



A Message from the President



Dear Members,

I am delighted to share with you the news that the new Governor of Tasmania, Her Excellency the Honourable Barbara Baker AC has accepted the invitation to become **Patron of the Society**. This continues the tradition of the Society's close involvement throughout its history with the Governor of the day.

The **joint lecture** on 23 June, 'Climate challenges and the path to mitigation', with national Australian body the Academy for Technology and Engineering (ATSE) was a great success, with a very good turnout of people attending both in person and online. It was especially pleasing that the Governor of Tasmania attended, accompanied by Professor Don Chalmers. The event was recorded and, if you missed it or would like to share the talks with your friends and colleagues, [click to view the event](#).

Very positive feedback was received from attendees and online participants. I would like to share some of this feedback with you, as it exemplifies how the use of digital media is allowing us to fulfil our objective of advancing knowledge: *'I want to express my appreciation for being able to participate as a member of the online audience last night. Regrettably I cannot attend events in person and so the opportunity to attend this event via Zoom was valuable. The Zoom link worked beautifully. The speakers' voices were crystal clear (worthy of praise as I used to experience great difficulty hearing when I was able to attend that venue in person) and the availability of the slides gave those on Zoom possibly a better view than those in the live audience. All around, praise to the organisers and presenters.'*

Our **Northern Branch celebrated its centenary** on 27 June in the presence of the Governor with the launch of the special centenary edition of the *Papers and Proceedings*, featuring a fine selection of articles highlighting achievements in Northern Tasmania. The Centenary Lecture, delivered by geologist and mineralogist Ralph Bottrill on the topic of 'What made Tasmania?', was very well received, and highlighted how modern developments in mapping, dating and information compilation have enabled the Tasmanian Geological Survey to produce detailed maps of most of Tasmania.

We are now looking forward to the Royal Society of Tasmania's **Midwinter Dinner** on Monday 12 July. Coming up on Sunday 25 July is the next Northern Branch Lecture presented by Dr John Whittington, 'Growing Australia's Blue Economy' (- p. 4). On Sunday 2 August at 5 pm, we will have the first of our Doctoral Award lectures for 2021, presented by earth scientist Dr Adam Abersteiner who now holds a position as Research Fellow at the University of Helsinki. He will deliver his lecture via Zoom from Finland (- see p. 5).

I would like to offer a warm **welcome to new members** Ralph Bottrill, Anne Donaghue, Dr Paul Donaghue, Associate Professor Rajaraman Eri, Curtis Salter, Maryanne Simpson, Stewart Simpson and Dr Imogen Wegman. I hope you enjoy your involvement with the Society.

Warm regards,

Mary Koolhof, President

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RST Northern Branch Centenary Lecture – 27 June 2021

The Northern Branch held its official celebration of 100 years of continuous operation on 27 June at QVMAG Inveresk. On a bright sunny day, over 100 people packed into the lecture room to hear speakers extol the achievements of the Branch and congratulate members on such an important milestone.

As occurred 100 years earlier on the exact same date, the Governor was present and delighted the audience with her speech on what was her first official engagement in the north. Her Excellency the Honourable Barbara Baker AC, Governor of Tasmania and her husband Professor Don Chalmers were not the only dignitaries present and we welcomed the Mayor of Launceston, Albert van Zetten and his wife, Lyndle, President of the Royal Society of Tasmania, Mary Koolhof, and her husband, Grady, members of the RST Council, and representatives from other associated organisations.

The Northern Branch President, Dr Eric Ratcliff OAM, welcomed the distinguished guests and invited Her Excellency to deliver a speech on 'The place of the Royal Society of Tasmania in current day Tasmania'. This was followed by the launch of the Special Edition Centenary Journal by Mary Koolhof who presented copies to those authors who were in attendance and to the daughter of the late Fred Smithies who kindly gave permission to use the photograph that appears on the cover. Contributors to the Journal were mainly northern authors writing about northern subjects ranging from geology, astronomy and faunal studies, to more history-based subjects, such as the European use of dolerite as a building material in Tasmania; the creation history of the Northern Branch; iodine deficiency and the survival of aboriginal life and culture in the Bass Strait Islands. A valuable technical element has been added by Peter King from the Australian Maritime College with an article on robotic exploration using autonomous underwater vehicles in Antarctica. At the conclusion of the launch, Mary presented a specially bound edition of what she has described as "one of the best *Papers and Proceedings* ever published by the Society", to the Branch for their Library.

