

**Australia's most
significant art prize
for a landscape
painting of Tasmania**



ADFAS Pokolbin TOUR OF TASMANIA *History, Art and Landscape*

by Heather McKendry

Member - ADFAS Pokolbin

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INTRODUCTION

In March 2017, a group of 18 happy travellers plus tour leader, Kathleen Olive, took a delightful tour of Tasmania to coincide with the annual award of the Glover Prize for Landscape Painting on the 250th anniversary of John Glover's birth. The tour started in Launceston on 9th March, 2017, and finished in Hobart 6 days later.

DAY 1 - LAUNCESTON

We were off to a good start in Launceston on a beautiful afternoon with a visit to the World Heritage listed Woolmers Estate. The story of this estate is that of the early settlers in Van Diemen's Land. William Archer of Hertford, UK, lived with economic insecurity as a miller but sought economic security for his sons. To that end, the sons emigrated to Australia in the early 19th Century.

Son Thomas emigrated in 1812, and was followed by brothers Joseph in 1821, William 1824 and Edward 1834. Thomas had a brief but successful public service career during which he became a member of parliament before settling near the village of Longford in



Looking through the Wool Shed window, Woolmers

1817 and establishing Woolmers, which was named after an estate in Hertfordshire, UK. He imported and bred fine merinos and by 1836 was running 25,000 sheep with the help of more than 50 convict workers.

He took advantage of the boom in the British wool industry from 1820s to 1840s to gain economic success but the property was never again farmed by his several descendants.



Woolmers Estate from the Air

Five generations of Archers lived here. In 1994 the property was left to the Archer Historical Foundation, now the Woolmers Foundation. It was one of the largest privately owned properties in the Tasmanian colony and now provides a record of pastoral life in the 19th and 20th centuries. The property boasts a National Rose Garden in the old apple orchard.

We celebrated the start of our tour with a friendly welcome dinner at “Stillwater”, one of Launceston’s premier restaurants, located on



Imagine letting us in here for our meal!

the Tamar River. Our happy band of nineteen was served in the ‘cellar room’ – and we started our enjoyment of Tasmanian food and wine – “Stillwater’s” wine list was named Best in Tasmania in 2016 by Gourmet Traveller!

DAY 2 - JOHN GLOVER

Our Tasmanian tour had begun! Our second day was dedicated to artist John Glover, his artwork and history.

John Glover, Landscape Painter, was born in 1767 near Leicester, UK. He worked the fields and became a nature lover and renowned painter in oil and water colour. However the Royal Academy displayed this latter genre poorly and he was never appointed as a member.



*John Glover Self Portrait
Queen Victoria Art Gallery Launceston*

Glover made the decision to emigrate to Australia and three of his sons sailed for Van Diemen's Land in 1829 whilst Glover and his wife arrived in Hobart in 1831 with their other son John Richardson; Glover was then aged 64 years, and his wife was aged 73 years. Two married daughters remained in England.

Glover eventually settled on a land grant on the Nile River, in north east Tasmania on the northern slope of Ben Lomond, calling his property Patterdale, after a Westmoreland village where he once lived.

A sunny Friday morning saw us strolling to the Launceston Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery for a guided tour of John Glover paintings, and other colonial works. There was the unexpected addition of a current exhibition titled "The Art of Science: Baudin's Voyagers 1800-1804", with original drawings and paintings from the French voyage funded by Napoleon Bonaparte. It is the first time these beautiful works have been displayed outside France. It includes spectacular images of Tasmanian Aborigines.

Our afternoon was also filled with John Glover. Firstly, we visited his home, Patterdale Farm, which was built as a two storey Georgian house of rubble stone on the first floor and timber on the second. Many of Glover's oil paintings of the farm have been widely reproduced and feature in major art galleries around the world.



Patterdale Farm being restored

The farm is being completely restored by Rod and Carol Westmore. Not only did they treat us to an outline of the extensive plans they have for the much needed restitution of the building and grounds, we were treated to afternoon tea in the conservatory of their delightful nearby home, Nile Farm.

