

**LINDISFARNE HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC**  
**REMARKS BY**  
**HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC**  
**GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA**  
**GOVERNMENT HOUSE, MONDAY 2 MAY 2022**

Good afternoon and a warm welcome to this Government House celebration marking the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of your Lindisfarne Historical Society.

I begin by paying my respects to the traditional and original owners of this land: the palawa people. I acknowledge the contemporary Tasmanian Aboriginal community. I recognise a history of truth, which acknowledges the impacts of colonisation upon our First People. I stand for a future that respects and acknowledges Aboriginal stories, culture, language and history.

When Bernadette Peck first contacted us enquiring about the potential for an anniversary event here, she mentioned a number of reasons for your society's founding in 1992. A major reform was the urgent need to record the wealth of untold and undocumented stories of Lindisfarne's citizens, particularly as many were elderly. That alone is a fine goal for your society: oral history is so important and may be all too often neglected until too late.

From a little research on the history of your area, the various place names in past usage are, as you all no doubt know, quite intriguing. To quote from the official record of Placenames Tasmania, which was formerly known as the Nomenclature Board:

“The Hobart suburb of Lindisfarne endured an identity crisis in its early years. It was first known as Hobermans Bay or Oglemans Bay (both apparently named after the same person). The area was later named Prices Bay (after an early resident John Price) and became Lindisferne in the 1840s (after Lindisferne House, where Price lived). A major housing development occurred in 1892 and the developers named their subdivision Beltana. However, this name was often confused with nearby Bellerive so the suburb was renamed Lindisfarne in 1903.”<sup>1</sup>End of quote.

But the same official record also mystifyingly states that: “Beltana is a Post Office name in South Australia. This duplication, it appears led to the change to Lindisfarne.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [Place Naming \(Nomenclature\) in Tasmania | Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania \(nre.tas.gov.au\)](https://nre.tas.gov.au), accessed 28 April 2022.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

The mystery continued in a contemporary newspaper account, which reads:

“The town was first called Beltana and became a town under the Town Boards Act on 6 November 1894, its first election being held on 26 November 1894, electing Town board members ... In July 1903 the Board resolved to ask the Governor to alter the name of the town from Beltana to Lindisfarne and on August 18, 1903 the proclamation altering the name of the town was gazetted.”<sup>3</sup>

The mystery behind the name did not quite end there! The Lindisferne House I referred to, was spelt “f-e-r-ne” with the “e” dropped at some later stage. But why then was a third change made, with a new ending “f-a-r-n-e”, as it is today?

The name derives from the tiny island of Lindisfarne – “f-a-r-n-e” – off the coastline of Northumberland. This is the Holy Island with all its ancient association with Monks and early christianity.

Interestingly, a 1736 work of history called *The History of Newcastle Upon Tyne* by Henry Bourne refers repeatedly to “Lindisfern” spelt “f-e-r-n”, first settled by St Aidan in 635 AD. (And after whom St Aidan’s Hall in our eastern shore Lindisfarne is no doubt named:)<sup>4</sup>

Another 1834 work of English history used the same spelling – f-e-r-n – claiming that the name derived from its being opposite a small brook called the Lindis!<sup>5</sup>

Fast forward to the year 2012 and an Oxford University academic, Dr. Caitlin Green, writes that there is no chance the island would have been named after a tiny brook two feet wide.<sup>6</sup>

Well, it is high time I stopped ferning and farning!

On your thirtieth anniversary, you may like to know how f-e-r-n became f-a-r-n-e, so may we present a modest little gift of Oxford academic Dr. Caitlin Green’s 2012 30-page intensely detailed dissertation on the etymology of the word “Lindisfarne”.

Here it is. And thank you.

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<sup>3</sup> *Tasmanian News* (Hobart), Thursday 2 June 1908 page 2, accessed 29 April 2022.

<sup>4</sup> *The History of Newcastle Upon Tyne: Or, the Ancient and Present State of That Town* by the late Henry Bourne M. A., Curate of All-Hallows in Newcastle, 1736, Chapter 2, “Of this Town, after the time of the Romans”, pages 6 and 7.

<sup>5</sup> *Metrical Legends of Northumberland: Containing the Traditions of Dunstanborough Castle, and other Poetical Romances*, by James Service, 1834, page 55.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.historyfiles.co.uk/KingListsBritain/EnglandLindsey.htm>, accessed 29 April 2022.