

THE LAUNCESTON PLAYERS SOCIETY RECORDS

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HELD BY THE

QUEEN VICTORIA MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY

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INTRODUCTION

The Launceston Players Society was founded in September 1926 to spread appreciation and understanding of the stage within the community. It is now reputed to be Australia's oldest continuously operating amateur theatrical society. From an original membership of 19, it had 172 members by 1938. Some original members had been associated with earlier groups (eg The Strollers). The Society's membership has always drawn on diverse sections of the Launceston community. Meetings are held monthly, and executive officers are elected annually. In any one year, a member may take part in several dramatic, musical and social activities, including acting, direction, stage management, or simply be a member of the audience. Some well known names associated with the Launceston Players include Colonel G E Harrap (first President), Mrs W K McIntyre (an early member), Max Oldaker (actor), Valerie Pennefather (singer), and John Lohrey (director).

The first play mounted by the Society was *Nothing But The Truth* (1926). By 1946 it had put on 32 public productions as well as some private ones. In the 1930's and 1940's the Launceston Players held regular play readings in the former Mechanics' Institute. During the 1939-1945 War they continued presenting two plays each year, contributing the proceeds to patriotic funds. In 1947 they performed at a Community Drama Festival in Sydney, and have had a close association with the Tasmanian Drama Festival since its inception that same year.

The Society has a reputation for a consistently high standard of presentation. Its repertoire ranges from drama to comedy, with usually three or four performances of each production. In 1960 the Launceston Players amalgamated with the Launceston Musical Festival Society (founded in 1942), their first joint production being *Bless the Bride*. The Players have since staged several musicals. They have also engaged in Old Time Music Hall activities, revue, period re-enactments, musical comedy, and for several years had a lively theatre restaurant association with the former Launceston Hotel.

By 1950 the Society's wardrobe included some 500 pieces, and continues to be a comprehensive costume collection (available for hire) representative of all periods of theatrical history. For many years this collection was housed in the Albert Hall.

The Society has never had its own theatre. Productions have been staged in the Academy Theatre, the former Little Theatre (Tamar Street), Princess Theatre, National Theatre, the 7NT radio station studio in the Quadrant and, most recently, in the Earl Arts Centre. Post war hopes to have a theatre built on Windmill Hill as part of the Launceston War Memorial Community Centre were unfulfilled. Attempts to develop a new Little Theatre complex in the late 1970's and early 1980's were also unsuccessful, despite state and local government lobbying, and a shortlived purchase of Chalmers Church for the purpose in October 1986

The Launceston Players Society records include minute books (covering executive and annual general meetings), correspondence, newsletters (*News-n-Views* has been published monthly since January 1950), programmes (autographed and mint copies), and other miscellaneous material. The collection was acquired by the Queen Victoria Museum in November 1994 and has been added to in June 2002 and June 2003.

THE RECORDS

<i>Item No</i>	<i>Contents</i>	<i>Date Range</i>
1. MINUTES OF MEETINGS		
1/1	Minutes of meetings	1929–1930
1/2	Minutes of meetings	1930–1932
1/3	Minutes of meetings	1932–1934
1/4	Minutes of meetings	1934–1937
1/5	Minutes of meetings	1937-1942
1/6	Minutes of meetings	1952-1963
1/7	Minutes of meetings	1963–1974
1/8	Minutes of meetings	1974–1988
1/9	Minutes of meetings	1989–1991
1/10	Minutes of meetings	1992–1994
1/11	Agendas and minutes of meetings	1995–1996
1/12	Agendas and minutes of meetings	2000, 2002
1/13	Agendas and minutes of meetings	2003–2006
1/14	Agendas and minutes of meetings	2007–2008
1/15	Agendas and minutes of meetings	2009
1/16	Agendas and minutes of meetings	2012–2013
1/17	Agendas and minutes of meetings	2014–2015
1/18	Agendas and minutes of meetings	2016–2017
1/19	Agendas and minutes of meetings	2018–2019
1/20	Agendas and minutes of meetings	2020–2022

2. LEGAL RECORDS

2/1 By-laws, miscellaneous legal papers, legislation agreements and licences, and constitution, including list of readers 1973-1979

3. CORRESPONDENCE

3/1 Correspondence (General) 1973-1974

3/2 Correspondence (General) 1975

3/3 Correspondence (General) 1976

3/4 Correspondence (General) 1977

3/5 Correspondence (General) 1978

3/6 Correspondence (General) 1979

3/7 Correspondence (General) 1980

3/8 Correspondence (General) 1981

3/9 Correspondence (General) 1982

3/10.1 Correspondence (General) 1983

3/10.2 Correspondence (General) 1983

3/11.1 Correspondence (General) 1984

3/11.2 Correspondence (General) 1984

3/12 Correspondence (General) 1985-1986

3/13 Correspondence (General) 1987-1994

3/14 Correspondence (General) 1989-1991

3/15 Correspondence (General) 1992-1996

3/16 Correspondence (Launceston Arts Centre (Little Theatre) Committee) 1979-1984

