Editorial

As we approach the end of our second year of the project, it is time to take stock. As of this week of publication, we are approaching nearly 12,000 in our ships database and 14,000 over all. This is wonderful progress and our heartfelt thanks to you all.

In this issue we raise our concerns for the future and appeal for your ideas for a sustainable income to keep the Founders & Survivors project and website alive after the ARC funding is finished.

Stephen Thomas, of Roar Films in Hobart, writes about the exciting school media project they have developed—Storylines. This was launched in Hobart by the Premier of Tasmania, the Hon. Lara Giddings. With the media comes some wonderful original music composed and performed by Tasmanian musicians. You can sample this on their Facebook page http://www.facebook.com/FoundersAndSurvivorsStorylines.

Another and related project is the film by Ronin Films on Ikey Solomon, The First Fagin http://www.roninfilms.com.au/feature/7516/first-fagin.html. This is screening in Tasmanian cinemas and was launched at the Melbourne International Film Festival. (A DVD will be available soon.)

Academic members of the Founders & Survivors team appear in both these films as ‘talking heads’. More importantly, some of our contributors tell their family stories.

The historical background and the family histories are cleverly interwoven, introducing middle school children to the human continuities in Australia’s convict history.

May we take this opportunity to wish you all the Compliments of the Season and again extend our appreciation of your support, enthusiasm, wisdom and hard work.
Volunteers’ Corner


We are just about to commence our final year’s work on the Ships Project. Progress has been outstanding, but we have many ships to finish. Now is the time to plan carefully.

Progress by 12:12:2012
We have added around 11,000 researched convict lives to the database since we began the Ships Project just over a year ago. Altogether, for the ships selected for the project, we have 11,902 authenticated convict entries, with deaths confirmed for 54% of those. 1,315 have AIF descendants and so far we have 20,504 children. The marriage rate for men runs at less than 25 per cent, and many marriages were childless.

This is an example of the mathematics of human fertility: unrestrained conception in a relatively healthy environment = population explosion! We are finding that the founder population, as is common elsewhere such as in Canada, was quite small. Therefore many descendants are related to each other and we were right to call this project in its early days ‘Australia’s Biggest Family History’.

LandAhoy
We will need to wind up at the end of July 2013 and if we finish all the ships that we could realistically complete, we will have around 12,000 men and 4,000 women in the ships project and around another 3,000 convicts from other ships. This would be a stunning result and it is achievable.

We realise that many volunteers signed up for ships only to discover that they don’t have the time for such detailed work, or their internet connection and computer setup make the job very difficult. Please don’t feel badly about this—we expected that and completely understand.

However, we will be contacting you over the next few weeks to offer either help or relief!

We have found giving a ship to a team of two seems to work well and it can be more fun if you have someone working on the same cohort with whom you can share ‘finds’ and problems.

Conferences & Workshops
The year finished with a whirl of conferences. Rebecca Kippen was the organiser for the biennial Australian Population Conference in Melbourne in December. Janet McCalman gave a plenary address on the projects under way, and Sandra Silcot and Matt Coller spoke on the Yggdrasil software development being funded by the Australian National Data Service and on the application of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to the convict data. Matt demonstrated his work with a GIS account of the Duncan (1841). It began in the villages, towns and cities of the convicts’ birth; followed them to their places of trial; then boarding at Sheerness; and the journey to Van Diemen’s Land.

On 14th December in Adelaide Janet McCalman gave a paper, co-authored with Rebecca Kippen, on ‘Visible but Involuntary Immigrants: Stayers & Leavers’. The conference was convened by the long-standing ‘Visible Immigrants’ program led by Eric Richards from Flinders University. This seventh in the series looked at mobility in immigrants, both before and after arrival in the colonies.

A workshop was held on 8th December for the Australian National Data Service grant, and we were able to welcome several international collaborators. Prof Kris Inwood from Guelph University, Canada gave a paper co-authored with Hamish Maxwell-Stewart on the heights of transported, immigrant and native born prisoners in the Tasmanian police gazettes, revealing the probable nutritional and health differences between those populations.

Victorian Workshop
We will hold another Melbourne University Workshop on Saturday 9 February, 2013, at the School of Population Health, 4th floor, 207 Bouverie St. This workshop will go all day from 11 am until 4 pm, and will involve researchers breaking into groups to help each other and to get to know each other. Lunch will be provided.

This workshop will focus on how we finish the project over the next seven months.

Please email Trudy Cowley trudy@researchtasmania.com.au to RSVP by 1 February 2013

Tasmanian Tutorials
Colette McAlpine is still providing group and one-to-one tutorials as well as telephone support from her Hobart home. She is doing a fabulous job and has been coaching volunteers from England to Brisbane and from Hobart to the backblocks of everywhere. The ships project work is a steep learning curve for both volunteers and staff. We are finding new problems we didn’t anticipate all the time, so these tutorials and workshops help us all.

Colette is back in full swing after her holiday in Scotland, Ireland and England where she touched base with various museums and family history societies. Email her on colette.mcalpine@gmail.com to obtain advice or to organise a tutorial.

‘Vandemonians in Victoria’ State Library of Victoria Family History Feast
Don Grant Lecture 2012.

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Roar Film became aware of the Founders and Survivors Australian Research Council project in late 2010. At that time we were looking for a signature online documentary project that would have national significance but also strong links to Tasmania. As we are based in Hobart, we were aware of the significant assets held at the Tasmanian Museum and Archives Office, including the UNESCO listed convict records. We knew they were vital to the understanding of colonial history and we had, in the past, considered using them as the basis for a project, either online or film. The problem for us had always been finding a way to visualise them in a compelling form for an educational or television audience.

When we read about the Founders and Survivors Australian Research Council Project a light bulb went on for us. Linking the convict records both back and forward in time to create intergenerational stories of our convict founders seemed, for us, to be the missing link in the telling of colonial history. The other aspect that appealed to us was the quality of the project leaders, historians and participating organisations. We felt that on the basis of a partnership with Founders and Survivors we could create a fitting project for Screen Australia’s National Documentary Program, a fund for projects that are considered to be nationally significant.

