



## PARRAMATTA FEMALE FACTORY FRIENDS

NEWSLETTER – ISSUE NO: 02

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PFFF website: [parramattafemalefactoryfriends.com.au](http://parramattafemalefactoryfriends.com.au) History: [parramattafemalefactories.wordpress.com](http://parramattafemalefactories.wordpress.com)

Online petition: <https://www.change.org/p/declare-the-parramatta-female-factory-a-national-and-world-heritage-site>



Parramatta Female Factory by Augustus Earle c1826 – courtesy NLA

**President:** *Gay Hendriksen*  
**Vice President:** *Judith Dunn*  
**Treasurer:** *Kerima-Gae Topp*  
**Membership Secretary:**  
*Noela Vranich*  
**Secretary/Public Officer:**  
*John Gaffey*  
**History Project :**  
*Anne Mathews*  
*Beth Matthews*  
**Publicity /Newsletter:**  
*Ronda Gaffey*  
**Committee Members:**  
*Pauline Garmonsway*  
*Alice Kershaw*  
*Kerry Martin*

### DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

#### General Meetings 2015

Every **3<sup>rd</sup>** Friday of every **second** month:  
**May 15<sup>th</sup> July 17<sup>th</sup> Sept 18<sup>th</sup> Nov 20<sup>th</sup>**

Where: **The Coach House,**  
**Hambledon Cottage,**  
**Hassall Street, Parramatta**

When: Guest Speaker **1:30pm**  
 General Meeting **2:00pm**

**SPECIAL EVENT: ANNUAL RIOT DAY**  
**FRIDAY 23<sup>RD</sup> OCTOBER 2015**

#### Contents

#### Page

<i>President's Musings</i> .....	2
<i>Noticeboard</i> .....	2
<i>NPRAG Rally Reports</i> .....	3
<i>Our Girls' Profiles</i> .....	4
<i>Guest Speaker- Heidi Brown</i> .....	6
<i>History Corner</i> .....	7
<i>Our Vision</i> .....	7



*Hello Friends*

Well, another month and plenty to share. Our current national heritage submission is being considered at this time and is the only one still standing in the current round. Fingers crossed but we won't know until late July or early August. Our submission is available for viewing on the Australian Government Department of the Environment website.

We have been stepping up our online presence. There is now a virtual Parramatta Female Factory Museum (in the absence of one on the female factory site!). It is <https://parramattafemalefactories.wordpress.com/parramatta-female-factory-museum/>

We have begun a new online petition at the suggestion of PFFFF member Leonie Clark and in a week and a half we have over 700 petitions, local, national and overseas. With the online petition, an email is automatically sent to our state and federal heritage and planning ministers every time someone signs. It is <https://www.change.org/p/declare-the-parramatta-female-factory-a-national-and-world-heritage-site>. This is in addition to the hard copy one which has over 7,000 signatures and well on the way to 10,000 to present to the NSW Parliament. Please share our site, particularly the advocacy with all your friends and networks. It is <https://www.parramattafemalefactoryfriends.com.au/>

We have been supporting the *Press Pause* campaign on planning by the North Parramatta Residents' Action Group and there is more about that in the newsletter.

On the fun side, there is an article on the female factory coming out in the UK edition of the Family Tree magazine. We are preparing for the *'It's a Riot Day'* so do feel free to put your hand up and be involved.

*Gay Hendriksen*  
*President*

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## NOTICEBOARD

- **Bookmarks!** Anne Mathews has produced attractive, laminated bookmarks which are becoming a very popular, practical and souvenir sales item. A great initiative Anne !
- **Tours & Talks** -Anne and Judith have conducted a number of Factory tours lately including tours for the ALP and the Sisters of Charity. Anne also stepped in for Beth Mathews and spoke to the Hurstville Family History Society in March and Gay gave a successful talk on The Riot at Parramatta Female Factory at Hambledon Cottage.
- A warm welcome to our **newest members** *Patricia Moody, Barbara Armitage, Dorothy Simmons* and *Susan Tracey* and welcome back to renewing members *Margaret Grace* and *Geoff Collins*.
- **The Parramatta Female Factory Museum** is a must see! There are some rare interior images (address above).
- **The Parramatta & District Historical Society** will host a **Parramatta Female Factory Exhibition** at Hambledon Cottage in October. Thank you to Brian Powyer and the Society for their generosity and a very special thank you to Trevor Patrick for his support in this endeavour.



