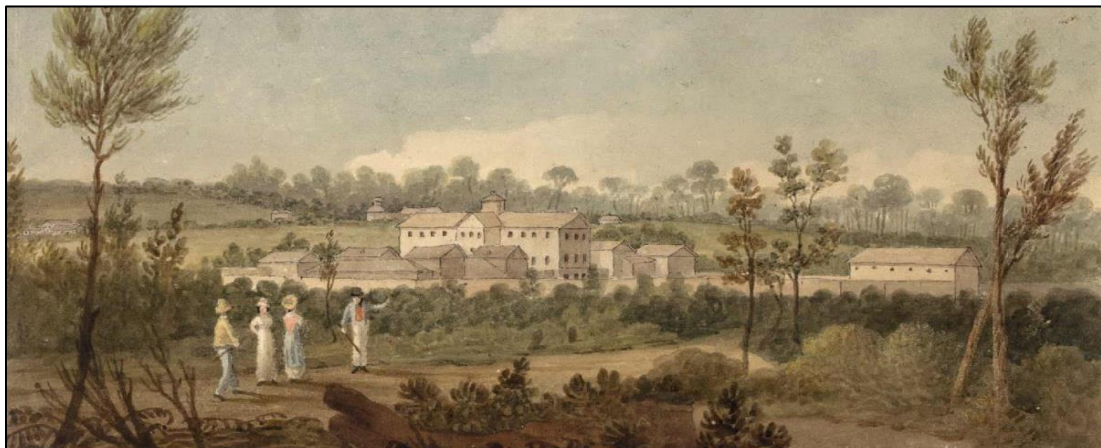


PARRAMATTA FEMALE FACTORY FRIENDS INC.
NEWSLETTER - ISSUE NO: 68 AUTUMN EDITION March-April 2026

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 PFFF website: parramattafemalefactoryfriends.com.au
 Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/pfffriends/>
 Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/parramattafemalefactoryfriends/>
 Twitter: <https://twitter.com/pfffriends/>
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The Parramatta Female Factory - Augustus Earle 1826 - nla.pic-an 2818460 National Library of Australia (NLA).

Patrons: Meg Keneally & Thomas Michael Keneally AO
President: Gay Hendriksen; **Vice President/Technical Officer/Tour Coordinator:** Kevin Dodds; **Public Officer/Treasurer:** Sharyn Byrne; **General Secretary:** Jane Clain;
Committee: Site Watch: Judith Dunn OAM; **Publicity/Newsletter Editor:** Ronda Gaffey; **Membership Secretary:** Lorraine Henshaw; **Minutes Secretary/Guest Speaker Coordinator:** Lyn Watkins

2026 - Next Bi-monthly Members' Meeting: Friday 17th April at 12pm - 1pm followed by afternoon tea with Guest Speaker at 1.30pm.
Venue: PFFF Rooms, 5 Fleet Street, North Parramatta.
Parking available at Parramatta Leagues Club Car Park.
Parramatta Light Rail from Parramatta Square to Ngara - short walk to site.

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Factory Friends,

Autumn has arrived and the Friends have already been very busy.

First of all there is significant news regarding the Parramatta Female Factory & Institutions Precinct (PFF&IP) World Heritage application. You may have heard in the news that the submission was rejected. This does not mean that the process is finished. The next step is for the Government to consider advice given and re-submit. To this end, the Parramatta Female Factory Friends are calling on both Federal and State Governments to progress this and include us in contributing to the process through advice and expertise. If the re-submission is not successful then we would be asking the Government to investigate the addition of the Parramatta Female Factory to the existing 11 Convict Sites.

As a matter of priority, we are asking:

1. Reinvigorate the World Heritage Process.
2. Provide a single transparent governance model for the potential World Heritage PFF&IP.
3. Provide Custodial Commitment and implementation short term and long term.
4. Provide a museum that honours and shares the site's foundational history and its potency as a part of our Australian identity.
5. Make a commitment that any rezoning proceeds only with World Heritage standards and limitations for developers that respect our past and future - the creation of a buffer zone is an imperative.

In seeking World Heritage Listing, we believe that the NSW Government needs to provide custodial care for the PFF&IP equal to Hyde Park Barracks. We identify this as the benchmark as it is a World Heritage Site and the Parramatta Female Factory history is as important. There is a chasm of difference between the two sites in terms of custodianship.

We will also be alert to critical developments and North Parramatta rezoning decisions.

Our event planning for this year has already borne fruit. In February and March, we hosted our first Public Program of the year with Rosemary Rope talking on 'Convict Clothing'. This year our workshops are in two streams, research and craft. Our first workshop was 'Straw Plaiting' with Lyn Watlkins. We have also begun a new workshop initiative, 'Craft Circle' which is for those interested in craft of different kinds and sharing their time, information and ideas. On Friday 6th March, we marked International Women's Day with a fabulous morning tea provided by Eileen Avery and Jeanette Moles, a talk by Kerima-Gae Topp on *Women of Note* and afternoon tours. Thank you to Lyn, Lorraine, Ronda, Kevin for your 'behind the scenes' organisation and a special thank you to Lyn and Gary for doing tours on the day. Thanks also to Mel, Leslie, Christine, Margo and Angie for your help in the PFFF Rooms and Resource Centre.

We continue to have a fabulous tour offer and at our Rooms there are displays, merchandise and a tea room where you can just chill out as you enjoy your Female Factory visit and of course, the Research Centre.

