



A Message from the President

Dear Members,

You will all be aware that the RST has a collection of early scientific and natural history books and journals, together with a diverse range of early Tasmanian families' documents including letters, photographs, drawings, diaries and maps.

The **RST Library Collections** are held in the Morris Miller Library at UTAS and managed by Janette Burke, University Librarian and Katrina Ross, Historical Collections Coordinator. Janette and Katrina recently reviewed the RST Library Collections with the aim of improving access and managing the ever-present problem of space. Council has dealt with six of the ten recommendations made in Janette and Katrina's report and will deal with the remainder at the October Council meeting. The RST benefits greatly from this connection with UTAS.

The Society's other major asset, the **Art Collection**, is held in the Print Room at TMAG. TMAG's Print Room has the highest security and special climate required for fragile artworks. Following signing of the Loan Agreement between RST and TMAG, TMAG Senior Technician Paul Westbury has separated the RST artworks from the TMAG artworks and transferred them to new RST Solander boxes. The RST artworks are now all together and fully catalogued. Also regarding artworks, the ownership of a set of Louisa Anne Meredith watercolour paintings was not resolved at the Mediation in November 2021. Meetings between RST and TMAG beginning in October 2022 have failed to resolve ownership, so another formal Mediation is planned.

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Right: Solander boxes containing part of the RST Art Collection, in the TMAG Print Room.



The Society received six applications for **RST Bursaries** in June and July – four from students at Elizabeth College in Hobart, one from a student at Don College in Devonport, and one from a student at Scotch Oakburn College in Launceston. All the bursary recipients have written short articles about their experiences. Thanks to Mary Koolhof, Deborah Beswick, John Williamson, Roxanne Steenbergen and Julie Rimes for evaluating the applications at short notice. See reports on pp. 9–10.

Congratulations to RST member **Rodney Gibbins** for being named "Tasmanian Aborigine of the Year" during the NAIDOC Week celebrations in July. See p. 7

The line-up of events for the next couple of months includes a special reception at Government House, hosted by Her Excellency, The Honourable Barbara Baker AC, Governor of Tasmania and Emeritus Professor Don Chalmers AO. The event will

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celebrate the life and achievements of artist and author, Louisa Anne Meredith. Louisa was the first female Honorary Member of the RST. You will find all the details on p. 8. I hope you can attend.

Finally, welcome to the **sixteen new RST members** who have recently joined: Mrs Alison Watson, Mr Peter Shimeld, Professor Michael Breadmore, Ms Stephanie McKellar, Professor Benjamin Richardson, Mr Leigh Dyson, Dr Rowan Eisner, Mr Russell Reid, Ms Louise Gillett, Ms Charlotte Faine, Mr George Davis, Dr Jan Tilden, Ms Kerry Sculthorpe, Victoria Jayde, Dr Ashley Dyson and Maria Riedl.

Best regards,



Prof Jocelyn McPhie,
President

The Royal Society of Tasmania Medals on Offer in 2023

The RST will offer two medals in 2023, the MR Banks Medal and the RM Johnston Memorial Medal. The Call for Medal Nominations is now open and has been posted on the [RST homepage](#), and advertised via the RST Facebook and Twitter pages. **Nominations for these two medals close on 31 August 2023.**

Richard Coleman

Chair, RST Honours and Awards Committee

The **M. R. Banks Medal** is awarded to an outstanding mid-career scholar in any field within the Society's purview, being between 8 and a maximum of 15 years or 15 equivalent full-time years post PhD graduation.

[Click for more details and nomination guidelines](#) about this medal.

The **RM Johnston Memorial Medal** is awarded to a scholar of great distinction in any field within the Society's purview.

[Click for nomination guidelines for this medal.](#)

Left: Dr Maxwell Robert Banks AM, Honorary Life Member of The Royal Society of Tasmania and Life Member of Geological Society of Australia.

Right: Robert Mackenzie Johnston, a fellow of the Royal Statistical Society, The Royal Geographical Society of Australia and the Linnean Society.

RST Celebrates Science Week 2023

Joint event with Beer Aquatic on 31 August

Dr Peter Puskic

“Trash Talk: The Plastic Peril in our Oceans”

The Royal Society of Tasmania, in conjunction with marine science presenters, Beer Aquatic, invite you to a lecture by Marine Biologist, Dr Peter Puskic, **at 6:30 pm on Thursday 31 August 2023** at the Hobart Brewing Company, 16 Evans Street, Hobart.

No prior registration is required to attend, just come along to a fun and informative presentation. Bar food and drinks available.

Admission is free and everyone is welcome to attend.



The message-in-a-bottle is a longstanding romantic trope. But what message are we sending when that's a plastic bottle, rotting its way into the ocean's foodweb? Dr Peter Puskic (pictured left), a marine biologist with expertise on the impacts of plastic pollution on marine wildlife, will guide us through the life-cycle of a bottle adrift at sea, from humble beginnings to the belly of seabirds, to remote tropical beaches and to its final resting place at the bottom of the ocean.

Dr Peter Puskic is an interdisciplinary marine scientist with expertise in understanding the impacts of anthropogenic stressors on environments, wildlife, and human communities.

A highly experienced field biologist, Peter focuses mostly on marine wildlife physiology and population monitoring (turtles, seabirds, marine mammals), plastic monitoring and clean-ups. He has conducted fieldwork in remote and challenging environments.





THE ROYAL
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THE ADVANCEMENT
OF KNOWLEDGE

RST Northern Branch invites you to a public lecture by **Michael Attard**

“Waste management and resource recovery in Launceston: The carbon story”

Where: Meeting Room, QVMAG at Inveresk.

When: 1:30 pm Sunday 27 August 2023.

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

Full COVID-19 vaccination and the wearing of face masks are highly desirable.

Abstract:

The City of Launceston owns and manages the second largest regional landfill in Tasmania. Recycling and reuse are major Council priorities to reduce the impact on the environment and operational costs. This supports a circular approach to the purchase, use and reuse of materials.

The presentation will explain how the City of Launceston Council goes about diverting valuable materials away from landfill through recovery projects.

