



Chainletter

News from the Founders & Survivors project at the Universities of Tasmania, Melbourne, Flinders, Monash and the Australian National University

A Tri-annual Newsletter

Issue No. 9 December 2011

Ships Projects

We report on the October workshop and the wonderful progress made already on the ships projects by our many valiant volunteers.

Page 2

Next Ships Project Workshop

Our next Workshop, Saturday, 18th February 2012, 2 pm, School of Population Health, University of Melbourne, 207 Bouverie St, Carlton.

Page 2

Ships Projects Stories

David Noakes has uncovered god, fire and bigamy aboard the 'Palmyra' and Jenny Wells travelling with Glad Wishart on the 'Governor Ready' has met up with smugglers.

Pages 3 & 4

New Book



Ballarat Benevolent Asylum

Tricia Curry introduces us to the Ballarat Benevolent Asylum and a couple of the many former Vandemonians who found a bed there.

Page 7

Extending Family

Cheryl Griffin tells of her convict ancestors and her new cousins; an important story of discovering long lost family

Page 9

Editorial

This final issue of Chainletter for 2011 reports on our Ships Projects and our next Workshop.

It's that time of year again and the end of a year of achievement for Founders & Survivors. With new funding from the Australian Research Council through the University of Melbourne, we are now able to focus on tracing the convicts' lives after they left the penal system.

The most exciting part of that has been the formation of a wonderful team of volunteers to research individual voyages. It is a lot of work for each of them and the learning curve can be steep, but the progress has already been quite amazing.

On 18 February we will hold another workshop, this time for our ships volunteers and anyone else who is interested, to swap stories, problems and discoveries. That conference is advertised on page 2.

In February also, Rebecca Kippen will run a preliminary analysis of the coding using a sample of the convicts already researched to test our hypotheses and methodology. She hopes to take the results to a meeting of the European Social Science History Conference in Glasgow in April.

After this preliminary analysis has been tried and tested at the conference, we will hold another workshop to report back to everyone on what we found.

We have two more years of funding to support these projects chasing convicts. And there are still many ships to do. Please email Janet McCalman if you wish to research a ship: janetsm@unimelb.edu.au and enrol in the workshop through Claudine Chionh: clchionh@unimelb.edu.au.

We will be on leave until the middle of January, so please wait until after 23 January to register for the workshop. This time there is no limit on attendance.

Next year will be Benevolent Asylum year both in Tasmania and Victoria!

May we wish you all the compliments of the season.

Volunteers' Corner

Ships Projects set sail

After a successful workshop on 15 October, over 40 volunteers embarked on what is a virtual First Fleet. We are very proud of the innovative use of computer technology that Claudine Chionh and Sandra Silcot have developed to support the projects. Here is the story...

The Research Task

The research is quite complicated. If we are to research a ship properly, every convict needs to be followed to find at least a death either inside the penal system or after leaving it. Often there is no trace at all outside the convict records and we even need to account for that, because the statistical analysis has to include both those who are traced and those who disappear.

The reason for this is that we need to compare the characteristics of the 'unfound' with the 'found' to be able to assess how representative our 'found' convicts sample is.

That said, the researchers have to fill out a spreadsheet that summarises the data on the convicts from both the records in the convict system and from their historical and genealogical research. This enables us to analyse many different factors at the same time. For instance: is there a relationship between literacy, religion, occupation and family background and behaviour under sentence? And is there later a relationship between all or some of those factors in whether the convict marries, has children and lives a long life? Can we discover a convict's temperament from the conduct record and how important may that be in his or her survival afterwards? What distinguishes convicts who were well behaved?

The researchers are therefore coding the convict records for 'insults' like the number of stripes or days in solitary or

hard labour, and they are coding the convicts' reactions to discipline.

Because the Female Convicts Research Group in Tasmania had already begun their own project, we are directing those who want to work on female ships to work with them, while Founders & Survivors (FAS) concentrates on male ships. We will exchange data between the two projects and work in tandem over the next two years while we have funding.

The IT work platform

We needed an online workstation where all the ships' spreadsheets could be hosted and linked to the FAS database and the community contributions. We also needed to provide our researchers with reliable support resources, such as the Tasmanian colonial births, deaths and marriages collated by Peter Gunn and Rebecca Kippen.

Claudine suggested that we use Google Docs as an open source workstation and she and Sandra created spreadsheets for each ship with every convict we have in the FAS database hot-linked to their FAS record. When a researcher has completed research on an individual—filled in the spreadsheet and added to the FAS convict record any data on marriages, children, death and personal history—that second hot link is added to the spreadsheet.

Every 24 hours, the system updates the online index to all the convicts who have been researched, with links to both the FAS record and to the new additional material (what we call the CCC or Community Contributed Content). This may well be the final format for the way we publish the research findings for other users in the future: ship by ship.

If all this sounds far too complex and daunting, it in fact works quite simply and systematically. On Google Docs we also provide a visual guide to the research processes, geographical codes, and the BDMs of Tasmania to 1899. With a subsidised Ancestry-Heritage account to help, our researchers are doing brilliantly and some of their findings are reported in this issue of *Chainletter*.

Next Workshop: Ships Reports

Our next workshop will be held at Melbourne University on **Saturday, 18 February 2012** at the Centre for Health & Society, 4th Floor, 207 Bouverie Street, Carlton, commencing at 2 pm, with afternoon tea provided. **Please email Claudine Chionh** clchionh@unimelb.edu.au.

We will move to the lecture theatre in the basement which can accommodate up to 100 people so there's no limit on attendance.

This workshop is for the Ships Projecteers to report on their findings, their problems and their successes. It's a chance to leave the lonely keyboard and share experiences and ideas.

Projecteers, their long-suffering families and companions and interested observers are all welcome. But please RSVP by 8 February so we can order the catering.

Swing Rioters Group

Leanne Goss and Colin Tuckerman have finished their Swing Rioters and Jenny Ellison is close to finishing hers. We hope to have them all completed by February.

Ships Projecteers

If you are interested in researching a **male ship**, there are plenty still to do so please email Janet McCalman on janetsm@unimelb.edu.au.

If you want to work on a female ship, please email Dr Trudy Cowley of the Female Convicts Research Group on trudy@researchtasmania.com.au.

Goldfields Group

In Ballarat Tricia Curry and Rosalie Darby have begun to work through the admissions registers of the Ballarat Benevolent Asylum to find former convicts who were admitted to the hospital or to care in the asylum.

Tricia reports on some of her 'finds' in this issue. Anyone interested in working on the Castlemaine, Bendigo or Melbourne Benevolent Asylums, please email Janet McCalman on janetsm@unimelb.edu.au.

Ships Projects Tales

Gold, Fire & Bigamy

David Noakes, FAS Volunteer

David Noakes is aboard the Palmyra that arrived in Hobart in 1846. There he met William Antill who went on to lead an interesting life after sentence and received some lucky breaks. This find is a reminder that New Zealand was a common place for former convicts to disappear and reinvent themselves.

