the variable star 'η' Argus, meteors, Jupiter, the transits of Mercury and Venus, and the timing and appearance of Aurorae. Between 1861 and 1874, he published 31 research papers on this work mainly in the *Monthly Notices* of the Royal Astronomical Society and the *Papers and Proceedings* of The Royal Society of Tasmania.

During a period of 20 years or so, Abbott noted many Aurorae, but he described only three: two in 1859, one in

1864. For Abbott, one of these was particularly breathtaking:

*“From 6h 55m to 7h 25m pm there appeared a most brilliant Aurora Australis, extending from the W. through the S. to the eastern part of the horizon in one continued arc of about 190°, and shooting up to the zenith. The eastern and western extremities of the conoid were of pale ruby, and deep red colour intermixed through the whole vault with bands of pale yellow, and shades of deep and light green, with here and there a dark cloud jutting in: elsewhere the circumpolar stars glittered like diamonds set in an emerald and ruby ground... This brilliant and beautiful magneto-electric storm appeared again at 9.30 pm, flickering in brisk coruscations of most beautiful colour, from horizon to the zenith, and, when reaching the convergence point, it produced at one time a beautiful halo, and at another period it had the effect of falling from the apex in a shower of nebulous matter, like star dust.”*

Abbott focused on the relationship between sunspot activity and Aurorae, and, in 1870, published some simple statistics based on his own observations. His conclusion was that “Sun-spots are now at a maximum, and Aurora displays frequent”. In that year, he read a paper to The Royal Society of Tasmania, proving statistically there was a direct correlation between sunspot numbers and the auroral frequency.

He correctly theorised, too, that the Earth was encompassed by a magnetic field, a concept that had been first espoused by Halley (1656–1742), but was properly explained by English astronomer, Balford Stewart (1828–1887), just eight months before Abbott. The Norwegian physicist, Kristian Birkeland (1867–1917), was then able to piece these disparate details together.

During a series of Norwegian polar expeditions during the early 20th century, he determined the pattern of electric currents from the Earth’s magnetic field at the poles, and developed a more complete theory of the causation of Aurorae. But it was Francis Abbott, a member of The Royal Society of Tasmania, who was one of the first astronomers to correctly make the link between the Earth’s magnetic field, sunspot activity and the appearance of Aurorae. This is a wonderful example of the way in which The Royal Society of Tasmania was both at the forefront of European scientific thought and also able to fulfil its role in “the advancement of knowledge”.

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## Closing Next Week

### Call for Nominations for the RST Doctoral (PhD) Awards 2022

Nominations for the annual RST Doctoral Awards opened on 1 October and will close on 15 November. Two awards are offered for recent PhD graduates who have made significant advances in the course of their doctoral research. The value of each award is \$1,000 (AUD). Awardees may be invited to present a lecture to the Society.

Conditions of the Doctoral Awards:

- The awards shall be made to nominees who are no more than three years, or three years equivalent-full-time, after their PhD graduation.
- The awards are intended to recognise significant advances based on the PhD research, as shown by published or in press peer-reviewed papers in national/international journals or equivalent outputs in fields where publications are not the norm.

- The research should have been largely carried out in Tasmania or under the aegis of a Tasmanian-based organisation.
- Nominations may be made by anyone although no self-nominations will be accepted.
- Nominations must be received before COB, 15 November 2022.
- **[Click for nomination guidelines.](#)**

Jocelyn McPhie, on behalf of the RST Honours and Awards Committee



## The Society's Library

Special & Rare Collections (5th floor, Morris Miller Library at UTAS Sandy Bay campus) including TRST Library asks that all visitors and researchers comply with the following:

Please note the email address for making appointments to visit the library and for email queries about the Royal Society of Tasmania's Library Collection has been changed to

**[RSTLibrary.Collections@utas.edu.au](mailto:RSTLibrary.Collections@utas.edu.au)**

- Opening hours are 10:00 am to 5:00 pm, Monday to Wednesday; closed for lunch 12:30 – 1:30 pm.
- Maximum occupancy of two visitors at any one time and must be adhered to.
- You are required to maintain the recommended 1.5m physical distance.