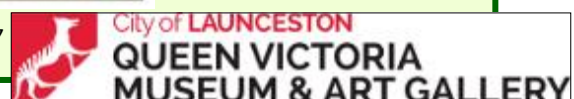
Biography:

Michael Attard (pictured right) is the Team Leader for Sustainability at the City of Launceston. He is a waste and recovery professional working with the City of Launceston for the past seven years to lead and deliver sustainability outcomes for the organisation. He has a science background and has previously worked in diverse roles such as abalone hatchery manager, parasitologist for Atlantic salmon and ecosystem health assessment for Kanamaluka/the Tamar Estuary.



Left: Aerial view of the City of Launceston's landfill site.

Generously supported by





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OF KNOWLEDGE

The Northern Branch of The Royal Society of Tasmania, along with the Tasmanian Branch of the Geological Society of Australia, invite you to a public lecture by

Dr Michael Roach

"Making it 'Real': Geological visualisation methods for research, education and public outreach"

Where: Meeting Room, QVMAG at Inveresk, Launceston.

When: 1:30 pm Sunday 10 September 2023.

Full COVID-19 vaccination and the wearing of face masks are highly desirable.

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

Abstract:

Methods for generation of geometrically correct, three dimensional, photorealistic, virtual models have developed rapidly in the last decade. These techniques are applicable at a wide range of scales and are very suitable for digitising both natural geological exposures and geological specimens.

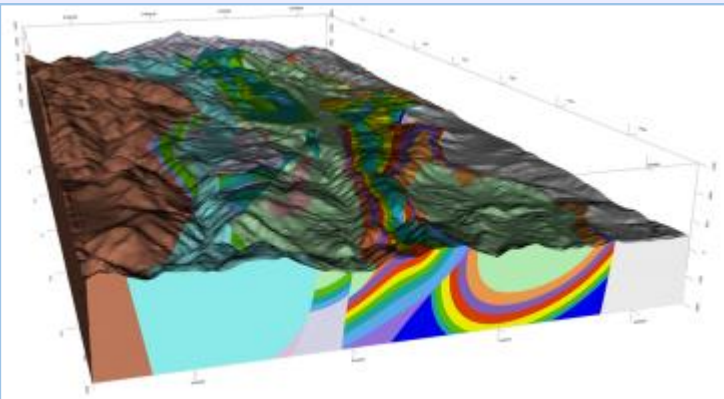
This presentation will outline methods for generation of 3D digital models and will showcase selected models from around Australia drawn from the AusGeol virtual library. The use of these 3D models, virtual tours, and new analysis software will be showcased for applications in geological education, geological research and public outreach.

Three-dimensional (3D) geological property modelling is a visual, interactive tool which captures the quantitative characterisation of various geological features in 3D digital form based on geostatistics using computer visualisation technology to develop greater understanding and interpretation of data. Resultant models can have a wide range of scientific, industry and socially beneficial applications, such as mitigating hazards and disasters, or exploring geothermal or groundwater resources.



Biography:

Dr Michael Roach (pictured right) is a geophysicist and long-term staff member in the discipline of Earth Sciences and CODES at the University of Tasmania. About 10 years ago, Michael saw the potential for the application of emerging digital visualisation methods for geological education and research. Since then, he has pioneered the application of these techniques for teaching, research projects and public outreach.



Above image by anr-charms.org



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RST Northern Branch invites you to a public lecture by Dr Ian Kidd

"The Tamar / kanamaluka: 200 plus years of mud and misunderstanding"

Where: Meeting Room, QVMAG at Inveresk.

When: 1:30 pm Sunday 24 September 2023.

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

Full COVID-19 vaccination and the wearing of face masks are highly desirable.

Abstract:

For many years since European settlement, the Tamar/kanamaluka has been seen as a unique system, and management decisions were based on riverine science with dire consequences for estuarine health and sedimentation. Poor decision-making and the paucity of knowledge/science continued into this century in what must surely be a classic Dunning-Kruger scenario. With hysteresis* now clearly evident, remediation requires a greater understanding of that which created the present state. Solutions to provide such remediation will be presented.

* 'hysteresis' is derived from ὑστέρησις, an Ancient Greek word meaning "deficiency" or "lagging behind".



Left: View of Trevallyn from Royal Park, Launceston. Image: The Rose Series.

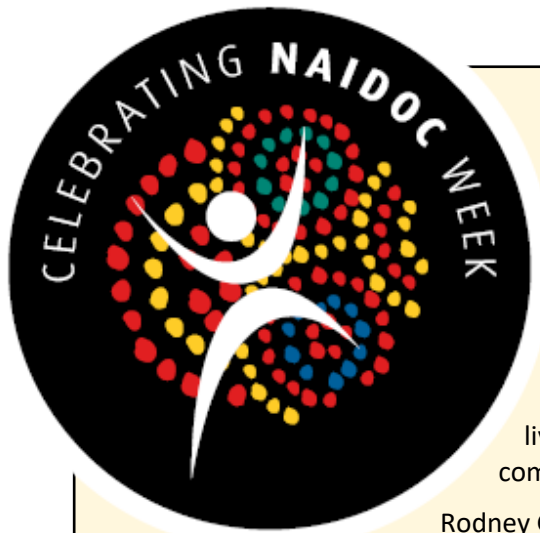


Biography:

Dr Ian Kidd (pictured above) graduated from UTAS (1980) with a BSc in physics. He worked in various roles from tutoring, the public service, to building before completing a Graduate Diploma of Computing. He spent 20 years in the computer industry before assisting Prof Jenny Davis with research into the Tamar/kanamaluka. That assistance became an obsession and Ian completed a PhD on the topic of the Tamar estuary in 2017.

Generously supported by





Rodney Gibbins named Tasmanian Aborigine of the Year, NAIDOC Awards 2023

At the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre's flag-raising event on Monday 3 July, the first day of NAIDOC Week 2023, **Rodney Gibbins** (pictured below) was named Tasmanian Aborigine of the Year. This award is intended to recognise Aboriginal individuals who make outstanding contributions to improving the lives of members of the Tasmanian Aboriginal community.