All the best and I look forward to seeing you soon.

Gay Hendriksen
President PFFF



NOTICEBOARD

A warm welcome to new members: *Mandy Lee Turner, Jason Burcher, Gail Barclay, Karen Hollenbach, Helen Leary, Lynne Audsley and Jennifer Wright.*

Dates for your Diary - 2026

* **The next Bi-monthly meeting will be: Friday 17th April** at 12pm, followed by afternoon tea at 1pm and at 1.30pm Guest Speaker **Christine Yeats FAHS - her topic: *Registers of the Forgotten: 19thc asylum and mental health facilities.*** This is PFFF's **Australian Heritage Festival (National Trust) event for 2026** - all welcome.

* **18th April - 18th May. The Australian Heritage Festival (NT) 2026** - with its theme, 'Change', invites all Australians to uncover the ways history continues to shape us - and how we are shaping history in return. There is so much on offer at: <https://www.australianheritagefestival.org.au>
Support local heritage, check out Parramatta offerings - there are tours and talks and heritage walks - there is lots to choose from.

* **Sunday 24th May - the Maitland Family History Group** are holding a Seminar Day, 'With a Needle and Thread' featuring three quilts telling the story of female convicts with 'blocks' made by their descendants. Some of the women featured spent time at the Parramatta Female Factory before being moved on to Newcastle.

*Book early - **Annual Conference 2026 - *The Paper Trail & Beyond, Family History in the Digital Age* - NSW & ACT Family History Societies Association.** Website: <https://www.portmacquarieconference2026.com>
This Conference is being hosted by the Port Macquarie & Districts Family History Society on **18th, 19th, 20th September 2026** at Port Macquarie.

History Corner - Postcard from Mauritius

Ronda Gaffey

A recent email alerted PFFF to a new publication which may be of particular interest to the many PFFF members and especially descendants of **Constance Couronne** - a slave girl and the youngest Factory woman c1834.

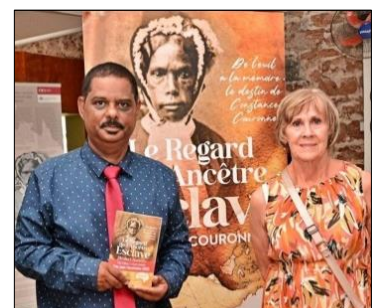
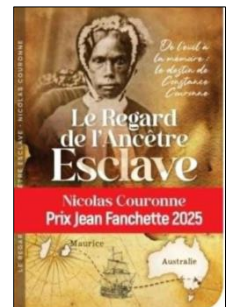
Nicolas Couronne has been in touch with PFFF over the last two years or so, therefore it was exciting to hear that his biography of Constance has been published. The book is in French and is titled: *Le Regard de l'Ancestre Esclave - The Gaze of the Enslaved Ancestor.*

The book was launched on 2nd February 2026 in Mauritius in the presence of the President, His Excellency, Mr. Dharam Gokhool, the Australian High Commissioner, Her Excellency Ms. Kate Chamley, fellow historians and descendants. This event coincided with the 191st Anniversary of the Abolition of Slavery*.

The book is based on extensive archival research in Mauritius and has been well received, being awarded the prestigious literary prize, *Prix Jean Franchette 2025* - congratulations to Nicolas on this award.

Currently the book is only available in French and in Mauritius, however Nicolas is exploring the possibility of an English translation and a wider distribution.

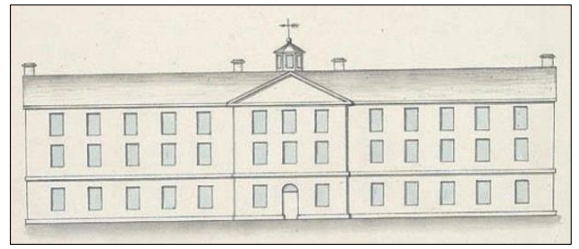
If you wish to contact Nicolas, email nicolascouronne63@hotmail.com
He would welcome hearing from descendants of Constance and researchers.



Nicolas and Her Excellency, Ms Kate Chamley

*Slavery in Mauritius was formally abolished on 1st February 1835 following the British Slavery Abolition Act of 1833, freeing over 66,000 people. The date is now an annual public holiday in Mauritius, once a British Colony (1810-1968) and a French Colony (1715-1810). It is a day of remembrance for the suffering, the resistance and the contribution of slaves and their descendants. Ed.

Early in the morning, on 1st February 1821, Macquarie rode down from the Governor’s Domain to the *new* Factory and Barracks to witness the reception of 109 convict women and 71* of their children, the first ‘occupants’¹. With the move to the ‘new’ Factory, a new era began for the convict women.

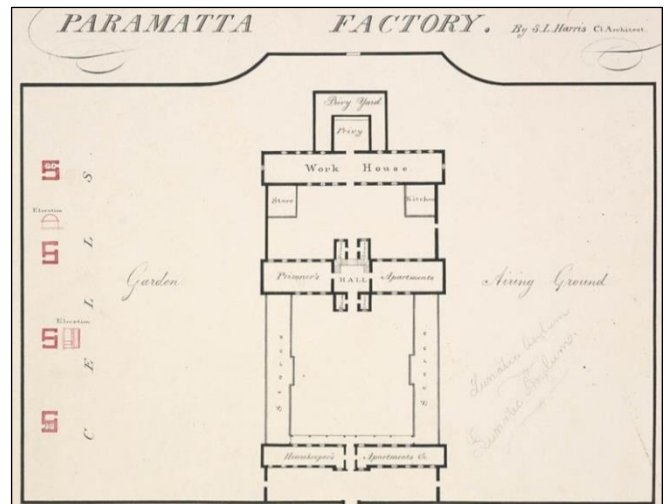


What was ‘new’ about this Macquarie commission, Marsden concept and Greenway design? It was the first purpose-built Factory and Barracks for convict women in the Colony. It was intended to provide much needed accommodation and regular employment. It was located near the river and therefore thought to be ideally situated for the manufacture of wool and linen².