In December 1871 a fire-damaged figurehead washed up on the shores of Rottneest Island, Perth, Western Australia. What ship did it come from? What was the fate of the passengers and crew?

The story starts in 1823 with the birth of William Antill in Montsorrell, Leicestershire.

William first comes to our attention in July 1839 when at the age of 16 he is gaoled for two weeks on the charge of curtilage breaking, that is, entering private property. In this instance he stole two rabbits. In January 1846 he was found guilty of the more serious charge of horse stealing and sentenced to 15 years transportation. He arrived in Tasmania on the 'Palmyra' in August 1846.

During his time in the convict system he earned one month hard labour for disobedience, three months for absconding, and three months for 'engaging as a clergyman for which he was incompetent'. In 1853 he was granted permission to marry Margaret Kavanagh (aka Tobin), herself a convict per 'Maria'. William was granted a Conditional Pardon in 1856, and, as is the case with many convicts, he seemed to disappear from public record. However, an obituary in a New Zealand paper in 1902 was the clue to establishing and filling in the facts of a remarkable story.

Some time after receiving his Conditional Pardon he arrived in New Zealand with his wife Margaret. In 1869 he is a passenger on 'Blue Jacket' which left Lyttleton bound for London, carrying fifteen cases of gold on behalf of the Bank of New Zealand. On 9th March 1869 after rounding Cape Horn the ship caught on fire and sank. All on board took to the three life boats. The captain, eight crew, and twenty eight passengers in the largest boat, and the crew in two smaller boats, each with a case of gold for ballast. After drifting for seven days the passengers were picked up by a small ship on its way to Falmouth, finally arriving 17th May.



The Burning of the 'Blue Jacket' 1869

One life boat with thirty one crew was never seen again and the smaller boat with eleven men and the ship's dog was rescued after twenty one days. Three had died and the dog was killed for food. It was assumed that the men had set the 'Blue Jacket' on fire, killed the crew and made off with the case of gold. As a result they were thrown in gaol on the Falkland Islands. It was not until word arrived from England that the truth was revealed.

William Antill returned to Leicester, married Mary Ann Orton, had a son, William and returned to New Zealand on the 'Norma' arriving 27th May 1871. His first wife sued him for cruelty and desertion and was awarded six shillings

a week maintenance by the Magistrates Court at Kaiapoi.

In 1872 his second wife arrived on the 'Dover Castle' which immediately resulted in William being tried in the Supreme Court for bigamy. In spite of Margaret producing the Registrar's Certificate proving her marriage in Ross, Tasmania and the maintenance order, William was acquitted by the judge with much reluctance. It could not be proven that the woman in court was the same as the one mentioned in the certificate.

William went on to raise a family in New Zealand, dying there in 1902. The figurehead on Rottneest Island was from the 'Blue Jacket' and had taken over two years to drift over 9000 miles from the site in the south Atlantic.

Sources

The information on the sinking of the 'Blue Jacket' is mainly from newspaper articles in New Zealand using Papers Past and articles from the London Times.

Times 18/5/1869 page 9, 22/5/1869 page 11, 20/5/1869 page 7, 3/7/1869 page 12 and 10/7/1869 page 10.

Bigamy case: *The Star* (New Zealand) 11/7/1872

Convict History: AOT CON 33, Ancestry, Criminal Registers 1791 – 1892

English Marriage: GRO Vol.7a Page 376

Nautical Note

The famous clipper ship 'Blue Jacket' was one of the fastest sailers of the mid 19th century. On her maiden voyage she crossed the Atlantic from Boston to the Mersey in 12 days, 10 hours. She was bought by J. J. Frost and put on the Australian run and maintained a passenger cargo service for the next 15 years.

[Hocking C., Dictionary of Disasters at Sea during the Age of Steam](#)

The Aldington Blues

Jenny Wells, FAS Volunteer



Smugglers Country: View from the tower of St Mary's church, Rye, East Sussex, southern England. The Ypres Tower in the centre-left marks the cliff-edge which defines the citadel. Below the cliff, roofs of buildings beside the River Tillingham can be seen, with yacht masts beyond. The river joins the River Rother and winds across Romney Marsh to the English Channel. [Wikimedia Commons](#)

Five and twenty ponies

Trotting through the dark

Brandy for the parson

Baccy for the clerk

So wrote Rudyard Kipling in 'A Smuggler's Song', inspired by the smuggling that took place along the south coast of England. The trade had grown from the illegal export of wool early in the 18th century and increased as taxes were imposed on the import of luxury goods such as tea, spirits, tobacco and fine silks and lace.

By 1782 the government estimated that a quarter of all smuggled goods were based in Kent and Sussex. There were several reasons for this: proximity to Europe, good roads to London for distribution of the contraband, and, most importantly, the Romney Marsh. With its many creeks and inlets on the

coast and paths known only to the locals through the treacherous bogs, it was perfect smuggling country.

Smuggling needed teamwork – store places, places of refuge, coordination with the boats to land the goods and the ponies to transport them, and men to do the work. Inns were strategic places to meet and pass information, especially in the isolated parts of the Marsh.

One of the largest smuggling gangs was the Aldington Blues, operating out of the village of Aldington and neighbouring Billsington, about five miles from the coast at Hythe. The leader was George Ransley who worked as a ploughman on a local farm, but who also owned the 'Bourne Tap', where he sold his recently landed spirits.

George's family was heavily involved in smuggling. Two of his brothers had been hanged in 1800 for highway robbery,

and his wife, Elizabeth Bailey, had a brother Samuel and an uncle John in the gang. Her sister Rhoda was married to Richard Higgins, another gang member, and Charles Giles, another member, was the son of Ann Bailey. Samuel Bailey's brother in law Edward Pantry was also in the gang.

In 1826 the 'Bourne Tap' was raided by the excise men and Bow Street runners. George Ransley, John and Samuel Bailey, Edward Pantry, Richard Higgins, Charles Giles, Paul Pierce, Thomas Gilham, and Thomas Dennard were arrested and sent to trial. Edward Pantry turned King's Evidence and was acquitted, but the rest, although tried on capital charges, were sentenced to transportation to Van Diemen's Land for life.

They sailed from Portsmouth aboard the 'Governor Ready' and arrived in Hobart on 2nd August 1827. All were quiet and

well behaved during the voyage and on arrival were quickly assigned to settlers as their farming skills were in great demand. Most had been farm workers and ploughmen and Paul Pierce was a hop grafter, very useful to the settlers.

Their behaviour continued to be excellent and all the married men were granted permission for their wives to join them. So, on 14th January 1829 the 'Harmony' arrived in Hobart carrying Rhoda Higgins, Mary Giles, Catherine Bailey, Elizabeth Ransley, Frances Gilham, Sarah Pierce and their children. Unsurprisingly, Samuel Bailey's wife Sarah, the sister of the turncoat Edward, did not accompany them, but their son John migrated later. Thomas Dennard married in Tasmania, but had no children.

