



WESTBURY & DISTRICTS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

June - August 2026 Newsletter

Preserving yesterday for tomorrow.

Welcome to our June–August newsletter. As winter settles across the village, we’re looking forward to sharing stories, events and opportunities to connect with Westbury and districts rich history.

National Family History Month – Discover Your Story

August is recognised across Australia and New Zealand as National Family History Month – a time dedicated to exploring the stories, people and places that shape who we are.

First established in 2006 by the Australasian Federation of Family History Organisations, this month – long celebration encourages people of all ages to look into their ancestry, whether they’re just starting out or already deep into their family research.

Here in Westbury, we’re especially fortunate to be surrounded by a rich and well-preserved local history. From early European settlement to the generations of families who have called this area home, our town holds countless stories waiting to be discovered. The Westbury & Districts Historical Society plays an important role in preserving these stories and keeping our shared history alive for future generations.

Exploring family history isn’t just about names and dates—it’s about understanding our identity, strengthening connections across generations, and uncovering the stories that make each family unique. Even simple steps like chatting with older relatives, sorting through old photographs, or visiting your local historical society or library can reveal fascinating insights.

National Family History Month is also a wonderful opportunity to get involved in your community. The Historical Society welcomes anyone who would like to be part of celebrating and preserving Westbury’s history. You don’t need any experience—just a willingness to help out, share ideas, and be

part of something meaningful. Whether it’s assisting with events, supporting activities or helping behind the scenes, every contribution is valued.

Why not take some time this August to start your own journey into the past? You might just find that your story is closely connected to the the history of Westbury itself. To learn more or to get involved please visit the Historical Society’s website and get in touch.

Westbury & Districts Historical Society
Preserving Yesterday For Tomorrow

AUGUST IS
National
FAMILY HISTORY
MONTH

*Discover your story. Explore your past.
Celebrate Westbury.*

From the earliest settlers to the families who call Westbury home today, every story is part of the rich history of our community. Let’s keep these stories alive for generations to come.

**Our past.
Our people.
Our community.
Our Westbury.**

GET INVOLVED!
No experience in history needed – just a willingness to help, share ideas and be part of something meaningful.
Everyone is welcome!

HELP ORGANISE EVENTS
Assist with planning and community activities.

SUPPORT ACTIVITIES
Be part of events, displays and special projects.

MAKE A DIFFERENCE
Help keep Westbury’s history alive.

To learn more or get involved, please visit our website to contact us.

Our Irish Roots in Westbury

Westbury's story is closely linked to Irish migration during the 1800s.

Irish men and women arrived in Van Diemen's Land both as transported convicts and as free settlers. Many came seeking opportunity; others arrived under far more difficult circumstances. Regardless of how they came, they became part of the fabric of this community.

By the mid-19th century, Irish families were farming the fertile land surrounding Westbury. They established Catholic worship in the district and formed strong, intergenerational family networks that shaped village life.

The St Patrick's Festival is a living tribute to these enduring connections.

Meet Our President – Amanda Taylor

Behind every strong community organisation is a dedicated group of volunteers, and at the heart of our Historical Society is our President, Amanda Taylor, whose passion for preserving local history helps keep our stories alive. From uncovering fascinating pieces of the past to bringing people together through shared heritage, her role is both inspiring and invaluable. We sat down with Amanda to learn more about her journey, her interests, and what makes our local history so special.



1. What first sparked your interest in history?

I have always been interested in history, but I think that my obsession with family history started when I was about 15 years old and we visited my aunt who was a keen family historian. She showed me some old documents, including information about our convict ancestry and I was interested to learn more. And so the journey started!

2. How did you become involved with the Historical Society, and how long have you been President?

We moved to Westbury in 2012 and purchased a heritage building. Soon after, we visited the Historical Society to find information about our building and before we knew it, we were members, attending the meetings and volunteering at the history rooms. I took on the President role in 2015.

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3. What do you enjoy most about being President of the Historical Society?