3/17 Correspondence (General) 2004-2005

3/18 Correspondence (General) 2006-2007

4. NEWSLETTERS

4/1	<i>News-n-Views</i> (includes notices regarding play readings, 1949)	1950 -1955
4/2	<i>News-n-Views</i>	1956 - 1959
4/3	<i>News-n-Views</i>	1960 - 1965
4/4	<i>News-n-Views</i>	1970 - 1990
4/5	<i>The Launceston Players</i>	1990-2016
4/6	<i>Follow Spots</i>	2017-2023

5. PROGRAMMES

5/1	Launceston Players Society Programmes: <i>Hay Fever, Autumn Crocus, Autumn Manoeuvre, George and Margaret, French Without Tears, Noel Coward visit 1940, The Strange Case of Blondie White, Business First, You Can't Take It With You, When We Are Married, Penny Wise, Britannia of Billingsgate, They Came to a City and April Showers, The Late Christopher Bean, Twelfth Night, Drama Festivals 1947-1949, Heaven On Earth, The Man from the Ministry, Macbeth, The Bartared Bride, Journey's End</i> (1933, autographed), <i>They Came to a City and April Showers</i> (1944, autographed)	1929-1949
5/2	Launceston Players Society Programmes Tasmanian Drama Festivals 1950-1959, <i>Mr Bolfray, The Man With a Load of Mischief, Dr Knock, Much Ado About Nothing, Toad of Toad Hall, The Miser, Peter Pan, Berkley Square, The Girl Who Couldn't Quite, Life With Father, Rookery Nook, Housemaster, Wildflower</i> (Tasmanian Musical Festival Society production), <i>Tobias and the Angel, A W Monds Theatre Bequest Commemoration, While the Sun Shines, Waters of the Moon, Sabrina Fair, The Man Who Came to Dinner, The Geisha</i> (Tasmanian Musical Festival Society production), <i>On Monday Next, Tir Nan Og, All My Sons, Thank the Moon is Blue</i> etc), <i>Tony Draws a Horse</i> (1950, autographed), <i>Thark</i> (1958, autographed), <i>All My Sons</i> (1958, autographed), <i>Four One-Act Plays</i> (1959, autographed)	1950-1959
5/3	Launceston Players Society Programmes <i>The Women, Bless the Bride</i> (joint production with the Tasmanian Musical Festival Society), Tasmanian Drama Festivals 1960-1964, <i>Death of a Salesman, The Importance of Being Ernest, My Three Angels,</i>	1960-1964

- Alice in Wonderland, Maria Marten, Jack and the Beanstalk, Dear Delinquent, The Miracle Worker, Salad Days, Johnny Belinda, Show Boat, Miracle Worker* (1963, autographed)
- 5/4 Launceston Players Society Programmes 1965-1969
The Diary of Anne Frank, The Glass Menagerie, East Lynne, The One Day of the Year, Tasmanian Drama Festivals 1965-1969, The King and I, The Amorous Prawn, A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum, Fool's Paradise, Carousel, Gone to Pot, Summer of the Seventeenth Doll, Kiss Me Kate, Under the Yum-Yum Tree, Lock up Your Daughters, The Amorous Prawn (1966, autographed), *Fool's Paradise* (1967, autographed), *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll* (1968, autographed)
- 5/5 Launceston Players Society Programmes 1970-1973
Two for The Seesaw, Tartuffe, Tasmanian Drama Festivals 1971-1973, The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie, South Pacific, Arms and the Man, Auntie Mame, Bliethe Spirit, The Beaux Strategem, Oliver, The Boy Friend, Two for the Seesaw (1970, autographed), *Passion, Poison and Petrification* (1970, autographed), *Aunt Mame* (1972, autographed)
- 5/6 Launceston Players Society Programmes 1974-1979
Arsenic And Old Lace, The Sound of Music, She Stoops to Conquer, The Killing of Sister George, Private Lives, Peter Pan, My Fair Lady, The Strollers, The Five Finger Exercise, Hotel Paradiso, A Night of Gilbert and Sullivan, Gigi, As Long as You're Happy, Dusa, Fish, Star and Vi, A Day in the Death of Joe Egg, The Pirates of Penzance, Launceston Hotel Theatre Restaurant programmes
- 5/7 Launceston Players Society Programmes 1980-1989
No, No Nanette, Cinderella (with others), *Guys and Dolls, Ten Times Table, Hello Dolly, Bedroom Farce, Noonday Demons, Only an Orphan Girl, The Bed Before Yesterday, The Fantasticks, Sequence of Events, The School for Scandal, Cop Out, It's Your Shout, The Taming of the Shrew, The King and I, Annie, Evita, A Streetcar Named Desire, Cabaret, Godspell, Launceston Hotel Theatre Restaurant programmes*
- 5/8 Launceston Players Society Programmes 1990-1993
A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum, My Fair Lady, Nunsense ; undated programmes

