



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. 10 April 2012

Ships Projects

We report on the wonderful progress of the Ships Projects and the plan for the next twelve months. In particular we now need to start work on the Women's Ships. Page 2

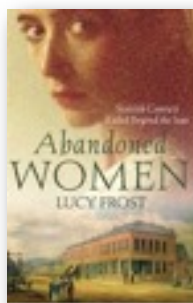
Next Workshops

Our next workshops will be in Hobart & Launceston on 2 & 3 June to launch the women's ships projects. On 23 June, we plan a day-long workshop at Melbourne University. Page 2

Ships Projects Stories

Steve Rhodes returns with two life stories from the Southworth 1834. Pages 3 to 5
And Glad Wishart reports on new connections. Page 12

New Book



Surgeon Superintendent

James Bradley discusses new research on the medicine of convict voyages and the role of the surgeon superintendent. Page 7

Research Reports

Claudine Chionh reports on the recent Digital Humanities conference and Janet McCalman & Rebecca Kippen on their paper at the European Social Science History Conference in Glasgow. Page 11

Editorial

We are now able to establish some deadlines for our project, as our funding will finish at the end of 2013.

The Australian Research Council has been very generous since 2007, but we know that we cannot expect further funding after the current grants are exhausted.

Sadly this means that the Founders & Survivors website will need to be archived, probably by the National Library of Australia's Pandora. This will keep it open for people to consult, but it will no longer be interactive. This means that new entries will no longer be permitted and communications maintained. December 2013 will mark the end of *Chainletter* as well.

However, it is not all sad news. We will find ways to publish results of the project online, the collection of convict biographies will be available, and we hope that the detailed research database will be accessible to researchers through Monash and Melbourne universities.

We have just received another grant from the Australian National Data Service (ANDS) to enable the data to remain useful to researchers in perpetuity.

We cannot, however, obtain funding that will employ the staff to run the service for the public. Funds for libraries, museums and the arts are tight and are likely to become even tighter in the near future.

In the light of this, we are thinking about online publishing as a means of continuing the research. And we have been approached to provide material that can be used for schools nationwide. Roar Films in Tasmania have been developing film and media using the project and we have contributed to a feature-length movie on Ikey Solomon.

Our research strategy therefore is to try and finish most of the ships by July 2013, so we have time to clean up the data and tidy loose ends.

In Volunteers' Corner we outline the plans for the next stage: women's ships and key men's ships that we need researched to complete the project.

Volunteers' Corner

Ships Projects and new voyages

We have over 6,000 convicts in the database as we go to press: an astonishing achievement, with 4,000 of these added by ships volunteers since October. Can we do 12,000 by the end of 2013? We now start a campaign, centred in Tasmania, to research as many women's ships as we can in the next twelve months. The Female Convicts Research Centre are making the task much easier. We also now need to target men's ships with good data.

Women's Ships

The Female Convict Research Centre have provided us with a list of 18 ships that have had their conduct records and descriptions transcribed into the FCRC database. They have also transcribed all the Permissions to Marry and there are completed life stories and genealogies for some. Our task is to complete the search for their life after sentence: finding marriages outside the convict system, births and deaths using Ancestry Heritage, and any historical references in TROVE.

The FCRC's hard work makes the coding of the convict records much easier and quicker. You won't have to struggle with deciphering the text as much, and once you have coded a few convicts, you quickly get the hang of it.

We hope to do most of the work in Tasmania because of the proximity of the FCRC for support. And we will kick off with two workshops—one in Hobart, one in Launceston—probably on the first weekend in June. Our volunteers who were able to attend the first Melbourne workshop have found getting started much easier.

The dates and places are yet to be finalised: we will keep you posted by email and the website.

List of women's ships available:

Midlothian 1853,
Martin Luther 1852,
Aurora 2 1851,
Earl Grey 1850,
St Vincent 1850,
Stateley 1849,
Cadet 1849,
Tory 1848,
Cadet 1848,
Royal Admiral 1842,
Garland Grove 1841,
Mellish 1830,
Eliza 1830,
Lady of the Lake 1829,
Borneo 1828,
Mermaid 1828,
Soveriegn 1827,
Persian 1827,
Sir Charles Forbes 1827,
Providence 1826

Men's Ships

We have tested our coding and it has turned out well, with Rebecca Kippen presenting a preliminary paper at the European Social Science History Conference in Glasgow on 11th April. The data on convicts' family backgrounds has turned out to be particularly useful and so we now need to concentrate on men's ships that have full indents. This includes virtually all the Probation-era ships from 1841 and a handful of Assignment-era ships. Here are some ships we would particularly like researched:

St Vincent 1853
Fairlie 1852
London 1851
Rodney 1850
Maria Somes (2) 1850
Blenheim (2) 1850
Hyderabad 1849
Tory 1847
Samuel Boddington 1846
Barossa 1844
North Briton 1843
Candahar 1842
Argyle 1831

There are also some very big ships being researched. The researchers on those ships may appreciate some team work to lighten their load.

Tasmanian Workshops

Our next workshops will be held in **Hobart and Launceston** on the **weekend 2-3 June** at venues and times yet to be determined. **Please email Claudine Chionh** clchionh@unimelb.edu.au.

When we have venues we will email all who have expressed interest **RSVP 18th May**

These workshops are to train a new team of Ships Projecteers to work with the Female Convict Research Centre tracing and coding women's ships. Our Victorian volunteers have found this training very helpful and we hope we can bring on board many who may have been daunted by the technology.

We welcome people who might like to work in teams rather than alone—sometimes teamwork can lighten the load. If you like spreadsheets, you will enjoy this work. However, a number of spreadsheet novices have quickly got the hang of it.

The women's ships volunteers will work from the FCRC records that have already been transcribed, so this project requires genealogical and historical skills.

Victorian Workshops

We will hold another Melbourne University Workshop on Saturday 23 June, at the School of Population Health, 207 Bouverie St. This workshop will go all day from 11 am until 4 pm, and will involve researchers breaking into groups to help new volunteers and to get to know each other. Lunch will be provided.

Please email Claudine Chionh clchionh@unimelb.edu.au.

RSVP 15 June.

