



CHANNEL Museum



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Museum – Research Room – Gallery – Camera Collection – Café

New regular visitors! Summer tour group visits



The Channel Museum has experienced many interstate tourists visiting over the last two months. We are delighted that New South Wales based Aurora Coach Tours have again chosen to visit the museum this year. Aurora Coach Tours run tours all over Australia and over the summer bring their coach to Tasmania for three 13-day tours. This year they have amended their itinerary to now include the Channel Museum in each of their Tasmanian tours, due to the high levels of praise that previous tour patrons

have given about the museum. They have three visits scheduled again for next summer.

We have also welcomed mainland tourists travelling on the Island Time Tours minibus which has been a regular visitor to the museum over the summer for several years.

The feedback from their tourists has been fantastic with many commenting that this has been the best small museum they have ever visited.

Andrew Tomes

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President's report

How time flies! It seems like only a week or so that our last newsletter was issued.

Our volunteers continue to be very busy with the many aspects of running our museum. The promotions team, very competently steered by Sheila, have been sourcing interesting guest speakers for our "Night At The Museum" presentations. These nights have been popular with booked out events almost every month. We are all looking forward to the Quiz Night on the 13th March. There are a few spaces left so come and test your general knowledge, join the fun, and don't forget to book. A huge thank you to Sheila and her team for your amazing effort in providing us with such a variety of interesting topics. I know much effort is dedicated to these events. Sheila is always looking for new topics of interest so if you have any ideas or requests, please contact Sheila with your suggestions.

The displays are methodically refreshed thanks to our Curator Lara, and her team.

Sadly, John who has been lovingly restoring the machinery in the outside shed can no longer continue doing this vital work due to health reasons, so if there is anyone who is interested in continuing John's project at your leisure,

we would love to welcome you. We wish John all the very best and send a huge thank you for all you have done to date.

Senator Claire Chandler kindly presented us with the Australia flag and Nic Street the Tasmanian flag as both had been weather beaten and needing replacement.

I had the pleasure of presenting Snug Butchery, David Hopkins and The Margate Men's Shed with Appreciation Certificates for their support.

Our new volunteers are settling in well and full of enthusiasm.

Recently we had a working bee tidying up and removing rubbish, cleaning gutters etc. Ten volunteers produced a great working team, finishing in record time and enjoying a catch up over coffee. A huge thank you for all your efforts and time.

Finally, I would like to remind everyone that the museum is solely run and maintained by volunteers who generously give their time to continue the legacy of Jim Waldie and keep the Museum alive. Our income is based on donations, entry fees (very reasonable), sales of merchandise by local artisans in our gift shop and the occasional fundraiser.

We would encourage and welcome anyone who has a bit of spare time and/or knowledge/skills to contact us with your offers and suggestions. Some areas in need of assistance include social media, web page upkeep, restorations, marketing on a budget and many more. Membership is not necessary, however encouraged, as this also helps keep us going.

Once again, a huge hug of appreciation to all our volunteers for all you give and to our supporters.

Keep happy and safe

Judi Castle



Judi with David Hopkins (left) and "Dacca" from the Snug Butchery (right).

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Presentation of new flags to the Channel Museum

On the 25th of January 2024 we had a visit from Senator Claire Chandler to present a new Australian National Flag to the Channel Museum. Senator Chandler toured the museum and was highly impressed with the displays and work of our volunteer members in operating the museum.

Senator Chandler later delivered a statement in Parliament on February 7th. A transcript of her statement is as follows:

"Recently I had the pleasure to present our national flag to the Channel Museum, based in Margate, Tasmania. This museum keeps the memories of the D'Entrecasteaux Channel area alive. I was welcomed by and guided through the museum by Judi, Mike, Andrew and Andrew, and Sarah. All of them are volunteers at the museum. In fact, it is operated by around 60 volunteers, mostly from the local community.

The museum has an extensive artefact collection, including more than 6,000 pieces, all of them amassed over more than 40 years and all of them donated by the residents of the channel community. The museum has sections with objects and information on the social aspects of the channel area, displaying memorabilia of schools, sports clubs, the men and women who have served our country in defence, and the 1967 bushfire, which we know was such a significant and tragic event in the channel area. It shows the cultural aspects of the channel, showcasing Indigenous heritage and migrant history, and the economic aspects of the region, including old farming tools and displays in relation to the

maritime, timber and apple industries, which have had such a historically important role to play in the channel. It even has an impressive collection of cameras, which these days, given most people have one of those on their mobile phone, I imagine would be quite novel to some of the schoolchildren as they're coming through having a tour of the museum.