The Barracks was substantial and impressive. It was built of locally quarried stone and three storeys in height. Macquarie described the building complex as:

A large Commodious handsome stone built Barrack and Factory, three storeys high with Wings of one storey each for the accommodation and residence of 300 female Convicts, with all the requisite Offices including Carding, Weaving and Loom Rooms, Work-Shops, Stores for Wool, Flax, etc., etc.; Quarters for the Superintendent and also a large kitchen Garden for the use of the Female Convicts, and Bleaching Ground for Bleaching the Cloth and Linen Manufactured; the whole of the Buildings and said grounds, consisting of about Four acres, being enclosed with a high Stone Wall and Moat or Wet Ditch³.

The 1822 ‘Harris’ plan of the ‘new’ Factory, shows the boundary and grounds that include a garden on the southern side of the Barracks and an Airing Yard on the northern side. There are four double cells (or eight single cells) near the southern wall. The privy yard is near the river, behind the work house. The rather grandly named *Prisoners Apartments* are upstairs and dining rooms are either side of a hall entrance. To the side of the front, inner yard, there are two long buildings for stores. Today these two buildings are identified as the ‘Greenway’ Matron’s Quarters, Administration & Stores and Hospital.



Francis Oakes, Superintendent at the *old* Factory, continued his service at the *new*, however the daily management of such a complex operation required regulation. To this end, Macquarie’s *Rules and Regulations for the Management of the Female Convicts at the new Factory at Parramatta* was devised and implemented.

There were twenty rules covering management, discipline and hygiene, daily workhours, rations, a dress code and a system of reward and punishment. From the outset, the women’s lives were highly regulated. They were incarcerated behind the imposing walls and had to earn privileges or *indulgences* to leave.

Under Macquarie’s Rules & Regulations there were initially two classes of women - the *General Class* and the *Crime Class*.

Sources:

Image: *Elevation of the Factory* - drawing, S.L Harris 1824; Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW.

Image: Francis Oakes - Men’s Pioneer Society Collection;

1822 *Plan of Parramatta Factory* by S.L Harris , Colonial Architect, ML/SLNSW;

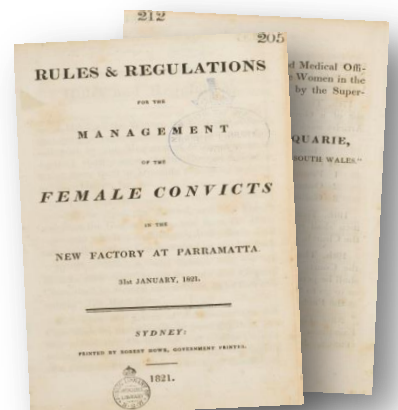
Rules and Regulations for the Management of Female Convicts at the New Factory at Parramatta, L. Macquarie., 31 Jan 1821 SLNSW - online.

References:

¹Commissioner Bigge reported that there were 111 women and 85 children moved that day.

²In the early years, quite a volume of cloth was produced and is evidenced on a work return for December 1824, when 2084 yards (approx. 1905 metres) were woven; ³Governor Lachlan Macquarie -

J.T.Bigge, *Report of the Commissioner of Inquiry into the State of the Colony of NSW 1822*.



From the *General Class*, a *Merit Class* was formed to reward women who behaved well for six months after admission. Behaviour that earned a place in the Merit Class included, *general orderly good Conduct, Sobriety, Industry, Cleanliness and humble Deportment*. Women in the Merit Class were also allowed to have visitors and they could use a portion of the time to work for themselves. They could earn money.

An additional incentive for a woman in the Merit Class was, that if she behaved well for twelve months, she would be allowed to go out to service as long as a suitable position could be found. A woman could also marry if there was a *proper Opportunity offer*; though a husband had to be approved. Further *indulgence* could be earned whereby a woman could leave the Factory for a day but she had to return before prayers - a woman who failed to do so, would be punished.

The Crime Class was for women condemned and sent as punishment by the Magistrates or the Courts and women who were *disorderly and dirty and disrespectful*.

Women now had to wear regulation clothing *suitable to their station* which consisted of a blue or brown serge or stuff gown and white apron and a straw bonnet for Sundays. They wore a jacket and coarse apron during the week and a common straw bonnet of a strong texture made by the women themselves. The Crime Class women had the same Sunday and Workday dress but were distinguished by having to wear a *Badge* denoting their status.