It was quite a family. Elizabeth Ransley, who sailed under her maiden name of Bailey, brought the eight survivors of their ten children. One had died in England and the baby Elizabeth died

during the voyage. Her sister Rhoda Higgins had two children. Frances Gilham arrived with her three from a previous marriage, the two she had with Thomas and a baby Frances who was conceived and born after Thomas was transported. The baby took Thomas' name, but like the three eldest children was not included in her stepfather's will. John Bailey's wife Catherine brought their six children and Mary Giles had one. Sarah Pierce had her five surviving children. Two others had died during 1827.

Eventually all the smugglers were assigned to their wives and several more children were born—two to the Pierces, three to the Giles and four to the Higgins. All the families thrived and most continued farming, becoming well respected. Thomas Gilham became a publican in the Prince of Wales hotel at Carrick and John Bailey was a shoemaker. Elizabeth Higgins married her cousin Edward Ransley and John

Bailey's son William married Maria Gilham.

It was plain that old friendships were maintained. All the men reached old age most dying in their seventies (Paul Pierce was eighty) except Richard Higgins who died as the result of an accident aged 46.

What would have happened to these men had they led blameless lives in England? Certainly they would not have owned their own land and would have worked no less hard. As it was they all contributed to building the society in their new country. They were truly survivors and founders.

I am very much indebted to the descendants of these men who submitted their stories to Founders and Survivors. Without their research and knowledge of their families I could not have cobbled this tale together.

Jenny Wells and Glad Wishart are working together on the Governor Ready (1827).

The public house that was headquarters to the Aldington Blues.

To find out more on the Aldington Blues, visit the websites of two of our contributors to Founders & Survivors

http://web.me.com/lynne_paul/Lynnes_Site/Aldington_Gang.html

and

<http://aldingtonblues.blogspot.com/>



Do you need hard copy records researched in England?

Charles Porter is willing to undertake research in the UK for members of Founders & Survivors.

Contact:

reneecharles.porter@gmail.com

Note from Ann Brown, author of 'A short but interesting life: Michael Tobin' in *Chainletter* August 2011.

It has just been pointed out to me, by someone with access to the original convict records, that some of details contained in my article on Michael Tobin that was included in the last issue of *Chainletter*, were incorrect. I apologise for my errors, which show that one should check details closely before committing to print.

Fortunately these errors were mainly in fine details of the convict conduct records and do not change the overall tone of the record that reveal that he was a recalcitrant who committed minor crimes on a regular basis until he found a trade and wife.

Ann Brown.

Feature Articles

The Ballarat Benevolent Asylum

Tricia Curry, FAS volunteer

The benevolent asylums of the Victorian Goldfields were the place of death of hundreds of destitute Vandemonians. The Goldfields hospitals and asylums were paid for by the gold miners who reproduced the parish-based welfare system they had known in rural England and Scotland. The parish had fed and cared for the orphaned and the indigent aged and sick since the time of Queen Elizabeth I and was the world's first 'welfare state'. Tricia Curry reports on the Ballarat story, from admission registers of the asylum that became the Queen Elizabeth Home for the Elderly and is now part of Ballarat Health.



Benevolent Asylum, Ascot Street, Ballarat [1861] State Library of Victoria.

On November 30, 1857, a meeting was held at the Council Chambers in Sturt Street, Ballarat. Mr Oddie, the Chairman of Ballarat West, raised the discussion about the many cases of distress within the region, primarily caused by gold field injuries. He proposed the establishment of a benevolent association, and thus, the Ballarat Benevolent and Visiting Society, later to be known as the Ballarat Benevolent Asylum, was formed.¹

Initially the recipients of aid were visited in their homes, but it was soon realised that an asylum was required. The Ballarat Benevolent Asylum was officially opened on February 20, 1860.²

A study of the ledgers dating from 1860 shows that inmates of the Ballarat Benevolent Asylum were not merely the old and infirm, but also those who were able-bodied but destitute. As Ballarat was a popular destination for many convicts once they received their freedom, it is only natural that this

study of the ledgers has unearthed numerous men who had been transported to Van Diemen's Land.

The majority of convicts who spent time at the Ballarat Benevolent Asylum were either single or widowed men. One was John Grant who was born in 1809 at Glasgow, Scotland, the son of a stonemason. John became a soldier with the 42th (The Royal Highland) Regiment of Foot. However he deserted, and upon capture was inflicted with 300 lashes. Undeterred he he deserted a second time in 1833. John Grant was captured three years later and tried at the Edinburgh Castle on September 15, 1836 and was sentenced to seven years transportation. He was admitted to the prison hulk, 'Hardy', moored at Portsmouth, on November 16, 1836, and sailed from Spithead aboard 'Sarah', arriving in Van Diemen's Land on March 29, 1837.³

After spending time at the prisoner barracks in Hobart, John was assigned

to Molesworth Jeffrey at New Norfolk in 1838. Then a dramatic turn of events changed the fortune of John Grant. He came upon two bushrangers, James Mackay and William Hill, who were both ex-convicts. They were wanted for the murder of two other convicts, William Trusson and William Clarke. John Grant befriended the bushrangers in an attempt to earn their trust, before he and his friends, Patrick Riley and Absalom Gomme, overpowered the bushrangers in a capture which was bloodless. John Grant and his two accomplices, received a £500 pound reward, and more importantly, on April 29, 1842, they each received a free pardon with no conditions.⁴

John moved to Victoria to try his luck on the goldfields. He was admitted to the Ballarat Benevolent Asylum on January 26, 1874 with 'torsion of the left leg'. His leg was eventually amputated and he was discharged. He was finally re-admitted on July 4 1877, dying eighteen days later from pneumonia.⁵

Another convict who relied on the services of the Ballarat Benevolent Asylum was James Charles Gunyon. Born on February 1, 1790, at Kitson, Middlesex, England, he became known as Charles. He married Sophia Robinson on October 31, 1815 at St Bride, Fleet Street, London and over the next ten years they produced five children.⁶ Charles worked as a waiter at The Swan, Westminster Bridge and Sophia was employed as a house maid. Whilst working on August 12, 1827, Sophia found £85 in bank notes which she promptly slipped into her pocket. On arriving home, she gave the money to Charles. This impromptu decision had dramatic consequences for her family. Sophia and Charles were both arrested and tried at the Old Bailey on September 13, 1827. Sophia received a death sentence, which was commuted to transportation for life, in consideration of her five children. Charles was transported for 14 years.⁷

Sophia and her five children sailed to Hobart aboard 'The Mermaid', arriving on June 27, 1828. Charles arrived two months later on August 25, 1828, aboard 'Woodford'.⁸ The four older children were placed into the Queen's Orphan School, but three-year-old Emma was allowed to live with her parents.⁹ A further three children were born between 1830 and 1837.

