

Hobart Town (1804) First Settlers' Association

PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2021

It has been a difficult year for all, however, our Association has had a full program of activities and of outstanding speakers.

In February our member Warwick Risby gave a wonderful account of the background to writing his book, "Risby Ancestors from Convict Beginnings", a copy of which he has donated to the Association library. In March we had Brendan Lennard, former Heritage Officer with the City of Hobart (Hobart City Council). Brendan spoke about Dame Nellie Melba and her Tasmanian connections. We were able to hear a recording of her singing which was a highlight.

Dr Annelise Rees spoke in April about her role as Assistant Curator at the Maritime Museum of Tasmania and this theme followed in May with Tony Hope's presentation on "The Remarkable James Kelly of Van Diemen's Land". This is the title of his book which is an outstanding contribution to the memory of the man and naturally to our own heritage.

In June, Alderman Jeff Briscoe from HCC spoke on his ancestor William Paton (1800-1854), Assistant Colonial Surgeon of Van Diemen's Land. This was followed by Military Historian John Wadsley whose topic was the Soldiers Memorial Avenue on the Queen's Domain and the excellent work being done to conserve and maintain the trees and plaques. Our speaker for August was Professor Michael Stoddart, author of "Tassie Whale Boys", highlighting what a huge industry whaling was in the early days.

September's presentation was by John Stephenson of Digital Heritage Studio who captured everyone's attention with an amazing selection of moving and still images recreated from known pictures and written descriptions of settlement. There was more maritime history in August with Rex Cox sharing some of his many slides taken over his lifetime, focussing on the history of the harbour of Hobart. Our Historian, Maree Ring, shared some of her work on the Burial Grounds of Hobart when she spoke in November. These were listed in the December newsletter.

There were Committee meetings in our room on the fourth floor of 24 Davey Street which belongs to the HCC, and is where our library and other assets are to be found. Thanks must go to those hard-working people, particularly Treasurer Alastair Douglas OAM who maintains the spreadsheet of members' contact details and is responsible for contacting members by email, as well as managing the finances. Vice-President Jonothan Davis, I must thank for taking the meetings when I have not been able to be present and for arranging many of the speakers. Thanks, Jonothan. Maree Ring registers new members and supplies many interesting relevant posts on Facebook and at meetings. Janice Daley and Stephany Fehre have put together the newsletters for members to enjoy.

Our morning teas have again been supplied by Di Vertigan and friends and eagerly consumed with the cups of tea and coffee ably served by Kath Lonergan and Carol-Hooper. Thanks to those members who have been able to attend meetings in the rooms at Moonah and to others who show their support in other ways. We do enjoy hearing from you and helping where we can.

It was a pleasure to be in contact with our Patron, Lord Miles Hobart, the Earl of Buckinghamshire. Thank you for the fine support I have received during my two years as President which ends at the Annual General Meeting on March 1st.

Reg A. Watson