

TASMANIAN MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY: HISTORICAL NOTE

By

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It is appropriate in this year 1966 when Volume One Hundred of the Papers and Proceedings of the Royal Society of Tasmania is to be published that there should be some review of the development and growth of the State Museum in Tasmania.

It should not be thought that though this island State was founded in 1803 when Lt. Bowen, with the ships "Ocean" and "Lady Nelson", formed a settlement at Risdon near Hobart, no Museum was opened until a much later date. Far is such a thought from the truth, for there is good reason to believe that as early as 1828, collections were being made with the thought in mind that when a Museum was actually opened, the collections would rest there. In truth we should say that a Museum was founded as early as 1828, for then the beginnings of collections of various kinds of animal and plant life had been started, catalogued and preserved.

Several Societies were formed in Van Diemen's Land in the early 1800's and by the early 1840's many scientific papers had been read and discussed, most of them dealing with the local fauna and flora. By 1830 deliberate and painstaking efforts were made to collect minerals and rocks, animals and plants, all of which were gathered together by enthusiastic amateurs who had the love of learning in their bones, it being understood that these items would form the beginning of Museum collections.

In this connexion the following Societies should be mentioned:—

(a) The Van Diemen's Land Agricultural Society was formed in 1821 but there is little record of museum collections and no record of the formation of a museum.

(b) The Mechanics' Institution of Hobart was founded in 1826 under the patronage of Governor Arthur. Piesse states ". . . In 1838 Sir John Franklin obtained a grant of £100 a year from public funds. In reply to a deputation from the Institution he said that 'in the new Customs House* now in progress, there was a room constructed which was intended for a Museum . . .'".

(c) In 1829 the Van Diemen's Land Scientific Society was formed and among the objects was the formation of a Museum.

It was stated in the original announcement ". . . and its chief objects are intended to be the collection of useful information regarding the island and its productions, so as to promote the prosperity of the colony—a Museum of natural history for the formation of which Van Diemen's Land is so singularly adapted, abounding as it does

with new and unknown specimens in all the three kingdoms of nature . . .".

On Saturday, 16th January, 1830 (according to the "Hobart Town Courier" of 23rd January of that year) the Annual Meeting was held and in the presence of the Patron (His Excellency Colonel Arthur), the President (Dr. John Henderson) delivered his inaugural address.

Piesse, in "The foundation and early work of the [Royal] Society [of Tasmania]" states "thus successfully launched, the Society met monthly . . . and it established a Museum,".

(d) Piesse states "Early in 1842 Lady Franklin purchased two blocks of land, one of 400 acres, and one of 10 acres, together forming the 'Ancanthe' estate, situated in Kangaroo Valley†, a secluded but picturesque valley at the foot of Mt. Wellington, three miles from the city and a mile from New Town. On the smaller block Sir John Franklin, on 12th March, 1842, laid the foundation stone of a Museum . . .".

"The [Museum] Trust, in regard to the Tasmanian Society, directed that until a College or University, having the approbation of the Bishop, should be established, the trustees were to permit the Museum to be used and inspected by the Society, for sometime established in Hobart Town called the Tasmanian Society or by any other Society or Societies, person or persons, or by the public at large as the trustees might think proper."

"Of the collections little record remains: they are said to have come into the custody of the Society, no doubt at about the time when the cases and fittings were purchased by the Society . . ."

[NOTE.—In 1853 the Royal Society of Tasmania purchased the cases and fittings of the Ancanthe Museum and re-erected them in the Museum then situated in Harrington Street, Hobart.]

It was when Sir Eardley Eardley-Wilmot was Lt.-Governor that a concerted effort was made by all concerned to bring about a reconciliation between the various scientific societies in Van Diemen's Land. On 14th October, 1843, this was achieved to some considerable extent. Unfortunately Wilmot lived to see little of it, but it is no less interesting to note that just prior to his proposed departure from the State, he fell ill, was put to bed in the cottage then used as an official residence by the Secretary to the Governor, where he died. That cottage later became part of the Tasmanian Museum and in fact it is still used as a definite part of the Museum organisation.

It is interesting to trace the development of this Museum through the years until it was a firmly established institution.

