


# PARRAMATTA FEMALE FACTORY FRIENDS INC.
# NEWSLETTER - ISSUE NO: 70 - PLATINUM EDITION
## July-August 2026

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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 - AGM: Friday 21st August at 12pm followed by afternoon tea - Bi-monthly meeting at 1.00pm.**
**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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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Factory Friends,

We are now in midwinter. The Solstice has passed us by and the Factory Friends continue with an active schedule of events and advocacy.

We had a very successful advocacy move with the Petition Presentation Day at Parramatta Square. First of all a warm thank you to our Patrons Meg Keneally and Tom Keneally AO for their message of support and a hearty thank you to all the members, friends, community groups and interested individuals who came to support the Presentation. The Committee worked hard on the wording of the Petition and ensuring the day went well.Thank you to Kevin D., Jane C., (who had the inspired idea of a new Petition) Judith D., Lorraine H., Lyn W., Ronda G. and Sharyn B. Also thank you to Luanne Fagan for working on 100 convict women's names to show the public and to Margo Carter who did wonderful design work on the two historic petition documents. Thank you to Gary C., Margo C. and Lyn W., for physically putting together the historically inspired petitions and their covers.

We are now moving to the second stage of Parliamentary Petitions for assessment. This means we will have three sets of petitions - the community Change.org Petition will continue and the government ones will have a limited life. These will close when they are ready for presentation to State and Federal Parliament. You will hear more about this soon. Just as a note, within three weeks we had over 3,500 petitioners, so the ground-swell is in the public domain. The government has heard us loud and clear about World Heritage and the future custodianship of the site.

We garnered great publicity, thanks to Ronda G. We secured two sessions with ABC radio, alerting national wide media of the event and sent four sets of media statements to keep the momentum going. Thank you to Kevin D. for organising social media, following through with updating and the Change.org framework. Also a thank you to Jennifer Twemlow, friend of the Factory and manager of the *Convict Australia* site who picked up on our event and did a podcast that went to air, just before the Presentation. There was a get together at the Friends Rooms after the Petition Presentation with Eileen A. and Jeanette M. providing a lovely morning tea as usual. Finally, thank you to Bob Cook, Wal Phelps, Ray Allen, Peter Peploe and Glenda Browne who have given us a record of the day with their photography and videographing.

On the social side of things, we had a very popular straw plaiting workshop facilitated by Lyn W., a talk by Mike Traynor about the maritime context for the Female Factory women, a workshop with Danielle Lautrec on finding our female ancestors and we hosted another successful Friend's Morning Tea, organised by Lorraine H.

The next activity on our horizon is our Annual General Meeting - save the date: 21st August at 12:00 pm.
Of course at this time of year we also would love to have volunteers for our next Riot Day which is Saturday 24th of October. We continue to have a fabulous tour offer and there are displays, merchandise, the tearoom and the Research Centre at our rooms. There is plenty to do for your next Female Factory visit.

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

Gay Henriksen
Presdent



'A hundred names…'



And a word from the Editor -
Dear Members

This edition is quite a milestone! It is our 70th PFFF Newsletter - **a Platinum edition!** When the first newsletter appeared in January 2015, I could never have imagined how popular it would become in its breadth of distribution and its evolution in telling the convict women's narratives.

Above all, the Newsletter has been important in keeping in touch with our membership, in reporting PFFF's ongoing challenges, our advocacy for the site and our program of events.

Thank you to everyone who has supported this initiative over the last 11 years (and some 250,000 words later). I still have the passion but I have 'run out of puff'. I will be retiring from the position as Newsletter Editor at the end of the year, so if you are interested in assisting in any way, let Gay know.

Kind regards
Ronda

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A warm welcome to new PFFF members: *Kate White, Karen Wakefield, Louise Ward, Janet Rogerson, Nicholena Janssen, Deidre Heitmeyer, David Bevan, Peter Speranza, Sandra Lindemann, Stephen Martin, Jenny Hill, Anne Glover, Annette Bamberg, Peter Stein, Jennifer Lothian and Kim McGlinn.*

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## NOTICEBOARD - DATES FOR YOUR DIARY - 2026

