



Newsletter: June 2026

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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

Annual General Meeting

Wednesday 10th June 2026 at 1:30pm

All welcome

President's Report

Colours of the trees have slowly changed to the glorious shades of Autumn, and the days are certainly getting shorter. Winter is on its way - chilly mornings, warm fires at night and winter clothes out of storage.

Life at the museum is moving well towards inhabiting the storage area, shelving assembled and positioned, the heating turned on in the archive room and further planning for the moving of items. A big thankyou to members of the Margate Men's Shed and Kingston Lions Club for their assistance.

The *Night at the Museum* has hosted presentations about Ireland, The Voyage of the Frederick, and Bengal Troops on the Line of March. These have continued to be well attended with strong bookings. Andy has more interesting talks organised so keep your eyes out for coming presentations. If you have any ideas for future topics, please do not hesitate to contact Andy at secretary@channelmuseum.org.au. He would love to hear from you. We thank the Snug Tavern for their continuing support of this program.

The Gift Shop continues to support local artisans and crafters with items priced at very reasonable rates. Please come in and have a browse – perfect for those special gifts and personal purchases. Our gift shop is located just inside the sliding doors.

We were very fortunate to receive a gift of over 30 original works by David Hopkins, along with the copyright for these to enable us to have prints made as an ongoing income earner for the Museum. David has been a strong supporter of the Museum and is keen to see it continue and prosper.



The photos of David were taken at the Exhibition opening on Sunday 17th March. These pictures will be on display until August, and orders for prints can be made at the reception desk. The Museum is grateful for this most generous gift, and we encourage you to come and have a look at these artistic "Channel Views" Thankyou you David.



A reminder that our AGM is to be held at the Museum on Wednesday 10th June at 1.30. All members are welcome to attend. We rely on feedback to keep improving so please free to discuss any issues, suggestions or ideas you may have with any one of our volunteers. We welcome your input.

Last but not least I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to all volunteers for your continued support and tireless efforts throughout this last year and wish all outgoing committee members all the very best and look forward to another productive year for the Museum. Stay safe, warm and healthy.

Kind regards

Judi Castle, President

1. Who was Southern Tasmania's first chicken sexer?

- a. Roly Proctor
- b. Bradley Pitt
- c. Jim Wallace

2. Who once won an 'ugly man' competition in a Channel fundraising event?

- a. Athol Smith
- b. Searle Tabor
- c. Nobody will admit to it

3. Which of these champion Channel footballers never played at the elite AFL/VFL level?

- a. Murray Steele
- b. Phil Garwood
- c. Mark McQueen

4. Which of these Australian musicians has roots in the Channel?

- a. Max Merrett & the Meteors
- b. Wolfe Brothers
- c. Ross D Wylie

5. The shed at Margate, opposite Hopfields Rd was once used as:

- a. A panel beater's workshop
- b. A public works depot (storing trucks, machinery & explosives)
- c. An electrician's workshop
- d. All of the above

6. The ancestry of the Lawless family can be traced back to a lawless convict.

- a. True
- b. False

7. Where did they bury the survivors from the Bussorah Merchant, which was quarantined at Snug in 1837?

- a. On the beach itself
- b. In the church cemetery
- c. They didn't bury them

8. How did Blue Gate Rd get its name?

- a. The road originally had limited access, and was closed with a blue gate
- b. One of the houses up the road had a blue gate
- c. Named after James Bluett who lived up the road

9. Verona Sands is also known as Pickup Beach. Why was it called Pickup Beach?

- a. It was a place for young men to meet young women, and vice versa
- b. A lot of stuff gets washed up onto the beach - and local residents would check most days and pick up anything interesting
- c. It once had a jetty and was a stop for boats

10. Who was the long term Margate resident once known as Mr Margate

- a. Donald Hazell
- b. Wally Groombridge
- c. Bernie Worsley

Answers: See page 7

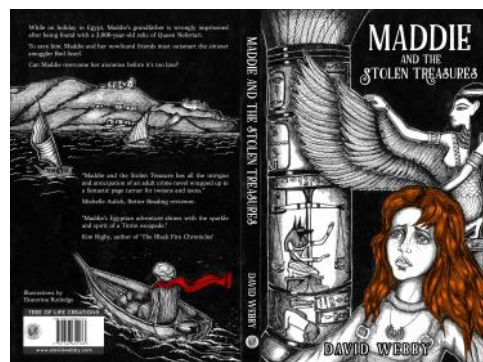
Introducing Ekaterina Rutledge...



