



# FRIENDS OF THE ORPHAN SCHOOLS

## St John's Park Precinct New Town Tasmania

[www.orphanschool.org.au](http://www.orphanschool.org.au)

Issue 26

NEWSLETTER

January 2017

**Fox's Feast: Sunday 26 Feb 2017 11.00am-2.30pm.** Fox's Feast, our annual picnic to remember the Orphan School children. Fox's Feast was an annual outing held from 1863 to 1879 for the Orphan School children. It was funded from the legacy of John Fox, an ex-convict who had been in an orphanage in England. This year there will be an optional tour, which includes the newly conserved TB Sanatorium Chalets, setting off from the Old Sunday School at 11.00am. It will be followed by a simple BYO picnic lunch – bring a rug or outdoor

chairs. Tea, coffee and milk will be available in the Old Sunday School. At about 1.30pm we will pause to scatter a few rose petals on the burial ground adjacent to the Old Sunday School.

**Organ Recital: Sunday 22 Feb 2017.** As advised in the last Newsletter, there will be a further recital on the fine Hill organ in St John's Anglican Church, on the Orphan Schools site at New Town. Internationally-acclaimed concert organist Thomas Heywood will present a program of music best-suited to the organ's

specification, commencing at 2.00pm, and early arrival is recommended. Tickets available at the door, and CDs of Heywood's recitals will be on sale.

**Research Seminar: Sunday 7 May 2017.** The Female Convicts Research Centre (FCRC) will present their next half-yearly Seminar, this time on the theme of Convict Motherhood (of especial relevance to those of us with connections to orphans). It will be held in the Hobart Town Hall. Registration for the Seminar is essential. If not already an FCRC member, you can join by visiting <http://www.femaleconvicts.org.au>.



Her Excellency, Professor the Honourable Kate Warner, Governor of Tasmania at the launch. Photo courtesy of Richard Bladel.

### New Publication

Latest publication by the Convict Women's Press. At the last FCRC Seminar in October, Her Excellency, Professor the Honourable Kate Warner, Governor of Tasmania, launched the latest in a series of books documenting our female convict history, titled *Repression, Reform & Resilience: a history of the Cascades Female Factory*. The book was compiled by FCRC members and edited by Dr Alison Alexander.

Copies are available for purchase from the CWP website, [www.convictwomenspress.com.au](http://www.convictwomenspress.com.au), the Cascades Female Factory Historic Site or selected Tasmanian book stores.

## THE GALLERIES: AN INTRODUCTION

Dianne Snowden

For some time, the Friends of the Orphan Schools have pondered over which gallery in St John's Church was used by the orphan school children and which was used by the convicts. The results of a painstaking piece of research by Bruce Lindsay, with the assistance of David Lewis, is presented for your consideration on our website at [www.orphanschool.org.au/galleries.php](http://www.orphanschool.org.au/galleries.php). The following extract is taken from Dianne Snowden's archival report on the Church, written in 2010:

Towards the end of 1842, it was found necessary to alter the arrangement of the pews in St John's Church. Captain Charles Swanston, one of the Churchwardens wrote to the Colonial Secretary:

"At present the Church has but two divisions of one part being appropriated to the Orphan children whilst the rest of the Church is filled by the Parishioners and prisoners of the Crown, the latter an arrangement that is one of the very great annoyance to the seatholders and which has compelled the respectable part of them to give up their pews adjoining the space occupied by the prisoners of the Crown in the Body of the buildings.

To remedy this evil it is suggested to appropriate one of the Galleries for the organ and the Prisoners of the Crown, the other Gallery is at present for the children of the Orphan School and the body of the Church entirely for the parishioners—To carry out this desirable arrangement it will be necessary to fit up the space at present occupied by the Convict Boys in the body of the building with pews for the inhabitants who now sit in the Gallery and to fit up the Gallery now occupied by the latter for the reception of the organ in the centre, the accommodation of the convict boys at one end and the of the Ticket of Leave men and assigned servants at the other.

The fitting up of the Pews in the Gallery where it is proposed to place the organ and the Prisoners of the Crown will be removed to this space now occupied by the latter in the body of the Church and the seats filling that space will have to be placed in the Gallery. There is consequently all the materials in the Church ... required to make the necessary alterations. [Ref: Catherine E Latta, leaflet, Church of St. John Hobart Tasmania Built 1834', [c1966], np."]

The convict boys mentioned were most likely those working on the government farm [Ref: TAHO, NS656/1/49 Letter from C Swanston and R Jacomb to Colo-

onial Secretary 7 July 1843.]

The Swanston letter raises more questions than it supplies answers about the placement of the 1850 organ. Additional information about proposed alterations can be found in the 1843 document headed 'New Town Church Plan shewing proposed alterations of Pews', signed by Mr P Kay and dated April 1843. [Ref: TAHO, PWD266/1/1521] On the tower side, the gallery was divided into three sections. On the left, a space was allocated for 60 Ticket of Leave men. The middle section included boxes for the School Mistress and School Master at the front. Immediately behind them was the organist's pew and then the organ. Either side of the organ section were seats for orphan children 'belonging to the choir'. On the right side were seats to accommodate 80 convict boys. The plan also shows that the gallery extended the full length of the church.

The placement of the organ seems to have determined the allocation of seating in the tower gallery. Swanston's letter was written in 1842, eight years before the first pipe organ was installed, and before the tower gallery was reserved for convicts. These and associated matters will be explored in a future article.

### Deadlines for newsletter articles

1 February 2017

1 August 2017

1 May 2017

1 November 2017

### Editor

Bruce Lindsay

### Contact us

Friends of the Orphan Schools,  
PO Box 461,  
North Hobart,  
TAS 7002

email:

[secretary@orphanschool.org.au](mailto:secretary@orphanschool.org.au)

telephone messages:

03 6285 2654



Her Excellency, Professor the Honourable Kate Warner, Governor of Tasmania; Dr Dianne Snowden, Life Member Joyce Purtscher and Thelma McKay. Courtesy of Berry Dunston