Charles was appointed a police constable soon after his arrival; however continual instances of being drunk and neglect of duty caused him many penalties. He was dismissed from his service with the police in December 1831. His problems persisted and he

was punished with fines, hard labour on the Bridgewater chain gang and time on the treadmill. His conduct record shows a total of nine offences of drunkenness.¹⁰

Charles and Sophia must have separated, because Sophia signed her name as 'Sophia Walker' at the marriage of their daughter Emma in 1844.¹¹ She spent her latter years living with James Walker. Sophia died on July 29, 1866 at Brighton, Tasmania. She was buried at Pontville St Marks Anglican Cemetery, Brighton Hobart. James died February 25, 1870, and was buried with Sophia.¹²

According to the 1841 Tasmania muster, Charles had received a conditional pardon. It is thought that he travelled to Victoria in 1847. Little is known about his time there, except that in his latter years, he worked as a shepherd and lived at Creswick.

Charles Gunyon arrived at the Ballarat Benevolent Asylum on July 1, 1874. He was admitted on the grounds that he was old and infirm. It was noted that he was 'admitted in a very low and weak state was taken into the hospital ward and never left'. He died at 6am on July 27, 1874 of 'ascites and bronchitis'. As the main cause of ascites is cirrhosis of the liver, it seems that he continued to drink heavily beyond his days of being a convict.¹³

Whilst Charles, Sophia and their elder five children arrived in Australia under duress, it would appear that their descendants adopted a sense of belonging to their homeland. Charles and Sophia had at least eight direct line

descendants who responded to the call from their country, and enlisted with the Australian Imperial Forces during World War One. Of the eight, only five returned from duty. This included Leslie Ernest Fitzgerald who had been hospitalized after suffering from trench fever; Alfred Edward Jarvis who received a gun shot wound to his knee in France on June 9, 1917; and George Henry Evans who was shot in Belgium in March 1918. Those that did not return were Tasman Jarvis, who was killed in action at the Gallipoli Peninsula on April 25, 1915; Richard George Jarvis who was also killed in action at Gallipoli on what we now call 'Anzac Day'; and Henry Thomas Jarvis who was killed in action on September 9, 1916 at France.¹⁴

1. *The Star* (Ballarat, Vic. : 1855 - 1864) Tuesday 1 December 1857 p2
2. Ballarat Historic Timeline: http://www.ballarat.com/historic_timeline.htm
3. Conduct Record
4. 'A letter from Molesworth Jeffrey' - <http://www.heavenandhelltogether.com/?q=node/339>
5. Vic Deaths 1877/3829
6. Ancestry
7. Proceedings of the Old Bailey: <http://www.oldbaileyonline.org/browse.jsp?id=t18270913-15-defend283&div=t18270913-15#highlight>
8. Conduct Record - CON40/1/3
9. Friends of the Orphan Schools St John's park Precinct: http://www.orphan.school.org.au/showorphan.php?orphan_ID=2254
10. Conduct Record - CON31/1/15
11. Jarvis Family Tree, compiled by Peter Eric Jarvis
12. Brighton Cemetery: http://search.ancestry.com.au/browse/view.aspx?dbid=1266&iid=31768_21088...
13. Vic Deaths 1874/6930
14. National Archives of Australia



Ballarat Benevolent Asylum Fete
December 1, 1875—The Chinese
Procession

State Library of Victoria

Robert McLeod and Mary McBride take their place in history

Cheryl Griffin, FAS Volunteer

Cheryl Griffin is one of our Ships Project Volunteers (Agincourt 1844), but this is a story of how she turned her virtual family history into an extension of family now.

In early November I found myself sitting around a table in northern Tasmania with five other women. We are all related through our common ancestors Robert McLeod and Mary McBride, both Tasmanian convicts. Only a few weeks before we had not known of each other's existence, but through the Female Convicts Research Group database we found each other and so began an incredible journey for all of us.

Before we met in person, we spent some weeks emailing and sharing information using Dropbox, which is available free and enables users to share documents and images. It's a useful sharing tool for people working on a common project, so keep it in mind if you are researching a particular convict ship with others.

Through Dropbox, we shared images and word documents. Several of the group had purchased Robert McLeod's precognition papers from the National Archives of Scotland and spent hours transcribing them and one had put together a beautifully written account of his life up to the point of his transportation, as seen in those papers.

They put all that material, digital images of the papers and all, into our McLeod family Dropbox folder. I put in the document which outlines my findings after thirty years of researching the family history and some family photos. Someone else submitted the story of her line, complete with photos. Suddenly, we found ourselves looking at a rich picture of our ancestors' lives.

Then came the day when we met in person. We spent the afternoon talking, taking notes and sharing anecdotes. We toasted the family with a glass or two of champagne, photos were taken and we came away from the day with our heads in a whirl and so much more that we

could add to our own family history. It can also be added to the database of the FAS project and we hope will provide rich pickings for FAS researchers.

For those of you who have undertaken Tasmanian research before, it will not be news to you that researching the lives of ordinary Tasmanians is never easy and even with all the research tools available to us today via the Internet, many aspects of the lives of Robert McLeod and Mary McBride remain a mystery, but here is their story as far as we have been able to uncover it.¹

Robert McLeod was born in Carlisle in about 1797 but grew up in Scotland. As a 22 year old he joined the 42nd Regiment of Foot, then based at Fort George near Inverness, and served for a short time in Ireland. Within months he deserted, eventually finding his way back to Scotland, ending up in the Inverness area. Here, in December 1823, four years after he had deserted, he was recognised as a deserter and arrested.



The new-found cousins (L to R): Kate Woolley, Cheryl Griffin, Anne Kiely, Helen Edwards and Mary Buck. Photo taken by 'honorary cousin' and fellow researcher Catherine Hamilton.

Within a fortnight he and two other prisoners had escaped. Two days later, two of them broke into a shop in a nearby town but were swiftly apprehended and Robert's fate was sealed. On 3 May 1824 he and his partner in crime, James McCose, had their day in court and by July they were on their way to Van Diemen's Land on board the 'Princess Charlotte'.

Precognition papers suggest that McLeod was a restless man, given to drink, not afraid to defy the law. Convict records support this view. Although the hulk report saw him as 'orderly', the gaol report, not surprisingly, claims he was of 'bad character', a description that is borne out by his time as a Tasmanian convict.

For his first year in the Colony he worked at the Government Garden at New Town, but was often in trouble: leaving his duty without leave, insolent, abusive, drunk and disorderly, attempting to defame the constable's wife (for which he received fifty lashes).

Four years later he was suspected of stealing sheep, then he was found guilty of theft and sentenced to work on a chain gang. Even here he made trouble and was finally sent to Macquarie Harbour for three years. Several more years passed, doing time at public works and in gaol.

No doubt the authorities were relieved when they were able to issue his Ticket of Leave in 1839. But trouble seemed to follow Robert and a year later his Ticket of Leave was revoked and he found himself working for twelve months on the Cleveland road party. By 1845 he had finally managed to be well behaved for long enough to receive a Conditional Pardon.

