

PARRAMATTA FEMALE FACTORY FRIENDS NEWSLETTER – ISSUE NO:03 JUNE – JULY 2015

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 History: parramattafemalefactories.wordpress.com
 online petition: <https://www.change.org/p/declare-the-parramatta-female-factory-a-national-and-world-heritage-site>

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DATES FOR YOUR DIARY! 2015

MEETINGS – 3rd Friday of every 2nd Month
 Hambledon Cottage Coach House, Hassall Street, Parramatta

FRIDAY: 17th July AGM : 2PM (no guest speaker)

GENERAL MEETINGS: 18th September 20th November
 (guest speaker :1:30pm)

ANNUAL ' RIOT DAY ' - FRIDAY 23RD OCTOBER 2015



The Parramatta Female Factory - Augustus Earle 1826 –courtesy: National Library of Australia-nla.gov.au/nla.pic-an2818460



PRESIDENT'S MUSINGS

Welcome to the winter musings. It has been another busy period for the Parramatta Female Factory Friends. There has been a flurry of activity at the Female Factory site. Conservation architects have been assessing the site and it was recently used for an episode of 'A Place to Call Home'.

Recently I gave a tour of the site for the Institute of Psychiatry staff who were very interested and it can be noted that they have been good custodians of the areas they are leasing. There was also positive discussion concerning future possibilities.

The Parramatta North Urban Renewal Project is before the Minister for Planning for consideration. There will be an ABC story coming up soon looking at the project and issues and, it will include our perspective.

Now is the time to send letters and emails to the state and federal ministers - Rob Stokes, State Minister for Planning, Mark Speakman, State Minister for Heritage and Greg Hunt, Federal Minister for Heritage - regarding the current plans which still include 6,000 units and a multi-storey building in the Gipps Yard. Voicing your opposition is critical to the high impact residential plan and the totally inappropriate plan for multi-storey buildings in the Gipps Solitary Cell Yard.

The Federal Minister is also particularly important at this time and the more letters he receives, the better. The PFFFF has the only current submission for inclusion on the National Heritage working committee for National Heritage. Write to him supporting our submission. The decision is currently set to occur in July.

Last piece of advocacy this month is to sign and get as many people as you can to also sign the online petition. The online petition is an addition to the hard copy one and as we keep our records in good order, the final list will only have your name once. However signing online shows support well beyond the Parramatta local Government Area and every single online support sends emails to state and federal ministers. So far over 3,000 emails have been sent regarding the female factory. The link is: <https://www.change.org/p/declare-the-parramatta-female-factory-a-national-and-world-heritage-site> - if you forget, all you need to do is to put 'change.org and Parramatta Female Factory' into your search engine and it will come up.

Lastly, on the public front, the 'Family Tree' magazine UK, April issue, gave the female factory story and the Friends a two page spread. The word is getting out there.

Just a reminder that our next meeting is our AGM so if you are interested in becoming an office bearer or helping out as a committee member or know someone you think would be good, get your nominations in.

Yours in community

Gay Hendriksen.





'OUR GIRLS' PROFILES – BY BETH MATTHEWS

Mary Noonan was born in 1812 and transported on the 'Asia'. She was in the Female Factory for 'insolence' and again, for 'absconding'. She married and was granted her Certificate of Freedom. She had 7 children. She remarried in 1876 and died in 1903, aged 93. (*Mary is photographed here at her spinning wheel.*)

Alice Leonard was born in 1806 and transported in 1824 for 7 years for 'stealing'. The records show Alice was in the Female Factory and punished 8 times. In 1829 she was punished for 'breaking into the Matron's garden and stealing her peaches'. For this she received 2 months in 3rd class. Alice married Nicholas Carr in 1840 and had 5 children. Alice was killed accidentally in 1849, aged 43. I call the wall in the Factory over which she climbed, 'Alice's Wall'.



Emma Maynor was just 18 when she was transported in 1837. Her offence was receiving a time piece with the value of 2 pounds and a shawl with a value of 6 shillings, knowing them to be stolen. Emma married Charles Wilson and had 8 children. She died in 1886 aged 65 at Uralla.

Beth Matthews.