The museum provides stimulating educational experiences, like I said, with school visits and its 'Night at the Museum' conferences that are always booked out, and it offers a range of benefits to people with dementia by stimulating their cognitive function and by improving general feelings of wellbeing while enjoying a stroll down memory lane. Thank you and well done to the volunteers of the Channel Museum."

Minister Nick Street presented the museum with a new Tasmanian State Flag the following week. Nick has been supportive of the museum and dedication of our volunteer members over the years.

The Channel Museum is most appreciative of the support and recognition given by Senator Chandler and Minister Street.



Senator Chandler presenting an Australian National Flag



Minister Street presenting the Tasmanian State Flag

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Introducing

Maree Da Costa



I have only recently joined as a volunteer, firstly as a researcher and now also fortnightly on reception. I belong to the Barrett family of Barretta with my grandparents later residing in Van Morey Road.

We lived on Main Road in Margate for the first 11 years of my life, at the top of Gemalla Road, in between the Hynes and Meredith families. The Groombridges lived up the hill. My dad, Phil Barrett, was a jack of all trades and worked as an orchardist and truck driver carting apples. He also cut timber and firewood, grew potatoes and was the milkman at Snug. Work was his favourite pastime and everything was fixed before it was even broken.

My brother and I attended Margate Primary School until the family moved to Hobart in 1970. Dad had purchased milk rounds in Sandy Bay, Dynnryne, South Hobart and later West Hobart. He was a milkman for 27 years, after which he returned to the Channel with a hobby farm at Leslie Vale and later retirement at Kingston. His father Bill Barrett lived in Margate his entire life and purchased land in poverty gully in the 1920s where he built the family home and was an orchardist and market gardener. He also worked shifts at the carbide works in the lime kiln. Bill was a familiar sight riding his bike to

and from Electra in the 1930s and 40s. The house is still there today.

The Barretts first arrived in the Channel in the 1880s and settled at Barretta in about 1903 when Captain Ted Barrett purchased the land where Barretta is today. Ted Barrett was a mariner and carried wood for the O'May steam ferries for 34 years on his beloved cutter *Waterlily*. There are still descendants of Ted's living at Barretta today. He died in 1929 and the *Waterlily* was beached at Barretta where she rotted away, until the 1967 bushfires took what was left of her and the family home. The original Barrett was an Irish foot soldier who arrived in Van Diemen's Land in 1824 with the 40th Regiment, followed by his wife and 3 children a year later. More children were born, and they settled in Dover, Esperance, and later Bruny Island. They were sawyers, mariners and boatbuilders.

My mother was Yvonne Perry whose Channel heritage extends back to Alexander McKay at Woodbridge. Alexander McKay settled at Peppermint Bay in 1847 after receiving a land grant of about 40 acres. His daughter Agnes McKay married Richard Thomas Wells and built Perry's Cottage at Woodbridge on land gifted by Alexander. Jane Wells married Alfred Daniel Perry, who by 1919 was an orchardist at Kettering. Their son Reginald Perry married Doris Flakemore and was an orchardist at Woodbridge and postmaster at Margate among various other things. Reg had many different occupations throughout his lifetime. He was a younger brother of well-known travelling picture show man Dick Perry. Doris was the daughter of Eli Flakemore who was an orchardist and sawmill owner in Saddle Road, Kettering. Reg and Doris were my maternal grandparents.

My work life has mostly been clerical and office administration with over 30 years in the marine industry. The marine industry is a man's world, but I survived and enjoyed my working life immensely. I have been an avid family historian since the 1980s, having been indoctrinated by my father's maternal aunts from a very young age. Dad's mother's family were very community minded, caring, capable, and industrious. They were always so busy and creative, and their love of their own family history had me enthralled. They didn't always have the details right, but then there were secreted convicts involved – 17 in fact including three first fleeters.

I retired 4 years ago and volunteering in an environment such as the Channel Museum was always on the cards, given that Margate holds a special place in my heart. I completed my Diploma of Family History at UTas in 2018 and am a member of the Tasmania Family History Society where I also volunteer.