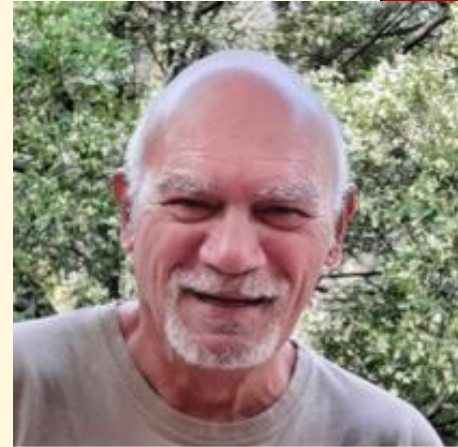
Rodney Gibbins was recognised for his selfless and unwavering dedication to advance the negotiations for Treaty by means of an Aboriginal-led process. At the same time, Rodney has been advocating for Truth-Telling as the essential context for achieving Aboriginal rights and recognition.

Rodney has generously given his time and experience to support these causes, both within and outside the Aboriginal community. He is also committed to developing the understanding of younger members of the Tasmanian Aboriginal community so they can reach their full potential and gain confidence in their own abilities and skills.

Rodney's connection with the RST began in February 2021 when, together with Michael Mansell, he spoke on behalf of the Tasmanian Aboriginal community at the paired RST-TMAG [Apology to Tasmanian Aboriginal people](#).

The text of Rodney's speech was published in the *Papers and Proceedings of The Royal Society of Tasmania*, December 2022 issue (Volume 156). Rodney delivered a RST lecture in December 2022 entitled "[Truth-telling and treaty as it relates to Tasmania now](#)".

The President, Council and all members of the RST offer our most sincere congratulations to Rodney!



LAST CALL FOR Expressions of Interest: THRA Excursion to the Tasman Monument

This year is the hundredth anniversary of the erection of a monument on Forestier Peninsula in 1923 by the RST. The monument commemorates the landing of the Abel Tasman Expedition in Tasmania on 3 December 1642. The Tasmanian Historical Research Association (THRA) is organising an excursion to the monument and has offered 15 places to RST members.

Date: Sunday 3 December 2023.

Plan: Participants make their way to "Bangor" independently. The excursion will start at the Bangor Shed, just south of Dunalley, at 10:00 am. After morning tea and a brief introduction, we will take a bus through "Bangor" to the start of the track, arriving there at 11:30 am. A hilly walk of around 15–20 minutes will take us to Tasman Bay and the Tasman Monument where participants can have lunch (BYO). For the more energetic, there will be an option for a 45–60 minute return walk to North Bay where Tasman and later Marion du Fresne (in 1772) anchored their vessels. Participants will return to the bus by 2 pm and then to their cars at the Bangor Shed at around 3 pm.

The Shed offers wine-tastings for those who would like to indulge! THRA member Tom Dunbabin farmed "Bangor" for many years and will provide commentary during the tour.

Cost: \$30 per person, includes morning tea and bus transport between the Bangor Shed and the start of the walk to the monument.

To secure a place on this excursion, please send a short message **before 30 September** to admin@rst.org.au with the subject line "Tasman Monument Excursion".



Right: Monument inscription reads: *At this spot the Expedition under Abel Jansz Tasman being the first white people to set foot on Tasmanian soil planted the Dutch flag on December 3rd 1642 as a memorial to posterity and to the inhabitants of this country. This stone was erected by the Royal Society of Tasmania 1923*

INVITATION

**to a reception at Government House, Hobart
28 September 6 pm – 7:30 pm**

'An Evening with Louisa'

This reception is generously hosted by our Patron,
Her Excellency the Honourable Barbara Baker AC,
Governor of Tasmania, and Emeritus Professor Don Chalmers AO.

Guests will be introduced to the life and art of noted RST member
Louisa Anne Meredith
while enjoying high-quality musical items and refreshments
in the elegant reception rooms of Government House.

The ticket price of \$85 is a donation to the RST Art Fund to support
the conservation of the magnificent RST Art Collection.

**Your invitation will be sent at the end of August, and you are most
welcome to invite friends to join you at this event.
Please put 28 September in your diary!**



Bursaries Committee News

ANZAAS Youth Science Forum 2023

The RST has funds set aside to support bursaries for Tasmanian secondary school students selected to represent Australia at either an international event or at a national event held interstate. [Click for further information.](#)

Youth ANZAAS is an international residential science forum held annually. This year Youth ANZAAS was held in Melbourne from 2 – 7 July. Participants were lucky enough to participate in a range of activities, including: a physics presentation at Melbourne University; tour of Melbourne Museum; RMIT presentations (including manufacturing and optical illusions); a cell biology presentation at the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research; a tour of Defence Science Research Group; a range of presentations at Science Works; applications of the Australia Synchrotron; and a Geology presentation at Monash University.

The Royal Society of Tasmania supported the following senior secondary students to attend, through the Society's Bursaries program: Lachlan Fox, Nguyen (Tim) Le, Abhitaj Singh, Moanie Zier Williams and Hayley Carpenter. All recipients responded very positively and have provided excellent accounts of their time at ANZAAS Youth Science Forum 2023.

Right: Elizabeth College, Hobart students (from left) Lachlan Fox, Moanie Williams, Tim Le, Abhitaj Singh.
Below: Elizabeth College, Hobart students clowning.



Some reflections by 2023 bursary recipients:

Lachlan (Lockie) Fox from Elizabeth College, Hobart:

On a regular Wednesday morning, I walked into Science class thinking it would be no different, however, there was

a poster on the wall, about a science camp in Melbourne. I have always had a passion for medicine, sport science and biological sciences and thought this was a great opportunity for me to expand my knowledge.

I applied and was accepted and with the help of my teachers, parents and The Royal Society of Tasmania, I was going. The days counted down and just like that, the day to leave came around I was on the flight headed to Melbourne.

At the airport I met everyone who was going to the ANZAAS forum from Tasmania. There were three other people who came from Elizabeth College and one who travelled from northwest Tasmania to attend the Forum.

When we arrived. We were greeted at large metal gates that led us into the campus, the main building towering over us with its castle-like structure (it looked exactly like Hogwarts). We were led inside where we were given our keys for the rooms where we were staying for the next five nights. Ormond College was laid out in the form of dorm rooms, with my room coming with a queen bed, a desk, a closet and a chair, nothing else. The bathrooms were a good 100m walk from where I was staying, which was an interesting change from my home in Hobart.

