



The History of Colour PROGRAM

Saturday 8th & Sunday 9th August 2026

Oatlands Supreme Court House

7 Campbell Street Oatlands

11am—3pm

Tickets at Humanitix



Ian Boersma • Michael Bremer Trainor • Hayley Curtis

Paula Dredge • Melanie Fihelly • Bee Anne Hay

Warwick Oakman • Huw Sandaver • Alan Townsend

Brad Williams



Saturday 8th August 2026

11:00 Introduction

11:10 Michael Bremer Trainor: Paint and colour in historic buildings

Michael will explore the types of paints and pigments available for domestic interiors in the 19th century compared to more 'high end' interiors such as stately homes & castles, the pros and cons of traditional paints and the dilemma of modern colours vs historically correct pigments and paints

11:40 Ian Boersma: Choices about applied finishes are integral to heritage conservation

Ian examines the importance of making well-informed choices about the finishes we apply to heritage buildings, the changes in Tasmania regarding how colours and materials are applied to heritage buildings and the challenges faced in managing this aspect of heritage conservation. Ian will also discuss the more active regulation of the colour aspect of works in the Tasmanian Heritage Council's 2025 *Works Guidelines for Historic Heritage Places*.

12:10 Lunch Break (FYO Lunch)

1pm Melanie Fihelly: Reading the Room: Informed Choices in the Conservation of Historic Interiors

Melanie will present a case study on identification and recreation of Victorian, Edwardian, and Interwar colour and patterned decorative schemes. Drawing on detailed archival research and physical evidence, she will outline her approach to the conservation treatment of historic interiors and the practical use of traditional materials and techniques to preserve authenticity and cultural significance.

1:30 Warwick Oakman: A social history of colour

Warwick will bring his extensive knowledge of early 19th century interiors to examine the choices and materials available to colonists in Van Diemen's Land and the popular culture underpinning them. By so doing, he will challenge many long held assumptions about how people in the past lived.

2:00 Jennifer Nicholls: The impact of Open House Hobart

Jennifer will speak about her experience with the Australian Institute of Architects, focussing on the establishment of Open House Hobart, a program which has introduced thousands of people to heritage interiors and colour schemes unimaginable to modern sensibilities.

3:00 Brad Williams: Vertical Archaeology

The question is often asked "how do I choose a traditional colour scheme for my heritage building?". Whilst there are standard colour schemes and professionals who can assist, it is usually possible to let the building tell you what it wants with some simple investigation. With the aid of case studies, this presentation will provide you with a range of do-it-yourself techniques to investigate and potentially re-create a traditional colour scheme (both interior and exterior), as well as identifying finish types and choosing a suitable material.

Sunday 9th August 2026

11:00 Dr Paula Dredge: All that Glitters is not Gold

The first wallpaper applied to the parlour of John Glover's home *Patterdale* utilises a gold-coloured decorative pattern. Paints made from metallic flakes of brass are versatile materials which can be applied by different methods to give a variety of reflective finishes. The Patterdale wallpaper is an excellent technical study of metallic flakes applied to produce a sparkling effect particularly during evenings lit with candles or lanterns.

11:30 Hayley Curtis: Shall we Poison our Homes?

Emerald green (copper-acetoarsenite) and Scheele's green (copper arsenite) gained great popularity within the home during the 19th century, a mythology later formed surrounding the toxicity of these green copper-arsenic pigments. The identification of these potentially toxic pigments is key within cultural heritage collections, yet their characterisation can be challenging even with advanced analytical testing. The identification of these pigments across a series of green 19th century Tasmanian wallpapers will be explored, outlining the findings made as well as the difficulties encountered

12:00 Huw Sandaver: A Blue of Uncertain Temper

Blue verditer was an inexpensive pigment used in nineteenth-century wallpapers, valued for its colour and coverage but capable of shifting from sky blue to green according to how it was made and dried. Its powdery character and carbonate composition can make it difficult to distinguish from other blue pigments in aged surfaces. Five Tasmanian wallpaper fragments, considered alongside a reconstruction, provide a case study in the manufacture, appearance and potential identification of this uncertain blue.

12:30 Lunch Break (FYO lunch)

1:30 Alan Townsend: the Social History behind the samples

Alan will share the social history behind the individual wallpaper samples chosen for testing by Dr Paula Dredge, Hayley Curtis and Huw Sandaver—who were their original owners, where were they found, how did they end up in the Southern Midlands Collection? And did their original owners die a horrible death from the toxicity of the pigments?

2:00 Bee Anne Hay: The Wilderness Society, a Case Study

Bee will discuss the use of non-traditional colour within heritage informed hierarchies and tonal relationships to create outcomes that are both contemporary and appropriate to place.

2:30 Guided Tour of the Southern Midlands Wallpaper Collection

Alan Townsend and Linda Clarke will provide a guided tour of the collection, housed in the Oatlands Gaoler's Residence, 2 Mason Street Oatlands

Hayley Curtis



Hayley graduated from the Master of Cultural Materials Conservation at the University of Melbourne in 2025 and is currently working as a rare book and paper conservator at Mannix Library. She has an interest in the field of technical studies and the possibilities of analytical analysis in understanding and characterising materials within cultural heritage. She also holds a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) majoring in Art History with a particular focus on architectural history and spatial narratives.