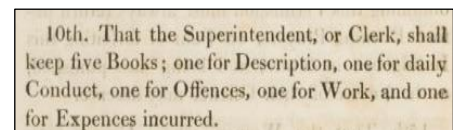
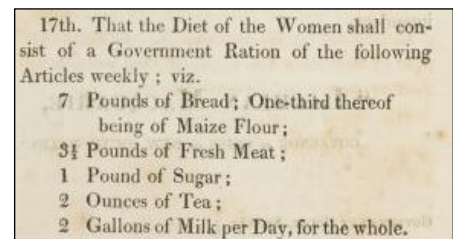
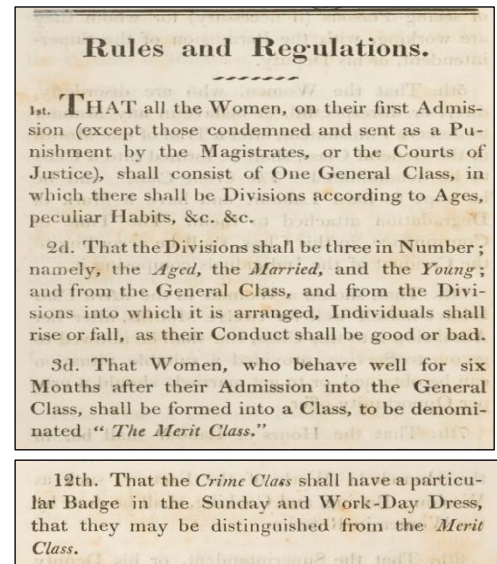
A working day in summer was from 6 - 8 in the morning, then after breakfast, from 9am - 1pm. An hour was allowed for dinner then work resumed from 2 - 6pm. In winter, working hours were from 8am to 12pm and 1pm to 5pm. The women were working a ten hour day in summer and in winter for eight hours. Prayers, led by the Superintendent were said before breakfast and before the women retired for the night. All the women were escorted to church every Sunday and had to be *clean and uniformly dressed*.

In addition to work in manufacture, there were daily 'household' chores to do such as baking, washing, sweeping and cooking for which a roster was set up. Cooking for up to 300 women would have been quite an undertaking as well as apportioning the rations. The basic diet of bread, fresh meat, sugar and tea and milk would have been supplemented with Factory grown produce. The Superintendent or his deputy were to ensure the food was properly prepared and that mealtime was orderly.

Record-keeping was essential for such an establishment and the books to be kept included a daily conduct book, a work book, an offences book and most importantly, a record of expenses incurred. The Description book also alluded to is thought to be an admissions book with each woman's details*.

Although the Factory was beset with the same core issues as the *old*, particularly overcrowding, it served the Colony for 27 years, 1821 -1848. It provided a barracks and employment for the women; it was a 'marriage bureau', a work assignment depot and a refuge; it provided the first dedicated women's health service in the Colony for both convict women and 'free' - with a lying-in hospital on site; it was also a place of punishment.

Today, the spaces and the yards defined by the sandstone walls and buildings are evidence of Macquarie's commission of 208 years ago. The 1818 - 1821 wall fragments and the two sandstone buildings first seen on Harris' map of 1822, (although altered over 200 years of use), are quite a legacy. Sadly, the 'Greenway' Barracks building has not survived.



*The NSW Gaol Description & Entrance Books, 1818 - 1930 are accessed through ancestry.com or State Archives NSW. Additional research - R.Gaffey.

PFFF RESEARCH CENTRE MUSTER & HISTORY BYTES

Gay Hendriksen

Research Coordinator Parramatta Female Factory Friends Research Centre & Babette Smith Collection

The Research Centre is a hive of activity with our researchers leading particular areas of our Research Plan. Our digital projects also include ordering our current digital collection and continuing our State Archives project this year. Our Creative Initiatives planning is well under way. Thank you to our wonderful research team - Sharyn Byrne, Gary Carter, Margo Carter, Jane Clain, Philippa Crosbie, Luanne Fagan, Angela Gibson, Christine Hardy, Lorraine Henshaw, Pip Palmer, Leslie Richman, Mel Ridge and Lyn Watkins.

Our Workshop Program has started with a very successful *Straw Plaiting Workshop* and *Craft Circle*. Local and interstate Research inquiries continue.

Don't forget our 1827-2027 Bicentenary Time Capsule Initiative. Of course there would be a list of the Friends but what would be nice also, would be a list of women and associated people for the Factory and their descendants, so if you want to be included contact the Research Centre with your information or email it to gayhendriksen@parramattafemalefactoryfriends.com.au with 'Time Capsule' in the title.

Our Factory women's list continues to grow so please keep those names and stories coming in. Given there are over 5,000 names, we really need your help to give back the life stories to these names. You can give directly to us at the Research Centre or email to: gayhendriksen@parramattafemalefactoryfriends.com.au and put 'Research Centre' in the subject field.

If you are particularly interested in being involved with the Research Centre you can email or visit us on a Friday. Of course if you would like to visit and explore our resources, you are welcome 10am to 2pm on Fridays.

Good read and online history adventures

Good read....A good read this time is *Academy for Young Ladies: Sarah and Thomas Bell, matron and keeper at the Female Factory 1836-1845** by Sue Bell. As well as telling the story of Sarah and Thomas Bell, this book shares some great insights into a slice of time in the Parramatta Female Factory when it was bursting at the seams and there were significant changes at the Factory and in the convict system.

Online...

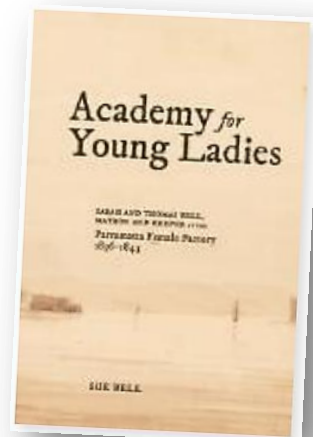
For a useful link try <https://coraweb.com.au/> This is a web portal for family historians and has a range of connections including free and convict.

