



Friends of the Orphan School and St. John's Precinct New Town Tasmania

Issue 3

Newsletter

May 2009

Coming Events

HERITAGE MONTH 2009

**General Meeting - 14 May at 5:30 pm
in the Parish Centre.**

The Isolation Huts at St. John's Park

Guest speaker, Robert Vincent, cultural heritage practitioner and conservation architect.

Come to hear about the history of the treatment of tuberculosis in Tasmania and the conservation issues around the two remaining isolation huts, currently situated within the St. John's Park Precinct.

Concert - 24 May at 2:00 pm.

The Music of Handel, including his 'Water Music'

Come and celebrate Handel's wonderful music, played on the grand 1886 William Hill pipe organ, in the superb acoustic of St. John's Anglican Church.

Bass/baritone, Christian Carson, will sing some of Handel's finest vocal music, accompanied by David Featherstone.

Sit below the 19th century orphan and convict galleries and experience the atmosphere of this beautiful and timeless house of worship.

The concert will be followed by afternoon tea. (\$5.00 donation for concert and afternoon tea. Members please bring a plate to share.)

For more information or apologies please contact the secretary on (03) 6228 2152 or friends.orphanschool.stjohnspark@gmail.com

St. John's Church Program

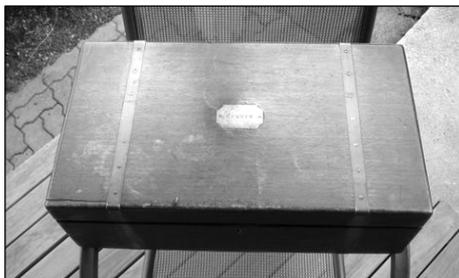
St. John's Church, St. John's Avenue, New Town. Enquiries phone 6228 5965.

A Service of Holy Communion is held every Sunday at 10:15 am.

On Sunday 31 May 2009, the Rt Rev. Bishop Phillip Newell will preach at the service to celebrate the anniversary of the consecration of St. John's Church.

The Story of Sidney Quinn Davis' Box from the November General Meeting.

When I visited my elder sister in the Lord Fraser Nursing Home in the 90s, she was very concerned that her daughter claimed Grandma Davis had been a convict. She asked me to try and prove this was not true but she died before I could do so.



Grandma Davis was Louisa Ann Frances Edwards—a 10½-year-old who was at the Queen's Orphan School from 1847 until 1852. She was the daughter of a convict, Eliz Edwards/Sanders and Peck, née Nicholson—our great grandma.

In the 40s, when I was about ten I was very concerned about the Quinn in my name. My mother had told me it was part of my father's name, but

he had one 'n' and I had two, so I wanted to know why.

When I finally got the courage to ask my father, he brought out of storage a box which he called the 'Quin Box'. He opened it and took out his Confirmation certificate that showed him to be James Michael Quin Davis, with one 'n'. He then pointed out how Quin was spelt on the lid of the box. My mother, or the rector, then, had misspelled my name. Then I became so intrigued with the box's contents and its secret drawer that I asked no further questions.

But who was C. J. Quin? James Michael Quin and his sister, Catherine Anastasia Quin, were teachers at the Queen's Orphan School at New Town from 1845 until 1866. James died in 1870 at Battery Point. Grandma Davis's youngest son (my Dad) was born that year. She named him James Michael Quin Davis. Catherine Anastasia Quin died in 1897—the year my elder sister was born.

Was the Quin box a gift from the Quin family to the Davis's, or was it given to Louisa Edwards (my grandmother) before she left the Orphan School?

The box or the name C. J. Quin is not mentioned in the wills of James or Catherine Quin, but a James Quin Maguire of Rathmines, Dublin, Ireland, is named as an executor.

Report of Fox's Feast

The inaugural event of the Descendant's Group, Fox's Feast, was held in the Parish Hall, the former Sunday School building, on 15 February 2009. Although the weather

decided to break just at lunchtime, preventing a picnic outdoors, it proved to be a very successful event with 50–60 people in attendance. This provided a further 38 entries on the Descendant's Register and information and photographs were exchanged.

Several display boards attracted a great deal of interest, along with bonnets from Christina Henri's collection.

