

PARRAMATTA FEMALE FACTORY FRIENDS INC.
NEWSLETTER – ISSUE NO: 15 MAY – JUNE 2017
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 Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/pffriends/>
 Petition: <https://www.change.org/p/parramatta-female-factory-federal-petition-for-world-heritage>



The Parramatta Female Factory - Augustus Earle 1826 – nla.pic-an2818460 National Library of Australia (NLA)

Patrons: Meg Keneally & Thomas Michael Keneally AO
President: June Bullivant OAM **Vice President:** Judith Dunn OAM
Treasurer/Public Officer: Kerima-Gae Topp
Secretary: Alice Kershaw
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The next General meeting is **FRIDAY June 16th 2017**
Guest speaker at 1:30 pm - **General meeting** at 2:30 pm at
 The Coach House Hambledon Cottage, Hassall Street Parramatta.

Dear Members,

I would like to thank the Committee for holding the fort and keeping the “Friends” going while I sorted out things our family have experienced over the last month.



The “Friends” have been extremely busy with the multitude of happenings in Parramatta; the City of Parramatta Council, like Cumberland, is really pushing to put their administration plans in place prior to the September 2017 elections.

Recent activities that members have been doing to raise awareness of just what a unique “Convict Site” we have in Parramatta include attending important briefings for the current work that is going on around the Factory site; Anne, Ronda and Beth have been updating the “Herstory” display at Hambledon which is attracting both state and interstate visitors; Anne and Beth continue their research and giving talks and tours which help fund PFFF projects; members have manned information stalls in the past few months – thank you to Kaye Weaver, Pauline Garmonsway and Alice Kershaw for collecting petition signatures and spreading the word at the recent *Back To Bart’s Day*. Thank you also to P&DHS for hosting the two talks on the Female Factory women at Hambledon Cottage during the National Trust Heritage Festival.

Your Committee has begun organising the the Female Factory Bi-Centenary in 2018; to this effect we have sent out 25 letters to politicians and organisations seeking their support and involvement. The Bi-Centenary has received a very favourable reception and a number of high profile people and organisations are wanting to help.

Our Patrons Meg and Tom Keneally were asked if they would video a message that we could use in our publicity and advocacy campaign; they answered in the positive and we were given permission to use it however and whenever we needed. I have posted the short video on the Facebook page. Meg and Tom are very hard working campaigners and are using the video within their networks as well as organising people who can assist our cause. Thank you Meg and Tom.

Recently, an announcement was made by the Premier regarding the North Parramatta residential development on a Sunday morning at 10.00 am. Fortunately two reporters rang member Suzette Meade who met the TV crew on site which resulted in three TV channels reporting on it that Sunday night. This gave good coverage of our concerns on commercial television which is very hard to achieve. The upshot of this was that the video was uploaded to Facebook pages over our networks and pages were reporting 5,000 odd views, with one “Memories” page (the Cumberland History, Heritage and Memories site) reporting at least 36,000. Our networks shared the Channel 7 Report and I have also shared it on the PFFF Facebook page: <https://facebook.com/pfffriends> - unfortunately with social media, some information is not always historically accurate but to get the word about the “Factory” out there is absolutely essential.

Another story that has been put out and has been shared around the networks is one written by Paulette Wallace from ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites) and shared on Facebook which you may like to read at <https://www.foreground.com.au/cities/making-happen-fate-parramatta-park/>. It is gratifying to see so many supporters beavering away to help the cause that we have fought so fiercely for over the last five years; a lot of voluntary work, hours and effort has been put in by our members and I would like to thank them and our supporters for caring enough about our Aboriginal, Colonial and contemporary history to give their time on behalf of all Australians.

The “PFFF Members’ Only Event” organisation is well under way and will take the form of an afternoon tea and talk on Saturday 8th July 2017 at Hambledon Cottage with special guests, PFFF Patrons Tom and Meg Keneally. Invitations will be sent out soon.

