



THE ROYAL
SOCIETY OF
TASMANIA

THE ADVANCEMENT OF KNOWLEDGE

NEWSLETTER

April/May 2024

President's Message



Upcoming Events



Notices



Articles



Reports on Recent Events



RST Contact Information



Contents:

3. [President's Message.](#)
4. [RST Lecture: *Microbes that shaped our world.*](#)
5. [Save the Date: RST Sunday 2 June lecture.](#)
[Save the Date: RST Midwinter Dinner: Thursday 4 July.](#)
[Advance Notice: RST Medal Presentation Ceremony on 22 April 2024.](#)
6. [Northern Branch lecture by Professor Dom Geraghty.](#)
7. [RST Committees 2024.](#)
8. [RST Art Collection: Kenneth William David Jack \(1924–2006\).](#)
9. [Kenneth Jack, p. 2](#)
10. [Kenneth Jack, p. 3](#)
11. [Kenneth Jack, p. 4](#)
12. [Report: RST AGM Speaker Professor Cassandra Pybus.](#)
13. [Report: Dr Keith Corbett OAM Lecture.](#)
14. [Northern Branch Report to Council, 9 April 2024](#)
[Tasmania Reads 2024.](#)
15. [RST Publications and Contact Information.](#)

President's Message



Dear RST members,

Taking on the mantle of the President of The Royal Society of Tasmania is both an honour and a responsibility, and I thank members for the privilege of electing me to serve in this position. I must first extend my gratitude and admiration to our outgoing President, **Professor Jocelyn McPhie**. Her exemplary leadership, unwavering dedication, and meritorious service to our Society have left an indelible mark on our community. Under her guidance, we have achieved much, and

navigated challenges with resilience and grace. I am immensely grateful for her generosity, vision and tireless efforts in advancing our central mission of advancing knowledge. Join me in extending our sincerest thanks and commendations to Jocelyn for her outstanding contributions as we build on the strong foundation that she has laid for us.

Thanks to all members who attended the **Annual General Meeting** held at the Royal Yacht Club of Tasmania on 7 March where Jocelyn provided an overview of just some of the work and achievements of the Society over the past 12 months. Seeing it all laid out so succinctly is a great testament to the work of the many members of Council who drive our agenda. I note in particular, **the work of the Committee Chairs** in undertaking a considerable workload to achieve all that they do, and thank sincerely the three **retiring members of Council**, Chel Bardell, Dr Imogen Wegman, and Neil MacKinnon. The new Committees were ratified at our Council meeting on 9 April 2024, and are included in this Newsletter. Can I also extend a special tribute to our Newsletter Editor, Bernard Pryor OAM, who provides such a substantial contribution to our work on many different levels. My thanks and gratitude to all our volunteers and supporters.



Above: RST Past President Professor Jocelyn McPhie accepts a thank-you token for her years of service to the Society from new RST President Dr Julie Rimes.



The AGM was followed by a lecture delivered by distinguished historian Professor Cassandra Pybus, a Fellow of the Australian Academy of Humanities, on her research entitled *Morton Allport: the resurrection man of the Royal Society of Tasmania 1862–1876* that delivered a wealth of information, covering a range of topics which were both enlightening and thought-provoking.

The 2023 **Papers and Proceedings of The Royal Society of Tasmania** were delivered to our Patron, Her Excellency the Honourable Barbara Baker AC

on 13 March 2024. I acknowledge with appreciation the support our Patron and Emeritus Professor Don Chalmers OA provide and the interest that they take in the work of the Society. All members will have received an invitation to the RST Medal Presentations at Government House in Hobart on Monday 22 April 2024. Please take this opportunity to join us as we recognise **Distinguished Emeritus Professor Paul Haddad** and **Emeritus Professor John Church** as joint recipients of the RM Johnston Memorial Medal and acknowledge **Associate Professor Alex Bissember** with the MR Banks medal. We will also present our 2023 Doctoral (PhD) Award to **Dr Tobias Staal**.

The Southern and Northern Lecture series for this year are available on our website. The May event in Hobart on Sunday 5 May at the Geology Lecture Theatre UTAS will be given by Emeritus Professor Gustaaf Hallegraeff and his lecture title is *Microbes that shaped our world*. Our Northern Branch invites you to their May lecture in their Launceston Lecture Series on 26 May at QVMAG Inveresk. Dr Anna Wrobel-Tobiszewska and Dr Valeriya Komyakova will present on the topic of *Microplastics in Tasmania*.

As you know, the RST owns a [large and valuable Art Collection](#) that has been assessed as being of national and international significance in several areas. In 2023, work commenced on a publication of an RST Art Collection catalogue. To date, experts in various fields of art genres, art history and art theory have been approached to contribute to the catalogue. We look forward to the announcement of a publication date in early 2025. The Art Committee of Professor Ross Large AO, Dr Anita Hansen and Marley Large are to be commended for their outstanding contributions to our Society in spearheading this key project which will result in a full colour volume containing all the artworks. As volunteer members, their work is central in bringing our Art Collection to world-

wide attention. On behalf of the Society, I commend them for their hard work and thank them for diligence and commitment. The publication will be a magnificent showcase of this unique collection.