* Customs House—Since enlarged and renovated to become the State Houses of Parliament.

† Later named Lenah Valley.

The Royal Society of Tasmania, after its formation in 1843, was zealous in its efforts to develop a really fine Museum, one worthy of the State and of the collections, and of those who displayed such interest in scientific matters. Throughout the years of the nineteenth century the Society played a very prominent part in the development of the State—it pioneered new ventures, developed a wide horizon and gave advice and criticism freely and willingly, advice often asked for by people of the day, criticism often wise enough to make others halt in their actions until further consideration had been given to new proposals.

In the following pages, extracts have been taken from Annual Reports and from the Minute Books of the Royal Society of Tasmania, which concerned the Museum and its development. It is indeed a great memorial to the efforts of all concerned that such a Museum and Art Gallery was fostered and developed and that such collections were made.

1846 Report.—"agreeable to the suggestions of His Excellency (Sir William Denison), the President of the Society, the Council intend, as soon as they have adequate funds at their disposal, to fit up the rooms of the cottage* lately occupied by the Secretary, as a Museum and Reading Room".

"His Excellency has, also, with the most laudable liberality and zeal for the welfare of the Society, engaged to present a valuable collection of specimens of Natural History to the Museum and also to apply to the Royal Society, the Linnean Society and the Antiquarian Society of London, and other Societies to obtain duplicate books on Natural History and Science as contributions to the Library."

"His Excellency has further promised to write to the Secretary of State, to recommend similar contributions from the British Museum and other depositories of learning and science in England."

1848 Report.—"A Museum, intended chiefly for objects in Natural History has been commenced. Already there is accumulated from various localities in the Island, many hundreds of specimens chiefly in the departments of Mineralogy and Geology. Among them are many valuable Fossils.

"There has also been placed in the Museum a considerable collection, of Freshwater Shells from Massachusetts, North America."

1849 Report.—"Large additions have been made to the contents of the Museum and Library during the twelve months.

The rapid accumulation of objects (chiefly in the department of Natural History) in the Museum has made it necessary to expend a considerable sum in the purchase of cases. The same accumulation has rendered it impossible hitherto effectually to carry out a system of classification, or to complete the catalogue of specimens, as proposed. These, however, are points which will meet with early and special attention.

"The Council are bound thankfully to acknowledge that, upon an application made by the Society for aid towards the maintenance of the Museum, His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor, in the exercise of his wonted liberality and desire to foster intellectual cultivation and social improvement, obtained from the Legislative Council a vote of £100 for 1849 and 1890 respectively.

"From this and other sources there has accrued a great accumulation of specimens of Tasmanian rocks and minerals. Presentations have also been made in the same department from Adelaide, New South Wales, and New Zealand.

"Considerable additions have been made to the collection of Shells in the course of the year; and the first on the list of

* The Cottage was at the Botanical Gardens—built in 1829 it became later, the home of the Superintendent of the Gardens.

contributors in this portion of the field stands the name of our late able and zealous coadjutor, the lamented Capt. Stanley.

"Insects have been promised, but as yet no collection has been actually deposited with us.

"Of Crustaceans but few have been acquired.

"Of Fishes and Reptiles a few only have been presented. The Council consider that the student in this portion of the field of natural history here will find paths but little trodden, and which, if pursued, will yield the most ample and interesting returns from time and attention bestowed: the subject is one which the Council earnestly recommends to such members of the Society as have inclination and opportunities for prosecuting it.

"Of Birds, a number of skins have been acquired by gift and purchase . . . The new cases recently filled up are intended for birds: already there is a considerable display of stuffed specimens.

"Of Mammals, few specimens have yet been obtained; skins of the brush kangaroo, the wombat, the kangaroo rat, the native cats, black opossum, etc., are in the cases.

"Presentations have been made of Medals and Coins of various ages and countries, and cases have been purchased for their reception.

"Articles illustrative of the manners and customs of Aboriginal inhabitants of the Islands of the Pacific and elsewhere, with other things curious or rare, have been received from sources too numerous to particularise."