HISTORY CORNER

Governor Macquarie travelled out to Parramatta on a regular basis and recorded the progress of the New Female Factory in his journal. He also recorded the day the women were removed from the Old Factory having personally witnessed their removal.

Tuesday 16 Jany 1821

I rode out early this morning with Secry Goulburn to inspect the Public works now in progress at Parramatta, returning home to breakfast in the Domain.

The contractors for the New Factory & Barracks for the female convicts report - and assure me - that the new Building will be ready for the reception and accommodation of the Women-on this day - fortnight -namely on Tuesday the 30th of this present month of January!!! I have accordingly issued the necessary orders for their being prepared to be removed on that Day-

Thursday 1 Febr 1821

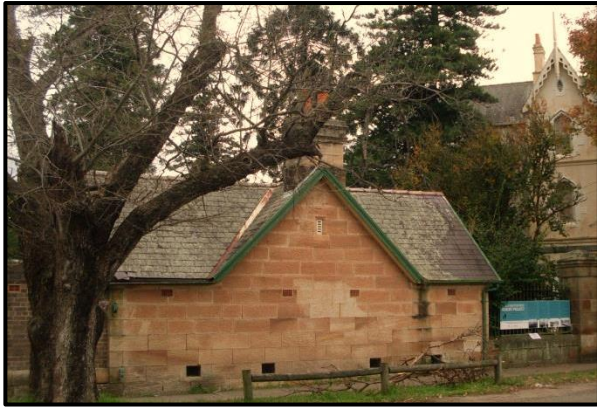
The Female Convicts were removed this Day from the Old to the New Factory at Parramatta: there being 109 women- and 71 children accommodated therein Honorable, The Commissioner of Enquiry, Mr Secry Scott, Mr Secry Goulburn, Major Druitt, the Resident Magistrate at Parramatta &c &c having accompanied me from the Government House to the New Factory at Ten O'clock to see the Women lodged therein.'

(source: <http://www.mq.edu.au/macquarie-archive/lema/1821/1821jan.html#jan22>)

ANYWHERE THEATRE FESTIVAL – THE FEMALE FACTORY



Susannah & Mary in 3rd class at the Factory - played by Karli Evans & Mel Hodges*



On the weekend of 16th/17th May, as part of the *Anywhere Theatre Festival* held in and around Parramatta, *Brave Theatre Company* and *Rue De La Rocket Arts Collective* performed a 45 minute play based on the lives of the Parramatta Female Factory women. The stage was the grounds and historic buildings of the Roman Catholic Orphan school and the setting was incredibly ‘atmospheric’ and the performances were very moving!

As the play unfolded, the audience were drawn into the world of “*Susannah*” and “*Mary*” with the women reflecting on their past, their crimes and their loss of family. They speak of their fears, their helplessness, their degradation and their hopes and dreams. The women often felt helpless, abandoned by their husbands and society, grief at losing their children, overworked and undernourished and yet they did whatever they could to survive and still have a sense of hope.

Both women are expecting a child and the very real fear is the loss and separation from that child in the not so distant future. Susannah has already ‘lost’ her son Thomas to the Orphanage and her repeated petitions to the Matron to visit him have been denied. Her protestations have landed her in 3rd class for ‘insolence’. Mary had seen the Riot as an opportunity to abscond – her strongest motivation had been ‘to get over the wall’ and eventually return home to England.

In the final scene, Susannah has lost her friend Mary to suicide – her losses were too hard to bear. Susannah pays tribute to her “courage, love and endurance”, a sentiment which resonates today as the stories of the women are researched and told.

*Karli and Mel are expectant mothers in real life, so there was an added poignancy in their performance.

Report by Ronda Gaffey & Judith Newell

(Images of the performance published with kind permission - Mel Hodge)