Of course you can find digital resources like this at the Friends Rooms and in the PFFF Research Centre and Babette Smith Collection – where we can help you help yourself in your history and family history discovery!

HISTORY BYTES

The Digital Panopticon is another website to explore: <https://www.digitalpanopticon.org/> This website allows you to search millions of records from around fifty datasets, relating to the lives of 90,000 convicts from the Old Bailey, to search individual convict life archives, explore and visualise data, and to learn more about crime and criminal justice in the past.

*Sue's book is currently on sale at the PFFF Rooms.



William Cluer - Clay pipemaker. (1765-1824) Mary Cluer (nee Burfill) aka Mary Morgan - Clay pipemaker; William Dark - Clay pipemaker (1801-)



Small common objects can tell a larger story. Pottery objects including clay pipes formed an intrinsic part of early Colonial history and women, including some of those in the Female Factory, were known to have smoked pipes - examples can be seen in the Factory display.

The process of pipe making was carried out by hand and was considered a craft which was quite distinct from other ceramic trades, although some pottery firms did make clay pipes. A skilled pipemaker could produce pipes at a rate of about 500 per day. One of our earliest convicts with these skills was given the opportunity to set up his own manufactory. Behind this manufactory lies a story of the vastly different lives of two young pipemakers William Cluer and William Dark transported to the Colony, 30 years apart, and the woman, our first female pipemaker, Mary Burfill who was inextricably linked to them.

William Cluer and William Dark were young men at the time of their crime (theft) and both were sentenced to transportation, although Cluer was initially sentenced to death. At his trial, Cluer's employer, and several others spoke up for his good character and *he was humbly recommended to mercy on account of his good character and simplicity* by the Jury.

William Cluer was described as 5 foot 2 inches, with brown hair, dark eyes, and a sallow complexion. He was 25 when he arrived in the Colony from London in 1792 (per *Royal Admiral*). His early days are not well documented, but he first advertised his *Pipe Manufactory* in December 1804.

W. CLUER,
Pipe Manufacturer, Brickfield Hill,
Respectfully informs his Customers and the Public in general, that he has lately burnt off a kiln of superior quality to any former, and that his Merchandize may be justly considered to rival the best English Manufacture.
Having a large stock on hand, he is enabled to furnish the best Pipes at the very moderate rate of Six Shillings per gross;— their durability is undoubted; they seldom break unless by accident; and possess every other quality that can recommend them to general use and approbation.

Over the years he built up a substantial business and *Cluer's Manufactory* (along with Leak & Moreton's potteries), was considered one of the largest in the Colony. Cluer also acquired at least four properties in Sydney: 3 Brickfield Hill, 15 Phillip Street, 1 Elizabeth Street, and 15 Castlereagh Street. He was also recorded on various Musters (1814 - 1820) as a landholder of 100 acres. His property *Cluer's Farm, near the Cooks River*, was first mentioned in the Sydney Gazette & NSW Advertiser in 1815.

Cluer became a respected member of the Sydney community and was listed as a Juror for several inquests held between 1811 and 1820. He also paid 10 shillings towards *Inclosing the Burial Ground at Sydney* which was opposite his premises and offered rewards for information regarding goods stolen from his premises in Brickfields.

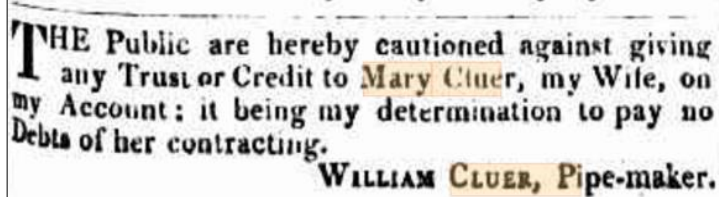
In a Memorial to Governor Macquarie dated April 1812, Cluer wrote that: *through his own good conduct he had obtained a certificate of emancipation from Governor King, to be a tobacco pipemaker by trade* and was *the only one of his profession in the country*. He described himself as: *an honest, sober and industrious man to which many people of respectability can bear testimony*. The Memorial was written and signed in his own hand and countersigned by Gregory Blaxland and Captain Kent.

William Cluer was 44 years old when he married Mary Burfill at St. Phillip's, Sydney on 11 October, 1809 - her age was unknown. He undoubtedly felt that as a free person, she was a highly suitable wife.

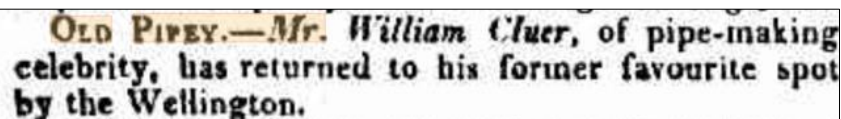
Soon after his Absolute Pardon was granted, 31 January 1813, Cluer began preparations for his return to England and placed several notices in the Sydney Gazette in 1813, 1816 and 1821 regarding his intention of

leaving the Colony. It is not clear whether William intended to return to the Colony or whether Mary might accompany him to England - perhaps she was the reason he did not leave initially.