We approached Founders and Survivors project leaders, Janet McCalman and Hamish Maxwell-Stewart, and found their enthusiasm and passion inspiring. By February 2011, we had been financed by Screen Australia to create Founders and Survivors Storylines. Storylines is an online portal with two distinctly different sections. Mugsheets is a unique visualisation of the convict records and Lifelines is a macro view of twenty intergenerational stories each beginning with the Tasmanian convict records.

Mugsheets
The idea behind Mugsheets came from a brainstorming session with Roar team members. One of them, a young programmer who had never seen the records before, suggested that they looked like a 19th century version of a modern social networking site. They contained detailed physical and character profiles, first person statements, notes on behaviours and locations where convicts were assigned. It was also possible to link records based on information such as the ship they arrived on, the port they left from, their crime, their age, and of course by name. Suddenly another light bulb went on... what if we could visualise the convict records using the paradigm of a social networking site. And what if younger people could use the convict descriptions to create identikit faces. We felt that this might be a way of introducing a younger audience to convict history in a new and exciting way.

Mugsheets took over a year to create from a number of databases. We worked closely with the Female Convicts Research Group and the Founders and Survivors team. In its original form, users can connect to the site through a scrapbook facility and post comments and images to the scrapbook. They can also create a convict’s face and save them here. Security issues surrounding moderation and historical veracity have
meant that the first iteration of Mugsheets that will go live at the end of January 2013, will not have the scrapbook function but it is hoped that this facility will be available in later iterations.

Lifelines

Lifelines is a highly visual take on twenty intergenerational stories. At the heart of each is a convict, and in some cases, several convicts. Lifelines enables users to enter the stories from many perspectives; through stories and images of individuals, through location, through a whole range of records, through film and song, and through interviews with experts and family members. Importantly Lifelines also enables users to enter these intergenerational stories by theme. The convict stain, recidivism, migration, crime, marriage, convicts and Chinese, convicts and Aboriginal people, mental health, education, occupation, conditions in Britain and Ireland, child convicts, female convicts, love tokens, Jewish convicts, use of alcohol, are just a few of the themes explored.

Lifelines draws heavily on visual assets from the Tasmanian Archives and many other institutions. In order to create photographic images of convicts our designer, Chris Rees, used sections of photographs sourced from a number of archives to create new ‘composite’ images. We know that this is a ‘conceit’ but we love the fact that we are creating new images of real people based on the descriptions in the records.

The Music of Lifelines

Music plays a huge part in Lifelines. This was another medium through which we felt that we could relate to a new audience but the canon of Australian convict music is thin and there are only a few songs that go to the heart of the convict experience. Virtually none of these songs are about women. We worked with Musical Director, Mick Thomas, and a number of top contemporary artists to create a song for each story.

Of the 20 songs recorded for the Lifelines, only three are not original and only one of those, Van Diemen’s Land, could be considered part of the Australian folk lexicon. However Jeff Lang’s brooding, nine-minute version owes more to Hendrix’s Star Spangled Banner at the Woodstock in 1969 than it does to any folk rendition of the song. Melbourne singer-songwriter, Van Walker, recorded a splendid version of a penny broadside written about Annette Meyers, a young woman sentenced to death for murder. The song came to us from Colette McAlpine from the Female Convicts Research Group and Van gives it a classic Tom Waits treatment accompanied by his partner, Liz Stringer. This song also forms the basis of a wonderful and emotive digital story by one of Tasmania’s foremost photographers, Jane Burton.

In Ikey Mo, the legendary Tim Rogers brilliantly brings to life a Mick Thomas song about Ikey Solomon. Mick based the song on the words of a schoolyard rhyme recalled by a woman who went to school in North Hobart, not far from where Ikey had his tobacco shop.

In another highlight Mick Thomas sings a song he wrote about the convict stain based on the family story of our key researcher Andrea Gerrard. Like many Tasmanians, it’s the story of a family who expunged the convict side of their family from history.

You can choose the house in which you live, the collection plate to which you give. Could choose to let the wide world have, what you want them to see. Two Grandfathers there should have been for me, But nobody told my father you can’t change your family.

The song has a digital story created by Tasmanian digital artist Raef Sawford. It features archival material shot at the Hobart regatta in the 1930s.

For the Life of Him is Mick’s paean to recidivism delicately performed by Ben Salter. The song is based on the sad family story of the convict Ephraim Quamby. It’s a family story beset with misfortune across generations... an unhappy marriage, an illegitimate son banished to the orphan school, three grandsons in the ‘war to end wars’, one making the ultimate sacrifice on the first day at Gallipoli. This song has a superb digital story created by Melbourne-based digital artist Will Barry.

Each of the songs covers an important theme and many feature evocative digital stories created by artists and filmmakers. Other artists include Ben Salter, Darren Hanlon, the Wolfgramm Sisters, Anna Burley, Shelley Short, Gary Adams, Tracy Harvey, The Band Who Knew Too Much, Weddings Parties Anything, Rory McLeod (UK), Adam Gibson and the Aerial Maps, The Men...
They Couldn’t Hang (UK) and Glenn Richards.

In a song that epitomises the entire project, Glenn Richards sings a Mick Thomas song inspired by a discussion I had with Professor Janet McCalman about the Vandemonians who came to Victoria during the goldrush in the 1850s. She explained that Tasmanian convict history has, in large part, been written by the winners and that many convicts fell by the wayside, in Tasmania or in the pauper institutions of Victoria.

Mick’s song is a nod to the losers... those convicts that looked like convicts and consequently could not escape their past. Augie March’s Glenn Richards gives the song a beautiful, melancholic quality.

For I am what you say I am,
A laggard Vandemonian.
Can you see the weather on my face?
A tattoo of my great disgrace
And if I steal your horse,
If I’m left no better course.
You can stop my boat from landing
But I doubt that you’ll stop me.

This song features a digital story using mugshots from the Tasmanian prison system 1880s to 1920s. Many of the men shown are convicts or sons of convicts - but on the final screen are the contemporary images of ten people who worked on the Storylines project. All have convict ancestry but one. Which one?

What Next?
The project goes live to Aussie schools in January. It’s great news but there are a few bits of the current site that aren’t suitable for schools such as the marvellous story about the Launceston Hospital scandal including Ben Salter’s irreverent song Sex Hospital and the story of Jane Gilligan - on the town. These ‘R’ rated sections of the site will be available directly from the Roar Film site.