Dr Ratcliff followed, delivering some remarks on the Branch's achievements over the last century including the setting up of the Launceston Field Naturalists Club and the Launceston Historical Society as well as the role of the Branch in the establishment of the National Trust of Tasmania.

As the guest speaker at the first lecture in 1921 was a geologist, the Branch thought it appropriate to invite another to give the Centenary lecture. Geologist, mineralogist and petrologist at Mineral Resources Tasmania Ralph Bottrill delivered an extremely well received lecture titled 'What made Tasmania?' with great enthusiasm. There was much positive feedback received after the event including the comment: 'Wonderful lecture yesterday – some very complex ideas explained really well'.

Following the meeting, invited guests were able to enjoy afternoon tea at Blue Cafe, adjacent to the lecture venue. The Branch regrets that COVID restrictions prevented us from offering hospitality to all who had attended the meeting and are looking forward to when this again becomes a possibility. Meanwhile the Branch continues with its celebrations, part of which will be a state-wide gathering of Royal Society members to be held in October. Watch this space for details.

Lynette Ross



Above: RST President Mary Koolhof with Her Excellency the Hon Barbara Baker AC, Governor of Tasmania.



Right: (from left) Professor Don Chalmers, Lyndle Van Zetten with her husband, Launceston Mayor Albert Van Zetten, Her Excellency the Hon Barbara Baker AC, Governor of Tasmania, RST President Mary Koolhof and Northern Branch President Dr Eric Ratcliff OAM, FRANZCP.



Launch of the Northern Branch Centenary Edition of the Royal Society of Tasmania *Papers and Proceedings* 27 June 2021

Your Excellency, Professor Chalmers, distinguished guests, members and friends of the Royal Society of Tasmania:

The Royal Society of Tasmania has an unbroken record of annual publishing since its inception in 1843. We still produce a hard copy journal, and exchange copies with major academic institutions around the world. But it is in the digital world that the wider significance of the journal becomes apparent.

After twelve months, all the articles in our *Papers and Proceedings* are digitised and can be downloaded. If you haven't yet investigated this, there is a link from our website, for you to view and download the digitised articles. And the number of downloads is staggering – for example, last year there were more than 67,000 downloads of our *Papers and Proceedings*. This is tangible proof of the value of our journal to researchers and to the community.

I'd like to draw your attention to the cover of this volume. A photo of someone standing on a mountaintop looking at one of our beautiful Tasmanian vistas is not unusual today. But this was not the case in 1936, when this photo was taken. Most Tasmanians had never seen photos of our remote and iconic places; the person pictured here is Fred Smithies, a legendary bushwalker and photographer who was President of the Northern Branch for eight years. He and other early Royal Society members campaigned for the establishment of Tasmania's national parks and reserves.



Above: Her Excellency the Hon Barbara Baker AC, Governor of Tasmania addresses the audience at the Launch.

In this special issue, Dr Eric Ratcliff OAM, Northern Branch President and a member of the Society for over 50 years, offers his reflections on the history of the Branch accompanied by a list of Branch Presidents since 1921. A paper by Lynette Ross provides fascinating insights into the early days of the Northern Branch and the key figures in its formation.

Dr Patsy Cameron, noted researcher and Aboriginal Elder, has contributed a paper 'Tyreelore and Straitsmen: The true story of Tasmanian Aboriginal survival' that reveals a nuanced interpretation of Tasmanian Aboriginal histories. Many of you will be aware that greater engagement with the Aboriginal community is a commitment the Society has made following our Apology to Tasmanian Aboriginal people in February this year.

As a child growing up in Northern Tasmania, I was thrilled by visits to the planetarium at the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery. So I'm delighted that this special volume contains an account by Launceston-based astronomer Dr Martin George of how our small island state became a centre for astronomical research and education recognised worldwide.

Some Tasmanian readers of this volume will remember being given 'goitre tablets' as we called them in primary school, containing iodine to combat the deficiency identified in Tasmania, and will read with special interest the article by Dr Paul Richards on the Tasmanian thyrotoxicosis epidemic of the 1960s.

The study of natural history has always been an important focus of the Royal Society of Tasmania. This volume contains an account by Martha McQueen of the contributions made by the Central North Field Naturalists to improving nature conservation in Tasmania.