Welcome to our **new RST members**: Mr Russ Gloster, Dr Ann Halliday, Ms Gaye Headlam, Professor Sue Kilpatrick, Dr James Markos, Professor Hamish Maxwell-Stewart, Professor Tim McCormack, Ms Kathryn Medlock, and Professor Russell Smith.

Best regards,



Julie Rimes
President

Upcoming Events

The Royal Society of Tasmania Lecture



Microbes that shaped our world

Speaker: Emeritus Professor Gustaaf Hallegraeff

Date: Sunday 5 May 2024

Venue: Geology Lecture Theatre, UTAS, Sandy Bay Campus

Time: 3:30 pm for pre-lecture refreshments; 4 pm for the lecture.

Microbes are organisms that are too small to be seen by humans without using a microscope. This talk takes us on a voyage of discovery from the first cyanobacteria and algae that created an oxygen atmosphere, through protozoan malaria parasites that affected the human genome, to the fungi that delivered us antibiotics, beer and wine, and bacterial (cholera, pests) and viral diseases (smallpox, measles, influenza, COVID) that shaped human civilisation.

Above: IMAS lecturer and aquatic botany expert Emeritus Professor Gustaaf Hallegraeff.

Photo: *TasWeekend*, *The Mercury* newspaper.

Most microbes (e.g., in human guts, forest soils) are beneficial to us. They never meant us any harm. They almost certainly will outlive us, and we need to rethink how we are using advanced molecular tools. We now better understand who they are and what they are doing, so that we can live in symbiosis with them rather than be at war.



SAVE THE DATE

Sunday 2 June 2024 RST Lecture

Speaker: Dr John Davidson

Tasmania and Revival of Continental Drift

Venue: Geology Lecture Theatre, UTAS, Sandy Bay Campus

Time: 3:30 pm for pre-lecture refreshments, 4 pm for the lecture.

In the early 20th century, a scientific theory called Continental Drift was proposed about the migration of the continents through time. Continental Drift, more recently termed 'plate tectonics', was debated ferociously in the mid-1900s. Since 1950, scientists working in Tasmania have played a crucial role in providing the evidence to support the concept that continents had previously been in dramatically different locations and have moved periodically in response to the evolution of the Earth.

SAVE THE DATE RST MIDWINTER DINNER

Thursday 4 July 2024

Speaker: Susannah Fullerton OAM, FRSN

10 Novels that Changed the World

Venue: The Royal Yacht Club of Tasmania, Sandy Bay.

Time: 6 pm for dinner and lecture.

Authors have given us new modes of writing and hence new modes of thinking. There is no doubt that fiction brings change by giving us the chance to walk in the shoes of another person, to empathise with those who are different from us in some way. Reading novels can change us and change our world. Join Susannah Fullerton, one of Australia's renowned literary speakers, for an engaging exploration of ten novels, such as James Joyce's *Ulysses*, Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables* and Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*, that changed the world.



Advance Notice RST Medal Presentation Ceremony, Government House, 22 April 2024

Her Excellency the Honourable Barbara Baker AC, Governor of Tasmania will present three RST medals and one Doctoral Award to the 2023 winners at Government House on **Monday 22 April 2024. The event will begin at 5:30 pm.**

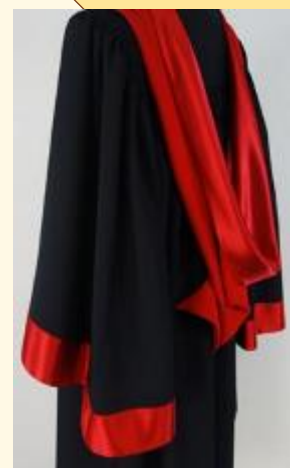
All RST members and guests are welcome. There is no admission charge. Registration on the Government House Trybooking site in advance is essential. The site is open.

Tasmanian Fellows of the Australian Academy of Science, the Australian Academy of Technology and Engineering and the Australian Academy of Medical Sciences have been invited to join us for this landmark event.

The RM Johnston Memorial medals will be presented to **Dist. Em. Professor Paul Haddad** and **Em. Professor John Church**.

The MR Banks Medal will be presented to **Associate Professor Alex Bissember**.

The 2023 Doctoral Award will be presented to **Dr Tobias Staal**.



Left: Dr Maxwell R Banks AM.



Right: RM Johnston FLS.

Upcoming Events – RST Northern Branch



NORTHERN BRANCH of
THE ROYAL
SOCIETY OF
TASMANIA

THE ADVANCEMENT
OF KNOWLEDGE

The Northern Branch of The Royal Society of Tasmania
invites you to attend the **Elvin Fist** public lecture by

Professor Dom Geraghty

The University of Tasmania Northern Transformation Project: 8 Years On

Where: Meeting Room, QVMAG at Inveresk, Launceston.