Then, in 1847, Robert McLeod applied for permission to marry Mary McBride and his trouble with the law ended forever. Mary McBride was much younger than her husband. In fact, she was born in the year that Robert was transported. In 1845, the year Robert was granted his Conditional Pardon, she and Ellen McKiverigan were found

guilty of larceny in Down, Ireland and were soon on their way to Van Diemen's Land aboard the 'Tasmania' (2).

After her arrival in the Colony, Mary served her sentence without further incident and received her Ticket of Leave in 1850, three years after her marriage. Before then, though, we believe that she was involved in a remarkable medical first.

On 9 June 1847, the *Launceston Examiner* covered the story of the first surgical operation performed under ether in Tasmania. The patient was described as a young woman who had been suffering from 'disease of the lower jaw' for the previous two years. While under ether, two old teeth were extracted and her tumour removed. This happened with little pain and she was able to walk home soon afterwards, according to the newspaper.

The family story, passed down from Mary's son Dan, is that Mary McBride was this young woman. We will never know for sure, but Mary had similar surgery and for the rest of her long life she wore a cloth bandage around her face and head to hold her jaw in place and ate only pureed food. If Mary was that young woman, all this happened just five weeks before her marriage to Robert McLeod on 19 July 1847.

After a few restless years moving around the north of the state in search of work, the McLeods settled at Carrick, not far from Launceston, where Robert worked as a gardener. By 1858 he had managed to find his way onto the electoral roll as the owner of a house on less than one acre, land on which he had planted a small cherry orchard.

There he and Mary raised nine children (two other children died young), including three sets of twins. Their youngest child was my great-grandmother, Ellen, born in 1868. The others around that table in northern Tasmania in November are descended from twins Dan and Rose, born in 1855.

After Robert's death in 1886 aged 90, Mary stayed on in Carrick, but

eventually moved into Launceston, living in a small cottage near St George's Square. Her son Dan provided a poignant picture of his mother in old age, sitting with great dignity at her kitchen table, drinking what appeared to be a cup of tea, but which he knew was boiling water because she was too poor to afford to buy tea. He would bring in firewood for her, but she refused to take it because she could not pay. Despite her extreme poverty, she was a fussy housekeeper and kept her little cottage meticulously clean. She died at the Launceston Invalid Depot in 1907 aged eighty-three.

Many of Robert and Mary McLeod's descendants moved to Victoria but it is perhaps unsurprising that all five women seated around that Tasmanian table in November 2011 are direct descendants of those who stayed in Tasmania.

Even though I live on the mainland, I am a first generation Victorian and have travelled to Tasmania to visit family regularly since I was eight months old. With the death of my 93 year old aunt last year, I have only one elderly uncle left and I feel the loss of family greatly, but that November meeting with my new-found cousins has given new heart to my connection with Tasmania. So, too, has the Founders and Survivors project, for it is here that the lives of 'invisible' people like Robert and Mary McLeod are being recorded. Finally, from a distance of a more than a century, they will make a contribution that will be valued.

¹ The sources are many and can be supplied to anyone who is interested. Please contact me at cag1@iinet.net.au



Ether Administration, Baltimore Dental Museum, photograph by Dr Anne Wiseman.

Talking point

Family History, Privacy and the Internet

Janet McCalman, University of Melbourne

We all enjoy family scandals, as long as they are other people's. It is one of our collective human failings to be fascinated by the failings of others. Of course, we often learn from such stories and they are an important way that we each build wisdom and experience: ...'but for the grace of God....'

But, for the popular media, as the Leveson Inquiry under way in London is painfully reporting, salaciousness sells. Celebrities and public figures are 'fair game' it seems: if they are lucky enough to be rich and famous, then they should 'pay' for their good fortune by being stalked, hacked and smeared.

There is a conflict of public and private interest if the behaviour of individuals adversely affects others: if private behaviour impairs the performance of public duties or compromises trust and probity, then the public has a legitimate concern. If an irregular private life in no way impinges on the performance of responsibilities and it not illegal, is it any of our business?

It's a different matter when it's our own family and privacy legislation exists to protect the reputations of individuals who do not seek to enter public life or take to public office. Under privacy legislation, no media outlet can publish your image without your permission—except that it is often not observed. We on Founders & Survivors are not allowed under our ethics protocols to publish family trees online, even though private individuals do it all the time.

It is more complicated when it comes to history and material that is from the past about the dead who have no legal right

to privacy, especially now that new technologies are making available newspapers, private documents, birth, death and marriage records, indeed convict records, that inevitably contain information that might embarrass descendants.

Before the internet we could rely on their relative inaccessibility. All the bad family stories—the convictions, divorces, bankruptcies—that were locked away in the family skeleton cupboard were sitting there in the pages of the *Argus* or the *Sydney Morning Herald*, but it took a lot of hard work to find them. Now, with a flick of a search engine, they are on your screen via TROVE.

What has brought infinite pleasure to family and general historians, has also brought distress to some. The TROVE website now has a disclaimer that it cannot remove individual articles from digitised newspapers because these are public documents and always were. A member of the public has made a submission to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal, that the digitisation of Victorian Gazettes that include their residential addresses, infringes their privacy (presumably they have an unlisted telephone number). The Digger Index for Victorian births from 1901 to 1920 has been removed from sale and from resource centres because it was claimed that it was being used for identity theft and that people had objected that it was now possible to discover that they had been born out of wedlock.

The result of privacy legislation has been to close down many avenues of historical research that were open thirty years ago in the archives to professional historians, while new technologies are opening the archives to the community

as never before. This frustrates many family historians and can, indeed, prevent research that could be in the public interest.

It's difficult issue. People's feelings matter: both of those who are hurt and of those committed to the scholarly pursuit. In publishing family trees, no one member of a family owns the tree and can give permission on behalf of others, nor perhaps even prevent publication if the majority desire it. Can one vote outweigh the votes of everyone else? Or is the pain to individuals who would be distressed sufficient to justify what is in effect, social censorship?

One complication is our sense of ownership of our family trees. Even if we are comfortable about publishing them ourselves, when others do, there is a (at least in my case) a mild sense of violation which I know is irrational. Perhaps this has to do with deeper feelings about family and lineage.

The keeping of a lineage in European societies was once the privilege of the literate and the propertied. Indeed in Lombardy, the origin of a land title began with being able to prove seven generations of occupancy. Poor people, or as they were considered 'common people', were people without a lineage. In this more democratic age we can discover and record our lineages for ourselves. And we can thank governments from the eighteenth century onwards who wanted to count us, conscript us and above all tax us for the secular historical records of our ancestors. Thus these records were always public records and the first invasions of privacy by the state.