In the Minutes of 22nd June, 1848, reference is made to the use of rooms provided by His Excellency the Governor. On 29th June, 1848, it was reported that His Excellency the President had allowed the Society the use of the sub-committee room at the Legislative Chambers for meetings and in which to place cases and drawers, &c., to form the nucleus of a Museum and Library.

1852 Report.—"The removal of the Society's museum and Library and of the meetings of members from the rooms now forming part of the suite occupied by the Legislative Council and which had heretofore been afforded rent free, for the purposes of the Society, to the Hall in Harrington Street, now held by the members of the Council in trust for the Society under a lease of five years, has thrown upon its funds a heavy annual charge. The rent is £60 a year . . ."

"The accommodation which has been secured cannot long however, prove adequate to the requirements of a Public Museum . . ."

"The Council considers that the first step should be to apply to the Crown for a grant of a suitable piece of land as a site, upon which, as a basis, then to proceed in raising, by public subscription or otherwise, a sum of money adequate to the speedy erection of so much of the plan of an extended edifice as the immediate and not very remote exigencies of the case may demand."

1853 Report.—"The Museum has received large accessions of specimens in the various departments of Natural History.

"The Council have also to intimate to members that His Excellency Sir William Denison has, in reply to an application made to the Government for the grant of a piece of ground suitable as a site for a new Museum, expressed his affection and readiness to comply, provided the Society afford some guarantee that they will build within a reasonable time. It is the opinion of the Council, that, as National Museums are in all countries maintained for the sole benefit of the public, and at the public charge, the Legislature of Tasmania, when appealed to, will neither be slack to acknowledge its appreciation of the principle nor to follow the practice. But the Council consider that a subscription for the purpose of building should be set on foot and brought before the Legislature, as a proof that the Society carries public opinion with it."

1854 Report.—"The Museum has attracted during the year, upwards of 1000 visitors . . . the Council would observe that, owing to the continued want of additional rooms, it is impossible to set up or expose to the view of the public a large proportion of the highly valuable and interesting objects in the possession of the Society."

[NOTE.—An earlier reference in the 1852 Report about the Museum removing to Harrington Street related to that year. The extract above from the report of 1854 which dealt only with matters of 1853 gives the quoted report of the Museum housed in Harrington Street.]

1855 Report.—"The Museum is now open to the public from 12 to 5 o'clock every day. Wednesdays and Sundays excepted. This arrangement, involving the constant presence and permanent payment of an attendant, entails a considerable charge on the funds of the Association, as will be seen by reference to the Balance-Sheet.

"Mr. Milligan has placed in the Museum the whole of his very extensive private geological collection, with a view to its arrangement and separation, and the assignment of a complete series of specimens to the Society. To meet the exigencies of so large an accumulation of specimens in the several departments, the Council have, at a heavy cost, enlarged the means of shelf and case accommodation, by cases purchased from the Trustees of the Franklin Museum* at New Town. Still, there is a very obvious deficiency of space in which to effect a systematic classification of the contents of the Museum, or even to dispose of them so as to produce a popular effect, or one pleasing to the eye.

"The Council, therefore, feel once more called upon to stir up to exertion the friends of the Institution in behalf of larger, more perfect, and permanent accommodation. Few places are better calculated, they still think, for the site of a Museum, conjoined with Zoological Gardens, than the open plot of ground in Fitzroy Crescent, already assigned to the Society for building upon. As labour falls in price, it may be worth consideration whether, if the money for such a purpose were raised in shares, say of £10 each, the Legislature, regarding the Institution as strictly of a public and educational character, may be found willing, if not to contribute directly towards the erection of the edifice, at least to guarantee upon a building capital so produced a moderate rate of interest for 20 or 25 years, upon the understanding that the Society would devise means for paying off a portion of the liability so incurred periodically; say one-fifth every five or six years.

"The Council, has however, reason to believe that the Legislature will directly contribute to an object so valuable and so truly national a sum from the public funds more than equal to any amount raised by public contribution for the purpose; they therefore consider that steps ought immediately to be taken for obtaining subscriptions to be used as a basis for further proceedings—the limited amount of accommodation afforded by the building at present occupied precluding any delay that can be avoided."