Later their marriage appeared to have been in difficulty and the first indication of a rift between them was a notice in the Sydney Gazette, 21 April, 1821: *THE Public are hereby cautioned against giving any Trust or Credit to Mary Cluer, my Wife, on my Account; it being my determination to pay no debts of her contracting.* WILLIAM CLUER, Pipe-maker.



THE Public are hereby cautioned against giving any Trust or Credit to Mary Cluer, my Wife, on my Account: it being my determination to pay no Debts of her contracting. WILLIAM CLUER, Pipe-maker.



OLD PIPEY.—Mr. William Cluer, of pipe-making celebrity, has returned to his former favourite spot by the Wellington.

William attempted to sell his *Pipe Manufactory*, his property at 15 Castlereagh Street and his 100 acres of land near the Cook's River in April

1821 which also suggested that he did not intend to return. However, in May 1821 just before his actual departure, a further notice of his intention to leave the Colony informed all concerned that: *any unsettled transactions are entrusted, in his absence, to the management of his wife.* This implied it was his intention to return and that he trusted Mary to operate his business in his absence.

William left the Colony on the ship *Skelton* on 9 June, 1821 without successfully selling any of his properties. On 18 December 1822, he returned to Sydney on the brig, *Wellington* which was noted in the Shipping News: *OLD PIPEY. —Mr. William Cluer, of pipemaking celebrity, has returned to his former favourite spot by the Wellington.*

Cluer endured a horrendous journey to Sydney and was obviously devastated when he found his personal and financial affairs in disarray. Both these events must have taken a toll on his health for "Old Pipey" died in December 1824 leaving many of his legal problems unresolved - he was buried on the 9 December 1824.

Mary Cluer (nee Burfill) alias Mary Morgan. There is very limited biographical information for Mary apart from her marriage to William Cluer in 1809. Her age on arrival in Sydney is not known, there are no physical descriptions or even any official record of her death. There are however numerous memorials and records of leases and assignments of property, plus census and muster records.

In William Cluer's Memorial of 14 April 1812, he described Mary as: *a woman of impeccable character who came free to this country as servant to Captain Kent's Lady, on His Majesty's ship, Buffalo.* It is unlikely Mary knew anything about pipemaking before she married Cluer, but she described herself as a pipemaker on various census and in Sydney directories until 1844 and may well have been the Colony's first female pipemaker.

Mary apparently ran *the Pipe Manufactory* when Cluer returned to England (1821 - 2) and was awarded Cluer's Power of Attorney to sell the 100 Acres, known as *Cluer's Farm*. In May 1822, Mary again advertised the 100 acres for sale. By this time Mary was apparently in debt as in June/July 1822 the Provost Marshall advertised the same property to be auctioned as part of the case of *Levey v Cluer* in the Supreme Court.

Mary was assigned three different convict mechanics during 1821/22. William Dark, a convict and pipemaker by trade, was assigned to Mary throughout his sentence. Dark also began a relationship with Mary, most likely soon after he went to work for her and during her husband's absence in England. Around 1822 Mary began calling herself Mary Morgan and Census & Muster records show Mary Morgan, as a housekeeper and Pipemaker, of George St, Sydney. There are no records indicating that Mary remarried or why she chose to use the name *Morgan*.

When William Cluer returned to the Colony at the end of 1822, he advertised his intention to divorce Mary. William specifically mentioned “family” in that notice, but there is no evidence of him and Mary ever having any children. Despite that notice, when Cluer died in 1824, he left his *Pipe Manufactory*, in its entirety, to Mary.

NOTICE.—I, the undersigned, hereby inform the Public of New South Wales, that my Wife, **Mary Cluer**, has absconded from her Home and Family without the least provocation on my part; and I therefore give Notice of my Intention to become divorced from the said **Mary Cluer**; and caution all Persons from giving her Credit on my Account.
 Pipe-maker Manufactory, }
 Brickfield-hill, Jan. 23, 1823. } **WILLIAM CLUER.**

In 1823, Mary Cluer was awarded the lease of land where *the Pipe Manufactory* stood, but in 1829 she signed over the lease to John Dickson, in return for a lump sum and rents from the property during her lifetime. The agreement provided substantial cash and a considerable income from rents which no doubt provided an easy life for her and Dark in the short term, but lost her the investment potential of valuable property in the long term. When these documents were signed, Mary had reverted to the surname Cluer, and she continued to use that surname on further leases up until 1839. She was also recorded as *Mary Clewer, pipemaker*, in Low’s Directory, 1844. Mary was awarded a Grant of that same land in 1831. Mary died in December 1845 (noted in a report of a court case regarding the rightful ownership of the land grant Mary assigned to John Dickson in 1829).

William Dark aged 20, was from Bristol. He was convicted for larceny along with his brother Jonathon in April 1821. They were both sentenced to transportation for seven years. However William was sent to Sydney, arriving per *Shiple* in 1822, whilst Jonathon was sent to Van Diemen’s Land (per *Phoenix*). William Dark was described as 5’ 1” tall, with a ruddy complexion, brown hair and grey eyes.

Dark was assigned soon after arrival to Mary Cluer, to work at *Cluer’s Pipe Manufactory* in Sydney. He obtained a Ticket of leave dated 8 Sep 1827 and his Certificate of Freedom in May, 1828. Dark worked for Mary Cluer for many years and their relationship lasted until Mary’s death. In 1826 Mary Cluer had signed a Deed of Gift to Dark in consideration of *Natural love and affection* which allowed him to remain in her property after her death.

