



PARRAMATTA FEMALE FACTORY FRIENDS INC. NEWSLETTER – ISSUE NO: 55 **SUMMER EDITION** 2024



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The Parramatta Female Factory - Augustus Earle 1826 - nla.pic-an 2818460 National Library of Australia (NLA)

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Coordinator: Janice Ruse Huntington

Next Meeting: **Friday February 16th 2024. Guest Speaker at 1pm**

followed by afternoon tea at 2pm. General Meeting at 2.15pm

Venue: PFFF Rooms, 5 Fleet Street, North Parramatta.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Factory Friends,

A Happy New Year to all! I hope you enjoyed your festive season, and the New Year is shaping up well for you. Welcome to our Summer Edition of the Newsletter.

Christmas celebrations feel like a long time ago as all the new things start to arrive - by all counts the Friends had a lovely end of year celebration with fabulous food and a screening of the German film on the Female Factory, *To Distant Shores*, an interesting social history document in itself and an unusual interpretation of the Female Factory site and experience.

This is our quieter time of the year where we get into the planning for the year and beyond. As Factory Friends there is plenty to look forward to and put in your diaries. Our Event Calendar will of course include 'It's a Riot' Day and the National Trust Festival.

There will be an inspiring talk program with topics ranging from the current state of the Factory to insightful history-based seminars. The first one will be presented by the Department of Planning and Industry (DPI) updating us on where everything is up to relating to the site from a government perspective. This is a talk not to be missed and it is a great chance to ask questions as well.

Our 2024 Workshop Program will cover family history research skills, colonial crafts, looking after your family history collections and more. Of course, you are always welcome to visit when the rooms are open and just enjoy being at the Female Factory. Check out the Event Calendar in the Newsletter for more details. The Research Centre is also there for your enjoyment and learning. Tours continue and are a great way to become familiar with the Factory story.

We are now preparing an updated vision document, a useful tool in our advocacy to government and stakeholders. Our advocacy this year will be focused on World Heritage, the museum concept, future site management and our future home onsite (but in a couple of years in another building).

I would like to acknowledge Pauline Garmonsway who is stepping back as Catering Manager, though still an active member. Pauline has been with the 'Friends' for 12 years and has been part of our advocacy activities as well as catering team all these years. Thank you Pauline for your wonderful contributions to the PFFF.

I also want to acknowledge the passing of John Pilger. John was a world leading journalist uncovering major stories and always with a humanitarian focus. John was a descendant of a Female Factory woman, Mary Palmer whose story he shared at our Bicentennial in 2018 and in our Bicentennial book.

All the best and I look forward to seeing you soon.

Gay Hendriksen, President PFFF



VALE: John Pilger

John Pilger was extremely proud of his female convict ancestry. In addressing those gathered for the Bicentenary at the Factory on 9th July, 2018, John said Mary Palmer and thousands of other convict women were part of another secret history of this nation saying, 'the memory of their courage and resilience and resistance should be honoured...'¹

John will be remembered for his courage and for his uniqueness in fighting for justice and truth both in Australia and abroad. He will be remembered for his advocacy and passion, especially for revealing truths about our convict history. Rest in Peace.



¹Address by John Pilger in *History-Her story-Our story, Commemorating 200 Years at the Parramatta Female Factory* pp21-22; Editor Gay Hendriksen, published, PFFF Inc.

A warm welcome to new members: Donald Harwin, Gay Parsons, Kathryn Cathers and Ian Edward Biddle.

NOTICEBOARD

NEXT MEETING: Friday 16th February 2024 with Guest Speaker, Mr. Simon Babbage, Development Director, Property and Development NSW (DPE) at 1pm - followed by afternoon tea. General Meeting at 2.15pm.

- Dates for your Diary - check out the 2024 Calendar - there are numerous talks and workshops, Festivals, commemorations, to enjoy as well as anniversaries to observe. See page 11.
- Congratulations to all our winners in the **Riot Day Monster Raffle** - John Brock, Phillipa Crosbie, Kevin Dodds, Linda Roe, Linda Parsad, Kerima-Gae Topp, Kaye Weaver, Dotty White, Jacqui White and Rhonda Wood. A special thank you to all the ticket sellers and to Kerima-Gae Topp and Kevin Dodds for sourcing the fabulous prizes!
- Thank you to Pauline Garmonsway for all her hard work in conceiving and managing the Matron Gordon Tea Rooms! This initiative has been a great fundraiser for the Friends over many years - we have also been so well looked after by Pauline with her homemade cakes and slices brought in for PFFF afternoon tea and for events - thank you from the 'Friends'!