When: 1:30 pm Sunday 28 April 2024.

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

Abstract:

Professor Dom Geraghty (pictured right) will describe the Northern Transformation journey from inception in 2016 through to the present. Dom will share how the relocation of the majority of UTAS functions from Newnham to the Inveresk Precinct is shaping new course offerings and research in the north, and the University's vision for the future of higher education in northern Tasmania.



Above: River's Edge, UTAS, a state-of-the-art learning and teaching facility for students and staff in the North. This \$45.5m development follows the opening last year of the Library, a new facility that has been warmly welcomed by the community and shortlisted for a national architecture award. The next major transition of students and staff from Newnham to Inveresk will be in late-2024, into The Shed on Willis Street with a focus on Sciences, Allied Health and Nursing.

The Northern Transformation Project is funded by the Federal Government under the Launceston City Deal, the Tasmanian Government, City of Launceston and University of Tasmania.

Biography:

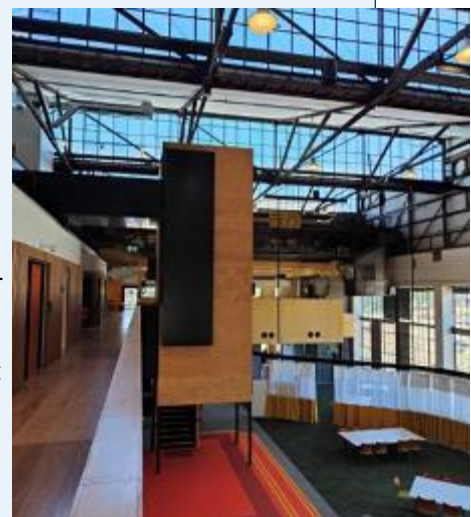
Until his recent retirement, Professor Dom Geraghty was the University's Pro Vice-Chancellor (Launceston), driving delivery of the higher education vision and strategic objectives for northern Tasmania. Prior to his appointment as PVC, he held a number of senior roles, including Acting/Head of School(s), Deputy Dean of Graduate Studies and Chair of Academic Senate.

As a pharmacologist and enthusiastic science communicator, Dom has presented public lectures on health/drugs of abuse awareness and a frequent 'guest scientist' on radio. He has co-authored over 250 research papers, reviews, book chapters and conference presentations.

He has played an active role in mentoring research students, driving new career development initiatives and supervising over 35 Honours, Masters and Doctoral candidates to successful completion. At the national level, he has sat on National Competitive Grant Review Panels and chaired several NHMRC Early Career/Career Development Fellowship Panels.

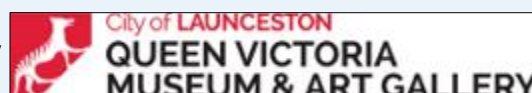
Dom is a past Director (2011–20), President and Chair of the Board (2016–17) of the Australasian Society of Clinical and Experimental Pharmacologists and Toxicologists (ASCEPT), the premier society for the

study of medicines in Australasia. He is currently a Director on the Boards of Business Events Tasmania, Breath of Fresh Air and the Northern Suburbs Community Centre.



Above: The Workshop.

Generously supported by



RST Committees 2024

Aboriginal Engagement Committee

Chair: Prof Jocelyn McPhie

Dr Sally Bryant
Mary Koolhof
David Morris
David Wilson

Art Committee

Chair: Prof Ross Large AO

Marley Large
Honorary Art Curator: Dr Anita Hansen

Art Fundraising Committee

Chair: Mary Koolhof

James Crotty
Marley Large
Prof Ross Large AO
Assoc Prof Julie Rimes
Lorraine Polglase

Bursaries Committee

Chair: Dr Deborah Beswick

Mary Koolhof
Assoc Prof Julie Rimes
Roxanne Steenbergen
John Williamson

Events Committee

Chair: Assoc Prof Julie Rimes

Evelyn Lambeth
Prof Ross Large AO
John Williamson
Lorraine Polglase

The RST Foundation Committee

Chair: Neil MacKinnon

Tony Culberg
Dr John Thorne AM
Dr Sonia Shimeld – RST Honorary Treasurer
Dr Don Garden – RST Honorary Secretary
NB: Both the President and the Vice-President are invited to attend and fully participate.

Honours and Awards Committee

Chair: Prof Richard Coleman

Prof Jocelyn McPhie
Dr Eva Meidl
Prof Jim Reid
Prof Brian Yates
Prof Jonathan Sprent
Prof Paul Haddad
NB: Both the President and the Vice-President are invited to attend and fully participate.