Family historians now enjoy a wealth of information online and are always hungry for more, but where does

legitimate historical interest end and invasion of privacy begin? The records that no-one seems to question are of those who were famous, infamous or insane and of course, if you want to get into the papers, the quickest way is to break the law. Somehow, therefore, these records are, like living celebrities, fair game while the well-behaved earn the right to absolute privacy.

The most interesting Australian case is the digitisation of the First and Second AIF attestation and service records. This was accelerated by Prime Minister John Howard as an investment in national pride in the Anzac tradition. Did he realise what some of the records tell us? For instance, that Grandad was never at Gallipoli but in hospital with haemorrhoids? That Uncle Albert was a gambler, a fighter, a deserter and got syphilis? They constitute the most painful and embarrassing collection of personal records in the public domain, yet I have heard of no complaints yet from offended descendants.

Many people might argue that there is 'no need' for such things to be in the public domain, that they are best left to be forgotten in the archives. History should be about 'nice things' when it is about those nearest to us. And yet we generally 'forgive the Diggers', knowing that they were subjected to fearful, shattering trauma. We acknowledge their full humanity.

This is exactly the dilemma that faced the first generations of descendants of convicts in Tasmania. For them, it was not just embarrassment, it was a genuine stigma that brought social exclusion, reduced employment and business opportunities. Alison Alexander's excellent book *Tasmania's Convicts* (Sydney 2009) reviewed in our first *Chainletter*, argues that the convict stain was managed by an extraordinary collective act of forgetting. No-one talked about the convict past, in particular of their own family or neighbours' convicts, and so by the next generation, the knowledge was lost. By the 1920s, most Tasmanians had no idea of they had convict ancestors.

Thus freed of collective stigma, the convicts' descendants got on with their very respectable lives, with Tasmania enjoying a remarkably low crime rate from the 1890s.

Now that it is safe to have convict ancestors, we can recover and think about that history, working from the evidence—the historical records—and not wishful thinking.

Many have said that we study history in order to free ourselves from memory. Memory is the stuff of national myths, prejudices and grudges that impel people to intolerance, even war, years after the original wrong was done. Ireland and the Balkans are two parts of the world in thrall to memory that can be disabling. History is meant to give us perspective, understanding—indeed—wisdom about the human condition. It is knowledge meant to set us free.

Australia's convict history is very much about our humanity—our frailties and our strengths. The convicts were not all 'poor souls' who stole a loaf of bread. Many were nasty and incorrigibly dishonest. Some were victims more than perpetrators and others displayed a remarkable capacity for personal rehabilitation. As our ships researchers are finding, they are the ones who were most likely to leave descendants.

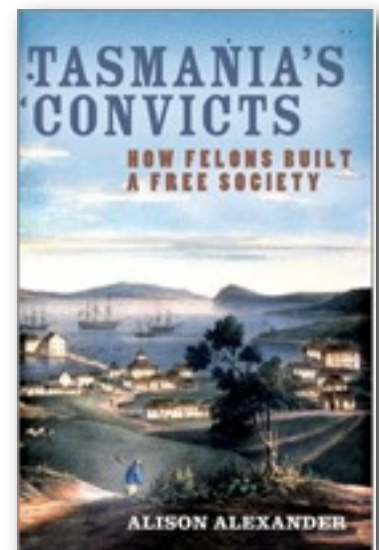
Perhaps we should stop fearing the past. We study history, especially family history, for much the same reason that we read novels, watch films, talk about other people: it is a fundamental part of our humanity to be involved with the lives of others. If we can't do that, if we can't share the experience of others through imagination and empathy, then we cannot learn and do better ourselves.

We can also learn to forgive through learning to understand and accept that we are all flawed and as we all explore our family histories, that every family has skeletons in the the cupboard. Therefore it is not a blight on us, but simply the way things are and may in the end, make us a more tolerant and humane society.

Having said all that, under the present regulatory framework, with Founders & Survivors we are constrained ethically in what we can publicly release on each convict who has been researched. Their life story, their death, their marriage/s and the fact that they had issue is probably all that we can publish.
—JMcC

If you want to engage in an online discussion about this or any other topic, we have an online forums on the FAS website for registered users of FAS.

A link for the General Discussion forum can be found through the Forums menu at the top of the FAS website.



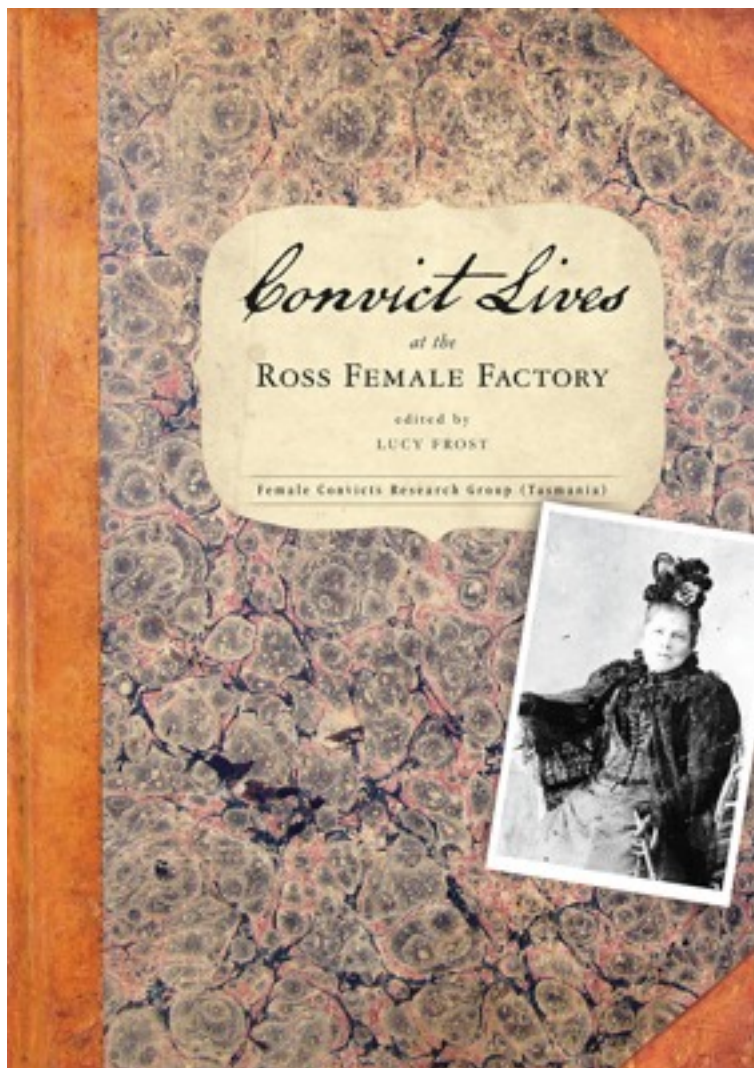
You can order this book online for \$45.00 at

<http://www.allenandunwin.com/default.aspx?page=94&book=9781742372051>

or purchase it as an ebook at

<http://www.allenandunwin.com/default.aspx?page=713>

New Book



Convict Lives at the Ross Female Factory

A new book on the lives of convict women in Van Diemen's Land, *Convict Lives at the Ross Female Factory*, was launched on 6 November by the Premier of Tasmania, Lara Giddings, at the World Heritage listed Cascades Female Factory in Hobart.