HISTORY CORNER - 200 Years ago: A New Regime At the Factory

Ronda Gaffey

The first female convict ship to arrive in the Colony in 1824 was the *Brothers* 1. It reached Van Diemen's Land on 5 April 1824 and a month later, on 7 May 1824 arrived in Port Jackson.

There were 89 convict women on board as well as free passengers and their children. Among the free passengers was Elizabeth Fulloon who, shortly after arrival took up her appointment as Matron of the Parramatta Female Factory. Elizabeth Fulloon and her husband had been appointed to the Factory as outlined in a letter dated 5 November 1823, Under Secretary Horton to Governor Brisbane wrote:

I am directed by Lord Bathurst to acquaint you that he has appointed Mrs Fulloon to be Superintendent of the Female Factory at Parramatta with a Salary of 100 pounds per annum, and, as her husband will be required to superintend a different branch of the Factory, he will receive a Salary of 50 pounds per annum...Lord Bathurst is also of the opinion that they should occupy Apartments in the Factory, and should receive two single Rations and Coals.

Matron Fulloon was the first female appointee to the position formerly held by male superintendents. Sadly her husband had died on the voyage so she faced what would have been a considerable challenge, being alone. Their four children accompanied her to NSW. Her appointment heralded a new era of management at the Parramatta Female Factory. Her tenure was from April 1824 til October 1827.

No doubt many women from the ship *Brothers* would have crossed her path at Parramatta in the next few years, after their arrival!

References:

Free Settler or Felon? Jenni Willetts; https://www.freesettlorfelon.com/convict_ship_brothers_1824.htm

Address by descendant Heather Garnsey - Parramatta Female Factory Bicentenary 9th July, 2018 in *History-Her story-Our story, Commemorating 200 Years at the Parramatta Female Factory* pp25-26; Editor Gay Hendriksen published PFFF Inc.

CATHERINE RYAN

The convict ship ‘Brothers’ arrived in Port Jackson on Friday 7 May 1824 after a voyage of 153 days. The Ship’s Surgeon, James Hall RN kept a journal in which he records an attack on his person one week into the voyage to NSW. One of the six convict women allegedly involved was **Catherine Ryan**.

At age 17, Catherine was facing the Surrey Quarter Sessions charged with: *feloniously stealing a silver watch the property of Wm. Steele, a shoemaker...residing in Blackfriars*. Two other women, Mary Ann West and Catherine Keef(e) were charged with her. They were tried on 3 March 1823 ¹:

Mrs Steele, the wife of the prosecutor, deposed, that on the 1st February last, the prisoners came to the house between 12 and 1 o’clock in the day. Keefe and Ryan entered the shop, through which they passed into the parlour, leaving West outside. After having seated themselves and tried on several pairs of shoes, one of the prisoners rose from the chair and went towards the mantelpiece. She was then observed to walk to the shop door and drop something into the lap of her companion West, who immediately walked off, followed by the others who had evidently walked into the parlour for the purpose of stealing whatever they could lay their hands on. The moment they were gone, the watch (now produced) was missed...The prisoners were all found guilty; and it appearing that they all were practised thieves, the courts sentenced them each to 7 years’ transportation.

It appears that this offence may not have been Catherine’s first offence or her partners in crime. It was not to be her last or, Catherine Keef’s. The latter was convicted of *Highway Robbery* in August 1832 and sent to Moreton Bay ².

Catherine, Mary Ann West and Catherine Keef and 86 other convict women embarked the *Brothers* and set sail from the Downs, London on 6 December, 1823. Catherine was one of the 39 women landed in Sydney after the first group had been landed in Tasmania on 5 April, 1824.

In the ship’s record, Catherine is described as: *Native of Marylebone; Trade or calling - Kitchen maid; Height - 5ft 0 in.; Eyes - grey; Hair Lt Brown Complexion - Fair; Remarks: [Behaviour on board ship]: Mutinous* ³.

James Hall kept meticulous records and his list of the women landed in Sydney, is revealing ⁴. There is an interesting comment in the right hand column (though difficult to read), which refers to the ‘conspiracy’ of the last six women listed. It is interesting to note their ages - 17 to 22. They were young, perhaps resentful and determined to let their presence be known, targeting the man who was responsible for their care, moral behaviour and punishment on board. Catherine Ryan was confined in the coal hole for her part in the assault on Hall which he said was instigated by the ship’s chief mate ⁵.