Membership Committee

Chair: Roxanne Steenbergen

Dr John Thorne AM

Publications Committee

Chair: Dr Sally Bryant

John Williamson
Dr Margaret Davies OAM
David Wilson

Newsletter Editor

Bernard Pryor OAM

Webmaster

Eddy Steenbergen

Northern Branch Information 2024

Northern Branch Office Bearers

Branch President: David Morris

Honorary Secretary: (position vacant)

Honorary Treasurer: Brian East

Management Committee:

Christine Beswick
Dr Andrew Alexander
Dr Lois Beckwith
Melanie Morris
Dr Martin Renilson
Lynette Ross
Dr Liza Snow.

Ex officio members:

Dr Eric Ratcliff OAM, Immediate Past President
Shane Fitzgerald, Director of the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery
Andrew Parsons, Northern Branch Honorary Librarian.

The RST Art Collection

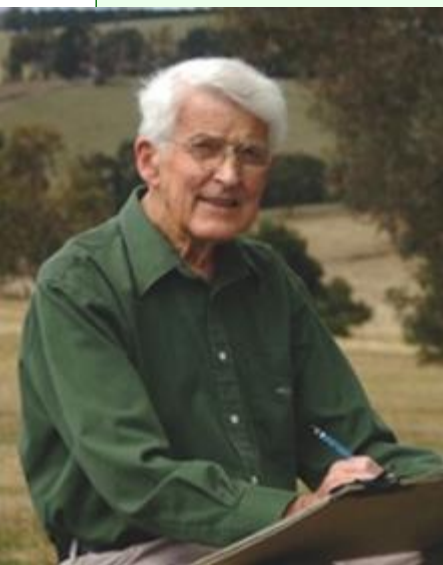
The RST Art Collection is housed at the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Hobart. Any queries please contact the Honorary Art Curator, Dr Anita Hansen: anita.hansen@utas.edu.au

Ken Guskich wrote in his book on the artist Kenneth Jack, *Ken & Ken: The Kenneth Jack Collection*, 'As the pace of development and rapid societal change accelerates unabated, the works of Australian artists such as Kenneth Jack have never been more important', and 'The two paintings I will write about now show the veracity of this statement.'

The RST Art Collection comprises mostly nineteenth century works on paper, however, there are a few twentieth century works by the artist Kenneth Jack, made in 1949–50, during a visit to Tasmania. These paintings in the Society's collection are not typical of the work for which he is best known – the desolate, decayed rural landscapes of outback Australia.

There are seven works in the Art Collection, mainly architectural works featuring well-known Hobart landmarks, and one from Port Arthur. However, today I will write about the two glorious, nostalgic views of Hobart's city centre in 1950.

Kenneth William David Jack AM MBE RWS (1924–2006)



Kenneth Jack AM MBE RWS (pictured left) was born Melbourne in 1924. The son of a commercial artist, Kenneth was something of a child prodigy, and was 13 when he won his first art prize at the Melbourne Royal Show. In his final year at Melbourne High School, he gained the highest marks for drawing in the state of Victoria.

He painted a vanishing world – he was a kind of "guardian of the outback". The land he evoked in his pictures, which he often depicted in the magical light just before nightfall, was an Australia of ghost towns, abandoned mine workings, ruined shacks and barns, recorded as they were about to return to the landscape where they had been both constructed and deserted almost within living memory. It became Jack's life's work to record this world before its destruction.

Aged 18, in December 1942, Kenneth Jack joined the Royal Australian Air Force immediately on leaving school, and for 15 months was attached to the Directorate of Works and Buildings drawing maps and doing lettering. He also attended evening classes conducted by John Rowell at the Melbourne Technical College. In 1944, he was sent as a corporal in the RAAF No 5 Construction Squadron to the Pacific war zone and

he spent the rest of the war in New Guinea, Morotai Island and Labuan in North Borneo.

From 1943–45 during World War II, he served in the RAAF as a survey and cartographical draughtsman.

From 1948 to 1968, Kenneth was a full-time art instructor for the Education Department of Victoria. While doing this, he learned printmaking and continued drawing and painting after teaching hours.

In 1956, he founded the Painting and Printmaking Departments within the Art School at Caulfield Institute of Technology (now part of Monash University) and was head of both departments until resigning from teaching in 1968 to paint full time. Subsequently, he was appointed Deputy Head of CIT Art School.

From 1969 to 1976, he was a member of the Council of Caulfield Institute of Technology; and from 1980 to 1983, he was the Foundation Member of Federal Government's Artbank Board.

Kenneth Jack in Tasmania

Kenneth Jack visited Tasmania for the first time in 1949. He wrote about this in his aforementioned book:

Ure Smith approached the young artist to illustrate *The Melbourne Book*, using 35 of his drawings to accompany the text by Clive Turnbull. Coincidentally, an already organised sketching vacation to Hobart in January 1949 coincided with an opportunity to provide drawings for a planned publication by Ure Smith, *The Charm of Hobart: Paintings by Kenneth Jack*. Originally designed to include a few drawings, along with photographs, engravings and historic prints with accompanying text, the 24-year-old Kenneth Jack seized the opportunity.