Family History Feast

State Library of Victoria, 30 July 2012. **Janet McCalman** will deliver the **Don Grant Lecture** for 2012 on the topic **"Family Secrets:**

Vandemonians in Victoria. 2.30 pm. See <http://www.slv.vic.gov.au/event/family-history-feast>

Ships Projects Tales

Boys aboard the Southworth, 1834

Steve Rhodes, FAS Volunteer

Steve Rhodes has just finished the Southworth, which arrived in Hobart in 1834. Of the one hundred and ninety convicts aboard, thirty were boys aged between eleven and sixteen from the hulk Euryalus at Chatham, the holding place for child offenders.

One of these boys was fourteen year old **William Scrimshaw**, who had been convicted of stealing a coat in his home town of Kidderminster, Worcestershire, in June 1832 when he was twelve. William had a prior conviction from December 1831 of stealing a hat, resulting in a sentence of seven years transportation¹.

There was a growing belief that juvenile offenders should be housed separately from the adult criminals whilst they awaited transportation at this time. This resulted in their being housed in a number of hulks moored on the River Thames, and collectively they became known as the "Euryalus Boys". By isolating the boys and giving them religious instruction and work it was hoped they could be reformed. The reality was that these overcrowded hulks were every bit as harsh as any prison, with some of the older boys employing standover tactics over the younger and more vulnerable inmates².

Arriving in Van Diemen's Land on the 14th of January, 1834, after a voyage of one hundred and eleven days, the boys were sent to Point Puer, where the first purpose built criminal establishment for the reformation of juvenile offenders in the British Empire had just been built. As well as contributing to the colony's labour force, the settlement aimed to provide the boys with religious instruction, schooling, and vocational training, all under the same strict regime the adult prisoners experienced³.

William struggled under this system, committing many offences during his five years there. The offences were wide ranging in degree of seriousness and included several instances of making fish hooks in the workshop for his personal use and fishing off the rocks, to several violent assaults on his fellow prisoners, including burning another boy with a red hot iron⁴.



At the end of his term, William made his way to Sydney before returning to England. Presumably he found prospects were better in the colonies, as he soon returned to Sydney as crew aboard the *Britannia*⁵. Before long he had slipped back into his old ways: on the 28th of March, 1842, William and two other men stole the watch of John Thomas at Surry Hills, Sydney. He was soon captured after running ahead of the crowd yelling "stop thief", with the watch in his possession, and identified as the thief by Thomas. He was found guilty and once again sentenced to transportation to Van Diemen's Land, this time for fourteen years⁶.

In August of 1844, William and five others absconded from Port Arthur in a whale boat in broad daylight. The only person to witness their escape was John

Cart, the son of the Superintendent of Convicts at Port Arthur, whom they had told they were going to Fortesque Bay. However, they instead made their way to the whaling station of Richard Griffiths at Adventure Bay, who was known to them, and demanded provisions. They also gathered clothes, a firearm and a telescope, and made away in another whaling boat. They got

as far as Port Sorell, a distance of almost 650 kilometres, before being driven ashore by the storms they encountered⁷.

It wasn't long before they were captured by the district constables and on their way back to Hobart. One of the prisoners, George Britton, managed to escape once again, when the guard removed his handcuffs at a rest stop, resulting in the twelve constables of the escort being dismissed for gross neglect of duty⁸. Britton was recaptured and together the prisoners had their day in court. A sentence of death was recorded against them, but as His Honor put it "under the present lenient administration, their lives might be spared, and they would be sent to Norfolk Island"⁹.

Joseph Childs had been appointed

commandant of the notorious Norfolk Island prison on the 7th of February, 1844, but despite his strict discipline, conditions descended into near anarchy. Under increasing pressure from his superiors to restore control over the prisoners, Childs confiscated their cooking utensils. This action proved to be the last straw for the prisoners who had long endured harsh treatment in deplorable conditions, and the following day saw William Westwood lead a riot against the authorities, resulting in the deaths of four guards. It would also end the career of Joseph Childs as commandant¹².

Along with William Westwood, William Scrimshaw and ten others were found guilty of the murder of constable John Morris and sentenced to death. Whilst waiting for his day of execution, Westwood made a statement to clergyman, Thomas Rogers, that William Scrimshaw and three others were innocent, taking no part in the murder of Morris. The fate of the men was sealed however, and on the morning of the 13th of October, 1846, all twelve were sent to the gallows¹³.

¹ Berrow's Worcester Journal, 18/12/1831 & 05/07/1832

² Transportation, Penal Ideology and the Experience of Juvenile Offenders in England and Australia in the early Nineteenth Century, Heather Shore, BA, MA, PhD

³ The Companion to Tasmanian History, http://www.utas.edu.au/library/companion_to_tasmanian_history/P/Point%20Puer.htm

⁴ Con 31/1/40 p56, Supplementary Conduct Register Con 32/1/2 p85

⁵ FAS pubsearch for William Scrimshaw

⁶ The Sydney Herald, 30/03/1842 & 16/05/1842

⁷ Colonial Times, 25/01/1845

⁸ The Sydney Morning Herald, 19/10/1844

⁹ The Courier, 30/01/1845

¹⁰ Colonial Times, 25/01/1845

¹¹ Australian Dictionary of Biography, Westwood, William (1820-1846)

¹² Australian Dictionary of Biography, Childs, Joseph (1787-1870)

¹³ The Courier, 31/10/1846

The early life of **George Wellbank**, another of the "Euryalus boys", reads like something from a Dickens' novel. George was born in Hinde Street, Manchester Square, Lisson Grove, London on the 19th of May 1818 to parents Joseph Wellbank and Elizabeth Russell¹⁴. As well as being the name of a

street, Lisson Grove is also a district of Westminster, London. Until the late 18th century it was a rural district but due to the effects of the industrial revolution and the huge influx of the unemployed moving from the country to London looking for work, it soon became overrun. For over a hundred years it was known as one of London's worst slums with its residents living in abject squalor. The area was notorious for drinking, crime, and prostitution and the police only ever patrolled in pairs, describing the women as the most drunken, violent and foul-mouthed in all London¹⁵.



In these conditions child mortality was even greater than the already high rates of the time, and within a short time George's two siblings, Joseph, and Hannah both died¹⁶. A few years later Joseph senior died, aged 55, at a London Workhouse, probably the nearby St. Marylebone Workhouse¹⁷.

It would have been almost impossible to survive, on her own for a widow with an eight year old son in what were already difficult circumstances. Elizabeth would have been keen to find someone to help share the burden. On the 3rd of June 1827 she married James Adams, a stone Sawyer, eleven years her junior, and they moved to a room of an inn at 37 William Street, Lisson Grove¹⁸.