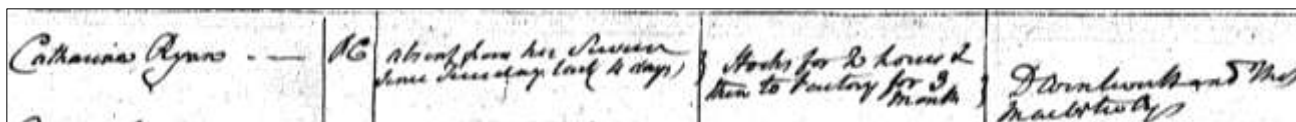
25. Mrs. Ann. L. L. L.	10	Wm. L. L. L.	Wm. L. L. L.	4	Wm. L. L. L.	Wm. L. L. L.
26. Mrs. Ellen. L. L.	20	Wm. L. L. L.	Lancaster 29. Mar	4	" "	" "
27. Mrs. Catherine. L.	17	Wm. L. L. L.	Levy 5 March 1823	4	" "	" "
28. Mrs. Elizabeth. L.	10	Wm. L. L. L.	Lancaster 15th -	4	" "	" "
29. Mrs. Catherine. L.	22	Wm. L. L. L.	Lancaster 15th -	4	" "	" "
30. Mrs. Ann. L.	9	Wm. L. L. L.	Wm. L. L. L.	4	" "	" "

References:

¹Law Intelligence, article, *Morning Chronicle* newspaper, 5 March 1823 quoted in *Convict Records*, article by Maureen Whitney 31.12.2019, <https://convictrecords.com.au>. ²Convict records for Catherine Keef - online; ³New South Wales, Australia, Convict Indents & Ships Musters 1813-1828; *Brothers* 1824; ⁴List of Female Convicts arrived at Sydney on the Ship *Brothers* May 1824, Colonial Secretary Papers 1788-1825; ⁵Free settler or Felon? Jenni Willetts; *Our Girls* - unpublished work, by Anne Mathews and Beth Matthews, sourced from original papers, SRNSW.

Though Catherine has been described as ‘mutinous’ having been involved in the attack on James Hall, she has been noted as: *loose but quiet*. Had she calmed down for the rest of the voyage? On arrival in Sydney there was an inquiry into the assault on James Hall, but no charges were laid ⁶.

Catherine’s life was far from settled after arrival. She first appears in Colonial records in August 1824, having been *missing from service* for four days. She was charged with absconding and was punished, being sent to the stocks for two hours, most likely at Parramatta and then sent on to 3rd Class at the Parramatta Female Factory for three months⁷.



7. Entry for Catherine Ryan - 21 August 1824. SR Reel 660. 4/6671 Magistrates Bench Books, SRNSW.



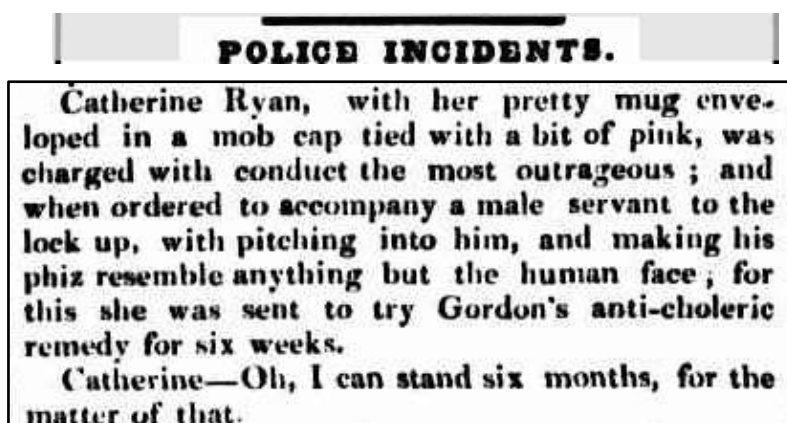
1828 Census, entry for Catherine Ryan per Brothers 1824 - Factory Parramatta, ancestry. com online

In the 1828 November Census, Catherine is recorded as being resident in the Parramatta Factory. A year later there was more trouble. In January 1829, Catherine was found neglecting her work and was sentenced to four days in a cell in the Factory, which would have been most uncomfortable mid-summer.