The Northern Branch of the Royal Society has supported the acquisition by the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery of the nationally significant Lambkin-Knight butterfly collection, and David Maynard explains the importance of this collection to future research.

Naturalists will also be interested to learn more about the endemic Tasmanian Digger Wasp in the article by David Maynard and Simon Fearn. And Rachelle Hawkins explains how the aquarium

Right: Dr Frank Madill AM and guest speaker, mineralogist Ralph Bottrill.





Above: (from left) RST Council Member Chel Bardell, Northern Branch Committee Member Lynette Ross with RST Hon Editor Dr Sally Bryant.



industry is making an important contribution to improving the survival of two of the world's most unique marine fish species.

Studying the geological characteristics of Tasmania has been a key focus of the Society; in this volume, Dr Eric

Ratcliff OAM continues this tradition by explaining the European uses of dolerite in Tasmania from early colonial times to the present day.

Dr Keith Corbett describes the geological history of the Tamar Valley and the Launceston area during the making of Tasmania over 70 million years ago.

Finally, Peter King outlines research led by the Australian Maritime College in Launceston to deploy autonomous underwater vehicles delving beneath Antarctic ice shelves to gather vital information about how glaciers change and melt.

This special volume of the *Papers and Proceedings* exemplifies the contribution made by the Northern Branch of our Society to knowledge of natural, historical and cultural aspects of Tasmania.

On behalf of the Society, I extend very warm congratulations to everyone involved in the creation of this important special volume, including all the authors; Chel Bardell and the Centenary Committee; Hon Editor Dr Sally Bryant; and members of the Publications Committee.

It is a great pleasure to launch this centenary edition of the *Papers and Proceedings*, and to present to the Northern Branch this specially bound and inscribed copy to place in the Northern Branch library. I ask Northern Branch President Dr Eric Ratcliff to come forward to accept this on behalf of the Branch. I also ask the authors to come forward to receive their copies of the journal, and thank them for their contributions.

Mary Koolhof
President, The Royal Society of Tasmania



Above: (from left) Northern Branch Committee Member Neil MacKinnon with Ralph Bottrill, Dr Karin Orth and Dr Lyn Edgar.



Left: Geologist and mineralogist Ralph Bottrill during his presentation entitled *What made Tasmania?* wherein he discussed findings and understandings about the geology of Tasmania from the mapping, dating and information compilation coordinated by the *Tasmanian Geological Survey* which included a system of advisory zone maps to control building development, followed by legislative controls.



RST Northern Branch
invites you to a public lecture:

Growing Australia's Blue Economy by Dr John Whittington

Where: Meeting Room, QVMAG at Inveresk

When: 1:30 pm Sunday 25 July 2021

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

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, registration will be required for the QVMAG lecture: phone 0417 330 118 or email apcachris@gmail.com

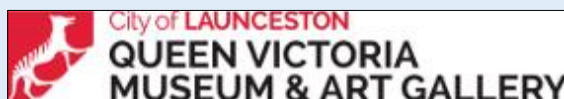
[For Zoom webinar, click to register.](#)

Abstract: In the context of increasing populations and prosperity and a changing climate, global demand for food and energy will increase. Australia, with one of the largest Exclusive Economic Zones in the world, has enormous potential to increase seafood and renewable energy production sustainably. Realising this potential requires moving industries offshore into high quality but remote and exposed, high-energy operating environments.

This talk will focus on how the Blue Economy CRC is addressing these challenges to facilitate a steep change in the value of Australia's ocean-based aquaculture and renewable energy industries.

Biography: John has a PhD from the University of Adelaide and worked at the State University of New York before returning to Australia where he worked for several universities and CSIRO. He then spent a number of years in the Public Service, most recently as Secretary of the Department of Primary Industries Parks Water and Environment, and is now the CEO of the newly established Blue Economy CRC.

Generously supported by



RST August Lecture

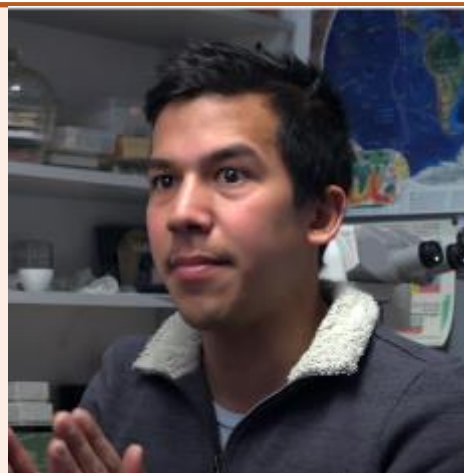
Dear Royal Society of Tasmania members and supporters,
You are invited to a Zoom webinar.