Hi, my name is Ekaterina, but you know me as Kat and can meet me at the Museum most Fridays. I was born in Russia, in a big city named Saratov and have a degree in philosophy from one of the largest State Universities. After graduating I worked as a high school history teacher and later as a journalist for the local magazine. In 2011 I moved to Australia, and as an army wife, have lived in Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane until our little family, which includes my husband Stuart, our son Tim and, most importantly, our fur daughter Claire the labrador, finally settled in Kingston in 2020.

As a self-taught artist, I was painting and drawing for as long as I can remember, however, I was only able to fully focus on my art practice in the last five years. My artworks, in oil paintings and drawings, are inspired by

the Tasmanian natural environment, world history and events, and everyday life. I am particularly fond of illustrations with attention to details and precise storytelling. Recently I became an illustrator for a book by a local writer David Webby. For the last three years I was honoured to have my works displayed at the Channel Museum. These exhibitions gave me a unique opportunity to develop as an emerging artist, and, most importantly, gave me so much support and to feel a part of the amazing community of the Channel.



Examples of Kat's artwork



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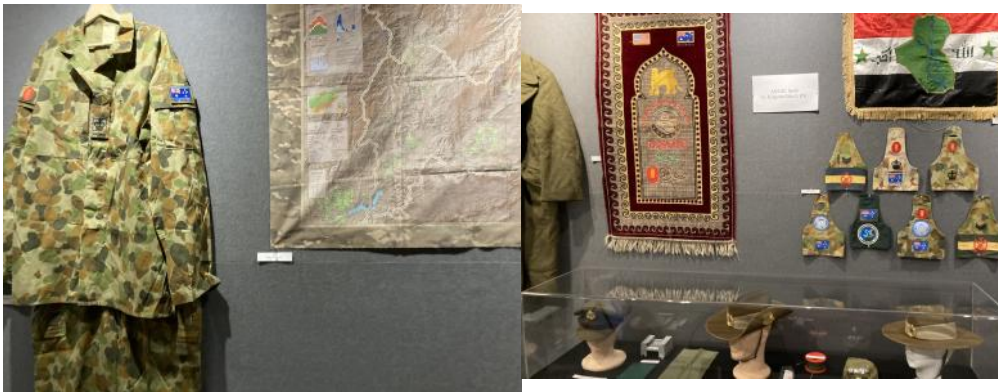
Temporary exhibitions

Women of the Channel — March 2026

A celebration for International Women's Day.

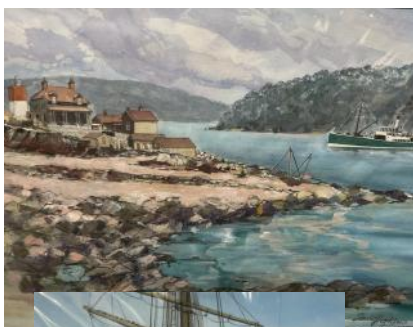


ANZAC Exhibition presented by Kingborough RSL — April 2026



Channel Views— May to July 2026

Our exhibition for the next three months is "Channel views", and features the wonderful art work of David Hopkins. We are very grateful to be able to present the work of such a renowned artist and author of so many books on Tasmania.



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Our *Nights at the Museum* for this quarter were:



A Journey around Ireland ~ a wonderful series of photographs and tales from his travels; presented by Neil Sorenson.

The voyage of the Frederick ~ the story of ten convicts who sailed away in a stolen ship in 1822 to Chile and freedom; presented by Andy Henebury.

and

Bengal Troops on the line of March ~ An explanation of how an eight metre long lithograph from the British Raj in India ended up here in Tasmania; presented by Dr Mary Knights Senior Art curator at TMAG

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Dr James Ray

Mike Avery

James Ray may have been the first doctor to practice in the Channel area. He is the ancestor of the Ray family that lived near Kingston for several generations.

Here are some of the things we know about James.

He was born in London about 1804 and qualified as a surgeon (MRCS) in 1831. He came out to Australia in 1832, the year following his qualification as a doctor. He was a passenger on the *Mary* which arrived in September 1832.