- **PFFF AGM** - Friday 21st August: AGM to commence at 12.00pm. Afternoon tea at 12.30pm followed by the Bi-monthly meeting at 1.00pm.
- Museums of History NSW (MHNSW) are holding **Parramatta Open** at selected sites across Parramatta on **Saturday 29th August - this is a ticketed event -** see the MHNSW Parramatta Open website**.** The PFFF Rooms will be open, so drop in, the kettle will be on!
- **Annual Conference - NSW/ACT Association of Family History Societies - at Port Macquarie 18th-20th September.**
- **Old Government House,** Parramatta Regency Fair - **Sunday 20th September.**
- **Annual Riot Day** - 199th Anniversary, **Saturday 24th October - tickets open 1st October.**
- **Parramatta Foundation Day** - **Saturday 31st October** at Hambledon Cottage Reserve.
- **A reminder that PFFF Annual Fees are due 1st July**. Please complete the form and return to Lorraine Henshaw, Membership Secretary - thank you for your invaluable, continuing support, Lorraine. **membership@parramattafemalefactoryfriends**.com.au

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## HISTORY CORNER - A CALL TO ACTION!



Making history - it is quite a milestone for the Friends and the community to have gathered another 3,500+ Petition signatures to date, in PFFF's quest for UNESCO World Heritage listing, site management and museum interpretation.

It was a chilly morning but it was exciting to be in Parramatta Square on Wednesday June 17th for the presentation of our Petition to our Federal and State Parliamentary Representatives Dr. Andrew Charlton MP. and Ms. Donna Davis MP. Ed.






Gay, Dr. Andrew Charlton MP, Donna Davis MP and Judy Mundey - advocate.







Photography:
Bob Cook, Ray Allen, Wal Phelps, Peter Peploe, and
Glenda Browne, Kevin Dodds, Ronda Gaffey,











To the PFFF Committee, Members and Community Supporters - Thank you!



*Most of the convict women transported to the Colony endured quite extraordinary hardship and made multiple journeys before they eventually settled. Some women barely survived. There were women who died enroute, women who gave birth under extreme circumstances and those who never should have embarked. The impact of their experience can be gleaned from numerous primary sources - from eye witness accounts, journals and rare letters*[1].

The first journey would have been from the place of arrest and trial to a county gaol. Then, there was a further journey to Newgate to await transfer to the ship to begin the potentially dangerous voyage to NSW. For Irish women, there was most likely, a journey to Cork Depot (prison) and then to the dock at Cork.

Convict women were brought from county gaols across Britain, by stagecoach and secured with chains for the journey to Newgate. One woman, *Janet Gunn*, from Caithness in the far north of Scotland made an arduous journey of 1000 kms, to London[2].

In the *Memoir of the life of Elizabeth Fry*, there is a reference to the harrowing experience of women who were to board the *Brothers* in 1823 - it was reported that eleven women from Lancaster were received:
*iron-hooped round their legs and arms and chained to each other…they were not allowed to get up or down from the coach without the whole being dragged together…some had children to carry.* There is also mention of a woman from Wales whose suffering is unimaginable: *A woman from Cardigan travelled with a hoop of iron round her ancle, until she arrived at Newgate, where the sub-matron insisted on having it taken off. In driving the rivet towards her leg to do so, it gave her so much pain, that she fainted under the operation…*her name, *Elinor James*[3].

In the early years of transportation, women were taken from Newgate in an open cart and subjected to all manner of abuse and humiliation, however through the advocacy of Prison Reformer Elizabeth Fry, this practice was stopped and subsequently, women were conveyed by closed-in Hackney coaches. Dr. Robert Espie RN., (*Earl of Liverpool* 1830), an experienced ship's surgeon who had made eight voyages to NSW, later observed that this practice brought a *significant change to the betterment of the women, their safety and morale*[4].

From Newgate, the women took a short journey, alighting at Blackfriars Bridge Steps from where they were taken by ferry boat to Woolwich or Deptford, to embark. Often convict women waited onboard for up to a month until the 'cargo' of prisoners was complete and the ship was ready to sail. For example, prisoners began boarding the *Lord Sidmouth 3* on 22nd August 1822 with the last women boarded by early September[5].



The moment of departure, the moment the ship was loosed from its moorings and then heading out to sea, would have been moments of dread. Leaving home and loved ones, possibly forever, would have been heart-rending.
The emotion of such a moment is captured in an eyewitness account of the ship *Maria* leaving Deptford 15th May, 1818:
*The silence was profound…Mrs Fry opened her Bible, and in a clear, audible voice…read a portion from it. The crews from the other vessels …listened apparently with great attention. She closed the Bible and after a short Pause, knelt down on the deck and implored a blessing on this work of charity. Many of the women wept bitterly - all seemed touched when she left the ship, they followed her with their eyes…until they could see her no more…..*[6]

The consequences of their crime, the reality of transportation, would have been keenly felt.