A further colonial crime is recorded for Catherine Ryan *per Brothers* in 1833. She was charged with ‘conduct most outrageous’ and sentenced to ‘6 weeks at Gordon’s anti-choleric remedy’ - the Parramatta Female Factory⁸.

It seems that after her arrest, Catherine had suddenly lashed out quite viciously, at a man being escorted with her to the lock up*. According to the Police report, the man was seriously injured.

The newspaper report of the incident is highly descriptive - Catherine, it seems was out on the town with a pink ribbon tied on her cap ⁸. She cheekily responds when the Magistrate hands down her punishment. She can handle being sent to the Factory for six months, forget 6 weeks!



*A Choleric personality type is someone who is bad-tempered, irritable or impulsive.

References:

⁶Free Settler or Felon? Voyage of Convict ship, Brothers 1824, Jenni Willetts, https://www.freesettlorfelon.com/convict_ship_brothers_1824.htm

⁷Reel No 890, Sydney Darlinghurst Gaol, 30.06.1829, SRNSW;

⁸Sydney Herald (1831- 1842) Police Incidents, Thursday, 16 May 1833.

Five years later, on 23 October 1838, there is a record for a Catherine Ryan per *Brothers*, now free by servitude, appearing in court charged with *Larceny*⁹. Allegedly, Catherine had lured a man into an inn in Sydney and robbed him. The hearing dated 23 October 1838 was delayed because witnesses were not found. A second hearing was set for April 1839 - again no witnesses turned up so the charge was dropped.

PRISONER'S NAME	CONDITION	SHIP	WHERE COMMITTED	DATE	OFFENCE	WITNESSES FOR THE CROWN	WITNESSES FOR THE PRISONER	DAY OF TRIAL	JURY
Catherine Ryan <i>alias Ward</i>	F. & B.	Brothers	Sydney	13 Oct 1838	Larceny	Eliza Kemp Margaret O'Connell Thomas King	Postponed till next session Witness not found		

9.

Catherine Ryan, born in Marylebone in 1806, tried 3 March 1823 and transported per *Brothers 1* 1824, remains a bit of a mystery. While there are numerous family trees online in which she is listed (200 in fact), without a string of primary records of births, deaths and marriages, we cannot verify her relationships, her family or her later whereabouts in the Colony.

Family researchers have Catherine Ryan per *Brothers* 1824 living at Liverpool in 1829 with a William Wilkinson, a widower with three children¹⁰. There is no record of marriage; however there are two children from this relationship. There is also a record of a relationship between Catherine Ryan and Joseph Turton per *John* 1832 in the mid-1830s and a later marriage to him in 1845. They had two children. They were living in the Tumut area. There is a death of a Catherine Turton née Ryan recorded on 12 June, 1868, Yass District. So far we have been unable to verify this information for 'our' Catherine.

It has been difficult to track this Catherine Ryan - there were numerous other Catherine Ryans in the Colony in the 1820/30s. To complicate things further, there were two *Brothers* voyages - the first was in 1824 and the second was in 1827. On *Brothers 2* (1827), there was another Catherine Ryan, convict and native of Tipperary, Ireland.

In 1829 Catherine Ryan per *Brothers 1*, received her Ticket of Leave - she had earned her freedom having 'good conduct in the Factory' however she was restricted 'to the district of Parramatta'. Two years later in 1831, she received her Certificate of Freedom. Catherine was aged 25.

TICKET OF LEAVE

No. *27/311 H*
31st March 1829

Prisoner's No. _____
 Name, *Catherine Ryan*
 Ship, *Brothers 1*
 Master, *Woolley*
 Year, *1824*
 Native Place, *London*
 Trade or Calling, *Servant*
 Offence, _____
 Place of Trial, *Sydney 2d*
 Date of Trial, *3rd March 1823*
 Sentence, *seven years*
 Year of Birth, *1806*
 Height, *5 feet 0 inches*
 Complexion, *Fair*
 Hair, *Light Brown*
 Eyes, *Dark*
 General Remarks, *12 months for good conduct in the Factory*

Allowed to remain in the District of Parramatta
 On recommendation of _____
 dated _____

CERTIFICATE OF FREEDOM.