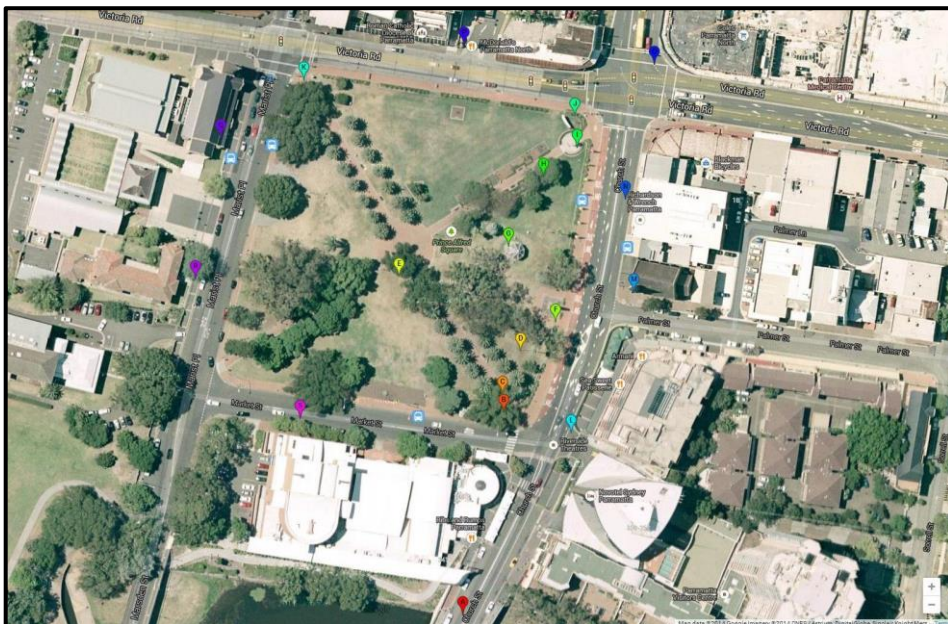
THE FIRST FEMALE FACTORY AT PARRAMATTA

A TALK BY ANNE MATHEWS - 15/5/15

Anne has just begun her research into the women of the first Parramatta Female Factory and in her recent talk, outlined some of the basic facts she has found in her journey so far.



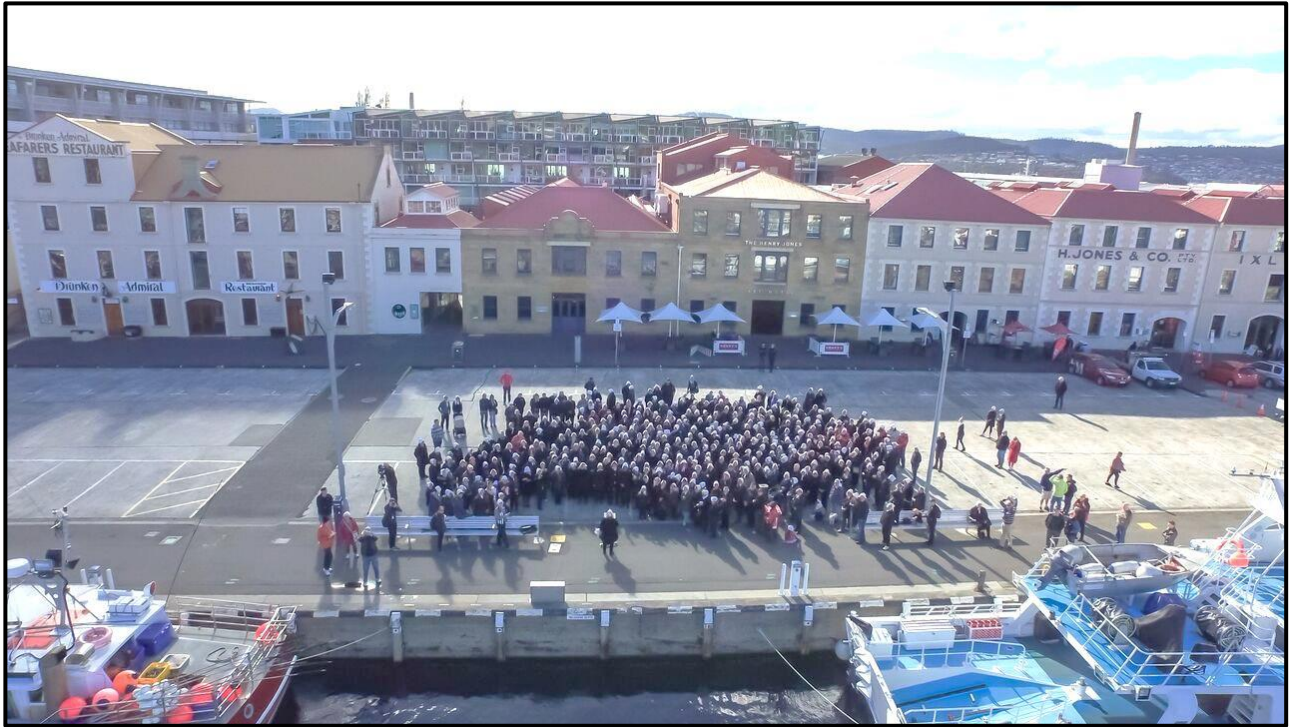
- In the early 1800s, the convict women presented problems for the authorities – there wasn't enough work for them and there was an increase in the number of women arriving in the Colony.
- In 1803, the construction of a stone gaol in Prince Alfred Park was commenced - it was completed in 1804.
- The new gaol was located across from where Lennox Bridge is today – the stone used was quarried locally however the workmanship of the building was problematic with the stone blocks being cut the wrong way – as a result, the life of the new gaol was limited from the start (*see image above – the New Gaol and Factory is the double storey building on the far right*).
- A two roomed workshop was established above the gaol and a Master Weaver, George Mealmaker, was employed to oversee the women. The weaving establishment became known as “*the Factory above the gaol*”.
- The gaol was intended to house 30 women, however many of the women were accompanied by their children and the accommodation was never adequate.
- Women who had offended in the Colony were kept at the gaol while others were able to find accommodation outside the gaol only returning to there to work each day – the convict women were kept upstairs often sleeping on the bales of wool. The male convicts were downstairs.
- The women were supplied with flax and wool from the settlers and manufactured fabric for both the government and settlers - the women were allowed a small amount for themselves.
- In 1810 running repairs were carried out on the gaol and the Old Granary which was situated on the Parramatta River nearby, was used as a weaving workshop.
- In 1816-18 the accommodation at the gaol had become inadequate with 200 women living in a space intended for 30.
- A four acre site (a part of Bligh's land grant), was selected for the new factory and in February 1818 tenders for its construction were called for – the first women were transferred to the new factory on the 1st February 1821.