The Charm of HOBART



DRAWINGS BY KENNETH JACK
WRITTEN BY CLIVE TURNBULL
Ure Smith Miniature Series
4

With only 12 days available, he commenced his exhausting task. On foot and using public transport, he sketched and coloured his chosen subjects. Combining pure line drawings, watercolour, crayon and pencil, he worked ceaselessly, frequently through to the late evening.

Endeavouring to capture the essence and history of Hobart, his untiring output produced 84 images, which were submitted to Ure Smith for consideration. Subject matter included Government buildings, historic homes, terraces, streetscapes, churches and other items of interest.

A letter from Ure Smith provided the news that Kenneth Jack had hoped for. Fifty-two of his drawings would be used to fully illustrate *The Charm of Hobart* to accompany the commentary and text.

Jack returned to Hobart in 1950 to celebrate his honeymoon with wife, Betty, being pleasantly surprised to see a city bookshop had devoted the entire window display to copies of *The Charm of Hobart: Paintings by Kenneth Jack*. The paintings in the Society's Art Collection are presumed to be from this trip.

Jack returned to Tasmania often. Apparently, he rated Hobart highly on his preferred destinations, always gaining inspiration to portray beautiful and significant architectural subjects.

Above: *The Charm of Hobart: Paintings by Kenneth Jack* by Clive Turnbull, Ure Smith, Sydney, 1949.

Guskich writes:

During a visit in 1985, he almost foretold Hobart's future. Urging locals to be cautious of indiscriminate development, he felt that "One of Hobart's greatest assets for the future must be its tourist potential". With nearby Mt Wellington, Salamanca Place and Market, plus busy Constitution Dock, the interest of both international and interstate tourism continues to grow.

This can be readily gauged by observing a fully booked ferry taking holiday makers to MONA to enjoy a cutting-edge art experience. Equally, a short walk from the city centre leads visitors to Arthur Circus in Battery Point. This ring of historic cottages around a village green is like stepping straight back into the colonial era of the 1840s.

Purchasing the Artworks

Artworks were purchased on 8th or 10th September 1950. RS1837/C210 to RS1843/C216

There is no record in the Society's Minutes or *Papers and Proceedings* about the purchase of these paintings, however, they are recorded in the original accessions book and the 1965 Loans List.

I imagine that after the success of the earlier publication *The Charm of Hobart: Paintings by Kenneth Jack*, it was thought important to add some Kenneth Jack paintings to the Society's Art Collection.

RS.1837/C210	K. Jack. Watercolor. Interior of St. George's Church, Battery P.	2.9.50.	Purchased for £6-6-0.
RS.1838/C211	K. Jack. Watercolor. Railway Controller of Stores Building, Hobart	2.9.50.	Purchased for £5-5-0
RS.1839/C212	K. Jack. Watercolor. A Port Arthur Street.	2.9.50.	Purchased for £6-6-0.
RS.1840/C213	K. Jack. Watercolor. St. Joseph's Church, Macquarie St. Hobart.	2.9.50.	Purchased for £5-5-0
RS.1841/C214	K. Jack. Watercolor. Hamington St. Hobart.	2.9.50.	Purchased for £5-5-0.
RS.1842/C215	K. Jack. Watercolor. Macquarie St. & St. Joseph's from Hotel Pitt.	2.9.50.	Purchased for £5-5-0
RS.1843/C216	K. Jack. Watercolor. All Saints, Macquarie St. Hobart.	2.9.50.	Purchased for £5-5-0.

Above: The RST's original Accessions List. **Below:** The 1965 Loans List – works on long-term loan to TMAG.

REG. NO.	TITLE	ARTIST	MEDIUM	DATE ACQ.	HOW ACQ.	R.S. NO.
1688	Spectacle Island	do.	Pencil	-	-	-
1689	Sorell, V.D.L.	do.	W/Col.	10/9/1950	Purchased by the Roy. Soc.	RS1837/C210
1690	Interior, St. George's Church, Battery Point	Jack, Kenneth	do.	do.	do.	RS1838/C211
1691	Railway Controller of Stores Building	do.	do.	do.	do.	RS1839/C212
1691	A Port Arthur Street	do.	do.	do.	do.	RS1840/C213

REG. NO.	TITLE	ARTIST	MEDIUM	DATE ACQ.	HOW ACQ.	R.S. NO.
1692	St. Josephs, Macquarie Street, Hobart	Jack, Kenneth	W/Col;	10/9/50	Purchased by the R.S.	1839/C213
1693	Harrington Street, Hobart	"	"	"	"	1841/C214
1694	Macquarie Street, Hobart	"	"	"	"	1842/C215
1695	All Saints, Macquarie Street, Hobart	"	"	"	"	1843/C216

The Two Paintings

The two paintings featured in this article were painted near one another. One is of the corner of Macquarie and Harrington Streets, and the other is looking back at the corner from Harrington Street. They show a charming, slower, bygone era.

Right: *Harrington Street, Hobart*, Kenneth Jack, watercolour and ink, 1950.