During the trip, we were able to visit the University of Melbourne, RMIT, Monash University, the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research, the Melbourne Museum and the Defence Science and Technology Group base. During these visits, we got to hear from a variety of different field experts about multiple different science areas, including angular physics, medical research, engineering, sport science, optics, biological research and many more.



Left: All five students outside Ormond College wearing their RST caps: (from left) Tim, Lachlan, Abhitaj, Moanie and Hayley.

These talks and tours were offered to expand our career knowledge and to hear from lesser-known fields of science that we may not have known about until now. My favourite part of the Forum was visiting the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research which was especially specific for my enjoyment of biological and medical sciences. We also toured the research facilities which was my favourite part of the journey.

Another great part of the tour was to also hear from the researchers themselves. My tour guide, who took four of my other peers and me down to the labs where they were researching and endeavouring to find a cure for Motor Neuron Disease, which was particularly interesting.

And after what felt like the fastest week ever, it was time for us to leave. This Forum gave me so many new experiences and a lot of things to look forward to. The first of which being the university

lifestyle. Being at this Forum and experiencing what it is like to be in a dorm room, as well as visiting all the Melbourne universities, I could see how my life could be structured there and it was exciting to think about and awaken-ed my eagerness for tertiary studies. This Forum also re-sparked by engagement for school as, before coming to the ANZAAS Forum, I was already burnt out from the pressures of four pre-tertiary subjects; however, surrounding myself with other likeminded students, who are way smarter than I am now, was re-energising and it has put me in the right headspace for Term 3 and for Year 12.

I would particularly like to thank ANZAAS, The Royal Society of Tasmania, my teachers and my family for the support to be able to attend such a high-standard forum.

Right: Abhitaj Singh from Elizabeth College, Hobart experiments using weights at the Youth ANZAAS Forum.

Abhitaj Singh from Elizabeth College, Hobart:

The 2023 Youth ANZAAS forum had very interesting and exciting activities and events. Due to my initial interest in physics, I found the physics lecture very informative and enjoyable. However, as we went through the presentation and the laboratories in WEHI, I developed a new interest in biology and biomedical technology. Overall, this science forum was very well organised, very informative and educational.

Nguyen (Tim) Le from Elizabeth College, Hobart:

I am writing to express my appreciation for the support provided by The Royal Society of Tasmania, which enabled me to participate in the ANZAAS Youth Science Forum. I am thrilled that my experience at the Forum was nothing short of transformative. The program, designed to nurture young scientific minds, allowed me to engage in stimulating scientific discussions, participate in hands-on activities, and explore various career pathways in the field of science.

Moanie Zier Williams from Elizabeth College, Hobart:

I had not been provided with many opportunities to engage with science, so at first, I didn't think Youth ANZAAS was for me. I was home-schooled for most of my schooling by a humanities and arts loving mother. However, this year, my Psychology 3 class is eliciting a new passion for science for me. Youth ANZAAS was an opportunity to nourish my budding interest in genetics and see what science could offer as a potential career path.

I strongly encourage anyone in Year 10 to 12 to apply to attend Youth ANZAAS next year, regardless of their previous involvement with science. They'll walk away with a fresh outlook on science and the role it plays in our modern society. I'm so grateful to The Royal Society of Tasmania for their support which enabled me to have this incredible experience. It awakened the possibility of science in a humanities student, and I'm now looking at how to include it in my career path. Youth ANZAAS gave me so much; I can't wait to volunteer as a chaperone when I turn 18.



Right: Hayley Carpenter (Don College, Devonport) at Science Works.

Hayley Carpenter from Don College, Devonport:

At least once a day the Australia Synchrotron (ANSTO) was mentioned which made everyone excited for Day 4 when we were able to visit it. On arrival, we learnt about what ANSTO actually does. We then were able to walk into the building where the particle accelerator is housed, and we learnt about all the applications: imaging, medical imaging, X-ray fluorescence microscopy, art history, and forensic science to name a few. Forensic scientists working at ANSTO were the ones who discovered that Phar Lap (the famous racehorse) was actually poisoned before an important race by analysing his hair for heavy metals.

Overall, Youth ANZAAS was an amazing experience, and I am beyond thanks that I was able to attend. The things that I learnt will stay with me all throughout my life and I have met my lifelong friends.



Left: Titanium bone.

Below: The Australian Synchrotron.





Wine-Tasting and Auction

November 2023

Many thanks to the generous members who have already donated special items for the fundraising wine-tasting and cultural auction the Art Fundraising Committee is planning for November 2023.

Do you have a painting, print, ceramic, small antique, concert ticket or similar item that you could donate? Or perhaps an interesting bottle of wine?

Please contact [Ross Large](#) or [Mary Koolhof](#) to discuss, either directly or through admin@rst.org.au

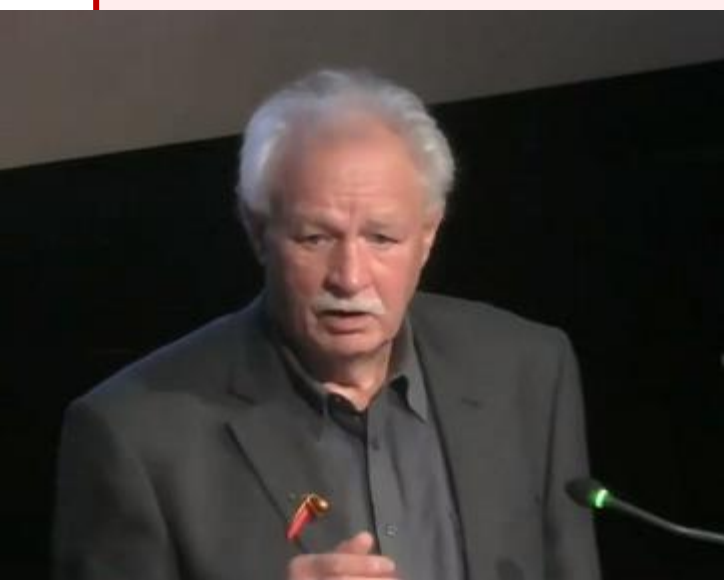
RST Voice Referendum Lectures: Michael Mansell and Kerry Sculthorpe

The RST hosted lectures by Tasmanian Aboriginal leaders, Michael Mansell (2 July) and Kerry Sculthorpe (30 July), both at the Stanley Burbury Lecture Theatre at UTAS.