By the time George was thirteen he was associating with a group of boys known

to the police as petty thieves. On the 8th of February 1832 he was indicted for stealing 10 yards of printed cotton. He was tried at the Third Session of the Old Bailey in London on the 16th of February 1832, found guilty and sentenced to seven years transportation¹⁹. Upon sentencing, George was sent to the notorious Newgate Prison, which was well known for its harsh conditions.

Meanwhile, Elizabeth and husband James were busy collecting signatures for a petition to have George's sentence commuted to time spent at a reformatory for boys known as 'The Refuge'. The petition brings to light the fact that at sentencing the Judge had offered George up to his parents rather than have him endure seven years transportation, but stated that if he was to appear before the courts again he could expect a longer sentence. Elizabeth and James, having little control over George, and believing it would only be a matter of time before he re-offended, agreed to the seven year term and pinned their hopes on being able to convince a Judge with the petition²⁰. The petition was unsuccessful and George was transferred to the convict hulk "Euryalus" moored on the River Thames at Chatham, where he spent about one year before departing aboard the *Southworth* for Van Diemen's Land on the 27th of September, 1833. The prisoners were disembarked on the 14th of January, 1834 and the thirty boys were taken to the Point Puer reformatory.

George's conduct record shows he had a short temper and high degree of stubbornness. On one occasion, after striking a fellow prisoner with a stick, he was ordered to spend seven days wheeling the barrow at the chain gang, and three days later received twelve lashes for refusing to wheel the barrow. In his five years at Point Puer, George received 171 lashes and spent 73 days in solitary confinement²¹.

In 1839 at the end of his term, George Wellbank, now aged twenty, would have left Point Puer, after spending his entire teenage years incarcerated, not the model citizen the reformers would have hoped for. As well as the physical scars

on his back he would have carried the mental scars from enduring seven years of hardship in the harsh judicial system of the 19th century. Perhaps the only thing he would eventually use to his advantage in life was the trade of shoemaker that he was taught. Whatever the case, there is little doubt his experience hardened him and impacted his entire life.

Like so many other convicts, George wasted no time, after gaining his freedom, in leaving behind Van Diemen's Land. He took passage on board the brig "Brazil Packet" on the 27th October 1839 from George Town bound for Port Phillip and arrived at Geelong²², which had been surveyed and gazetted as a town the year before. When he arrived, the population was only around 550 but growing fast and there was a distinct lack of police officers in the area. The *Geelong Advertiser*, contains many articles relating to recruited constables who joined up for all the wrong reasons. They list numerous cases of officers drunk on duty, and intimidating and abusing respectable members of the public in an attempt to incite crime. Many were ex-convicts who—perhaps after witnessing the power available to those in the judicial system—wished to exercise some of it for themselves. The local Magistrates also came in for their fair share of criticism from the editor of the newspaper who referred to some of the Judges' decisions derogatorily as "Geelong Justice"²³.

Against this backdrop, it did not take George very long to find himself, once again, on the wrong side of the law. His name does not appear in the newspaper reports until January 1842, but by April he is described as being a notorious peace breaker²⁴, so it would seem he was involved in numerous incidents long before this. There is evidence of one such incident in some notes contained in the Geelong Depositions Book (1838-41). On the 24th of July 1841, Theresa Carey charged George Wellbank with threatening her life if she did not marry him and for assaulting her. George received a good behaviour bond of £50²⁵.

A charge of assault against George resulted when Constables Patrick Ryan and Edmond Roche went to investigate a fight that had broken out at the Commercial Hotel North Corio on the 26th of January 1842. Two men were arrested and as Ryan was coming out of the room, George Wellbank "gave me a kick in the fork". He then saw that his partner was down and Wellbank "leap on his body with his feet". Another man, Sylvester Newton, picked up a stone and struck Ryan on the side of the head with it, rendering him "insensible". George and Sylvester were both charged with assaulting the two constables in the execution of their duty, but the original two prisoners arrested managed to escape. It was two weeks before the committal against George could proceed due to the injuries sustained by Ryan. In the meantime, Sylvester Newton had managed to escape from the Geelong watch house and was not recaptured until April. It was stated that upon striking Ryan with the stone, Newton exclaimed "that was the way to serve the B.....ds". Several witnesses placed George at the scene but denied that he was in any way involved in the assault. One of the men who gave evidence of the affray stated that he saw Wellbank "standing at the bar, hands in pocket smoking", and that the two of them had gone out when the constables arrived. He continued that Roche had been knocked down, but Wellbank did not jump on him nor strike Ryan. Presiding Judge Willis then commented that perjury had been committed by one party or the other, a juror fell ill and was discharged, and Willis had no option but to acquit George of the crime. Newton, after recapture, was tried and convicted for the assault on Ryan and sentenced to six months imprisonment with hard labour, later reduced to four months²⁶.

Around this same time another article appears detailing the theft of clothing and a pistol from Arthur McMann by John Cousins, alias George Wellbank. At the trial, the witness Anne McMann was called and found to be so intoxicated she was unable to give her evidence. The judge sentenced her to one month imprisonment and George was

discharged²⁷. Shortly afterwards, George began to fancy himself as a police officer, by operating as a special informant. He first appeared as a witness in the case against Robert Unkles, accused of sly grog selling at Ashby Village (present day Geelong West)²⁸. The thought that Wellbank, "the most notorious breaker of the peace in the district" might become a constable outraged the editor of the *Geelong Advertiser*²⁹.

Before the year was out George was before the Court again, this time accused of stealing a gun, the property of Dr Coward. The evidence against him came from a man named Thistlewood, described as a scourger. A scourger was an ex-convict attached to certain police stations to administer floggings. The report of the trial at the Supreme Court, Melbourne, cites how George had gone to see Dr Coward for an illness and that the doctor had gone to get some medicine for him that he had some difficulty locating as he had just moved house. He asked George to return later but he didn't reappear for a few days. Thistlewood said that he saw George with the gun and that he had been asked to sell it and retain all above £3 for his trouble. He reported this information to the police who suggested he buy the weapon and give it to them, which he did. Two other men, John McGarry of the 80th Regiment, and assigned servant John Astice, both swore that George had tried to sell the gun to them. Dr. Coward stated that the gun had been in the same area where he had been looking for the medicine when George had first seen him. He identified the gun produced as evidence at the trial as being his property but admitted that he had not noticed it missing for three or four weeks after George had been there. George handled his own defence, cross-examining witnesses with great tact and ability according to the court reporter, and was acquitted³⁰.