An aerial view of Prince Alfred Park – the site of the first factory is in the lower right hand corner of the Park –courtesy: NSW Gov.

One interesting fact mentioned by Anne is that it is hoped that the site will be marked out in some way to acknowledge its historical significance. Thank you Anne for revealing yet more of Parramatta's history and of the women transported.

THE 'ROSES FROM THE HEART' MEMORIAL PROJECT



Many PFFF members have contributed 'bonnets' to Hobart-based artist Christina Henri's 'Roses from the Heart' Project begun in 2009. There was also an exhibition of bonnets as part of the 'Women Transported' Exhibition in Parramatta. Recently Christina was contacted and has sent an update. Here is an extract from her email-

'The Roses from the Heart' Memorial is a multifaceted memorial. There are cloth bonnets symbolising the lives of the transported women and have been made by people from all around the world. Creating a cloth bonnet has allowed descendants to connect with their ancestors in a tangible way, sewing or embellishing material that links to the custom of the day - wearing a bonnet - and the varied work that the convict women were engaged in from laundry work to weaving, spinning, sewing, embroidering and lacemaking.

The Memorial includes information accompanying the bonnets-the stories of either the woman making the bonnet or information about the woman the bonnet remembers.

There is also the art side of 'Roses from the Heart' with various installations and exhibitions I have held and those that may yet be shown in public places.

There is the collection side of the Memorial with its (eventual) 25,566 bonnets that will require cataloguing, photographing and displaying in reality and digital or other contemporary manner.

There is also the value that I bring to the Memorial with the collection of stories and experiences that have built up as I have travelled along this 'Roses from the Heart' journey. These are many and varied and all of them are wonderful and add to the resource.

So where do I go from here? I only need 800 bonnets to complete the collection of 25,566 bonnets.

Also I am collaborating with Professor Stephen Loo, Head of School of Architecture and Design, ITAS and some of his students to design the best possible way to showcase this unique Memorial.

I am so appreciative of all the people around the world who have made a bonnet in memory of our female convict ancestors. So many families who have been involved with the Project and have an added layer of meaning to their collective engagement with the female convict story, their family's story, as they reminisce about the various bonnet ceremonies and events they have attended or been part of.

