



CHANNEL Museum



1755 Channel Highway, Margate TAS 7054 – Ph: 03 6267 2333.

www.channelmuseum.org.au secretary@channelmuseum.org.au

Museum – Research Room – Gallery – Camera Collection – Café

Summer visitors to the Channel Museum



Visitor numbers to the Channel Museum have increased significantly over January and February with a total of 554 visitors in this period. The majority of these have come from the mainland and have given high praise to the collections and displays.

We have had several visits from our regular summer visit coach tour companies, Island Time Tours and Aurora Coach Tours. These companies have brought 181 mainland visitors to the museum in January and February.

Island Time Tours is a local company that provides small personal tours for mainland guests. They visit the museum frequently over the summer period. Aurora Coach Tours is a family run business based in rural New South Wales. They have included the Channel Museum four times this summer as part of their 15-day Tasmanian experience.

These companies have had very positive feedback from their customers and will continue their visits next summer.



Our successful school visit program will commence again in March with schools booking in already. Over 500 students visited the museum in 2024, the majority of these being younger primary students.

Andrew Tomes

President's report

Another year has begun and our team are up and running.

The storage shed is finally completed (yay!) and now planning of the interior fitout has begun. Our curatorial team have been packing items to transfer to the new area and we look forward to the move.

The Kingborough Council has installed a concrete block wall at the rear of the building to protect us from further rock fall – given the size, we feel safer. Perhaps we can dub this as “The Great Wall of Margate”? Thankyou to the council.

The first 3 “Night at the Museum” presentations for the year are to be held on:

Wednesday **12th March** at 7pm. Chris Nelan will be giving us the history of “Whitewater”.

Wednesday **23rd April** Peter Horobin will be presenting WW1 Submarine History.

Wednesday **14th May** Mike Groth presents “Jupiter”.

If you have an interest in something and would like to know more, please contact Sheila by emailing her on secretary@channelmuseum.org.au Sheila looks forward to hearing of new ideas and topics.

Temporary exhibitions for the next 3 months are as follows:

March – “In House” items which are never seen

April – Anzac Day – Presented by Kingston RSL

May – My Personal Owl Collection

Please note: this space is available at no cost to local artists and groups who would like the opportunity to showcase their talents. Please email our curator for more information.

Recently the Roving Curators facilitated a workshop on how best to clean old objects. This was very interesting and hopefully those who attended can pass on this information to anyone who may be interested in helping our team with cleaning. There are many items in need of a clean.

We are hoping to inform more groups about our Museum and what it offers. If you are a member of a group that would like a presentation, we would love to hear from you. This is at no cost. Please email enquiries to Judi Castle at secretary@channelmuseum.org.au

Until next newsletter, keep well, stay happy and healthy.

Kindest regards

Judi Castle

* * * * *

March 12th's A Night at the Museum

WHITEWATER, Kingston, 1906-2015

Chris Nelan (nee Pearsall) and son David share stories and photos of the Whitewater property which belonged to the Pearsall family for 109 years. The homestead was built by Solomon Baynton in 1870 from hand-made clay bricks.

Chris grew up in Kingston and enjoys researching the history of the area. David is currently CFO for the Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority.



* * * * *

Introducing... Helen and Andrew Wadsley

Helen and Andrew have been volunteers for about two years and both are Committee members. Andrew is active, taking school groups around the Museum—what a great way to learn about the history of the Channel. Helen, using her skills as a quiltmaker, made the cloth covers for the shop shelving and, more recently, the WELCOME banners for the front desk. Perhaps the highlight of the past year was having the mural completed and displayed on the north wall of the Museum, thanks to the persistence of the Committee and the patience of Joel, the artist.



Helen and Andrew

Helen and Andrew first met fifty-five years ago last month in Newcastle, New South Wales, and were married in London, in September 1971.

Helen was born in Australia, but, as a child, was raised on mission stations in North Rhodesia, now Zambia. Her father, the Rev. Gordon Riley was a Congregational minister. Her mother, Margaret Gibson, was a secondary school teacher, having obtained her degree from the University of Sydney—a rare achievement for a

woman of the 1930s. When her parents were on leave, Helen, the fourth child, was born in Sydney. This was the pattern for the birth of her siblings: the first child, her eldest sister, was born in Africa; the second, another sister, was born in Australia; and, the third, her older brother, again born in Africa. Prior to her sisters attending university, the family moved back to Sydney where Helen completed her education. Her father was Uniting Church minister for parishes in Parramatta, the Blue Mountains, and, before his retirement, in Canberra.