This was an historic moment. The *Maria* was the first ship provisioned by Mrs. Fry and her Newgate Ladies - they had negotiated a school for the children on board and fabric for the convict women to make quilts on the voyage.

There are numerous references to women's conduct in Surgeon's journals where women are often described as *quiet* or *suffering hysteria*. Anxiety about the future, the sense of loss and separation would have sapped a woman's morale.

In a rare eyewitness account, the depth of feeling and despair felt by one woman is especially moving. John Nicol, a mariner on the *Lady Juliana* (Second Fleet), wrote an autobiography in which he recalled an encounter with a fellow country-woman and his attempt to comfort her in her despair: *She was young and beautiful but pale as death even in her convict dress and her eyes red with weeping. My heart bled for her - I offered her consolation but her heart and hopes had sunk. I lent her my Bible to comfort her but she read it not. She laid it on her lap after kissing it and only bedewed it with her tears. At length she sunk into the grave of no disease but a broken heart - I have never yet got her out of my mind…*[7]

The sea voyage was perhaps the most dangerous journey the women were to take. There was the threat of storms and wild seas, the fear of shipwreck, of encountering 'enemy' ships or pirates, the impact of being confined 'below' deck for days on end and the ever present threat of disease including measles, dysentery and chronic sea-sickness.

Charles Picknell, a sailor on the *Kains* 1830 kept a diary which was later published in the Sydney Morning Herald. His description of life on board is straightforward and quite remarkable in detail. He describes suffering a six day tempest, the sighting of numerous ships and the tension on board until a ship was identified as friendly, as well as every day life for the crew and prisoners. Though brief and to the point, his description of a child's death is heartfelt: *August 1 Child dyed little girl three years old. evening captain gave lambart watch bottle of rum for singing to cheer women up..12 o'clock launch child over board after prayers…*[8]

His final comment, written on the last day of December 1830 indicates some normality aboard with all celebrating the New Year: *Prisoners and sailors sung the old year out, the new one in…*

Day after day of high seas meant being kept below deck with constant wet clothing and deteriorating living conditions. In a letter to her husband George, Mary Hindle per *Harmony 1* 1825 wrote: *we arrived in NSW about 7th October after a long and tedious journey of about five months…we had a tolerably good passage…I was ill and in hospital nineteen days. I was bad with my legs swelling through not having any exercise*[9].

In the same letter, Mary wrote: *I am anxiously waiting to hear from you and hope you can get my sentence mitigated or I will die of despair.*
Mary's despair ended when she took her own life at the Factory on 21st September, 1842. The impact of transportation was, for her and her family in Lancashire, devastating. Mary always protested her innocence.

Dealing with sea-sickness was perhaps the most common reason to be attended by the Surgeon - it was debilitating and often resulted in dehydration and death if a woman was already weakened by childbirth or some other pre-existing condition. Those who were considered *healthy,* including pregnant women, were boarded, however there were a few cases where a woman ought to have been refused.

One such case is *Sarah Rivell* who embarked the convict ship *Kains* in 1830. She was 78 years old and was described as *confused* and *suffering shortness of breath* when examined by Surgeon Dr.Thrasycles Clark RN. He wrote that he regretted taking her on board. Sarah was put on the sick list on 13th October and died 6th November, 1830[10].

The *Kains* carried 120 convict women and a number of children - three infants, all of whom were under the age of six months, were teething and quite sickly. Clark went on to recommend that children ought not to accompany their mothers until they were weaned at least 30 days before embarking[11].

References:
[1] *Our Girls* - Anne Mathews and Beth Mathews - unpublished work sourced from original papers SRNSW; [2] Ibid: Profile: *Jane Gunn*; [3] Extract, *Memoir of Mrs Elizabeth Fry*, quoted in article, Mrs Fry - research Ronda Gaffey, - *Herstory Book 2* pub., PFFF 2023; [4] *Voyage Earl of Liverpool 1831* - freesettlerorfelon? jenniwilletts online; [5] *The voyage of Lord Sidmouth* research, Noela Vranich, *Herstory Book 1*., pub., PFFF 2016; [6] *Mrs Elizabeth Fry article - Herstory Book 2*, pub., PFFF 2023; [7] Extract - *autobiograhy of John Nichol* - article, research, Noela Vranich - *Herstory Book 1* pub., PFFF 2016 ; [8] Extract *Charles Picknell diary* - Wikipedia online; [9] Extract of letter written by Mary Hindle to her husband George, 12th November 1825 - research Ronda Gaffey, *Herstory Book 2* pub., PFFF 2023; [10] *Kains* - freesettlerorfelon? jenniwilletts online; [11]Ibid; additional research Ronda Gaffey.

