



President's Report 2016–2017

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It gives me great pleasure to present the President's report for 2016–2017.

In September 2016 we held a very interesting seminar in conjunction with the Launceston Historical Society, with close to a record attendance. Brad Williams threw light on his work on the *Archaeological dig at Launceston College/Gaol*. His excavations revealed that the College's proposed Performing Arts Centre straddled the very earliest part of the gaol stemming from 1825, and we were privileged to get a preview of the College plans to embrace their heritage. I spoke on the topic: *Oral History: What's all the fuss about?*, looking at the reasons behind the many and varied uses of oral history in books, radio, television, exhibitions and the internet. Finally, Margaretta Pos explored the unpublished diaries of her great-great-great grandmother in *My Journey with colonial pioneer Elizabeth Fenton* which included her time in India.

Later in the year as part of Seniors Week at the Launceston LINC I spoke to a large group of people of all ages interested in interviewing relations while researching family history. Finally, in May was the customary oral history workshop, held this year in the newly-redeveloped Glenorchy LINC which now provides an excellent location for the south. The wide range of participants discussed many oral history issues and several participants became members.

It has recently become clear that it would be valuable to have a large sign for events so we employed graphic designer Louise Thrush to design a retractable banner. The committee was delighted with her design and the colourful banner proved its worth at the workshop in directing participants to the right room.

Over the year we were able to place the remaining issues of *Real to Reel* on the website, joining the post-2008 editions. The earliest editions, in some cases consisting of just one page, did not survive in electronic form and needed to be scanned. Later ones had been printed in an A5 format and many thanks are due to Elaine Crisp who reformatted them to suit the A4 layout suitable for converting to a pdf. Now all issues from 1991 onwards are available and their content is searchable by search engines.

We are delighted that member Rena Henderson applied for the scholarship which we offer every two years for someone to attend the National Oral History conference, which this year will be held in Sydney. We try to encourage people to explore the possibilities of oral history and the scholarship will assist Rena to pursue her PhD studies.

At this Annual General Meeting the committee is proposing a small change to the constitution. It was difficult to choose a date for this year's seminar which did not clash with other events including the National conference. The option of postponing the seminar till October was not possible because the constitution requires us to hold the Annual General Meeting 'within three months' of the last financial year, so the proposal is to change the wording to 'within four months'. This will keep all options open.

After several years Elaine Crisp had to resign from the committee due to work commitments, and while we regretted her loss we are delighted that Tasmanian newcomer Jen Thompson agreed to replace her. I wish to thank them both along with Alison Johnston who has continued to take the minutes, Lana Wall who as treasurer keeps track of the finances, and the rest of the committee: Terry Fritsche, Andrew Parsons, Leonie Prevost and Pauline Schindler. And as always I would like to thank the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery for its continued support.