In 1843 he appears as living at North West Bay. I'm not certain of this, but I believe he lived at what was once called "Doctor's Hill". Interestingly, it coincides with where Rays Court is now located.

It is likely that James conducted a medical practice at Brown's River and North West Bay from the time of his arrival till about 1852. We know for certain that he published an article in 1849 entitled "A Voice from the Inquest Room" where he defends himself against accusations of misdiagnosing and/or mistreating a patient who subsequently died. It provides interesting reading. He is clearly very articulate.

Here is a brief extract from his paper:

"I ordered her into a warm bath, applied leeches, used fermentations, applied blisters, and also rubbed in the Ung:Ant:Tart: all of which proved of very little benefit. I continued to attend her daily for some time, giving full doses of opium until it became of no use...I concluded, therefore, that a predisposition had been concealed in the system which a severe cold would be sufficient to call into action..."

I have seen a reference which refers to James as a 'quack', but here was probably a lot of retrospectivity in that comment. The treatment outlined above was perhaps 'best practice' at the time.

Sometime in the late 1840s, James met Jane Chinn and fathered two children, Edward and Alfred. There is no record of James and Jane having married, and it is unlikely that they did (particularly as Jane was most likely still married to Thomas Mitchell, with whom she emigrated to Australia).

Jane died in 1851, and this may have prompted James' decision to leave the State; leaving Edward and Alfred to be raised by Jane Tringrove (nee Searle), wife of Ezekiel. This is interesting given that one of Alfred's children later married a Tringrove – so the families obviously kept in touch. Jane's death was registered in the name of Jane Mitchell (Brown's River). The register shows that she was a labourer's wife. This is undoubtedly 'our' Jane, given that there was a death notice in the Examiner on the same day for a Mrs Ray.

In 1852 (or thereabouts), James moved to the Goldfields in Victoria. We know that he was registered as a medical practitioner in Victoria in 1863, and he was off the register by 1867 (his year of death). He held the position of 'vaccinator' in Grant, Victoria. It is highly probable that he practised as a medical practitioner on the Goldfields prior to becoming formally registered.

He died in Grant in November 1867. An account of his death was reported in the Gippsland Times on 28 November 1867. His death was sudden but appears to have been natural causes.

It is likely that James had a brother Robert, who was also a doctor. James apparently encouraged Robert to come out to Australia, which he did in 1862. Robert practiced homeopathy in Melbourne.

There is an unanswered question. Did James keep in touch with his two boys, Edward, and Alfred? On the one hand, Alfred's obituary mentions that both his parents died whilst he was young. This suggests no contact and that he had been told that both of his parents had passed away. However, there is evidence that Alfred was very keen to move to Melbourne at one stage. And when James died, Edward and Alfred are listed as next of kin on his death registration. This means that whoever registered the death obviously knew of their existence. So maybe there was contact after all. It would be nice to think that there was.

Network Update

Beth Bartlett



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 History & Folk Museum Association, 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.

Thank you Farron

Cathy Fyfe

A **big thank you** to Farron Wall from VIP Home Services, who kindly donated his time and resources to clean out all the gutters for the Museum's main building and shed. We appreciated his assistance in ensuring our building is maintained to protect our precious resources and artefacts.

Members may like to consider his business when looking for gardening and lawn maintenance, hedge trimming, rubbish removal and gutter cleaning.

<https://viphomeservices.com.au/franchise/faron-wall/>

Answers to Quiz (page 2)