Kimberlites – Volcanic insights into Earth's deep interior

When: 1 August 2021 5:00pm

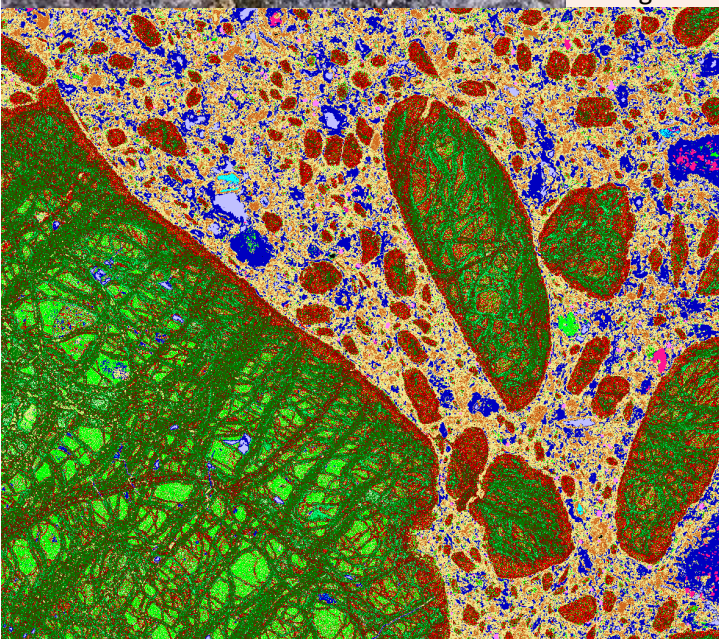
Topic: RST Doctoral Award Lecture by Dr Adam Abersteiner (Postdoctoral Researcher in geochemistry and melt inclusions at the University of Helsinki, Finland).

[Click to register in advance for this webinar.](#)



Above: A diamond set in kimberlite.
(Photo www.crystalclassics.co.uk)

Below: A clear diamond set in kimberlite. (www.pinterest.com)



After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.

Abstract

Kimberlites are rare igneous rocks that originate from the deepest-derived magmas on Earth. Despite their rarity, kimberlites have attracted an almost disproportionate amount of attention in geoscience as they entrain fragments of mantle rocks (i.e., xenoliths) and are **the major source of diamonds**. Thus, kimberlites present unparalleled insights into the composition and nature of the Earth's deep mantle.

However, one of the greatest challenges in understanding how kimberlites form is deciphering what the original composition of magma was in the source, as by the time the magma reaches the surface and solidifies, it has undergone extensive alteration. This presentation will highlight research advances developed during the course of Adam's PhD. The focus will be on the systematic study of melt/fluid inclusions in kimberlite minerals and the novel insights they present, contrary to classic models, into the composition and evolution of kimberlite magmas.

Webinar speaker:

Dr Adam Abersteiner (pictured above right) completed his PhD in 2020 from the University of Tasmania under the supervision of Professor Dima Kamenetsky. Adam received his undergraduate bachelor's degree from the University of Melbourne and pursued his Honour's Degree at the University of Tasmania.

During Adam's time as a student, his main research focus was centred on understanding the composition of kimberlite magmas (i.e., the deepest derived magmas known) and how they evolve during their ascent through the Earth's mantle and crust.

His research focused on analysing melt and fluid inclusions (- see image at left) entrapped in kimberlite minerals in order to reconstruct the original composition(s) of kimberlite melts prior to alteration processes. Adam's research interests have now transitioned into understanding different areas, such as chromite geochemistry and various alkaline magmas.

Left: Close-up of magnified view of melt and fluid inclusions entrapped in kimberlite.



Three RST Medals on Offer in 2021

Nominations are now open for three RST medals:

The Royal Society of Tasmania Medal, M.R. Banks Medal, and RM Johnston Memorial Medal.

The Royal Society of Tasmania Medal (pictured left) is reserved for a distinguished scholar who is also an active member of the Society.



The M.R. Banks Medal (pictured left) is awarded to an outstanding mid-career scholar.