Library staff will continue answering all email enquiries and can scan and email requests as needed, so if you don't wish to visit the Library in person, there is no need. We will also be quarantining material handled by researchers and other visitors for 72 hours, in line with UTAS Libraries' COVID-safe practice.

Any appointments or queries please contact **[RSTLibrary.Collections@utas.edu.au](mailto:RSTLibrary.Collections@utas.edu.au)**

Janette Burke, University Librarian, Collections,  
Library Services | Academic Division, University of Tasmania



## RST Publications Make Great Christmas Gifts

These publications will enhance anyone's holiday reading shelf:

All items below are available for purchase online via the [RST Shop with some offering a membership discount](#).



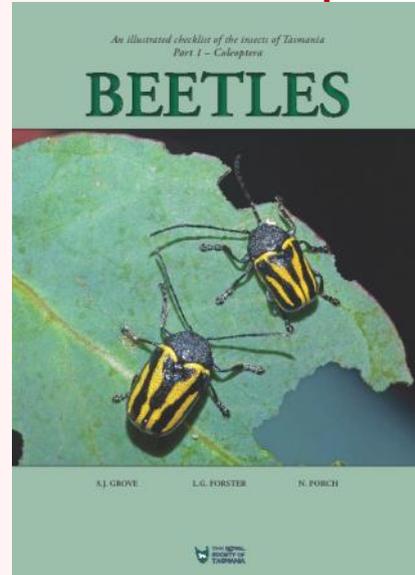
**RST Notebooks** featuring a choice of three cover images from the Society's Art Collection and the Special and Rare Book Collection are available (- see left). Beautifully bound and presented, these prestigious notebooks are ideal for meeting notes or creative writing, so why not buy yourself a couple or as gifts for others? \$25 each or \$22.50 member discount.

[Purchase now.](#)

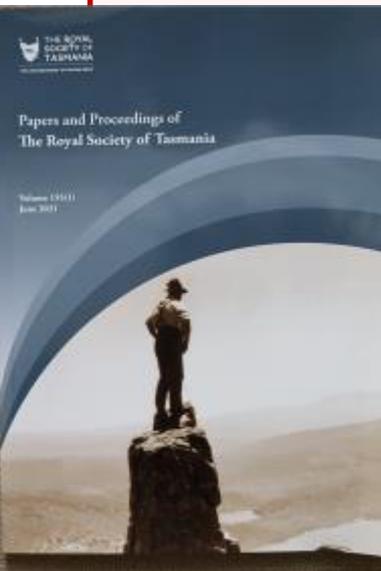
### **An Illustrated Checklist of Tasmanian Beetles**

prepared by experts Simon Grove, Lynne Forster and Nick Porch (- see cover at

right), is an exciting new taxonomic guide to Tasmanian beetles with diagnostic information on nearly 3000 species, including over 600 endemics and seven species found only on Macquarie Island. Featuring thumbnail images of every group and 16 full colour plates, this fantastic new resource will help you identify and learn more about Tasmania's enigmatic beetle fauna. \$46 [Purchase now.](#)



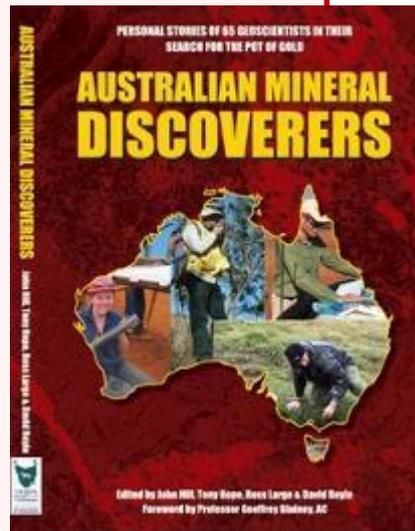
Following Volume 155(1) celebrating the RST Northern Branch centenary in June 2021, the RST Journal **Papers and Proceedings Volume 155(2)** (- see cover at left) features the transcripts of speakers at the historic *Apology to Tasmanian Aboriginal people*, as well as a diverse range of scientific and review papers of wide interest. Contact the Office to purchase a copy [admin@rst.org.au](mailto:admin@rst.org.au)