The goal was to provide a forum for learning about the issues and for discussion, given that before the end of 2023, there will be a referendum on whether to change the Australian Constitution to recognise the First Peoples of Australia by establishing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice.

The Society does not endorse any particular position with respect to the referendum.

Michael Mansell's lecture was entitled **"Empowering Aborigines: Voices inside parliament or advisers outside? Voting 'No' to the referendum is a vote of support for Aboriginal self-determination"**.



Michael argued that the Federal Government could create an advisory body as envisaged by the Voice immediately, without involving either the Constitution or a referendum. He offered multiple reasons why the Voice advisory body was not going to improve the lives of Aboriginal Australians: the advisory body has no place in the legislative process so cannot enact or modify laws; its jurisdiction is mainly Federal whereas the pressing issues for most Aboriginal Australians (health, housing, education, employment) are dealt with at the State level; and there is a long history of Aboriginal voices in Parliament not being listened to so it is most unlikely that an external advisory body will be heard.

The Uluru Statement from the Heart in 2017 identified Truth-Telling, Treaty and Voice as the three priorities for improving the lives of Aboriginal Australians. Of these, Michael believes Treaty is of paramount importance because it will affect the

Above: Michael Mansell delivering his RST lecture on 2 July, Stanley Burbury Lecture Theatre.

whole nation and would have the power of Federal law. Michael's position is that voting "no" could send a signal to the Federal Government that the Voice is not the best first step nor will it change anything. Michael's preferred choice is to have no referendum at this stage but to channel resources into the creation of a Treaty.



Above: Kerry Sculthorpe delivering her RST lecture on 30 July, Stanley Burbury Lecture Theatre.

Three weeks later, Kerry Sculthorpe presented her lecture: **"An exploration of the Voice to Parliament – how we got here, and what we might expect after the referendum"**.

Kerry recounted the long list of government-funded initiatives and campaigns over some 30 years starting in the 1990s, all intended to improve the lives of Aboriginal Australians, such as "Close the Gap" (2005) and "Recognise" (2012–2017). All can be said to have failed because for Aboriginal Australians, rates of incarceration and rates of suicide remain exceptionally high, and prospects for employment and health are bleak.

While there is little reason to expect the Voice advisory body to have any greater success, that is what is being offered and rejecting that offer will do more harm than good.

In the background of many of the early campaigns was the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC), created in 1990 and abolished in 2005. ATSIC was unique in being a national organisation and largely led by Aboriginal Australians.

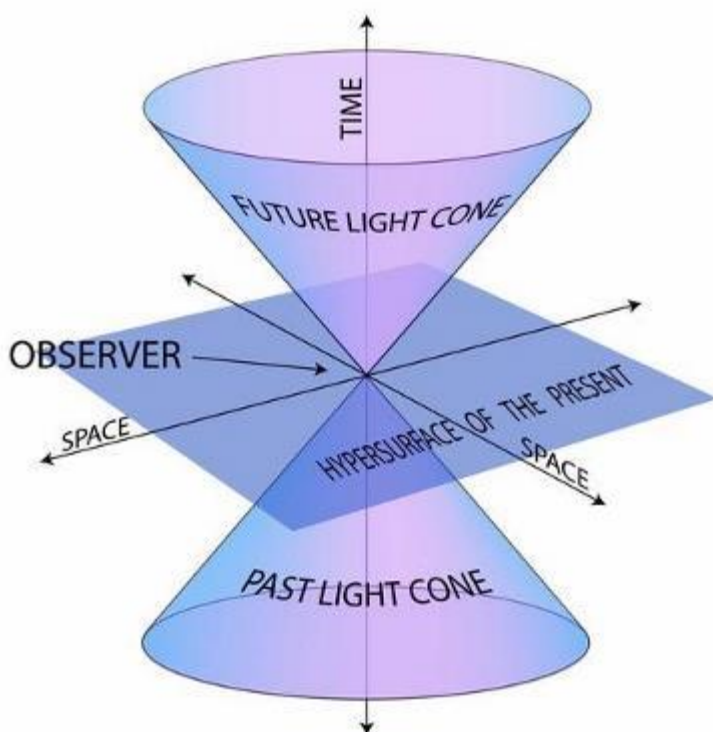
Its removal left a gap in representation of Aboriginal Australians at the national level that has not been filled. Subsequent government agencies have been ineffective, following a pattern of recommendations coming forth, most or all of which are not enforced, then demise and being disbanded.

Kerry explained some of the rules and limits that will apply to the Voice advisory body: some topics will not be included; the Voice is not supposed to duplicate any existing agency or function; and members will be reviewed by an ethics committee before being accepted.

Kerry described the creation of the Voice advisory body as a "very timid and small" move that ought to be supported not because it will be highly effective in changing the lives of Aboriginal Australians for the better, but because rejecting it will send a profoundly negative message to Aboriginal Australians. Further, she had not encountered any compelling reasons to vote "no".

Click to access videos of the lectures: [Michael's lecture](#). [Kerry's lecture](#).

Jocelyn McPhie



Einstein's Special Relativity 1905 – Can you help?

Mark Ross of Scottsdale, Tasmania, recently contacted the RST in search of a physicist willing to discuss aspects of Albert Einstein's 1905 paper on Special Relativity.

Mark wrote: "My problem relates to Einstein's logic and his rational assessment or understanding of the correct use of simple Newtonian Physics. I hope you can help me find someone who is willing to go over this with me."

If you can help Mark, please contact him directly at oldbut@live.com

Image left by sutori.com

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RST Art Collection

The 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

This month I'll return to more familiar territory and write about the genre of artworks that distinguish the RST Art Collection: artworks created in nineteenth century Van Diemen's Land. But I will stray a bit because the person I am writing about was also a diarist – combining both the Society's Art Collection and Library Collections.

An Artist and a Diarist

George Thomas William Blamey Boyes, a member of the John Skinner Prout cohort who painted 'en plein air' watercolours, is this month's protagonist and he is arguably as well-known as a diarist as an artist.

As well as having a number of his watercolours in the RST Art Collection, the Society also has his diaries and letters (RS25–26, RS7/107 and RS3/1(1)) in the RST Library Collections. The letters were donated by Miss Boyes in 1960, while the diaries were donated by CE Boyes from 1941–6.