Tony Draws a Horse, Fresh Fields, Trumpet to the Wind, Say Who You Are, Breaker Morant, The Bad Samaritan, Boeing-Boeing, Lady Windemere's Fan, The Boy With a Cart, The Real Inspector Hound, We Still Call Australia Home, Grog for the Guv)

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| 5/9 | Launceston Players Society Programmes
<i>One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest</i> (2017), <i>Stepping Out</i> (2018)
<i>1984</i> (2019), <i>Picnic at Hanging Rock</i> (2019), <i>The Bridesmaid Must Die!</i> (2021), <i>Marjorie Unravelling - Tasmania's Fabulous Edna!</i> (2021),
<i>Bums on Seats</i> (2022), <i>The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (Abridged)</i> (2022), <i>Away</i> (2023), <i>A Clockwork Orange</i> (2023) | 2017-2023 |
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6. MISCELLANEOUS RECORDS

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|-------|---|-------------|
| 6/1 | Membership Lists | 1961-1986 |
| 6/2 | History of the Launceston Players Society, including a manuscript by Alison Andrews | 1980s-1990s |
| 6/3 | Submission regarding the Christ Church - Milton Hall complex by the Launceston Arts Centre (Little Theatre) Committee | 1981 |
| 6/4.1 | Corporate fundraising video for the restoration of Chalmers Church | 1987 |
| 6/4.2 | Report on Chalmers Church by Peter Parkinson, theatre consultant | 1989 |
| 6/4.3 | Department of Construction report on Chalmers Church | 1989 |
| 6/4.4 | Application for National Estate funding by The Launceston Players Society Incorporated for Chalmers Church | 1989 |
| 6/4.5 | Minutes of meetings of committees involved with the restoration of Chalmers Church | 1987-1989 |
| 6/4.6 | Documents and correspondence regarding the restoration of Chalmers Church | 1985-1990 |
| 6/5 | Production working papers
<i>The King and I</i> (wardrobe notes (includes photographs), production and rehearsal schedules, budget notes, correspondence, set plans etc) | 1927-1984 |
| 6/6 | Production working papers
<i>Annie</i> (budget and publicity notes, Part 1 production and rehearsal schedules, correspondence) | 1985 |

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| 6/7 | Production working papers
<i>Annie</i> (audition forms also includes Part 2 photographs) | 1985 |
| 6/8 | Scripts
<i>Gigi</i> , <i>Grog for the Guv</i> and <i>Eliza Comes to Stay</i> | 1979, nd |
| 6/9 | Melodrama scripts
<i>Maiden Mist</i> , or; <i>Winsome's Woeful Wanderings</i> ; <i>Billabong Balderdash</i> , or;
<i>Pretty Priscilla's Predilection</i> ; <i>A Fruity Melodrama</i> , or; <i>She Was Only a Poor Little Mill Girl</i> ; <i>Only an Orphan Girl</i> ; <i>Passion, Poison & Petrification</i> , or;
<i>The Fatal Gazogene</i> | nd |
| 6/10 | Records of the Light Operatic and Musical Group: Minutes, 19 Jul. 1972-Feb. 1979; Publicity, 1972; Miscellaneous correspondence, documents and correspondence, 1970-1973 | 1970-1979 |

7. Photographs

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| 7/1 | Miscellaneous loose photographs and one scrapbook of photographs of the Cabaret production, 1987 | 1930s-1987 |
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8. Ephemera

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| 8/1 | Share certificates of the National Hall Company Limited, flyers, certificates and stickers | 1948-2016 |
| 8/2 | Posters <i>Oversized item</i> | 1980s-2016 |

9. Scrapbooks

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|-----|---|-----------|
| 9/1 | Scrapbook of newspaper cuttings and programmes | 1928–1938 |
| 9/2 | Scrapbook of newspaper cuttings, programmes and photographs | 1928–1959 |
| 9/3 | Scrapbook of newspaper cuttings, programmes and photographs | 1960–1967 |
| 9/4 | Scrapbook of newspaper cuttings, programmes and photographs | 1965–1984 |
| 9/5 | Scrapbook of newspaper cuttings and programmes | 1985–1997 |

OTHER SOURCES

Andrews, Alison [*History of the Launceston Players*] (to be published ?1996)

QVM, Oral history interviews: Anne Edgeworth (1992 OH 32), Elizabeth Godfrey-Smith, Mac Woodroffe and Jacqueline Horne (1992 OH 22 (MC))

QVM, Community History Department secondary file : 'Theatre'

Northern Reference Library, Local Studies Room: newscutting file 'Launceston Players Society'