The RM Johnston Memorial Medal (pictured below) is intended to acknowledge a scholar of great distinction in any field within the Society's purview.



Guidelines for these medals are available at <https://rst.org.au/awards/>

Nominations close at the end of August.

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



RST member, Dr John Paull, awarded OAM

The Royal Society of Tasmania congratulates longstanding member Dr John Paull, who was awarded an OAM in the Queen's Birthday Honours 2021. Dr Paull received his award 'For service to medicine, and to history'.

John's career as a distinguished anaesthetist spanned more than four decades.

In retirement, John delved more deeply into history, his second passion, unearthing the remarkable story of anaesthetist William Pugh. Pugh who was in Launceston when he provided the first anaesthetic for a surgery in Australia in 1847. John has published two books on the topic, notably *Not just an Anaesthetist: The remarkable life of Dr William Russ Pugh MD*.

Congratulations, John!



Royal Society Office

The Royal Society office is open on Wednesday mornings 9:00 am to midday. Enter the Custom House building from the **Davey Street entrance and register at the Visitors' Desk**. TMAG's Safety Plan requires all visitors' details to be recorded or use the QR code.

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 Wednesday morning on 03 6165 7014.

Main contact:

GPO Box 1166

Hobart TAS 7001

Email: admin@rst.org.au

Northern Branch contact:

Christine Beswick, Secretary:

0417 330 118

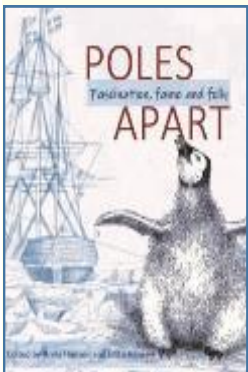
PO Box 47 Perth TAS 7300

Membership forms and renewals can either be posted to the Post Box (see above) clearly marked 'Royal Society of Tasmania' or completed and emailed to the address above.

Book and calendar sales are available either through the RST shop, on our [website](http://www.rst.org.au), by email or by phone through the office.

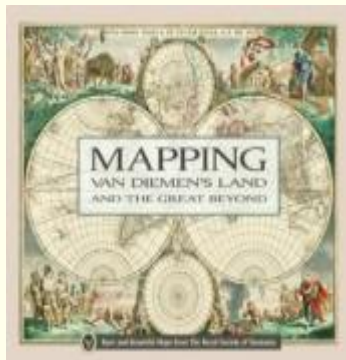
10% discount for Members on these books.

Discounted prices for members are shown beside each book:



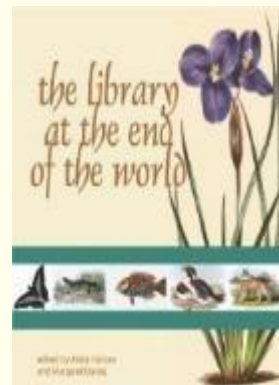
Poles Apart: Fascination, Fame and Folly

Hardcover (\$22.50) and Softcover (\$13.50)



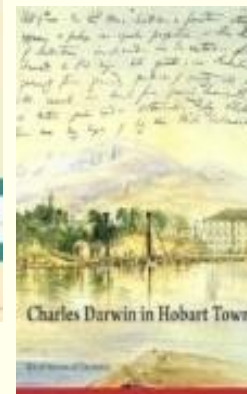
Mapping Van Diemen's Land and the Great Beyond

Hardcover (\$54) and Softcover (\$36)



The Library at the End of the World

Hardcover (\$54) and Softcover (\$36)



Charles Darwin in Hobart Town

Softcover (\$32)



Papers and Proceedings

Since 1849, the Society has published annual volumes of refereed scholarly papers. The *Papers and Proceedings* publishes research that focuses on Tasmania or is particularly relevant to Tasmanians.

Personal subscription to the *Papers and Proceedings* are made through membership of The Royal Society of Tasmania. Prices for back editions of *Papers and Proceedings* range from \$10 – \$40 per volume. Members of the Society are eligible for a

10% discount, please contact the **Honorary Editor** at editor@rst.org.au

Royal Society 2021 Calendar

Features 13 lovely watercolours by Francis Guillemard Simpkinson de Wesselow. Retail price: \$8.00 plus postage and handling as applicable.

Members of the Royal Society can also order calendars from the [website](http://www.rst.org.au) or the RST office at the newly discounted price of **\$7.00**.

