



### A Message from the President

Dear Members,

The much-anticipated fundraising event for the **RST Art Collection** took place at Government House on Tuesday 6 September. The two goals for the event – to shine a light on the RST Art Collection and to raise funds for its conservation – were both met comfortably. The event was sold out two weeks in advance. The income from ticket sales alone has boosted the Art Fund towards the target. Guests obviously enjoyed the combination of unique music, priceless art and fabulous refreshments in the grandeur of Government House.

We are indebted to **Her Excellency the Honourable Barbara Baker AC, Governor of Tasmania**, Distinguished Professor Don Chalmers AO and Government House staff, especially David Owen and Colonel David Hughes, for generously and graciously hosting the event.

**Right:** (from left) Gillian Groom AO and RST member Dr Derris Wood with Her Excellency Barbara Baker AC, Governor of Tasmania.



Similarly, the event would not have happened without the contributions from composer and pianist **Thomas Rimes**, the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra musicians and soprano Zoë Fitzherbert-Smith (- see left).

**A large team of RST Councillors and Members** was responsible for the evening's success. Mary

Koolhof (Past President and Chair, Art Fundraising Committee) and Julie Rimes (Co-Chair, Events and Publicity) masterminded and drove all the behind-the-scenes organisation to perfection. Chel Bardell (Co-Chair, Events and Publicity) promoted the event through our usual channels and several new channels and coordinated media releases. Honorary Curator Anita Hansen and Art Committee members Marley Large and Ross Large selected, prepared and installed all the artworks on display. John Williamson and John Davidson helped Ross transport, install, and dismantle the artworks. Honorary Treasurer David Wilson and RST Office Manager Bronwyn Beechey handled the ticketing and record keeping. RST Newsletter Editor, Bernard Pryor, took still photos, some of which are reproduced below on pp. 7–10, and Anthos Simon very kindly offered to film the highlights of the evening and we are very grateful for both contributions.

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**Left:** (from left) William Cox AC, RFD, ED, QC, Governor of Tasmania from 2004–2008 with TMAG Director Mary Mulcahy and Andrew Stacey.

You will recall that in November last year, Mary Koolhof (then President), Ross Large, Marley Large and Anita Hansen (Honorary Curator) assisted by James Crotty,

Honorary Solicitor, successfully established **ownership of the RST Art Collection** through mediation with TMAG. In the months since then, the Deed of Settlement and Release has been taking shape. The Deed has now been signed by both parties and will serve as a perpetual confirmation of RST ownership of the Collection. We are indebted to the RST mediation team, Mary, Ross, Marley, Anita and James, for this momentous and historic achievement.

On Sunday 4 September, a **PhD Student Showcase** was held in Hobart. This event was organised by RST Student Councillor Shasta Henry and comprised presentations by Mars Buttfield-Addison (space junk), Grace Martini (clothing waste) and Brenda Mooney (mine waste). The Northern Branch held a similar event a week before, featuring Rhys Tanton, Freya Su and Jack Tan, all architecture students. In both cases, the student presentations were very high quality and stimulated discussion that lasted beyond the meetings. These engagements with the next generation of scholars are an important part of how the RST achieves its goal of advancing knowledge.

There has been a pleasing response to the **call for nominations** for the Clive Lord Memorial Medal and the Peter Smith Medal. Nominations for these medals have closed. Nominations for the annual RST Doctoral Awards will open on 1 October.

At the August Council meeting, Council resolved to **increase membership fees** in all categories by \$5. This increase will take effect when you renew your membership for 2023.

**Upcoming events** include the Inaugural Elvin Fist Lecture on 25 September 2022 by Dr Allison Trimble on “School Principals and School Law” (- see p. 5) and a lecture by the 2021 winner of the Max Banks Medal, Associate Professor Rebecca Carey on 16 October entitled “Bang, Fizzle, Pop: Case studies of the interactions between volcanoes and magma with the ocean” (- see p. 4).

A warm welcome to **new RST members**: Dr Liza Snow, Dr Kathryn Squibb, and Mr Jack Tan Soo Kang. We look forward to meeting you at one of the forthcoming events.

Best regards,

Prof Jocelyn McPhie,  
President



The Royal Society of Tasmania publications are now on sale at the TMAG Gift Shop, Davey Street, Hobart until the end of October.  
A further 10% off sale prices for all Royal Society members.



## *With Deepest Sympathy*

The Royal Society of Tasmania expresses deep regret on the passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, at Balmoral Castle in Scotland, early on the morning of Friday 9 September 2022 AEST.