## PFFF RESEARCH CENTRE MUSTER & HISTORY BYTES

Gay Hendriksen, Research Coordinator
Parramatta Female Factory Friends Research Centre & Babette Smith Collection

The Research Centre is continuing to be busy with Factory research, inquiries and visitors. At the moment we are upgrading our furniture and improving our workspaces. We are continuing our State Archives Project and our Creative Initiatives Exhibition 2027 is well under way.

We are working on the 1827 Riot and that year of unrest as we move towards the Bicentenary. This has been worked on by Angie G., Leslie R. and Luanne F. There is a project called *The 111* which is research on the women who were moved from the first experimental Factory to the purpose-built Factory - this project is led by Gary Carter. There is a visual upgrade of the *Herstory* displays. Registration is well underway for our CD, microfilm and microfiche collections. Our systems and inquiries are steaming ahead. Old newspapers are being registered for Female Factory information. All in all, there is continuing hard work on our Research Centre resources.

Our public programs continue well with a talk by Mike Traynor and the workshop streams which included a very successful *Straw Plaiting* workshop and an excellent research workshop by Danielle Lautrec. Local and interstate research inquiries continue.

Don't forget our Time Capsule. 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 as well as those who honour the women and their histories. 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 it 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. If you would like to visit and explore our resources you are welcome 10am to 2pm on Fridays.

**An excerpt for the conditions and process of receiving a convict servant 1st April 1826.**

*General Regulations, for the Guidance of the Board appointed to report on the Applications for Convict Servants and Labourers.*

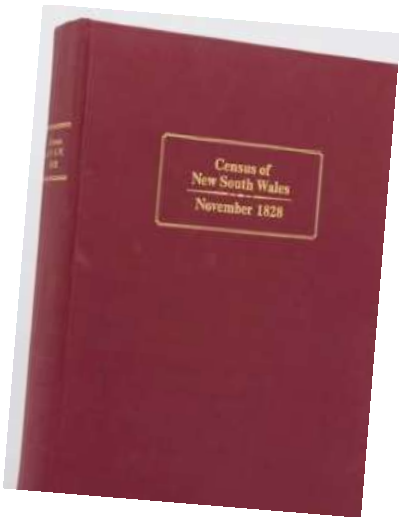
1st. UPON the Arrival of a Ship with Convicts, the Principal Superintendent shall, as soon as they have been mustered, prepare and lay before the Board a correct List, classing the Individuals according to their Trades, &c. as likewise a List of the Applicants for Servants or Labourers, to be made out in the Order in which the Applications have been received. He is also to prepare and submit similar Lists, whenever the Number of disposable Prisoners shall amount to Ten.

2d. In assigning Convicts, Preference will be given to the Claims of new Settlers, as their being enabled to proceed in improving or stocking their Farms must depend on their receiving the necessary Assistance in this Respect.



Image: Sydney Cove - Joseph Lycett c1818; SLNSW.

**Good read and online history adventures**




**Good read…..** The Census books at the Research Centre are invaluable for filling in some of the blanks about where your ancestor was, what they were doing or whether they were bond or free. We have all the musters and census up to the end of the female factory system.

**HISTORY BYTES**

https://www.digitalpanopticon.org/

This is a great research tool for your convict, female or male.

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

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## THE 111 PROJECT- FEET TO FLEET - A FEMALE FACTORY TRANSFER

Gary J Carter

### Jane Quigley 1793 - Aliases: Jane QUIGLY, Jane WHITELY, Jane WHITELEGG



Jane was one of the 111 women on Commissioner Bigge's list[1] who were in the First Factory 'above the Gaol' and in February 1821 marched to the new Fleet Street Female Factory.

Biographical Narrative of Jane Quigley

Jane Quigley was born around 1793 in County Derry, Ireland and convicted at Londonderry in 1817. She arrived in Sydney aboard the *Elizabeth* in November 1818 and was immediately sent to the Parramatta Female Factory, where she appears in Bigge's list as: *C — confined (going to criminal class).*



Newcastle c1800s.