I love being able to help people find out information about their ancestors - whether it is finding a photo they have never seen, discovering where their ancestors lived or showing them where their ancestors are buried. It is wonderful seeing the joy that people have when they learn a little bit more about their ancestry.

4. Is there a particular story, person, or piece of local history that fascinates you most? Why?

There are so many fascinating stories and people in our local history, and my favourite stories change regularly! One of my current obsessions is Reverend John Bishton, who was the first resident Anglican minister of Westbury. He purchased land which he subsequently sold to ex-convicts in the area of St Giles or Hell's Kitchen, believing that by owning land the men would be more responsible in character. Did it work? I will let you know after more research.

5. What do you think makes our local history so special or unique?

Westbury has such a diverse history - the early convict history, the military pensioners and strong Irish connections which are still celebrated today, the very English community with the Village Green and hedgerows, the importance of agriculture from the early tenant farmers to the current poppy industry, strong religious influences including the founding location for the Tasmanian Sisters of St Joseph, and so on. It is very special that so many of the buildings and traditions connected to our early history are still intact today.

6. What has been one of the most rewarding or memorable moments during your time with the Society?

There are so many memorable moments within our Society. But from a personal perspective, I started formal studies in family history in 2015 and am currently completing a Masters in Public History and Cultural Heritage. It is very rewarding to be able to study areas of Westbury history as a part of my university studies, and to be able to contribute to our understanding of our history (and in some cases rewrite the history).

7. What would you say to someone in the community who is thinking about getting involved or visiting for the first time?

Just do it! You don't need any particular skills or knowledge of Westbury history (although it would be great if you do!). It is an excellent way to meet others who are interested in history and to contribute to our community. And of course, we are a fun and friendly group.

What's Happening Around the Village – June to August

 Westbury Historical Society Meeting – Last Monday of the month at Supper Rooms

* 29 June

* 27 July


* 31 August

 Westbury Historical Walking Tours - First Sunday of the month

* 7 June William Street (meet Love Lucy Boots)

* 5 July Anglican Cemetery (meet Cemetery)

* 2 August Sportsground & Probation Station
(Meet Love Lucy Boots)

 The Westbury Market – Third Saturday of the month at St Andrew's Anglican Church

* 20 June

* 18 July

* 15 August

 Weekly Westbury parkrun - Every Saturday 8:50am for 9:00am start at Town Common

If you have something happening that connects to our village history or community life, please let us know for next quarters edition.

Visit Our History Rooms

 Westbury Historical Society

Rooms

Lyall Street


Westbury TAS 7303

 Open Wednesday & Thursday

10:00am – 2:00pm

Swing by and say hello! Our delightful volunteers are ready to help with all your family history mysteries, local sleuthing, and historical treasures. Everyone's invited, and the price of admission? Absolutely free!

BECOME A MEMBER


 Join for \$15 per year


By becoming a member of the Westbury Historical Society, you are:

- ✓ Supporting preservation of local archives
- ✓ Protecting important heritage sites
- ✓ Encouraging historical research
- ✓ Strengthening community connection
- ✓ Ensuring future generations know their story

 Visit our website

<https://westburyhistorical.org>

 Contact us via our online form

 Phone 03 6393 1006

We warmly welcome new members of all ages. Whether your family has been here for generations or you've only just arrived, there is a place for you in preserving Westbury's story.

Sunday Strolls

You are invited to join members of the Westbury & Districts
Historical Society for guided tours of Westbury

Hear fascinating stories of our village history

Meet on Sunday afternoons (first Sunday of the month),
starting at 2.00pm from Love Lucy Boots*
(*except for Cemetery tours)

Cost \$10 per person per tour

Contact Amanda for more information on 0467 097 791
or email amanda.m.taylor@bigpond.com

3 May – Village Green and Town Common

7 June – William Street

5 July – Anglican Cemetery (*start at Cemetery)

2 August – Sportsground and Probation Station

6 September – Hospitals, Doctors and Midwives

4 October – Catholic Cemetery (*start at Cemetery)

1 November – Mystery, Murder and Mayhem

6 December – Pubs and Inns