No. *4037*
 Date, *26 April 1831*

Prisoner's No. _____
 Name, *Catherine Ryan*
 Ship, *Brothers 1*
 Master, *Woolley*
 Year, *1824*
 Native Place, *London*
 Trade or Calling, *Servant*
 Offence, *Robbery*
 Place of Trial, *Sydney 2d*
 Date of Trial, *3rd March 1823*
 Sentence, *seven years*
 Year of Birth, *1806*
 Height, *5 feet*
 Complexion, *Fair*
 Hair, *Light Brown*
 Eyes, *Dark*
 General Remarks, _____

References:

⁸Sydney Herald Police Incidents, Thursday 16 May, 1833. Trove online; ⁹Court Records, Catherine Ryan per *Brothers*, 23 October, 1838, SRNSW; ¹⁰Convict Records - entry for Catherine Ryan, contributed by Val Wilkinson, Tumut - <https://www.gundaroo.info>; Ryan/Wilkinson/Turton Family Trees - Public Trees for Catherine Ryan per *Brothers* 1824 - ancestry.com

The Research Centre is ready for the next phase of development. The book collections are fully listed. It is now time to order the collection for the best ways to find the subjects. We are steadily developing our digital resources and vertical files as well. If you have a resource or have research you would like to share please contact me at parramattafemalefactoryfriends@gmail.com with research in the subject field. This is the same one as where you can share information about your ancestors or the social history/site history of the Parramatta Female Factory. Photographic digitisation of our Babette Smith archives and small object collection continues.

The Colonial Crafts patchwork workshop rounded off the Colonial Crafts for the year and was well placed for that unusual Christmas gift! The coming year will include an ancestry workshop, colonial craft - straw plaiting - weaving a bonnet (2 sessions required) and looking after your family history collections. As our workshops have limited numbers, it is always a good idea to book early to avoid missing out as spaces are limited.

Our Factory women's list continues to grow, so please keep those names and stories coming in. You can give directly to one of our researchers or email it to: parramattafemalefactoryfriends@gmail.com and put 'Research Centre' in the subject field. That way we can ensure they are shared with all Australians.

All research inquiries are responded to by appointment. You can either request a booking through our gmail or ask a volunteer to book you in when you come to the next Friends' meeting. If you don't live in Sydney you can contact us and we can provide an hour of research on an agreed direction through an online or phone conversation.

See you at the PFFF and Babette Smith Research Centre!

A CHALLENGING DISPOSITION - ELIZA ASHTON

William and Mary Ashton were living in William Street not far from St. Leonard's Church in Shoreditch, London when their daughter Eliza came into the world.¹ Eliza Ashton was born early in 1812 and baptised on 30 April of that year.

By the age of 16, Eliza had moved from London to Warwick where her father's family came from. In 1828 Eliza was convicted of Larceny in Warwick and received three months imprisonment.² In July 1829 she was convicted of larceny in the Summer Assizes Court Sessions (July) in Warwick and again received three months imprisonment.³

In 1831 at the age of 19 Eliza was before the court a third time in Warwick and was charged, with Hannah Ebbon, for stealing two shillings from Maria Coster in Birmingham. The two young women were convicted on 3 August 1831 of *Larceny from a person*. Eliza was sentenced to transportation for life.⁴

Eliza boarded *Pyramus 1* at the Woolwich Dock, most likely on 2 September 1831.

References:

¹*Church of England Parish Registers, 1538-1812*, London, England: London Metropolitan Archives, May 1812. ²England & Wales, *Criminal Registers, 1791-1892* Class HO 27; Piece 28, p309. ³*ibid.* ⁴England & Wales, *Criminal Registers, 1791-1812* Class HO 27; Piece 42, p315.

⁴Indent for the ship *Pyramus* showing the entry for Eliza Ashton, 1832, SRNSW.

Gay Hendriksen
Research Muster Researcher



St. Leonard's Church in Shoreditch, London



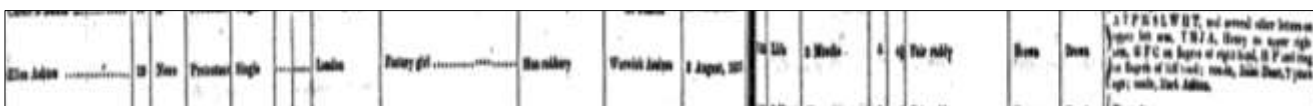
The East Gate, Warwick, UK.

Pyramus 1 left Woolwich 10 October 1831 with 147 prisoners and seven children. The weather conditions were difficult and the ship's master sought shelter in Cork Harbour because of a severe gale. They finally left Cork 10 November 1831.