Her early Colonial years were turbulent. Within six months of arrival, she was sent to Newcastle aboard the *Elizabeth Henrietta*, a common punishment for Factory women considered troublesome or unmanageable. By 1821 she was back in Parramatta and again committed to the Factory.

In 1822 she absconded from her employer, appearing in the *Absconded Convicts Notices*, and later that year she was recorded as a Factory inmate in the General Muster. In 1823 she sought permission to marry in the Roman Catholic Church, though no marriage record survives.

Jane received her *Certificate of Freedom* in August 1824 where she is described as a small, fair-complexioned woman with brown hair and blue eyes. By 1825 she was living in Sydney as a housekeeper to Frederick Whitelegg, a Yorkshire labourer transported per *Morley* in 1817. Whitelegg had been tried at Lancaster and arrived as a 19 year old labourer. By the mid 1820s, he was free by servitude and working as a fisherman. Their relationship was longstanding but unstable.

Jane appears twice in the Factory punishment books - on 19 June 1827: *Exposing her person to public view,* sentenced to three months, 3rd class. Then on 3rd May 1828: *Reputed common prostitute,* sentenced to two months, 3rd class. Despite these punishments, the couple were living together in Kent Street, Sydney, at the time of the 1828 Census, recorded as *husband and wife*. After 1828 Jane disappears from the surviving records. Frederick later applied to marry another woman in 1830, suggesting the relationship had ended. Jane's life was marked by Factory confinement, Newcastle exile, repeated punishments, and a long partnership with a fellow ex-

convict, this reflects the precarious existence of many Irish women transported in the late 1810s. Jane was most likely one of the rioters in the 1827 Riot.

References:
[1]Commissioner John T. Bigge; *Report on the State of New South Wales…,* J.T. Bigge, 1824.

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## THE MYSTERY OF MARTHA SHAW per Brothers 1823

Marie-Anne Wells - with assistance from Amanda Teichelman and Helen McKillop

Martha Shaw, my 3x Great Grandmother has proved to be a mystery on where she was born and where she died.

The mystery of Martha begins with her birth, as we have been unable to confirm a record of her birth or baptism, we have been tracking ancestors of her brothers, who we believe were taken in by an uncle after the death of their parents.

We know she is *not* the daughter of Harriot Waite and William Shaw, although there is some connection with those descended from Catherine Shaw. We know Martha is *not* the daughter of John Shaw and Sarah Haigh, although they did have a child named Martha in 1808, who unfortunately died in 1810. Martha's true parentage is currently being researched with DNA from across multiple generations being utilised and paper trails for documents.

Martha began her journey to Australia as a convict aboard the *Brothers* in 1823 after being convicted at the Old Bailey: *MARTHA SHAW and ANN POWELL were indicted for stealing, on May 22nd, a hat, value 10s, the goods of George Davis, from the person of Elizabeth Davis, seven years old.* On 27th June, 1823, she was sentenced to 14 years transportation.

Martha was transferred to the *Brothers* at Woolwich for transportation on 8th November 1823. She was described as: a 15-year-old spinster from Bristol, 4 feet 9 inches tall, fresh-faced, dark brown hair, grey eyes and stoutish. She was a housemaid by calling.

The *Brothers* arrived in Sydney Cove on 7th May 1824. Martha was sent to the Parramatta Female Factory; shortly after, she was sent to be a maid for William Nichols at Wilberforce.

Within months of arrival (1825): Martha absconded from William Nichols - when she was found, she was returned to the Parramatta Female Factory. In the 1825 Census (entry 14), Martha Shaw is listed as: *residence Female Factory Parramatta.*

During her time at Wilberforce, did she meet Thomas Wells who was also there? Is this why she absconded, to be returned to the PFF for marriage?

In a letter to the Superintendent of the Female Factory at Parramatta dated 10th July 1826, Thomas Wells wrote as follows: *I reside at Lower Portland Head, and hold 20 acres of land, which I cultivate for my own support, I am a bachelor, I enjoy the indulgence of a Ticket of Leave and I am in for a wife and pray the indulgence to be allowed to select one from the Factory at Parramatta. I will adieu. Your most obedient, very humble servant,*
*Thomas (his X mark) Wells.*
The letter was accompanied by two supporting letters written by Archibald Bell who was a military officer and magistrate and the other was from John Grono who was a mariner and ship owner who also had substantial land holdings in the Hawkesbury region.

In 1826 there is a Marriage application entry (no:136) for Thomas Wells and Martha Shaw, Parramatta.

On 12 September 1826 Thomas and Martha were married by Rev. Samuel Marsden at St. John's Church Parramatta. Their marriage record is page149 of the St John's Parish Register, Parramatta 1790-1966.



In the 1828 Census (entries 65 & 66), Thomas and Martha Wells are residents at Webbs Creek. Thomas and Martha had four children born there: Thomas, 28.12.1828; William, 07.06.1831; (Julian) Hannah (Annie) b. 04.12.1833; Martha Clare, 20.09.1834. They had another two children - Elizabeth (Betsy), born 26.09.1836 at MacDonald River and Mary, born 09.11.1840 at Lower Hawkesbury.

The 1841 Census has Thomas Wells living at Cornelia, Cumberland, NSW, with his family recorded as: *2 Males 7-14 years, 1 Male 21-45, 1 Female under 2 Years, 3 Females 2-7 years and 1 Female 21-45 years; 1 married Male, 2 single Males, 1 married Female, 4 single Females. 2 Males born in Colony, 1 other Free person Male, 4 Females born in Colony, 1 other Free person Female, 8 were Church of England, 1 was employed in Agriculture, 7 not included in Employment Classification, 3 Males, 5 Females Inhabited in a Finished Wood house.*

The remaining mystery is, what happened to Martha? We know the Wells family was at Wollombi mid-1840s. We know our Martha (Shaw) Wells is *not* buried in Bathurst, this was Martha Coates married three times and only in Australia for four years prior to her death, her last husband was Benjamin Wells.

It has been said that Martha had a relationship with a man named James Crawley (convict), and they had a child together, named James Crawley but he is *not* the deceased child buried at Raymond Terrace, as this child was only 22 months old and his father is recorded as being a settler. So what happened to Martha, James and their baby James, another mystery?

It has also been said that she left her children in the house and went out to the wood pile to collect wood for the fire and she was taken by Aborigines. We have been unable to locate any newspaper articles relating to this, another mystery! To complete the mysteries of Martha, we do not know where or how Martha died!

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**Are you a descendant of Thomas and Martha Wells?**

We will be celebrating the 200th Anniversary of their wedding with a Family reunion planned for **12 September 2026,** where we will explore the mysteries of Martha. The Parramatta Female Factory and St. John's Church, Parramatta, are allowing us to explore their facilities and discuss our family! Find details on:
Wells Family Reunion 2026 | Facebook or if you are interested,
email: wellsfamilyreunion2026@gmail.com



St.John's Parramatta c1800s

## GUEST SPEAKER - FRIDAY 19 JUNE 2026

Kim McGlinn



Our Guest Presenter on Friday 19 June was the engaging master mariner, Mike Traynor.

Mike gave us a wonderful, if harrowing insight into the voyage our ancestors embarked on, as his opening remarks hinted at what was to come, *"A Voyage of a Lifetime, or a Cruise for Life"*.

It was astonishing to hear that between 1788 and 1900, 97,000 ships travelled the route to Australia, many bringing supplies and cargo to the new Colony. But of those voyages, just over 800 carried our convict ancestors, as human cargo, 14,000 nautical miles across the seas, to begin life and a prison sentence, in a foreign land.




Prior to 1850 three types of vessels transported our ancestors:
1. West Indiamen - made to sail the Atlantic route
2. East Indiamen - large, heavily armed cargo ships
3. Blackall Frigate - frigate hull for speed

None of these vessels were designed for passengers, and as a result there was very little room with approximately 7 sq. feet, per convict, along with fresh water in 2.5 gallon casks, salted and dried food, animals, crew and officers. The average size of these ships was 40 metres in length, compared with the larger Manly Ferry which crosses Sydney Harbour, at 70 metres – a scary thought indeed.



I do not need to go into detail here about the sanitary conditions our poor ancestors endured for approximately 135 days at sea. Although Mike certainly did, he didn't hold back, as he explained the "tow rag".

For me it was a fascinating, eye opening and heart-breaking story brought to life through the eyes of a merchant seaman, who travelled those very shipping routes our ancestors also travelled, in his career.

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## WORKSHOP - Friday 26th June Colonial Straw Plaiting and Craft Circle

Thank you Lyn for once again leading such a productive workshop!