Inspired by Founders and Survivors Storylines, we have also just received news that we have been financed through Screen Australia, Screen Tasmania and the National Maritime Museum to create a serious game based on the convict voyages to Tasmania. This will be ready in 2014.

In the meantime, you can experience the songs, interviews, digital stories and news from Founders and Survivors Storylines on our Facebook page... please ‘like’ us and we’ll keep the material coming.

http://www.facebook.com/
On 19 October 1812, the convict ship Indefatigable, carrying 199 convicts and a detachment of soldiers from the 73rd Regiment, arrived in Hobart. The ‘Indefatigable’ was the first convict transport to arrive directly from England. The next direct shipment would not arrive for another six years.

Overnight the colonial population of Van Diemen’s Land increased by 20 percent. While the English justice system put them together, the men from the Indefatigable needed to forge friendships and relationships to ensure their own survival and to be useful to their new world. This article describes some of the bonds between the men of the Indefatigable.

The success of the small settlements striving to survive would have a high dependence on the abilities of the new convict workers. Unfortunately, the men of the Indefatigable were not hand picked for their potential value to the new Colony. The ship had been preparing to sail, as usual, direct to Sydney when new orders were sent to dispatch the men to Hobart.

The ship contained a number of men who already had shared experiences. William Stanley and William Cobb were sentenced at Hampshire to life for horse stealing, Timothy Murphy and Emanuel Levy were transported for life for highway robbery and William Newton and Charles Simmonds were serving seven years for theft. Also on board were brothers John and Charles Baxter as well as five Luddites from Northamptonshire arrested for destroying weaving frames.

Others on board with common bonds were 16 sailors and soldiers who had been court martialed at various English outposts including Canada, Spain and the West Indies, that had been established as part of the Napoleonic Wars. An Indian lascar seaman from the East India Company, a Norwegian, an American, two Italians, and a Portuguese who could barely speak English may have seen their multiculturalism as a way to form friendships.

The English justice system had sent most of the men on a one-way journey – 149 were carrying life sentences. A large proportion of the men had come from an urban environment with 60 men having been convicted in the Old Bailey. At least 47 men were over the age of 40, many probably leaving families behind. A handful of 16-19 year olds could have also seen their age as a common bond. Most men of the Indefatigable would have found something in common during their 137 days of sailing to Van Diemen’s Land.

On arrival, the men were sent to work with their fellow exiles who had preceded them in the three early settlements of VDL, a few free settlers, officials and those ex-Norfolk Islanders who had been forcibly resettled. New bonds and relationships were about to form. A number of the Indefatigables were sent to work as shepherds and they appear in court records as witnesses or culprits in various sheep stealing cases.

Given the basic living conditions, the life long sentence carried by most and the difficulty of the officials to police all convicts, the opportunity to escape was high and the temptations of freedom irresistible for some of the Indefatigables.

On 23 April 1813, seven men including Patrick Russell, Thomas Watson, Thomas Curtis, Thomas Bird and Frederick Callaghan from the Indefatigable, overpowered the Captain and the three crew of the sloop Unity, which had been used to carry supplies between Sydney and the other colonial outposts. The Unity and its crew of pirates sailed away, never to be seen again.2

Another escape attempt was made on 15 April 1814, when seven men aided by John Pascoe Fawker Junior3, who would become one of the original settlers of Melbourne, attempted to flee by boat. Four of the absconders had been soldiers of Napoleon, taken prisoner in Spain, and then enlisted in the British army, where they had been court martialed and transported. Two of the other absconders were Patrick McCabe, an Irish ex-soldier serving life and Montrose Johnson, 26 years old from Kent, another Indefatigable.

After sailing some 100 miles they found the tanks storing their water supply to be unsafe and returned to get new water casks. They were caught and while Montrose Johnson was allowed to return to work, Fawkner was banished for two years to Sydney and the two Irishmen William Green and Patrick McCabe received 500 lashes each. McCabe received another 500 lashes in the same year, this time for burglary.

Instead of risking sailing away to an uncertain destination, most absconders adopted the life of bushranging. John Whitehead (Indefatigable) was the leader of the main bushranger gang of convict escapees and army deserters. When Whitehead was caught and killed in 1815, the gang was taken over by Michael Howe, also from the Indefatigable.4 At least thirteen Indefatigables were at some stage classed as bushrangers.5

Michael Howe6 was born at Pontefract, Yorkshire in 1787. He served two years on a merchant vessel at Hull before deserting to join the navy. About 1806
he joined the army, but again deserted. On 31 July 1811 he was sentenced at the York Assizes to transportation for seven years for highway robbery.

On arrival in Van Diemen’s Land he was sent to service with the merchant, John Ingle. In 1813 he absconded and took to the bush. In March 1815, Howe and his gang carried out a series of raids in the Pitt Water and New Norfolk areas, killing one and wounding others. Lieutenant-Governor Thomas Davey then declared martial law. Howe called himself ‘lieutenant governor of the Woods’ and became a serious threat to the power and position of the official established Government.

Davey’s successor, William Sorell, offered Howe a conditional pardon for all his offences except murder.

Howe continued to elude capture while at the same time continued his campaign of robbery. His luck ran out on 21 October 1818 when he was cornered and clubbed to death on the banks of the Shannon River. He was buried but his head was sent to Hobart. Curiously, throughout his escapades he retained a surprising love of flowers.

Most of the men from the Indefatigable who had absconded and joined the bushrangers came back into the community when an amnesty was called and came to become accepted members of society.

Others from the Indefatigable made the most of their opportunities. Within the first 10 years, 53 men had been pardoned in addition to those who had served their time. By 1821 a number of them had started their own families. Due to the lack of women, marriage was not available to all and some of the marriages appeared to be of a short duration. Nonetheless, at least sixteen were married by 1821. Some of their wives were children of the First, Second and Third Fleets, while others were fellow convicts. A number of the men’s wives and children followed them from England. These included the wives of Thomas Dixon, James Blay, William Entwhistle, Thomas Fogarty, Benjamin Hancock, William Jemot, Montrose Johnson and William Wood.