Continued p. 4

Andrew is a fifth-generation Tasmanian, with the Wadsley family travelling from England in 1852. His father, Rex Wadsley, worked for the Hydro from the early 1930s. During WWII, Rex joined the RAAF. There, he was responsible for siting radar installations on most of the north coast of Australia, rising to the rank of Squadron Leader—though never having flown an aeroplane. During his time at the Hydro, he surveyed the routes for transmission lines to Queenstown, and also across the hills behind Glenorchy. Apparently, the slopes above Molesworth were the steepest he had ever encountered. After the war, he became Deputy Chief Electrical Engineer and retired in 1971 following three years as agent for the Hydro in London. Prior to her marriage in 1945, Andrew's mother, Caroline Dugan, was Matron of the Sydney Children's Hospital. Again, an unusual achievement for a woman still in her twenties.

Andrew was raised at Mt Stuart where the family moved when he was six months old. As a child, he and his elder brother and sister would catch the tram on Augusta Road to Lenah Valley Primary School. Then to New Town High and Hobart Matriculation College in Letitia Street. He then won a scholarship to the Australian National University from where he gained a BSc (Hons) in mathematics. It was during his fourth year, that he met Helen in circumstances that would have done a *Chick Flick* proud. Having put new rings and bearings in his 1961 Vauxhall Wyvern, it needed a long trip to run them in. It turned out, a friend was travelling to Newcastle for his engagement party. Of course, just the journey! At the party, Andrew met Helen—and the rest is history, as they say.

Andrew was awarded a scholarship to the University of Warwick, England, and, following their marriage, Helen and Andrew settled down to student life. During this time, Helen was very active—studying at the Open University, and also having our two oldest children, Johanna and Frances. Following Andrew's completion of a PhD in mathematics, they decided that the academic world did not suit them. Andrew joined Shell International in the Hague, the Netherlands. This was followed by postings in Brunei—a brief exit from Shell during the late 1970s to work for John Lysaght in Newcastle, NSW and the birth of our son, Alexis—and a posting back with Shell, again in the Hague. Deciding that postings to either Venezuela or Nigeria would mean sending the girls to boarding school, we quit and joined a consultancy in London. During our time in London, Helen completed her tertiary studies in textiles with City and Guilds. Having decided that we wanted our children to be Tasmanian, we bought 50 acres at Cygnet on the Wattle Grove Road—by coincidence, it was next door to a cherry orchard Andrew's great-grandfather had bought in the late 1890s.

Prior to the girls attending university, we moved back to Tasmania and bought our house at Neika in 1989. Shortly thereafter in 1990, we welcomed our youngest, Theo. In Tasmania, Helen is a quilter, having won many awards with the Tasmanian Quilting Guild. Andrew, a confirmed quilt widower, was a consultant to the oil and gas industry; now, he is attempting to write a *Pride and Prejudice* variation novel. The whole family, though most born out of the state, all identify as Tasmanian. We are very fortunate that our children and grandchildren all live nearby.

The Museum is wonderful—the best community museum in Tasmania. We enjoy working with the volunteers and promoting the history of the Channel, and hope to maintain our active involvement for many years to come.

* * * * *

New museums Network



In April 2024, a meeting of history groups and museums in the Huon and Kingborough Municipalities agreed to form a Network. All the history groups and museums are run by volunteers, and some are small. The purpose of the Network is to use the collective size of the groups to assist the individual member groups to achieve objectives which might be otherwise unreachable for the history group or museum by itself.

The Member Groups are Bruny Island History Society, Geeveston Archive & History Society, Cygnet Living History Museum, Channel Heritage and Folk Museum Association Inc., Dover History Group, Ida Bay Railway

Preservation Society, Franklin History Group, Upper Huon History Group and Middleton History Group. Membership of the Network is free.

The combined total numbers of people who support the Member Groups in the Network are over 260 volunteers.

Areas the Member Groups have asked the Network to investigate include:

Whether better rates for insurance are possible?

Assistance in preparing grant applications.

A better appreciation of the contribution museums and history groups make to the attraction of tourists to the area.

Collective promotion to the public.

We have been very fortunate to be sponsored by the Bendigo Bank who donated \$500. These funds have assisted the Network to register as an Incorporated body, establish our not-for-profit status and acquire an ABN.

A Research and Planning sub-committee has been formed to support the Committee in its liaison with all levels of government, as well as organisations in the private sector.

The Network Committee have set up an email address, Facebook site and it is currently planning a Website. It has established a strategic plan, and it publishes a newsletter to members every second month with a member of the Network showcasing their museum or history group in each edition.

Any member of the Member Groups is very welcome to attend the Network Committee meetings. The meetings are held at 10.00 on the second Monday of each month either at the Hub in Huonville or online via Microsoft teams. The next general forum will be held at the Huon Hub on the 12th April from 1.00 to 4.00pm..

