

“Whispers.....”

Welcome on behalf of the Female Factory Historic Site Ltd's Board, Project Manager and volunteers to the first edition of the site's quarterly newsletter, 'Whispers' of May, 2007.

Every 3 months we hope to give you the latest news from this important historic site as we progress towards 2009, when the site is gifted to you and your families – The Tasmanian Community.

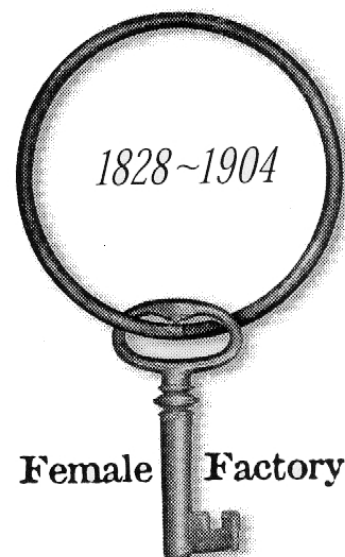
Since 1999 when this public not for profit company received a Centenary of Federation Grant to acquire Yard 3 of the site, I have been proud to serve as the Chairman of the company. During that time much has been achieved including the purchase of the Matron's Cottage in Yard 4 and a good start made on its conservation, extensive archaeological work uncovering a great deal of information on the site, the opening of an original doorway between two of the yards and access stairs, conservation work on those sandstone walls still standing and the publication of Lucy Frost's "Footsteps and Voices".

In addition, we have presented unique community events such as the Women's Muster presented by one of our sub-committees, the Female Factory Research Group in 2004. In 2006, the dramatised recreation of the arrival of the convict ship, 'Harmony' and a major Conference, 'Footsteps Across Time'. 2005 saw the gifting of the Harriet Pullen Christening Gown made by convict women for the sub-matron's baby at the Female Factory in 1828, the year the prison opened.

Interpretation of the site through the Arts has been a driving force for the organisation and has included such successful events as the Tasmanian Bicentennial Rajah Quilt Project attracting almost 25,000 people during its presentation, artist Christina Henri's installation 'Departures and Arrivals' which has toured throughout Tasmania and has just returned from being exhibited at Sydney's Hyde Park Barracks

All of this has been achieved through successful submissions to corporate sponsors, various government agencies and fundraising activities by a not for profit community organisation. The next 3 years will be vital for the site and we look forward to your support to ensure progress continues and to enjoy with us the many exciting events planned over that time. Of course the most exciting development this year has been our inclusion in a listing of Australian Convict Sites by the Federal Government for possible World Heritage Listing.

Do drop into the site and explore our gift shop, featuring Tasmanian goods, take a tour with one of our highly trained volunteer guides, enjoy Morning Tea with the Matron, wander in the Memorial Garden or just say hello – we'd be pleased to see you.



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Watch this Space!



In 2008 we have an important Anniversary – 180 years since the prison was opened and received the first intake of convict women transported to Van Diemens Land. It will be an exciting year with many interesting activities being planned!

Our Volunteers



Our Award Winning Team are winners in every way – ranging in age from 20 to over 80 drawn from a wide variety of professions and backgrounds, our volunteers are the life blood of the historic site. They give their time generously and theirs are the happy faces that greet you when you visit, they serve you in the shop, undertake tours, help with administration work and become involved in the many projects undertaken on the site and its history. Like many of us, several can trace a convict or two in their ancestry and are proud of the contribution these ‘forced migrants’ made to Australia.

The team have now won three National Australia Bank Awards for the quality of the volunteer program and their participation. They invite you to come and have a chat and become a part of our special group. Drop in to the site or call us on 6223-1559 and make a time to visit and chat about the possibilities.

The Female Factory

Opened in 1828, Yard 1 of the site was built on the site of Thomas Lowes Distillery, making use of the existing distillery buildings and adding more designed by the famous colonial architect, John Lee Archer. Over the years of operation of the Female Factory in Hobart, the site gradually expanded to include all of Degraives Street. Hundreds of interesting stories of the women imprisoned there are waiting to be told and their legacy to Australia honoured.

Our Tours

The tour of the historic site includes yards 1 and 3 of the original complex with interpretive plaques and archaeological digs and the Matron’s Cottage in Yard 4. The Memorial Gardens created in memory of the women and children who passed through the site are particularly beautiful and are often used for wedding photography and small functions. The Visitor Centre and Site Shop offers a range of quality Tasmanian products and books in addition to free tastings of a superb Tasmanian fudge.



Shop (Mon-Fri)

1 Dec to 30 April, 9am to 4.30 pm
1 May to 30 Nov, 9am to 4pm

Tours (Booking essential)

1 Dec to 30 April, 9.30am + 2pm
1 May to 30 Nov, 9.30am

Morning Tea with the Matron

Monday, Wednesday, Friday
10.30am





Roses from the Heart

Christina Henri is coordinating a project 'Roses from the Heart' recognising the lives of convict women. Christina is inviting 25,000 women worldwide to make a bonnet to pay tribute to the convict women who were transported from the United Kingdom to 'parts unknown', in the nineteenth century.

The project was launched to a packed Cathedral audience with an Ecumenical Service for a 'Blessing of the Bonnets' at St Davids in Hobart on International Womens Day, 8th March 2007. This was followed at the Female Factory Historic Site with talks, entertainment and networking opportunities for the many men and women attending.

One year later when this site marks its 180th Anniversary, the first of four separate installations of the bonnets will occur in Hobart on International Women's Day 2008 This will be followed by installations in Sydney, London and Dublin.

Christina is asking descendents of convict women to make a bonnet for their ancestor with women who have no known female convict ancestry to 'adopt' a convict woman.

Already more than 5000 bonnets have been received from women all over Australia. The project has now become a global one with women in England, Ireland, Sweden, France, Holland and the United States contributing bonnets to the project.

Bonnet patterns are also available from the Female Factory Site Shop

To access a convict lass for adoption and more information contact Christina on her email cjhenri@inet.net.au or www.christinahenri.com.au



Gallery Opening

His Excellency, the Governor of Tasmania, the Hon. William Cox opened the newly restored space in the front of the Matron's Cottage on 22nd April 2007. The space is named the W D Booth Gallery in honour of a gracious benefactor of the Female Factory, the late Winifred Booth.

The Gallery's first exhibition was also opened on that day. Titled 'First Steps' the exhibition features heritage christening gowns, bonnets and glimpses of current arts projects at the site.



The Exhibition will be open to the public from Monday 23rd April until late May (Monday to Friday) as part of the National Trust Heritage Festival.



Admission is by a gold coin donation, all moneys raised will be used for continuing restoration.

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