We honour her remarkable lifetime of dedicated service to the Commonwealth.

Sincere condolences are extended to Her Majesty's family.



### **Condolences Book at Government House, Hobart**

The Royal Society of Tasmania Secretary, Marley Large, and Past President Mary Koolhof visited Government House, Hobart, to sign the official condolences book for the passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

The tribute which Marley wrote read: "On behalf of The Royal Society of Tasmania, please accept our sincere condolences".

The condolences book which includes signatures from Tasmanian dignitaries, representatives of community societies and clubs as well as grieving citizens will be sent to Buckingham Palace in coming weeks.



**Above:** RST Secretary Marley Large signs the official condolences book on behalf of the members of The Royal Society of Tasmania. (Photo Mary Koolhof)

**Right:** A photo of the base of the oak tree that Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II planted in 1954 on one of her trips to Tasmania showing the floral tributes marking her passing.

Queen Elizabeth II was the United Kingdom's longest-serving monarch, dying at Balmoral in Scotland aged 96, after reigning for 70 years. (Photo Mary Koolhof)



## RST Lecture and Webinar

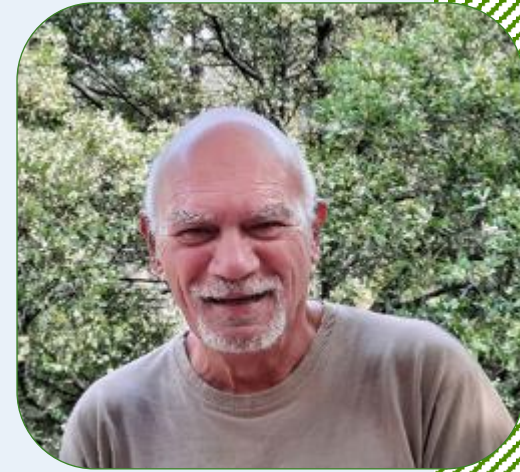
Dear Royal Society of Tasmania members and supporters,

You are invited to a Zoom webinar  
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:** Nov 13, 2022 3:00 pm, Hobart

**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 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.





## M R Banks Lecture

Please join us for an upcoming lecture from The Royal Society of Tasmania's 2021 M R Banks Medal winner

### Associate Professor Rebecca Carey

Senior Lecturer and researcher in volcanic sciences, School of Earth Sciences, UTas.

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

**Sunday 16th October 2022, 3:00 pm**

At the Royal Society of Tasmania's Lecture Room, Custom House, 19 Davey Street, Hobart or via Zoom webinar.

To attend the lecture in person, [please register](#).

Registrations close at 2:00 pm on Saturday 15 October 2022.

Register [here for the Zoom webinar](#). After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.



**Above:** Lava from the Kilauea volcano in Hawaii flowing into the ocean. Photo from pinterest.com

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

**Abstract:** Volcanic eruptions are fascinating for scientists and the public alike. Visual observations of eruption on land have been central to the scientific understanding and development of various models used in hazard forecasting. However, in a submarine setting the interaction between hot magma and seawater is hidden and therefore not well understood. Recent submarine eruptions like the Hunga Tonga eruption in 2022 are extraordinary and can be devastating.

International scientific teams with innovative robotic technologies have responded to these events to characterise and further understand submarine eruptions. These well-characterised events underpin step changes in our understand-

ing of how magmas and volcanoes interact with the ocean. In this presentation, I will describe case studies of recent submarine eruptions and underwater exploration of the eruption products to highlight advances and remaining challenges in the study of underwater volcanoes.

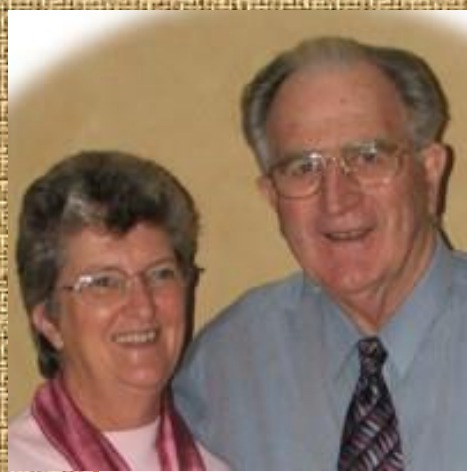
**Biography:** Associate Professor Rebecca Carey is a former Australian Research Council DECRA Fellow, Tasmanian Tall Poppy Scientist of the Year, and the 2020 winner of the Australian Academy of Science Dorothy Hill Medal. Rebecca won the RST's M R Banks Medal as outstanding mid-career researcher in 2021.