Our *Riot Day* on Friday 27th October 2017 is to take the form of a display of new material in the main lecture room on the site, as well as tours; we are using “Eventbrite” to get a firm idea of who is attending, so this will cut down the amount of work for members. A sub-committee to help with this event will be formed in June 2017. If you would like to volunteer, please let us know.

Finally a warm welcome to new members: Julianne Noble, Phil Hare, Beryl Gallard, Adele Henty, Margaret King, Jules McCue, Clarise Hawkins, Penny Tilling, Marie Carns, Nicole Elliott, Jill Finch, Jacqueline White, Elda Crea, Clare McGuinness, Stephen Bryant and Corrine Vale.

June M Bullivant OAM
President PFFF

HISTORY CORNER – ‘CUMBERLAND HOSPITAL – FORGOTTEN GARDEN PRECINCT’

‘What strikes the visitor on entering the main gates is the exquisitely clean and neat appearance of the buildings and their surroundings. Closely shaven lawns, well-rolled gravel paths, and flowerbeds bright with coloured walls covered with ivy and the climbing ficus, and in some cases the gorgeously tinted bougainvillea, all be token a great amount of case on the part of the gardener and his assistants, and show that amongst other curative, or palliative measures used, that of beautiful surroundings holds no small place in the system adopted. Ornamental fountains and statuary, some the work of attendants are also frequently met with.....’⁽¹⁾

May the gardens bloom again and weave their ‘curative’ spell for the community and visitors to a World Heritage site and world class Museum Precinct! RG.



Front gardens along Greenup Drive by E.W. Searle, c 1935. Source NLA (vn4654261-v)

(1) Australian Town and Country Journal, 1885, page 26 from Cumberland Hospital – Forgotten Garden Precinct, Alison Lykassis; Parramatta City Council Heritage Centre 2015

NOTICEBOARD

- The next General Meeting at Hambledon Cottage Coach House is **Friday 16th June**; Guest Speaker is at 1:30pm
- One year to go! This year, on 9th July we celebrate the **199th Anniversary** of the Parramatta Female Factory foundation stone being laid by Governor Macquarie!
- **PFFF “Members’ Only Event”** is at - **2pm Saturday, 8th July** at Hambledon Cottage – special guests will be our Patrons Meg Keneally and Tom Keneally.
- The **Herstory** Exhibition is continuing at Hambledon Cottage. It would seem that there is an ever increasing interest in the women’s narrative and certainly underscores the need for a permanent home in Parramatta for this rich archival material and community engagement with the ‘herstory’ experience.
- **Another important date for your diary!** Meet your Committee for a specially arranged tour for PFFF members of the archaeology at the North Cumberland site on **Friday 26th May at 2pm** – meet at the Recreation Hall. A flyer has been emailed this week. Thank you UGNSW.
- If we have missed welcoming any new member, please let us know!

FINDING MY 3 X GREAT GRANDMOTHER AT THE PARRAMATTA FEMALE FACTORY

Recently PFFF were contacted by a factory woman's descendant, Jan Neaves; in this extract Jan shares part of her exciting family history journey which we appreciate very much:

"On Saturday 25th March we decided to drive to Parramatta to investigate the Female Factory, from convict days. We drove into the Cumberland Hospital, off Fleet Street, and discovered the huge sandstone walls and remaining buildings, built from around 1818. Although neglected they are in amazing condition, but we learned they are under threat of a modern development.

(I had researched my convict ancestor, Ann O'Brien -1810-1875- transported from Cork, Ireland on the ship Hooghly 3. She had been convicted of shoplifting in 1831, two years after her father and brother were transported to N.S.W. After arriving in Sydney Town in 1831, Ann was one of the 78 women convicts sent to the Female Factory at Parramatta.

William Watts, an English convict who had a Ticket-of-Leave, came from "Glendon" N.S.W. where he had worked as a groom. He went to Parramatta to select a housemaid. Although illiterate, poor, perhaps with her head shaved and working at breaking rocks in the 3rd class; he selected Ann O'Brien. Luckily for us, her future family, he married her a year later, in 1833).

