

An insight into TMAG's Trustees

Friends President John Sexton interviews Geoff Willis, Chairman of the TMAG Board of Trustees.

goes beyond duty of care and goes more to their values and their personal commitment to see TMAG flourish.

There are seven Trustees, and they set the policies and strategic direction of the Museum. Two are appointed by the Royal Society, one by Hobart City Council, and four by the State Government. The Chair is chosen by the Trustees, and Geoff believes it is a very well balanced group.

"Currently we have two eminent professors, two people for whom art and culture is a central part of their lives, two with strong business experience, and a

I asked him about the negative feedback resulting from the decision to close Mondays.

"Unfortunately it was not really a matter of choice, but a financial necessity. TMAG has to function mostly within a budget amount each year provided by the State Government, and Monday was the quietest day by far of the week, so, like most Museums around the world, the decision was made.

"However, we will try to make the most of the six days open, and we hope to make available special tours and other events on certain Mondays during the year for visitors in town."



Detail, *Creatures from the corners of old maps 2008* from the exhibition *Things I Once Knew: The Art of Patrick Hall*

Geoff Willis became Chairman of the TMAG Board of Trustees following Sir Guy Green's retirement after eleven successful years in that role. I caught up with Geoff recently to discuss the role of the Trustees and to hear from him how they envisaged the future for TMAG.

The Trustees are similar to a Board of Directors, but with important differences. They are people who are highly engaged with the Museum and the cultural life of Hobart, and are all volunteers. Their prime responsibility is the stewardship for the Museum and its diverse and unique Tasmanian collections. But their involvement

community representative who is an alderman. This affords a fine body of capability for the future", he says.

Although the Trustees do not have the power to hire and fire, they were very involved in the process of engaging Janet Carding as Director. Now, says Geoff, "we're working closely with the new Director and staff to jointly develop and refresh the vision of TMAG. The central planks of this will be for TMAG to be a cultural hub for the State, highlighting the Tasmanian identity; TMAG to emerge as a key destination for tourists; and to ensure that TMAG has a digital future."

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Mr Geoff Willis, Chairman and Governor in Council appointment

Alderman Helen Burnet, Hobart City Council representative

Professor Jim Reid, Royal Society representative

Professor Ross Large, Royal Society representative

Miss Julia Farrell, Governor in Council appointment

Ms Brett Torossi, Governor in Council appointment

Ms Penny Clive, Governor in Council appointment

The Union Club

THE UNION CLUB preceded the Tasmania Club as a gentlemen's club in Hobart, being set up in the 1820s. Its motto, 'Ships, Colonies, Commerce' was displayed on its custom-designed dinner service, items of which are held in the TMAG collection, and also in the collection of the Allport Library and Museum of Fine Arts.

Our late, lamented Friends committee member Ross Fouracre also had a plate from the service: how he got hold of it is lost in the mists of time. After his death, his effects went to auction, and his nephew Don Abel very kindly bought the plate in order to donate it to TMAG. Thank you Ross, and thank you Don!

Don Abel presents the Union Club plate to TMAG Senior Curator of Decorative Arts Peter Hughes.



Membership renewals

Your committee have been busy processing renewals: about half have come in already.

In addition to payment by direct deposit into the Friends bank account, by cheque or through the TMAG Shop, you can also renew your membership and pay online by credit card or PayPal through our website friendsoftmag.org.au

If you've lost your membership renewal form and aren't able to update your membership on the website, email us at friends@tmag.tas.gov.au, or call 6165 7001 and leave a message to receive a replacement renewal form.



The Centre for Learning and Discovery: aiding a life-long journey

Andy Baird, Acting Deputy Director: Audience Engagement

EVERYONE WANTS TO LEARN. It's innate in animals and humans are no different except perhaps our remarkable capacity to engage both the body and mind in this activity through things of our own creation. TMAG with a plethora of objects from both the natural and creative worlds is one of the richest repositories for learning in the state.

In 2008 TMAG created the Centre for Learning and Discovery, a hub of professionals and programming to aid the learning journey across the diversity of the collection. The Centre, or CLD, came about on the back of a significant philanthropic gift from the Detached Cultural Foundation that dramatically increased our programming capacity, especially in the arts. With the redevelopment CLD found a physical home in the heart of the museum with two multi-purpose activity rooms from where programming for all ages extends into the galleries, the courtyard, the indigenous welcome garden, and beyond.

Programming through CLD is diverse, eclectic and for many, surprising. From our Curious Caterpillar playgroup, Family days, thematic school programs such as our current Tasmanian Aboriginal cultural program *milaythina makara takila-ti* 'Country forever in our hearts' to our AccessArt on-site and state-wide outreach programs, our U3A seniors programs and daily visitors tours; we use the springboard of the collection to explore important themes and issues in society. Along the way we all, educators and participants alike, develop new skills in art appreciation, science methodology, observation, aesthetics, enquiry and more. The list is long: compassion, connection, inspiration...

Though eclectic, programming is strategic. Recently we've focused on increasing access to the collection for



Teangi Brown, CLD Indigenous Cultures Officer with an item for the new 'Black Box: Tasmanian Aboriginal cultural loan box', a 3D printer bust of himself to contemporise the Benjamin Law busts.

groups who've traditionally had barriers to their engagement. We've endeavoured to overcome hurdles such as geographic, socio-economic, age, disability, ethnicity and others and give voice and access for those who also own the collection, have a right to its wealth and wonderment, and can enjoy learning.