In 1946, WH Hudspeth wrote about Boyes (and Rev Robert Knopwood) in the *Papers and Proceedings of the Royal Society of Tasmania*, and later in 1954, he published *Early Van Diemen's Land*.

TWO EARLY DIARISTS OF VAN DIEMEN'S LAND

By L. A. Triebel

"THE Lt-Govr Mr. Collins and self went to examine a plain on the S.W. side of the river; the plain extensive and a continual run of water which is very excellent. It comes from the lofty mountains resembling the Table Mountain at the Cape of Good Hope."

THE run of water was the Hobart Rivulet; the diarist, the Rev. Robert Knopwood; the date February 17, 1854; the extract is from "Early Van Diemen's Land," the W. H. Hudspeth Memorial Volume, Government Printer, Hobart, 1954.

In 1952, a committee was formed to commemorate the service of Wilfred Hugh Hudspeth to Tasmanian history and to the Royal Society of Tasmania, whose vice-president he became. Voluntary subscriptions from his many friends made possible the present volume, edited by Miss Amy Rowntree.

A selection was made from Hudspeth's unpublished writings, and consists of his account of the two principal source diaries of Van Diemen's Land — those of Knopwood and G. T. W. B. Boyes.

more than a century, we may ask, in the name of common-sense and of literature, should the 13 heavy handwritten volumes now locked up in the keeping of the Royal Society of Tasmania not be published?

Known to contemporaries as "Alphabetical" Boyes, George Thomas William Blamey Boyes was in 1826 appointed Auditor of Civil Accounts and remained in the Public Service of Van Diemen's Land until his death in 1853. He became Colonial Secretary, and a member of the Legislative Council.

His position brought him into contact with all classes of society and he drew pen portraits of contemporary notabilities. He sketched the four Governors whom he served so competently and amiably. Many entries are frankly Peppysian and bring before us a host of minor characters, including their next-

diarist, whose mind was endowed with qualities of observation and perception revealing a keen and original talent.

Australian workmen were for Boyes "radicals of the worst kind"; people who gained wealth, "rogues and damned rascals."

"Yet," says Mr. Crossland, "his diary has the fascination of a record set down by a kindly man—a lively and stimulating record, scandalous in parts but never dull, a capital source-book of early colonial history and an unrivalled picture of the life and times."

This review should end with a few quotations taken by Wilfred Hudspeth and Robert Crossland from the Boyes Diary:—

Left: *The Mercury*, 20 Sept 1954, p. 4.

The artworks are cited as being donated by CH Bowling in 1952, and the paintings are noted in the 1969 Loans List, as well as the RST Accessions List.

The things I've found particularly interesting about my research for this article are the contradictions in the material that I have discovered. Boyes appears to have been a person who divided opinions. One piece will note him to be: 'a capable, prudent, agreeable, and eminently respectable official'; while another will say of him that he was: 'an embittered man ... [who] hadn't a good word to say for anyone'.

The *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (ADB) notes:

Outwardly cordial and modest, Boyes privately scorned his superiors as a 'dirty pack of unprincipled place hunters', and the colonists as 'radicals of the worst kind ... ever ready to impute the basest motives to their fellow[s] ... Lying, slandering, every hatred and malice are their daily aliment and the consumption is incredible'.

He considered himself refined, and bitterly regretted that circumstances forced him to live in a society given over to gross commercialism and sordid political intrigue. From this discontent sprang his writing.

Among the duties entailed by Mr Boyes' official position was that of attending parties at Government House and his description of some of these is worth quoting: *At another [party], given by the Franklins: An evening party, about 450 present; came away about 2 o'clock heartily tired with the bad supper, bad dancing, stupid people, and the clouds of dust.* (WH Hudspeth)

So, it looks like the opinion one had of Boyes could depend on one's social standing or whether or not one has read his diary.

'... some sort of Government official'

Boyes was some sort of Government official, (I forget now exactly what) He was an embittered man with a grudge against his superiors. He poured out his thoughts in a stream of venomous comments on everyone from the Governor down, and hadn't a good word to say for anyone. His comments are so libellous and vindictive that his diary has hitherto never been published for fear of offending various descendants of his victims. The only person he consistently praises is Lady Franklin, wife of the Governor and explorer Sir John Franklin, who by her unconventional ways often shocked the provincial Victorian Society of Hobart in the '40s. In the circumstances, ^{Boyes'} tribute to Charles is significant. A.L.

Above: Catalogue note for the Boyes' diary manuscript extracts at the National Library of Australia. (1p.) nla.obj.-954225481.

This image from the National Library of Australia's records is amusing: *Boyes was some sort of Government official, (I forget now exactly what).*

Boyes was posted to Van Diemen's Land as its Colonial Auditor in October 1826. During his time in VDL, Boyes held the positions of Colonial Auditor, Colonial Secretary, Caveat Commissioner, Member of the Executive and Legislative Councils, and Member of the Committee of the Queen's Orphanage.

GTWB Boyes (1786/7–1853)

Boyes was born in Hampshire, England, the son of a Hampshire gentleman and property-owner, Thomas Boyes. His mother, Ann (nee Blamey), died shortly after his birth.

Again, the information available on Boyes' early life is contradictory. The *Dictionary of Australian Artists Online* (DAAO) states that after his mother's death, *Boyes moved from household to household and from school to school;* while the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (ADB) states that, *he was educated by various private tutors. By his 13th year, he had attended six educational establishments in or near Portsmouth.*

He seems to have been interested in painting and drawing from an early age and it was considered a suitable activity for young gentlemen at that time, so this is perhaps not surprising.

Early artistic influences came from the Hampshire school of landscape and marine painters, including John Livesay, professor of drawing at the Portsmouth Naval College, with whose son he walked and sketched in Wales, and possibly from the painter, engraver and former pupil of Benjamin West, Richard Livesay (1750–1823), who also taught at the college. Boyes was a friend of another teacher there, John Christian Schetky, later marine painter to the King and collaborator with J.M.W. Turner on some of his marine paintings. One of Boyes' letters suggests he himself may have taken tuition from Turner in 1819. (DAAO)

In 1809, Boyes joined the Commissariat Department of the army and spent some years in the Peninsula War, serving under the Duke of Wellington. His former drawing teacher JC Schetky was also at the Peninsula War at the time. Schetky's influence on Boyes' style can be seen when comparing similar subject matter.