Joyce Purtscher prepared a booklet, *The First True Friends of the Queen's Orphanage*, the story of John Fox and George Dexter, who bequeathed money to the children of the orphanage to provide an annual Picnic Day.



Thanks to Chris Woods and her husband Bruce, (front row) and Rosie Davidson, Joyce Purtscher and Dianne Snowden (back row, l. to r.).

Research News

The research group plans to hold quarterly research days in the History Room, State Library of Tasmania between 9:30 am and 2:30 pm on the last Saturday of the month.

Planned research days for 2009 are Saturday, 27 June and Saturday, 26 September. Members of the research group will be on hand to assist and guide research. We will have a list of possible research topics but would also like to hear your ideas.

If you would like to come along please let us know either by email: research@orphanschool.org.au or by post: Research Committee, PO Box 111, Moonah TAS 7009.

Protecting Cultural Heritage

David Young, Senior Research Officer from Heritage Tasmania, was the guest speaker at the FOSP General Meeting on 12 March 2008. David talked about the issues in heritage registration in Tasmania and the ways in which FOSP might best protect the

Orphan School and St. John's Park Precinct. He gave a comprehensive and informative outline of the activities of Heritage Tasmania and recent recommendations regarding the *Historic Cultural Heritage Act 1995*. David's presentation generated a lively discussion and he graciously answered a number of questions and concerns raised by members.

David explained that the original Act, the first to specifically consider Tasmania's heritage, required the construction of a comprehensive list of heritage properties in the state. The original list of properties was put together from the already existing records of various government and community groups, the National Trust among them, with the data transfer undertaken by contracted employees with little or no heritage experience. At present there are nearly 5,500 registered places in the state, each of which has been assessed as meeting at least one of seven criteria contained in the Act. The bulk of these places found their way onto the register in this early period, and most were only assessed in a cursory fashion to ensure immediate protection of the place.

Registration of a place is important for its owner because if a place is on the Heritage Register and there are plans to carry out works on it that have the potential to affect its cultural heritage significance, then the Act states that an application has to be made (through the local council) to the Tasmanian Heritage Council for approval to carry out those works. Many local councils also have lists of places on their Planning Schemes which have been assessed as having local heritage significance. The local councils in question have to give approval before works can be carried out on these places. David said that in recent years the *Historic Cultural Heritage Act 1995* had been reviewed and a number of suggested changes have been proposed. The Department has outlined these proposals in a document titled 'Managing Our Heritage', which is available at www.heritage.tas.gov.au

David's recent work has involved reassessing some listed properties more thoroughly against the criteria in the Act to determine with greater precision on what grounds they merit heritage registration. Heritage listings

for buildings within the St. John's Park Precinct have recently been revised by David. His report emphasises the precinct's long association with institutionalised healthcare in Tasmania and the site's connection to prominent Tasmanian historical figures such as Lt-Governor George Arthur, John Lee Archer, James Blackburn, social reformer Edward Swarbreck Hall, Charles O'Hara Booth, and Tasmanian Aboriginals Mathinna, William Lanne and Fanny Cochrane Smith. He also points out the architectural significance of many of the nineteenth and twentieth century buildings within the precinct. His recommendations also make provision for the inclusion of the Infant Orphan Asylum on the Tasmanian Heritage Register, which to date has not been included. Fourteen buildings within the precinct are assessed as having state historic heritage significance, while seven have local significance. Areas such as the former Anglican and Roman Catholic Burial Grounds are deemed to have state archaeological heritage significance, while the avenue of oaks which line St. John's Avenue also have state significance. Many of the twentieth century buildings on site, while acknowledged as having a contemporary functional value, are deemed to have no heritage significance at all.

The future heritage management of the St. John's Precinct as a whole represents significant problems but would be helped by the development of a conservation management plan for the whole site to complement individual heritage listings. For the St. John's site such a plan could lead to better recognition and appreciation of the cultural, social, historical, architectural and archaeological significance of this diverse site and ensure that future development was co-operative and sympathetic to the special values of the precinct.

Contact details:

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web site:

www.nationaltrusttas.org.au/friendorphans/pages/friendsorphans.htm

