



FRIENDS OF THE ORPHAN SCHOOLS

St John's Park Precinct New Town Tasmania

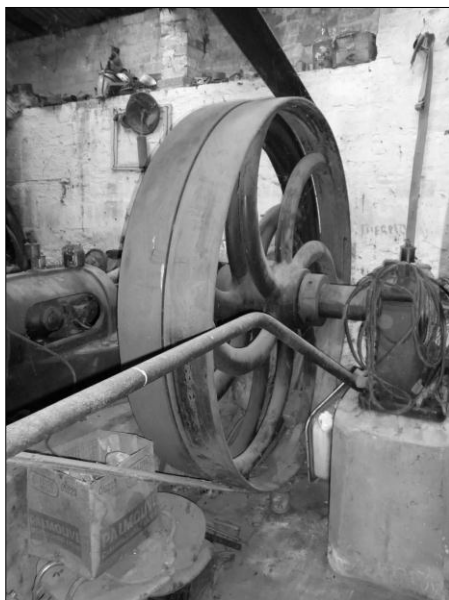
Issue 12

Newsletter

August 2011

Annual General Meeting And visit to "Mr George Gatehouse's 'New Farm' Establishment"

The Friends of the Orphan Schools Annual General Meeting will be held 2.00 p.m., Sunday 21 August 2011 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 2011–2012 will be elected. Following the formal part of the meeting we will visit the property once owned by George Gatehouse – a short walk from the Old Sunday School and an important heritage site. This visit also provides an opportunity to visit the cool storage facility for fruit established in a building once known as Mezger's bone mill. The Ockenden brothers and Dr Harry Benjafield developed the cool store in 1912.



Inside Benjafield's Cool Store

Please join us 2:00 p.m. Sunday 21 August 2011, Old Sunday School, St John's Park.

Would you like get help?

The Friends of the Orphan Schools relies on a small committee for its operation. Most of those members are keen to continue their involvement, but as we have several vacancies on our committee we would welcome some fresh blood and enthusiasm. We would particularly like someone to organise regular member events. If you could fill this role or would like to be a member of the general committee please get in touch or come along to the AGM. If you think you can help, and have the time, we would welcome your nomination. If you have any concerns or want to find out more please email our secretary, Andrew: secretary@orphans.org.au. The Committee meets at 5.30 p.m. on the second Wednesday of each month.

Volunteer Wanted

We need someone to take and prepare minutes for our meetings. This position would require attendance at committee meetings and the taking, preparation and distribution of minutes. You would not necessarily need to belong to the committee. The required time commitment would be about 3 hours each month.

Open Days

From September the Old Sunday School will be open on the last Sunday of each month between 2.00 and 4.00 p.m. Committee members will be on hand to answer questions about the Precinct's history, explain

the displays and help you with our resources. Members of the Lenah Links Community Group will be working in the St John's Orchard.

Come along on Sunday 25 September 2011. Visit the Old Sunday School and drop into the Community Orchard.

About the Gatehouse Farm



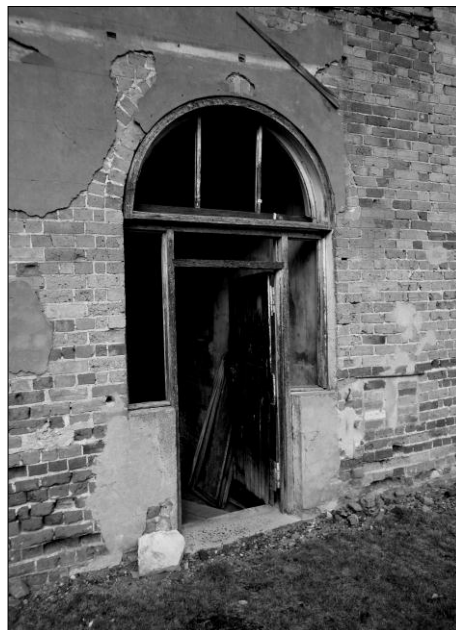
Gatehouse Farm—The Hall

George Gatehouse purchased his New Town property in 1820 and established himself as miller and brewer. Although this business was not a success he established a fine orchard and garden. An advertisement for the property – following Gatehouse's death in 1838, describes his garden "as without exception, the most complete one in the colony, expense in procuring the best trees, &c, having been no consideration with the late proprietor." The advertisement describes a recently completed "hot-house," supplied with "choice plants and grape vines" and

an “orchard ... of about 3 acres [that] can at any time be irrigated from the mill dam.” The property included a brewery, malt house and mill as well as a “cow shed capable of holding twenty cows, several stables, poultry yards, cooperage, &c., &c.” In April 1821 he harvested 68 kgs of tobacco – perhaps the first in the colony – from this property.



Mrs Gatehouse's Vinery



George Gatehouse was a former convict, made good. He was transported to New South Wales for seven years in 1803. He arrived in 1804 and returned to England in 1812, where he raised considerable capital before sailing once more for the Australian colonies. He arrived in Van Diemen's Land in 1816 where he invested his capital in a mercantile partnership with Anthony Fenn Kemp, which for three years traded as Kemp and Gatehouse. Following his retirement Gatehouse established his New Town property.

Although once a convict, he became a respected citizen of Hobart: he was an original pew holder at St David's Church and one of the first

shareholders of the Bank of Van Diemen's Land. Benjamin Duterrau painted his wife Edith's portrait and George Gatehouse was buried in the family vault in St John's churchyard. (Later removed to the churchyard of St John the Baptist, Buckland.)

(See the *Hobart Town Courier*, 3 May 1839; *Mercury*, 9 May 1912 and G T Stilwell, “George Gatehouse (1778–1838)”, *Australian Dictionary of Biography* for further information.)

An Invitation to ‘Journeys’

A sentence to transportation became a sentence to travel as convict women journeyed from their places of trial across the world to Van Diemen's Land. Many had made significant journeys before their arrests. After they arrived in Hobart Town, many travelled about the colony while under sentence. Once they were free to move where they liked, the emancipated women often set off yet again for somewhere new.

Members of the Female Convicts Research Group will explore these journeys in a seminar on Saturday, 5 November 2011 in the Old Sunday School, St John's Park, New Town.

The seminar will run from 9.30 – 3.30 and members of the Friends of the Orphan Schools are cordially invited to come along.

Please bring your own lunch. A gold coin donation is requested

Research News

Orphan Schools

On a recent trip to the archives Joyce came across some additional plans of the Parsonage and the Orphan Schools after they were converted to the New Town Charitable Institution. These plans are very detailed and give the interior layout of both buildings. They also establish that the iron staircases at the rear of the Orphan Schools were added in 1887.

Old Sunday School

A member of the Ogilvie High School Alumni has also found evidence that for most of 1938 – while additional classrooms were built – the St John's Sunday School was used for classes. She has unearthed plans of the building and correspondence between the Education Department and the

Warden of St Johns, Denis Butler (of Hobart law firm, Butler, McIntyre and Butler). She has kindly agreed to pass this on and we will have more about this in our next issue.

Find and Orphan

www.orphanschool.org.au/searchorphans.htm

This has generated a lot of interest and done much to lift our profile. To date more than 200 people have claimed orphans, and in some cases contributed information to our website. Many people request extra information about their ancestor – sometimes, happily, we can help out - but in many cases we have nothing to add. Knowing what to do next can be very daunting – but don't despair help is at hand.

To continue your research we suggest you visit www.archives.tas.gov.au/guides/genealogy to find out about the available resources. Some of these can be viewed online while others can be accessed by visiting to the Archives Office of Tasmania, which located in the reference section of the State Library of Tasmania. The archivists and librarians who work there are very helpful and enthusiastic. They are usually very happy to help you get started with your research.

Colonial newspapers are another good source of information for researchers. Many of these have been digitised by the National Library of Australia and can be searched via <http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper>

Microfilm copies of colonial newspapers are also held in the library. Again if you need help to get started here, the library staff does not mind showing you what to do.

Current Office Bearers

Convenor: Dianne Snowden
Deputy Convenor: Toni Sherwood
Secretary: Andrew Cocker
Treasurer: Simon Cocker
Committee members: Rosie Davidson, Joyce Purtscher and Lisa Hutton.

Contact details:

Friends of the Orphan Schools, PO Box 461, North Hobart TAS 7002
secretary@orphanschool.org.au
telephone: (0) 6285 2654

We welcome your enquiries and interest.