Left: A drawn battle between the French frigate 'Aréthuse' and the British frigate 'Amelia', 7th February 1813, John Christian Schetky, 1778–1874, pen and ink over grey wash, RST Art Collection.



Left: *Ships at Anchor*, date unknown, GTWB Boyes, 1786–1853, watercolour, RST Art Collection.

Bernard Smith, arguably the most influential writer on nineteenth century art in Australia, wrote of Boyes in *European Vision and the South Pacific*: *An outstanding and yet, in many ways, a representative member of this group [the group surrounding John Skinner Prout] was George Boyes ... an enthusiast for the romantic and the picturesque ... Boyes cultivated the arts not as a means towards a better understanding of an unfamiliar part of the world but as a manifestation of taste, culture, and sensibility.*

Smith also quotes Boyes' diary entry of 9 September 1831 after a visit to John Glover, *Walked with Hill up*

to the Glovers. Saw his picture of Mount Wellington. Sun rising and Moon setting in its finished state. I like the twilight part of it very well ... a very gaudy effect of Sunshine – where the Trees in the foreground are designed with hideous fidelity to Nature. (p. 217).

Boyes seemed to criticise all the local artists. In his diary entry on 15 August 1857, he writes a scathing criticism of a painting John Skinner Prout had given him, *a poor washy thing not worth a frame.*

Although he criticised the art of others in Van Diemen's Land at the time, it did not stop him from also being part of

Sent 6 pictures to the exhibition before breakfast. Called at the Exhibition on the way to the office. With Bicheno in the afternoon [Bicheno took over Boyes' position as Colonial Secretary]. Walked down with him to look at the pictures. The Bishop [Nixon] passes a good deal of his time there. Bustles about. Runs up and down the library steps, suggests, alters, chatters to everybody and takes such an interest in the affair that one might suppose his own reputation as a connoisseur of fine arts depended upon the success of the exhibition. 28 Dec 1844

the Hobart Art Exhibition in January 1845. He wrote in his diary:

Boyes and Bicheno formed a sketching group of their own which included the Colonial Treasurer and amateur painter Peter Fraser and Bishop Francis Russell Nixon, a remarkable combination of 'Art and Government' in Van Diemen's Land. Their informal sketching club included such major colonial artists as Simpkinson de Wesselow and John Skinner Prout; and Boyes' diary has much useful detail of their activities. While Boyes and Bicheno also indulged their joint musical enthusiasms by promoting soirées and instrument quartets, undoubtedly their most important cultural alliance was in the promotion of the Hobart Town Art Exhibition of January 1845 – regarded as the first Fine Art exhibition in Australia – at which Boyes exhibited *Cottage Scene, after S. Prout* – sadly not part of the RST Art Collection.

A trip back to England

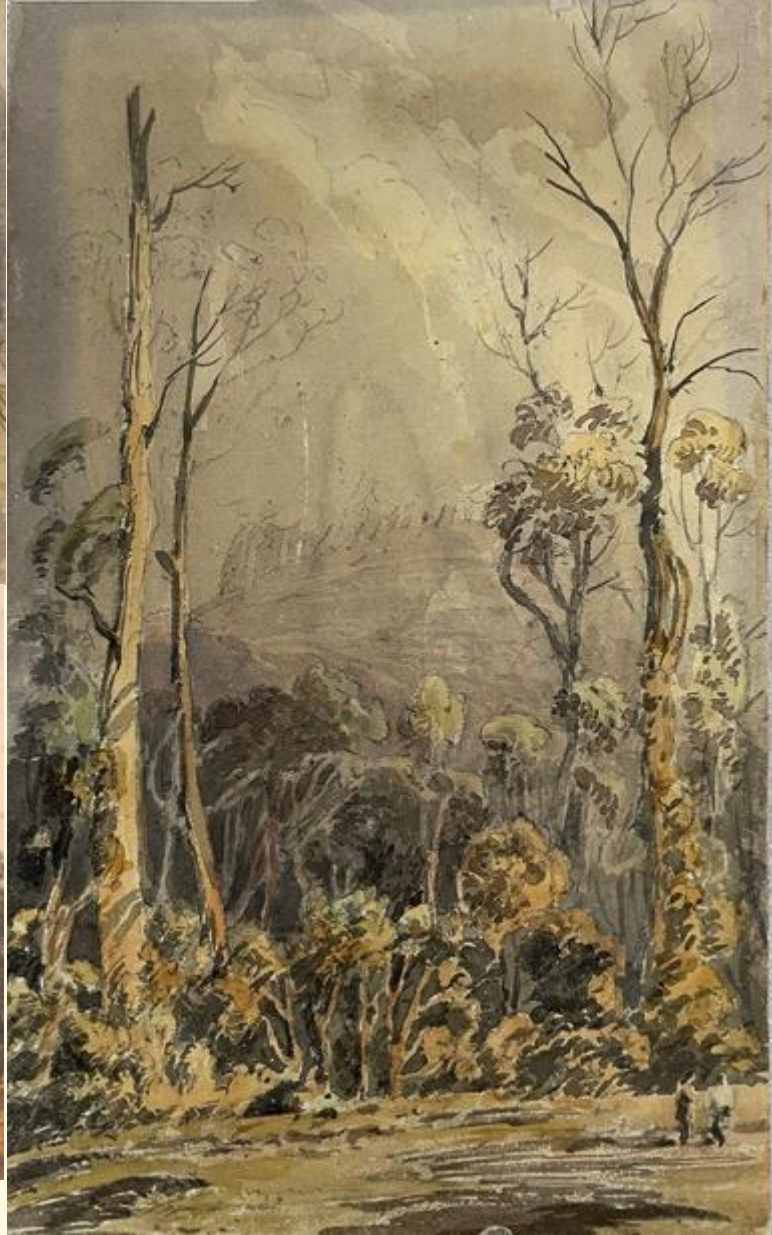
In 1832, Boyes returned to England after nine years away to bring his wife, Mary (nee Ediss), and their family back to Tasmania with him. While there, he immersed himself with art matters, visiting his old teacher John Shayer and making numerous technical notes on his work. He sailed back to Tasmania on the convict transport *Moffat* with his wife and four sons arriving in 1834, and resumed his colonial auditorship. He was appointed Legislative Councillor in 1840. (ADB)

kunanyi/Mount Wellington

Boyes, like many other artists of the time, was fascinated by kunanyi/Mt Wellington. He painted and wrote about it often. See three Boyes' paintings of kunanyi/Mount Wellington from the RST Art Collection below. It is interesting to see Boyes' styles here: from a very rough, quick watercolour sketch (most likely painted on site) to a more