A year later, probably under the influence of a few festive drinks, George came to the attention of the authorities again. His tongue, which seems so often to get him into trouble, managed to get out of it once more. He was charged

with having fired at a mob of men, women, and children in a public street on Christmas Day 1843. Evidence given stated that George had argued with some Irishmen about their nationality and religion, whereupon a crowd gathered and chased him down the street with sticks and stones. George, in fear of his life, as he claimed, went to his house, took the gun and fired, some said at the mob, some said in the air. For this he was fined 10s. The court also heard how George had hit one of the mob with a stick, knocking his hat off in the process. It was found that this person was not taking part in the affray and George was consequently fined 60s³¹.

It would have been around this time that George formed a relationship with Mary Ann Harford. No record of a marriage has been found. A daughter, Rosanna, was born c1845, followed by Mary Ann on 31st March 1849³², and Emily Jane c1851. Mary Ann's is the only birth that appears to be recorded, noted in the parish records of Christ Church, Geelong. Throughout this time George put the skills he had learnt at Point Puer to use, working as a shoemaker³³. This proved profitable and enabled him to purchase a bullock team and employ journeymen to cart goods for him³⁴.

Four years passed before George's name appeared in the newspaper again, listed as a member of the Geelong Fire Brigade³⁵. Just when it seemed he may have been settling down George was charged with assaulting a publican after finding a fly in his drink. Once again, sounding every bit like a defence lawyer, he managed to have a witness contradict himself and have that evidence disregarded, limiting the punishment handed down to him to a fine of £4³⁶.

In July of 1851, George appeared in the news again, this time, however, as the plaintiff. Falling short of money, he left his coat in pawn at the pawnbroker's shop, but when he returned to collect it found it had been given to another man by mistake who had deposited a similar garment. George showed great restraint by not assaulting the pawnbroker, and instead took him to court in order to

recover the value of the coat and hopefully receive some compensation. He displayed his usual flair and ability in handling himself in a court room, building a case for himself and cross-examining witnesses. He won the case and was awarded compensation of £3 but only received half of that amount. Not being the type of person to give in easily, he then pursued the matter further by taking it to the Court of Requests, eventually being awarded the full £3³⁷.

Sometime the following year the family followed business to the Ballarat goldfields where George re-established his shoemaking shop. Over the next few years George was involved in a number of cases. He appeared in court on a charge of using obscene and threatening language to a shopkeeper, after he sold a gold ring to George's partner, above the value put on it by George. He believed "the shopkeeper had practised a robbery by charging what he had for the ring, and had thereby rendered himself liable to be called a swindler and robber in the public streets." The court found in favour of the prosecutor and fined George £5 or a fortnight's imprisonment³⁸. Other cases range from creating a disturbance in the gallery of the Theatre Royal, to failing to pay for professional services and being the victim of a minor assault³⁹.

Then in 1868, a side of George emerged, not previously seen, when he appeared on a charge of attempting an indecent assault on a seven year old girl at the Ballarat cricket ground. The girl had gone there with friends and found George lying on the ground near the fish pond. The court treated the case as a common assault, probably because of the age of the victim and witnesses, and the belief that a child was incapable of swearing an oath and providing reliable evidence. He was found guilty and sentenced to three months imprisonment with hard labour².

This offence may help explain what happened to George's wife Mary Ann, who disappeared without trace, and his apparent estrangement from his

daughters. Whatever the case, at the Registry Office, Ballarat, on the 22nd of August 1885, George married widow, Keziah Chandler². He stated on the marriage certificate that he was a bachelor and had no issue, although two of his three children were living in Ballarat.

On the 15th of December 1891, George's hard life came to an end when he died from renal failure⁴¹. He was laid to rest the following day in the Ballarat New Cemetery with Keziah who had died the year before. Despite his troubled existence, George did still manage to raise a family and leave descendants.

¹⁴ LDS Family Search IGI Batch C035246

¹⁵ Wikipedia

¹⁶ Ancestry, London, England, Deaths & Burials, 1813-1980

¹⁷ Ancestry, London, England, Deaths & Burials, 1813-1980

¹⁸ Ancestry, London, England, Marriages & Banns, 1754-1921

¹⁹ The proceedings of the Old Bailey website <http://www.oldbaileyonline.org/browse.jsp?id=t18320216-281-defend2322&div=t18320216-281#highlight>

²⁰ National Archives UK Ref HO 17/83 C356276

²¹ Con 31/1/47 p28, Supplementary Conduct Register Con 32/1/1 p227

²² TAHO Departures CSO95/1/1 p16

²³ Geelong Advertiser, 02/02/1842

²⁴ Geelong Advertiser, 18/04/1842

²⁵ Crime in the Port Phillip District 1835-51, Paul R Mullaly p403

²⁶ Geelong Advertiser, 02/02/1842 & Crime in the Port Phillip District 1835-51, Paul R Mullaly p419

²⁷ Geelong Advertiser, 02/02/1842

²⁸ Geelong Advertiser, 28/03/1842

²⁹ Geelong Advertiser, 18/04/1842

³⁰ Geelong Advertiser, 31/10/1842 & 05/12/1842

³¹ Geelong Advertiser, 28/12/1843

³² Victorian Birth Certificate RN 22230

³³ Port Phillip Directories, Victoria 1851

³⁴ Geelong Advertiser, 26/11/1845

³⁵ Geelong Advertiser, 07/07/1849, & 28/08/1849

³⁶ Geelong Advertiser, 21/11/1849

³⁷ Geelong Advertiser, 06/08/1851, & The Argus 13/08/1851

³⁸ The Star (Ballarat), 30/10/1857

³⁹ The Star (Ballarat) 04/03/1864, 18/04/1864, & 25/11/1864

⁴⁰ Victorian Marriage Certificate RN 5464

⁴¹ Victorian Death Certificate RN 13255

Feature Article

Ships Surgeons and convict medicine

James Bradley

What really happened on the convict ships? And why were so many convicts 'well behaved' during the voyage after bad reports from the prison or hulk, and why did they relapse into 'bad behaviour' on arrival in Van Diemen's Land?

James Bradley delves into the surgeons-superintendent reports and reviews new work on convict health and naval medicine by a young English historian, Katherine Foxhall.