I really enjoy meeting the visitors and hearing all the positive praise of the museum. I am delighted to be a member of such a wonderful team of volunteers.

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Temporary exhibition

Traces of Places Linda Van Bemmelen (January 2 - February 29)

Our temporary exhibition for January and February was 'Traces of Places' by local artist Linda van Bemmelen. Linda's abstract paintings are inspired by the world around her - memories of architecture, towns and landscapes. She states: 'Expressing myself through colour, line, marks and placement of structure-like forms, I have created depth and textures of interest and elements of surprise'. Her work aims to inspire and trigger recognition, intertwining reality with imagination.



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Nights at the Museum

Sheila Shewry

The Night at the Museum programme is held the second Wednesday of each month starting at 7pm and running for approximately one hour in the Channel Museum Library. Bookings are essential as this is a very popular event. Email secretary@channelmuseum.org.au or phone 03 6267 2333.

The 2024 Presentation schedule to date :

March 13 - Mike Avery's Quiz Night. A fun night testing your knowledge of local, Australian and International history. Attend on your own or bring a group of friends.

April 10 - History of the Hobart Shot Tower. Presenter Julia Russell.

May 8 - The History of Claremont Army Camp. Presenter Author John Wadsley

October 9 - Some Stories From My Own Tree. Presenter Mike Avery. Mike has a fascinating Channel family history he would enjoy sharing with you and perhaps inviting the audience to link in theirs as well.

November 12 - Conservation of Mawson's Huts. Following the very entertaining Mawson's Huts 2023 presentation we are delighted to have Lara Colrain and her team entertain us once more.

Channel Museum Members - you are valued as supporters of our Museum and Sheila Shewry, Night at the Museum coordinator would welcome any suggestions of entertaining Presenters/Topics you may wish to put forward. Sheila can be contacted on secretary@channelmuseum.org.au

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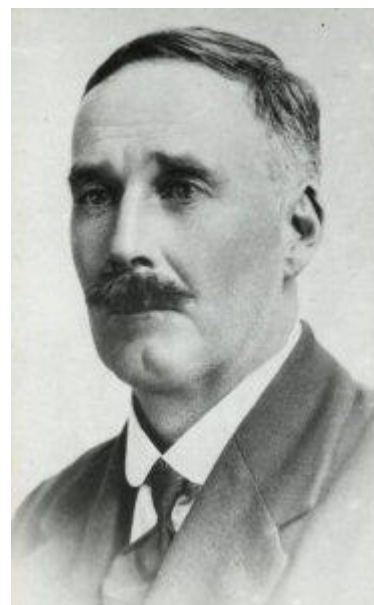
Tribulations of election campaigning

Chris Nelan

With an election looming I found these excerpts from my grandfather, Ben Pearsall's diary, (virtually one hundred years ago) quite "exhausting"!!!
No wonder he got elected!

EXCERPTS FROM DIARY OF BENJAMIN PEARSALL - 1924

- 2/4/24 Attended Council Meeting all day at Margate
- 7/4/24 Snug Regatta – Attended
- 8/4/24 Kingston Show all day
- 22/4/24 Had shot on Rifle Range. Held meeting at Sandfly this evening then went to Snug
- 24/4/24 Held a meeting at Kingston hall at night
- 25/4/24 Went to Lenah Valley and held a meeting at night
- 26/4/24 Went to Lower Longley and held a meeting this evening
- 27/4/24 Out at Longley and Sandfly to the Municipal Elections. L Abery elected
- 28/4/24 Went down to Gordon and over to Bruni and held a meeting at Adventure Bay tonight
- 30/4/24 Went to New Norfolk and held a meeting at Lachlan
- 1/5/24 Held meeting at Magra Hall Back River tonight
- 2/5/24 Went to Collinsvale Show from New Norfolk through Molesworth
- 3/5/24 Went back to New Norfolk and held a meeting there tonight
- 4/5/24 Went to Bellerive and met Mr Murdoch and went down to South Arm and held a meeting there this evening
- 5/4/24 Went to Bream Creek Show and back to Bellerive this evening
- 7/4/24 Held a meeting at Neika yesterday and went down to Copping and then held a meeting with Mr Murdoch at Bellerive this evening
- 8/4/24 Went to Port Arthur with Mr Murdoch and held a meeting this evening



*Benjamin James Pearsall ***

9/4/24 Went over to Nubeena and held a meeting there and at Highcroft this evening

