



**LIBRARIES  
TASMANIA**

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## Media Release

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### Revealed: A vintage Tasmanian Mills & Boon

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Local Mills & Boon author, Melanie Milburne, may be a very popular choice at Libraries Tasmania, but real-life Tasmanian love stories are every bit as tantalising. And while *vintage* love letters are not commonly found in state collections, Libraries Tasmania can reveal a very special set that we're celebrating this Library Lovers' Day (Friday, 14 February 2020).

From January 1875 until their marriage in September 1876, Louis Manton Shoobridge engaged in loving correspondence with Amy Lidbetter. When first received into the Tasmanian Archives collection, the letters were folded into bundles and tied with cotton, presumably by Amy.

The letters of courtship were written at Bushy Park, where Louis lived and worked. Amy lived at New Town, some 30 miles away. Despite this, the letters between the two were fond and frequent. In one letter, dated 9 February 1875, Louis writes, unabashed: "My dear and precious Amy. This is something novel for Lou to be writing love letters..."

The Tasmanian Archives does not hold Amy's replies, but Louis's letters indicate constant correspondence between the two: "My very, very dear Amy, it is so good of you to write to me so much – just fancy two such nice letters in one day..."

Louis provides details on his life and work at the hop kilns and farm, and it is clear that Amy returned the favour, reporting on her daily life. Sadly, Amy died of consumption on 2 April 1878, just 18 months after her marriage to Louis.

Today, for preservation and access, the letters have been placed into acid free folders and interleaved with archival paper. The complete letters can be found at <https://stors.tas.gov.au/AI/NS6532>

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