Those who regularly use the Tasmanian convict archives are quite naturally drawn to the most comprehensive record sets: the indents (CON14-17) and the conduct registers (CON31-42). For it is here that we are able to get closest to understanding who the convicts were and what they experienced under sentence. Occasionally, however, my attention has been drawn to lesser known and rarely used series. Of these, the CON69 series is, perhaps, the most tantalising: the "Descriptive Lists of Convicts Compiled by Surgeons-Superintendent"; a grandiose name for a rag-bag collection of records relating to a mere four transports.

The file is fragmentary in every way, but what it contains hints at a greater truth about the nature and purpose of transportation. For these are the last remnants of a larger, unpreserved series: the product of the work of the surgeons who oversaw the health and conduct of prisoners and passengers aboard the convict transports. From these small surviving traces we can infer the work of the surgeons and the important part they played in the operation of the convict system.

Dr James Bradley is Lecturer in the history of medicine and life sciences in History & Philosophy of Science at the University of Melbourne. His interest in convicts and transportation began during his time at the University of Edinburgh, the major centre for convict studies in the UK, where he was a fellow student with Hamish Maxwell-Stewart under Dr Ian Duffield. His research interests are the history of the body including tattooing, the body as a site for punishment and the body in sickness and in health; convict transportation to Australia; sport and colonialism; and the way that we deploy technology to interrogate historiographical problems. And he plays district cricket in Melbourne.



Here we find an example of the lists used to compile the "Surgeon's report", included in the conduct registers, alongside the gaol and hulk reports. Intriguingly the fragments include a set of records from the passage of the convict ship *Duchess of Northumberland* (arrived in Van Diemen's Land in January 1843), which illustrate the multifarious nature of the Surgeon's role. Here we discover a document that compiles the gaol and hulk reports of each convict, as well as their occupation. This document would have been passed on to the Superintendent of Convicts, and incorporated into the Conduct Registers and Indents. Next we find a list of the convicts on board with the Surgeon's report of their behaviour and character during the voyage. From the handwriting, it appears this was compiled by the surgeon himself, using the hulk lists provided to him on the prisoners' embarkation. Finally, there is a "List of prisoners ... who distinguished themselves by general good conduct on Board ... and for whom the Bibles and Prayer Books may be delivered as presents." When we combine these records with others produced by the Surgeons-

Superintendent we see that they were, in many ways, the lynch-pin of the entire system.

Just how important these figures were is illustrated by Katherine Foxhall, currently a Wellcome postdoctoral fellow at King's College London, in her recently published article, "From Convicts to Colonists". Building upon her doctoral research, she explores the central role of the surgeons, not just in managing the health of the convicts, but also in a diverse range of other areas. These included using the convicts as objects of experimentation, particularly in assessing the effectiveness of prophylactic treatment for scurvy—a demand made by the Admiralty. But more importantly she suggests that the "surgeons came to believe that the voyage was a powerful and productive space" where convicts might be transformed into colonists. Foxhall maintains, therefore, that the surgeons were, to some extent, the "arbiters" of the convict's future in Australia.

The role of the Surgeon-superintendent was mapped out by Admiralty regulations. Surviving examples of

these demonstrate the extent to which the surgeon was Foxhall's arbiter. Aside from his medical duties, which combined the treatment for all on board who needed it, he was expected to oversee a rigorous programme of hygiene that targeted the environment of the ship and the bodies of the convicts. This included monitoring the quality of rations, the fumigation and ventilation of the convict quarters, and the cleanliness and physical well-being of the convicts themselves. He was also expected to organise a school for illiterate prisoners and convict boys, take Sunday service and the daily reading of prayers, and to ensure that each convict mess was provided with bibles and prayer books. And finally, the surgeon, not the ship's master, was in charge of convict discipline. He organised the convicts into decks and messes, appointing the best characters to the position of Captain. He also possessed the authority to impose a wide array of punishment: from the noxious task of watching the water closets, to double-ironing and flogging.

Increasingly, from 1815 onwards, it is clear that the British authorities believed that both the voyage and the surgeons were integral to punishing and reforming the convicts, and CON69 gives us a glimpse of the type of work that that involved. But, of course, for historians there are other records relating to the Surgeons-superintendent that provide us with an understanding of the convicts' experience of transportation and the impact of this punishment upon their long term health. The journals, sick lists and reports contained in the ADM101 series from the British National Archives, give us a tantalising insight into the health, well being and treatment of convicts. The sick lists themselves are tricky beasts. In principal they give the researcher the opportunity to find out about the individual health of the convict on a voyage—how many times they fell ill, a diagnostic label for their illness, and a measure of its severity judged by whether they were moved to the hospital and the duration of their treatment. Indeed, a small minority of the convicts ended up in the ship's

hospital where the surgeon recorded notes detailing the trajectory and treatment of the illness. For most, however, we are left with labels that point to a range of possible illnesses. Here, the historian is faced with the significant problem of retrospective diagnosis. Not only are many of the disease names alien to current medicine, but those still in use have often changed their meaning.

This hardly surprising given the changes that medicine has undergone in last the 200 years. The Surgeons-superintendent had a very different conception of causation and pathology from twenty-first century medical practitioners. There were very few acknowledged infectious diseases, limited in the main to syphilis and other venereal diseases, cholera, consumption, leprosy and typhus. Cholera, the most recent and most feared of contagions, was barely understood, to the extent that some medical men believed that it was just another version of a continued fever caused by environmental factors. Instead, most disease was seen as the result of an interaction between body and environment. To be healthy, a body had to be in perfect balance with the environment in which it existed. Diet, exercise and mental state—all had an impact upon health an illness. A body poorly regulated could spill over into ill-health just through a change of temperature. An classic nineteenth-century sickness like Dyspepsia, the symptoms of which included indigestion and depression, might have manifold causes. A poor diet irritating the stomach might cause depression by irritating the nervous system in the wrong way. Alternatively, depressed spirits or overwork might stimulate the mind in the wrong way, and through the nervous system could cause poor digestion.

This was the world in which the Surgeon-superintendent operated. And given that the voyage transited different climatic zones, with a circumscribed diet that often lacked fresh fruit and vegetables, and a cargo of prisoners depressed by their circumstances, it was

hardly surprising that the Surgeon-superintendents conceived of much of the illnesses they encountered in these terms. Foxhall believes that it was in their interests so to do; that the disease model itself could be used to exculpate the medical men from their failings. Thus the reports at the end could be used as a rhetorical device to justify the occurrences of the voyages—untoward deaths or major outbreaks of disease. This is, I believe, is too simplistic, given that the Surgeon-superintendents could not look beyond their worldview. At the same time, the reports undoubtedly provided an opportunity to comment not just about shipboard sickness and health, but also social, cultural and political factors that impacted upon the convicts.