On 13 February 1831, Boyes wrote in his diary:

At home all morning. In the afternoon rode Bryant's horse beyond Roseway across the stream and into the woods on the other side. Magnificent scenery – Mt Wellington rearing his giant head above the tall trees at every turn – and the deep purple shadows of the Ravines formed fine contrasts with the bright parts rich with streams of yellow light from the declining light. [*Visions of Australia*, Eric Rolls, p. 82].



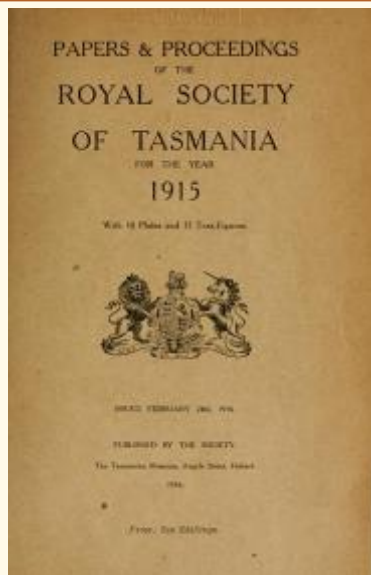
worked up painting, to the final very finished piece. Although much maligned and perhaps not given as much recognition as he should be for his role in documenting the early history of European settlement in Van Diemen's Land, GTWB Boyes leaves us, like his contemporary Louisa Anne Meredith, important written and visual records of early Tasmania. Boyes died at Hobart on 16 August 1853.

Do you know this artist?

In The Royal Society of Tasmania's Art Collection there are four unidentified sketches of Tasmanian scenes. The artist has a very distinctive way of mark-making, particularly the hatching of the rocks. If anyone can identify the artist, I would be very interested in hearing from you.

Anita Hansen





Papers and Proceedings of The Royal Society of Tasmania – Free copies of selected issues

The family of Dick and Joan Green, former members of the RST, (<https://www.greenfamilyaward.org/dick-joan-green>) would like to offer their parents' collection of the *Papers and Proceedings of The Royal Society of Tasmania* to any RST members who would like to supplement their own collections.

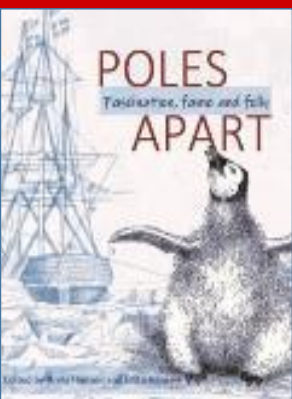
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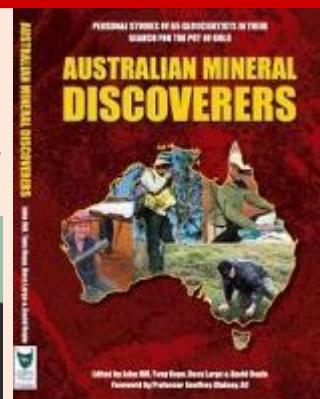
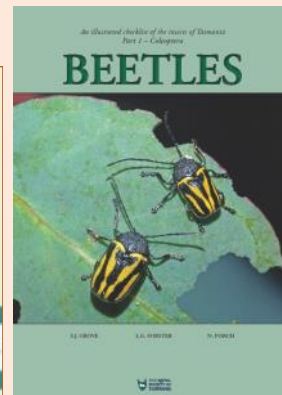
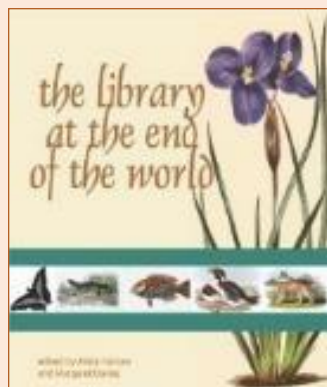
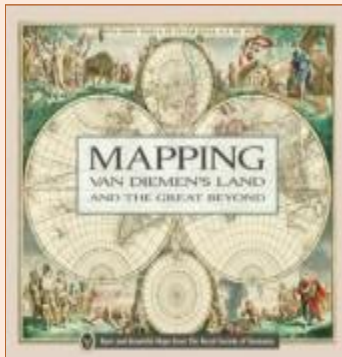
Katrina Ross, Historical Collections Coordinator, University of Tasmania



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Special & Rare Collections (5th floor, Morris Miller Library at UTAS Sandy Bay campus) including the RST 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
- 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

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



Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery

Open Tuesday to Sunday, 10:00 am – 4:00 pm



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](#).

TMAG Highlights Tour: 1:30 pm Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays

Join the TMAG guides for a highlights tour of the treasures of the Central and Henry Hunter galleries, and the historic Commissariat Complex and Bond Store exhibitions.

Twist exhibition: Closing date: 22-10-2023

This exhibition brings together artwork by exceptional Australian and Irish artists to engage with Dickensian themes – with a contemporary and quirky twist. Charles Dickens (1812–1870) enchanted readers with irrepressible characters while exploring issues such as crime and punishment, the dire impact of poverty on women and children and the grim conditions in public institutions such as orphanages, prisons and workhouses. He was as fascinated by the people and social interactions in the far-flung colonies as he was in those of the dirty streets of London. Many of his characters were transported or immigrated to Australia.

This exhibition brings together artwork by exceptional Australian and Irish artists to engage with Dickensian themes – with a contemporary and quirky twist. It was accompanied by a program of artist talks and special evening events throughout the Dark Mofo festival period.

Twist Exhibition Tour: 11:00 am Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays for the duration of the exhibition. Join an art guide for a tour of twists and turns, exploring the array of contemporary and quirky art works that reflect Dickensian themes.



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