**Australian Mineral Discoverers: 1950-2010** (pictured right). Edited by John Hill, Tony Hope, Ross Large and David Royle, this book features the biographies of 65 Australian mineral explorers and educators. Their stories show that the discovery of buried minerals is an extremely complex science, requiring knowledge, innovation, disciplined application of geological principles, teamwork, persistence and luck. \$60.00 non-member

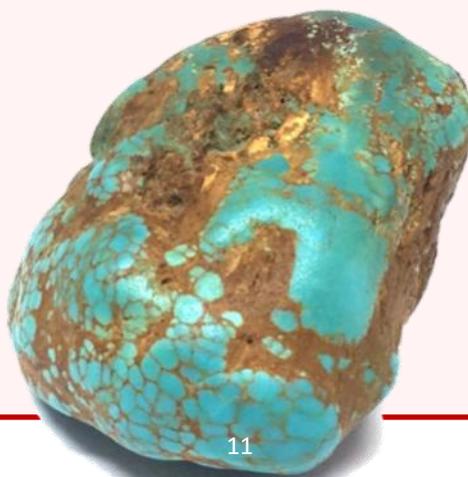
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A phone call prior to your visit will help with more speedy arrangements.

Please phone between the hours of 9:00am – 12 noon on a THURSDAY morning on 03 6165 7014.

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Christine Beswick, Secretary:

0417 330 118

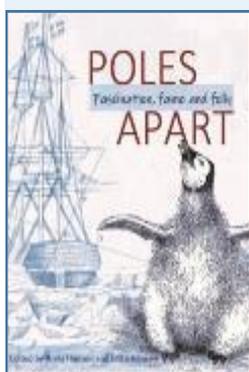
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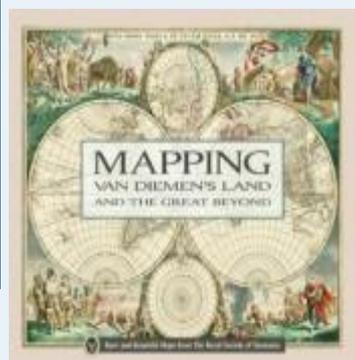
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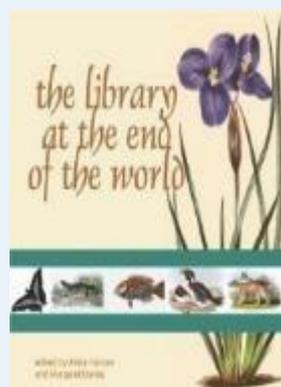
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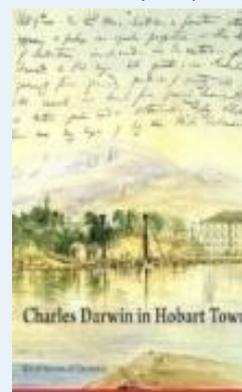
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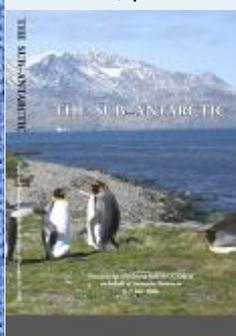


### ***Papers and Proceedings***

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## RST Art Collection

RST Art Collection is housed at the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Hobart.