PFF Friends enjoying a cuppa and catch up in the Coach House at Hambledon Cottage after the General Meeting Friday 20<sup>th</sup> March

# NORTH PARRAMATTA - RESIDENTS ' ACTION GROUP RALLY



The recently formed North Parramatta Residents' Action Group held a highly successful public rally on Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> February. The aim of the rally was to urge the Government to '*press pause*' on the proposed Urban Growth re-development of the North Parramatta Precinct ( which includes the Parramatta Female historical site) and to allow six months for further community consultation.

The rally was extremely well attended and there was much concern expressed for the lack of information regarding heritage in the plan and with the effect of high rise residential development in and around the historic precinct and existing homes. All political parties were represented and had the floor to put their view. Other speakers included Babette Smith and Terry Smith who spoke eloquently about the site's unique narrative and historical significance. Both speakers were warmly received!

There were a number of PFF Friends at the meeting supporting the 'cause'. It was important for the PFFF to be represented and Gay had successfully negotiated a table which provided an opportunity to publicise the Female Factory and to gather signatures on our petitions. Anne Mathews was kept very busy answering questions and pointing people to the petition clipboard, complete with purple pen and ribbon. Pauline Garmonsway was also extremely busy at the entrance to the hall with her clipboard and badge declaring '*Heritage Matters in Parramatta*' (note that the entrance was next to the NPRAG sausage sizzle which Pauline declared was the "*best ever*"!).

The day was very successful with subsequent press coverage in local newspapers and an undertaking being given by the local member that the Government would be approached to '*hit the pause button*'. A few days following the rally, Julie Owens spoke in Federal Parliament declaring that this development "*would not be happening in the Rocks or in Balmain so it should not be happening in Parramatta*". Julie also began a petition which is on her website. Congratulations to all involved.

Report and photos: Ronda Gaffey



Anne Mathews



Pauline Garmonsway

## OUR COMMUNITY SPIRIT SHARED – REPORTS ON COMMUNITY FORUM 1/4/15

Following on from the NPRAG rally, Julie Owens MP organised a community forum which again focused on the development proposal for the North Parramatta Precinct .

The meeting went well. There were about 170-200 people there and they heard from Jason Burcher, who has done modelling on what effect the development's impact will have. Julie and the North Parramatta Residents' Action Group also spoke. All the meeting agreed that there should be a Masterplan and proper community consultation before proceeding. It was said by all the speakers that we have a wonderful opportunity to conserve and develop this precinct for the public good and that the proposal in its current form does not give the people of Parramatta this opportunity.

Report by Tilly South Communication Officer, Office of Julie Owens

Jason did a marvellous presentation re the government's plans. There was to be a follow up meeting with the Department of Planning the next day and there will be a further meeting soon. I am a member so I will pass on emails to PFFF. I also gave out a membership form (all that I had!) and got 2 pages of signatures on the petition.

Significantly, Julie Owens wrapped up by saying this site needs to be preserved and she mentioned the Female Factory, the Catholic Orphan School and the Parramatta Girls' Home as 200 YEARS OF FEMALE IMPRISONMENT – Julie also wants the site to be a place of reflection.

Report by Alice Kershaw –PFFF Committee Member

For further information and updates -NPRAG : [info@nprag.com](mailto:info@nprag.com)

Julie Owen's website: [www.julieowens.com.au](http://www.julieowens.com.au)



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### 'OUR GIRLS' – MORE PROFILES FROM THE PFF HISTORY PROJECT

by Beth Mathews

A LOVE STORY - **Martha Brooks** was transported in 1821 aged 22, her offence; *'with force of arms stole bread, butter, a gown and a handkerchief'*. She was sentenced to death, but then her sentence was commuted to transportation for 14 years. She arrived on the *Mary Ann* in 1822. She fell in love with a sailor on the voyage and James Scott asked permission to stay in the colony and marry Martha. James returned to sea and was lost. Martha and her daughter Charlotte were in the Female Factory. Martha died age 64. Charlotte married at 16 and had 16 children.

**Rachel Rebecca Bradley** was born in the colony, the daughter of a convict. Aged 16 she was convicted of *'stealing'* and sent to the Female Factory for 6 months with *'hard labour'*. A daughter was born in 1832, then she married Samuel Small, a son of 2 convicts, both First Fleeters\*. There were 9 children. Rebecca died in 1891 aged 80.