We then drove to John Macarthur's "Hambledon Cottage" where there was a display called "Herstory – Lives of the Parramatta Female Factory Women". Enjoyment of our tour was intensified when we read the "Herstory" booklet produced by the "Friends of the Female Factory". Surprisingly on page 13, there was the very positive report on "OUR ANN" written by James Ellis, Surgeon Superintendent on her convict ship! Out of 5,000 women who went through the Factory, about 20 were mentioned in the book. I was informed that Ann was only in the Factory one month before being selected, by William, as a servant.

As I had a photographic portrait of Ann in old age (as well as information on her progress through life from the Singleton Family History Society's Watts' Family File), I decided to contact the Friends' Group. Eagerly they replied, asking permission to publish my photo etc., as well as some by Graeme Watts of Queensland.

(Ann and William went on to raise 9 children. They bought farms and built hotels and homes in Singleton, Broke and Warkworth. According to William's will, at the time of their deaths they were very wealthy. They donated the land for St. Phillips Church, Warkworth to be built and are buried in a place of honour, right by the church door.

Although only a chimney now remains of their hotel, the Watts family multiplied. Son George "Jack" Watts married Jane Duff, granddaughter of Jerry's Plains pioneer Richard Cheers. They raised a fine family of 12 children, one of whom was my great grandmother Melanie L. Green, later Matron of a hospital).

So after 185 years, Ann is about to return to the Parramatta Female Factory. Her success story is about to be told to the public. *

Whether she stole from desperate need or to be reunited with her family in N.S.W., she succeeded beyond her wildest dreams. Starvation and death was rife in Ireland at the time and her mother, Anistia, had already died.

Her father, Peter O'Brien, an old pioneer died in Warkworth at the age of 101! He was buried in Singleton, in the Catholic section in 1861. I like to believe that Ann cared for him well in his old age.

They had a terrible start in life and we owe them a huge debt of gratitude for our comfortable life now in Australia".

Submitted by Jan Neaves

The ship *Hooghly* embarked 187 women and sailed from Cork on 24th June 1831. It arrived in Sydney Cove on 31st July 1831.

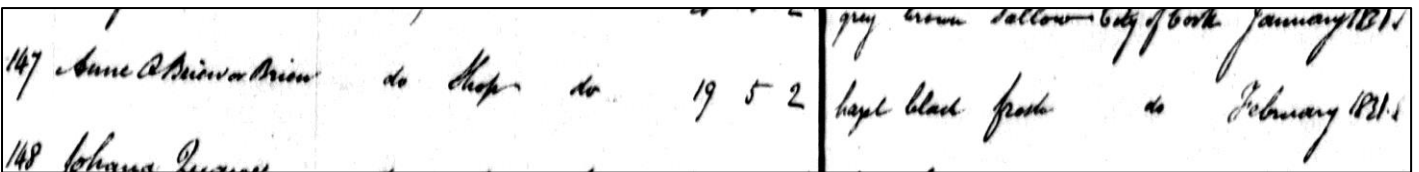


Photo: Ann Watts (O'Brien)



Ann's gravestone at St Phillips Church, Warkworth NSW.

(1)



In the 'Hooghly' indent, Ann is described as 19 years, 5ft 2", fresh faced, hazel eyes and black hair (1). In his journal, Surgeon Superintendent James Ellis describes Ann's behaviour on the journey to NSW in the most positive terms:

"No 147. Ann O'Brien or Brien

Has conducted herself extremely well – she is active, cleanly and industrious. Attentive to school at which she made much progress. Very penitent for her former crime and much inclined to conduct herself well for the future."