Beth Bartlett

* * * * *

Blooming Church 2025

St. David's Cathedral's 57th annual floral festival Blooming Church 2025 was held on the Regatta Day weekend 8th-10th February 2025. The theme was *"In the garden"*.

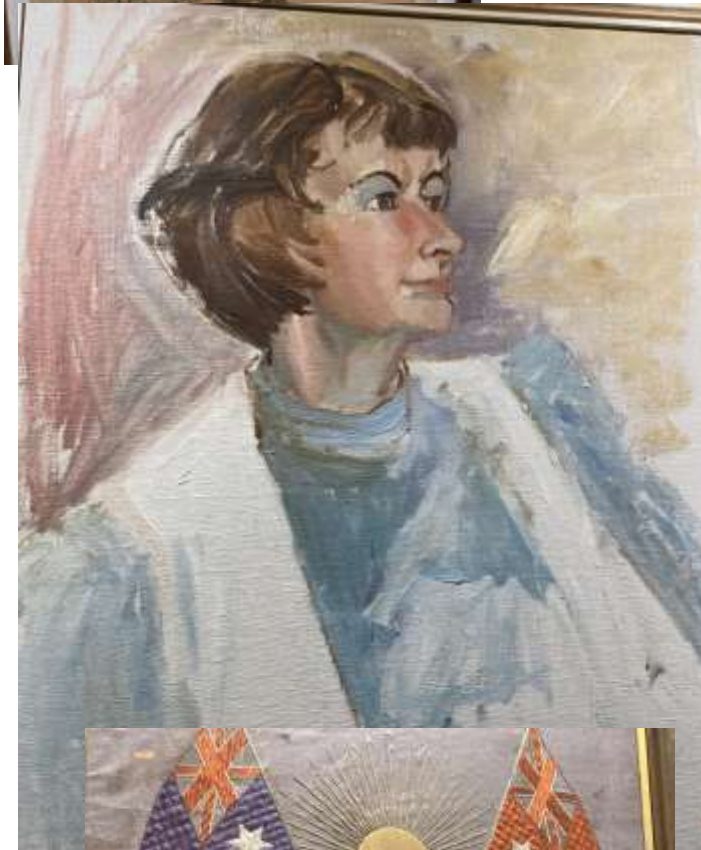
The Channel Museum, along with many local churches and community groups participated in the festival. An ideal way to promote the Museum!



Temporary exhibitions

Local treasures January—February 2025

Featuring some of our collection of artworks which do not normally see the light of day!



Rarely seen objects from the Channel Museum's collections.



* * * * *

Museum Storage Extension

It has been a long time in the making but the construction of the storage extension is almost complete. Internal finishes to the walls and floor, widening access between the Museum and extension and basic electrical wiring is anticipated to be completed within the next couple of months.

Heating of the extension is provided by underfloor electric cabling to make more use of the power generated from the existing solar array. This, in conjunction with the insulation provided by the Timbercrete blocks used for the walls plus 100mm thickness of ceiling insulation ensures that a stable environment can be maintained cost-effectively.



Extension at the back of the Musuem—March 4th 2025

Mike Jackson

With the major work on the extension having been completed by the end of 2024, new work commenced on the construction of a retaining wall at the rear of the Museum. This has been necessitated due to a minor rock fall caused by tree roots destabilising the rock face. This work has now been completed, having given rise to the “Great Wall of Margate”! Thanks are due to the contractors in the way they have ensured minimal disruption to the Museum and Café.

Now all the heavy construction work is completed attention can be given to the remediation of the carpark surface and rear access to the storage extension. Hopefully a grant can be found to cover the cost of this work.

Great Wall of Margate

The land that the Museum is on was once a quarry. Here are some pictures of the remediation work that the Kingborough Council has made to ensure that the Museum is safe from rock falls.



February's "Night at the Museum"

Brian Wilson, a long-time member and stalwart of the Channel Museum gave a very entertaining presentation "Return to the Lune River on the May Queen" at the February *Night at the Museum*. Teenage Brian had taken the journey from the Hobart wharfs to the Lune River with his uncle on the May Queen, Australia's oldest trading vessel. Brian recounted the journey, as he remembered it from those early days, with reflections on the places they past from his current much greater knowledge of the Channel and Huon River. A very entertaining evening.



Right: Brian on the night

* * * * *

Office Bearers 2024-2025	
President:	Judi Castle
Vice President:	Mike Jackson
Secretary:	Andrew Tomes
Treasurer:	Sarah Jackson
Curator:	Lara Colrain

Committee Members 2024-2025	
Andrew Wadsley	Michele Mason
Helen Wadsley	David Tulip
Anthea Wallhead	Cathy Fyfe
Melissa Grabert	Col Hocking
Newsletter editor: Diane Worth	