Purchase direct from the Royal Society Office on Wednesday mornings 9:00 to 12:00 noon or email admin@rst.org.au or phone Wednesday mornings on 03 6165 7014.





Free Membership Offer

We are looking for a member or new member who has suitable dry storage space for storing some of our stock of books. We would need occasional access to replace sold stock, but because we already have stores of books elsewhere, that would not be often. The space required would be approximately two and a half cubic metres and all the books are packed in the original, clean shipping boxes.

If you think you have such a space and you are willing to allow our Society the use of it, **we will offer free full membership, including *Papers & Proceedings*, for the duration of the storage use, valued at \$90 per year.**

Please contact us via the RST email:

admin@rst.org.au

Susannah Fullerton

The Importance of Being Oscar:
the life and works of Oscar Wilde

twitter.com/RoyalSocTas
facebook.com/RoyalSocietyTas
royal.org.au

July 12, 2024



RST Midwinter Dinner

The Midwinter Dinner held on 12 July at the Royal Yacht Club of Tasmania was a fine opportunity for Society members to not only socialise but to advance their knowledge of the life and works of famous author Oscar Wilde. Following a welcome to Country, President Mary Koolhof warmly welcomed Her Excellency the Honourable Barbara Baker AC, Governor of Tasmania and her husband, Professor Don Chalmers, and all those in attendance before introducing guest speaker Susannah Fullerton OAM, FRSN to address the audience via a Zoom presentation from her home in Sydney.

Fullerton engaged us all with information and photos of Wilde as well as reading segments of his stories, plays and poems to illustrate his linguistic flair. His life was a series of success, folly and eventual decline into straitened circumstances; however, the brilliance of his literary works live on to enchant audiences worldwide.

Fullerton has a [free newsletter](#) for those keen to learn more about literature, authors and literary events.



Above: Prof Kate Warner AC with Her Excellency the Honourable Barbara Baker AC, Governor of Tasmania.



The effective use of dual screens set up by Hon Treasurer David Wilson afforded an image of Oscar Wilde which seemed to listen attentively to Fullerton's presentation.



Above: Rosemary Scott with Prof Ross Large AO and Dr Anita Hansen.



Above right: Margaret Binns, Hilary Wallace with Leone Schrivener.

Left: Justice Chris Webster AM with Robyn Malcolm. **Right:** Ted Lefroy with Jill Webster.





Above: Dr John Thorne AM with his wife Shirley.



Above: Sandra Pitt with Dr John Freeman.



Above: Derris Wood and Grady Koolhof with Peter Watson.



Above: Prof Kate Warner AC with her husband Richard Warner AM.



Left: Brian Corr with Susan Steenberg and Julia Corr.



Above: Dr Sally Bryant with Suzanne Skira.



Above: RST webmaster Eddy Steenberg (at right) in deep discussion.



Left: Dr Deborah Beswick with Ann Jones.

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 COVID-safe practices:

- Please make appointments via special.collections@utas.edu.au to assist with managing maximum occupancy requirements.
- Opening hours are 10:00 am to 5pm, 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.
- Make sure you have had your temperature checked before entering the Library.
- Temperature checks will be undertaken at the entrance to Morris Miller Library.
- If you are not a staff member or student at UTAS, you will need to sign in on entry to Morris Miller Library to enable contact tracing.
- The Library is providing hand sanitiser, cleaning wipes and carrying out additional cleaning.
- If you are feeling unwell, please do **not** come to the Library.

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 queries please contact special.collections@utas.edu.au

Juliet Beale, Senior Librarian, Collections
Library Services | Academic Division
University of Tasmania

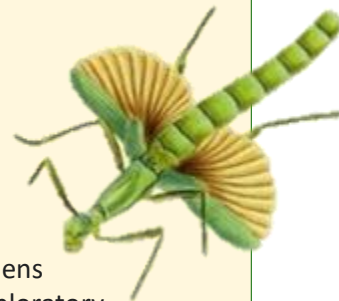
Edward Donovan (1768–1837)

Donovan was an Anglo-Irish writer, natural history illustrator, and amateur zoologist. Born in Cork, he moved to London when he was 21. Little is known of his family background although presumably he was independently wealthy as, like many of his cultured contemporaries, he was an avid collector of natural history specimens. He did not travel outside Britain but purchased specimens from notable natural history auctions that included items from exploratory voyages. As a well-connected Fellow of both the Linnean Society and the Wernerian Natural History Society, he was also able to access the best collections and libraries in London.