The charming sketch at right shows Jack's easy style. As Guskich notes: 'His ability to visualise drawings on blank paper enabled him to draw directly in ink with no pencil guidelines, using only the eye to judge angles and correct proportions.'

The sketch is full of the quiet details of everyday life; a horse-drawn carriage trundles down the road, while a trolley bus hurries past in the background; shoppers amble along the footpaths and an old red telephone waits on the corner for an important conversation.



Left: *Macquarie St and St Joseph's from Hotel*, Kenneth Jack, watercolour and ink, 1950.

I thought it would be interesting to try to capture the same scene today. Jack must have been on the awning of the Astor Grill. I'm not quite intrepid enough to try that, so I'm afraid the image (see page below) was taken at street level.

You can see though that the church is still there, as are a few of the buildings on the corner on the left. You can already see the houses on the mountain (Tolmans Hill) in the background. Of course, the streets are so much busier now.

The photo of Harrington Street looking down to Macquarie Street (see page below) definitely shows a more hectic way of life now too.

Quite a few of the buildings are the same: the church, the building in front of it are still there. The building on the corner of Harrington and Liverpool Streets seems to be the same, but with a newer façade and awning.



These paintings by Kenneth Jack are a fascinating glimpse of the past.

Anita Hansen

Right: *Self-Portrait*, 1956, Kenneth Jack, oil and pva on board. Not held in the RST Art Collection. **Below:** *Railway Comptroller of Stores Building, Hobart*, Kenneth Jack, watercolour and ink. This work is in the RST Art Collection.



RST AGM Speaker Professor Cassandra Pybus

The speaker at this year's AGM was Professor Cassandra Pybus who is well known for her long career of scholarly writing, notably in recent years the award-winning biography, *Truganini*.

Professor Pybus' lecture was based on her most recent book, *A Very Secret Trade: The dark story of gentlemen collectors in Tasmania*. This is a disturbing study of the Tasmanian trade in human remains in the nineteenth century as scientists sought to provide museums and collectors, particularly in Britain and Europe, with specimens of a people many believed to be unique and then facing extinction. Scientific interest, complemented by good money, assured a secretive and lucrative trade that lasted for decades.



The RST lecture focussed largely on the 1860s and 1870s when the death of the 'last' Tasmanian Aboriginal people was seen to be occurring. That belief enhanced the urgency of the trade, especially over the bodies of the last 'full-blood' man (William Lanna or Lanne) and woman (Truganini) and subsequent raiding of gravesites on Flinders Island and at Oyster Cove where many of Tasmania's Aboriginal people were buried.

One of the chief participants in the collection and trade was Morton Allport, a Hobart lawyer identified by Professor Pybus as a 'Resurrection Man', a nineteenth century term for a person who secretly exhumed bodies. He was a member of the RST. The Society itself was somewhat involved in promoting this work because of its broad promotion of science and collecting for its own museum. Allport and WL Crowther were leading figures in the RST and in this disreputable trade.

A substantial source of evidence for the lecture was obtained from research in Allport's papers which are held in the collection of the Allport Library and Museum of Fine Arts which was established in 1972 at the

Hobart Library. The collection was donated by Morton Allport's grandson, himself a major collector of a large range of materials and after whom the library was named.

The history described by Professor Pybus was somewhat familiar to those who have read about the activities of Crowther and Allport and their ilk. This has notably been in the public eye in recent years because of the campaign to remove a statue of Crowther from its pedestal in Franklin Square. The disclosures in the lecture were deeply disturbing in their detail of the unscrupulous work of these men. She emphasised that while secretly cutting up dead bodies and exhuming graves were justified in the name of science, these individuals were well aware that what they were doing was both illegal and immoral. Hence they were largely done in secret, although the intense rivalry to claim bodies and status, and the rumour mill in Hobart, meant that much of it was known to people such as some members of the RST.

The RST is keenly aware of these events in its past and of the illegal and immoral activities of some of its leading members in the nineteenth century. In 2021, the Society offered a formal *Apology to Tasmanian Aboriginal People of Tasmania*. [Click to view the Society's Apology.](#)

Dr Don Garden OAM
Honorary Secretary



Left: On 15 February 2021, RST President, Mrs Mary Koolhof, delivered the RST's Apology. In the audience, left to right foreground, Chair of TMAG Board of Trustees, Ms Brett Torossi, Nala Mansell, Rodney Gibbins and Michael Mansell. In the background are members of the Tasmanian Aboriginal community holding historical photographs of Tasmanian Aboriginal people. Rodney Gibbins and Michael Mansell responded to the Apology on behalf of Tasmanian Aboriginal people. (Photo courtesy of Jillian Mundy)

Dr Keith Corbett OAM Lecture: Gondwana's Child: the geological making of Tasmania

Dr Keith Corbett provided a wonderful lecture at the Geology Lecture Theatre, UTAS on 7 April 2024 for a substantial audience. He began by pointing out that Tasmania has an exciting geological history and that this island is a really good location to be a geologist.



