



# FRIENDS OF THE ORPHAN SCHOOLS

## St John's Park Precinct New Town Tasmania

Issue 21

NEWSLETTER

November 2014

### Annual General Meeting 2014

This year our Annual General Meeting was held on Sunday 17 August at 2.00 p.m. in the Old Sunday School. Twenty members attended. The Convenor, Dianne Snowden, read her Annual Report for 2013/2014, mentioning the many activities conducted over the past year and thanking the committee and other members for their participation and support. The Annual Report will shortly be available on the website. Copies of the Financial Statements were distributed.

### Office Bearers 2014-2015

#### Convenor

Dianne Snowden

#### Secretary

Andrew Cocker

#### Treasurer

Simon Cocker

#### Committee Members

Bernadette Bell

Berry Dunston

Peter Gaggin

Chris Leppard

David Lewis

**Ex-Officio (New Town Primary School)** Di Smith

**Ex-Officio (St. John's Church)**

Rev. Bill Stewart

We have a vacancy for Minutes Secretary – if you are interested, please contact Dianne at [dsn Snowden@tassie.net.au](mailto:dsn Snowden@tassie.net.au)

Following the formal part of the AGM, guest speaker Andrea Gerard spoke about the topic 'All World War I Soldiers deserve our commemoration'. She discussed the work that she has been doing with her husband Ron to identify the unmarked graves of World War I soldiers buried across Tasmania – 220 from Cornelian Bay alone! It was a moving and interesting talk and we commend Andrea and Ron for their hard work.

### Wattle Day September 2014

Last year, to celebrate Wattle Day, the Friends spent a very pleasant afternoon in the sunshine in St John's Orchard, the garden of the Lenah Links Community Group, opposite the South Wing of the Orphan School. Originally, funds were raised on Wattle Day for those in the Consumption Chalets.

The wattle later became the symbol of the fight against tuberculosis in Tasmania. Committee member Simon Cocker gave a well-researched and interesting presentation about the history of the Chalets as our Wattle Day 2014 event. We look forward to his publication on this topic. Simon has been Project Manager for the chalet conservation project. He and his team have done an outstanding job – well worth a look next time you visit the precinct!

### Point Puer

On 28 September we were privileged to hear John Stephenson talk about his project on the digital reconstruction of Point Puer, part of the Port Arthur Historic Site. Those who attended found the talk inspiring and full of possibilities for what might be possible on the Orphan School site.

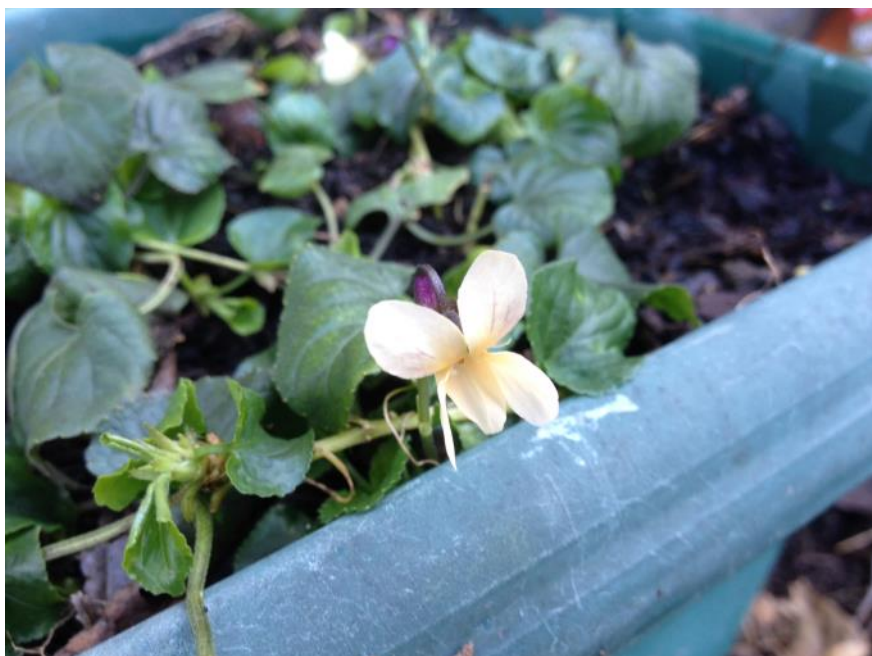
### Burial Ground Interpretation

Throughout the year, the Friends of the Orphan Schools have been working with a designer to create interpretation for the Burial Ground, which is currently unmarked. We have approval from the Department of Health and Human Services to proceed with this project and are in the process of obtaining other required approvals.

### Did You Know?

A rare apricot violet, discovered years ago in the St. John's Burial Ground, is being cultivated by the Friends of the Orphan Schools.