1856 Report.—"With reference to the views propounded in the Reports for the last and previous year, touching the urgent and pressing necessity then existing for additional accommodation, and the best means of attaining it in the shape of a new Museum,—the Council, while they express anew their increasing anxiety on the subject, consider that, under present circumstances, they will best further the object by laying before the general body of Fellows the following Correspondence which has passed with the Government on the subject:—

"Royal Society of Tasmania,
Hobart Town, 22nd May, 1856.

SIR,—I am directed by the Council of the Royal Society to solicit the attention of His Excellency the Governor and Local Government to the present position, claims and requirements of

the Museum. The amount of accommodation enjoyed by the Society for the purposes of a Museum and Library, and for meetings of the Society and the Council, limited to one large room, has been found for a considerable time past altogether inadequate to the urgent and rapidly increasing requirements of the Institution. The cases and fittings in the Museum are without exception filled to repletion with specimens and books, and with their contents are insured against fire for £2,000,—a sum much below their actual value, indeed, twice the amount would not replace them, were such an untoward mishap as their destruction by fire to occur.

"I am directed to remark that the contents of a Museum ought not to be subjected to the losses, mischances, and injuries incident to a removal from one building to another, and that wherever such an Institution has been established and grown into national importance, it has found a fixed and permanent habitation under the auspices and at the expense of the State.

"I am to inform the Government, through you, that while a heavy rent is now being paid by the Royal Society for the premises occupied as a Museum in Harrington-street, the accommodation afforded is too narrow to allow of the proper classification, arrangement, and display of the specimens already collected; that this circumstance operates prejudicially to the prospects of the Institution, and most materially abates from the advantages to be otherwise derived from it by the community; and that, inadequate as the present accommodation is, there is no security even for its continuance for any lengthened period, as the lease held by the Society will shortly expire.

"I am further to say that, although the Members of the Society are unanimous in the opinion that additional accommodation is now indispensable, all are not agreed that either of the localities (Fitzroy Place and the Government Domain), which have at different times been selected, is suitable for an Institution to which the Public ought to have the freest possible access.

"I am therefore, on the part of the Council of the Society, to submit to the Government, that as the erection of the Museum will be exclusively for the benefit of the Public and its contents remain for ever an accumulating public property, the cost of the work ought to be defrayed here, as in other countries, from the public purse, and that the Crown (Her Most Gracious Majesty the Queen is the Patron of the Royal Society, under whose auspices the Museum originated), ought in the legitimate exercise of its prerogative, to grant in some central situation in the city a site for the structure, in which case a commodious and symmetrical plan, upon a scale calculated to subserve all purposes for a few centuries to come, would be at once prepared, with a view to its progressive execution as the necessity may arise, so as to secure ultimately, with convenience as regards space, consistence in arrangements and architectural effect.

"Having stated the grounds upon which the Council and Members of the Society have formed the opinions and views they entertain, I am to request that you will move His Excellency the Governor to place on the Estimates for the ensuing year such a sum (and it is thought that less than £3,000 would not suffice) as may be adequate to the erection of so much of a building, for the purposes of a National Museum, as is required at the present time, to be open to the Public under due regulations, and to be for ever vested for such purpose in the Trustees of the Royal Society as now recognized by law.

"I am at the same time to request, with a view to effectuate this object with greater certainty, and in a way to render the Institution convenient to the community, and to secure from it the utmost attainable amount of public good—that you will move His Excellency to grant a piece of Crown land for a site in one of the following situations:—At the corner formed by Macquarie-street and Murray-street, in the quadrangle enclosed by the wall of the gaol, which it is understood will very soon be removed; or at the corner formed by Macquarie-street and Argyle-street, now garden-ground, occupied by the Aide-de-Camp; or in Collins-street, upon a piece of ground between Elizabeth-street and Murray-street, the property of the Crown, which is now occupied as a Coachmaking Establishment.

I have the honour &c.,

JOSEPH MILLIGAN."

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary,

"Colonial Secretary's Office,

10th June, 1856.