Left: Geologist and author Dr Keith Corbett OAM at kunanyi/Mount Wellington. Picture: Chris Kidd for *The Mercury* newspaper.

Dr Corbett's exemplary maps supported his text precisely. First, it was explained that the continents move as the Earth's hot core also shifts. The imperceptible continental drift (averaging 5.5 cm per year) can be explained by the 'boiling billy' model whereby the heat source in the Earth's core moves molten rock upwards to the surface and as a result, supercontinents break apart. Dr Corbett explained the continental clash of India and Asia and the resulting orogenic event seen best in the upwards move-

ment of the Himalayan Range.

The next part of the lecture showed the evolution of the Earth's crust from the 1.4 billion-year-old Nuna supercontinent to the 900 million-year-old Rodinia (in which the proto-Tasmania was part of Antarctica and separate from Australia), and then to Gondwana (approximately 400 million years old). Dr Corbett explained how dolerite intrusions are to be found in Antarctica and Tasmania but not in Australia (further proof that they were formed separately). Gondwana and other supercontinents were pulled apart after the Jurassic period which ended approximately 145 million years ago. During this time Australia became attached to Antarctica through Tasmania, at that time a place of rift valleys (e.g., where the Tamar Valley is now) – the largest of which was in Bass Strait.

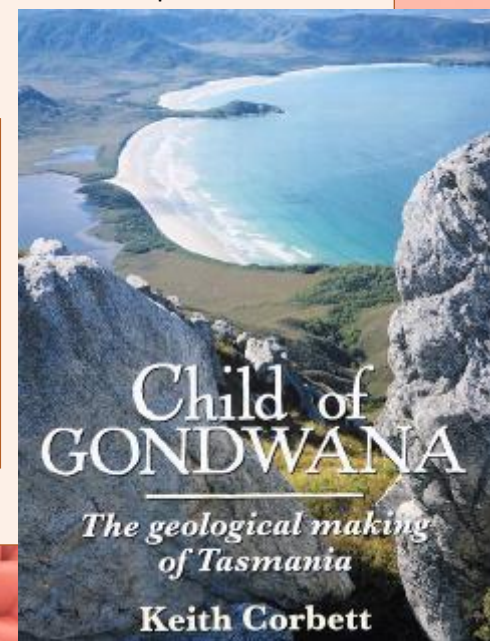
The third part of this compelling lecture was to explore the different rock types in Tasmania. Dr Corbett showed how shallow sand layers metamorphosed into quartzite that can be found in western Tasmania and on King Island. Conglomerate rocks make up many of the mountains on the west coast of Tasmania – such as Mounts Lyell, Owen, Murchison, Jukes and the Tyndall Range – while we find granite in two locations from Freycinet Peninsula, up through Flinders Island and then on to Wilson's Promontory in Victoria. More common in Tasmania are the Permian Mudstones that can be seen in the foothills of Mt Wellington and Triassic sandstones from which many Hobart buildings are constructed. Dolerite is even more prevalent and is found on the Tasman Peninsula, Ben Lomond plateau and on Mt Wellington.

The audience was keen to know more but there was time only to discuss the Pleistocene glaciation and the Holocene interglacial period of the last 10,000 years. Dr Corbett's perfectly paced lecture and his excellent illustrations and maps, provided a particularly informative and fascinating presentation to the captivated audience.

John Williamson

Right: *The Child of Gondwana: The geological making of Tasmania* by geologist Dr Keith Corbett OAM. In a 2020 interview with journalist Helen Kempton, Corbett stated, "From Queenstown's beautiful bare hills to knowing that Tasmania, like Antarctica, has some standout dolerite mountains such as Mt Wellington and Cradle Mountain. Tasmania was dragged away from Antarctica as part of Australia. But I describe this island as a reluctant appendage of the Australian mainland."

Picture: Chris Kidd for *The Mercury* newspaper.



Northern Branch Report to Council, 9 April 2024

Launceston Lecture Series: This year's Launceston Lecture Series began with Professor Tim McCormack addressing the Branch on 'The International Criminal Court: Ukraine and Gaza' on 25 February (77 attendees), and on 24 March eminent criminologist Professor Russell G Smith addressed the Branch on the topic of 'Pandemics and Fraud' (56 attendees).

Election of the 2024 Management Committee: The Northern Branch's Annual General Meeting was conducted on Sunday 24 March 2024. (Note: The Office Bearers are listed on page 6.)

Retiring Management Committee Members: Robin Walpole, Neil Mackinnon, and the Hon Dr Frank Madill AM stepped down from the Management Committee at the AGM. Christine Beswick remains a Committee Member, having relinquished the Honorary Secretary position. She will support the incoming Branch secretariat in a consultancy capacity and continue to perform some Honorary Secretary duties.

Fundraising Project for 2024: At the AGM, the appeal was re-launched for the Northern Branch to raise money to purchase another butterfly specimen storage cabinet for the Lambert-Knight Butterfly Collection in the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery.