Rutherford, the ship's surgeon described the illnesses on board: *sea sickness, tonsillitis, asthma, typhoid, fever, hysteria, eye inflammations, cholera, inflammatory fever, hepatitis and gout*. He also noted: *It was not difficult to enforce the observance of personal cleanliness amongst them [the women]*.⁵

On 4 March 1832 *Pyramus 1* arrived in Port Jackson. The Transportation Register shows: *Eliza Ashton, Where convicted - Warwick Assizes, 3rd August 1831; Sentence - Life*.⁶ Eliza's Indent describes her as: *19, education none, Protestant, Single, factory girl, crime -Man robbery, 3 August 1831; 5'4¾" tall; complexion fair, ruddy; brown hair, brown eyes and tattoos - ATPMSLWHT. And several other letters on upper left arm. TMJA, Henry on upper right arm, GFC on fingers of right hand. HP and ring on fingers of left hand; cousin, Isaac Dane 7 years age and Uncle Mark Ashton*.⁷

Tattoos often refer to loved ones left behind which these may also reflect.



On 13 March 1832 Eliza was assigned as a housemaid with J. Lovett, Kent Street.⁸

Eliza first appears in the Parramatta Female Factory records on 6 June in 1832 aged 20. F. A. HELY, Principal Superintendent of Convicts records: *Female Factory, Parramatta, 6th June, 1832, Entry number 468; Ashton, Eliza, Pyramus, house maid, to J. Lovett, Kent-Street, Sydney*.⁹ Her next appearance in the records is 28 November 1832 as a nurse at the Female Orphan School, Parramatta.¹⁰

By 9 March 1833, Eliza had given birth to a son, John Ashton and was recorded on 6 May 1833 by the Police Office: *1st class, Disposed of how and when - to the factory*.¹¹

On 31 of March 1835 at age 23 Eliza was again in the Factory. It may have been for a felony or because she was pregnant, although it would have been the early stages of pregnancy. On 5 December 1835 Eliza Ashton gave birth to a daughter, Maria Ashton in the Female Factory - she was baptised at St. John's Parramatta on 3 January 1836.¹²

When Eliza was 23, there was a successful marriage application for her and John [James] McKone [McKeon] who was 27 and free.¹³ On 19 November 1836, this was approved.¹⁴

They married on 26 November 1836 at St. James' Church in Sydney.¹⁵



References:

- ⁵Ancestry.com. UK, *Royal Navy Medical Journals*; 1817 - Original data: Admiralty and predecessors: Office of the Director General of the Medical Department of the Navy and predecessors: Medical Journals (ADM 101, 804 bundles and volumes). Records of Medical and Prisoners of War Departments. Records of the Admiralty, Naval forces, Royal Marines, Coastguard and related bodies. The National Archives, Kew, Richmond, Surrey, England. ⁶Home Office: *Convict Transportation Registers* (The National Archives Microfilm Publication HO 11); The National Archives of the UK (TNA), Kew, Surrey, England p205. ⁷*New South Wales, Australia, Convict Indents, 1788-1842*; Series: NRS 12189, Item: [x634]; Microfiche: 702, SRNSW. ⁸Ancestry accessed 26/09/2021. Original data: Home Office: *Settlers and Convicts, New South Wales and Tasmania* (The National Archives Microfilm Publication HO10; Pieces 1-4, 6-18, 28-30; The National Archives of the UK (TNA), Kew, Richmond, Surrey, England. ⁹*The New South Wales Government Gazette* (Sydney, NSW 1832-1900) Wednesday 18 July 1832, issue No. 20 p192. ¹⁰*The New South Wales Government Gazette* (Sydney, NSW 1832-1900) Wed 28 Nov 1832, issue No. 39 pdf. ¹¹State Archives NSW, Kingswood, New South Wales: *Gaol Description and Entrance Books, 1818-1930*; Series: 2514; Item: 4/6434, Roll 852. ¹²Ancestry.com.au. New South Wales, Australia, St. John's Parramatta, Baptisms, 1790-1916, 1835-1851 - I. ¹³*Register of Convicts' Applications to Marry 1826-1851* -granted 1836, SRNSW. ¹⁴New South Wales, Australia, *Register of Convicts' Application to Marry 1826-1851*. ancestry.com.au/ ¹⁵Church Register: NSW Sydney, St. James' CE Marriage 1832-1856; ML ref: Reels SAG 0136 & 0137 secondary source from original document. Image viewer/collections/1504_082752-00271.

