



FRIENDS OF THE ORPHAN SCHOOLS

St John's Park Precinct New Town Tasmania

Issue 14

Newsletter

May 2012

Fox's Feast

Sunday 26 February

Fox's Feast Celebrations for 2012 focused on the dedication of the Memorial Garden for the children who died while at the Orphan Schools. Aileen Ashford, Commissioner for Children officiated at this ceremony. The memorial plaque for the children was unveiled by Shirley Kerin, a descendant of former orphans Elizabeth Ware and Thomas McAveady. Four generations of Shirley's family shared this occasion with her; some travelling from Victoria to do so. A framed photograph of the Queen's Orphan Schools was presented to Shirley in acknowledgement of her family's generous donation of plants for the garden and the cost of the plaque and also to Joyce Purtscher for her hard work towards this project.



Shirley Kerin (left) and Aileen Ashford

Memorial Plaques

The next stage of the Memorial Garden is to organise plaques listing the names of the 400 or so children who died in the Orphan Schools. Rosemary Davidson and Joyce are in the process of finalising this list. The plaques will be cast in bronze and the estimated cost is in the vicinity of \$5000.00. We are hoping to meet the



Joyce Purtscher

cost of the plaques largely from donations and are pleased with the response so far.

If you would like to contribute towards the cost of the plaques, please send your cheque made out to the National Trust Australia (Tasmania) to the **Treasurer, Friends of the Orphan Schools, PO Box 461, North Hobart, Tasmania 7002, before 31 May 2012.** Your donation would be much appreciated.

Donations are tax deductible. If you would like a receipt please include a return address with your cheque.

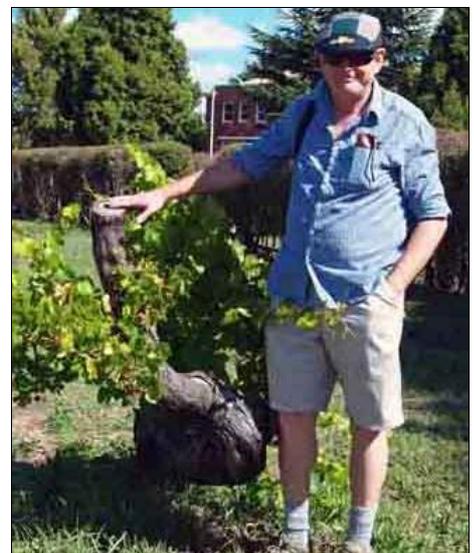
Willow Court Tour

Thirty or so Friends and their guests, together with some members of the Tasmanian Family History Society Inc., enjoyed a tour of the Willow Court Precinct at New Norfolk on Sunday 18 March which was a typically beautiful autumn day in the Derwent Valley and ideal for walking through the precinct. The tour was led by heritage architects Robert

Vincent and Paul Johnston. Inger Visby, President of the Friends of Frescati Community Garden spoke about the restoration and development they are undertaking in the cottage gardens. A small group of volunteers have successfully conserved and rehabilitated a significant hawthorn hedge and they are presently uncovering a pond in the garden. Simon Rolfe of the Willow Court and Barracks Working Group guided us through the Barracks buildings and other associated buildings, many in need of urgent repair and attention.



Willow Court Barracks



Our Treasurer, Simon Cocker beside a grape vine believed to be the oldest in Australia – in the grounds of Frescati

Sanatorium Huts

We are very grateful to Robert Vincent who has prepared a conservation plan for the two remaining TB (tuberculosis) isolation chalets. Robert presented this plan at our May General Meeting and it is now being considered by the committee. Urgent conservation works are needed before winter rains cause irreversible damage. We will report progress on this important project in future newsletters.

General Meetings

General Meetings have been held on Thursday, 8 March and Thursday, 3 May; both meetings have been well attended.

Robert Vincent provided a fascinating overview of some early maps and images of Hobart Town at the March meeting. This meeting also provided a forum for some early discussion about the best way to move forward with restoration work on the TB isolation chalets located within the St John's Precinct. Robert agreed to prepare a draft conservation plan as a first step in this process. This plan was presented at the May meeting.

At the May meeting Professor Lucy Frost gave a paper entitled "Whose children? The early years of the King's Orphan Schools." This paper looked back to the early days of Van Diemen's Land when Lieutenant-Governor George Arthur struggled with the problem of how best to protect the colony's most vulnerable children.

Heritage Festival Sunday 27 May 2012

The theme of this year's National Trust Heritage festival is *Innovation and Invention*. Our contribution to the festival is a group walking tour of the Orphans Schools and St John's Park Precinct led by Dianne Snowden. The tour will highlight some of the innovations associated with Precinct throughout its life. The TB chalets will be opened for internal inspection.

Bookings for the tour are essential. To reserve your place email the secretary at secretary@orphanschool.org.au or phone Joyce on (03) 6234 1392. A \$10 donation towards notes and afternoon tea in the old Sunday School is appreciated.

Annual General Meeting

The Friends of the Orphan Schools will hold its Annual General Meeting at 2:00 pm, Sunday, 19 August 2012, in the Old Sunday School, St John's Park, New Town. Our Convenor, Dr Dianne Snowden will deliver the Annual Report and Office Bearers for 2012-13 will be elected.

Our guest speaker will be Mrs Sue Newitt who will speak about her UTAS honours project which looked into Aboriginal children in the Orphan Schools.

Membership

Several members have enquired when they should renew their membership. The last membership period was extended to eighteen months as a result of moving the annual general meeting from December to August. Membership renewals will fall due in June and we will issue a request then.

Newsletter

The newsletter is published in February, May, August and November each year. We welcome contributions from member and friends. We would particularly like to include stories about children who were at the Orphan Schools and their descendants. If you have something you would like to contribute please email Toni Sherwood at research@orphanschool.org.au.

Tours

Group walking tours of the Orphan Schools and St John's Park Precinct can be arranged by negotiation for a minimum ten persons.

The tour includes a visit to St John's Church and a short organ recital (subject to availability of church) and will be led by one of our tour guides: Joyce Purtscher, well known for her work on the children in the Orphan Schools and paupers, or Dianne Snowden our convenor and historian.

The cost of the tour is a \$10 donation for tour notes and afternoon tea.

Email the secretary at secretary@orphanschool.org.au or phone Joyce on (03) 6234 1392 to enquire about a tour of our fascinating site.

Office Bearers and Committee for 2011/12

Convenor: Dianne Snowden

Deputy Convenor: Toni Sherwood

General Secretary: Andrew Cocker

Minute Secretary: Colleen Read

Treasurer: Simon Cocker

Assistant Treasurer: Roger Stott

Committee: Joyce Purtscher

Rosie Davidson

Lorraine Davidson

Lisa Hutton

St John's Church (ex-officio):

Rev. David Lewis

Ogilvie High School (ex-officio):

Wendy Frost

New Town Primary School (ex-officio):

Danny Neal

Newsletter: Toni Sherwood

Rosie Davidson

Andrew Cocker

The Committee meets on the second Wednesday of each month in the Old Sunday School at 5:30 pm.

Contact us:

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