Any queries please contact the Honorary Curator, Dr Anita Hansen:  
[anita.hansen@utas.edu.au](mailto:anita.hansen@utas.edu.au)

### John Skinner Prout (1805 – 1876)

#### *Tasmania Illustrated* by J. S. Prout, Vol 1. Hobart Town

This month's article will be the first piece about John Skinner Prout's *Tasmania Illustrated*, Vol 1. (the first five lithographs). The next exciting instalment will be in December's Newsletter!

In January 1844, Van Diemen's Land was visited by an artist who would prove to have quite an impact on the art of the young colony – this was John Skinner Prout.

Prout was born at Plymouth, England. He was the nephew of the artist Samuel Prout (1783–1852). Although he was largely self-taught as an artist, he was reasonably successful and was elected a member of the new Society of Painters in Water Colour.

In December 1840, Prout, his wife Maria and their seven children moved to Sydney where his brother already lived. Prout had brought with him from England equipment which would enable him to produce lithographic prints of his works for sale both in the colony as well as in England. He published *Sydney Illustrated* (images from that in a later article).

A little over three years later, Prout made a visit to Hobart Town in January 1844. Much impressed, he went back to Sydney for his family and arrived at Hobart Town in April of that year.



Above: John Skinner Prout (1805–1876), unknown photographer, c 1860.

**LECTURE ON PAINTING.**—A gentleman of the name of Prout, has, we learn, given a Lecture on Painting, somewhere, in Hobart Town. It was but thinly attended, inasmuch as the Lecturer failed to give proper publicity to his undertaking. If Mr. Prout will invite the Press to his lectures, he may expect due publicity to be given to them, but not otherwise.

His initial foray into giving painting lectures was not a very auspicious affair judging by the report in the *Colonial Times* in May that year.

Left: *Colonial Times*, 14 May, 1844.

However, Prout must have contacted them and the next review was published a short time later. Looking back now, it was a somewhat humorous article. While it does

praise his art and lecture on the whole ('the lecture gave great satisfaction ...'), it does go on to note: 'Mr Prout's address is good ... apart from all the heavy learned quackery of expression and assumption of profound knowledge, which is considered by mere professors necessary to give effect to all they do or say'. Oh dear!

**THE FINE ARTS.**—The lectures of Mr. Prout, delivered at Mr. Cowle's Academy in Melville-street, on each Wednesday evening, (to-morrow being the last of three,) have been (we find on further inquiry) well and respectably attended.—It is too late to insert the notices previously sent us, and can therefore only now very briefly observe, that on last Wednesday evening the lecture was attended by the Colonial Secretary, Mr. Fraser, Mr. Boyes, Mr. Burgess and family, with others of a class which we are glad to see patronizing such very praiseworthy attempts to amuse and instruct. The lecture gave great satisfaction, delivered as it was in language sufficiently chaste and eloquent, and relieved by the lighter shades of occasional anecdote. Mr. Prout's address is good, composed as it is of instruction given in the light of understandable common sense, apart from all

Left and below: *Colonial Times*, 14 May, 1844.

the heavy learned quackery of expression and assumption of profound knowledge, which is considered by mere professors necessary to give effect to all they say or do. He sketches rapidly with the brush, and explains as he proceeds, showing the effects of light and shadow, and the great advantage it is to the artist his having a mind capable of chaste and correct composition. It is a beautiful study, and such as should be encouraged in a colony where the mind has hitherto been too much neglected. It produces better results than mere pictures. It leads "through nature up to nature's God," and imperceptibly implants causes and creates influences in the human heart, which especially in youth ought not to be neglected.—

Things did improve and the review goes on to say that, 'He sketches rapidly with the brush, and explains as he proceeds, showing the effects of light and shadow, and the great advantage it is to the artist his having a mind capable of chaste and correct composition'.

But to prove that reviewers seldom agree with each other, *The Courier (Hobart)*, wrote a glowing review:

LOCAL. *The Courier Hobart*, Fri April 26, 1844, p. 2.