It was quite common for private collectors to open small public museums and, in 1807, Donovan founded the London

Museum and Institute of Natural History as source material for his publications and for public education about natural history. For the price of one shilling, visitors could see several hundred cases of world birds, mammals, reptiles, fish, molluscs, insects, corals and other invertebrates and botanical specimens and exotica alongside his British collections.

Donovan's reputation as an author was established with his 16-volume work *The natural history of British insects* (1792–1813). He also wrote many other successful natural history titles on the shells, fishes and quadrupeds of England; and the insects of China, India and New Holland between 1789 and 1827. As well as writing and illustrating his books, he also prepared the copper plates. His works typically appealed both to serious naturalists, through the careful descriptions and a more general readership because of the attractive illustrations.



NATURAL HISTORY OF THE INSECTS OF INDIA.

OF THE

FOURTH AND DESCRIPTIONS,

BY E. DONOVAN, F.L.S. & W.S.

A NEW EDITION,

WITH ADDITIONAL DESCRIPTIONS OF SOME SPECIES, AND OF THE HISTORY AND HABITS OF THE INSECTS OF INDIA.

BY J. G. WESTWOOD,

PROFESSOR OF THE NATURAL HISTORY OF INSECTS, AND OF THE HISTORY AND HABITS OF THE INSECTS OF INDIA.

LONDON:

HENRY G. BOEN, & S. N. THOMAS, STREET, COVENT GARDEN.





Phalaena Argus

Published in 1800, Donovan also wrote the first illustrated publication dealing with the entomology of India. *Insects of India* was based on his own specimens as well as the collections of the Duchess of Portland, Marmaduke Tunstall, Governor Holford (resident for many years in India), George Keate, John Francillon, Dru Drury, Alexander Macleay and Messrs Ellis, Yeats and Bailey. The book featured superb hand-coloured plates – with burnished highlights, albumen overglazes and metallic paints – which captured the metallic brilliance and iridescence of the exotic insects.

(The Royal Society of Tasmania holds an 1842 edition of this title, with 58 engraved plates, in the Special & Rare Collections).

Donovan's many books were successful at the time. But his voracious appetite for collecting, an unfortunate experience with his unscrupulous bookseller Rivingtons of St Paul's Churchyard (after many years on good terms), and the economic decline in England after the Napoleonic Wars most likely forced the closure of the museum in 1817. The auction of his collection the following year took eight days. He continued to publish, but the collection was an important resource for his publications and its dispersal caused problems. His finances worsened and, in 1833, he issued a plea to his supporters for funds to bring legal proceedings against Rivingtons. This was to no avail and he died penniless in 1837 leaving a large family destitute.

Natural history of the insects of India: containing upwards of two hundred and twenty figures and descriptions, by E. Donovan. A new edition, brought down to the present state of the science, with systematic characters of each species, synonyms, indexes, and other additional matter, by J. O. Westwood, London: Henry G. Bohn, 1842

Morris Miller-Royal Society- Folio-Rare QL 483.I D66 1842

<https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/132571#page/7/mode/1up>

Other works by Edward Donovan
<https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/creator/1061#/titles>



Phalaena Argus



Staphylinus

Above: Plate 1 from the *Natural history of the insects of India: containing upwards of two hundred and twenty figures and descriptions* by E. Donovan, 1842.



Phalaena Argus

Hairy Cicada

Friday Aug 4th 1827

I have been promoting the Royal Society Library and the adjacent Special Collections to the students at UTAS. The Society's collections were housed here explicitly to improve their accessibility to the research population, however, too few students know of this intriguing resource. I have started thinking of it as the 'Secret Library', not only because of its discreet location on the 5th floor of the Morris Miller Library, but also because of all the wonderful personal treasures in there to discover.

For instance, the librarians were showing me Henry Hellyer's Diary. Hellyer was a road cutter in early Van Diemen's Land who included natural history sketches amongst his daily accounts of rain, mud and forest. While I was leafing through, a very funny-looking insect caught my eye and I stopped to scoff at it. Those crazy googly eyes and moustache-like appendages made me chuckle – what in the world is this poor cursed beast? Hellyer didn't know either, but his description is diligent and accurate – I commend him on it although it took me a long sit-down to translate his handwriting.