They have been propagated by gardeners Barry and Lorraine Davidson. The plants are now being lovingly cared for by a number of committee members. It is hoped that they may be available to other members in the near future.



Vol.35 No.2 pp.77-80 Sep 2014  
 'Margaret Connell & St. Columba Falls'  
 Vol.35 No.3 pp. 159-162 December 2014  
 'Actions Speak Louder than Words'

**Research and Publications Committee Report**

The committee has continued to meet and work through the ambitious agenda which it set for 2014. We are currently reviewing all of our sources of information by adding to them and updating existing data. The ongoing digitization of records by TAHO, and the launch of the new Linc Tasmanian Names

**Educational Visits: Lindisfarne Primary School**

The grade 1 children from Lindisfarne Primary School visited the site recently as part of their history curriculum looking at family life in the past. Lorraine Davidson showed the children around the site and talked them through a day in the life of an orphan. Rev Bill Stewart showed the children inside the church. The children completed their visit playing on the grass around the Old Sunday School Hall. The children were interested to hear how the orphan boys had slept in hammocks, the girls three to a bed, the meagre amount of food the children had to eat and they couldn't believe that the children had no play equipment!

**Web Site**

Our web site continues to attract a steady stream of visitors, searching for an orphan. Many descendants who have claimed an orphan have been contacted by other descendants or researchers who have found their claim and story. 760 of our 5958 orphans have been claimed. Have you claimed yours? Our Web Manager Andrew Cocker has done a remarkable job creating and maintaining our website.



**Voices from the Orphan Schools'**

Since June 2011, Convenor Dianne Snowden has been publishing a regular series of articles, 'Voices from the Orphan Schools', in Tasmanian Ancestry, the journal of the Tasmanian Family History Society. Reference copies are available at the Old Sunday School.

The following articles were published in 2014:

Vol.35 No.1 pp.9-15 June 2014  
 'Musical Voices'

Index continue to present researchers with new and more easily accessible information. It is therefore a constant challenge to keep our resources current while initiating new projects. Material for our excursion notes and website are among those resources which we are constantly reviewing. Some individual projects are as follows:

The erection of a memorial plaque to mark the site of the burial ground, and a further interpretation board to explain the site will offer valuable information to visi-

tors and serve to lift the profile of the precinct.

Dianne is working on the History of St John's, the proceeds of which will benefit St John's church. This will include stories of some of the orphans who passed through the various Orphan Schools.

We are using the existing database to compile a small booklet listing the children who died and were buried at the Orphan Schools. Once again this will be in a format which will appeal to visitors who want to take away further information about the site – either for their own research, or as a memento of their visit.

Plans to produce an illustrated site guide are still on the agenda and our initial discussions with artist Peter Gouldthorpe, were promising in that he is willing to assist. However quotes for the publication of such a document proved very expensive and as with other projects we will be investigating grants to make this happen. Similarly we are working towards producing a booklet about the Aboriginal children who were at the Orphan School. This would include a small paragraph on each child.

Lorraine is continuing to create a model of a room in the girls' Orphan School, including accurate representations of the orphans. We also hope to follow this up with a model of the interior of our reconstructed Chalet. When completed, these displays will be placed in the Sunday School Room. They will offer a unique addition to the written material which we have on display. Anyone who has seen these painstakingly detailed miniatures will know that it is a slow labour of love. But we will keep members updated on the progress of these much anticipated projects.

### **Publications for sale**

1. Deaths and Burials in the Parish of St John's New Town by Rosemary Davidson \$25.00 including packaging and postage in Australia.
2. Deaths at the New Town Charitable Institution July 1895 - December 1912 \$20.00 including packaging and postage in Australia.
3. A set of six postcards \$15.00 including packaging and postage in Australia.
4. The First True Friends of the Orphanage \$5.00 including packaging and postage in Australia.
5. School Days at the Queen's Orphan Schools, New Town \$5.00 including packaging and postage in Australia.

### **Site tour**

On the last Sunday of each month we offer a precinct walking tour starting at the Old Sunday School at 2pm. The next scheduled tour is 30 November. Where possible, the tour includes a visit to St John's Church. \$10.00 donation towards tour notes and a cuppa and biscuit at the conclusion of the tour. Bookings are essential. Book online now at [http://www.orphanschool.org.au/register\\_tour.php](http://www.orphanschool.org.au/register_tour.php) or leave a phone message on 0362 852654.

### **2015 Deadlines for articles for newsletter**

- Wednesday 11 February: (for March newsletter)  
Wednesday 12 August: (for September newsletter)  
Wednesday 11 November (for December newsletter)

**We have a renewal [\$15.00] with no name and a note 'Agent's Deposit' received on 31 October 2014 – could it be you?**

### **Contact us**

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