This was despite them hosting Ben Quilty, one of that evening's Glover Prize judges.

One more local treat awaited – The Chapel at Deddington, closely associated with John Glover, who is buried there with his wife Sarah. We heard the story from volunteer Maureen, who has researched files in England, that the son known as John Richardson Glover, who



The farm and garden as it was

sailed to Australia with his parents, was possibly born to a Mary Richardson. Maureen believes he was treated poorly, in keeping with an illegitimate son of the father.

John Glover was a large, heavy man with two clubbed feet and

became a patriarchal figure who let nothing stand in his way. He is said to have lived a happy family life at Patterdale as a country squire and successful painter. Here he discovered a new landscape, light, foliage and atmosphere. He responded to the raw and primitive features of his new country. His work's rusticity became its strength.

THE GLOVER PRIZE FRIDAY 10TH MARCH

It is 250 years since John Glover was born; he was deemed "the father of landscape art in Australia". The Glover Prize is an annual Award for a landscape painting of Tasmania. The inaugural Prize in 2004 attracted 75 entries.

Our tour group was given special early entry to view the artworks for the 2017 Glover Prize at Evandale. A record 336 artworks, from every state and territory of Australia and overseas, entered this year. 42 pieces were judged by a panel of three, including Ben Quilty.

The winning entry "La Barque de Dante/Macquarie Harbour Party Barge" by Raymond Arnold, was awarded the \$40,000 prize.



The 2017 Glover Prize winner

The Queenstown artist also won the Prize in 2007. He describes his winning painting as essentially about getting old and dealing with mortality. The barge on Macquarie Harbour, an area of Tasmania that is often in the news, is “where people get wasted” – a contrast to the death of one’s friends and family when one reaches a certain age. Although not everyone’s favourite, it was actually mine.

DAY 3 - WE HEAD TO HOBART.....

Our next day was spent on the bus driving down Heritage Highway, along the picturesque east coast of Tasmania.

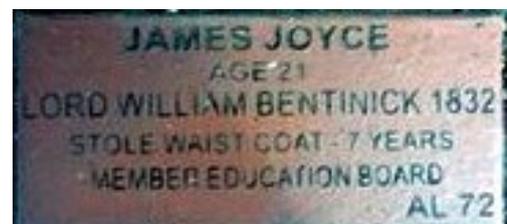
First stop was Campbell Town, “where south meets north” in Tasmania. Governor Macquarie’s wife, Elizabeth Campbell, is responsible for the name of the town and its river, the Elizabeth. We walked along the sidewalk decorated with commemorative convict bricks, and admired The Red Bridge, fully convict built, and opened in 1838 from bricks made locally.



Paula Cameron and Heather Wilson at the Red Bridge, Campbell Town

Diemen’s Land in the early 1800s and many of the places and features built during that time are still standing, like the Red Bridge.

We had met the convict history at Woolmers Estate, but were now being made aware of their history of crime, punishment, hardship and survival in one of the harshest and most beautiful places on earth. Over 76,000 men, women and children were transported to Van



I found this convict brick quite interesting – note the name



*Judy Wearne and Heather Wilson at
Freycinet National Park*

We had a welcome stop to walk in the beautiful Freycinet National Park.

Lunch was served at Springvale Vineyard – delightful Tasmanian fresh food and outstanding wine once again. Heather Wilson received valuable input and support for the tour from Jill Bale, our current National ADFAS Chairman. Jill's knowledge and experience was fundamental to the success of our journey. Both Jill and her husband were also at Springvale enjoying a lovely lunch

We passed through the area around Triabunna, previously home to a now defunct wood chipping mill, being revived as a fishing and fish processing town and gateway for trips to Maria Island, one of the early convict settlements.

Our Heritage journey continued to lovely Richmond, in the Coal River Valley, home to settlers on land grants and also the site of a convict station and barracks. Finally, beautiful Hobart – and our first experience of rain. That did not matter to a tired crew who were welcomed by lovely beds at the Lenna of Hobart Hotel, just above famous Salamanca Place.