We are able to do it only because we gain support from partners. Approximately half our staff and programming are funded from funds external to the Department of State Growth. Funding from Detached, from other donations, from grants, from partnerships with other government agencies, it's a tenuous existence but also energising because it keeps us looking for new ways to partner, to engage, to invite on the learning journey. Got an idea, resources, a desire to make a difference; come share with us.

MEMBERSHIP CARDS There may be a delay before you receive your new card. In the meantime, you can use your old card for discounts at the TMAG Shop and Café, and entry to the members' lounge. If you are travelling overseas, remember that we are happy to supply you with a letter requesting that comparable Friends' groups extend their courtesies to you. This isn't a guarantee, but it's worth a try.

Recent events ... and there's more on our website



Things I Once Knew: The Art of Patrick Hall

This was an event with a slightly different format from the usual: a walk and talk by the artist Patrick Hall around his exhibition. A number of members reported that they particularly enjoyed this format and felt it was one of the best Friends functions they had been to. Our sincere thanks go to Patrick Hall for his generosity in taking part in this event and for leading such an entertaining and informative discussion.



The Suspense is Awful: Tasmania and the Great War



Curator Ian Terry with member Anne Tucceri

This exhibition presents a fascinating view into the lives of those who were left at home when many Tasmanians went off to become participants in various ways in the campaigns of the First World War. With many of the members who attended having personal connections to the war, the exhibition and Curator Ian Terry's explanation of it was a fascinating and engrossing event.

Friends President John Sexton, TMAG Director Janet Carding and member Peter Stanton

Memento Mori exhibition and the Allport Library and Museum of Fine Arts



Allport Curator Caitlin Sutton and artist Lauren Black (pictured) spoke at our visit in May.

Proposed constitutional amendment

AT THE AGM of the Friends of TMAG in September, there will be a motion presented to amend certain parts of the Friends' Constitution.

The Constitution hasn't been amended since 1999 and, as you can imagine, there are some aspects that are now somewhat out-of-date. For example, the Constitution (Paragraph 9) allows only one method of payment of bills: that is, by cheque. As you will be aware, cheques are becoming an endangered species in commercial life, and your Committee needs the freedom to operate financially in other ways.

Similarly, the Constitution (Paragraph 6) prescribes what the membership fees are and they similarly haven't changed since 1999. The current Committee isn't proposing a change to annual membership fees, but rather the constitutional ability to change them should there be a reason to do so.

Another area that the Committee feels needs amendment relates to our connections with our sister organisations, the Foundation and the TMAGgots. The Friends are the senior of the three, in terms of their formation date, but where there were clear inter-connections between us and each of the other two in previous times, we now see a situation where the three organisations have become quite independent of each other, and the links between the Friends and the Foundation that are referred to in our Constitution (Paragraphs 2 and 5) no longer seem appropriate, particularly as the TMAGgots have never had any such constitutional connection to the Friends. The Committee is proposing that those historical and restrictive links be severed by the removal of all reference to the Foundation in the Friends' Constitution.

There is no proposal to alter the basic meanings, values and purposes of the Friends as established in the Constitution: all the amendments we are proposing are either to reflect current practice, to ease restrictions (particularly in financial matters), to remove historical anomalies and/or to amend minor wording issues. The changes do not in any way affect the fundamental principles, values and meaning of the Friends of TMAG, and they affect only 5 of the 35 paragraphs in the Constitution.

The current Constitution and the proposed amendments in detail can be read on the Friends website friendsoftmag.org.au.

Upcoming events

Keep an eye on your inbox for invitations a few weeks ahead of each event. Details will also appear on our website friendsoftmag.org.au, where you will be able to book and pay for events. The site is frequently updated with news and photos of past events, as well as early advice of future events, so it's worth checking in regularly.

September ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
5.30pm Thursday 24 September
Guest speaker will be Janet Carding, Director, TMAG

October ROYAL TASMANIAN BOTANICAL GARDENS
5.30pm Wednesday 7 October
The Gardens are much more than just a big park. Staff at the RTBB are instrumental in a wide range of scientific and horticultural programs aimed at conserving Tasmania's unique plant species. Join us in the Conservatory for a talk by staff on the fascinating work that goes on behind the scenes, along with light refreshments. Why not come early and enjoy a stroll through the Gardens before gathering at the Conservatory at 5.30pm?



Membership that rewards you



The Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery collects, houses and safeguards our natural and cultural heritage and provides an insight into other cultures.

The Friends are a group of people formed to bring the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery to Tasmanians and Tasmanians to TMAG. The Friends aim to help TMAG with our time, our talents and our money and to make more information available to the community about the TMAG and its collections. Part of the function of The Friends of the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery Inc. is to raise funds to assist with the purchase of significant items for the TMAG.

The Friends of TMAG are part of a wider Australian group with similar aims, the Australian Federation of Friends of Museums (AFFM).

You can read more about Friends on our website friendsoftmag.org.au

The Friends of the Tasmanian Museum & Art Gallery Incorporated

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Committee Members:
Jean Boughey David Coleman
Ruvé Etchell Digby Longhurst
Andrew Ross Matt Spencer
Ex Officio:
Janet Carding, Director, TMAG

OFFICE HOURS

We are run entirely by volunteers so we can't staff our office on a fulltime basis. We almost always answer the phone at TMAG on Tuesdays and Thursdays between 10 and 12, so that's the best time to call. An email to friends@tmag.tas.gov.au will get our prompt attention. Our website friendsoftmag.org.au carries lots of information. Comments and suggestions are always welcome!

Views expressed in this newsletter reflect the views of the author and not necessarily those of the editor, the Friends of the TMAG or the TMAG.
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