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*It was not only transported female convicts who spent time in the Parramatta Female Factory but also offenders born in the colony as Rachel's profile shows.*

*\*Samuel Small, Rachel's husband, was the son of First Fleeters John Small (Charlotte) and Mary Parker (Lady Penryhn) who had married in October 1788. This photograph of Samuel and Rebecca Small is courtesy of The John and Mary Small Descendants' Group.*



Samuel Small (7)

Rachel Rebecca Small nee Bradley (7)



## PFFF GUEST SPEAKER MARCH 20<sup>TH</sup> - HEIDI BROWN- DIRECT DESCENDANT OF MATRON ANN GORDAN

*Heidi Brown was guest speaker at the March meeting and spoke of her passion for social history and her special interest in her forbear, Ann Gordon. (Heidi is pictured here with her mother, PFFF member Pauline Garmonsway).*

*Heidi, as her forbear, Ann Gordon, is a mother and a career woman. At one time Heidi worked in the Westpac Museum and recounted her excitement as she handled the original Bank (NSW) Charter signed by Governor Macquarie when setting up an exhibition.*

### BACKGROUND

Ann Gordon is my great, great grandfather's grandmother on my father's side. She had a child in 1809, the father is unknown; the child was given Ann's maiden name King as her surname. We assume that the child was not Robert Gordon's as she did not appear on his death certificate as the other children he and Ann had together.

After Ann moved to Australia the child, Letitia King, went on to marry Edward Watts Garmonsway in 1831 and moved to New Zealand with their children in 1852. Letitia had eleven children in all and six made it to adulthood. For a long time, Ann's children thought that Letitia was their aunt - Ann only told them when her daughter Caroline passed away (I do wonder whether if it was Caroline's death or the fact that Letitia was now living nearby in New Zealand that prompted the disclosure, we will never know for sure ).

My mother, Pauline Garmonsway (nee Allan) met my father (and later married) while on a working holiday in NZ in 1959. My father was one of 15 children so there are plenty of Garmonsways in NZ but in Australia there is only my mother and my brother (who has no children). Even though there will be no Garmonsways, I have already told my sons about Ann Gordon and one did a school project on her. This connection will remain alive in my family, I will ensure that my sons (and grandchildren, should I have any!) will know about and will understand the importance.

### WHO WAS ANN GORDON?

Ann was born Ann King in 1795 in Portsmouth England (coincidentally from where the First Fleet sailed in 1787). She married Robert Gordon in May 1812 (which was three years after Letitia was born - again suggesting he was not her father) and they came to New South Wales in 1817 aboard the 'Matilda' with Robert's Regiment – the 48<sup>th</sup> Northamptonshire Regiment of Foot which he had joined in 1816. They did not bring Letitia with them and from the letters we have from Ann to Letitia at a much later date, it would suggest that she was left with her grandmother (Ann's mother).

After nine years of service, mainly in the Newcastle area, Robert bought himself out of the army for twenty pounds and was discharged on 19<sup>th</sup> January 1825. In the early 1840's after Ann's time as Matron and then a few other positions they held, Ann and Robert returned to the area settling in Maitland. Robert died in 1863 and Ann passed away on 6<sup>th</sup> June 1868 in Maitland.

Apart from the illegitimate Letitia, Ann had a further five children during her marriage to Robert in the years 1814-1822 – one of the daughters Maria Matilda was born at sea on the 'Matilda'! One of their sons Henry Meldrum attended the Kings School as a day student and was later a police magistrate. Henry had eight children with his first wife and then at 85 years of age had a son with his second wife!

### THE FACTORY YEARS

Ann was Matron at the Female Factory from October 1827 -1836 and her time started and ended with a riot! The first one on her arrival was a 'food riot' as the luxury rations of tea and sugar were reduced, the second was a few days after her departure.

The Governor at the time was Governor Darling who established a Board of Management for the Factory and appointed Ann as Matron. She was paid 150 pounds per annum plus food and lodgings. Her husband worked as a commissariat storekeeper, later becoming the storekeeper at the Factory. During Ann's time the Factory came to be known by a number of variations on her surname – to be sent to the Factory was to be 'Gordonised' with the Factory often being referred to as 'Gordon's Seminary', 'Gordon's Nunnery', 'Gordon's School for Girls' and 'Gordonville'!

Ann's time at the Factory seems to have been a success for her personally with Governor Bourke saying that she was a valuable public servant but that '*she had the misfortune to be surrounded by an ill conducted family*'. Unfortunately for Ann, her husband was reported to the Factory Committee by Mrs Ann Neale (a midwife at the Factory) for '*indecent conduct*' which was the catalyst for Ann's removal. Her daughter Caroline had had two illegitimate children by this time (I don't imagine such behaviour from the Matron's daughter would be considered the best example for the Factory inmates and this could also have contributed to the Gordons' dismissal). Also, Governor Bourke wanted to appoint a married couple and create more of a prison system than a Factory as it was under Matron Gordon.