Eliza died in 1849 at the age of 37.²⁰ Much of Eliza's adult life was as a convict, however, she was not someone who succumbed to her circumstances and despite several poor choices she also made good choices to have a fulfilling life with James McKeon. She did manage a life with family, beyond the Factory.

[illegible]

Image: Conditional Pardon for Eliza Ashton, 1847. SRNSW

WORKSHOP REPORT- 'PATCHWORK LIVES', SATURDAY 25th NOVEMBER Lyn Watkins

A small but enthusiastic group spent the morning learning to do basic patchwork of Broderie Perse and Paper Piercing a technique that the convict women used in the making of the Rajah Quilt (c1841) and later presented to Lady Jane Franklin, the Governor's wife (VDL).

The ladies enjoyed learning something new and are looking forward to furthering their knowledge and skills in a future workshop.



MEMBERS' CORNER - STOP PRESS!



Announcing a new publication from member Sara Powter with the release date of January 26th 2024 - *Convict Shadows of the Past*.

Jennifer Kellow is a Cornish girl who grew up on a dairy and learned how to make delicious cheese. However, circumstances conspire against her, and she ends up in Parramatta as a convict working in the Government Dairy.

This novel was inspired by Sara's visit to the Parramatta Female Factory for Riot Day 2022. For further details go to Sara's online store: <https://www.sarapowter.com.au>

SERENDIPITY - A Concept by Janice Ruse Huntington

Ronda Gaffey writes: Recently a neighbour rang me to ask what I knew about the '*Rajah Quilt*' which she had just read about in the Sydney Morning Herald - she asked me was it anything to do with the Parramatta Factory. Where to begin? I launched into a short version of the story of Mrs. Fry and female transportation in particular and then told her about the quilt - to my surprise she said, "*Ooh it was found in a house in Scotland - in fact my younger sister's daughter lived in that house just outside Edinburgh, she was the first tenant to live there after the quilt was found and remembers all the fuss!*"

My jaw hit the floor! Wow, I thought - this was quite serendipity and as with all serendipities, I am reminded of the popular song (1927): '*I've danced with a man who's danced with a girl who's danced with the Prince of Wales*'!

And there is another wonderful story (with a most surprising outcome), which arose from a casual conversation with a friend! (Ed.)

Gay Hendriksen writes: I first became aware of the Rajah Quilt in 2006 when researching for the Women Transported Exhibition. About 12 months ago I mentioned the Rajah Quilt to my friend Jenny who is interested in patchwork. I told her the history of it and then casually said that she should try making it!

Jenny and I met for lunch in January this year and she gave me the quilt she had made - it is such a lovely thing and I was over the moon. It is a quarter size* of the Rajah Quilt - I just love it!

The Jenny McCarron interpretation was a surprising 'show and tell' at the recent PFFF Committee Meeting - we were enthralled! Ronda G.



From Left: Janice Ruse Huntington, Kerima-Gae Topp, Gay Hendriksen and Lorraine Henshaw - with the replica quilt. Photograph: John Brock.

*The original quilt measures approximately 128" x 128". (Ed).



POSTSCRIPT - The Brothers 1, 1824

Ronda Gaffey

The Committee of the British Ladies' Society for Promoting the Reformation of Female Prisoners (c1817), provided fabric and needlework equipment to the women on the *Brothers* as they did for the women embarked the Rajah years later in 1841¹. There was the belief that 'work' especially needlework with its repetitive action/ rhythm, had a calming effect. There was also a steadfast belief that women could learn a new skill and have a product, such as a quilt, that could be sold once in the Colony².

Some 20 years after the arrival of the *Brothers* a gift of a *calabash* (gourd) was sent to Mrs. Fry's family by a convict woman on board, in appreciation of her kindness. The woman, referred to as *Hester* recalled being *schoolmistress at Newgate* - she also reported saying that: *the patchwork quilt which now covers her bed, was made with the pieces given her by the ladies when she embarked...*³

Perhaps there is another convict quilt in a family box somewhere waiting to be revealed! Let us hope so.

Another ship "The Brothers," left England the end of last year, containing ninety females, who were sent from twenty-one different prisons.