Ultimately the Surgeon-superintendents were practising a form of social medicine, with a socially deterministic model of disease that remains important within public health. On one level, medicine at this time was an undeniably liberal profession with liberal and often radical values to match. The reports were an opportunity to discuss the health of the convicts at embarkation in relation to the lives they lived before, both within and without the penal system. Foxhall highlights the many cases of epilepsy suffered by convict exiles embarked upon transports from the new prisons, particularly Pentonville, where they had undergone the full rigours of the Separate System. The Surgeons-superintendent blamed the epilepsy upon what they perceived as an inhumane system of punishment. The ADM101 reports of ships sailing from Ireland during the latter part of the 1840s are full of the surgeons' reflections upon the malnutrition of the embarked convicts—the direct product of the emerging horrors of the famine. While prisoners embarked from the hulks might stimulate reflection upon the lack of care that they endured in that system.

What the appointment of these men amplifies is that the British government cared about the health and future of their prisoners. For too long popular

histories, epitomised by Robert Hughes' *Fatal Shore*, have touted raw brutality as the defining feature of convict transportation. Certainly, in terms of our own world, it was nasty and brutish. But as the logic of the old order buckled under the twin assaults of Bentham's utilitarianism and the refusal of juries to pass sentences of death upon common larcenists, a new regime emerged. This sought to punish and reform, and its principal mechanism was the ordered regime of the new penitentiary. In the meantime, however, while the new system was under construction, older forms of punishment persisted, and these had to be brought into line with the new way of thinking. The Surgeons-superintendent, then, were not just arbiters of the convicts' futures, a bridge between the old world and new, they were also arbiters between two different penal systems: the older based upon deterrence and displays of sovereign power; the newer a discrete, rational and reformatory reshaping of the individual's character. As members of an emerging liberal profession there was no person better equipped than the medical man to undertake the seemingly contradictory roles of gaoler and healer, punisher and reformer.

Further reading

Foxhall, K. (2011). "From Convicts to Colonists: The Health of Prisoners

Katherine Foxhall's book: *Australian Voyages: Health, Medicine and the Sea, Australian Voyages, 1815-1860* will be published by Manchester University Press in July 2012.



CONVICTS EXERCISING IN PENTONVILLE PRISON.



Dr Everard's surgical kit used on board the *Africaine*, 1836. Courtesy Royal College of Surgeons, South Australia.

This is a surgeon-superintendent's kit from an immigrant voyage to South Australia in 1836. Missing are obstetrical forceps, but in the second box the instruments needed for amputation and cleaning wounds are well-supplied.

You can browse Surgeons-superintendent journals online at the National Archives. Many convict voyages are included in this major digitising program funded by the Wellcome Trust.

<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/surgeonsatsea/>

Richard Brown has a history blog on <http://richardjohnbr.wordpress.com/2011/03/28/prison-reform-1835-1850/> where he gives a vivid account of the 'silent system' at Pentonville and Millbank. Katherine Foxhall has found that convicts were desperate to be chosen for transportation after even a few months under this new reforming regime: another reason why convicts found the voyage a relief and the care of the Surgeon-superintendent fair and humane.

Living with the Convict Stain,

Thomas Dorgan per Blenheim 1849 *What are we beginning to find in our ships projects?*

Launceston Examiner

Saturday 10 December 1881 p 2

PECULIAR WITNESS.-A considerable amount of amusement was created at the Police Court yesterday through the stupidity of an elderly witness named Thomas Dargan, who related his grievance against a neighbour named Michael Hogan in a most amusing manner. Dargan, who is the possessor of a thick Irish brogue, evidently felt very much hurt at having been called an "old lag" a by his fellow-countryman Hogan, with whom he had a slight difference on Saturday last, from which the proceedings at the Court yesterday arose.

After relating how Hogan had "trampled a 5 horse upon him," and then gave him a "welt over the head with a stick," the witness added, almost with' tears in his eyes, "And, your Worship, he called me an old lag." After this the examination was carried on in the following manner :- Mr Collins (who appeared for the defence)-" Now, Dargan, did he strike you with a stick?" Witness - (after considering a few seconds) "Sorry" Mr Collins-"Did he strike you with a stick?" Witness-" An' how would you like, Mr Collins, to be called an ould lag, after being thirty years in the colony?" Mr Murray-" That has a nothing to do with the case. Did he strike you with a stick?" Witness "Didn't I just ax Mr Collins how he would like to be called an ould lag after-" Mr Murray-" Will you be quiet?" Witness--" I was thirty years in thie country, an' never called an ould I lag before."

Mr Collins-" Really, your Worship, if this goes on the examination must be closed." Witness-" Bad luck to him, Mr Collins, he called me an' ould lag, and how would you -" Mr Murray -" You have said that several times, and I have listened to you very attentively. Now will you answer the question" Witness-" Sure, didn't I ax Mr SCollins how he would like to be called an' ould lag?" Mr Murray--" Stand down, Sir." Witness-" Sorr " Mr Murray "Stand down, Sir." The examination of the witness was then closed, and he left the box with the look of a man who had undergone a great wrong, written on his face.

Research Report

First, we are lucky to trace half the ship's complement of convicts to a death certificate after sentence. And towards the end of the transportation period, with opportunities for self-reinvention across Bass Strait beckoning, the majority disappear into new identities.

This is rather frustrating for our researchers, especially after working for so many years on fruitful family trees, where most people married, had children and remained visible in the records.

However, this only highlights how remarkable were those few convicts who became founders as well as survivors, and who have descendants to recover their lives and remember them. They were the exception rather than the rule, and it may well turn out that the proportion of male convicts who left discoverable descendants will be under 15 per cent.

Our Swing Rioters, however, are different. They lived a lot longer than ordinary convicts, they were more likely to marry again in the colony and remain visible in the historical record. Fewer found the need to change their name, because for them, their crime was not such a source of shame as it was for poor Thomas Dargan who objected so vehemently to being called an 'old lag' in 1881 (see left).

We know that there were significant national differences between the convicts. Irish convicts were the most likely to be transported for trivial crimes, subject as they were to an oppressive legal regime in Ireland. Scots on the other hand, were generally convicts with the worst records because the Scottish courts were reluctant to

transport people. Consequently, Scottish convicts were the most refractory in the sample we have tested, while Irish convicts, apart from getting drunk, were the best behaved.