By all accounts Ann fulfilled Dr Ellis' prediction for she went on to become a successful businesswoman with her husband William. Their epitaph is perhaps a testament to their characters and, it is a loving tribute – it reads:

***WELL MAY WE GRIEVE WHO LAID THEM THERE
WHERE WILL WE FIND THEIR EQUAL WHERE***



St Phillips Anglican Church, Warkworth c 1848: source unknown

Sources:
Jan Neaves and family
SRNSW
The Singleton Family History Society

Photos: Courtesy: Jan Neaves

**The display at this year's Annual Riot Day on 27th October will certainly feature Ann O'Brien.*

OUT AND ABOUT

Kerima-Gae, PFFF treasurer, local Parramatta historian and tour guide was in fine form when the Parramatta & District Historical Society launched their National Trust Heritage Talks and Tours Programme on Thursday 20th April at Hambledon Cottage. Kerima-Gae's talk entitled *"Let the Walls Talk"* was lively and the research was impressive. The audience was enthralled with the narrative about the "other" female factory sites about which so little is known generally speaking (with the exception of the Hobart Cascades).



The lesser known female factory sites Kerima-Gae spoke about were Bathurst, Port Macquarie, Moreton Bay, Newcastle, and Ross and George Town in Tasmania. Each site was described in detail - dates of construction and factory 'personalities' as well as the factory locations today and site interpretation even where there is little or no original fabric.

Beth Matthews and Anne Mathews, PFFF researchers, were also on the Hambledon Cottage National Trust Heritage Festival Talk programme. Anne and Beth's talk, *"Walking with the Women"* was delivered to a 'packed house' - the coach house was filled to capacity which was extremely satisfying for our hosts P&DHS and for Anne and Beth (and PFFF!).

Brian Powyer introduced Anne and Beth acknowledging their invaluable research and spoke about the importance of *"Herstory"*, pointing out that these women were 'nation - builders'; that their narrative was such a significant part of our history and needed to be told.

Anne and Beth each presented a slightly different perspective. Anne gave a short history of the two factories at Parramatta with some wonderful images of places in and around the female factory site. Beth, so fond of her "girls" shared some of the fascinating and touching stories which she has uncovered.



Anne Mathews and Beth Matthews



Kaye Weaver



Anne and Beth with Enid Turbit and Brian Powyer



More chairs please!

Another event on the National Trust Heritage Festival calendar, *Back to Bart's Day* provided an excellent opportunity for PFFF to publicise the factory story and for site advocacy. Many thanks to Jill Finch for her offer of a trade table.

Thank you to Alice Kershaw, Kaye Weaver and Pauline Garmonsway for their terrific support on the day. Once again a number of brochures and flyers were distributed; there were lots of interesting conversations and more signatures for the World Heritage petition. It was reported that Kaye ensured that every stall holder signed!



St Bartholomews Church, Prospect c1841



ADVOCACY CORNER

- UGNSW Development Director *Donna Savage* addressed the April PFFF General Meeting which members appreciated. Many questions were asked and points clarified concerning the Parramatta North Urban Transformation project (Cumberland Hospital, North Parramatta).
- UGNSW Senior Development Officer *James Adcock* also spoke about the current archaeology at the site and showed some images of the finds so far. James also informed us that **on 26th May, at 2pm** PFFF are invited to tour the site to view the archaeology with UGNSW staff. The site is open to the general public on Saturday 27th May.
- **The Development Application (DA)** for Stage One of the UGNSW Project is now on public exhibition as well as the **Development Control Plan (DCP)** and other related documents which set the parameters for the development of the North Parramatta Cumberland Hospital site including the “heritage core”.
- All members are encouraged to view the DA and the accompanying documents. The PFFF Committee will be writing a response on your behalf however, the more responses Council receive, the better! Links are as follows:
UGNSW DA: <http://eplanning.parracity.nsw.gov.au/Pages/XC.Track/SearchApplication.aspx?id=404610>
Parramatta City Council **Draft DCP:** <https://www.cityofparramatta.nsw.gov.au/sites/council/files/inline-files/Draft%20DCP%Version%20for%20Website.pdf>
If you need any further information please don't hesitate to contact us. If you would like input into the submission please email parramattafemalefactoryfriends@gmail.com . The submission deadline is June 13th 2017.



The exquisitely detailed Fitzell-Mathews model of the Main Factory Barracks (c1818) currently featured in the *Herstory* Exhibition at Hambledon Cottage. Photographer: Bob Cook.