"SIR,—I have laid before the Governor your letter of the 22nd ultimo, soliciting, on behalf of the Royal Society of Tasmania, the grant of a site in Hobart Town for a Museum and of a sum of money from the Public Revenue in aid of its erection; and in reply I am to acquaint you that it is con-

* The reference to the Franklin Museum in New Town concerns the building erected through the interest of Lady Franklin, wife of Governor Sir John Franklin. An account of this charming piece of Greek architecture is given in the booklet "Souvenir of Lady Franklin Museum, Hobart"—Mercury Press, 1949.

templated to pull down the present gaol*, and that His Excellency will be glad to reserve a portion of the site on which a Museum may be erected; and further, that he is disposed to entertain favourably the application for a grant of money, but before such a matter can be submitted to the Legislature, plans of the building to be erected should be prepared and approved.

"His Excellency is of opinion that the Tasmanian Public Library has an equal claim with the Royal Society to the consideration of the Government, and he desires me to request that the plans which you procure shall embrace accommodation for the Public Library, and also that no time may be lost in their preparation."

I have the honour to be, Sir,
Your very obedient Servant,
W. CHAMP."

February 9th, 1859.

"Letter from the Hon. the Colonial Treasurer dated 22/1/1859 notifying the reserve of land near the old Government House as a site for the new Museum and stating that the same would appear in the Gazette."

"The Gazette of 29th January contained the notice of the Museum laid on the table."

August 10th, 1859.

"Secretary reported having received and deposited in the Commercial Bank upwards of £1,400 being subscriptions for the erection of a new Museum and that promises to more than the sum of £1,500 have been obtained."

As a result an approach was made to the Hon. the Col. Treasurer claiming payment of £3,000 granted by Parliament last session on condition of £1,500 being raised for the erection of the building by public subscription.

"Resolved that the sum of £1,500 having been raised by subscription to aid in the erection of a new national museum in terms of the Act of Parliament 22 Victoria No. 36 which on this condition grants a sum of £3,000 to be applied to the same object the time has arrived when the building about to be commenced and the work vigorously prosecuted and that an application ought therefore to be at once made to the Colonial Government for the immediate issue of a grant from the Crown of the ground assigned as a site for the same as notified in the Gazette under date 22/1/1859.

"Resolved also that the Secretary do accordingly address a letter to the Colonial Government requesting the issue of such grant in the name of the members of the Council of the (Royal) Society, they being Trustees as defined in the Royal Society Act 18 Victoria No. 4."

1860 Report—"The Council have succeeded in obtaining from the Government a good site† for the New Museum and upon invitation several designs have been furnished for the new building. These will be exhibited at the Annual Meeting and afterward for a week to the public after which the decision of the Council as to their relative merits will be announced."

Extracts from Royal Society Minutes.

January 4th, 1861.

Period for sending in designs extended to 28th January.

January 29th, 1861.

Designs for new museum sent in by "Fides", "Nimrod", and "Utility" we have examined, and directions were given for exhibiting them to the public for a week.

February 9th, 1861.

1st prize given to design submitted by "Nimrod".

2nd prize given for 2nd best of drawings submitted "Utility".

May 8th, 1861.

8 tenders received for erection of proposed Museum in Macquarie Street.

Firm	Tender	Time
Anderson & Sockie	£4625	8 months
J. Gregory	£4490	—
W. Andrews	£4350	10 months
Young & Williams	£4120	—
J. Rait	£3700	14 months
A. M. Nicol	£3075	—
Seabrook & Son	£3580	12 months

Resolved to accept tender of Seabrook & Son.

It was discussed whether it would be desirable to complete the plan of the museum in Argyle Street, the tender of Messrs. Seabrook & Son being so much within the funds of the Society for the building, but it was thought better to leave the surplus amount to meet unforeseen expenses and the cost of fittings for the new museum.

August 12th, 1861.

A committee of Mr. Lewis, Mr. Archer and Dr. Agnew was appointed to make arrangements for laying the Foundation Stone of the new Museum on Saturday next 17th instant at 3 p.m.

August 17th, 1861.

Minutes of a special meeting of Council at the Museum convened for arranging and attending the ceremonial of laying the first stone of the new museum by his Excellency the Governor. (Sir H. E. Fox Young, C.B.)