Mr Prout's first Lecture. We have had several opportunities of witnessing Mr Prout's skill as an artist, but not of his talent as a lecturer until Wednesday last, when he illustrated the leading principles of perspective necessary to be known by those who desire even mediocrity in drawing. His explanations of these leading principles, and of the means by which a knowledge of sketching from nature might be obtained, were exceedingly clear; aided as they were with his pencil, with which he frequently illustrated and simplified his meaning. His exposition of the mode in which drawing is generally taught at schools was so true and graphic that we dare say many of his hearers called to mind the "touching up" of their attempts, and the difficulty they had in recognising their own handiwork afterwards. Mr Prout we are glad to see, advocates a close study of natural objects in preference to copying the meaningless drawings which are usually put before pupils for that purpose and we trust that his efforts in creating and fostering a taste for the beautiful will not relax, nor be unsuccessful.

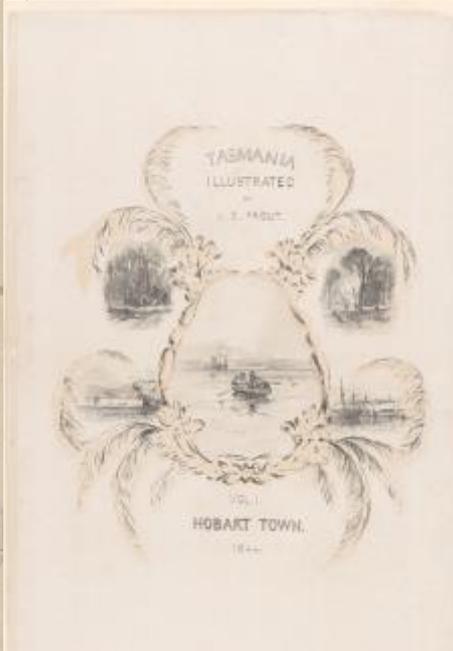
His anecdotes, with which he interspersed the lecture, [were] told well and his manner, as much as the story itself, afforded great amusement to his audience, who seemed to be very sorry when he came to a conclusion. The second lecture will be delivered on Wednesday next.

We may add that Mr Prout has undertaken the preparation of views in this colony, with the intention of publishing later.

This he did, and later in the year he produced the first volume of *Tasmania Illustrated*. The Royal Society of Tasmania's lithographs are all black and white, although hand-coloured examples of the images do exist.



**Left:** Cover of 'Tasmania Illustrated by J. S. Prout, Vol. 1 Hobart Town', lithograph, 1844.



**Left:** Title page of 'Tasmania Illustrated by J. S. Prout, Vol. 1 Hobart Town', lithograph, 1844.



**Above:** *The Female Factory from Proctor's Quarry.*  
**Below left:** *New Town, Mt Direction, etc.*  
**Below right:** *Hobart Town from the New Wharf.*



**Left:** *The Wellington Falls, Hobart Town.*

I've included *The Wellington Falls, Hobart Town* here although it does not appear in the list in the *Hobart Town Courier* article because our records indicate that it is from Vol 1.

**Right:** *Fern Tree Valley.*

The *Hobart Town Courier* [28 March 1846, p.4, col.1.], wrote a review of *Tasmania Illustrated*:

**TASMANIA ILLUSTRATED**  
**by J. S. PROUT,**  
**VOL. 1 HOBART TOWN**

It consists of a title page and twelve views of Hobart Town or the neighbourhood. The title page is divided into five compartments, showing, we presume, different stages of the colonization of Van Diemen's Land – the arrival of the earliest vessel on that coast – an