This was certainly so of the Irish women if they were convicted in Ireland rather than as immigrants to England or Scotland. Many too were young enough to be able to bear children, hence their contribution to the population was out of proportion to their number in the system.

There are tantalising hints in our early analysis that a convict's family experience was often critical in how they coped with convict discipline and life after sentence. Young convicts who had lost their mothers were particularly vulnerable. Mothers held families together both materially and emotionally. Indeed one working-class autobiographer confessed that when his mother fell dangerously ill, his first thought had been 'of other boys who had been left motherless [and so] gone to rags both in clothing and in morals'.

The family information contained in the indents is very precious, especially for Irish family history where so many records were burnt in the Dublin Easter Rising of 1916. What the convict provides is a count of the surviving complete family members. For those Irish who came after the Great Famine, we can measure the impact of the famine on families.

There is much, much more to do and these findings are very preliminary because our samples are still small, but we have been reassured—and so can be our volunteers—that all that coding is yielding valuable results.

Our heartfelt thanks to you all,
Janet McCalman and Rebecca Kippen

Developer's Corner

At the end of March I went to Canberra for the conference **Digital Humanities Australasia: Building, Mapping, Connecting**. This was the inaugural conference of the newly formed Australasian Association for Digital Humanities. 'Digital Humanities' is a new and growing field that incorporates computer technology into research in traditional humanities disciplines such as literature, linguistics, history and archaeology. Delegates to the conference came from universities, museums and community history organisations all over Australia and New Zealand. The University of Melbourne was represented by myself (for Founders and Survivors) and members of staff from the eScholarship Research Centre and the Victorian eResearch Strategic Initiative.

The program featured technical presentations and case studies that demonstrate the variety of projects now being conducted in this field. Two aspects of Digital Humanities that I was particularly interested in, and that are applicable to the Founders and Survivors project, are 'crowdsourcing' and the integration of Geographic Information Systems into historical data.

Community History and Crowdsourcing

The Term 'crowdsourcing' is used to describe collaborative projects that invite contributions from, potentially, anyone with an internet connection, rather than a small or select group. One of the largest and best-known examples of crowdsourcing is Wikipedia, an encyclopaedia that anyone can edit. Crowdsourcing is being adopted by more historical projects as a way of transcribing or digitising enormous collections of documents and data. Founders and Survivors is an example of crowdsourcing and has generated some interest in the Australian Digital Humanities community. Another project that might interest readers is the Old Weather project <<http://www.oldweather.org/>>, which collects transcriptions of weather observations

made by Royal Navy ships around the time of World War One.

People who work with crowdsourcing projects shared some of their challenges and experiences, such as the different motivations and expectations that 'amateur' and 'professional' historians bring to their research. However, crowdsourcing methods were generally affirmed as a way to open up historical research to the public and to perhaps bridge the 'amateur'-'professional' divide.



Historical Geographic Information Systems

One of the goals of the Founders and Survivors project for 2012 is to add a richer geographical element to the data we already have, by integrating a geographic information system (GIS) or visualising narratives and data in map form. There are two major approaches to visualising data in four dimensions (space and time): visualising a period of time spatially; and visualising the changes in a location over time. Two examples mentioned at the conference demonstrate these different approaches. The Digital Harlem project <<http://acl.arts.usyd.edu.au/harlem/>>, developed at the University of Sydney, allows users to select data on the population of Harlem, New York, between 1915 and 1930, and presents the data as layers on top of a Google Map of the neighbourhood. Historypin <<http://www.historypin.com/>> collates

photographs and other media that are associated with specific locations, allowing users to see different images of the same location over time.

The GIS presentations that I attended were focused on theory and difficulties in historical GIS, which suggest that this goal will be both challenging and exciting. Some of the difficulties come from the changes in place names and borders over time, which make it difficult to tell a computer how to match an ambiguous name to a specific place. As some of our volunteers have found, differences in spelling and pronunciation present further challenges. This is a rapidly evolving field and we are beginning to develop models for adding GIS capability to Founders and Survivors. Watch this space for further developments.

Best wishes
Claudine Chionh

Participation in Research on Crowdsourcing

Mia Ridge is a PhD student in the department of History at the Open University. She is interviewing people — whether amateur family or local historians, academic or something in between — who conduct research on people and places in England between 1600 and 1900. Many people find the interviews a rewarding opportunity to reflect on their research findings and practices.

Mia is interviewing some staff and volunteers from the Founders and Survivors project and is looking for more participants. Information about her research can be found at <<http://www.miaridge.com/my-phd-research/information-for-potential-research-participants/>>

If you are interested in taking part or finding out more, please email Mia at mia.ridge@gmail.com. Please include your name, preferred contact details, and a good time to reach you.

Volunteer Stories

Glad Wishart has been in search of William Thomas Skerry

I first became aware of William Thomas Skerry many years ago after receiving a copy of the death certificate of my great-great-grandfather, Isaac Waters. The informant to his death was a 'William T. Skerry, a friend, Tinsmith, Epsom'. Isaac had died on 3rd September 1867 at Back Creek, Huntly.

The second sighting of William was as informant on the death certificate of my great-great-grandmother's third husband, John Attiwell (Atterwell), who died at White Hills on 16th May, 1866. William had signed the document 'William Thomas Skerry' and described himself as 'a neighbour, present at the death of the deceased, White Hills'.

I knew that John and Ludlow Atterwell, Ludlow's daughter Arabella Waters, Isaac, and two children, had travelled from Tasmania to the Goldfields in May of 1852.

As Ludlow, with nine-year-old Arabella, Isaac, and John had all been transported to Van Diemen's Land as convicts, I wondered if William Skerry had also arrived in the Colonies this way.

Fast forward to 18th February 2012, and the Ship's Projects workshop. Whilst chatting to Janet, I happened to mention William and the connection with my family. Janet suggested that I complete an entry for William on the Founders and Survivors website. As there were two men by the name of Skerry, on the database, one being William and the other Thomas, I decided to obtain a death certificate for my 'first choice' Thomas, as he had died in Victoria. There was no more waiting for three weeks or so for a certificate to be sent by mail, now these certificates were only a 'couple of clicks' away!

The certificate was indeed for the man I was seeking, right birthplace, and father's name correct as per the convict records. The certificate listed William's nine children, six of whom were still living at the time of William's death in September 1891, and also the fact that he had married in Victoria in 1857.

By now I was quite intrigued by the life of William Thomas Skerry, and a marriage certificate would give me much more information. After all, this too was only a 'couple of clicks' away!