More than 150 people attended the launch where the book's 19 authors, dressed in convict garb, entertained the audience with readings from the book.

The book is the first publication of the recently formed Convict Women's Press Inc, a not-for-profit publishing company established in Tasmania by members of the Female Convicts Research Group (Tasmania) and dedicated to publishing books on the lives of convict women and their families. *Convict Lives at the Ross Female Factory* brings together stories of convict women who moved through the Ross Female Factory between 1848 to 1854 when the establishment processed thousands of women transported to Van Diemen's Land.

According to one of the contributors, James Parker, the Ross Female Factory provided "a complete institution for the exploitation of female convicts in the service of the great houses of the Midlands". But, as the members of the Female Convicts Research Group (Tasmania) remind us in this compelling book, many convict women who passed through the Ross Female Factory also found ways to challenge the convict system, to make their mark. Here for the first time their poignant, tragic and inspirational stories are told.

The book was edited by Emeritus Professor Lucy Frost and written by members of the Female Convicts Research Group (Tasmania), which was established in Hobart in 2004 by Lucy Frost and Dr Alison Alexander. The group's previous publication, the best-selling *Convict Lives: Convicts at the Cascades Female Factory*, published by the group in 2009, has sold out and is soon to be republished by Convict Women's Press as an e-book.

How to purchase a copy from the Female Convict Research Group

To order one or more copies of *Convict Lives at the Ross Female Factory*, please [send us an email <cwpaccounts@femaleconvicts.org.au>](mailto:cwpaccounts@femaleconvicts.org.au) detailing:

- your name or business name
- your postal address
- number of copies

You will be sent an invoice with the order. Payment is by cheque or direct deposit, as detailed on the invoice.

- \$25 per copy, plus postage, to individuals
- \$14 per copy, plus postage, to book shops and distributors (free delivery within Hobart and Launceston)
- postage for 1 book is \$7
- postage for 2–9 books is \$12

R. Lucy Frost, editor



Ships Projects: a guide to research

Choosing your ship

First, you must choose your ship. You may wish to research the ship that brought an ancestor. This will give you a better sense of the context of your ancestor's experience and life after sentence. You may well be surprised at how atypical your ancestor was in being able to establish a new life and a lineage.

It is important that you choose a ship where the records have survived and where they are not too difficult to read. If your ship arrived during the assignment period before 1841, the conduct and description record will be available to you on the Founders & Survivors (FAS) website. Except for some late ships, the indent details should be transcribed for you on the FAS website.

If you choose a voyage that arrived in the later Probation period, you will need to work from the digitised volumes available on the Archives Office of Tasmania (AOT) website.

If you wish to choose any ship, we would prefer that you selected one that made only one voyage to Tasmania, as that makes record linkage easier for us.

How we will help you

First, we will give you staff access to the full Founders and Survivors (FAS) databases. For this we will require you to sign a confidentiality agreement so that we abide by the University's ethics protocols and the various states' privacy acts.

Second, we can provide you with a year's heritage subscription to Ancestry.com that will give you access to the Australian and UK birth, death and marriage records, as well as the UK censuses.

Third, we will supply you with a spreadsheet to enter the key data and to do some very simple coding (for which you will have clear instructions). And we will provide a detailed manual both online and in hard-copy to guide your research.

Fourth, we will offer workshops to train you in reading and interpreting the convict records and in our requirements for collecting the data.

Fifth, we will set up a buddy system for people who would like to work with a group (you can communicate via Skype for free) and for those doing women's voyages, as the Female Convicts Research Group (Tasmania) have a wealth of experience and access to the Factory records of births. We will repay them by sharing our findings with them for their own database.

Finally, we will purchase death certificates and occasionally marriage certificates to complete your research on a particular convict.

What you will be doing From the Convict Records

1. You will enter key data about each convict in the excel spreadsheet: year and place of birth, place of sentence, family, height, occupation, religion etc—all of which you can obtain quickly from the convict's transcribed record on the FAS website. The workshop and the manual provided will help you with abbreviations and simple coding and we will provide help for identifying birthplaces and the standard abbreviations we use for the counties of England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales.

2. You will work from the convict's imaged conduct record: for those who came under the assignment system (before 1841) this is on the FAS site in the convict's record; for those that came in the probation period, you will need to open up the relevant volume from the AOT site and work through it page by page. From this source you will find out when and how the convict left the convict system. A capital "P" in the margin means pardoned, but more important will be the year of tickets of leave (TL) or conditional pardons (SP) or freedom by servitude (FS). Remember, only those 'cut free' were permitted to leave the colony and return to the UK.

The conduct record will often also tell you if the convict died while in the system, or re-offended, although there are plenty of gaps in the records. But most importantly of all, the conduct record tells about the convict's experience in the penal system. We will provide training in interpreting and coding the conduct records in our workshops. It is here that we can begin to measure the degree of rebelliousness, the suffering under harsh punishment, and the behaviour that might affect the convict's chances of rehabilitation. For instance, we are counting offences for drunkenness, and obviously the degree of severity of punishment: floggings, solitary confinement, working in chains, hard labour, and for women, the dreaded hair shaving. There is already a clear correlation between the conduct record and life chances after servitude, both positive and negative. Sometimes, resistance to authority was a marker of strong character rather than of intransigence or aggressiveness.

Life after sentence

The steps:

1. The key records that enable us to link convicts with birth, death and marriage records are the Permissions to Marry Index in the AOT and the Departures Index, and these would be your first searches. Supplement this with a confirmation of the marriage reference on Ancestry's Australian Marriage Index.
2. Search for a death in Ancestry's Australian Death Index, inserting the year of birth and allowing for subtle spelling changes and abbreviations of given names eg. Margt for Margaret, Jas for James, Jno for John. If there are no obvious matches go to...
3. Ancestry general search on UK records, inserting year and place of birth, preferably the parish as given in the convict records and the County. This may throw up sightings in the census returns for England or Scotland, and then you can search for deaths via Ancestry's English BDM. Contact a staff member for

- English BDM. Contact a staff member for searches on Scotland's People as we have to pay for those.
- If a convict married, look for births of their children, deaths of their spouses, remarriages if their spouse died: all via Ancestry.com. Please paste the Ancestry reference to the certificate in the Sources box for each marriage event, or child's birth.
 - Find the convict's record on the FAS and enter the data you have found OR if you find nothing, record in the Staff Comments that either you cannot trace the death or the name is too common or you have found a couple of candidates, pasting in the Ancestry reference so the staff can follow up the options.
 - See if you can find any obvious AIF descendants, but don't spend too long on this, as it can be exhausting.
 - If you find an inquest, we can obtain a copy of it.