Mr. H. Hunter, architect of the proposed new museum then produced the inscription, engrossed in vellum, which with the newspaper of the day were enclosed in a bottle. It was then determined that the Council should adjourn to the site of the new Museum, there to receive the Governor in a Body.

The Council then adjourned to the site of the New Museum where His Excellency, Sir H. E. Fox Young, C.B. performed the ceremony of laying the corner stone with the usual formalities.

1861 Report—"A design has been procured (for the building of a commodious Museum and Library) by public competition, contracts have been entered into, and the more substantial parts of the building erected."

1862 Report—Meeting held at the Museum, Macquarie Street at 7 p.m., 29th January, 1863.

"It now only remains for the Council cordially to congratulate the Fellows on this their first Meeting within the walls of their New Museum. The tenure of the old Museum having expired at the close of 1862, its contents have been removed to this building, but are in a temporary state of confusion pending the completion of the exhibition cases. It having been found that the Building Fund was not quite adequate to the completion of the internal fittings, the Council determined to hold for a few weeks an Art Exhibition, with the view of adding to the Fund such a sum as would suffice for this purpose, it being determined, if possible, not to trench upon the resources of the Society. The Exhibition has been most ably and artistically carried out by Mr. Morton Allport, Captain Chesney, and Mr. Hunter, and, as they anticipate that the sum required will thus be realised, we expect in a few weeks to commence the scientific arrangement and classification of our very valuable books, and stores of objects, and specimens of Natural History etc. In the Geological department we shall have the invaluable assistance of Mr. Gould, the Government Geologist; the Rev. T. J. Ewing has kindly undertaken to superintend the classification of the Birds, etc., and for the general arrangements we have secured the services of Mr. Robin, who has long been accustomed to similar duties in Museums in London, and who, on the resignation of Mr. Whiting, in July last, was appointed as his successor at the same salary.

"On the whole we may anticipate that our Museum, when completed, will be an ornament to Hobart Town, a credit to Tasmania, and invaluable as a field for study and reference on almost every subject connected with the Natural History and production of the Colony.

[NOTE.—In Reports and Minutes there is no note of the definite date on which the Museum as such was opened. The Art Exhibition mentioned was held in one room but as there was no money for display cases, and as the Harrington Street premises had to be vacated by the end of December 1862, exhibits and material belonging to the collections were scattered on the floor in the various rooms. The Minutes indicate that members of the Council were distressed to see the rooms in such a state and they agreed to take action to collect money to provide adequate show cases to get the Museum opened as soon as possible. It is presumed this is why the report of 29th Jan. 1863 states "our Museum when completed . . ."]

* The gaol was then situated at the corner of Murray and Macquarie Streets and diagonally opposite St. David's Cathedral.
† This site is the one on which the present building stands.

1872 Report—"Many specimens of our Mammals, Reptiles, etc. have been added to our collection, and others as a means of affecting exchange with other Museums have been of special value. The Native Tigers (*Thylacinus cynocephalus*) have been particularly useful in this respect, special requests have been received from Adelaide and Christchurch, New Zealand."

1885 Report—"The Museum has undergone a change of government, in accordance with an Act passed during the recent session of Parliament. Having by that Act been incorporated, it is now a national institution, with an annual endowment of £500. The management of its affairs is vested in a Board of Trustees, consisting of five officials, a Crown Trustee named by the Governor, and six others elected from the Council of the Society.

"The fact that the Museum has thus for the first time been placed on a secure and permanent basis will unquestionably exert a happy influence over its future development. The number of visitors have been very large, including temporary residents from other colonies and passengers by the various steam routes who make a short stay on their way to and from New Zealand."

[NOTE.—From this date, all extracts are from the Minutes meeting of Board of Trustees of Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery.]

Extract from Act dated 5th December, 1885.

"Whereas the Museum situated in Hobart and known as 'The Royal Society's Museum' has been for many years in the possession of and under the control of 'The Royal Society of Tasmania for Horticulture, Botany and the Advancement of Science' the Society has acquired a large collection of specimens of Natural History and other objects of value, which collection is now deposited in the said Museum and is the property of the Society; and whereas the Gardens situated in the vicinity of Hobart and known as 'The Royal Society's Gardens' . . . ; and whereas the Society has proposed to surrender all claims to the Museum . . . and to the Gardens . . ."