Thomas Dixon is a bit of a love story. His wife and two children followed him, arriving in 1815. They had six more children and at least 41 grand children. They died together, drowned when their boat capsized in Ralph Bay in 1842. The boat was a 7-ton schooner, so they were one family who had found success in their adopted homeland. Religion provided a bond for some. Two men worked as vergers for the sole chaplain in VDL – Reverend Knopwood.

Benjamin Nokes started the first Wesleyan Bible Class in Hobart in 1820. Others found their bonds and relationships away from Van Diemen’s Land. John Mills, who was serving life for highway robbery had at some stage made his way to NSW. Here he married Mary Manning on 12 January 1824. They had 15 children. A success in a variety of roles, he ended his working life as schoolmaster in the Richmond area.

Matthew Piggot was originally sentenced to 7 years for stealing a watch. The accuser was his father. It may be that he went to Sydney after he served his term of 7 years. From there he went to England on the Surrey in June 1819.

There he married and returned with his wife to Sydney. Business relationships were also formed. By 1821 John Petchey was in partnership with William Wood. They owned the Hobart Town Brewery and two taverns in Davey Street. Petchey went back to England in 1824, taking with him a shipment of mimosa bark extract for use by the tannery trades, which had been manufactured by Petchey and Wood in Hobart. In 1825 the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce in London awarded Petchey and Wood the Ceres Medal for their efforts. When Petchey returned to Hobart in April 1825, he brought out William Wood’s wife and four children. Another successful businessman was James Tedder. His death was reported in The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser dated 18 October 1822 which stated he was a ‘respectable and industrious inhabitant of Hobart Town, in which he had erected several houses, and a corn mill.’ After his death, his wife married James Blay (also from the Indefatigable).

One bond that was shared by all was death. The early days were tough – not counting the men on the Unity, at least 19 died within the first dozen years. John Marsden was speared by natives and died. Peter Septon, a member of Howe’s bushranger gang, was killed by another member of the gang in 1817. At least four were executed for crimes committed in VDL — including Humphrey Oulton who at aged 70 was hanged for sheep stealing in 1827.

Others became victims of crime. Richard Hutchinson, also known as ‘Up and Down Dick’, was sent to Macquarie Harbour in 1829 for stealing a bullock. He absconded with four others. Lost and starving, he was murdered and eaten by the other escapees. Two other escapees were also killed and eaten before the surviving two were...
recaptured. His murderers were executed.\textsuperscript{14} John Butler, known as Pretty Jack, was killed by Charles Routley (both from the \textit{Indefatigable}). Butler was shot, sown into a bullocks hide and burnt. Routley was found guilty of this murder and of others. He was executed in 1830.\textsuperscript{15} While many men formed bonds of friendship, relationships in marriage and business, some did not. John Burrows died in 1827 described in his convict records as ‘an idiot’. George Northam, convicted for life at the age of 54 died a sad and lonely man in 1828. The coroner findings were ‘death by drowning himself in a state of despondency, produced by old age and poverty’.\textsuperscript{16}

There is no doubt the men from the \textit{Indefatigable} who arrived in 1812 were victims of the English justice system but many survived and through their individual relationships and bonds became major contributors to the development of Tasmania and other mainland States.

They are now part of us.

2. \textit{The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser}, 21 Aug 1813
3. \textit{The Melbourne Argus}, 7 Jul 1848
5. \textit{The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser}, 28 May 1814
7. \textit{The Courier}, 30 Sep 1842
8. \textit{The Hobart Mercury}, 19 May 1947
9. \textit{The Sydney Morning Herald}, 10 Feb 1859
10. \textit{Colonial Secretary’s Papers}
11. RGD 34/1/1599
12. \textit{Old Tales from a Young Country - The Rule of the Bushranger} by Marcus Clarke, 1871
13. \textit{Hobart Town Courier}, 3 Nov 1827
14. \textit{Launceston Advertiser}, 22 Aug 1831
15. \textit{Colonial Times}, 1 Oct 1830
16. \textit{The Hobart Town Courier}, 29 Nov 1828

\section*{Future Planning}

\textbf{Founders & Survivors: Life after 2013?}

\textbf{Janet McCalman}

\textit{That’s a $100,000 p.a. question. The funding for Founders & Survivors from the Australian Research Council runs out in December 2013. While the website and its contents can be archived, it can’t remain a open, active community workstation without continuing funding. That’s our next challenge and we welcome creative thinking from our supporters!}

We have a problem. We know that more people are using the Founders & Survivors website everyday and that its usefulness will grow in the future. Colette McAlpine has forged connections with family history societies all over the United Kingdom and they are sending material from parish records and county assizes. Thus we are reconnecting the convicts with the families they left behind and revealing the new families they created in the colonies.

However, if the Founders & Survivors website is to remain open, we need to pay for an IT professional to maintain the site and software, and for historians to check the accuracy of new contributions. We also need to improve the interface so that it is easier to find things and create new entries.

Trudy Cowley is currently running the website for us and since the Linux base ran out of warranty, she is clearing out over 1000 spam attacks a day. It is essential that the website remains uncorrupted and that there is quality control of the contents. Founders & Survivors has been dedicated to good scholarly standards from the beginning.

We do not claim that everything on the website is absolutely accurate: mistakes are made, avenues of inquiry are not pursued vigorously enough, new data appears. Historical research is a constant process of searching, correcting, and searching again. That’s one if its great pleasures.

It would be a great shame if Founders & Survivors had to shut up shop when the ARC funding runs out. We may really be just at the beginning of this whole collaborative enterprise.

Therefore, has anyone some creative ideas on how we could create an income stream to support Founders & Survivors and projects like it: Female Convicts Research Centre, Graves Tasmania, the Friends of the Queen’s Orphanages and so on? Perhaps a shared portal for all these projects could protect them and eventually enable them to connect. It would be wonderful if researchers could assemble a palette of data for a family from all these different projects.

This is a very difficult time for the Tasmanian economy and we cannot expect the State Government to provide when there are so many other essential services and projects that must be maintained.

A colleague recently described you all as citizen-historians, and while our taxes support the public libraries and archives, and Ancestry et al make their fortunes, volunteer based research still needs an income.