David Morris, Branch President

Tasmania Reads 2024

The RST is proud to be a supporting partner of Hobart UNESCO City of Literature activities. This year RST members were invited to take part in "Tasmania Reads" from 17 – 23 March. The aim of this annual event under the auspices of Libraries Tasmania is to help Tasmanians discover and rediscover the benefits of reading, which fits well with the RST mission of advancing knowledge. The theme this year was '**Challenge yourself – read something new!**'

Perhaps unsurprisingly, RST members and supporters read an astonishing variety of books! Here is a sample:



Margaret Neilsen's Book Chat group read Richard Flanagan's *Question 7* and Ann Patchett's *Tom Lake*. Margaret reported: "While the group found examples of exceptional writing in both books, we found Patchett's book the more pleasurable read. People brought along their favourite books from 2023 which were predominantly American and English books. For one person, it was her first book discussion. We agreed to meet again next year for the occasion."

Left: (from left) Val Baxter, Angela Hermanis, Margaret Neilsen, Rita Stephens and Judy Peters.

Grady Koolhof enjoyed *537 Days of Winter* by David Knoff, the story of an Australian expedition team trapped in Antarctica by the COVID pandemic. "Knoff gives an interesting description of life on an Australian Antarctic station, the challenges faced by the station leader and the situations he needs to work through to keep the team safe. Extra pressures are brought to bear by the extended time in Antarctica and the effect this has on the team members. Particular challenges were presented by a complex medical evacuation and an engine fire onboard the MPV Everest on the journey home."

Reading recommendations: *The Angry Women's Choir* by local author Meg Bignell. A really enjoyable read encapsulating some home truths! (Mary Koolhof)

Peter Watson prefers biographies and was moved by Corrie Ten Boom's *The Hiding Place*: "This is a true story, simply and honestly told. It is set in Holland, during the build-up to World War II, through the war and beyond. It is a journey from a simple and happy life, followed by cruelty and utter despair, then to hope, giving, and forgiveness, all overarched by faith. Read this book and be engrossed in the gripping journey, it is uplifting."

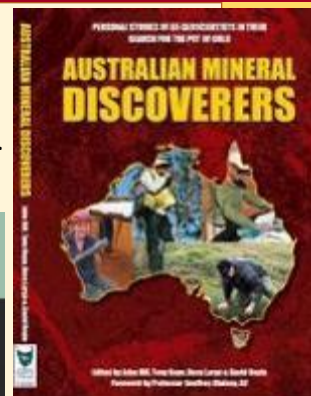
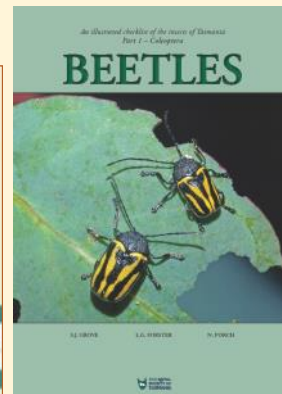
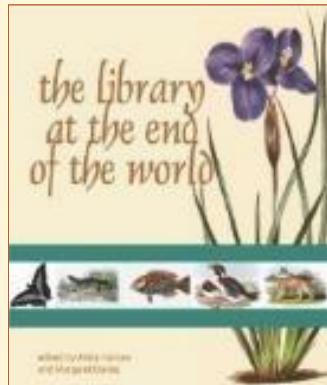
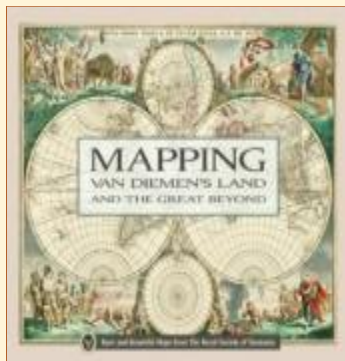
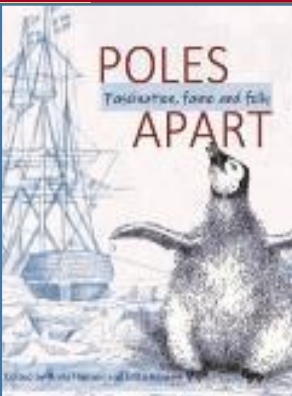
Mary Koolhof

RST Contact Information

Fabulous RST Publications

There are RST publications to suit everyone's reading shelf or as a gift. As well, there are **10% discount prices for RST members** for many of the publications.

Visit the [RST Shop now to view all publications and discounts.](#)



The Society's Library



The RST Library Collection is held at UTAS in the Special and Rare Reading Room, Level 5, Morris Miller Library, Sandy Bay Campus.

The Reading Room is open by appointment on Mondays and Wednesdays only between 10:00 am and 5:00 pm; closed for lunch from 12:30 – 1:30 pm.

Please email RSTLibrary.Collections@utas.edu.au for appointments and enquiries about the collection.

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