DAY 4 - THE HUON VALLEY

Our next adventure was a guided visit to the amazing Tahune Forest Airwalk, and Huon Pine Track. Our guide, Ian, told us the history of the magnificent Huon Pines and all the enormous eucalypts grown in the area and now quarantined from major logging. Another feature is the Leatherwood Eucalypt, from which comes the dark Tasmanian Leatherwood Honey.



The thrill of the Airwalk over the Huon and Picton Rivers

members of ADFAS Hobart, who kindly took us on a tour of the garden, then provided a splendid afternoon tea and tour of the features of their home, which they dearly love.



High Peak House, Mt Wellington

We lunched in style once again at Home Hill Winery, on our way to visit High Peak historic house and garden.

The magnificent High Peak, an 1891 Queen Anne Tudor style house on the slopes of Mt Wellington, is owned by Jim and Annabelle Grant,

The house has an extensive garden initially planted by Jim's great grandfather, Charles Henry Grant, the original owner, who was a pre-eminent businessman and speculator in his time, including directorships in the Cascade Brewery, Hobart Gas and the Hobart Coffee Palace.

The house is situated high on Mt Wellington, and was initially a summer escape for many generations of the Grant Family from the

late 1800's. It is one of the few heritage Tudor-style buildings in Tasmania. The exterior woodwork is of exceptional King Billy Pine from trees cleared on the site. The garden has rare monkey puzzle trees and giant sequoia trees, which can live for thousands of years.



We were all invited to use the "special toilet" at High Peak House

We were all invited to try the special "toilet" - the porcelain was found during a garage cleanout, and is probably French, and displayed by Annabelle by having a Perspex lid over it. A laugh for all of us on another delightful tour day.



Jim Grant explaining parts of the garden at High Peak House

DAY 5 - A DAY IN HOBART

We started with a delightful walk through Salamanca Place, and opposite Constitution Dock to visit the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery. We were treated once again to an excellent guided tour.



"My Harvest Home" John Glover 1835 – noting his rising status as a gentleman farmer, endorsed by the depiction of assigned convicts who are labouring in red vests. (Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery)

Both this gallery and the one we visited in Launceston have a fine display of the heritage of the history of landscape, art and life in this island colony.

The Aboriginal history cannot be ignored; the Black War was a period of violence between British colonialists and Aboriginal Australians in Tasmania from the mid-1820's – 1932. It was mainly guerrilla warfare on both sides, claiming the lives of more than 200 colonialists and between 600 and 800 of the indigenous population. Historians have debated whether the Black War can be defined as an act of genocide.



"The Conciliation" 1840 – depicts the 1831 meeting between George Augustus Robinson and the Big River and Oyster Bay tribes, the last of the free Aboriginal people captured during the Friendly mission. By the time the picture was painted, the Flinders Island Mission had been a disastrous failure. (Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery)



John Glover "Natives on The Ouse River Van Diemen's Land" 1838 AGNSW

MONA - NO PLACE FOR FUDDY-DUDDIES

Sustenance was provided by a magnificent lunch in “The Source” Restaurant at MONA, with a view of the Derwent and an artwork in itself. In fact, all of MONA is an artwork.



Enjoying a lunch at “The Source” before visiting the exhibits at The Museum of Old and New Art....MONA

The MONA gallery space is encased in a three-level subterranean cave cut into 240-million year old Triassic sandstone on the Derwent River Bank. It is an edgy place, and there is diverse genius at play in this nod to aesthetic extremism.

Down on the first level is the delightful “Bit Fall” a two-storey pulsing waterfall that drips words. Immediately we head individually to the current exhibition, “On The Origin of Art”, where owner David Walsh has asked four of his science buddies the question – “We Need Art. But What For?” Four answers. Four Exhibitions. “One man’s crusade to piss off art academics”. If my quote from the MONA programme offends you, this is not the place for you. Walsh is an eccentric who made money in online gambling, and quotes his interests as Sex and Death. He grew up in a Catholic Family, but when he became an atheist at 12, he made a pact with his parents to go to the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery instead of attending church on Sundays.