Without expert maintenance, websites fall over, become corrupted with spam and perpetuate inaccuracies. Nothing on the internet really comes free—behind the scenes someone is always paying for the work that is presented.

Can anyone think of a mechanism that might work to provide support: for instance a cooperative with shares and annual subscriptions.

If you have any ideas, please email me on janetms@unimelb.edu.au.
Sometimes I was lucky, sometimes not. A few weeks before we left for Ireland, Trudy Cowley forwarded me an email from Michael O'Doiblin. He is a guide at Kilmainham gaol and he wanted to buy Trudy’s book, *A Drift of Derwent Ducks* and the books in our Convict Lives series. I wrote to Michael suggesting that if it was okay with him I would like to do a tour when he was guiding so that we could discuss the convict women kept at Kilmainham and so that I could answer some of his queries about life in the colony. Michael suggested he could better that. He would meet us on his day off and do a special tour with us. My husband was delighted.

Kilmainham is now a museum. It played such an important part in Irish history as so many of the leaders of the Irish rebellion were imprisoned there and some of them executed there. In fact, almost every significant Irish nationalist leader was incarcerated there except for Michael Collins and Daniel O’Connell. As early as his 1809 report the Inspector had observed that male prisoners were supplied with iron bedsteads but women had to sleep on straw on the flags in cells and in the hallways. Conditions for women prisoners were persistently worse than for men. As early as his 1809 report the Inspector had observed that male prisoners were supplied with iron bedsteads but women had to sleep on straw on the flags in cells and in the hallways. During the first half of the 19th century, the Gaol housed prisoners awaiting transportation to convict colonies in Australia. Over 4,000 prisoners were transported to Australia via Kilmainham Gaol.

The last prisoner to be held in Kilmainham jail was Eamon de Valera who was released on the 16th of July 1924. Public hangings took place in front of the gaol on a ledge above the entranceway. The last women to be executed there were Bridget Butterly and Bridget Ennis in 1821.

The prison was decommissioned 1926 and saved by volunteers in the 1960s. Since then it has been a film set for movies like Michael Collins, *The Italian Job* and *In the Name of the Father*.

Michael entertained us for almost five hours and then sent us off in a taxi with a driver he trusted to take us to..

**Grangegorman**

The driver could not understand why I wanted to go to what had become a film set. However, he was friendly and helpful and he found a groundsman who directed us to the right buildings. The driver told me not to hurry. The meter was running after all.

The groundsman was curious. Why was someone photographing a building that was about to be gutted and reinvented as a technical college?
He crossed the road to ask me. I explained the convict system in a sentence or two. He told me to follow him, pulled out a set of keys and took me down a rather grand staircase into the darkness. He said that the cells had been down there, but there was no electricity, no other lighting. He told me to step into any of the open doorways and snap photos. I did. Hesitantly.

It smelt dank, it oozed atmosphere, but I could see nothing until I was back in the cab. Then all I saw in my photos was decay and rubbish piled high. We had climbed to the top floor of what had been the mental hospital and he proudly showed me the rooms they had cleaned out. There was a sad bathroom with two basins intact. For how many patients I wondered. Certainly not our convicts. If anything, I hope I left my man with a sense of the importance of the building in the story of women transported from Ireland.

Almost all the Irish convict women were held in Grangegorman prison where they spent three months. The authorities in Hobart had complained that they had no skills and no way of supporting themselves in the colony. At Grangegorman, they were taught basic domestic skills.

The Grangegorman register of female convicts covers the period July 1840 to December 1853. On the register, now available on Find my Past, Ireland, you will find details of each woman's crime, and information on age, crime, sentence, location of conviction, marital status, literacy level, trade or occupation and number of previous convictions. Much of this information is very useful when coding or doing CCCs for your convicts.

We visited Cork Gaol and Inverary Gaol too. Each tells its own story of transportation. Neither touched me as much as Kilmainham.
William Bamford was born in Rochdale, Lancashire in 1807 and at a very young age was put to the trade of a wool comber. However, a regular lifestyle did not appeal to the young man and he joined the regiment of the 33rd Fusiliers as soon as he was able, probably about the age of fourteen.

He served with them for nearly twenty years, but unfortunately for him the Napoleonic wars were over, the East India Company controlled India, and England enjoyed a period of peace and increasing prosperity. So instead of a life of adventure and heroic deeds Bamford was restricted to garrison duty at various places in the United Kingdom.

He did not settle well and was a troublesome soldier. In Gosport, Hampshire, at one time he received 300 lashes for some unspecified but serious offence and on 14th May 1840 at the Dublin Royal Barracks was court martialed for desertion. He had been absent twelve days and once before for six months. Was he up to mischief or was it boredom that inspired him to such risk? He was branded with the letter D and was sentenced to transportation for seven years.

He left Dublin aboard the British Sovereign, arriving in Hobart on 17 March 1841 after a voyage of ninety two days.¹ His days as a convict passed without serious incident, and he was awarded a certificate of freedom in February 1847 on expiry of his sentence. Perhaps the experience of the long sea voyage and the work in the new land satisfied his appetite for adventure.

After the discovery of gold in Victoria in 1851 he sought greener pastures and on 17th November 1852 he signed as crew on the Rory O’More and left Launceston for Victoria². We know nothing of his first years in Melbourne or his luck, if any, on the diggings, but in January 1856³ the following article appeared in The Argus.