10/4/24 Came back through Carlton and held a meeting with Mr Murdoch at Forcett tonight

11/4/24 Went to Colebrook and held a meeting there with Mr Murdoch tonight

12/4/24 Went to Bellerive and Lindisfarne and held a meeting at Mr Stone's Hop Kiln tonight with Mr Murdoch

14/4/24 Went to Geeveston and held a meeting there with Mr Murdoch

15/4/24 Came back to Franklin and held a meeting there tonight with Mr Murdoch

16/4/24 Attended Annual Municipal Conference and went back down to Huonville this evening. Not enough turned up for meeting

17/4/24 Attended Empire Day Celebrations at Kingston School and then went to Port Huon and held a meeting tonight

18/4/24 Went to Judbury and around Ranelagh to Cygnet this evening

19/4/24 Went to Cygnet and Gardners Bay and over to Woodbridge and held a meeting at Gordon tonight.

21/4/24 Held a meeting at Mountain River tonight. Attended Huonville Sale today

22/4/24 Went down Channel and had a meeting at Woodbridge tonight

23/4/24 Came up from Woodbridge and held meetings at Margate and Snug

24/4/24 Held a meeting at Kettering this evening

25/4/24 Went up to Magra and held a meeting there this evening

26/4/24 Went on to Tyenna and held a meeting there this evening

28/4/24 Went around by Risdon and held a meeting at Sandford tonight

29/4/24 Went to Sorell sale and held a meeting at Bellerive tonight with Mr Murdoch

30/4/24 Down at Kingston and Sandy Bay in connection with the General State Election

4/5/1924 The result of the General Elections was made known last night when I was elected.

** Ben Pearsall's picture accessed at <https://www.parliament.tas.gov.au/resources/about-parliament/historyindex/members/pearsallb406>

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Personal memories of 7 February 1967

Michele Mason

Many years ago, my aunt Reinee Yates gave me a copy of a short article written by a former neighbour of hers, Harry Sayer, from Middleton describing his experience on the day of the 1967 bushfires, which destroyed his home. It was a handwritten narrative presented in a small memo booklet.

Reinee grew up in Middleton, where her parents had moved in 1919 after buying the Middleton General Store. Over the years, her father operated additional stores in Gordon and Woodbridge. In 1967, Reinee and her husband Bill were managing the Gordon store, while living in the house attached to the Middleton store – both stores as well as Reinee and Bill's home in Middleton were destroyed.

Harry Sayer's short article has always stayed with me as a powerful narrative of that awful day. But, probably more because it so powerfully demonstrated the resilience of so many people who had lost so much on that day, but who were able to go forward and start anew.

Both Harry Sayer and Reinee and Bill Yates rebuilt their homes and continued to live in Middleton for many years. Here's Harry's memories:

Never to be Forgotten

Written by Harry Sayer (1893 – 1981)

On Feb 7 1967

On this particular morning, I was up very early. In fact, I was up before the sun and it was very warm, the temp being about 70 deg. [21°C] before the sun was up. And when it came up it was like a ball of fire and I had an idea we were in for a bad day, but not as bad as it turned out to be.

So, I will just try and give a little bit of my experience as the day went on.

Well I had my usual cup of tea and a bit of toast for breakfast, and that is all I had till about 6:00pm. Anyway, when I went out to milk Julie [the house cow], I found it was getting very hot with a light N.W. wind and there was smoke and fire all round the hills. Well after I had milked and separated, fed [one of the animals] and the fowls, I went back inside and the phone rang. It was Col Sayer from Hobart asking if I was alright. I said things looked pretty bad, but I thought I would be right. And that I was one time I wish I had spoken my mind (as you will see as the day goes on).

Well it was now about 10:00am and it had got very hot with a hot N.W. wind. I got all the buckets and cans I could find, filled them with water and placed them round the house, as I could now see we were in for it. I could see the fire weaving down on *Grandview*, but could do nothing about it, but I was thankful Ted Armstrong was up there.

You know, there is a passage somewhere in the Bible which says there was a man sent from God whose name was John and I am going to say this: I believe there was a man sent from God whose name was Ted Armstrong. [He] very seldom comes down, but he was here on Feb 7th and on his own, and I don't know what I would have done without him. He got Pearl [Laurie], Bill [Armstrong] and Reg Mason down to the beach, and then tried to save *Grandview*, the house.