Rebecca is interested in volcanic processes and environments, geological hazards, and indigenous cultural narratives around volcanic events. Her research focuses on understanding volcanic eruptive histories, mechanisms and drivers of volcanic eruptions, explosive eruption plumes, submarine volcanoes and eruption dynamics, and volcanic hazards.

**Right:** Lava from the Kilauea volcano explodes as it reaches the Pacific Ocean. Photo from telegraph.co.uk







## Background to the Inaugural Elvin Fist Lecture

**Elvin Fist** (pictured left with his wife) has been associated with the Northern Branch of The Royal Society of Tasmania in various roles since the 1960s when he became a regular attendee at meetings along with colleagues from the staff of the Launceston Teachers' College and later the TCAE/TSIT. Elvin became the President of the Branch in 1995. The Branch declined in its activities somewhat in the late 1990s.

Chris Tassell, the Director of the QVMAG, was by tradition the Secretary of the Northern Branch, and he, along with members of his staff, was instrumental in the maintenance of the Branch.

Elvin Fist worked closely with them in the last years of last century and the early years of this century. A line of capable and dedicated Presidents came forward to lead the Northern Branch. For a number of years, Elvin became the Secretary of the Branch and, with the Presidents and Committees, helped to bring it into its new era. Chel Bardell took over the Secretary's role from Elvin and brought a new look and new skills to it.

It is appropriate in honouring Elvin Fist to name a lecture about education after him. Elvin spent his professional life in a variety of settings across the State. The major part of his career was as a teacher-educator involved in leadership roles in the Launceston Teachers' College and its successors, the TCAE and TSIT which later merged into the new University of Tasmania, Newnham campus. Elvin came from Hobart to Launceston in 1964 as Vice Principal of the teachers' college and from time to time acted as Principal.

From 1974 until his retirement in 1989, he was a Principal Lecturer in the School of Teacher Education. During that period, the College developed into a highly respected institution for the preparation of a wide range of teaching specialities in modern facilities based from 1969 at Newnham, but involving schools and teachers across the State.



THE ROYAL  
SOCIETY OF  
TASMANIA

THE ADVANCEMENT  
OF KNOWLEDGE

The Royal Society of Tasmania  
invites you to the

## Inaugural Elvin Fist Lecture

a public lecture by

**Dr Allison Trimble**

## School Principals and School Law

When: 1:30 pm Sunday 25 September 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.

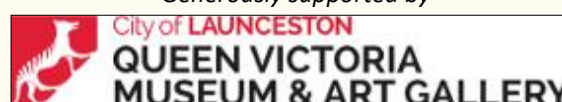
For Zoom webinar, [register here](#).

**Abstract:** How much legal knowledge do school principals have, and how accurate is it? This presentation is based on a PhD study conducted in Tasmania concerning the impact of legal issues on school principals and their schools. It examines the legal literacy of Tasmanian government, Catholic and Independent school principals and asks whether they should really become lawyers.



**Biography:** Dr Allison Trimble is a researcher in the School of Education at the University of Tasmania, based in Launceston. She has qualified in both Law and Education and combines those professional interests in her research on Education Law. In 2018, Allison was awarded the Australia and New Zealand Education Law Association Anne Shorten Prize for her PhD thesis, *Education Law, Schools and School Principals*.

Generously supported by







**Above:** Dr David Blaxland of Warrnambool, a Life Member of the RST, toasts the evening's success with RST Secretary and Life Member Marley Large.

Prints of many of the works in the collection were displayed throughout elegant rooms in Government House and these were sold via a silent auction during the night. The head chef at Government House, Ainstie Wagner, provided extraordinary food inspired by art works in our collection.

**Right:** "Frog in a Pond" desserts of gold-dusted chocolate frogs 'swimming' in native mint and gin jelly were inspired by a painting featuring frogs by Louisa Anne Meredith called 'A Cool Debate'.



**Right:** Soprano Zoë Fitzherbert-Smith.

Thomas Rimes, the noted composer and conductor, with a group of musicians from the TSO (pictured left) and the soprano Zoë Fitzherbert-Smith, presented a commissioned work by Thomas created for the event: the audience was exhilarated by the beauty and quality of the music. During the evening, we also heard from the renowned Art Valuer, Warwick Oakman who explained the significance of the Royal Society's collection.



**Left:** (from left) Kate Newton of Sandy Bay, Jocelyn Cox of South Hobart, Margaret Newton, and Frances Underwood of Battery Point.

Our very grateful thanks are extended to our Patron, Her Excellency the Honourable Barbara Baker AC, Governor of Tasmania, and Emeritus Professor Don Chalmers AO, on hosting the gala evening fundraising event and the Government House staff who were so professional and hospitable. In particular, very warm thanks go to the RST





**Above:** Larry and Lorraine Polglase of Sandy Bay.  
**Below:** Peter Bowen and Kate Jones of Battery Point.



**Above:** (from left) Jennie Caswell of Longford with Jackie O'Toole of New Town.  
**Below:** Lloyd Johnson with Kimberley Rimes both of Sandy Bay with Dr Will Simon of South Hobart.



members who worked so hard to bring the event to fruition: Prof Ross Large AO, Marley Large, Dr Julie Rimes, Dr Anita Hansen, Prof Jocelyn McPhie, Chel Bardell and John Williamson, supported by David Wilson and Bronwyn Beechey.

We were charmed by beautiful art works, wonderful food, splendid music and gracious hospitality. This was a wonderful opportunity to showcase some of the RST Art Collection and a very successful start to raising the much-needed funds for conservation work. We now believe that knowledge of The Royal Society of Tasmania's Art Collection is beginning to be more widely understood and supported by the community.

#### **Mary Koolhof**

Chair, Art Fundraising Committee



**Above:** (from left) Marian Thomson of Sandy Bay with Susan Elliott of Mt Nelson.

**Below:** Alison Parsons, the only Life Member of the Friends of the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens, was accompanied by Bruce Terrens of Taranna.







**Above:** (from left) Anthony and Penelope Gresford of Oxford UK with Rosanna Cameron of Sandy Bay.  
**Below:** (from left) Denise and Ernie Hacker with Bart and Larri Hutchings, all of Sandy Bay.



**Above:** (from left) Friends of TMAG representatives Secretary Julie Hawkins with President Jane Wilcox.  
**Below:** (from left) John Groom with his mother Gillian Groom AO with Soprano Zoë Fitzherbert-Smith.



**Above:** (from left) Dr Jody Heald AM of New Town with Judy Tierney OAM.  
**Below:** Eduard and Marj Eshuys of Mt Macedon, VIC .



**Above:** (from left) Susie Harrison of West Hobart with Cath Adams of New Town.  
**Below:** (from left) Neil MacKinnon and Dick Warner AM.







**Above:** Simon and Wai Lin Coultas of Deloraine.

**Below:** (from left) Lyn Kirkwood of South Hobart with Terese Henning of Fern Tree.



**Above:** (from left) Kathy Brown with Nikki Johnston both of Mt Stuart.

**Below:** (from left) John Groom with UTAS Vice-Chancellor Prof Rufus Black.



**Left:** Dr Grace Pundyk, Caroline Sharpen from the TSO (centre) and Dr Julie Rimes (right) in deep discussion.

**Below:** (from left) Sue Cottier, Caroline Rockefeller, Susan Shadforth and Ann Boman all enjoyed the outstanding event organised by Mary Koolhof, the hardworking Chair of the Fundraising Committee who worked tirelessly leading her team to bring the Art Gala to realisation.







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

Nominations will open for the annual RST Doctoral Awards on 1 October 2022. 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 COVID-safe practices:

- Please make appointments via [special.collections@utas.edu.au](mailto:special.collections@utas.edu.au) to assist with managing maximum occupancy requirements.
- Opening hours are 10:00 am to 5 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.
- Make sure you have had your temperature checked before entering 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](mailto:special.collections@utas.edu.au)

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



## Beer Aquatic Event 2022: Seabirds of Macquarie Island

In a special event to launch Antarctic Festival week (Wednesday 24 August – Sunday 28 August), The Royal Society of Tasmania combined with the Beer Aquatic team for a 6:30pm evening lecture. This was our second collaboration with Beer Aquatic, an inspired way of engaging in marine science at the pub, every last Thursday of the month at the Hobart Brewing Company. It was a great opportunity to learn something new, ask lots of questions, enjoy a beer and good company – highly recommended.



The RST collaboration event featured **Dr Julie McInnes**, (pictured above and left on the evening) an ecologist who specialises in sub-antarctic ecosystems, with a particular emphasis on seabirds and their diets. She is the first female recipient of the esteemed RJL Hawke Postdoctoral Fellowship, awarded by the Australian Antarctic Division. At Beer Aquatic, she shared her latest insights into the ecology of Southern Ocean seabirds – with a focus on work done on Macquarie Island - and talk about the innovative methods she uses to untangle the complicated food webs around these top-level predators. Julie has worked extensively on

the ecology of Southern Ocean seabirds and mammals, with a focus on applied research to create better conservation and management outcomes.

One of the 'rules' of the Beer Aquatic is that there are no PowerPoint presentations, so Julie enlisted some colleagues to create an interpretative dance sequence to illustrate the food web sequence from ingesting to DNA sequencing:

**Left:** A dance sequence from McInnes' presentation wherein seabirds are becoming acquainted.

**Right:** The dance sequence illustrating the DNA sequence back in the laboratory.

More reading, suggested link:

<https://www.antarctica.gov.au/news/2020/dna-unravels-tangled-food-web-of-southern-ocean-predators/>



**Left:** McInnes' approaches, such as DNA analysis of bird scats, help to supplement established techniques for identifying albatross food. The difficulty of accessing remote breeding grounds and collecting samples during the months the birds spend at sea means there are still major gaps in what's known about albatross diets. (Photo: news.com.au)



## Recent RST Publications

Three new publications are available to add to your reading list:

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



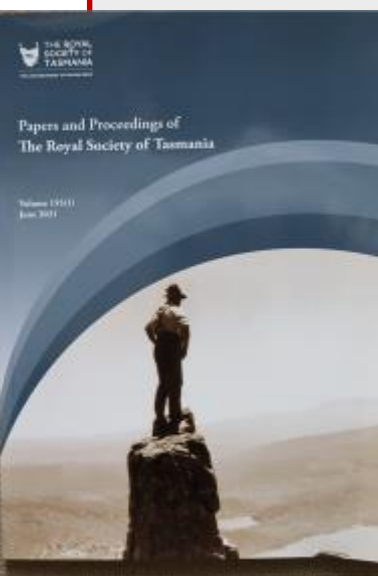
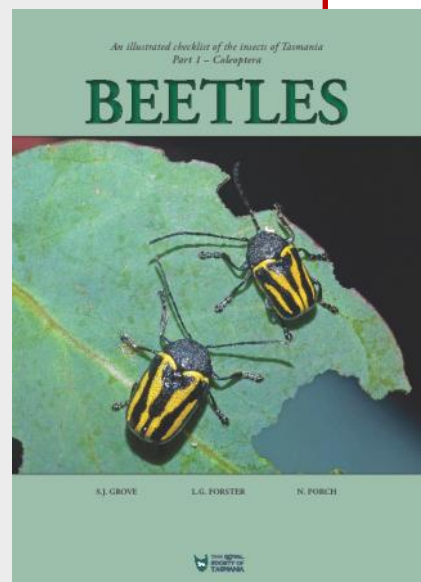
**RST Notebooks** featuring a choice of three cover images from the Society's Art Collection and the Special and Rare Book Collection are available (- see left). Beautifully bound and presented, these prestigious notebooks are ideal for meeting notes or creative writing, so why not buy yourself a couple 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.](#)

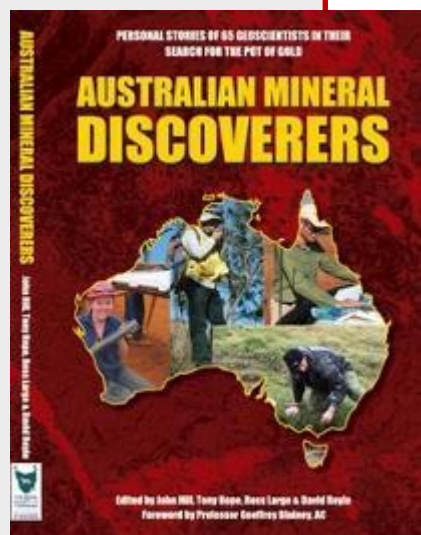


Following Volume 155(1) celebrating the RST Northern Branch centenary in June 2021, the RST Journal **Papers and Proceedings Volume 155(2)** (- see cover at left) features the transcripts of speakers at the historic *Apology to Tasmanian Aboriginal people*, as well as a diverse range of scientific and 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

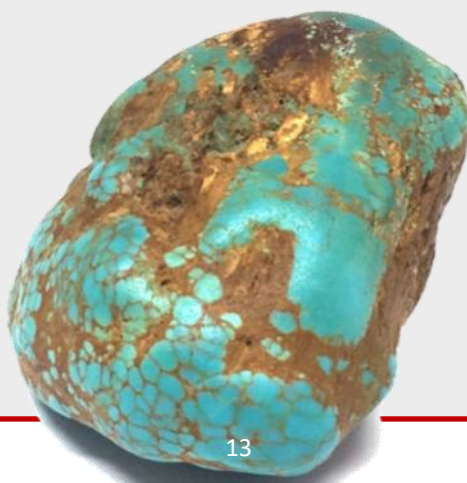
**RST members' discount on this item @ \$50.00**

[Purchase now.](#)



**For overseas orders, please contact the Society directly to calculate postage and place the order: [admin@rst.org.au](mailto:admin@rst.org.au)**

For orders of more than one copy, please contact the Society direct: [admin@rst.org.au](mailto:admin@rst.org.au)





## The Royal Society of Tasmania Office

The Society office is open on Thursday mornings 9:00 am to midday. Enter the Custom House building from the Davey Street entrance and register at the Visitors' Desk.

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.

### Main Society contact:

GPO Box 1166

Hobart TAS 7001

Email: [admin@rst.org.au](mailto:admin@rst.org.au)

### Northern Branch contact:

Christine Beswick, Secretary:

0417 330 118

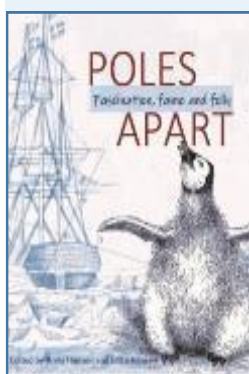
PO Box 47 Perth TAS 7300

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

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

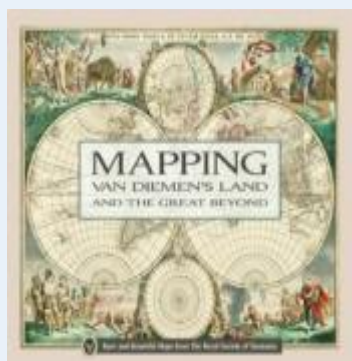
## 10% discount for Members on these books.

### Discounted prices for members are shown beside each book:



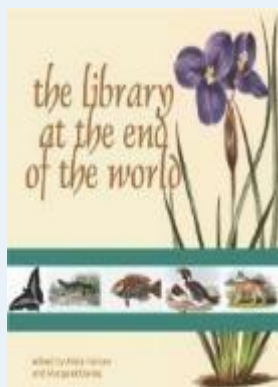
#### Poles Apart: Fascination, Fame and Folly

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 (\$60) and Softcover (\$36)



#### Charles Darwin in Hobart Town

Softcover (\$32 member or \$35 non-member)

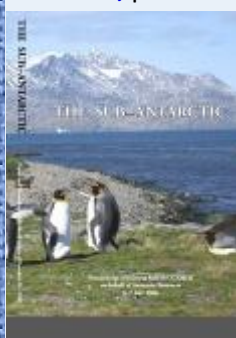


#### **Papers and Proceedings**

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](mailto:editor@rst.org.au)



#### Special publications still available:

*The Sub-Antarctic* (21 papers on various aspects of the Sub-Antarctic islands).

*Aspects of Tasmanian Botany* (– a collection of botanical papers given at a symposium honouring the work of Dr Winifred Curtis AM); *Tasmanian Wilderness – World Heritage Values*.

Purchase direct from the Royal Society Office on Thursday mornings 9:00 to 12:00 noon or email [admin@rst.org.au](mailto:admin@rst.org.au) or phone Thursday mornings on 03 6165 7014.



## The Royal Society of Tasmania's Art Collection

The Royal Society of Tasmania's 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)

### Captain James Lucas (1792? – 1853)

This month I will look at the work of another naval officer, Captain James Lucas. There is no record of how the eight watercolours by James Lucas came to be in The Royal Society of Tasmania Art Collection. It may have been part of the push by the Royal Society to collect items relating to Tasmanian history in around 1900 (- see previous *Newsletter* articles about this).

There seems to be some question about when and where James Lucas was born. According to the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (ADB), he was born either at Norfolk Island – where his father Lieutenant James Hunt Lucas was stationed – in 1792, or in Sydney in 1791.

His early career was as a naval officer, although I have found no record of where he trained. It may be that he received his training through working his way up through the ranks onboard ships, rather than attending a naval college. It has been written that at an early age he was enlisted as midshipman on the *Porpoise* under Matthew Flinders and was on that ship when it was wrecked on the east coast of Australia in August 1803 (ADB). Such a young age – he would have been only ten or eleven! He served for three years on the *Buffalo*, two years as second officer, and chief officer on the *Kangaroo*, and then four years as chief officer on the *Elk*.

At the age of about thirty in 1821, he was appointed as the harbourmaster and pilot of the newly formed penal settlement of Macquarie Harbour. He was stationed at Cape Sorell and for eight years piloted across the shallow and treacherous entrance most vessels making for Macquarie Harbour. (ADB)

**Right:** *Sarah Island, Macquarie Harbour*, William Buelow Gould c.1832. Courtesy of the Allport Library and Museum of Fine Arts.

#### Escaping Convicts

In this job Lucas was occasionally sent along the coast to search for escaping convicts and recaptured a number of them. It was noted in his obituary in the

*Colonial Times* that: 'He captured

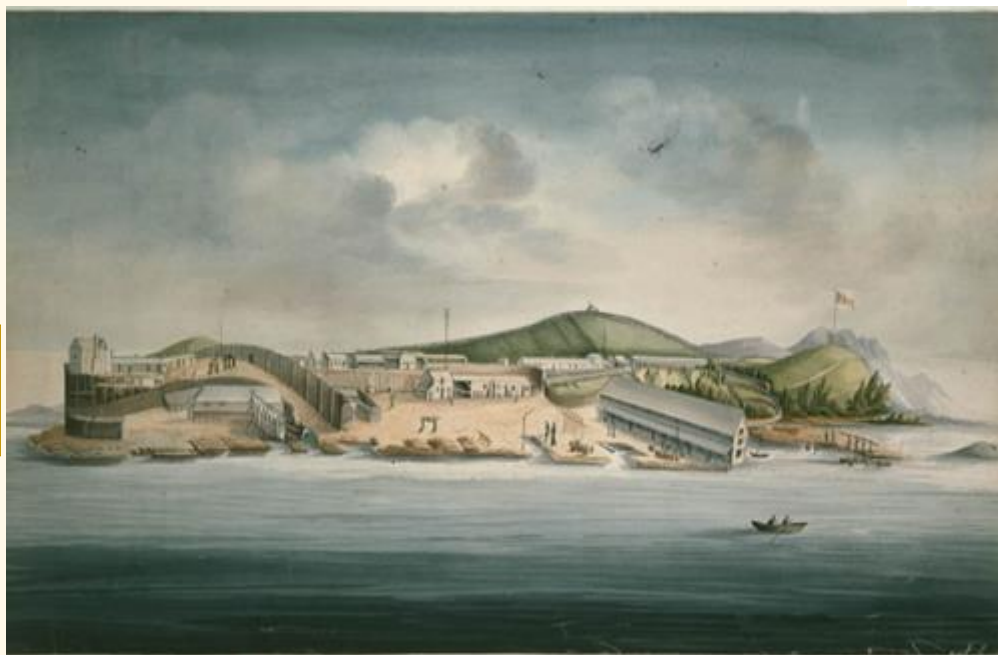
[Alexander] Pierce, the bush ranger, who with seven others absconded from that place, and were so reduced by hunger that they drew lots to decide who should die to provide for the others. This horrid cannibalism continued until none survived except Pierce, in whose possession were found portions of a human body.'

#### Leaving Macquarie Harbour

During his time at Macquarie Harbour, Lucas met a female convict named Margaret Keefe and they had three or four children together (accounts vary). Initially the couple lived together unmarried and were consequently shunned by the Commandant. When they did marry, the Commandant did not attend the wedding.

This, and the dangers of the job when encountering escaping convicts there, led Lucas to apply for a less perilous appointment. In November 1829, he was stationed at Point Louis in d'Entrecasteaux Channel as a pilot. The two paintings I have included in this article were painted at this time (- see below).

In all the material I have been able to find about James Lucas, there is no record of where or when he learned to paint. It seems likely that he may have observed the English-trained naval officers he served with painting coastal panoramas and learned from them. While his works may not be as skilful as some in the Royal Society's Collection, they are quite well observed and are valuable images of nineteenth century Tasmania.







**Left:** *From Pot Lighthouse Storm Bay*, James Lucas c. 1829–53. The Royal Society of Tasmania Art Collection.

**Below left:** *Faith Hope and Charity Islands at Port Esperance – Tasmania*, James Lucas c. 1829–53. The Royal Society of Tasmania Art Collection.

While stationed at Point Louis, he applied for land on Slopen Island. However, he was refused this by the Land Board on the ground that farming pursuits would be liable to divert a pilot's attention from his important public duties; later, however, he received 100 acres (40 ha) at Point Louis.

In June 1853, after thirty-five years in government service, he applied for a pension. Some weeks later – always ready to help those in distress – he went to the assistance of the Dutch barque *Emilie*, aground at Halfmoon Bay. During this mission, Lucas was severely injured when the warp line broke. He was taken to St Mary's hospital, where he died on 5 August 1853.