UNSUPPORTED CHARGE OF RAPE. — William Bamford was charged at the City Court on Tuesday, apprehended on warrant, with having attempted to commit a criminal offence on a girl, thirteen years of age, named Eliza Pohlman. The mother of the girl is a German, and arrived in the colony about two years ago, as she supposed, a widow, having heard at St. Louis, in the Mauritius, that her husband had been drowned at sea. She subsequently married Bamford. Soon after the marriage, however, Bamford detected her in a correspondence with a German residing in Little Bourke Street, and learned that she was in the habit of paying visits to his residence. Bamford told her that if she persisted in paying visits to this man (who there was strong reason to believe was Pohlman) he would turn her out. Their life was a very uncomfortable one for some time, and the woman summoned Bamford for a separate maintenance, which the City Bench refused to grant her. Since that time she appears to have done everything in her power to annoy the prisoner, and on Saturday last the daughter preferred the charge of rape against him, and he was apprehended. The evidence of the girl was altogether most extraordinary; and precocious as Australian children generally are, this girl so far outstripped them that it was positively disgusting to hear her make use of phrases with which a child of her years should be unacquainted. Her evidence throughout manifested so many symptoms of having been maliciously prepared, that the Bench dismissed the charge, observing that there was no evidence either presumptive or circumstantial, of the offence alleged having been committed. There was, however, evidence of an evil animus pervading the whole of the prosecution. The mother of the girl was present to add her evidence of having actually seen what took place as described by the child, but her evidence was objected to by Mr. Frank Stephen, who appeared for the defence, on the ground of a wife’s testimony being inadmissible against her husband.
Whatever the truth was, this event seemed to have affected him badly because his well documented decline began then and by 1857 he was in gaol once more. At this time a man named Mason, aged 60, was to be hung for murder. The executioner of the time, Jack Harris, had disappeared from sight and his assistant, Walsh, had gone ‘up country’. Bamford volunteered for the job. The execution took place on 6th November 1857 and from then until his death he performed every execution in the colony, except one in Beechworth when a local man was found to do the deed. He also acted as flagellator and whether because of his occupation or from natural inclination, he became notorious. He provided *The Argus* with much copy and the paper followed his career closely.

In 1858 he lost an eye in a drunken brawl which did not enhance his looks and was of most intemperate habits. He was constantly before the courts for drunkenness and vagrancy, but also for other crimes. He was remanded for 7 days for stealing some sheet zinc and carpenters tools\(^1\) in 1864, a hand truck in 1865; for breaking the fence of the Botanic gardens in 1866; for stealing 30 lbs of lead in July 1867; and some scales in 1869.\(^2\)

In September 1870, after being paid for the execution of Cusack, he held a ‘Lawn party’ on the grass behind the Immigrants’ Home (situated about where the Alexandra Gardens are now). He bought four bottles of rum and his guests were ‘the vagrants who inhabit the scrub between the Yarra and the Observatory’. When the rum was all consumed he entered the Home and shouted obscenities at the schoolmaster there. For this he got two months in gaol.\(^3\)

In January 1871 he was arrested with some others in the Botanic gardens for sleeping on a bed of the hay used to mulch the plants. The authorities were afraid of the danger of fire from the pipes of the accused and they were all sentenced to 6 months.\(^4\) *The Argus* reported that every time he was paid for an execution the money was soon spent in the company of ‘the degraded of both sexes’ who joined him in his drunken orgies.

Despite this lifestyle he took his employment seriously. He customarily lived somewhere near the barracks and word could always reach him when he was needed. The call was usually given several days in advance so he could voluntarily imprison himself, make himself clean and sober and perform his duty quietly and efficiently. He always shook the hand of the victim after he had pinioned the arms, murmured ‘God Bless’ and took pride if the death was instantaneous.

He kept count too. In all he executed 71 people during the sixteen years he held the position of hangman, the last being Oscar Wallace in Ballarat on August 8th 1873, only one month before his own death. His health was deteriorating by then and the officer in charge had difficulty transporting him safely back to Melbourne. The job of flagellator had also been taken from him, as on the last occasion he was employed thus he suffered an asthma attack brought on by the exertion. It was generally considered that the periods of sobriety enforced by his employment and frequent incarceration prolonged his life as his behaviour outside gaol would have killed him years before.

William Bamford died in the Melbourne Hospital on September 9th 1873 aged 66 years. The cause of death was Morbus Cordis, (chronic heart disease) and *The Argus* published a long obituary\(^5\). He was obviously a personality, but was he naturally degenerate or an adventurous lad brutalised by the society in which he lived? We will never know!

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\(^1\) Con 31/1/3 p.384  
\(^2\) Pol 220/1/2 p.227  
\(^3\) The Argus Thursday 31 January 1856  
\(^4\) The Argus Tuesday 20 September 1864  
\(^5\) The Argus Tuesday 31 October 1865  
\(^6\) The Argus Thursday 13 December 1866  
\(^7\) The Argus Monday 15 July 1867  
\(^8\) The Argus Tuesday 31 August 1869  
\(^9\) The Argus Friday 2 September 1870  
\(^10\) The Argus Tuesday 3 January 1871  
\(^11\) The Argus Thursday 11 September 1873

Illustrations of the hangman’s cell at Old Melbourne Gaol, and the hangman’s log of executions with calculations.
Transportation ran in the Family

Jenny Higgins,  
Family History Reference Librarian, National Library of Australia

The first hint of a case of serial family convict transportation was the notation, in Catherine Forsyth’s conduct record, ‘Mother Margaret transported to VDL 12 years ago’.1

Catherine Forsyth was born in August 1813 in the parish of Old Monkland, fifteen kilometres east of Glasgow, the second last child of coal hewer Livingston Forsyth/Forsayth and his wife Margaret Love.2 Livingston had married Margaret, the daughter of a coal hewer, in 1798 and they had moved around mining localities in the Coatbridge area for work as their family grew to five offspring.3 Margaret plied her hand as a dairywoman.

By 1826, Livingston had died or left the family. Deaths from accidents in the mines were reported from time to time in the local newspapers—Livingston may well have been one of the nameless victims. By that year, Margaret had moved to Glasgow and was living with Duncan McCarter, originally a farm labourer, then a hawker of whiskey, in Kirk Street, Calton. Duncan is consistently referred to as her husband, but a record of their marriage is still to be found.

In January of 1826, Duncan and Margaret, both in their late 40s, shared their apartment in Kirk Street with a young married woman, Catherine Ferguson nee Fitzgerald. Duncan and Catherine took to going about together, often passing off as a married couple. Sometimes they would be absent together at night, which Margaret found very unsatisfactory.

Late that month, Duncan McCarter, Margaret Love and Catherine Forsyth were all arrested for robbing a coach, house breaking and theft. Margaret’s defence was that she was not involved in the crime, claiming that she had spent the night in question at home, whilst Duncan and Catherine had been out that evening. Her defence stated that she had even attempted to move away from Kirk Street when her husband had attacked her after the alleged crime. The attack had supposedly rendered her physically incapable of observing any movements of people or items in the house in the period under examination in the court.