	Answer	Comments
1	Roly Proctor (a)	Rowland (Roly) Proctor was the first qualified resident chicken sexer in Southern Tasmania. To achieve this qualification Roly had to handle a minimum of 200 chickens within 30 minutes with 95% accuracy. He managed 200 in 28 1/2 minutes with 97% accuracy. Well done, Roly! Roly was also a very good footballer, having played with both Kettering and then Channel.
2	Searle Tabor (b)	To raise money to build a new Margate Hall in the 1930's, an "ugly man" competition was held and won by Searle Tabor. For those of you worried about political correctness, you'll be pleased to know that the prize was actually awarded to the person who raised the most money.
3	Murray Steele (a)	Murray Steele was a champion footballer but never played at the VFL/AFL level. He trained pre-season with St Kilda and was predicted to make their team. However, he got homesick and returned to Tasmania. Phil Garwood played with Hawthorn in the mid 1960s. Mark McQueen played with Richmond in the 1990s.
4	Wolfe Brothers (b)	The well-known Tasmania Country Rock band, The Wolfe Brothers has Channel roots and German ancestry. And music has been in the family's blood for several generations. The Wolff family that eventually settled at Neika/Leslie Vale arrived on the "America" on 23 July 1855. The family comprised: Johann (aged 27), Maria (aged 27), and Herman (aged 3). Their baby, also named Johann, died on the journey out, aged about 6 months.
5	All of the above (d)	Kingborough Council once had a works depot (for trucks and equipment) at the beginning of Sandfly Road, Margate. The building still exists and is located opposite Hopfields Road. The building has had many uses over the years, including a car bodyworks, and an electrician's business premises.
6	True (a)	The Lawless dynasty in the Channel started with Joseph and Ann (nee Walker). Joseph was a convict. He was convicted in the Lancaster Kirkdale Court on 19 January 1843 on charges of stealing 17lbs of pork from Thomas Jackson at Warrington, Lancashire. He was sentenced to 7 years transportation. He departed London aboard the "Sir George Seymour" on 22 October 1844, arriving in VDL on 27 February 1845. His records show that his 'native place' was Warrington. He was 'single' and a 'weaver'. He was 5'7" tall, freckled with reddish hair (just like future generations).
7	They didn't (c)	The key word here is 'survivors'. If they survived, there would be no bodies to bury. Those that did die were most likely buried on the beach, as a skeleton was found on the beach about 30 years later, and attributed to the Bussorah Merchant.
8	One of the houses up the road had a blue gate (a)	Blue Gate Rd is about 2km up Sandfly Rd (from the Margate end) on the left-hand side. It's about 2km long and leads to Hickman's Hill. It once had its own competitive cricket team, comprising mainly members of the Worsley, Rollins and Bluett families.
9	It once had a jetty and was a stop for boats (c)	Not much more to say here. The remnants of the jetty can still be seen.
10	Wally Groombridge (b)	Wally was called "Mr Margate" because of his services to the Margate Football Club, firstly as a player and then as President. All three would be worthy winners of the "Mr Margate" title.

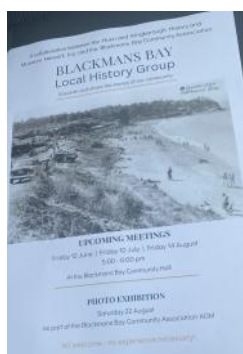
Sarah had been a member of the Channel Museum almost as long as the Museum has been in existence. She was a Life Member and held the office of Treasurer for many years, keeping a tight rein on our finances thanks to her proficiency in business administration.

Sarah will be sorely missed by those who knew her quiet ways and subtle, yet witty sense of humour. Our deepest condolences and ongoing support go to Mike Jackson.

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Blackmans Bay History Group formed

Beth Bartlett



The Huon & Kingborough History and Museum Network Inc have a new member group. The Blackmans Bay History Group is part of the Blackmans Bay Community Association. The new group will meet at the Blackmans Bay Hall on the second Friday of each month at 5.00pm. Visitors are welcome to attend. An exhibition of photos will be held in the Blackmans Bay Hall on the 22nd August to showcase photos and memorabilia. There is interest in a walking history tour of Blackmans Bay showing the photos of original shacks and the current houses. Please contact me if you have any memorabilia of Blackmans Bay.

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Proposed Father's Day Exhibition

Kat Rutledge

With Lara's approval, we are planning an exhibition in September dedicated to Father's Day. The idea is that Museum members who would like to participate, could bring photographs of their fathers, and/or items with a short story related to their father. I hope it will be possible to share it with members via email or in the newsletter. I am going to designate the area and place temporary donation forms in the staff room. Could you please let me know if any further information is needed.

Email Kat via curator@channelmuseum.org.au.

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Office Bearers 2025-2026

President:	Judi Castle
Vice President:	Andrew Tomes
Secretary:	Cathy Fyfe
Acting Treasurer:	Andrew Tomes
Curator:	Lara Colrain
Public Officer	Andrew Tomes

Committee Members 2025-2026

David Tulip	Anthea Wallhead
Mike Jackson	Michele Mason
Andrew Wadsley	Mary Tomny
Colin Hocking	Andy Henebury

Newsletter editor: Diane Worth