Much progress had been made since we last met in February with many metres of plaiting being done for 'homework'. Once again it was wonderful to chat about Female Factory connections and family history, as well as sharing progress in our plaiting!

We meet again on Friday 13th/Saturday 14th November (TBC).



## CELEBRATING OUR HERITAGE, OUR STORIES - THE FRIENDS' MORNING TEA

Melissa Paris

On Saturday 13th June, a Members' Morning Tea was held at the historic Parramatta Female Factory. These mornings allow members to connect, listen and engage with stories that are new and old. Morning Tea events are always inspiring.

It was yet another opportunity to share our passion for this precious heritage site and ponder how to preserve its future - rich conversations flourished. Much tea and coffee was poured, the Lucky Door Prize was drawn and to much applause, won by Judith Dunn.







*Thank you to PFFF Membership Secretary Lorraine Henshaw, for being such a wonderful host and to Committee members: Kevin, Ronda, Judith and Lyn for their support on the day. Even though our Catering Team could not attend, two plates of tempting biscuits were sent - the peppermint slices were a sure hit! Thank you Eileen and Jeanette! Ed.*

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## OUT & ABOUT - MAITLAND & BEYOND FAMILY HISTORY GROUP SEMINAR 2026

*"With a Needle & Thread"* Lyn Watkins

Lorraine Henshaw, Kevin Dodds and I attended the Annual MBFHG Seminar held at Morpeth recently. It was a wholly enjoyable weekend, catching up with 'family history buffs' and in sharing the passion for our convict ancestors.

PFFF's Kevin, Ronda and I all have PFF ancestors who ended up at Maitland so it was a thrill to have these women honoured in a quilt. The quilt is made from 36 'blocks' and mostly sewn by descendants. There were three quilts made and a book with the background to the project, was launched on the day.

One of the presentations was the story of Elizabeth Fry who started helping the female convicts in Newgate by supplying a sewing kit for their trip to New South Wales; some would have learnt how to sew on the voyage and had the option of selling their quilt on arrival.

We are very lucky to have one such quilt that was made on the ship *Rajah* in 1841. The Rajah Quilt has survived and is now kept at the National Library in Canberra - it was the inspiration for this project.

It was exciting to see the Maitland Quilts Project completed and it was rather special to have been invited to participate. Congratulations to Vicki Osborn and Robyn Harris, Projector Coordinators - the result is inspiring.



















The Quilt of 36 Blocks

Contents page



MAITLAND FEMALE CONVICTS QUILT

1. Ann Holland – *John Renwick* 1838
2. Ann O'Neill – *Southworth* 1832
3. Ann Pugh – *Earl Cornwallis* 1801
4. Ann Vale – *Royal Admiral* 1792
5. Caroline Haines – *Buffalo* 1833
6. Caroline Laycock – *Prince of Wales* 1788
7. Catherine Reilly – *Asia* 1832
8. Charlotte Davis – *Princess Charlotte* 1827
9. Charlotte Dawson – *Harmony* 1827
10. Eleanor Clark – *John Renwick* 1838
11. Elizabeth Fellows – *Fanny (2)* 1833
12. Elizabeth Wheatley – *Diana* 1833
13. Ellen Collins – *Hooghly* 1831
14. Ellen Timson – *Lucy Davidson* 1829
15. Emma Mayner – *Sarah & Elizabeth* 1837
16. Ellen Willoughby – *Andromeda* 1834
17. Grace Thomson – *Numa* 1834
18. Honorah Harrington – *City of Edinburgh* 1828
19. Jane Mitchell – *Speke* 1808
20. Janet Angus – *Midas* 1825
21. Johanna Finn – *Edward* 1829
22. Margaret Brandon – *Burrell(2)* 1832
23. Margaret Callaghan – *City of Edinburgh* 1828
24. Matilda Huxley – *John Renwick* 1838
25. Mary Ahern – *Palambam* 1831
26. Mary Ann Staines – *Buffalo* 1833
27. Mary Donohoe – *Margaret* 1839
28. Mary Hale – *Caroline* 1833
29. Mary Kelleher – *Margaret* (1) 1837
30. Mary Ingram – *Buffalo* 1833
31. Mary Jones – *Earl of Liverpool*
32. Mary Williams – *Neptune* 1790
33. Sabina Higgins – *City of Edinburgh* 1828
34. Sarah Carrol – *Surrey* 1840
35. Sarah Primer – *Lord Melville* 1817
36. Selena Jones – *Grenada* 1827

If your Parramatta Female Factory ancestor is featured in the Maitland Quilt, please let us know (see Contents page 14).
For information on the PFFF women, **contact@parramattafemalefactoryfriends.com.au**
Photography: Vicki Osborn, Kevin Dodds, Ronda Gaffey and Lyn Watkins.