The court found all three guilty of the crime.4 Margaret Love and Catherine Ferguson were both sentenced to 14 years transportation. It was perhaps small comfort to Margaret to have her rival, Catherine, as a companion when they boarded the Sir Charles Forbes in late 1826 for the voyage to Van Diemen’s Land.5

Duncan McCarter was sentenced to transportation for life. He was sent to New South Wales on the Albion in September 1826 and assigned to a landowner in the Hunter River.6 He died in servitude in late 1838.7

Margaret Love was considered a well-behaved convict on the voyage, but it is her possessions that stand out in the list compiled by the ship’s Superintendent of Convicts. Margaret carried with her, amongst other items, 9 chemises, 12 bed gowns and 24 caps, two to three times the average number for other women on the voyage.8

After her arrival in Tasmania, Margaret’s compliant demeanor was to deteriorate over the time of her sentence. She was punished a number of times for disobedience, quarrelling with other servants, being drunk, neglect of her duty, being abusive and absent from service.
An early assignment sent her to Bothwell in Central Tasmania but she was later sent back to Hobart to the House of Correction for punishment before a new assignment. After another stint in the interior of the colony for bad behaviour and time at the Female Factory in Hobart, she was eventually assigned to the Orphan School where her behavior improved enough for her to obtain her Ticket of Leave in August 1836. Eight months later, in April 1837, she died in the hospital in Hobart.9

When Margaret departed Glasgow in late 1826, her daughter Catherine was just thirteen years old. She may well have already been working for her keep but her mother’s departure would have left her in straitened circumstances. This may well have led to the string of petty thefts over a number of years, resulting in her trial and transportation in 1837. Trial records show that she was working as a laundry-maid when she was convicted of theft in October 1831, aged eighteen years. Subsequent thefts occurred in 1832, and 1834, then later, five incidents taking place around December 1836 to March 1837. The later thefts involved clothes, bed and bathroom linen, fabric, sewing notions and tea and sugar. She was sentenced to seven years transportation on 26 April 1837, just two days after her mother died in Hobart.10

Catherine arrived in Tasmania on the convict transport, *Atwick*, in early 1838. She showed much of her mother’s defiant spirit whilst serving out her sentence, being punished for disobedience of orders, drunkenness, disorderly conduct and being absent from her service. Such was her conduct that her sentence was extended by 6 months, but she eventually obtained her Free Certificate in 1845.

While still a convict, Catherine applied to marry John Josephs, a free settler, in September 1842. Their application was not approved because of Catherine’s bad conduct record.11

In the year that she obtained her Free Certificate, Catherine was tried for receiving goods stolen from Henry Green. She was acquitted, as she was asleep when the police arrived at the house in pursuit of Green, a defence curiously echoing that of her mother’s in Glasgow, years before.12

There is little certainly about Catherine’s movements for the next year or two. In 1847, a Catherine Forsyth married Edward Watts in Hobart. The age given on the certificate matches that of our subject, but her marital status is given as a widow.13

It is reasonably certain, however, that the convict Catherine Forsyth is the Catherine Forsyth who is the ‘wife’ of William Roberts and mother of his seven children from 1848 to 1858, in Melbourne and Bendigo, Victoria. The identity of William is not so certain. William’s occupation of currier or tanner matches closely that of Edward Watts who was a fellmonger. The birth certificates of the children consistently state that William and Catherine were married in Hobart on varying dates in the mid/late 1840s. However, the ages of Edward and William, calculated from William’s children’s birth certificates, are mismatched by about fifteen years, so it cannot be assumed that Edward and William are the same men, with Edward changing his name on crossing Bass Strait.

William Roberts and Catherine Forsyth settled first in the Melbourne area, and then followed the rush to Bendigo when gold was discovered. Catherine lived for over fifty years in the gold fields district, at times in the splitters’ camp near Axedale. She outlived her husband14, by twenty-four years, dying aged 89 in 1903 at Strathfiedsaye near Bendigo.15 She was the progenitor of twenty-nine grandchildren. Five of her grandsons served in the first world, one earning a Military Medal. In total, eight of her descendants served in that war and at least three served in both wars.

Transportation brought both Margaret and Catherine’s Glasgow lives to an abrupt end, but for Catherine it eventually provided an opportunity for a sufficient life in which she was able to raise five children to adulthood and live to see the convict colony to which she was sent, joined to an Australian federation of states. For her descendants, participation in military service in two world wars provided them with opportunities not available to them in normal circumstances, leading to improved housing, jobs and education. Margaret and Catherine’s descendants today have a wide-ranging mix of occupations from trades-people to professionals. The two women were indeed Founders and Survivors.

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1 Tasmanian Archives, Conduct Record Catherine Forsyth, Police Number 157
2 Scotland’s People, OPR Births, 652/000010, 0316 Old Monkland or Coatbridge
3 Scotland’s People, OPR Marriages, 652/000010 0411 Old Monkland or Coatbridge
4 Scottish Record Office: Reference: AD/ 14/26/329, Margaret Love
5 Tasmanian Archives, Conduct Record Margaret Love, Police Number 57
6 New South Wales Convict Indent, Duncan McCarter, *Albion*, Indent No. 184
7 NSW State Archives, NRS 12213, Convict Death Register, 1828-1879
8 Tasmania – Papers re Convict Ships 1825-1841, Mitchell Library CY 1273-1282
9 Registrar-Generals Department pre-1900 births, deaths and marriages records, Tasmania, Burials in the Parish of Trinity, County of Buckingham, 1837, no 4951
10 Scottish Record Office: Reference: AD14/37/291, Catherine Forsyth
11 Convict Applications For Permissions to Marry 1829-1857, CON 52/1/2, page 87
12 Hobart Courier, 25 Oct 1845, page 3
13 Registrar-Generals Department pre-1900 births, deaths and marriages records, Tasmania, Parish of St George, Hobart
14 Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages, death certificate, 1879, 12633
15 Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages, death certificate, 1903, 302.
One night in June, I was not sleeping well. In the early hours of the morning, I was thinking about the amazing work all our volunteers do and I realised that if we love this work so much, then there was a possibility that family historians in the UK and Ireland might enjoy it too.