I think the most telling thing we have about Ann are the family letters - among these is the following letter from Ann's grand-daughter Jessie, a daughter of Caroline, telling her of Ann's death (*identity of transcriber not known*)

**' Maitland July 13 1870**

**My dear Aunt**

***I received your letter addressed to my dear grandma who I trust is in heaven. I did not know your address or I should have written to you of your Mother's death. She died of bronchitis on the sixth day of June 1868. She was dead two years and one month when I got your letter. I have often thought of you my dear aunt. I would give anything to see you. My dear Grandma often spoke about you to me she told me if ever I should see you that I should see my mother as you are very like her. I am your sister Caroline's daughter. I was always with my dear Grandma. I was with her in her last moments. She died a happy and peaceful death trusting in her savior. My dear Aunt do not grieve or fret for your mother. I will send you her portrait the next time I write to you. You must write to me when you receive this. We have often read about the war in New Zealand it will be a good thing when the war is over. You speak of the directions of a letter. My grandma's letters were all destroyed after her death. Your sister Maria sends her love to you and your brother Henry is quite well.***

***I expect you think there is something wrong from the long silence. Your sister, Ann, is in New Zealand but we have not heard of her this long time. I must now conclude. With love to you and your family and hope and trust this will find you well and happy.***

***I remain your affectionate niece***

***Jessie Gordon '***

I love it that when I look at Ann I see a woman who was the highest paid woman in the colony at the time, had a career and made a good job of it from what I read. I was thrilled to discover that I had an ancestor in the First Fleet and then this – a connection to the Female Factory of which I am very proud !

*Heidi Brown 20/3/2015*

## SOURCES

- Personal letters held by the Garmonsway family
- Garmonsway Family History (privately published
- Colonial Ladies-Lovely, Lively and Lamentably Loose – Judith Dunn)
- These Outcast Women –The Parramatta Female Factory 1821-1848 – Annette Salt
- Women Transported –Life in Australia's Female Factories –Gay Hendriksen, Trudy Cowley, Carol Liston
- Websites: [www.myplace.edu.au](http://www.myplace.edu.au) ; <http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com>



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Our next Guest Speaker is **Anne Mathews** who will be speaking on **The Women of The First Parramatta Factory** at 1:30pm Friday 15<sup>th</sup> May 2015

## HISTORY CORNER

- **Governor Macquarie** wrote the following in his journal for *July 9th 1818*

***' After breakfast went to the Place selected for building the Factory and Barracks on the Left Bank of the Parramatta River, where I met Mr Greenway, the Government Architect and the Contractors Messrs Watkins and Payten, and at 12 o'clock, laid the Foundation Stone of this new building the usual Form, giving the workmen Four gallons of Spirits to drink success of the new building....'***

One wonders how many men shared the 'Four gallons of spirit' ! Let's hope we can raise our glasses in July 2018 (the PFF bi-centenary) with such optimism for the future!

- There are many historical narratives to be told about the Parramatta Female Factory and one which may not be so widely known is **the Sisters of Charity** connection with the site which they visit on an annual pilgrimage. The Sisters of Charity arrived in the Colony in 1839 and one of their missions was to care for the women at the Factory, providing religious instruction and caring for the sick (their blog is <http://pioneersites.wordpress.com>).
- One of the oldest women to be transported to NSW was **Catherine Finn** aged 80 years. She was transported for 7 years – her offence was 'passing bad money'. She died in November 1826 at the Parramatta Female Factory. She had arrived on the *Lady Rowena* in May that year. Her son had arrived in the previous year.

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Thank you to all our Newsletter contributors – a special thank you to Heidi Brown and also to Gay and to Noela for helping edit! Please send me anything of interest whether from your reading and research about the Female Factory and photos as well as involvement with other groups with the same interest in preserving our heritage. The next Newsletter edition is July with the deadline, 9<sup>th</sup> July.

*Ronda Gaffey*

[ahalcoop@bigpond.net.au](mailto:ahalcoop@bigpond.net.au)

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### *Our Vision*

*' The vision for the Parramatta Female Factory is a World Heritage Site which acknowledges its past and evolving history and meaning as the most significant convict female site still in existence. Intrinsic to this is access for all to the identity, history and meaning that makes the Parramatta Female Factory a key aspect of Australian history and identity. '*