Trustees, 1st Meeting Jan. 29th, 1886.

The Chief Secretary (Sir Adye Douglas) was elected to the Chair. Mr. Alex. Morton was appointed Curator and Secretary to the Tasmanian Museum and Secretary to the Gardens. Salary as Curator £200 with residence, gas and fuel etc. and as Secretary £50 p.a.

At that first meeting Mr. J. M. Arnold was appointed Caretaker and Messenger and Mr. F. Abbott was appointed Superintendent of the Botanical Gardens at a salary of £200 p.a. Hon. J. W. Agnew was appointed Treasurer.

July 1st, 1886.

"A letter was received from the Chief Secretary stating that the plan of the new wing to the Museum had been submitted to Cabinet and approved.

"Because of obscene writings appearing frequently in the Visitors Book recommended that the book be discontinued."

September, 1886.

"A letter received from the President of the Mechanics Institute, Launceston stating that they were desirous of forming a Museum in Launceston and as a room has been recently set apart for that purpose they were desirous that leave of absence might be granted to Mr. Morton so that he might arrange the collection for them. Leave of absence as suggested was granted . . ."

May 5th, 1887.

Letter from Hon. the Minister for Lands and Works stating that with the concurrence of His Excellency it had been decided to hand over the cottage hitherto known as the Private Secretary's cottage to the Trustees of the Tasmanian Museum and Botanical Gardens as a residence for the Supt. of the Botanical Gardens. Trustees accepted.

November 3rd, 1887.

Curator reported "that he had that day received a fine specimen of *Salmo* sp. caught in the Huon by his Excellency* and presented by him to the Museum. The fish weighed 29 lbs., length 35 inches and girth 26 inches.

June 5th, 1889.

Curator reported that on 22nd ult the new wing had been officially opened by his Excellency. (Sir R. G. C. Hamilton.)

January 31st, 1890.

"In reply to a letter from the Royal Society of Tasmania to the Government of May 9th, 1888, requesting that the Island known as Franklin Island might be vested in the Trustees of the Society, the Government forwarded a large number of letters bearing on the subject and informing the Board of Trustees that they would be prepared to accede to the request."

December 30th, 1890.

"Letter from the Mayor of Launceston on behalf of the Municipal Council of that City requesting that the Curator's services as Curator to the Victoria Museum and Art Gallery of Launceston might be granted. The Curator (Mr. Morton) stated that the duties in connexion with the Launceston Museum would not take up a great deal of time as a caretaker was to be appointed who would take his instructions from Mr. Morton and it would be necessary once or twice monthly to visit Launceston. The Trustees thought it would be highly desirable to assist the Northern Museum and that if agreeable to Mr. Morton the approval of Trustees would be freely granted."

July 5th, 1892.

"The Curator stated that as several applications had been received from the different Museums asking for specimens of Native Tigers, and not having many in duplicate, he had met the Minister of Lands who had informed him that if the Trustees would pay a pound a head he would instruct the different wardens to forward specimens when brought to them for the Government reward, to the Museum.

The Curator was instructed to thank the Hon. the Minister and inform him that they would be prepared to pay the sum asked for, for a limited number of 15, provided they were good specimens."

July 31st, 1893.

"Letter from Mr. Alfred Mayson, Bicheno, informing the Curator that he had been able to secure the skull of a Tasmanian female aborigine, the name of the native being 'Waubadebar', died June, 1893, aged 40 years. Mr. Mayson promised to forward the skeleton by the next trip of the 'Warrentinia'."

Small note which says,

"Here lies Wauba Debar,
female aborigine
of Van Diemen's Land.
Died June, 1893
Aged 40 years.

This stone is erected by a few of her white friends."

[NOTE.—No reference to situation and stone, etc.]

October 4th, 1898.

"In view of the expected arrival of the Antarctic Expedition on the way to the South Pole, the Government be asked to co-operate with the Trustees of the Museum and the Council of the Royal Society in arranging a reception to be given to the Leader of the Expedition, Mr. Casten Borchgrevink, F.R.G.S., and the members of the scientific staff on board the 'Southern Cross'."