Our Parramatta Female Factory ancestors are:
*Mary Ahern, per Palambam 1831* (Ronda Gaffey)
*Margaret Brandon per Burrell 2* 1832 (Lyn Watkins),
*Honorah Harrington per City of Edinburgh 1829* (Lyn Watkins),
*Elizabeth Fellows per Fanny 2 1833* (Lyn Watkins)
*Selena Jones per Granada 1827* (Kevin Dodds).

To purchase the book (cost $25 - plus postage), contact Allan 02 4905 2878 or email: Treasurer@mbg.com.au

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## WHAT'S ON THE SHELF at Honorah's & Sarah's Ye Olde Curiosity Shoppe?



Last year I noticed Gay was wearing a rather pretty brooch. It was a forget-me-not made from clay - it was a light bulb moment!

In the 'Language of Flowers' (Georgian, Victorian times), the forget-me-not is emblematic of remembrance and has been a recurring motif in jewellery - in brooches and rings (particularly mourning jewellery) as well as on greetings cards, in cross stitch samplers and bookmarks.



The *'Women Transported'* Exhibition (2008) and subsequent *'Herstory'* Exhibition (2015) at Hambledon Cottage, featured two cross stitch bookmarks with the text, *'Remember Me'* and '*Forget-Me-Not'*, worked by Parramatta Female Factory woman, Emma Mayner per *Sarah and Elizabeth* 1836.

I recalled this connection to a Factory woman, so what could we sell in the PFFF shoppe that incorporated this motif and would attract interest as part of our all-important promotion and fundraising as well as pay homage to the women?

Various objects have been sourced - we now have small pieces of quality china with a forget-me-not motif as well as small button badges, painted garden stones and crocheted brooches. So, check out our merchandise next time you are the PFFF Rooms.



The shoppe also has reproduction convict love tokens for sale - these were made prior to transportation and given to a sweetheart, wife, mother or friend with the text expressing love and remembrance:

**WHEN THIS YOU SEE REMEMBER ME THOUGH I AM FAR AWAY**



We continue to honour the women and will never forget Emma Mayner and her fellow convict women!

Ronda Gaffey

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Postscript - Thanks to Gail and Bec of Katoomba Kraft, for their kind donation of crocheted brooches and the garden stones! Thank you to Gay H. for her consignment of love tokens.
Also, it was a delight to see the forget-me-not motif used in the design of the recent PFFF Petition to Parliament.

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**MONTHLY COMMITTEE MEETINGS 10.30AM.**
**BI-MONTHLY MEMBERS' 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 |
|---|---|---|
| **August** | **Friday 21st Annual General Meeting**<br>**Bi-monthly Meeting**<br>**Member's Morning Tea - Saturday 15th** | **AGM**<br><br>History Week TBA<br>**Parramatta Open** 29th- various heritage sites open. PFFF Rooms Open |
| **September** | **Newsletter 18th Committee Meeting**<br>**Workshop - 25th TBC** | 18th - 20th September **Annual Conference** NSW & ACT Assoc. of Family History Soc. - Port Macquarie<br>20th September **Regency Fair - OGHouse.** |
| **October** | **Friday 16 th Committee Meeting**<br>**Guest Speaker: TBC**<br>**General Meeting**<br>**RIOT DAY -199th Anniversary Event 24th Oct**<br>**The Annual Thomas Keneally Lecture - Heather Garnsey OAM** | **Riots: 27.10.1827; 11.10.36**<br><br>Saturday 31st October - **Parramatta Foundation Day** at Hambledon Reserve<br>**Riot: 29.11.1831** |
| **November** | **Newsletter 20th Committee Meeting**<br>**Workshop Fri 13th Saturday 14th - Craft Circle** | |
| **December** | **Friday 11th Committee Meeting**<br>**General Meeting** | ***(2nd Friday) PFFF Christmas Afternoon Tea** |





Shadows of the past! Walking in the convict women's footsteps….
Guide - Kevin Dodds.
Photography - Jane Clain