- It is also worthwhile checking the Probate indexes if the convict seems to have owned property. Victorian Probate files are often too big to attach to the website so you can simply summarise the contents: what matters is the money, the property and the relationships.
- NEVER FORGET to search for your convict in TROVE and always GOOGLE him or her in case descendants have already done the work! Any new material can be put into the 'Other Biographical Material' box. You can cut and paste from TROVE or you can summarise the item. Court appearances are particularly important. Please always note the source: e.g. Mercury 5 Jun 1858.
- On your spreadsheet, you will find directions to summarise the genealogical research you have entered in the FAS record. This enables us to analyse the data more easily. We will give you these detailed instructions when you are inducted.

What to expect

You will probably find a death record for around half the male convicts on the ship and perhaps even less for women. Don't feel bad about that. We will double-check each convict story when we validate, so if you've missed a record, we will probably find it.

We would hope that in later years, as more records become available online, that more will be traced and perhaps over time, descendants of convicts who changed their names, will contact us. This is a project that will never stop.

There are obvious difficulties with convicts with very common names and those with namesakes on the same voyage—which confused people at the time as well as ever after. We just have to cut our losses with those and make up for it with the volume of voyages we will research.

You will find some fantastic stories and characters. Do record them and they can be included in the final publication for your ship.

Admissions May 1898

Date	Name	Age	25	22	2	9	6	6	1	6	Backplaces
3	Sauley John	62		1				1	1		Ireland
7	Robertson John	75		1				1	1		England
	Watts Sarah	62		1				1	1		Wales
7	Grant Robt	67	1					1		1	Ireland
	Williamson Benjamin	88	1					1	1		England
14	Charles Perry	78	1					1	1		England
17	John Lee	77	1					1	1		England
18	Smith John	76	1					1	1		England
18	Ratner Archibald	71	1					1	1		Ireland
19	Lockello John	47	1					1	1		Ireland
	Byrnie, Barbara	73	1					1	1		Ireland
20	Webb, Elizabeth	75	1					1	1		England
21	Smith William	78	1					1	1		England
22	John Mahony	65	1					1	1		Ireland
24	John Costello	82	1					1	1		Ireland
31	C. Mitchell	68		1				1	1		New Zealand
			1	1	1			1	1	1	
											England
											Ireland
											Scotland
	Remaining 1 st May	277	5								
	1 st May	248	26								
	1 st May	27									Colonial

The Tasmanian Archives has digitised the Records of the **Launceston Benevolent Asylum** from 1898 to 1915. Certainly nearly all the inmates admitted on this page were former convicts.

Does someone (or a team) want to work from home on these records, identifying former convicts, linking them to their convict record on FAS, researching their life and recording their death?

If you do, we will can set up an online worksheet via Google Docs and supply you with transcribed Tasmanian births, deaths and marriages

This is a project for 2012.

<http://search.archives.tas.gov.au/default.aspx?detail=1&type=I&id=NS1172/1/1>

Who's Who & Where...

University of Tasmania

Associate Professor Hamish Maxwell-Stewart

Dr Alison Alexander

Associate Professor Alison Venn

Professor Haydn Walters

Associate Professor John Bass AM

University of Melbourne

Professor Janet McCalman

Dr Rebecca Kippen

Associate Professor Shyamali Dharmage

Dr James Bradley

Sandra Silcot

Claudine Chionh

Professor John Mathews

Gavan McCarthy

Australian National University

Dr Len Smith

Flinders University of South Australia

Associate Professor Ralph Shlomowitz

Dr Peter Gunn

All Souls College, University of Oxford

Dr Deborah Oxley

Monash University

Associate Professor Daminda Alahakoon

Professor Michael Shields

University of Guelph, Canada

Professor Kris Inwood

University of Ohio, Columbus

Professor Richard Steckel

Founders & Survivors: Australian life courses in historical context 1803-1985, funded by the Australian Research Council, the Institute for the Broadband Enabled Society (IBES) and the Australian National Data Service (ANDS).

Centre for Health & Society,
University of Melbourne, Vic, 3010, Australia
(Victorian inquiries)

or C/- School of History & Classics,
Private Bag 81, Hobart, 7001, Australia
(Tasmanian inquiries)

Do you want your convict's original record transcribed?

The Port Arthur Historic Sites Resource Centre offers a range of services:

Research

We can provide copies of records relating to Tasmanian Convicts held at the Tasmanian Archive and Heritage Office. They can include:

- Conduct/Police record
- Indent (which may provide details of relatives)
- Physical description
- Appropriation list
- Surgeon's report (of the voyage to the colony)
- Application for permission to marry

We can check a variety of indexes for further reference to a convict and can conduct a name search to determine whether a person arrived in Tasmania as a convict.

Transcriptions

For those having difficulty deciphering the abbreviations often found on conduct records, indents or description lists, we can assist by producing a typed transcription.

Fees

Minimum Fee – \$35 (includes up to 1 hour search/transcription time).

In excess of one hour, at the hourly rate of \$35 per hour (or part thereof).

Additional costs include printouts @ \$0.66 per page, plus postage and packing.

Most basic searches take 1–2 hours and are completed within 4–6 weeks of request.

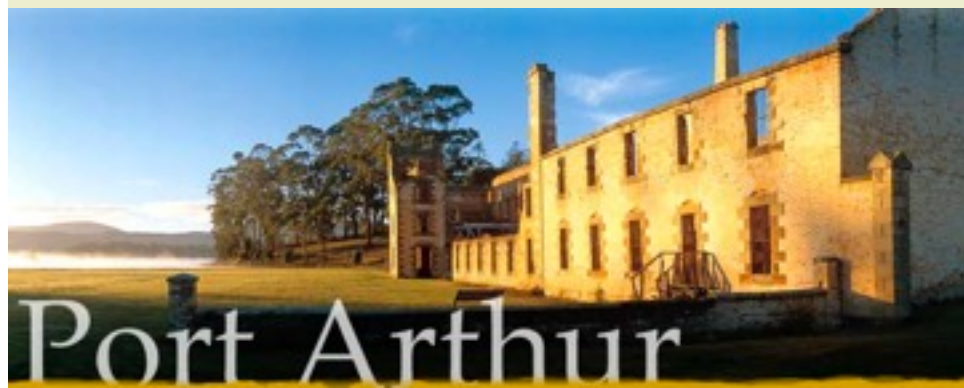
Go to <http://www.portarthur.org.au/index.aspx?id=7942> for the online enquiry form.

Contact

For more information about our Enquiry Service contact our Resource Centre

Ph: +61 (0)3 6251 2324 / 6251 2326

Fax: +61 (0)3 6251 2322



Chainletter: ISSN 1839–6402, edited by Prof. Janet McCalman (University of Melbourne) .

Contact Details: <http://www.foundersandsurvivors.org>

email: inquiries@foundersandsurvivors.org