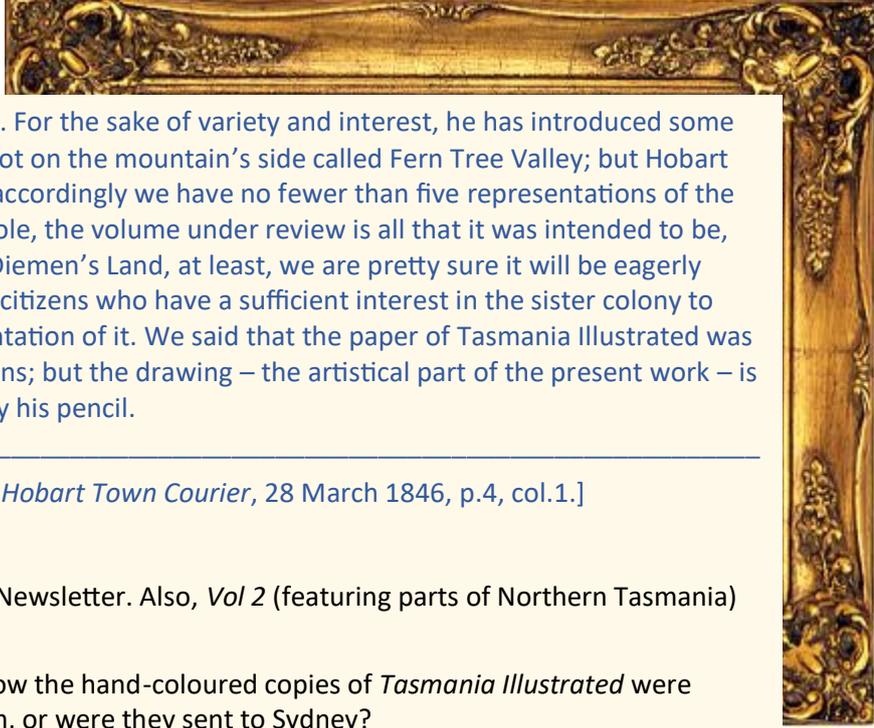
encampment of the native blacks of the island, whose race is now almost extinct – colonists burning stumps and felling trees – and lastly the signs of traffic and commerce, and the chimneys and spires of a large and flourishing town.

This ingenious title page may accordingly be looked upon as emblematical of the rapid advancement of Hobart Town; for the eye wanders in the same page from the dense forest inhabited by the savage, to the imposing town built and peopled by a race of Britons and their descendants. To dwellers in towns and cities in the mother country, which have crept, at a snail's pace, in the slow progress of centuries, to their present condition, the railroad speed at which our Tasmanian neighbours have travelled in colonization may appear somewhat marvellous. But in this young metropolis, our organ of wonder is less active or less developed than the same protuberance on the craniums of our fathers and friends in the old world; for we live in an age which has witnessed a most important colony established out of a wild forest, at the very antipodes of the British Isles, and a most flourishing city built, and filled with a population of 40,000 souls in the space of a little more than half a century. These are wonderful features in this age of wonders. But to resume. The sketches in the work before us are named –

1. *The Female Factory, from Proctor's Quarry*
2. *New Town, Mount Direction, &c.*
3. *Hobart Town, from the New Wharf*
4. *Cape Raoul*
5. *Cape Pillar*
6. *Fern Tree Valley*
7. *Hobart Town, from the New Town Road*
8. *Rest Down*
9. *Hobart Town, from Kangaroo Bay*
10. *The Queen's Orphan Schools, New Town*
11. *Hobart Town, from Mount Nelson*
12. *Hobart Town, from the Government Paddock*

The eye which has never beheld any but the tame scenery in the neighbourhood of Sydney will be agreeably surprised if not somewhat startled at the wild features of Van Diemen's Land which the volume before us so graphically exhibits. The first print of the series, *The Female Factory*, which is a picture we like better perhaps than any of its companions, gives us a very fine piece of highland scenery. Mount Wellington rises in stately grandeur from the wooded valley where the Factory stands, rearing his rocky summit above the trees that creep far up his sides, and showing an outline and appearance so peculiar as to be recognized on several of the succeeding views. But we are not now writing a description of the scene depicted.