We wander as individuals through the Exhibitions, and through the rest of the Gallery, meeting occasionally with looks that indicate we are all a little overwhelmed. We were attached to iPods to provide information while drifting through, to explain artworks and installations.



*Yours truly in one of the exhibitions
"The Origin of Art"*

Another confronting area is a wall of 151 porcelain moulds of female genitalia. Each to his/her/its own!



*The infamous "Cloaca Professional", fondly called
the Poo Machine, is fed at 11 am and produces at
2pm daily. It is apparently a commentary about
art being shit.*



*Our group descended to the Ferry to take us back to Hobart; even the
dedicated MONA transport is an art work, painted in camouflage
colours, and the on board workers look like Top Gun Pilots.*

In 2015 The Lonely Planet Guide named MONA the best modern art gallery in the World; this enfant terrible of the Australian Art scene is not for everyone.

We all welcomed drinks that evening after our confronting day; National ADFAS Chairman Jill Bale and her husband Bill generously hosted us for cocktails at their lovely apartment near our hotel, and we then had our final dinner at Peacock and Jones, a fabulous restaurant on the iconic Hobart waterfront in an old sandstone warehouse. This was the last supper of our tour and once again we celebrated with more outstanding Tasmanian food and wine.

OUR FINAL DAY

Tasmania's convict past was again brought to our attention by a guided visit to the Cascades Female Factory. It is Australia's most significant site associated with the female convict story. Between 1788 and 1853 about 25,000 women were transported to Australia for their crimes. One half came to Van Diemen's Land, most spending time in one of the colony's five female factories.

The Cascades Factory operated as a female convict prison from 1828-1856. We were all solemn hearing tales of the women who walked through Hobart town from the prison ships at the docks to this dark and damp site at the foot of Mt Wellington.

In the 1850s, Van Diemen's Land was transformed by three major events. Convict transportation ended with the last convict transport in May 1853. The colony's name changed to Tasmania officially in 1856 – it lost the name associated with shame. The end of convict transportation enabled self-government to progress, and the Constitution Act was passed in 1854, giving the colony responsible government.

And so, we were invited to Tasmania's beautiful Government House for morning tea with Her Excellency Professor the Honourable Kate Warner, Governor of Tasmania and Mr Richard Warner. They had

attended an ADFAS Hobart lecture the previous week by Paul Atterbury "The Canal Age". Paul's March lecture at ADFAS Pokolbin titled "New Horizons" evoked memories of the history and art of Tasmania.



Morning tea with Her Excellency Professor the Honourable Kate Warner, Governor of Tasmania and Mr Richard Warner at Tasmania's beautiful Government House



*Her Excellency Professor the Honourable Kate Warner, AC
The Governor of Tasmania, and Mr Richard Warner*

request the pleasure of the company of

Dr Heather McKendry

at Government House

on Tuesday, 14th March, 2017

at 11.00 a.m.

*Government House
Tasmania*

Dress: Lounge Suit/Day Dress

ONLY RSVP ON 6234 2611 IF YOU ARE NOT ATTENDING

PLEASE PRESENT THIS CARD ON ARRIVAL

VICE-REGAL

Yesterday morning at Government House, the Governor of Tasmania, Professor the Honourable Kate Warner, and Mr Warner hosted a visit by members of the Australian Decorative and Fine Arts Society Pokolbin NSW Branch.

A trip to Mt Wellington (weather permitting) was our final activity. And the weather indeed permitted – windy but the views were perfect.



*Heather Wilson and Robin Pope enjoying the sun out of the wind
Mt Wellington*



*Charles Pope capturing the view
Mt Wellington*

A big thank you to ADFAS travel and Kathleen Olive - and of course our band of 18 travellers who are now best of friends after our wonderful visit to Tasmania.