Boldly, I wrote to over 80 family history societies. The responses were positive and immediate. Now we have a team working on the convict story before transportation. Daily, I receive information on trials, including digitised images of original records, and newspaper reports. Volunteers are forwarding detailed family histories with birth, and marriage details for our convict women, their siblings and parents.

Whilst many individuals are now volunteering with us, we are also receiving wonderful information from the Cornwall Family History Society. I enter the information into the Female Convicts in Van Diemen’s Land database making it available to everyone.

The newspaper reports give us not just extra information on the convicts, but also an indication as to the attitudes of the judiciary.

Valerie Glass sent this snippet from the Newcastle Courant 7 March 1829.

'Sarah Purvis, one of the frail sisterhood, was charged with robbing Gerard Watson of his watch. The case was satisfactorily made out, and the jury returned a verdict of guilty. On the following day, she was sentenced to be transported 7 years.'

The judge berated Margaret Hume and his comments were reported in the same paper on the same day. He said, "I am extremely sorry to see a person of your appearance, talents and education, for you possess both, in such a situation when you might have filled another in a superior degree, had you followed a virtuous career; but the life you have led, and the connexions you have formed, all tend to shew that a departure from honest and industrious habits is sure to bring disgrace upon you".

Alert.....

Many times, I have had someone say that a certain convict could be that person’s ancestor because the convict married in a church of one denomination or another and would not have done that being a strict Methodist or Catholic.

What I have found when coding convict data is just the reverse. Many convicts married in the closest church and indeed, some Catholics married in a Protestant church when a Catholic church was operating in the same town.

What I have also noticed is that regardless of where they married, Catholic convicts were baptizing their children in the Catholic Church and sometimes travelling huge distances to do so. Many of these children were not registered at birth, but their details can be found in the Catholic baptism records.

Happy hunting.

We wish them every happiness...

This is a most welcome short history of women transported from Kildare to Van Diemen’s Land in 1849—the peak of the post-Famine Irish convict exodus. Catherine Fleming provides a concise and informative background to Kildare before the Famine—the decline in traditional industries and employment that had provided women—especially unsupported women—with a subsistence income.

The great historian of the Irish Famine, Cormac O’Grada, has argued that we need to understand the impact of the Famine in the context of the extreme poverty already prevalent in Ireland. Population had grown rapidly, poor Irish tenants were being evicted, and agricultural assets were being sucked dry by the British. Indeed historians now see Ireland as a colony and food basket for Great Britain—above all in the provision of beef that required grazing land in place of cultivated land. When the potato blight struck, Irish people had nothing to fall back on—the crisis was one of resilience as well as food.

When we study Irish convicts in Australia, especially in the second half of the 1840s, we need to be aware of the deprivation they had suffered even before the Famine. They were often ‘less criminal’ than other convicts, but it seems, more vulnerable and frail, both physically and mentally. The convict indents are therefore particularly precious because they are one of the few archival records of the impact of the famine on vulnerable families.

Catherine Fleming follows women through the courts, on ship and to Hobart. Kildare was not the worst affected county during the Famine, but it had many arsonists who set fires in the hope of deliverance from Ireland via transportation. Dianne Snowden is finishing a book on the women arsonists.

The court processes, the management of prisoners and the dreadful narratives of the prisoners are sensitively and vividly portrayed. Statistics are well used and will prove helpful to many.

A number of the women studied in detail were transported on *The Australasia*, the subject of Dr Trudy Cowley’s book *A Drift of Derwent Ducks*, out of print but under revision for republication. These two works connect across the seas, the two sides of the convicts’ stories, before and after sentence. We hope that in coming years, we will be able to make many more such connections—hands across the water.

It is part of an excellent series of Irish local histories, Maynooth Studies in Local History published by the Four Courts Press in Dublin. The catalogue can be browsed online and copies purchased by credit card.


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**Book Review**

**Research Report**

**Stayers and Leavers**

Our most recent work has been on the mobility of convicts before transportation. As we suspected, convicts, like most poor people, were not very mobile unless they had no family and therefore no home.

The most mobile were those who were arrested in one of the port cities which were magnets for lost people, seeking opportunity and escaping disintegrating families and economies.

Village people were the least likely to have moved away and we suspect were the least likely to leave Tasmania after sentence. But that remains to be seen from further analysis.

We hope that all the patient work of volunteers in translating the phonetic spelling of places names mis-heard through regional accents and misspelt by the convict clerks taking the indents, will bear fruit when we map convicts’ journeys from the villages and towns of England, Scotland and Ireland.

A preliminary paper on convicts’ mobility was presented at a conference in Adelaide convened by the Visible Immigrants series, that has published many outstanding histories of nineteenth-century immigration of the Australian colonies.

A book chapter has also been submitted for publication in a book from McGill University Press which looks at the Swing Rioters as a control group for comparison with the general run of male convicts. Here we found the Swing Rioters to have been older, more often married, steadier and less refractory than other convicts. And they were more successful in later life in marriage and re-entering society. This suggests that the other convicts were not quite ‘ordinary working people’.

Do you want your convict’s original record transcribed?

The Port Arthur Historic Sites Resource Centre offers a range of services:

Research
We can provide copies of records relating to Tasmanian Convicts held at the Tasmanian Archive and Heritage Office. They can include:

- Conduct/Police record
- Indent (which may provide details of relatives)
- Physical description
- Appropriation list
- Surgeon’s report (of the voyage to the colony)
- Application for permission to marry

We can check a variety of indexes for further reference to a convict and can conduct a name search to determine whether a person arrived in Tasmania as a convict.

Transcriptions
For those having difficulty deciphering the abbreviations often found on conduct records, indents or description lists, we can assist by producing a typed transcription.

Fees
Minimum Fee – $35 (includes up to 1 hour search/transcription time).
In excess of one hour, at the hourly rate of $35 per hour (or part thereof).
Additional costs include printouts @ $0.66 per page, plus postage and packing.
Most basic searches take 1–2 hours and are completed within 4–6 weeks of request.


Contact
For more information about our Enquiry Service contact our Resource Centre
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