We wish merely to draw the attention of the public to the work which is well worthy of the patronage of all who have any interest in the sister colony, or any wish to advance the arts among us, and patronize the artist, who may still be regarded as one of ourselves. Those who are aware of the fidelity of Mr Prout's pencil, and those who are familiar with the scenes represented in the present volume, need not be told that in the work before us his pencil has lost none of its character for truth. The artist has done all that could well have been accomplished without descriptive letter-press to give strangers a pretty correct notion of the appearance and situation of Hobart Town,



and the vicinage. This was the object he had in view. For the sake of variety and interest, he has introduced some sea and river sketches as well as that wild woody spot on the mountain's side called Fern Tree Valley; but Hobart Town itself was the chief object of illustration, and accordingly we have no fewer than five representations of the town, taken from different directions. Upon the whole, the volume under review is all that it was intended to be, and we trust it may meet with a ready sale. In Van Diemen's Land, at least, we are pretty sure it will be eagerly sought for; but even here there are numbers of the citizens who have a sufficient interest in the sister colony to induce them to purchase so fine a pictorial representation of it. We said that the paper of *Tasmania Illustrated* was inferior to that used in Mr Prout's English publications; but the drawing – the artistical part of the present work – is superior to anything we have ever seen produced by his pencil.

[*Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 March 1846, p.2, col.3; *Hobart Town Courier*, 28 March 1846, p.4, col.1.]

**Last Word**

The rest of the lithographs will be in the December Newsletter. Also, *Vol 2* (featuring parts of Northern Tasmania) will form another article.

I would be interested to find out if anyone knows how the hand-coloured copies of *Tasmania Illustrated* were produced. Were they painted in Tasmania, by whom, or were they sent to Sydney?

**Anita Hansen**



**RST Membership Renewal**

The RST membership year runs from January 1 to December 31. A reminder to renew will be in our December newsletter.

At the August meeting, Council approved an increase of \$5 for all categories of membership for 2023.

You can see the new pricing structure and download a 2023 membership renewal form by clicking [here](#).



**Suggestion Box**

Members are an important part of the Royal Society, and we are always keen to hear suggestions about speakers or subjects for monthly lectures, ideas for social events, or thoughts about ways we can progress our current projects, such as the Art Fund initiative.

Members can share their ideas or general comments by talking directly with any Council member at Society events, by emailing the Society at [admin@rst.org.au](mailto:admin@rst.org.au), or by directing your email to any Council member.

The **RST Council** is this month's focus. The RST Council is a voluntary group, responsible for the administration of all RST events, publications and member services. Much of the Council's work is conducted by committees ([Committees-rst.org.au](http://Committees-rst.org.au)). If you would like to support the Council by being part of one of the smaller committees which undertake the day-to-day tasks of the RST, then please contact us.



# Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery

Open Tuesday to Sunday, 10:00 am – 4:00 pm until 24 December 2022.



## Tours

Free tours for small groups are available on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays, and run for approximately 40 minutes.

Tour times are subject to change and availability and can be checked by phoning (03) 6165 7000. For guided tours for clubs, tourist groups or other organisations please click [here](#).

## Long-term Exhibitions

**Left: *ningina tunapri***, TMAG's Tasmanian Aboriginal culture gallery will provide you with a rich, enlightening and inspiring experience. *ningina tunapri* means 'to give knowledge and understanding'.

The exhibition explores the journey of Tasmanian Aboriginal people and is a celebration of all Tasmanian Aboriginal generations.



**Right:** Tasmania has a unique geological history and hosts an unusual complement of plants and animals, each with its own story to tell. This exhibition explores these fascinating species and environments through the objects found in the State Collection.



**Left:** The Henry Hunter Galleries on Level 2 will take you on a journey through significant periods in the history of Tasmanian art and design, from the early 1800s to the present day.

In **Dispossessions and Possessions**, explore treasures of our Colonial and Arts and Crafts collections, including works by notable artists such as John Glover, Benjamin Duterreau and W C Piguenit.



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