Huw Sandaver



Huw Sandaver is a current student of the Masters of Cultural Materials Conservation at the University of Melbourne and Manager of the University of Divinity's Library Hub network. Within conservation he has looked at methodologies for identification of blue pigments, and within the library and information science field he specialises in rare books cataloguing, with a focus on early modern printed works.

Alan Townsend

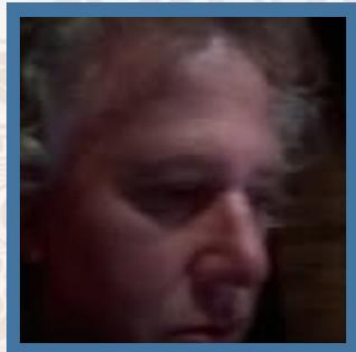


Alan is a self taught reproducer of historic wallpapers. Working in collaboration with Southern Midlands Council, Alan and colleague Linda Clarke have developed a substantial collection of historic wallpapers sourced from Tasmanian buildings (now available through Trove). Alan also specialises in researching Tasmania's colonial period, with a particular interest in scandals of the 19th century and the operation of colonial courts.

Warwick Oakman



Warwick is a third generation antique dealer and an architectural historian, having graduated from UTS with a BA (Hons) in Design and Applied Arts, Environment. Warwick has extensive experience providing advice on colonial buildings in Tasmania and has contributed to Tasmania's built heritage as a board member of the National Trust. Warwick is also the proprietor of *Arkwright & Carpenter*, an Oatlands shop selling Tasmanian vernacular furniture & books on Australian architecture



Michael Bremer-Trainor

Michael Bremer-Trainor is an expert in the decorative restoration of historic buildings. With 30 years experience on projects in the UK and internationally, his range of skills include water-gilding, oil gilding, trompe l'oeil, woodgraining, marbling and stencilling. As a colour consultant he can advise on appropriate colours and schemes for period buildings and can hand-mix/match any colour.



Paula Dredge

Dr Paula Dredge is a Lecturer at the Cripps Institute for Cultural Conservation, University of Melbourne and minor thesis supervisor for Huw and Hayley's minor theses on the identification of blue and green pigments used in the collection of Tasmanian wallpapers from the Southern Midlands Council collection. Paula's research interests lie in the areas of technical art history and scientific analytical techniques for the identification of pigments and binders.

Ian Boersma



Ian graduated from Curtin University with a Bachelor of Architecture in 1995 and for the next five years worked in a Perth-based practice that specialised in heritage conservation. In 2000 he became Conservation Project Manager at the Port Arthur Historic Site. After five years in the role he joined Heritage Tasmania, where he leads the heritage advisory team. Ian has a keen interest in the archaeology of applied finishes and how well-considered choices in colour and materials can be used to appropriately present and conserve heritage places. He is keen to see Tasmanian heritage practitioners grow in their understanding of this field, especially now that much traditional knowledge and skill is being lost within the painting and decorating trades. He is optimistic that a revival of past practices may offer an antidote to the ubiquitous grey acrylic that coats too much of our built environment today.

Melanie Fihelly



Melanie Fihelly is a Conservator with a Bachelor of Applied Science in Conservation of Cultural Materials, and is a Professional Member of the AICCM. She specializes in the conservation of built heritage, sculptural artworks, historic objects, and archaeological materials; and also provides training and preventive conservation advice to the museum and gallery sector. Melanie is a committee member of the Longford Academy and has a diverse set of skills and extensive knowledge gained from experience in both the private sector and major cultural institutions. Over the past 25 years, she has worked on projects at Queensland Museum, Queensland State Library, Queensland State Archives, Anzac Square Brisbane, Government House Brisbane, Port Arthur Historic Sites, Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, MONA, The Australian Museum, the Art Gallery of Western Australia, the Western Australian Maritime Museum, The National Archives (Perth), The Australian War Memorial, Conservation Works (Canberra), plus numerous private clients, councils, historic houses, and regional museums.



Bee Anne Hay

Bee Anne Hay is a practicing architect with postgraduate education in archaeology and heritage management, and is the Heritage Adviser to Woolmers Estate World Heritage Site. She specialises in heritage conservation, adaptive reuse and sensitive renovations and alterations to historic buildings.



Brad Williams

Brad is an historical archaeologist and heritage practitioner with a BA (Hons) in Historical Archaeology, a Grad Cert in Marine Archaeology, a Master of Cultural Heritage Management and a Graduate Diploma of Environmental Planning from UTAS. He is the Manager of Southern Midlands Council's Heritage Program and founder of Praxis Environment.

Brad has managed a number of major conservation works including the Oatlands Military Precinct buildings (Courthouse, Gaol & Commissariat) and through these and other projects has developed extensive skills in the analysis and management of historic surface finishes.



Jennifer Nicholls

Jennifer is the Executive Director of the Tasmanian and International Chapters of the Australian Institute of Architects. After graduating from the University of Tasmania with a Bachelor of Environmental Design and a Bachelor of Architecture (Hons), Jennifer worked in teaching on Tasmania's West Coast and at the Centre for Aboriginal Studies at Curtin University. Moving back to Tasmania, Jennifer took up her role with the AIA, where she became the founder of Open House Hobart, and has been producing this free public event for well over a decade. She continues to develop public engagement to promote the architectural profession in Tasmania and to help the Tasmanian chapter of the AIA embrace the wider community and highlight the contributions made to society by architects.