The usual attention was paid by the Committee to this vessel, work and clothing (where required) being provided, and schools established both for children and adults. It is

References:

¹Quote from *Report of the Ladies' Committee* p13, Jenni Willetts; https://www.freesettlerorfelon.com/convict_ship_brothers_1824.htm

²Elizabeth Fry, en.m.wikipedia.org

³*Memoir of the Life of Elizabeth Fry - with Extracts from her Journal and Letters* edited by Two of her Daughters. Volume 1 London 1847, p445.

It is possible the convict woman was Esther (Hester) Clarke, dressmaker, aged 32, indicted for stealing twenty four yards of printed cotton.

The Rajah Quilt has been in the safekeeping of the National Gallery in Canberra since 1989 and has not been exhibited for some years due to its fragility but, that is about to change. An exciting exhibition is opening this year in which this great survivor and testament to the skill of the convict women and a reminder of the compelling narrative of transportation, will be on display. It is a rare opportunity and not to be missed!

A CENTURY OF QUILTS COLLECTION is on from 16 March - 25 August 2024 at the National Gallery in Canberra.



2024	PFFF MEETINGS - DATES	FOR YOUR DIARY
January	Newsletter 19 th Committee Meeting	
February	Committee Meeting Friday 16 th Guest Speaker General Meeting	1 st Feb. St Brigid's Day and the 203 rd Anniversary of the occupation of the <i>new</i> 'Macquarie' Factory 1821. Riots occurred: 3.2.1831; 24.2.1843
March	Newsletter 15 th Committee Meeting <u>Friday 8th March - PFFF International Women's Day event</u> <u>Members' Only Morning Tea 11am</u> <u>Saturday 23rd Workshop: Colonial Craft 1 - Straw Plaiting</u> <u>Lyn Watkins</u>	March: Linnwood House Open Day. Riot occurred: 7.3.1833 8 th March - International Women's Day. 16 th March 'Quilt' Exhibition opens at the National Gallery Canberra..
April	Committee Meeting Friday 19 th Guest Speaker - TBC <u>Australian National Trust Heritage Festival Event</u> General Meeting	Australian National Trust Heritage Festival 18 th April - 19 th May - 'Connections'. 6 th April - Bicentenary: Matron Fulloon appointed. 13 th April - Bicentenary: Parramatta's Hambledon Cottage.
May	Newsletter 17 th Committee Meeting <u>Factory Open Day - 18th May - National Trust Heritage</u> <u>Festival</u> <u>Saturday 25th: Workshop 2: Colonial Craft - Straw Plaiting</u> <u>- Lyn Watkins</u>	DPE Open Day/NT Heritage Festival Event Sunday 18 th May at Factory site.
June	Friday 21 st Committee Meeting Guest Speaker General Meeting Friday 29 th June: Members' Only Morning Tea 11am	AGM PREPARATION
July	Newsletter 19 th Committee Meeting <u>Friday 12th: Workshop: The Home Curator - Caring for your</u> <u>Family History Collection - Gay Hendriksen</u>	July 9 th 205 th Anniversary - Gov. Macquarie laid the foundation stone for the <i>new</i> Factory.
August	Friday 16 th Committee Meeting AGM	
September	Newsletter 20 th Committee Meeting <u>28th Workshop: Ancestry Master Class - Kevin Dodds</u> Members' Only Morning Tea 11am TBC	Linnwood Open Day TBC NSW & ACT Assoc. of Family History Soc. Annual Conference - September TBA. History Week 7 th - 15 th September
October	Friday 18 th Committee Meeting Guest Speaker General Meeting 25 th RIOT DAY - 197 th Anniversary Event featuring The Annual Thomas Keneally Lecture TBC	Riots occurred: 27.10.1827; 11.10.36
November	Newsletter 15 th Committee Meeting <u>Friday 8th: Workshop TBC</u>	Riot occurred: 29.11.1831 Parramatta Foundation Day Festival TBC
December	Friday 13 th Committee Meeting General Meeting	Christmas afternoon tea (note date - 2 nd Friday)

REGULAR SITE TOURS - BY APPOINTMENT. CONTACT: TOUR COORDINATOR parramattafemalefactoryfriends@gmail.com
 COMMITTEE MEETINGS 11am. BI-MONTHLY GUEST SPEAKER 1:00PM. FOLLOWED BY AFTERNOON TEA. GENERAL MEETINGS 2:15PM.
 PFFF RESEARCH CENTRE IS OPEN FRIDAY 10am - 2pm, by appointment.