It was now about 11:00am, the heat was terrible with the wind very strong and thick smoke everywhere. I ducked inside for a drink, but did not get it as the phone rang and it was Col again asking how things were now. I said, mate things could not look worse. Come down as soon as you can, and bring help if you can get it, we are going to be lucky to get out of this alive.

(Well, he started to come down almost at once, but only got as far as the School at Woodbridge and it was about 4:00pm before they would let anyone go further south. But while he was waiting, he twice put out a fire in the Methodist Church [now Uniting Church] at Woodbridge.)

When I got outside again the sparks were falling as thick as snow (but not quite so cooling). I started putting out fires all round the house. I had a small hand pump, but I could see I was not going to keep up with it, and no chance of getting any help, so I had to fight a lone battle as everyone else was doing the same, but I fought on. Then I saw a fire under the back verandah roof. I got it out, as I thought.

Then the woodshed burst into flames, but [I] just had to let it go. Ted tried to put it out, but no good. He had just come down and said *Grandview* had gone and I don't think we can save yours Unc. I said no, but don't give up yet. Then the back verandah got alight again, also the front verandah. Ted said where is your car, Uncle? Oh my goodness, still in the garage. I ran down, the heat was terrible, opened the doors and all the back of the garage was alight. I got her out, but we could now see, it was all up and it was getting very dark.

Then I thought of my hearing aid. I knew it was on the organ, [but] could not get in the back door now, it was too hot; went to the front, the door was locked, breaking it open and inside was just like an oven and almost black dark. I stood for a second, then in I went, got the aid, camera and transistors, which were all together on the organ. And on my way out, I thought of Mother's big family Bible in another room. Again, I stood for a second, but I went in and got it, and that was all. But I thanked God I got out with my life. I put them in the back of the car ... and took the car along in front of Mrs L [Lyla] Mason's, the only place where there seemed to be no fire. And then I went back to have a last look at the dear old house, but it had all burst into flames, and it was quite dark. I don't know what the time would be now as I had lost track of the day. There was [sic] now eight buildings on fire all round us, including two churches, Sunday School, Post Office, Public Hall and the local store.

Well, after the fire had beat us, that is Ted and I, we went over to keep watch at Mrs Mason's place as there was no-one about. They had all gone down to the beach. The heat was terrible. Ted said I will keep watch here if you take those folk down some water. I said alright and off I started in the car.

I just about got roasted passing the Hall. It was like Hell let loose, and to make it worse, I got caught in some wire across the road. Put the wind up me a bit, thought I might be electrocuted, but I got out of it and came back to earth again, and on I went to find Pearl, Bill and Reg. It was dark and hot with fire everywhere, but I found them round by Alan Dean's jetty [just south of Whaleboat Rock]. They all had a good drink, but they were in some distress. The track that took them down onto the rocks was now all ablaze, which made it a track of no return, and they could not get back up the stone wall.

Poor Pearl, she did a wonderful job. Reg was under a wet blanket by the stone wall; Bill under another one by a

big rock; Pearl out in the water trying to keep alive. All the jetty was alight and fire right down to the road.

I said you can't stay here Pearl. She said, what are we going to do? Just then Alan Dean came down, he said I have got to move my boat. I said that's our way out. Bring the boat ashore and we can get the old folk into it and row them round to the sand. And that's what we did, with Roma Rae's help. And when we got round to the sand, what another sight. Just about all of Middleton was there. Old folk, young mothers with little babies in arms, some under blankets, some in the water, others out in boats, all trying to keep cool and wondering if they would have a home to go back to. I am not ashamed to say I shed a quiet one.

There was a lot of bunks to be found that night. Some slept in their cars on the beach (or did they). I don't think there would be much sleep.

Well, there it is. That is a bit of what I and all of Middleton went through on that 7th day of February 1967. And then followed the 8th with all its heartaches and the thoughts of what we had lost. But cheer up, we are still alive, and thank God.

* * * * *

Office Bearers 2023-2024

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Vice President:	Mike Jackson
Secretary:	Andrew Tomes
Treasurer:	Sarah Jackson
Co-Curators:	Lara Colrain and Ekaterina Lukina

Committee Members 2023-2024

Andrew Wadsley	Michele Mason
Jenny Morgan	Helen Wadsley
David Tulip	

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