...while preserving Fern leaves for the Huts Mackie caught a curious insect supposed to be a kind of Locust the Eyes are as clear as crystal + the pupil quite blank seems to be a fine aperture at the back of the transparent globule of the Eye - between the Eyes are 3 bright circular spots wonderfully diamonds set in gold, it has a proboscis which it has the power of carrying close to its body and when it drinks it makes use of it as the common flies do - it has a complete curias of shell armour as far as the top of the wings its body is like that of a cockchaffer + it has also 6 legs - the wings nearly transparent and so large the insect altogether resembles a large Moth

As I transcribed the description, it dawned on me that, far from a sea dragon or unicorn - misdescribed from real life - I did recognise this insect and had seen specimens recently.

Hellyer had encountered a **Tasmanian hairy cicada** (*Tettigarcta tomentosa*). As a member of the Order 'bugs' (Hemiptera), cicadas are defined by their sucking mouthparts and, like many insects, they have a cluster of light sensitive 'spots' on their forehead which are called ocelli. Forward-facing eyes is one of several characteristics which identify this primitive species as different from modern 'true' cicadas. They do not have the equipment to 'sing' loudly either.

Hairy cicadas were a dominant Family during the Mesozoic and now there are only two surviving species. One lives in high country NSW and Victoria (*T. crinita*) and the other in Tasmania (*T. tomentosa*) where they are active in winter. This preference for cold links these cicadas to the environmental conditions of Gondwanaland. Their hairy exoskeleton helps keep them warm and also gives them a moth-like appearance as Hellyer noted.

Hellyer's might be the first European account, as the species wasn't scientifically described until 1845 by A. White, and each author was probably unaware of the other. With the connectivity of the internet, those documents can be united. More powerful still, Hellyer's account can be added to databases of the species' seasonal activity and range making it one of the greatest contributions of historical wildlife records. Natural history collections and libraries alike are treasure troves of records which can illustrate how species change over time, expand their range or

Right: *Tettigarcta tomentosa*. Modern 'true' cicada. (Photo © Milson Barnard)



become locally extinct.

However, I needn't have worked so hard to decipher 200-year-old handwritten field notes. Bertram Thomas transcribed much of the diaries and their revelations in 2011, creating the book *Henry Hellyer's observations: journals of life in the Tasmanian bush 1826–1827*. I should have asked the librarians first!

Shasta Henry

References:

Henry Hellyer's observations: journals of life in the Tasmanian bush 1826–1827. Ed. Thomas, B. North Down Press, 2011 Available at Morris Miller-Rare-Book (DU 198.N6 H46 2011)

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White, A. 'Description and figures of four new species of Australian insects.' In Appendix: *Journals of expeditions of discovery into Central Australia, and overland from Adelaide to King George's Sound, in the years 1840-1; sent by the colonists of South Australia, with the sanction and support of the Government: ...Edward John Eyer*. 1: 412-413. (1845).



Above: *Tettigarcta tomentosa*. (Photo courtesy © about-tasmania.com.au)



New RST Office Manager

The Society warmly welcomes our newly-appointed Office Manager, **Ruth Mollison**.

Ruth brings with her vast experience in a number of fields aligned with the interests of the Society.

Our office hours will remain the same for the moment but expect to see a lot more of Ruth than you have of previous office staff.

We are open!

Untimed ticket bookings now available

www.tmag.tas.gov.au

Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery

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

Visiting TMAG: It is no longer essential to book your visits to TMAG in advance, but when you arrive, you will need to register. The quickest and easiest way to do this is with the **Check In Tas** app: [click here to go to the Tasmanian Government website](#) to download the app.

The Museum Shop is open.

TMAG from Home initiative is available from the TMAG website.

**TMAG
from
home**

Free tours for small groups are available on 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 Art Tour – 11:00 am on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays Join the TMAG Art Guides for a tour of our current art exhibitions.

TMAG Highlights Tour – 1:30 pm on 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 the Bond Store exhibitions.

Beaker Street Festival

Beaker Street Festival is returning to TMAG in 2021! Come and enjoy an amazing program of talks, activities, exhibitions, live music and Tasmanian food and drink as TMAG becomes the Festival Hub.

Dates: Friday 6 - Sunday 8 August 2021

Times: 6:00 pm - 12:00 am (Friday and Saturday); various ticketed session times Sunday.

Cost: entry to TMAG is free (subject to capacity); tickets are required for specific sessions.

[See the full program at the Beaker Street website.](#)



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