He must have been a popular member of the community, for a moving obituary was placed in the *Colonial Times Hobart* on Saturday 13 August 1853 (p3).

#### Lucas' Obituary in full:

##### **FUNERAL of the LATE JAMES LUCAS.**

**MOURNFUL** and sad was the tread of the hundred and fifty merchants and captains of this city who, in solemn procession, bore the remains of the late pilot to their last resting place on Thursday last. Many of the shops were closed and the ships hoisted their flags half-mast high. Another of the fathers of the colony has been taken from amongst us, the circumstances attending his death being of a melancholy nature.

The deceased had been a pilot for the long period of thirty-three years, and had recently a pension granted to him in consideration of his many and valuable services. The Dutch barque *Emilie* on coming into the Derwent on Tuesday, the 2nd instant, ran ashore near Half-moon Bay, and Mr. Lucas, with that promptitude which has ever distinguished him, hastened to assist in getting her off; and whilst in performance of this laudable duty he was severely injured by the breaking of the warp, which also threw him overboard; these injuries, aggravated by his being allowed to remain

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A sketch of Mr. Lucas' career may not be unacceptable to our readers, amongst whom we believe, he numbered a great many personal friends. He was born at Norfolk Island, and had been in the service of the Crown in various capacities upwards of 40 years. As master at Macquarie Harbour for upwards of nine years, he encountered many dangers whilst in pursuit of bush rangers and absconders from that settlement; the government frequently expressing their sense of his services.

He captured Pierce, the bush ranger, who with seven others absconded from that place, and were so reduced by hunger that they drew lots to decide who should die to provide for the others. This horrid cannibalism continued until none survived except Pierce, in whose possession were found portions of a human body.

On one occasion his boat was upset whilst in pursuit of bush rangers, and five of the crew were drowned; but Mr. Lucas swam a distance of three miles, and even succeeded in saving one of the men. Whilst in pursuit of Brady, who kept the colony in terror for some time; he was very severely stabbed by one of his own crew to prevent his success, but notwithstanding the delay caused by such a foul deed, although Brady had nine days start, he only reached Hobart Town, a few hours before Mr. Lucas.

When Lieutenant Wright was in charge at Macquarie Harbour, on one occasion provisions were so scarce that starvation seemed to be inevitable; but Mr. Lucas being sent to Hobart Town in a whale-boat for supplies, made such strenuous exertions as caused it to be acknowledged that he was mainly instrumental in saving the lives of all the settlement. At one time the bushrangers succeeded in disarming four soldiers who were in pursuit of them, when Mr. Lucas came upon and captured them; recovering the fire-arms for the rightful owners.

He was once fastened below in a small schooner by the convicts who held an axe over his head threatening to take his life; after which, six of them took his boat and made off, but not deterred by their violence or threats he went in pursuit next day and captured two of them at Circular Head. Other equally daring and remarkable events signified his life, but we have related sufficient to prove his worth. Under a tough exterior Mr. Lucas concealed a generous and humane disposition. His death will be felt as a loss by many of the poor who were the objects of his bounty; he was also a liberal subscriber to public and private charities. Although a member of the Order of Freemasons, his sympathies were not confined to them. The large attendance at his funeral proved how much he was esteemed and regretted by all classes of the community, and we believe this feeling will be more forcibly expressed by a monument to be erected to his memory by the mercantile.

### Last Word

If anyone has any more information about James Lucas' art – training or other artworks – I would be interested in learning more about this interesting man. It is important that we know about and recognise the early artists of Tasmania.

Anita Hansen

## 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 Funding 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 an email to any Council member.

The **RST Art Fund** is this month's focus and we look forward to hearing your thoughts and ideas. You can make a donation to the [RST Art Fund here](#). Donations over \$2 are tax deductible in Australia.



# 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](#).

## TMAG Highlights Tour

Join a TMAG guide and discover some of the treasures and exhibitions at the museum and art gallery. Friday 21 – Sunday 23 October, Central Gallery.

## Lift Off! TMAG's Festival for Children and Young People

Lift Off! is Tasmania's only dedicated annual cultural festival for children and young people.



## TMAG Historic Buildings tour

Discover why they were built and what they were originally used for.

Thursday 20 October 11–12 noon.  
Central Gallery, TMAG



Staged each year as part of the national school holiday period, Lift Off! brings alive the cultural precinct in and around the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery's waterfront site in Hobart, for a four-day and one-evening program of engaging, educational and inspiring activities, performances and workshops.

This year, the theme is 'spring'.

5–8 October 2022



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