Imagine my surprise and delight on downloading the marriage certificate, to find that the witnesses to Thomas and Ellen Skerry's marriage were my great-great-grandparents Isaac and Arabella Waters!

Feeling very pleased to have found a little more about my ancestors in the early days on the Goldfields, I went back to researching with Ancestry for details on 'my' convicts aboard the Governor Ready.

As I checked the Ancestry site I noticed on the 'Member Contact Activity' list that another member had looked up records relating to the Skerry family.

After a message on the Ancestry site, an email and then a phone conversation, I was in touch with William Skerry's Great, Great, Grandson, Greg Stahel. Greg did not know of Williams convict connection and did not have details from Death and Marriage certificates, so it was rewarding to forward these to him.

It was a pleasure to speak with Greg and hear of the Skerry family from his perspective. I am sure that we both marvelled over a connection that happened almost 150 years ago.

Now, I just wonder, as Ludlow was a nurse and midwife, did she help deliver any of William and Ellen's children? The answer could be 'just a click or two' away!



(William)Thomas SKERRY per Stratheden in 1845

Isaac WATERS per Governor Ready in 1827

John ATTIWELL per Recovery in 1837

Ludlow TEDDER per Hindostan in 1839

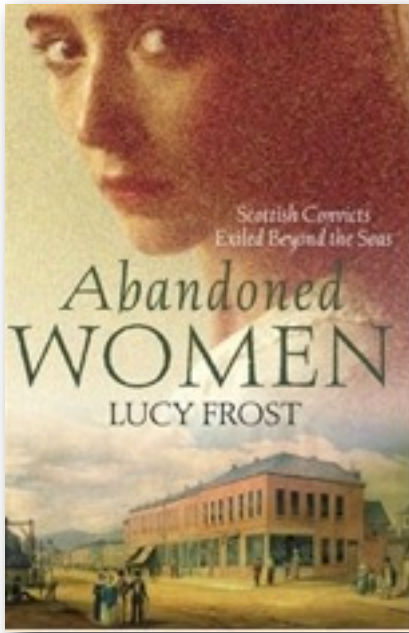
Isaac Waters– Vic BDM D No 9521 in 1867

John Attiwell– Vic BDM D No 6911 in 1866

William Skerry – Vic BDM D No 9269 in 1891

William Skerry – Vic BDM M No 3745 in 1857

New Book



Lucy Frost, *Abandoned Women: Scottish Convicts Exiled Beyond the Seas*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 2012, ISBN 978 174237 7 605, pb. \$29.95

Lucy Frost's *Abandoned Women* were abandoned in every way. In morals, many of them; emotionally most; socially all. Outcast, abused, destitute, they reacted with anger, resignation, despair, and often great courage.

Her study is of the Scottish women transported to Van Diemen's Land on the *Atwick* in 1838. They were the products of a legal system that was more reluctant to consign offenders to alienation from their homeland than were the English and Irish jurisdictions. And for the historian they were the objects of a legal system that collected copious records for their arrests and trials. These are what the Scots call 'precognitions' and they are far richer records than those presented at the Old Bailey.

These Lucy Frost has used to reconstruct the lives the *Atwick* Scots from before transportation. Her close reading of the ships, conduct and court records in Van Diemen's Land reveals the moral careers of the women through the system, and where possible, she has followed their lives after sentence.

78 of the 151 women aboard the *Atwick* were Scots, poor women without reliable male breadwinners or protectors, who struggled to survive in the vile slums of Glasgow or Edinburgh, some of them refugees from dispossession in the Highlands or Ireland, all of them unable to support a life by honest work.

Some were bad and a few mad— such as Agnes Campbell Robertson who was obsessed with stripping young children of their clothes for trophies rather than sale. She was an emotionally starved child who did better for a while when she had her own baby, but who relapsed into bolting and who found prison safer than freedom.

Aboard the *Atwick* was also Mary Sheriff, 'head girl' of the infamous 'flash mob' who defied authority and convention, and operated in the Cascades as prison gangsters. But while the flash mob have attracted the attention of historians for their supposed 'feistiness', more significant were the majority who struggled with the oppressiveness of domestic service under the Assignment system, who snatched moments of love or money staying away from their master's place at night, or who found momentary relief in the bottle.

If you want to understand the way convict discipline worked and how it affected female convicts, this is the best account that I have read to date. Lucy Frost has spent years working over the convict records. She is also a colonial scholar with a deep understanding of how this pre-industrial society of ranks and orders worked.

Convicts who understood 'the game' of deference to their social betters, of the cultivation of patronage from those with power over them, were those who flourished in the Assignment period. Women were almost all assigned as domestic servants, even though many had no training in the style of service expected by colonial society. If they could cook, they could only cook the plainest of meals, being quite unfamiliar with good food. If they could wait at

table, they had probably only learnt that in a rough public house.

Worst of all, they had no escape from the judgemental eyes, sharp tongues and incessant demands of employers who regarded them with moral contempt. A few were lucky and their quieter disposition found them patrons and protectors. Most flared into alleged 'insolence' and 'disobedience of orders'.

As for the punishments, while women were not flogged, confinement in the cells on bread and water, and especially in the total sensory deprivation of solitary confinement, exacted a psychological toll.

But the women were also mothers, and with them came children, some of whom were orphaned not long after arrival in the colony. This is a story sometimes of neglect borne of poverty and abuse, but also of love and grief at separation and death. Convict women, despite everything, could be wonderful mothers who fought to keep their children alive and loved. Some children however, found themselves orphaned in a strange land, and while the convict system undertook their education and arranged apprenticeships just as the parish did in England for orphan or bastard children, it could not give them the love and training in family life that equipped them to form enduring new families. That some did so, despite everything, is even more to their credit.

Finally there was a life after sentence for some. That too was hard, as emancipists struggled to find a living and a new reputation. Many convict marriages were unstable, the result of opportunistic liaisons, but a few were loving and sustaining. Lastly, at least three *Atwick* Scots made a good new life and became founders as well as survivors. Among them Mary Bentley, the mother of William Peeler VC, whom we have already met in *Chainletter*.

Abandoned Women is essential reading for all who have a female convict ancestor and for all other students of convict history.— **Janet McCalman**

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 Centre (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

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

Dr Sue Bedingfield

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)

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 and Dr Rebecca Kippen (University of Melbourne) .

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

email: inquiries@foundersandsurvivors.org