

MEDIA RELEASE

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180 year-old portrait of Tasmanian Premier uncovered

An early portrait of former Tasmanian Premier Tom Chapman has been uncovered and will be displayed at the City of Launceston's Queen Victoria Art Gallery later this year.

In researching Chapman's life and contribution to politics for an upcoming biography, local Historian Nigel Burch sought out descendants of Chapman. That search led him to meet Gladys and Karen Chapman in Langley, British Columbia who had owned the portrait for some time but knew nothing of Tom's life or significance.

The portrait can be dated as being painted in London between 1837 and 1841, but so far the artist is a mystery. Gladys Chapman asked for the portrait to go to a place where it would be appreciated, so Burch suggested it come to QVMAG for restoration and display.

Chapman was Premier from 1861-1863, and also served as Treasurer, Colonial Secretary and President of the Legislative Council.

He wrote the first Tasmanian Constitution, creating two Houses of Parliament, and set up the Launceston and Hobart City Councils. Chapman was also President of the Anti-Transportation League.

Launceston Mayor Albert van Zetten says the fragile work will now be cared for by QVMAG's Conservation team.

"The City of Launceston thanks Gladys Chapman for this generous donation of a significant piece of Tasmanian political history."

"It's hoped the portrait will be on display mid-year following conservation, and will join other objects in the Chapman collection on display."

For further information or to arrange a photo opportunity, please call QVMAG Marketing and Media Coordinator Claire Campbell on 0438 691 066.