I look forward to receiving all the bonnets and each woman's life remembered with a cloth bonnet and I am very excited about the 'Roses from the Heart' Stage 2 and where that will lead. My vision is that there will be Memorials in Tasmania/New South Wales and that there will also be special collections in Ireland/Uk/France and Canada- all places that are part of the convict story.

Recently I held events in Hobart to celebrate our exiled colonial grandmothers on Mother's Day. The 'Wear a Bonnet – Living Art Installation' was held at the Hobart Wharf - Hunter Street Precinct. I especially chose this spot as being close to where the transport ships anchored ready to offload their convict 'cargo'.

People were invited to come along and wear a bonnet signifying either an ancestor of theirs or a woman they were remembering for her contribution to the social and economic growth of the colony and the Australian nation.'

Christina Henri

Currently Christina is artist in residence at the Cascades Female Factory (an unpaid position) and is looking for financial support to travel to Ireland to attend an event that will see 200 bonnets permanently installed at the Down County Gaol Museum. This Museum is the original gaol where convicts were held before being transported to Australia. Christina points out that it is a real coup to have a permanent installation at this site. She hopes to make it to the ceremony and give an address so if anyone would like to support Christina, her email contact is cjhenri@gmail.com

Christina also commented that she would be thrilled to spend time in Parramatta and bring her experience to further enrich and promote the huge importance of the Parramatta Female Factory as *'undoubtedly the most valuable female factory site in Australia'*.

We wish Christina well in her endeavours!

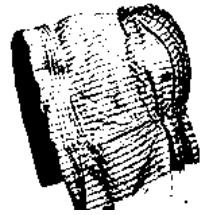


The photos – page 6 and above are published with the kind permission of Dr Christina Henri – the photos were taken at the Mother's Day Event, 'Wear a Bonnet – Living Art Installation' at the Hobart Wharf –May 2015. (aerial photo courtesy – a drone!)

POSTSCRIPT: In a further email, Christina mentioned that following the *'Wear a Bonnet-Living Art Installation'*, the public were invited to visit the Cascades Female Factory Historic Site with free entry for the afternoon. There were a number of bonnets on display in the Matron's Cottage, some of which were made by residents of Castle Hill NSW – Darralyn and Carole - who are making some amazing bonnets for the women aboard the *'Rajah'* for the Memorial Project. These bonnets will be on display for a short time in the Matron's Cottage at the Cascades.

NOTICEBOARD

An important date for your diary is the **PFFF AGM** to be held at Hambledon Cottage Coach House on FRIDAY 17th JULY – join us if you can at 2:00pm.



NOMINATION FORMS for the PFFF Committee 2015-2016 are available from the secretary – email the PFFF secretary at the gmail address asap. Forms must be returned to the secretary by 10th July.

A gentle reminder that **ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FEES** (\$10 – individuals) are due in July each year – please complete the attached form and forward to the Treasurer as indicated. We also invite groups to join as affiliate members (\$25) and look forward to your support and advocacy which is highly valued. Donations are always welcome.

RIOT DAY plans are well and truly going ahead and the FLYERS advertising the day will be available soon for distribution by our members.

The Hambledon Cottage **EXHIBITION** is also something to look forward to in early October with many interesting artefacts, photos and women's stories being unearthed by members – well done to Alice Kershaw who has sourced some oakum (*oakum picking being one of the harsher punishments for the 3rd class women*). If you have any family stories, relevant images, women's profiles or artefacts you can contribute to the exhibition then please let us know - (*email us at the PFFF gmail address*).

BONNETS!!!!!! If you have attended a 'Bonnet' Ceremony, or created a bonnet for Christina's project and are willing to share the experience in a future PFFF Newsletter, please contact *Ronda*. Photos are also welcomed!

PETITION UPDATE! Anne Mathews reports that the Parramatta Female Factory hard copy petition has reached 8854!

If you have anything of interest, any photos or would like to contribute an article related to the Parramatta Female Factory or the women, please let me know. The deadline for the September – October edition is 10th August 2015.

Many thanks for your feedback and for your support! *Ronda Gaffey*



The 1820s - 3rd class sleeping quarters at the Parramatta Female Factory site 2012.