Neither Mary, nor Dark advertised their pipes in the way Cluer had, and it is not clear for how long *the Pipe Manufactory* continued to operate. Dark and Mary both appear to have been alcoholics which cannot have helped the business operation. Dark described himself as a Pipemaker when he witnessed the signing of a document in 1838 and both Mary and Dark are recorded as pipemakers in Low’s Directory, 1844. Whether they were actually producing pipes at that stage is unclear.

Following transportation, Dark had certainly secured a relatively easy situation working at his previous trade rather than in one of the convict gangs. Dark was only 21 when he began working for Mary and continued to work for her even after he obtained his Certificate of Freedom; he no doubt thought he had no need to set up on his own when he could reap the rewards of Mary’s pipemaking manufactory and rents collected from several Cluer properties.

In November 1836 Dark spent an hour in the stocks *for having exceeded all the bounds of moderate refreshment and gentlemanly indulgence*. In November 1841, three newspapers reported that following a drunken spree, William Dark had: *cut his throat in a fit of delirium tremens* and furthermore, that Dark was rushed to hospital, *where he now lies in a very precarious state*. Dark did recover, but he spent the rest of his life an alcoholic.

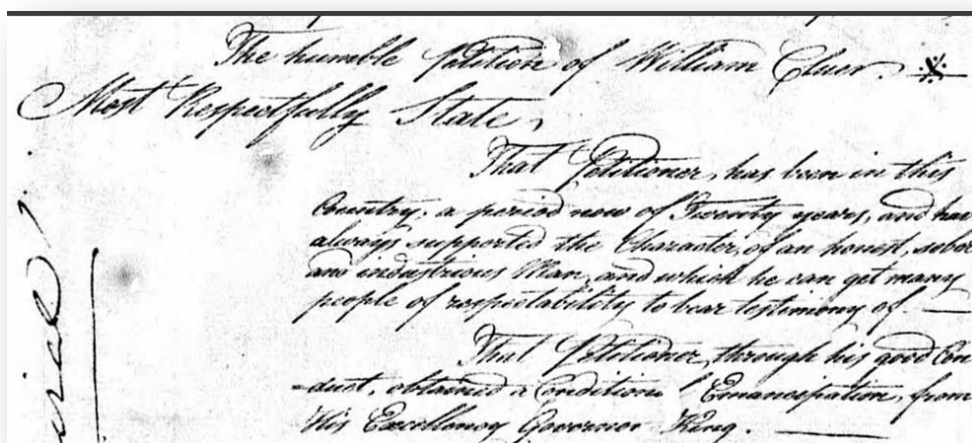
At some point after Mary Cluer's death, Mary Ann Riley (a daughter of John Moreton*) began living with Dark however one morning in March 1850, she was found dead - the coroner determined her death was caused: *from pre-existing disease, accelerated by intemperance*. Dark was too intoxicated to testify at the inquest, but the Doctor who attended the scene was horrified at the state of the tenement saying: *It is scarcely credible that human life could be sustained under such circumstances*.

In 1853 Dark gave evidence at the court case regarding disputed ownership of the Cluer property, but the judge's summation was that his testimony could not be relied upon as he was suffering badly from chronic alcoholism and neglect. It is not known when Dark died. By 1857 Cluer's manufactory property was occupied by a coachmaker and bootmaker.

Cluer spent years steadily building his pipemaking business and property portfolio which was quite an achievement for an early convict arrival who ultimately gained an Absolute Pardon. He also built a reputation as a respected resident of early Sydney as evidenced by the nick name "Old Pipey".

Mary's background and her arrival in the Colony is undocumented, as is her death. As Cluer's wife, she had respect and the opportunity to share in his industry yet chose to throw in her lot with William Dark, who although much younger, chose to take the easy option and squandered his good fortune on alcohol and ultimately lived in squalor and abject deprivation.

* John Moreton (per Recovery) of Moreton and Sons, Surry Hills Pottery, Est. 1820



Extract - William Cluer - Memorial to Governor Macquarie, April, 1812

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GUEST SPEAKER REPORT - ROSEMARY ROPE - 'Convict Clothing'

In February, PFFF were treated to a fascinating talk by Rosemary Rope on 'convict clothing'. Rosemary has a particular interest in the early Colonial period, being a descendant of two First Fleeters.

Rosemary's extensive research has revealed some little known facts - the food shortages faced by the fledgling Colony are well documented but a lesser known fact is the shortage of adequate clothing.

Thank you Rosemary for such a detailed and informative presentation, and the truly 'authentic' (sample) convict clothing on display.



Rosemary's book, *Female Convict Threads* - on making convict clothing, is currently on sale at the PFFF Rooms.

MEMBERS' MORNING TEA - Saturday 28th February

Our first Members' Morning Tea (MMT) for 2026 was very well attended - there were new members too and plenty to talk about. We also hosted some 'drop ins' - two people just saw the door open and wanted to know what 'we' were about. It was also great to have City of Parramatta Councillor Judy Greenwood call in.

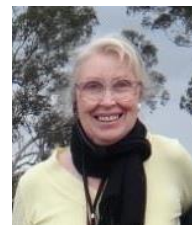
Thank you to Eileen and Jeanette for their superb catering and to everyone who contributed to the morning. A special thanks to Membership Secretary Lorraine Henshaw for organising the event. The next MMT is in June.



INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY at the FACTORY - Friday 6th March

International Women's Day 2026 was observed at the Female Factory on Friday 6th March and advertised as *a Talk, Tea and a Tour*. The event was a great success.

The day began with our Guest Speaker Kerima-Gae Topp giving her inaugural talk, '*Women of Note*' - it was such a well researched topic with numerous illustrations and hitherto unknown facts about some exceptional and *noteworthy* Australian women who are featured on our bank notes. Who knew that Dame Nellie Melba died from sepsis after undergoing a facelift in Paris or that Caroline Chisholm had a Parramatta connection?



Thank you Kerima-Gae for such an excellent talk.

Morning Tea followed the Talk and once again the Matron Ann Gordon's Tea Room was kept very busy - there were many 'ooohs and aahhs' from visitors, having so much choice of the delicious pastry and cakes on offer.

At 12pm there were two tour groups and, with people visiting the site for the first time, again there were many 'ooohs and aahs' about this heritage site - it was rather special to be able to go inside one of the three original Factory buildings - the 3rd Class Sleeping Quarters & Penitentiary c1823.

Thank you to everyone who supported the day.



Craft Workshop & Craft Circle - Saturday 14th March



There is something rather special about sitting in a circle, chatting about anything and everything and working on a sewing project. It was so satisfying, spending a relaxing morning at the Factory and imagining the convict women working here, making their straw bonnets - for the 21st century bonnet makers, only nine metres of straw plaiting is required for the next stage!



Thank you Lyn for organising and leading this workshop and for your expert tuition! Thank you Lorraine and Lyn for such a delicious morning tea. Thanks also to Raelene for leading the inaugural Craft Circle and for sharing your fabulous projects and the wondrous world of fabrics.



Reports and photographs - Ronda Gaffey

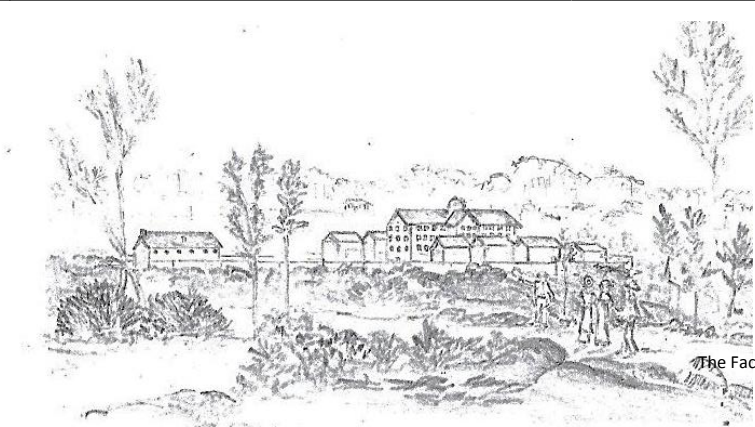
MONTHLY COMMITTEE MEETINGS 10.30AM.

BI-MONTHLY MEMBER'S MEETING 12 - 1PM FOLLOWED BY AFTERNOON TEA. GUEST SPEAKER 1:30PM.

PFFF RESEARCH CENTRE IS OPEN 10AM - 2PM EVERY FRIDAY. RESEARCH ASSISTANCE BY APPOINTMENT.

REGULAR & BESPOKE SITE TOURS - BY APPOINTMENT. CONTACT: TOUR COORDINATOR: contact@parramattafemalefactoryfriends.com.au

2026	PFFF MEETINGS - DATES &	EVENTS & ANNIVERSARIES
April	<p style="text-align: center;">Committee Meeting *Friday 17th Guest Speaker - AHFNT Event General Meeting</p>	<p>Australian Heritage Festival (National Trust) (AHFNT) Sat. 18th April - Sun. 18th May</p>
May	<p>Newsletter 15th Committee Meeting <u>Workshop 29th TBA</u></p>	
June	<p>Friday 19th Committee Meeting Guest Speaker General Meeting <u>Members' Morning Tea TBA</u> <u>Workshop - Friday 26th Braiding & Craft Circle</u></p>	<p>AGM PREPARATION</p>
July	<p>Newsletter 17th Committee Meeting <u>Open Day - Macquarie Anniversary Fri 11th July</u> <u>Workshop - Friday 24th TBA</u></p>	<p>Thurs. July 9th 208th Anniversary - Gov. Macquarie laid the foundation stone for the <i>new</i> Factory.</p>
August	<p>Friday 21st Committee Meeting AGM</p>	<p>History Week (August) TBA</p>
September	<p>Newsletter 18th Committee Meeting <u>Workshop - 25th TBA</u> <u>Member's Morning Tea</u></p>	<p>18th - 20th September NSW & ACT Assoc. of Family History Soc. Annual Conference -Port Macquarie</p>
October	<p>Friday 16th Committee Meeting Guest Speaker: General Meeting RIOT DAY - 199th Anniversary Event TBA The Annual Thomas Keneally Lecture</p>	<p>Riots: 27.10.1827; 11.10.36</p>
November	<p>Newsletter 20th Committee Meeting <u>Workshop Fri 13th Saturday 14th - Craft Circle</u></p>	<p>Parramatta Foundation Day Festival TBC Riot: 29.11.1831</p>
December	<p>Friday 11th Committee Meeting General Meeting</p>	<p>*(2nd Friday) PFFF Christmas Afternoon Tea</p>



The Factory at Parramatta c1826