September 19th, 1899.

"The Bishop of Tasmania wrote stating that he came across on Vansittart Island (Furneaux Group) the graves of 17 Tasmanian Aborigines buried there by G. A. Robinson. Curator was authorised to examine the site with a view of securing the skulls and skeletons and the Chairman undertook to write to the Chief Secretary for permission to examine the bodies."

June 10th, 1906.

"The Director drew attention to a discovery of a number of bones that had been obtained on King Island among them had been determined as belonging to an extinct Emu. This recent discovery was of great scientific interest . . ."

* Sir Robert Hamilton.

December 23rd, 1907.

Col. W. V. Legge wrote saying that two skins of the Tasmanian Emu had lately been found and placed in the National History Department of the British Museum.

March 6th, 1911.

"The Chairman . . . informed the meeting that the Thylacine was still a plentiful animal in certain parts of the country."

July 2nd, 1917.

The action of the Chairman and the Hon. Curator in purchasing a live Tasmanian Tiger for £15 was approved.

April 12th, 1920.

"The Curator reported that a *Nototherium* had been discovered in the Mowbray Swamp and that it was extremely probable that this specimen would be obtained for the Tasmanian Museum."

May 31st, 1920.

"The *Nototherium* specimen was to be described in the Papers and Proceedings of the Royal Society of Tasmania by Messrs. Scott and Lord . . ."

"Resolved to write to the Premier asking that action be taken by the Government to prevent the exportation from Tasmania of valuable natural history specimens."

July 30th, 1926.

"Director reported he had purchased a Thylacine specimen for £10."

April 2nd, 1928.

"Committee wished to draw attention to the fact that within the last 2-3 years, mutton birds had commenced to breed on Franklin (Betsey) Island . . . the Trustees might consider the advisability of ceasing to lease the Island and of having it declared a sanctuary."

May 7th, 1928.

Reported that English blackbirds had been seen in the vicinity of the gardens and that the Government fruit experts hoped to have the birds exterminated before they became a pest."

May 31st, 1935.

"Reported that a set of casts of the aboriginal rock carvings at Mt. Cameron West was being made at the Adelaide Museum and would be presented to the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery."

April 6th, 1936.

"Two Wainwright watercolours purchased for £10 each."

April 8th, 1937.

"A letter was read from the Chief Veterinary Officer, Department of Agriculture to the effect that it was proposed to make experiments on the control of rabbits by the disease Myxomatosis and in this connexion enquiries were being made to ascertain the views of the Trustees regarding Franklin Island. In case it was decided to conduct experiments on this island the Trustees agreed that permission would be given to do so."

In 1950 it was agreed that the Botanical Gardens and the Museum should act under separate Boards of Trustees. Both had been started by the Royal Society of Tasmania, both had been administered by the Council of the Royal Society with a separate committee, for each institution.

A new Act was prepared for the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery and this came into operation in 1952 as did the new Act for the control of the Botanical Gardens.

Museum Directors.

1860-1861	J. Whiting—Curator.
1862-1884	Thomas Roblin—Curator.
1884-1907	Alexander Morton: 1886-1903—Curator; 1903-1907—Director.
1908-1912	Robert Hall—Curator.
1912-1918	Professor T. T. Flynn, D.Sc.—Acting Curator.
1912-1917	G. Hardy—Assistant Curator.
1918-1933	Clive Lord: 1918-1922—Curator; 1922-1933—Director.
1934-1952	Joseph Pearson, D.Sc.—Director.
1953 (Jan.-June)	R. Colbron Pearse, Acting Director.
1953?	William Bryden, C.B.E., Ph.D.—Director.

The following sources of information and references were used in preparing this brief history:—

- PIESSE, E. L.—*The Foundation and Early Work of the Society*. Royal Society of Tasmania Publication, 1913.
 SOMERVILLE, J.—*The Royal Society of Tasmania, 1843-1943*. Published 1944.
 Minutes and Reports of Royal Society of Tasmania.
 Minutes and Reports of Board of Trustees of Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery.