

**Engaging the Convict Legacy:
Art's Role as a Means of Understanding**

by

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Abstract

Based on the heritage sites that form part of Australia's convict legacy, focusing mainly within Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania), this project explores ways in which the economic, social and cultural context of the transportation experience can be communicated to the 21st century visitors to the various sites. The importance of art in mediating site in the service of history will be demonstrated through the conception and curation of a major installation work inviting international participation. Behind the practice-led investigation lies research into possible interpretative and art installation strategies for specific sites: some of the strategies have been initiated in the course of this project, while others remain as suggestions for consideration in future contexts

All aspects of the project retain a focus on demonstrating the importance of art as a significant tool to bring attention to history. This is a project by an artist working within a worldwide community that retains links to a convict past, not the work of an historian. With the recent World Heritage nomination of eleven convict sites within Australia this research is pertinent to current concerns within the heritage and tourism industries regarding the communication of these sites to a non-expert, cross-cultural, international audience. Sites central to the research include Maria Island, Cascades Female Factory and Woolmers Estate. Attention to conventional history is used to inform the practice component of the project. Producing and presenting past experiences of each site through art in the form of exhibitions, installations and performance art is one possible interpretation strategy.

Reference has been made to artists who have worked in similar themes and media including Hossein Valamanesh and Angela Valamanesh, Anne Ferran, Fiona Hall and Julie Gough, and to Susan Best's ideas of affect. Writers who have addressed the question of interpretive modes of history include Ann Curthoys and John Docker. Kate Grenville and Rohan Wilson provide recent examples through the contemporary historical novel of literary evocations of site. The tenets of tourism are derived from Dean McCannell.

The project demonstrates that art works can be used by historians and site custodians to evoke story, memory and a sense of place and time that enriches the visitor experience and can elicit poignant and sometime surprising responses from those who choose to participate in the collaborative aspects of the project, from simply attending a site or exhibition having direct input to installations and related site-specific activities.

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Introduction

Back in the 1980s when I was regularly driving along the East Coast to Swansea there were no signs on Tasmania's roads alerting the tourists to our Island's convict past. This situation has changed and certainly by 2009, visitors and locals alike are offered an opportunity to learn about Tasmania's convict heritage via 'The Convict Trail' project. This innovative concept invites people to investigate areas where convicts worked and lived. 'The Convict Trail' wording is recognised nationally. In New South Wales it highlights the Old Great North Road, an example of the use of penal transportation, and in Western Australia is used to promote and direct people to the Fremantle Prison where male convicts were stationed from 1852.

The concept was developed in Tasmania in response to the Massacre at Port Arthur Historic Site on 28 April, 1996 (Australian Government, 2011). To assist the recovery process the Port Arthur and Tasman Region Visitor Association was formed. This association included representatives of Port Arthur Historic Site, the Tasman Council, local tourist-related businesses, and the Parks and Wildlife Service. A combined Federal and State Government grant for interpretation works enabled the Convict Trail to become a reality.

The idea of using the brand name of 'The Convict Trail' may have been employed as a tourism drawcard to bring interstate and overseas visitors to Tasmania but it also affords Tasmanians the chance to connect with and investigate their own heritage – one with which many are still unfamiliar.

At this time the Tasmanian version of 'The Convict Trail' only promotes sections of the island's convict story. 'The Convict Trail' logo consists of a broad arrow head, pointing upwards, stamped onto a bright yellow background. The design symbolizes the conspicuous dark arrow that was displayed on the yellow and black clothing worn by convict men. This effective promotional emblem invites the public to visit areas such as Georgian Richmond, once a key military post and convict station with a heritage gaol open to the public, valuably positioned close to Hobart and en route to the Port Arthur penal settlement. From Richmond 'The Convict Trail' signage leads people on through the Sorell Municipality, one of the earliest areas settled in the 1800s, beckoning them on towards the Tasman Municipality. 'The Convict Trail' symbol directs people to a number of sites including Eagle Hawk Neck, Taranna, Port Arthur Historic Site, Koonya, Premaydena, Saltwater River, Coal Mines Historic Site and Nubeena.

This selection of convict sites constitutes the extent to which the 'The Convict Trail' promotes Tasmania's rich and diverse convict story. Tasmania has a plethora of sites representing the key elements of the forced migration of convicts. These sites include, to name but a few, Darlington Station on Maria Island, the Cascades Female Factory Site in Hobart and *Woolmers* and *Brickendon* in Longford, Tasmania, all sites of research I have undertaken during this project. The latter two properties are examples of colonial homes where convict women were sent to work as 'assigned servants'.

'The Convict Trail' brand name is eye catching. This visual signpost has the potential to link far more convict related sites throughout Tasmania than it

does at present. I suggest that there is room for additional signage that offers a brand name linking the public to female convict sites and their stories. The visibility of sites that may be less spectacular than Port Arthur, and that are important to the history of the female convict experience, is a major concern of this research project.

On August the 13, 2008 the Federal Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts, The Hon Peter Garrett AM MP announced that Australia was nominating its most important convict sites for World Heritage listing, as some of the most meaningful places on earth. Garrett made this announcement from the Fremantle Prison, in Western Australia.

These convict sites are a living record of one of the greatest penal experiments in world history – the transportation of more than 166,000 men, women and children to a vast and largely unknown land,

We are asking UNESCO to recognise the outstanding universal value of these convict sites, just as it has the living culture of the first Australians, in listings such as Kakadu and Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Parks. (Australia ICOMOS, 2008)

Since that statement eleven sites have become inscribed as World Heritage and are collectively referred to as *The Australian Convict Sites*. Included in the nomination process were the following five Tasmanian sites: Port Arthur Historic Site; Tasman Peninsula Coal Mines Historic Site, via Premadeyna; Cascades Female Factory, Hobart; Darlington Probation Station, Maria Island; *Brickendon* and *Woolmers* Estates, Longford.

I have spent time living interstate and visiting overseas but Tasmania is my permanent home. I am ashamed to say that I only learnt about the Cascades

Female Factory in 2003 when I visited the site as part of a module, 'The Historical Landscape' which I was studying in the last semester of my degree in Fine Arts at the University of Tasmania in Hobart. On a number of occasions throughout my life I had visited the local Municipal Waste Management Site, 'the Tip'. The route I always travelled took me along Macquarie Street, continuing on as it merged into Cascade Road, then 0.9kms on taking a right hand turn into McRobies Road where I would follow the signage leading to the Tip. On leaving the Tip all vehicles are required to turn off McRobies Road and either travel along Symes Street or Degrares Street to link back to Cascades Road. This is the only way out. Along Symes Street or Degrares Street all motorists drive past the imposing sandstone walls of the Cascades Female Factory. The site used to be poorly advertised. The one faded sign facing on to Degrares was practically undiscernible from the road, obscured by parked cars, and therefore did little to attract the attention of passing motorists. Hobart has many sandstone walls and I did not give a second thought to *those particular walls* even though they were imposing. Their story remained a mystery to me until 2003 when the secret the stone walls guarded unfolded as I walked within the space where convict women were once segregated from the rest of society.

My first encounter with Woolmers Estate was in 2007 when I was donated hundreds of cut roses and a number of bags of rose petals from their National Rose Garden which I used in an International Women's Day art installation at the Cascades Female Factory. Interest in the Archer Estates once focused more on the owners rather than their families and less still on

the convict men and women who lived and worked on the properties. The publicity spin was fashioned to focus on their colonial splendor. Although history lessons at High School had included the topic of male convicts the subject was not extensively covered. The failure to discuss this integral part of our colonial history in greater depth certainly created a black hole that subsequently influenced my dealing with the past. I knew that convict men had worked for colonists but it was really only by chance that I discovered they had been engaged to work on properties such as *Highfields* in Stanley and on the isolated *Woolnorth* property in the far north-west of the State. Our scant convict history lessons were limited to being taught about chain gangs and whippings, convict men's labour on the construction of roads, bridges and buildings, the dreadful suffering of male convicts at Port Arthur and Macquarie Island and we were aware of the escapades of the more notorious bushrangers such as Martin Cash and Matthew Brady. However on the matter of convict men and women being *assigned* to work at homesteads such as *Woolmers* and *Brickendon* Estates there was silence.

The facts detailing Maria Island's more recent history had remained an enigma until 2003 when researching Tasmania's convict history I gained more understanding about this isolated section of the east coast that had once been an industrious convict settlement. The island lies a mere 70 kms north east of Hobart, nevertheless is secluded being insulated by water. From 1825 until 1832 Maria Island was utilised as a convict station and then later as a probation station from 1842 to 1850 for male convicts.

As a Tasmanian I was raised with an understanding of Maria Island's link with Tasmanian Aboriginal culture. One image from my school days has lingered, a print depicting a coastal scene with an Aboriginal group, and featuring canoes. This image was created by the Frenchmen, Charles Alexandre Lesueur, in 1802, on Captain Nicolas Baudin's scientific expeditions in search of the 'unknown' southern coast of Australia. Zoologist François Péron's anthropological observations were made on Maria Island between 19-27 February, 1802 and the canoe image I remember belonged to this expedition (State Library of South Australia, 2011). In 2011 considerable media attention was focused on a replica bark canoe that was unveiled on 3 September, 2011 at a special ceremony at the Spring Bay Maritime and Discovery Centre (SBM&DC) on Tasmania's east coast. This canoe had been commissioned by the SMB&DC and was constructed by Tasmanian Aboriginals to highlight the history of the Paredarerme tribe, known more commonly as the Oyster Bay people. Men and women from within this tribe had once built reed and bark boats, using much the same exacting construction method dating back over 4000 years. The connection of boats, large and small, to Maria Island has been constantly with me.

In this thesis I focus on the legacies of these Tasmanian convict sites, specifically Darlington on Maria Island, the Cascades Female Factory in South Hobart and the Archer property of *Woolmers* and explore ways in which the economic, social and cultural context of the transportation experience can be communicated to the 21st century visitors to the various sites. In my art I integrate the use of boats and bonnets as metaphors for both the male and

female experience. Boats played a crucial role in the forced migration of some 160,000 convicts and cloth played a prominent role in the life of convict woman. I explore the symbolism and ritual of collective memory and examine the means by which art and history may be mobilised in the service of enriching cultural tourism. The importance of art in mediating site in the service of history is demonstrated through the conception and curation of a major installation work inviting international participation. All aspects of the project retain a focus on demonstrating the importance of art as a significant tool to bring attention to history.

My current research investigation centres on the importance of art: as a device to attract interest in convict history and relevant heritage sites both from within Australia and internationally, and as a valuable marketing tool to advertise and assist the development of cultural tourism.

The project is based around *Roses from the Heart*, a memorial for women convicts. The memorial has a number of contributing components, some based around the major sites of research and others that tie specific sites to individual women convicts, through *Making their Mark*. The interactive and personal nature of ritual for communicating history has been developed through the performing of *Blessing of the Bonnets*. The project has been carried out across Australia and internationally and will continue after this particular iteration, in which the theatrical setting for the key elements, boats and bonnets, adds another element to the story.

The following chapters detail the development of the project across the key sites; Maria Island, the Cascade Female Factory, and *Woolmers*, as well as

subsidiary sites. The work is put into the contexts of the female convict experience, the use of symbols and history, and of contemporary artists working towards communicating experience in political and empathetic ways. Throughout the structure of the thesis I have taken the approach of integrating information relating to artists and writers who constitute the Literature Review so as to act as a thread binding the exegesis. Chapter Five expands this critical component examining a number of contemporary artists whose work contributes to the premise that art is important as an interpretive tool giving meaning to the subject matter it relates to.

Chapter One:

The impetus to history:

Boats to Maria Island

My current research and art grew out of an association with Australia's convict legacy which began with the Cascades Female Factory in 2003 and grew to embrace the recently inscribed Australian World Heritage Sites, with specific emphasis directed towards Maria Island, Port Arthur and Woolmers in Tasmania. My focus centres on providing cultural tourists with a meaningful experience, captivating their interest in all facets of the transportation experience employing art as a tool to mediate the history of the sites.

The Cascades Female Factory is situated at the foot of Mount Wellington in the suburb of South Hobart, some three kilometers from the Hobart General Post Office. This site operated as a purpose-built facility for the incarceration, punishment and reform of convict women from 1828-1856 (DEWHA, 2008, p.54). On the day of my first visit there in 2003 the weather was mild, making it difficult to imagine the inclement conditions that the convict women would have endured for many months of the year.

On March 24, 1827, Lieutenant Governor George Arthur wrote to Earl Bathurst, Secretary of State for the Colonies, London:

...I have ... approved of a purchase of a building for a factory for the female prisoners, which will require considerable additions ... A more desirable arrangement might have been made ... if it had not been urgent at once to place the female prisoners in a better state. (in Rayner, 2005, p. 129)

The decision to buy Lowes Distillery, built on flat land adjacent to the Hobart rivulet, as Rayner points out, was purely one of economy (2005, p.129). Flaws in the design included approval to raise the surrounding factory wall to the height of a two-story structure, combined with erecting equally tall buildings within, which inevitably blocked out much of the sunlight in the courtyards (Rayner 2005, pp.132, 138).

As I sat on the cold stone in Yard One I recall being overwhelmed by the isolation of the site. Situated away from the centre of Hobart Town the women were deliberately placed 'out of sight, out of mind': as Scripps observes, away from the 'notice of respectable folk' (2000, p.51). Rayner refers to the dilapidation of the road from Hobart Town to the Cascades Female Factory. He tells how a new three-kilometer road was constructed that led from the edge of town at Barrack Street, to the Factory (2005, p. 139). I pondered the women's existence within the female factory system, and wondered about their lives in general. I would learn some six years later that I had a female convict ancestor, Maria Briant, just a young teenager when she was transported from Downs, England on September 15, 1833. She had arrived in Hobart Town aboard the *Frances Charlotte* on January 10, 1833. Whilst trawling through documents at the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, Launceston, in 2010, I spotted Maria Briant's details that confirmed she had spent time at the Cascades Female Factory in March 1833.

The area open to the public at the time of my first visit included three definable Yards (Yards One, Three and Four), primarily represented by the remains of their sandstone perimeter walls. Although these Yards are now unrecognisable spaces

compared to the original days of occupation, when many buildings were crowded within the enclosures, I was nevertheless filled with a sense, a presence, of what once was.

In her booklet *Footsteps and Voices* (2004) Lucy Frost informs in a detailed, easy to read format, facts surrounding the history of the Cascades Female Factory. The booklet takes the reader back in time, offering a comprehensive tour of the Female Factory and its inmates, through text and extensive illustration. Until that first visit I was ignorant of the fact that in Yard One, close to where I had sat, there had been a chapel. In fact this enclosure, renamed Yard One, had been divided into seven smaller defined spaces. The three Yards that had held the convict women were organised into separate classes. The First Class convict women were positioned closest to the entrance and were available to be 'assigned' for work as servants to the colonialists who would visit and choose their free labour. Other individual yards were within Yard One, housing a kitchen, nursery and hospital (Frost, 2004, p.12). As I stood in Yard One I was unaware that substantial subsurface deposits survived beneath my feet. I later learned that rubble from the demolished buildings lay buried as 'fill' some 1.5 to 1.7 metres beneath the grassed dirt that on that day housed only an interpretive metal sculpture in the courtyard.

I was overwhelmed with a sense of disbelief when hearing of the researched and anecdotal evidence of convict women's treatment. I was incensed when I learned about the death of so many infants born to convict women sent out as 'assigned' servants, only to be returned to the cold, damp factory pregnant with birth imminent.

There was nothing at the site that day in 2003 that made reference to the misery that had been inflicted on the convict mothers who were directed to force wean their children at an early age. Lieutenant-Governor George Arthur had authorised that following the weaning of their babies the mothers be placed in the Second Class Section for six months as a punishment for their 'immoral behaviour'. This order facilitated exploitation of the women's labour, the six months work consisting of picking oakum after which they were returned to the cycle of 'assigned' servitude.

Tony Rayner asserts a large number of babies died because of this policy of forced separation (2005, p.145). He writes about the death of the convict women's babies and children at the Cascades Female Factory, describing the tragedy of infant mortality as the greatest horror (2005, p. 145). It is chilling to read of their fate. According to Rayner the result showed that figures for annual age specific mortality rate (0-3 year olds) was 10% for Hobart District and 30% for female factory nursery children. These figures back up the notion that over crowding, poor facilities and isolation were the key to the higher mortality rates at the Cascades Female Factory (2005, pp. 157-158). The deaths of the babies became lodged in my mind over the following days until eventually I returned to the Cascades Female Factory and met with Shirley McCarron, the site's project manager. A few weeks later I was offered the role as honorary Artist-in-Residence which I accepted.

The decision to become involved with artistic interpretation at the Cascades Female Factory also shaped the course of my research that resulted in *900*

bonnets (Figure 1) in 2003. This art involved the photographing of colonial christening bonnets and silk screening these images on to 900 acetate sheets that were joined together with clear plastic press studs to form an installation of nine rows of 100 bonnets that hung from the ceiling supported by nine slender wooden boughs. In order to gain an understanding of women's place in colonial society my investigation probed the lives of convict women compared and contrasted to the lives of middle and upper class women entrapped in the social mores of their time

My interest in convict woman and their children was the catalyst that triggered my use of christening bonnets as a metaphor for the grief suffered by convict mothers at the loss of their infants who died and were subsequently unceremoniously buried near the Cascades Female Factory site. The cloth bonnet installation *Departures and Arrivals* (2004) (Figure 2) followed on from *900 bonnets* and became the impetus for the concept that became this project, *Roses from the Heart*. *Departures and Arrivals* involved the making of 900 cloth christening bonnets. I chose the design of one of the colonial bonnets I had photographed for *900 bonnets* as the template for the bonnets that were made by participants throughout Australia and New Zealand. The 900 bonnets were displayed on polystyrene balls, forming the shape of a cross, using wooden dowelling that connected the polystyrene balls either to the ground or to wooden base plates facilitating the work to be exhibited both outside or within a building. The idea of using a colonial servant's bonnet as symbolic of convict women's lives was developed in new directions for *Roses from the Heart*, which has now burgeoned into an international project with my requesting participants from

around the world to construct, in total, 25 566 cloth bonnets to form an iconic installation in memory of Australia's convict women. In conjunction with *Roses from the Heart* (Figure 3) I conceived a participatory performance art piece, the *Blessing of the Bonnets*, allowing communities to be directly involved in a expressive ceremony involving story-telling, art, music, theatre and ritual in a rich symbolic 'handing over' of the bonnets for inclusion in *Roses from the Heart*.

Bonnet makers often become attached to their creations and the *Blessing of the Bonnets* ceremony encourages participants' engagement with the ritual of the 'blessing' and assists in the process of parting with what has often become a treasured tribute. This process is crucial to the realisation of the experience allowing the emotional affect of the participant to add to the dynamism of the performance. This performance art is live and although each event follows a similar format every blessing is an exclusive presentation. In order to protect the uniqueness of my conceptual art I have trademarked the names *Roses from the Heart* and *Blessing of the Bonnets*.

Not all of the women who were sentenced to transportation arrived safely in Australia. On August 25, 1833 the *Amphitrite* set sail from Woolwich for New South Wales. Caught in a gale in the English Channel the ship struck a sand bank off Boulogne-sur-mer on the French coast. All 108 female convicts, their twelve children and unborn babies died. Only three seamen survived the tragedy. Two years later, in 1835, the *Neva* was wrecked on King Island in Bass Strait with the loss of 224 lives. The accident was reported in the *Colonist* (1835, p. 221).

Charles Bateson (2004, p. 252) calculates the figure to be 225 lives lost and of that number he records 144 as being convict women. Six of the surviving of the

convict women eventually were taken to Port Jackson. The convict women who died aboard the *Neva* and the *Amphitrite* are included in *Roses from the Heart*, along with any female convict who died at sea, as part of their journey to Australian shores. I want recognition for every woman sentenced to transportation to Australia.

One of the other Tasmanian sites that eventually became inscribed as World Heritage was Maria Island, which had held a fascination for me. Looking across from the east coast of Tasmania it was difficult to believe this island had been a convict settlement on two separate occasions. I was particularly interested in the first era from 1825 to 1832 because of the weaving industry that had been in operation during that time.

It was March 1, 1825 when the *Prince Leopold* moored at Maria Island and the first fifty male convicts stepped on shore accompanied by military escort and officials to start an agricultural settlement. Darlington station, as discussed by Ludeke (2001, p.19) was chosen to relieve pressure on Macquarie Harbour. It was seen as a closer location, easier to transfer convicts from Hobart and provided more space to house the men. Those sent to Maria Island were convicts returning to custody after working for settlers who had been or were being punished for crimes less severe than warranted transfer to Macquarie Harbour.

The convicts on Maria Island supplemented shortage in food rations by 'fowling' and fishing for food. Despite the island's isolation, convicts attempted, and sometimes succeeded, in escaping. Ludeke writes of convict endeavors to flee the island often in rafts made from the same reeds that the Aborigines had used in

their crafts (2001, p. 21). One such escape was reported in the *Colonial Times* and *Tasmanian Adviser*, 11 November 1825.

....prisoners at this Penal Settlement have already found means of escape.

About ten days ago six men, by name Craven, Miller, Brown, Boswell and two others, were sent to receive rations from the Commissariat Store with which they escaped upon a catamaran of bark to the mainland..... we were in hopes that the distance of Maria Island from the main, we believe seven or eight miles, would have secured the men to that Establishment...

The reliance on boats and crafts to navigate the expanses of water that distanced countries and settlements and curtailed migration – and in the case of convicts, ‘escape’ from isolated imprisonment – motivated my interest in boats. My project *Transported by Water* (2009) and my inclusion of boats or boat symbolism in *Roses from the Heart* exhibitions grew from my emerging awareness of the critical role that boats played in the British government’s decision to transport, colonise and incarcerate as the need for off-shore prisons and acquisition of new territories became an imperative. Islands such as Maria, Sarah and Macquarie in Van Diemen’s Land were chosen as secondary penal sites for their isolation, places where convicts were excluded, segregated from free society by watery expanses. Historian Cathy Dunne (2010) quotes Norman Bartlett writing in 1976 who suggests that:

There is no evidence that either Prime Minister Pitt or any member of his cabinet thought of Botany Bay as anything more than a convenient place distance enough for the safe\disposal of social waste.

My post card installation *Mailing Maria* (2009) responded to the connecting industries that developed on Maria Island and linked with manufacturing at the

Cascades Female Factory. The convict men's skills sustained many of the industries that Major Lord introduced in the First Settlement on Maria Island.

Major Lord reported the following description of life at Darlington (Rieusset 2007, p.7)

Sawing and splitting timber for house and fence work; carrying it to the settlement; excavating and clearing the ground; building houses and huts; blacksmithing; carpentering [sic]; shoemaking; tailoring; quarrying stone; tanning leather; weaving; brick and pottery making; loading and unloading Government ships; and occasionally preparing land for cultivation. Hours of work were 5am to 6pm with an hour for breakfast and 1½ hours for dinner. In winter prisoners breakfasted first, then went to work at 7.30 am and continued to dusk. Work stopped at 1pm on Saturday to allow the convicts to wash their clothes. No work was done on Sundays'.

Training equipped the less skilled with the competence to work in these trades. Weidenhofer (1977, p.20) notes that the tan yards, lumberyard, brickfields, a pottery, farm and hop fields as industries launched on Maria Island between 1825 – 1832. The cloth factory comprised a weaving shop, a spinning shop, a fulling mill, carding and pressing rooms, a turners' and carpenters' shop and a dye house. This demonstrated Major Lord's determination to deliver a viable cloth enterprise.

It is the cloth industry that attracts my attention. I was especially intrigued to read that in 1826 yarn was scarce at Darlington and in trying to rectify this situation Major Lord proposed that the Cascades Female Factory, a supplier of yarn, should be moved to Il du Nord, a small granite island which lies closest to the northern most point of Maria Island. Lord's plan was never pursued and the

island still remains undeveloped (Weidenhofer 1977, p. 20). The symbolism of cloth has been central in my pursuit to connect with the female convict story. Weidenhofer mentions one consignment received in Hobart Town between April 29 and November 26, 1830 which lists articles produced on Maria Island as including 4082 ½ yards of colonial cloth, one thousand pairs of shoes, 296 blankets and fifty mops (citing *The Hobart Town Courier*, 1829, p. 2).

We had much pleasure in a visit to the Ordinance store... to see the numerous bales of cloth and blankets lately made at the fulling mill in Maria Island. The blankets, though not as soft as some we have seen from Witney, are stoutly woven of a close texture and must be very durable. The cloth has been dyed of several different shades, from the liquid obtained by boiling down the several woods and barks of the country. It is particularly well suited to labourers' dresses, or travelling great coats.....

Comparing the blankets to a Witney blanket was high praise in itself, the town of Witney having specialised in producing quality blankets since 1669 under Royal patronage.

After visiting Maria Island National Park on a number of occasions between 2008 and 2010 I was struck by the seclusion and the tranquility of the place. Vehicles are limited to those belonging to the Parks and Wildlife staff or operators of the Adventure Express Tourism four-day wilderness walk, with its 'elegant tented accommodation and gourmet dining'.

I walked through all the remaining convict buildings including the mess room, the miller's cottage, the barn, the chapel, the bake house and the ruins of the religious instructor's house. I climbed the narrow stairs of the Commissariat building to

the second floor and gazed out through the windows, over the water, to the Tasmanian mainland. I found it hard to visualise the human energy of the thriving settlement at Darlington with its commissariat store, officers' quarters, hospital and convict quarters. Walking around Darlington the tourist can examine fourteen convict buildings and substantial ruins. There is stillness in the air, a sense of timelessness. One can walk for a distance and not see another human being. In this animal sanctuary wombats wander freely, flocks of Cape Barron geese feed close by and there is the chance that you will almost trip over a forester kangaroo lying quietly basking in the sun. I found it difficult to conjure up the sounds of a busy convict settlement and to imagine the intensity of the manufacturing being undertaken within such a small expanse of land.

The Maria Island register, now held in the Oxfordshire Record Office, England provides documentation of the convict men at Maria Island (1825-1832). Brian Rieusset who has researched this material believes that it contains some 75% of the names of the men in the First Settlement (2007, p. 3). The register documents that sixteen convict men were sent to work in the cloth factory. The balance of the men made up of other tradesmen, ex soldiers and seamen as well as servants, smiths and miners (2007, p. 14).

It was the realisation that a vast timber resource existed at Stewarts Bay (close to Port Arthur) that triggered the suggestion of a convict settlement being established nearby. This led to the Government deciding to set up Port Arthur and close down Darlington. By September 1832 the island had been evacuated with the exception of Major Lord and his family, William King and clerical assistant William Christmas (Rieusset 2007, p. 11). Major Lord and his family moved to

their home *Oakhampton* across from Maria Island on land that had been granted in 1825. (Rieusset 2007, p. 12).

The manufacturing industry must surely be recognised as Major Lord's greatest achievement at Darlington. From mid 1828 as the cloth and woollen production advanced, approximately 300 yards of cloth was processed and sent to Hobart Town per month (Rieusset 2007, p. 9).

Cloth manufacturing connected the convicts of Cascades Female Factory and Darlington Probation Settlement, Maria Island. Convict women at Cascades Female Factory worked at sewing clothes, carding and spinning yarn and providing substantial needlework and laundry services, for example producing 2,500 pairs of trousers and 165 blankets in a two-month period in 1843 (DEWHA, 2008, p. 192). Cascades became a notable textile manufactory. The factory supplied yarn to many centres throughout the colony including the fulling (cloth processing) house at Darlington (DEWHA 2008, p. 54).

During my visits to Darlington I pondered on the possibilities of covert correspondence (hidden notes or gifts) from fellow inmates being transported between the prison sites that were the destination of their manufacturing labours. I knew that love letters had been smuggled into the Cascades Female Factory hidden inside chickens used as bribes to some of the Cascades Female Factory staff (Huffposts Books, 2010). With the thought of the convicts' enforced separation haunting me I struggled with the idea of contact being maintained with the outside world.

The postcard project *Mailing Maria* (2009) (Figure 4), evolved from this contemplation. This installation comprises a series of postcards with a textural pattern resulting from frottage, in this instance a coarse granular effect achieved by rubbing crayons over large paper surfaces against the sandstone walls surrounding the Cascades Female Factory. The crayons used were chosen to replicate the actual colour of the walls where the women were imprisoned. The decision to emboss the paper with the imprint of the walls was important because these stone enclosures connect the present with the past. Very little remains to define the women's lives in their prolonged imprisonment within this bleak environment. This facade was part of the original site and it can be assumed that the convict women would have touched these very same surfaces.

The very hands that made physical contact with these barricades possibly worked on the cloth transported across from Maria Island. It is not fanciful to suggest that the convict women who railed against these walls would have included dressmakers who fashioned such fine costumes as the christening gown designed in 1828 for baby Harriet, born to Harriet Pullen, Task Mistress/Assistant Matron at the factory and wife of Jesse Pullen, the Assistant Superintendent. (Rayner 2005, p. 127). In 2010 *Mailing Maria* was installed on Maria Island in the Post Office. For the exhibition the postcards were laid out on the original wooden bench tops and covered with sheets of clear perspex. The majority of the postcards were placed face upwards. Positioning an occasional post card upside down formed an irregular pattern that from a distance resembled a 'patchwork' of quilted cloth. I organised a book of blank postcard pages to be left sitting on one of the bench tops and invited the public to leave comments, the idea being to

provoke a viewer into speculating about the lives of the inmates and conversations they might have entertained if given the opportunity. Essentially I was asking the observer to participate, to transport themselves back in time and write a message as though from a loved one or friend to a convict at Darlington. *Mailing Maria* remained installed on Maria Island for over six months.

A second installation *Transported by Water* (Figure 5) was installed in the chapel. This building is located diagonally across from the muster ground to the Post Office. The impetus for *Transported by Water* resulted from the numerous tales I had heard of attempted and realised escapes made by male convicts whilst on the island. The cessation of convict transportation to New South Wales in 1842 resulted in an increased convict intake to Tasmania and the consequent re-opening of the Darlington settlement as a probation station. Three years later a second probation station was opened at Point Lesueur on the western coast of Maria Island to assist with the accommodation of the 600 prisoners.

Surrounded by water Maria Island offered the convict men opportunity to dream of escape to an imagined freedom. Documentation shows that many attempts were made. The five miles distance from the mainland was no deterrent to those who managed to build a craft :

We are sorry to state, that four men, Millar, Bosworth, Craven and another, having constructed a canoe of stringy bark, escaped from Maria Island last week. (Rieusset, 2007).

The concept of the installation of paper boats that was *Transported by Water* highlighted the importance of water to the convict story. Ships transported the convicts thousands of miles across oceans to lands unknown and on many

occasions additional traversing of water was involved. As previously stated, Maria, Macquarie, Sarah and Norfolk Islands are all examples of further crossing of water barriers to reach the isolated and sometimes desolate areas chosen by authorities as penal settlements. I decided to use the paper boat as a conduit to tell the convict story and chose a basic paper boat pattern, using A4 size paper, to create a small craft. Participants were asked to draw on the paper, or alternatively to write the name of a convict man or woman, prior to folding the paper into the shape of a boat. I tested the paper boat concept in a variety of locations. In 2008 I travelled to Parramatta, New South Wales and offered free workshops for primary school children which were held at the Parramatta Artists Studios space. Children and parents attended and learnt about aspects of convict history, mentioning the Van Diemen's Land story as well as highlighting their own State's connection with the Parramatta Female Factory close by. The children were invited to draw images on the paper provided. There was a demonstration on how to fold the paper into a boat shape.

Once the paper boats were completed the participants joined me on a walk from the Studios in Hunter Street, through the city of Parramatta, to the Lennox Bridge on the Parramatta River. At a section of the river not far from the bridge a wooden ramp made launching the boats onto the river a safe and easy task. The fine summer weather was perfect. The Parramatta City Council supplied two council workers who crewed a small boat on the river during the proceedings and were the retrieval crew. As the paper boats sank the council workers rescued them with long handled nets and these soggy objects became part of an

installation, along with a selection of paper boats that were not immersed in the watery depths.

That installation *Bonnets and Boats* was art re-telling convict women's stories and was exhibited at the Parramatta Artists' Studios on 5 September 2008 and was officially opened by Councillor Paul Barber, Mayor of Parramatta.

My second trial with the paper boat concept was in Western Australia with students at St. Patrick's Primary School, Fremantle, speaking to them about Australia's convict past. I was mindful that no convict women were transported to Western Australia, so specific reference was made to the local convict story where male convicts were incarcerated at the Fremantle Prison from 1852 to 1886. On this occasion the students drew on A4 paper provided and then added the name of a convict transported on the *Hougoumont*. This shipment of 280 men which docked in Fremantle on 9 January 1868 was to be the final transportation of convicts to Australia (Perth DPS, 3002). These paper boats were included in my exhibition *Vessels of Hope* that was installed at the Fremantle Prison Gallery, 12 March to 7 June 2009. The paper boats were displayed as a single line around the limestone walls of the large space that was once the former West Workshops of the prison. The positioning of the boats in this manner re-created the horizon that represented the unknown as the convicts were taken across the seas.

Some months later I was invited to work with art students at St. Michael's Collegiate College in Hobart. Once again the paper boats metaphor was used to portray the transportation story, focusing on how necessary the ships were in transporting more than 160,000 convicts to Australia's shores. The students drew and painted images, reflecting their interpretation of the story. Their paper boats

were included in an art exhibition at their school after which they became part of the installation *Transported by Water* on Maria Island.

In 2010 I worked with pupils at both the Orford and Triabunna schools, following the format developed with the previous schools. At Triabunna District High School the paper boats were taken to the wharf where students placed their craft onto the water and watched as they sailed towards the Mercury Passage, the stretch of water that separates Maria Island from the east coast of Tasmania. Members of the Parks and Wildlife Service were on hand in their boat to collect the paper craft once they became too sodden to stay afloat. The paper boats made by students at the Orford Primary and the Triabunna District High School were also included in the installation *Transported by Water* that was subsequently installed in the Chapel on Maria Island. The paper boats were displayed in a number of glass cabinets assembled throughout the stone building, the cases used as protection against vandalism in an unsupervised environment. The concept of *Transported by Water* as presented on Maria Island encapsulated the importance of crafts in the day-to-day life on the island.

The following outcomes became obvious after presenting the convict story to students at schools close to a heritage site – in this case Maria Island. Although the island was situated close by, across the Mercury Passage, the students were not well informed about the island's convict history. Using art as the medium to bring the island's convict history alive appealed to the pupils and the staff and the interest kindled from this experience led to the organising of a school excursion to the island some weeks later.

In an attempt to showcase Tasmania's cultural and environmental heritage on a broader scale, the Tasmanian Government created a Natural and Cultural Residency Program for both State and, since 2006, international artists. This scheme also promotes the use of art to attract interest in Tasmania's cultural tourism.

Australian artist Fiona Fraser was chosen to spend two months in a small fisherman's cottage on the sand dunes of Maria Island in 2009. She describes her time there as being surreal:

Without set times to get up, go to work, sleep or other deadlines, the body sets up its own rhythms. Without clocks, TV, stereo, phone and power point convenience the mind too sets new patterns. As my own daily rhythms synced with those of the island I created a collection of images that married the twenty four hour cycle of daytime and night, investigating the dual characteristics of incredible natural beauty and the succession of human endeavor and it's abandonment. (Fraser 2011)

Her experience of nighttime on the island in the comfort of a cottage mirrored mine in 2010 when I stayed in the Parks and Wildlife accommodation. The majority of visitors to Maria Island spend a day investigating then leave on a ferry before dark. A few campers remain, with some staying in the old convict quarters that have been modernised, although still retaining a degree of sparseness. Fraser's work juxtaposes images of nature, with empty buildings, contrasting sunshine, light, and beauty of nature with night skies and emptiness of the abandoned buildings serving up the unexpected. Her digital compositions present Maria Island in a cleverly imagined way:

...the duality of night and day in a landscape with a history of nature preserved but radically altered and punctuated by architectural monuments to human intervention. (Fraser 2011)

There is something about the quality of light on Maria Island that emphasises and sharpens the scenery. Through her photography Fraser's body of work, *Circadian Rhythms*, drawing attention to the fact that nature operates independently of human timetables, depicts the incongruity of the abandoned 19th century penal settlement lying amidst the natural wilderness. (Morrell, 2011)

The Tasmanian bi-annual art festival, *Ten Days on the Island*, which began in 2001, has successfully drawn focus onto Maria Island through art performances such as Erin Collins *Maria: Island of Dreams* (2007) which drew the audience into the lives of the successive generations of inhabitants on Maria Island including the indigenous people of the Tyreddeme band who journeyed regularly to the island, French explorers, convicts and their gaolers, Maori martyrs held on the island along with the second wave of convicts and lastly, the entrepreneurial Italian Bernacchi family.

Collins's art performance, scripted by Finegan Kruckemeyer, used music, poetry, video projection and spoken word, delivered through the eyes of Vega, Diego Bernacchi's daughter, and a variety of other characters.

This performance attracted interest in the history and culture of a part of Tasmania that has been an enigma for not only those living outside the State but for many who call this island home. Through the auspice of a major attraction such as *Ten Days on the Island* art is telling stories and delivering historical

content to a wide audience. It was estimated that 195,000 people attended the *Ten Days on the Island* event in 2009 (TDOTO, 2011).

As part of my research I examined sites at Maria Island and formulated concepts for installations that might attract funding for implementation, at a later stage, post completion of my doctoral submission.

The cloth christening bonnets of *Departures and Arrivals*, the linking of memory and materiality in *Mailing Maria* and the paper boats of *Transported by Water*, all come together in researching this project which is centred around the cloth bonnet memorial, *Roses from the Heart*.

Exploration of the historical events that bring the convict story alive has shaped my decision to focus on boats and bonnets. Boats symbolise convictism, transportation and escape and also trade as exemplified by the successful ship building industry at the Port Arthur dockyards. The earliest known record of paper folding is from 1490 and relates to a folded paper boat that appears in *Tractatus de Sphaera Mundi*, a document created by the Irish scholar Johannes de Sacrobosco (Wanke, 2011). Even today it is not uncommon for Irish children to be taught the art of paper boat folding, a tiny coincidence of some importance to the convict story.

Selecting the bonnet as the metaphor depicting convict women's lives was crucial because of the importance of the cloth connotation. Cloth played such an integral part in their existence. I have found the strategy to use boats and bonnets as metaphors in an interactive art experience encourages the participation of the potential cultural tourist. My intent is to awaken an interest in convict history and

further a desire to attain knowledge through investigation of associated heritage sites. In the following chapter I introduce *Making their Mark*, a bonnet trail that leads the tourist from one heritage site to another connecting the convict women's narrative through the symbolism of a bonnet that links their story to a specific place such as Woolmers Estate or the Cascades Female Factory Historic Site in Tasmania.

The importance of the Cascades Female Factory Historic Site was recognised on 31 July 2010 when the site was inscribed, along with ten other sites throughout Australia, on the UNESCO World Heritage list. Female factories were significant sites of punishment and reform of convict women. There were thirteen female factories in Australia and the Cascades Female Factory Historic Site was chosen from amongst these to represent their function and value within the transportation system. Chapter Two considers aspects of the Cascades Female Factory where convict women were incarcerated and Woolmers estate as an example of where convict women were assigned to work for colonists.

Chapter Two:

Working with sites and bonnets:

Cascades Female Factory and Woolmers.

The Cascades Female Factory warrants further investigation. To understand the history allows for an educated interpretation of the site opening up opportunities for attracting the cultural tourist's interest. At the present moment the site is almost bare except for the sandstone walls, the archaeological excavations and the one remaining building, the Matron's cottage.

The Cascades Female Factory was the scene of some of the earliest manufacturing industries and was noted for its textile production. The convict women spun cloth that was woven into blankets at the fulling mill and cloth factory erected in 1835 as mentioned in Chapter One (Scripps 1997, p. 77). The textile industry was an important money-making enterprise for the factory. One year after the female factory began operation in 1828 Isaac Briggs was employed as a wool-spinning instructor for three months from August to October 1829. Some of the staff directly involved in this area of work are listed under the heading 'employees' on the Female Convicts Research Group, Tasmania, website. Yarn was also supplied to many places throughout the colony (DEWHA 2008, p. 54). Laundry services were a mainstay and for the price of one shilling and sixpence, per dozen items, townsfolk's washing was catered for (Scripps 1997, pp. 77-78). One year after the female factory began operation in 1828 Isaac Briggs was employed as a wool-spinning instructor for three months from August to October 1829 (Female Convicts Research Group, 2011).

There are numerous references to the sewing and embroidering that convict women did in the female factories yet almost no examples of their work have been catalogued and maintained. In 2004 information was conveyed to me that a christening gown existed that had been made by convict women at the Cascades Female Factory in 1828 for the Task Mistress/Associate Matron, Harriet Pullen. The locating and viewing of this christening gown inspired art work which has continued in this project. Needlework was also taught to those requiring training: Amelia Condell commenced work as a needlework instructress on 10 February 1843 and Eleanor Hawson worked as a needlework instructress at the factory in April 1850.

Using cloth as the medium for the cloth bonnet memorial, *Roses from the Heart* commemorates the importance of the textile industry operating at the factory. The bonnet pattern chosen for this memorial was taken from an original 1860s servant's bonnet, donated to Narryna Heritage Museum, Battery Point, which may have been worn by a convict woman assigned to work for colonialists in Van Diemen's Land.

My own art arrived at the Cascades site by a circuitous route via that other convict colony, New South Wales. On 7 August 2008 the Governor of New South Wales, Her Excellency, Professor Marie Bashir, AC, CVO, opened *Women Transported* and *Roses from the Heart* - a display of bonnets from my convict woman memorial, a work in progress. Parramatta City Council's Cultural Officer Gay Hendriksen invited me to exhibit 3,000 cloth bonnets that had been made by participants from Australia and New Zealand. These bonnets had been blessed at St. John's Cathedral, Parramatta in 2008. *Women Transported*, curated by Gay

Hendriksen, is an exhibition examining the life of convict women transported to the Australian colonies with emphasis on the New South Wales female convict story focused on the 1804 Parramatta Female Factory. The exhibition comprised artifacts, mementos and contemporary female convict related material.

Commonwealth funding was received to enable the exhibition to travel throughout Australia during 2008 – 2011. My photogram *Hopes and Dreams* (Figure 6), an image of the 1828-christening robe made by convict women was included in the exhibition. *Women Transported* attracted interest nationally and certainly helped to bring the convict women's story to the fore. This travelling exhibition received joint first prize in the Programs, Projects and Partnerships category at an event held at NSW Parliament House on 29 April 2010. Those associated with the exhibition developed a number of crucial working partnerships and collaborations as part of the project. These included alliances with the University of Western Sydney, Powerhouse Museum, historical societies, teachers, community groups and the invaluable support of eighty-five volunteers (Hyde, 2010).

During the Tasmanian leg of the tour the exhibition was shown in two separate venues – the Matron's Cottage at the Cascades Female Factory, South Hobart and the Hobart Penitentiary Gaol (31 July – 31 September, 2009). As an adjunct to this focus on the female convict story I was invited to hold a *Roses from the Heart* workshop which involved facilitating a bonnet-making session with students from the local Campbell Street Primary School. This was particularly meaningful as the Campbell Street Primary School is built on the ground once used as a cemetery for convicts, part of a burial ground of five and a half acres that had

5,113 burials registered. It was closed in 1923. Convict burials took place at this cemetery from 1831, on the small portion of government owned land located between Park Street (now the Brooker Highway) and a rivulet which flowed through the area at that time. There was also a larger connecting portion of land vested in Holy Trinity Church. It is exceedingly fortunate that the parish burials records extending from 1833 to 1872 remain intact. The majority of registered burials relate to convicts whose bodies were taken to the south of the cemetery where they were typically buried en masse, in unmarked graves. Many of these convicts would have spent time at the Hobart Gaol, located in Campbell Street, where the bonnet making classes with the students were held. In 1923, human remains were removed from the cemetery and taken to the Cornelian Bay Cemetery. The present Campbell Street Primary School (2005, p.47) was built on the site three years later.

During April 2007 the Winifred Booth Estate contributed funds to convert two of the rooms in the Matron's Cottage, Cascades Female Factory, into suitable spaces for a Gallery. The first exhibition held in the venue after refurbishments were completed, was *First Steps* that featured a display of heritage christening gowns, including the Harriet Pullen christening robe. The Governor of Tasmania, William Cox, who was also patron of the Cascades Female Factory at the time, opened *First Steps*. As part of the event I presented the Governor with a personal gift of photograms that I had made of his great, great, grandmother's two christening gowns. The first became the petticoat to the second after that was created some years later. These dresses were made by William Cox's ancestor Olivia, nee Gascoigne, who, along with husband Nathaniel Lucas was transported from

England to Australia, both as convicts. Their story as a married couple began on Norfolk Island where they wed on 5 November 1791 (Cox, 2006, p.24). Today visitors to the Matron's Cottage can view the black and white photogram of Harriet Pullen's christening gown as captured in *HandMaid* (2006) (Figure 7), donated to the Cascades Female Factory Historic Site Board Incorporated collection.

The female convict story extends further than the female factories but the presence of textiles remains ubiquitous. Some convict women never spent time at a factory. In Van Diemen's Land some were sent to the *Anson* and some straight from the ship to service. The *Anson's* role as a probation station was to accommodate the convict women as they disembarked, for a period of six months. Irene Schaffer states that 4000 women went through this system between 1844 and 1849 (2009). The women's employment included the fashioning of such items as men's shirts and jackets, women's day caps, straw bonnets, shoes and stockings. Irene Schaffer's research (2009) includes the following details:

Washing was also carried out by the women for Hobart residents; if they were prepared to pay 6/- cab fare to New Town, as well as 1/6 to be rowed out to the ship. (The cost of 67 articles [sic] was washed for private individuals was £3/14/4½) Work was carried out for the Marine Department, Queen's Orphanage, General Hospital, Prison Barracks, Nursery, Convict Store etc. The total money earned for the Government from December 1845 to June 1846 was £1,062/15/9.

Using cloth as a metaphor within my art highlights the existence of female convicts and acts as a link between their lives and the sites they inhabited. The servant's bonnet was a signifier of the convict woman's status in society. The

majority of female convicts handled cloth on a daily basis as they sewed and fashioned garments, worked to produce cloth through weaving and spinning and provided laundry services

On April 5, 1841 Maria Feans, a single, nineteen year old, girl from Dorchester arrived in Van Diemen's Land aboard the *Rajah* on July 19, 1841. Maria had received seven years transportation for shoplifting (AOT, CON40-1-4, 2010, p. 135). At some time during her sentence Maria worked on Thomas Archer's property. In the Woolmers Information Brochure, *A convict story*, printed to coincide with the World Heritage nomination mention is made of Maria spending time on the property where she was assigned to work as a needlewoman and dressmaker.

When Maria arrived on the property the generation of Archer men would have been credited for the success of the establishment. The Archer wives would have been involved with the domestic arrangements and organising the assigned servants' daily routine. Up until very recently tourists to the estate would have been unaware of the convict contribution to the prosperity of the property. Visitor information was based firmly on the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* view of the Archer family history (Stilwell, 1966a, 1966b). Thomas Archer (1790-1850) sailed from England arriving in Sydney, New South Wales in January 1812. Appointed by Governor Macquarie to Port Dalrymple, he arrived in Van Diemen's Land in September 1813. Thomas resigned from his Government postings on July 21, 1821. During the intervening eight years he had amassed a 2000 acre (809 ha) estate. By March 1825 Archer's holdings had increased to 6000 acres (2428 ha by grant and the remainder through

private purchase). Such was his success that his brother Joseph was persuaded to join him bringing a flock of pure merino sheep, later to be claimed as the colony's first directly imported European sheep. Joseph Archer at once took up 2000 acres (809 ha) on the Lake River adjoining his brother Thomas's estate where he established his property, Panshanger (2006-2011). Two other brothers William (1788-1879) and Edward (1793-1862) and their father also migrated to Van Diemen's Land to reunite with family. The Archer brothers resided on their properties and developed their land using convict labour and proved to be skilled farmers earning the praise of the land commissioners in 1826.

It was in 1817 that the first Thomas Archer established Woolmers estate and six generations later, Thomas William Archer, having no heirs, bequeathed the estate and its considerable contents to the Archer Historical Foundation Incorporated, as it was his wish that his cherished belongings be a lasting museum for everyone to enjoy (2009). In 1824 Thomas Archer had acquired farming land across the valley from Woolmers, for his brother William who subsequently established Brickendon modeling it along the lines of the traditional English farm he had left behind. Brickendon Estate has stayed in the Archer family ever since and today it remains a working property open to the public with seventh generation descendants still living there (2008). In the last few years both the estates have attracted interest not just in relation to the Archer family story but also because of the properties links with the assigned convicts who worked for these colonial families. It was the historical presence

of assigned convicts on these properties that attracted their World Heritage inscription in 2010.

In 2009 the Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts published and distributed brochures promoting Brickendon's and Woolmers' convict heritage. The four page brochure details the convict story under the headings of Convicts and Transportation; Women and Assignment 1804-1853; The Masters; Woolmers Convict Women; The End of Assignment. Prefacing this information is a paragraph strategically positioned beside an image of a convict woman, Catherine Bartley:

The skills and labour of assigned convict women and men were the key to the prosperity of the estates like Woolmers, and indeed to the colony of Van Diemen's Land. This is their story.

Bartley had been sentenced to seven years transportation for stealing a cow. She arrived in Van Diemen's Land aboard the *Duke of Cornwall* on 27 October 1850. Her profession was that of a servant (AOT CON41-1-28, p.18).

The information researched by consultant historian Julia Clarke detailing the lives of convict women provides the reader with an understanding of the skills they possessed, the jobs to which they were delegated and an insight into daily domestic life on the property. This story allows the reader to observe life on 'the other side of the fence'. Unlike the sparseness of the Cascades Female Factory site, tourists visiting Woolmers are offered a tangible insight into the confines of the dwellings that housed them. Convict woman Maria Feans who is featured in the brochure was one of the 197

convict women transported aboard the *Rajah*, the convict ship whose name has become synonymous with the *Rajah Quilt*. During the 105 day voyage from Woolwich to Hobart Town a number of convict women stitched a quilt that was donated to Lady Jane Franklin, wife of the Colony's Lieutenant-Governor, Sir John Franklin. Many hands had worked to achieve the finished quilt. Analysis of the sanguine blood stains and sweat would certainly provide forensic evidence of those involved in the preparation of the quilt. Elizabeth Fry organised for Miss Kezia Hayter to travel on the *Rajah* and instruct the convict women in the art of quilt making (Bell, 2011).

It seems such a task may have been assumed by a free passenger on board the *Rajah* for this journey – Miss Kezia Hayter, from the Millbank Penitentiary. On the recommendation of Elizabeth Fry, Hayter had been sent to assist Lady Franklin in the formation of the Tasmanian Ladies' Society for the Reformation of Female Prisoners. Her instigation, supervision and completion of the quilt was a clear demonstration of the success of the shipboard project.

On arrival in Van Diemen's Land Miss Hayter visited the Cascades Female Factory and reported back to Elizabeth Fry on the conditions at the site. Kezia Hayter ceased her prison reform work on April 6, 1842 and took up teaching (Hayter, 1842). For most of 1842 she was governess to the children of William Archer. One might speculate that Miss Hayter assisted in selecting skilled women from the *Rajah* to work on the Archer properties (Ferguson, 2004-2005).

The existing documentation of the 'assigned' servants, such as court transcripts, are a valuable resource to assist with the interpretation of the site's relevance to the convict story and the links to textiles. A number of the women's stories are

included in the Woolmer's brochure including that of Georgiana Gatehouse also from the *Rajah*. Georgiana was a twenty-nine year old Londoner with one child. She had stolen a gown and was transported for seven years. The surgeon's report stated that she was very industrious and of good behaviour. Her profession was that of needlewoman (AOT CON40-1-4, 2007, p. 192). Both Maria Feans and Georgiana Gatehouse doubled as nursemaids in their duties.

Convict women assigned to colonialists were chosen from a variety of ships. Eleanor Bryan, tried in Middlesex, February 1830 and sentenced to seven years transportation for stealing two salt cellars, received her Conditional Pardon (No 763) on 28 September 1835 (AOT CON40-1-1, 2010, p. 153).

In order to focus attention on the convict women assigned to specific properties I included the female convicts from Woolmers in the art installation *Making their Mark* (2009-2011). I retained the same cloth bonnet template as for *Roses from the Heart*. The bonnets were designed as works of art, aesthetic creations rather than displays of perfect needlework. I chose to sew buttons on each bonnet representing the number of years of each woman's sentence. The right hand side of the bonnet represented the convict woman's life prior to exile and the left hand side exemplifies the woman's life in Australia. I used dyed silk material, retro clothing fabrics and items from the family sewing box that had belonged to my mother. The buttons were from a collection donated by Jill Cartwright for use as part of my tribute to convict women's lives. All the bonnet ties were constructed from silk ribbons. A selection of *Making their Mark* bonnets are now on permanent display at Woolmers World Heritage Site. Two are seen from the distance, mere apparitions at the windows of the attic bedrooms female convicts once occupied.

The remainder are installed in the servant's quarters.

My choice of the bonnet relates to the fact that the bonnet was part of the servant's livery in the 17th and 18th century, and thus synonymous with servitude

The *Making their Mark* collection of bonnets links a convict woman to a determined site. My intent is for the bonnet metaphor to act as both a tribute to convict women and an identification of a site linking it to the female convict history. For example *Making their Mark* will in the future be associated with sites in Ireland such as the County Wicklow Gaol, Cobh Heritage Centre in County Cork, County Cork Gaol and Grange Gorman Penitentiary Stoneybatter, in Dublin. Eliza Davis, who was incarcerated at the County Wicklow Gaol, is featured by a life-like sculptured figure in the cell in which she was imprisoned. A bonnet for Eliza will be included in the *Making their Mark* collection. Convict lass Mary Connor, who spent time at the Cork City Gaol before being transported to Australia on the *Elizabeth II* in 1828, will also be remembered by a bonnet as part of *Making their Mark*. In Australia specific bonnets will be on permanent display at other World Heritage Sites, such as convict housekeeper, Jemima Bolten's bonnet, at Old Government House Parramatta, New South Wales. Other bonnets will be linked to Cockatoo Island in Sydney Harbour and Hyde Park Barracks in Sydney.

Individual bonnet exhibits are also planned for permanent display at Entally House, Hadspen, Tasmania where a bonnet will be an enduring reminder of Mary Reibey's life. (Our Pioneer Women, 1949) Mary was transported from England on the *Royal Admiral* in 1792. She spent time at Entally House, a substantial dwelling, built by her son Thomas Haycock. Following her husband Thomas's death in 1811 Mary became one of the richest and most successful entrepreneurs in Australia.

Today her contribution to the nation is recognised with her portrait on the Australian twenty dollar note. At Shene a National Trust heritage property in Brighton, a bonnet for Sarah Thompson, transported on the *Atwick* in 1838, will be a reminder of this convict woman's time at the property being 'assigned' to Gamaliel Butler (Kernke, 2011).

Mary McLauchlan, married with two children she was forced to leave behind, was transported aboard the *Harmony* in 1829. Sentenced to fourteen years transportation for housebreaking, Mary was the first female convict to be hanged in Van Diemen's Land. After giving birth to a son at the Cascades Female Factory Mary's baby was discovered in one of the female factory privies. The father of the baby was Scottish settler Charles Ross Nairne to whom Mary had been assigned. Historian Helen MacDonald suggests that there was an element of doubt as to whether death was by natural causes or by human intervention. Despite refutable evidence, Mary was found guilty and convicted of murder. She was sentenced to be both hanged and dissected (MacDonald, 2009 p. 71). Mary was executed on January 19, 1830. A bonnet remembering her life will be part of *Making her Mark* and will be exhibited at the Hobart Penitentiary Gaol (AOT, CON40-1-5, 2010, p. 323).

Three convict women assigned to work on Maria Island will be remembered with bonnet tributes. Bridget Jones was transported on the *Margaret* arriving in July 1843. She was assigned to Samuel Lapham in August 1844. Jane Prior and Ann Edghill were both transported aboard the *Hindostan* arriving in Van Diemen's Land in September 1839. Both of these women were sent to Maria Island in August 1844. Ann was assigned to work for George King. Historian Maureen

Martin Ferris provided me with information from the *Hobart Town Gazette*, (1844, p.47) on Jane Prior taken from the Permission to Marry documentation that cited approval given to Jane to marry William Morris. A bonnet for Margaret Daziel, assigned to work at Port Arthur, will be featured as part of *Making their Mark* at Port Arthur World Heritage Site. Margaret had been transported from London on April 27 aboard the *Aurora*, arriving in Van Diemen's Land on August 10, 1851.

A selection of bonnets from *Making their Mark* (Figure 8) will form the basis of the installation that is the demonstration of this project. The remaining bonnets will already be housed at, or in the planning stage to be housed at, their associated historic sites.

Performance art has successfully attracted attention to the Cascades Female Factory. Over three consecutive nights in March 2001 the play *Slipping Through the Cracks*, a performance installation devised by Lisa Morisset, Jo Richardson and Jody Kingston drew community interest to the site. The play's title emanated from conversations about how little is known of convict women's experiences. Lack of personal written records such as diaries and letters has resulted in stories 'slipping through the cracks'. Rather than speaking on behalf of the women, the performance prompted the audience to imagine what might have been said. *Slipping through the Cracks* originated from a twenty-minute opera *Whisper the Bitter Blue* by Morisset and Kingston. Originally performed in 1999 at the *Colonial Eye Conference* at the Theatre Royal, Hobart, the work was later augmented via support given through the Tasmanian Conservatorium of Music's Opera Program.

Australian artist Anne Ferran has used performance art and also photography to focus attention on the female convict story. Two of her most significant works relating to convict women are *Lost to Worlds* (2001) and *In the Ground on the Air* (2008) (Figure 9). Ferran's work is described as by Geoffrey Batchen (2009) as being at:

the intersection of photography and history, focuses on the limits, silences and gaps. Her work encompasses analogue and digital photography (including large-scale photograms), video, installation and the production of artist books.

In *Lost to Worlds* Ferran combined photographs taken at both the Ross and Cascades female factory sites. As Ferran (2001) writes:

Everything I saw and felt about these sites during those visits is present – whether visible or buried – somewhere in the work. Though its roots are in the past it is more truly about the here and now – about evidence, remembrance, disintegration, photography. If these sites make anything clear it is that a ruined past can never be made whole again. It can only be glimpsed, gestured towards, evoked, conjured, lost again.

The photos relating to the Cascades Female Factory combined images of the site interspersed with details taken by photographer John Watt Beattie (1859-1930), that directly capture the site's reality. Ferran's portrayal of the Cascades Female Factory as it was in the 1800s is most evocative, especially as today the site - almost bare of buildings – forces the visitor to *conjure* images of the past. The characteristic muted tones of Ferran's black and white photography imbue her images with an almost ghostly air. Sourcing John Beattie's images is particularly provocative as Beattie is widely acknowledged as one of Tasmania's finest

landscape photographers. According to Tasmanian historian, Dr Michael Roe, Beattie 'did more than anyone to shape the accepted visual image of Tasmania' (1979, p. 232).

Ferran concentrates on a vanished past. In *Lost to Worlds* she combined photographs taken over a period of almost ten years at the Ross Female Factory. The focus in these pictures is the ground that hides the archaeological remains of a chapel and the children's nursery. The viewer's attention is drawn to the earth that is covered by growth mainly weed species.

In 2004 I installed my 900-cloth christening bonnet installation *Departures and Arrivals*, a forerunner to this project, at the Ross Female Factory on the section of ground midway between the two mounds beneath which lie the nursery and the chapel. This placement was very important to me because it reflected the reality of the babies' deaths that took place in the nursery and the burial service conducted by the chaplain with a promise of life ever after. The babies born at the Ross Female Factory would have been baptised in the Chapel just a stone's throw from where many of them died. Today an interpretive board and a glass case exhibiting some of the christening bonnets that were on display in 2004, are part of a permanent installation in the Commandant's Cottage, the only remaining building at the site. Whereas the bonnets from *Departures and Arrivals* remain as a visual symbolic representation of history for visitors to the site, Ferran's images are resolutely within the discourse of art. Both bodies of work aim to reveal the presence of past at the site.

Ferran's images are given a more contemporary resonance by digitally applying the photographs to thirty sheets of aluminium. In an online interview responding to Batchen's question (2009) 'What do your documentary photographs document?' Ferran reflects that:

The effect can only be some new quality or thought the photographs offer the person who sees them. Perhaps they are able to understand or glimpse something they hadn't considered before. Or they apprehend the knowledge they already had in a new way. The recent work is a good example ... the shiny metal surface has a surprisingly strong effect. The images seem more real somehow and a lot colder (Inadequate explanation I know, but the work is still new.

Contemplating this collection of photos, especially *The Ground at Ross 10*, and discovering a landscape analogous to the moon makes sense with its natural resemblance and perfect symbolism. The convicts were 'being banished to the ends of the earth' and today's equivalent scenario might well be 'transported to the moon'. Ferran has been a consistent visitor to the Ross Female Factory site and her work captures that dedication. Her art has awoken interest in the site's history. Answering Batchen's question regarding the importance of defining the distinction between fact and fiction within her photography Ferran shared these thoughts (2009):

The answer I ended up with was twofold — [the history] it's either disappeared into the ground or vanished into the air. The air was my shorthand for the intangibilities of memory, story, rumour, gossip — all the

things you can't corroborate and therefore you might have made up. However by itself the ground is too dry, as is the evidence it yields; you need both.

Archaeologist Eleanor Casella (2008) has explored 'beneath the ground' in the same area that Ferran photographed the surface capturing an intangible presence 'above ground'. Both are equally valuable and *tell the story*. Ferran's own words enunciate the quintessential essence of her practice:

The other aspect to all this is the continued photographing of a subject that can't be grasped visually (*The Ground at Ross* 2001 and *Lost to Worlds* series 2008). At those convict sites the historical evidence, if it still exists at all, is buried in the ground, meaning that photography will never find it since all it can show you is the surface. My idea was that the fact of there being so little to see would somehow be underlined or augmented (made more telling) by the knowledge that photography is a machine for showing you things — by its failure in other words ... The gradual accumulation of slightly varied images, the odd occasion where the camera or film didn't work properly amounted to something. That work is still visually austere and limited by the capacities of the medium, but by now it's expressive/atmospheric as well (in Batchen, 2009).

The various ways of interpreting history as demonstrated by Casella's and Ferran's approaches, reveals the substantial role that art contributes to public knowledge about the past. My approach of using concepts such as the symbol of the cloth bonnet and performance art – *Blessing of the Bonnets* – at convict related sites, including the Ross Female Factory, add a further dimension. *Departures and Arrivals* (2004) with its 900 christening bonnets brought a visual embodiment of life as it existed in the female factories. It was in this earlier project I chose to

highlight the tragedies that occurred at all the female convict sites in an evocative, yet arresting art experience and this realisation has strongly impacted my current work.

Making their Mark, the convict bonnet trail commenced in 2009, creates a visual journey following the convict women as they progressed from gaol, to court, to awaiting transportation, to arrival in Australia and experience within female factories, assigned servitude, extended sentences in gaol and, for most, eventual freedom. There is great potential for *Making their Mark* to reach a wider audience, culminating with a world-wide impact for cultural tourists as they follow the convict 'bonnet trail' throughout associated heritage sites. *Making their Mark* became the catalyst for *Roses from the Heart* which extended the idea of highlighting specific convict women connected to particular sites to be inclusive of 'all' convict women transported to Australia. The following chapter looks more closely at the process of developing *Roses from the Heart*.

Chapter Three:

Roses from the Heart: the process

As previously stated, *Roses from the Heart* is a memorial to all women sentenced to transportation as convicts to Australia (1788-1853). I am inviting participants world-wide to create a cloth bonnet tribute to commemorate the lives of the 25,566 women who have been shrouded by a veil of historical amnesia.

The name *Roses from the Heart* grew out of the concept that the making of a bonnet was a significant gesture to the value of the woman's life whose name is to be placed on the bonnet's brim. The bonnets are not only expressions of folks' empathy for the hardships endured by the convict women, they are a reminder that these women actually existed and indicated the status they held. I chose to make the reference to 'roses' because this flower symbolises love, beauty, peace, war and politics. It has considerable connotations with England and Ireland with women referred to as an 'English rose' or 'Irish rose'. In England great emotion is attached to the Tudor rose, the country's traditional floral heraldic emblem. Including 'from the heart' in the Memorial title identifies the empathy bonnet makers afford the convict women as they stitch the cloth tribute.

The *Blessing of the Bonnets* performance has become an integral part of *Roses from the Heart*. I conceived this theatrical ceremony to bring people together in a compelling, yet entertaining, ritual that acknowledged the convict women's existence and allowed people to see the importance their bonnet tribute brings to the Memorial. Offering the public an opportunity to personally 'hand their

bonnet/bonnets over' is essential to the *Roses from the Heart* memorial. The reaction of those attending, from primary school students through to the more elderly members of society, is undisguised emotion, an affect that provokes a real affinity with the convict women being summoned to mind. As Freud argued 'ideas are cathexes, basically of memory-traces, while affects and emotions correspond to process of discharge, the final manifestation of which are perceived as feelings'. (Best, 2011, pp. 87-88) The *Blessing of the Bonnets* performance offers the participant the opportunity to touch a bonnet, or continue to handle 'their' bonnet before placing it in a receptacle to be blessed. Hearing the sound of the convict woman's name being read aloud in the accent of her homeland, joining in with the specially chosen music, listening to the stories of hardship and resilience, and being part of a community displaying appreciation for the value of the work force the convict women represented, stimulates the kinetic senses. This expedites cathartic experiences on a personal level which activates a further dimension in the performance, enriching the art.

As part of the *Blessing of the Bonnets* performances I present people with something as they leave. This varies, examples including long stemmed roses, rose petals in muslin bags, red coloured cardboard hearts inscribed with a convict woman's name, bunches of rosemary and other mementos of significance. At the *Blessing of the Bonnets* held in St. John's Cathedral, Parramatta, *Roses Only* donated 600 long stemmed roses to be handed out as attendees left the ceremony. In Fremantle I utilized the abundance of rosemary growing profusely in the area and gave sprigs of 'memory' to the hundreds of visitors as they left the church.

The choice of using a cloth bonnet as the symbol for the Memorial to the convict women emanated from the following considerations. Prior to the eighteenth century there were laws to stop common people from dressing similarly to the more affluent in society. These laws, referred to as *Sumptuary laws*, were designed to maintain class distinctions (Hurlock, 1965). In earlier times, back as far as the end of the 12th century, Pope Clement III (1187-91) ruled prostitutes should dress differently from honest women (Freiberg 1879, cited in Brundage, 1987). Prescriptive codes, along with sumptuary legislation precluding prostitutes from wearing certain expensive materials, followed. Laws relating to prostitution mainly applied to professionals but could also refer to other sexually active women. The focus of this legislation was to shame and stigmatise these women. In the colonies, it enabled a system of control:

It was deemed necessary by both the local and the British authorities to have a supply of whores to keep the men, both convict and free, quiescent. The Whore stereotype was devised as a calculated sexist means of social control and then . . . characterised as being the fault of the women who were damned by it (Summers, 1975).

The branding of the convict women as all being ‘tarred with the one brush’ led to my decision to have a collection of objects that appeared to be the same from a distance, yet on closer inspection, would portray individualism relating to the personal talents of the maker. This uniqueness in turn would reference the identity and personality of the convict women the creation commemorated.

Participants wishing to partake in this memorial tribute process can access the bonnet pattern template, derived from the Narryna servant’s bonnet, from my

website. I ask that all bonnets be sewn from the same template. Other than including the convict's name, the ship and date of arrival participants may embellish the bonnet in whatever manner they choose. The 'bonnet' merely serves as symbol, a device that conjures up the memory of a convict lass: it is an artistic expression, not factually, historically accurate.

I prefer the bonnet be made out of cream or white coloured material, preferably calico, to replicate the original bonnets worn by assigned servant convict women, as previously stated. The embellishing of the bonnet offers participants the opportunity to be creative and commemorate the life of their chosen convict woman in whatever manner their talents allow. The making of the bonnet creates a link between past and present. The physicality of the connection between participant and convict woman creates a very personal dimension within this conceptual art. Thousands of bonnets continue to arrive. To date I have 20, 066, and I collate, catalogue, photograph, maintain, exhibit the bonnets and prepare for 'blessing' ceremonies. To date I have taken 8000 bonnets to the United Kingdom and Ireland and by 2013 all 25,566 bonnets will have been conveyed to London where they will be 'blessed' in a significant cathedral. I plan to have the bonnets installed in a number of prominent galleries and museums throughout Britain and the Republic of Ireland. I anticipate the return of the bonnets to Australian shores by 2015.

Convict women would have been allocated the least elaborate bonnet until such time as their standing in society changed from being a servant. In actual fact their every day headdress would have been referred to as a 'cap'. The publication, *Women convicts and the female factory – Port Macquarie* [Port Macquarie and

Districts Family History Society, 2010], lists basic clothing worn by convict women, records including 'two calico caps'. After 1824 'First Class' convict women were issued special Sunday clothes and were allocated one white cap and one straw bonnet. A convict bonnet was more generally thought of as clothing suitable to be worn outdoors, such as a straw hat. Sue Felshin's (2010, p. 5.) glossary of 18th century costume terminology definition states:

A bonnet was normally considered to be a headcovering for women with an unstiffened crown (caul?) and a stiff brim going part way around the crown. Possibly the crown was sometimes stiffened or the brim went all the way around, but this would have been unusual.

I have deviated from this description in as much as I have suggested the brim remain compliant, like their wearer. Mop-caps were unsuitable for the project because I needed the provision of a flat brim to allow participants the surface and space to easily display the female convict's particulars.

Cloth featured prominently in the daily life of a convict woman not just in their apparel but also within their daily working lives. Barry York (2008, p. 8.) reveals, with regards to the Parramatta Female Factory, female convicts 'worked as laundresses, needle workers, made hats, rope, wove flax for sail canvas and carded wool'. York states that in 1822 convict women produced the colony's first handcrafted export product of 60 000 yards (65 400 metres) of cloth. As already shown (refer Chapter 1) cloth was the connection between the Cascade Female Factory and the Darlington Probation Settlement, Maria Island.

The importance of cloth and stitch was made particularly evident in the 2010 *Roses from the Heart* art performances in Queensland. A special bonnet was

blessed on the river foreshore very close to the site of the Eagle Farm Female Factory (1836-1839). The bonnet was made for Ann Dean, one of the convict women transported on board the *Rajah* in 1841. It is possible to conjecture Ann may have been one of the convict women who sewed the Rajah Quilt that was eventually presented to Lady Jane Franklin in 1841.

Five women in Queensland joined together to undertake the making of a bonnet for Ann Dean that involved growing and spinning the cotton, weaving the thread, embellishing the bonnet with embroidery and then sewing the material together. Norma Gomez grew the cotton on her property in Queensland. A small amount of ginned cotton was added because bad weather impeded the production of Gomez's cotton resulting in an insufficient yield. Judith Weller and Gomez spun the lint from the raw seeded cotton. Rhonda Karnau then wove the resulting three-ply yarn into fabric. A small amount of the cotton was designated to be coloured with natural vegetable dye. Kathy Deighton used this thread to embellish the bonnet and embroider the convict woman's name and ship onto the brim of the bonnet. Marja Colquhoun, a professional weaver in her own right, cut the cloth into the required pieces, oversewed the material, hand stitched the bonnet ties and assembled the completed bonnet.

The combined contribution of these five women resulted in a unique bonnet that encapsulates the intent of *Roses from the Heart*. This tribute to Ann Dean responds to my selecting the bonnet as symbolism. The makers have exposed themselves to the work practices performed by women of that era and in so doing connected with the lives of many of the females who were condemned to transportation. At the conclusion of the proceedings at Eagle Farm all the bonnets, including Ann

Dean's bonnet, were parcelled up in calico and placed in a vintage saddle bag and given to the rowers who conveyed the consignment down the river in a wooden dinghy.

The second symbolic gesture I have employed within the *Blessing of the Bonnets* has been the inclusion of a wooden dinghy, or occasionally an antique trunk as an alternate "vessel" or container. These objects are metaphors of travel, and in the case of the boat, communicate the importance ships and the sea played in the transportation of convicts to Australia. Even on arrival in Australia boats still played a part in convicts lives not only as vehicles of transport (or escape) but their continued importance requiring more to be built and sails and ropes to be supplied. Convicts were also made to pick oakum. I incorporate boats in a number of ways including authentic wooden boats (*Vessels of Hope*, Fremantle Prison, 2009); cloth bonnets installed in such a way as to imply boats or sections of boats (*Vessels of Hope*, Hawkesbury Regional Art Gallery, Windsor, 2009); exhibitions and school activities incorporating paper boats (*Transported by Water*, 2010); connecting contemporary society with vessels of the day such as the Irish Currach (*Vessels of Hope*, Fremantle, 2009) and events using the boat as the vehicle of transport – as in the *Blessing of the Bonnets* performance, Eagle Farm, Queensland, November 2010. Hundreds of people travelled from interstate to many of these events and in some instances, such as the *Blessing of the Bonnets* at St. Matthews Church, Windsor attendees travelled from interstate and New Zealand. I have incorporated selected case studies of *Blessing of the Bonnets* in Chapter Four and I include documentation of all the associated *Roses from the Heart* events, including *Making their Mark* in an Appendix.

At each art performance the symbolism is retained however the boat or the trunk varies. Each 'container' carries its own tale and that narrative adds to the ceremony. There have been occasions when a boat has been lent, the owner having invested hours of time cleaning and rejuvenating then transporting the craft ready for inclusion in the ceremony.

Each art performance is made distinctive, in tourist terms a value-added experience. Included with the bonnets at the Eagle Farm performance art event were 300 commemorative envelopes franked at the Brisbane G.P.O. recognising the 150 years of Post Office operations in Queensland. Information from the Brisbane History website indicates that the Brisbane General Post Office building was erected in 1871 above the Moreton Bay Female Factory Site. Built in 1829 this Female Factory housed as many as 138 convict women at any one time.

After the Blessing, the bonnets and commemorative envelopes were taken by dinghy to the Logan River. This journey culminated with the continuation of the special postal delivery the following day. The mail bag was transferred to the Logan River and rowed to the hotel jetty at Waterford. I met with the rowers and watched as the saddle bag and contents were handed to a young rider on horseback, accompanied by a second rider and with our group in cars. As the envelopes were unpacked we witnessed them being re-franked at the Kingston Post Office. This post office has a history dating back to 1877 that connects with the first land owner in Kingston, James Trihey, whose property now houses the Butter Factory, built in 1868 (Logan City Council, 2011). The Logan Philatelic Society made the *Roses from the Heart* commemorative envelopes, featuring my portrait, available for purchase. During the previous week I had conducted bonnet

making workshops in this heritage building and the resulting bonnets were exhibited there as part of the community day event. The *Blessing of the Bonnets* performance and subsequent bonnet and ceremonial envelope delivery event helped to memorably mark the historic 150th Queensland Post Office anniversary, while drawing attention to the lives of convict women.

The decision to use the Drama Studio in the Annexe Theatre building, Academy of the Arts, Launceston as the venue to exhibit my 3000 cloth bonnets examination installation, *Sea of Bonnets* (Figure 10), was a deliberate move to showcase the work in a theatrical space in line with the 'performance' aspect of the work. It had been a memorable experience working on this concept at the National Exhibition Centre in Birmingham, United Kingdom, for the 'Festival of Quilts' event, where I chose to exhibit the bonnets in a manner replicating a very large quilt. I encountered problems in that setting that I do not expect to be replicated in my thesis exhibition. In Birmingham I was allotted a very large space however it was not until I had erected the installation that I was told I was occupying the emergency exit area and if any problems arose the expanse of floor the bonnets were covering would instantly become the exit corridor. The other difficulty became apparent on the second day of the exhibition when I noticed black markings that on inspection were revealed as soot covering some of the bonnets. This problem was due to spillage from air conditioning ducts. I was able to remedy the situation by gently brushing the affected bonnets at the cessation of the event without any adverse complications. It was also extremely fortunate that no difficulties presented during the Festival that necessitated evacuation of the building. Had these problems been apparent prior to installing the *Sea of*

Bonnets I would have certainly reconsidered the strategy of installing the work. The situation would have been problematic because my decision to exhibit the bonnets to simulate a colossal quilt was in tune with the festival discourse of quilts and quilting and embedded memory.

The *Sea of Bonnets* exhibition cloth tributes were created by people wanting to connect with the female convict story through a personal association. Bonnets made by descendants allowed for a real sense of intimacy, a tangible object to invest with sentiment. Those who 'adopted' a convict woman also wanted to have a sense of connection. They looked for association with name or place or origin and if that was not forthcoming they chose a crime committed that held significance. Many researched the selected woman's life or learnt about the ship she was transported on. Participating in this component of *Roses from the Heart* led many to research aspects of colonial history. During the process some people even discovered they had convict ancestry.

I consistently accept invitations from around the country to stage *Blessing of the Bonnets* performances, responding to people who in a variety of communities, many in rural areas, wish to participate in this experience as a meaningful expression of connection to this colonial history. As Robert Burgoyne describes in *From Contested to Consensual Memory* (2006) the process of constructing a past that is worthy of remembering typically brings to the fore multiple perspectives that together reinforce the incident. Burgoyne (2006, p. 209.) quotes John Bodnar who writes:

Public memory is produced from a political discussion that involves...
fundamental issues about the entire existence of a society: its organisation,
structures of power, and the very meaning of its past and its present.

Burgoyne then hypothesises that public memory is shaped to embrace a collective acceptance of the past; one that fits into the current public milieu, that is useful to the present and also the future, serving to mediate 'the competing restatements of reality' that arise from competing expressions - be they 'official or commercial interpretations of past experiences' (2006, p. 215). Burgoyne believes that enmeshed within the social system are passionately held incompatible perspectives - such as witnessed in variances (2006, p.209):

...between generations, between racial and ethnic groups, between different classes and different regions of the country and between men and women that public memory's function is to act as conciliator between these opposing anomalies, to 'mediate the compelling ..[rehashing] of reality these antimonies express'.

There has been a change in the public attitude to convictism in the past decade. Heather Garnsey, the executive officer of *the Society of Australian Genealogists*, has emphasised the interest that genealogy enthusiasts have in finding their own convict ancestor (in Stevens, 2007).

For Australians finding a convict ancestor is the Holy Grail, especially a First Fleet ancestor... A lot of people have a romantic notion of the convict period. I joke in Australia it's the equivalent of royalty, to some extent.

Garnsey pointed to the 1980s as a turning point, suggesting that the Bicentenary of European settlement brought a change in attitude. Whereas previously having a convict in the family was unwelcome, 'a social no-no', in today's society, as

Prime Minister of the day, John Howard stated in the *Daily Telegraph* (2007), 'Australians ... don't actually feel the least bit offended that many of our ancestors came here as convicts. It's almost a badge of honour for many Australians.' The celebration of the 1770 landing of Captain James Cook in Australia followed by the 1988 revelries at the anniversary of 200 years of European settlement heralded an attachment to our convict ancestry. The once 'hidden, out of sight' emphasis towards convict heritage changed into a mark of respect. Josh Hanna of Ancestry.com has explained that it was the fear of discovering a convict in the family forty or fifty years ago that discouraged Australians from exploring their past.

Realistically, this is quite rare these days, which is ironic as convict heritage is exactly what more and more Australians now hope to discover when they start their research.

Christine Yeats, the New South Wales State Records Public Access manager agreed with Hanna's assessment commenting that the public 'were [now] keen to claim a convict' (in Stevens, 2007).

Negative attitudes to convict statues were framed in the earliest days of colonial society. Alison Alexander (2010, p. 81), recounts the position of Janet Ranken, a recent emigrant to Van Diemen's Land in 1821, who wrote to her family that 'the society here is abominable' – they all only wanted to make money by 'hook or by crook.' As an example, Edward Lord, officer of marines, commandant, pastoralist and merchant who built the first private house in Hobart Town in 1804, was acceptable, however his ex-convict wife, Maria Risely, whose daughter and sister had visited Janet Ranken, was not. 'Of Maria Janet wrote, I have never returned

the call yet nor shall... I shall rather be without the kindnesses Mrs. Lord has in her power to show me than visit her'. It was this stigma that as Alexander notes, 'did not vanish overnight' (2010 p. 260).

Through my art, especially through this recent Memorial, *Roses from the Heart*, I am offering the public a forum to learn about the female convict story and to acknowledge the value of convict women's contribution to society, both socially and economically. Through ritual, art and performance, the Memorial can act as a revival or revealing of collective memory free from stigma.

In his investigation into the *Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum* (2006) Burgoyne suggests that there are three types 'or subsets of collective memory' which he refers to as the 'vernacular, official and commercial'. In describing the vernacular Burgoyne states (in Hodgkin and Radstone, 2006, pp. 210):

Memories carried forward from first-hand experience in small-scale communities; it conveys the sense of what 'social reality feels like rather than what it should be'. It expresses a sense of loyalty to local and familiar places. Collections of posters, advertisements, contracts, photographs, costumes, newspaper articles etc. provide a vivid portrait of the texture of everyday life in specific locations....

Burgoyne (2006) explains that 'Official memory' is a commemorative discourse about the past that offers an overarching, patriotic interpretation of events and persons, more often than not produced by Governments or civic institutions. Burgoyne sees the official presentation of the past as being offered 'on an abstract basis of timelessness and sacredness.' Further to this idea Burgoyne adds that 'it seeks to neutralise competing interpretations of the past that might

threaten social unity' (2006, pp. 210-211). The third component Burgoyne proposes in the memory system is the commercial recycling of the past where commemoration is progressively articulated via appeal to heritage. Burgoyne proposes that commercial products elicit memory (2006, p. 211).

...representations as an aspect of national heritage, through strategies designed to heighten a product's visibility, legibility to its audiences, and resonance as a specifically [National] good.

With the UNESCO inscribing of eleven Australian Convict Sites as World Heritage in July 2010 opportunities have increased for expanding the nation's cultural tourism, making heritage visible. (I address further aspects of cultural tourism in Chapter 5). A search of the internet for 'World Heritage Convict Sites' locates websites such as *About.com Australia Travel* where Larry Rivera (2011) writes about the 'Australian World Heritage Sites inscribed by the United Nations' with the accompanying picture, an image from Sarah Quine for Tourism Tasmanian highlighting the Port Arthur ruins. The search suggests that there are 4 320 000 results for this topic available for analysis. An image by Sarah Quine of the Port Arthur ruins appears on the Port Arthur website under the heading of *Fact Sheet, World Heritage and the Australian Convict Sites*. This page explains that the eleven sites were selected because 'they are unparalleled as the best surviving examples of the forced migration of convicts' (Port Arthur Historic Sites, 2010). Further to this the fact sheet states that:

The inscription of a site(s) on the World Heritage List brings an inevitable awareness and curiosity about the site(s) outstanding values.

World Heritage Listing can result in building the capacity for sustainable tourism, raising public awareness of conservation principles, sharing expertise and knowledge with other sites and protected areas, and building an increased understanding of the need to protect heritage for future generations.

I suggest my art using the bonnet symbol to represent convict women covers both the 'vernacular' and the 'consumer' strands that Burgoyne speaks of.

Observation of website support systems for family historians indicates a response to growing consumer interest. I would include sites such as Ancestry.com and numerous genealogy sites, operating as rootswebs or blogs such as My Heritage genealogy blog. The popular SBS television programme, *Who Do You Think You Are?* was nominated as the most popular factual program at the 2011 Logies. SBS has hosted or made four series of this show and DVDs of each of these series are sold on-line via their website.

The suppressing of knowledge about the convict ancestry in one's family left a void in family history research that is now being addressed with the reconciling of one's past. Family historians have led the field in this aspect. The majority of bonnets made by descendants for their convict ancestor are accompanied by a researched history. As Alison Alexander explains, in the past the most ardent of supporters of covering up our convict heritage have been those wanting to hide their convict associations. Alexander references the example of convict descendant, Tasmanian politician, Alfred Pillinger, who was Minister for Lands and Works in 1889 when the convict buildings at Port Arthur were considered obsolete and gazetted for destruction. There were objections, and a successful challenge ensued on the grounds that keeping the buildings would be good for

tourism and protect heritage. This outcome was not endorsed by Pillinger who as Alexander notes :

considered [the buildings] monuments of disgrace to the British Government. If there was anything good about them then there might be some reason for preserving them, but when he thought of the cruelty and misery that had been practised and experienced there, he had not the slightest sympathy for those who wished them to remain (Alexander, 2010 p. 184).

Pillinger's attitude was in line with the *Mercury* newspaper editorial of the day, cited by Nicola Goc, which stated:

Quite time that the colony was freed from the last vestiges of a system which was got rid of with some trouble', and called for the demolition of Port Arthur. At the same time tourism was being trumpeted as the savior of the island state. '...The new Port Arthur ... by the 1880s, (just thirty plus years post transportation in the colony) was accommodating thousands of visitors a season, [and] had become a tourist icon (Goc, 2002, p. 22).

In a similar fashion, although more recently, the Cascades Female Factory was destined to become a car park however intervention by women in the late 1960s temporarily saved it. Having been sold in 1904 and subdivided, a gradual pillaging of almost all the buildings and above-ground structures has taken place. In the 1970s the Government did begin using the area as a car park and bitumen was laid to prevent cars from becoming bogged. It was not until 1 August 2007 that the Cascades Female Factory (Yards 1, 3 and 4 South) was entered in the National Heritage List (NHL).

The journeys that are integral to the process of *Roses from the Heart* bring the convict experience to a public now eager to accept and understand it. Prior to the

final permanent public installation planned for the entire 25,566 bonnets 'transporting' the bonnets overseas will be a reversal of the convict journey, albeit symbolic. This journey also acknowledges that the sentence convicts received, generally for seven to fourteen years, was effectively a life sentence therefore for most the hope of returning to their homeland was non-existent. In taking the cloth bonnet tributes to the northern hemisphere I am essentially, 'taking the girls back home'. The most recent plans for extending *Roses from the Heart* and 'returning home' are documented in the 'Postscript'.

On August 28, 2010 I held a *Blessing of the Bonnets* performance at the Cobh wharf, County Cork, Ireland and this event proved to be so successful that it has become the forerunner to a *Blessing of the Bonnets* ceremony to be held on this site annually. On 24 July 2010 the second of these events was held to coincide with the berthing of the luxury liner the *Dawn Princess*. On board 1500 passengers from Australia disembarked to attend a special 'Australia Day' celebration with the *Blessing of the Bonnets* performance promoted as the main attraction. A variety of print media publications, cruise ship newsletter, Facebook, Tourism Ireland, Cobh Tourism, Irish Weather Online (IWO), bloggers and others contributed to the on-line promotion of the Australian convict women's story connected with the *Blessing of the Bonnets* ceremony. The Labour website provided the Mayor of Cobh, Councillor Jim Quinlan's, entire civic welcome speech for the Australian Ambassador, including this following recognition:

Christina Henri's "Roses from the Heart" project was created to commemorate the 25,266 convict women who were transported from Ireland

and Britain between 1788 and 1853 and we will hopefully continue Cobh's participation in this project into the future (Quinlan, 2011).

I plan to create a similar annual *Blessing of the Bonnets* performance at the Waterside Pavilion, Mawson Place, Hobart commencing in 2012. As in Cobh, the performance will commemorate the lives of all convict women transported to Australia with a specific focus on a different convict transport ship each year. As with the Cobh wharf the annual event in Hobart would be held close to where the convict ships dropped anchor with their 'cargo' of women.

The following chapter documents in greater detail selected case studies of key *Blessing of the Bonnets* performances that have been developed in the course of research including events held in Parramatta, New South Wales; York, Western Australia; Cobh, County Cork, Ireland and Birmingham, England.

Chapter Four:

Roses from the Heart: Case Studies

Over the past three years, in the course of this project, I have devised a number of *Blessing of the Bonnet* performance art ceremonies as part of *Roses from the Heart*. I feature three of these in this chapter, selected for their varied contributions to the cause of retelling the convict experience in Australia and internationally. I also detail the exhibition *Sea of Bonnets* which formed the main component of the *Roses from the Heart* exhibition at the 'Festival of Quilts' at the National Exhibition Centre in Birmingham (2010). In light of these and other performances detailed in the Appendix, a consideration of my position in relation to history and in the context of *Roses from the Heart* concludes the chapter.

I have chosen to detail the Parramatta 'Blessing' (2008) because this was a significant event with over 600 people attending and their 3000 bonnets being blessed. Many of the attendees were descended from convict women. The *Blessing of the Bonnets* in Cobh (2010) was an important occasion, being the first time a commemorative event had been held at the wharf where 102 convict ships departed from for Australia. The *Blessing of the Bonnet* performance art at York, Western Australia (2010) was significant because women belonging to the local County Women's Association helped to organise the event which was embraced by the York Shire Council. Most of those who assisted with arrangements would have known little about the female convict

story. However, York being an historic, rurally-isolated town, residents would have empathy with the female convicts' dilemma in coping with the solitude and desolation of a foreign land isolated from home and family. The final case study is a record of the installation *Sea of Bonnets* that was the major exhibit feature at the *Festival of Quilts*, Birmingham, which saw the project placed in an exhibition context for the first time and was the forerunner of the examination installation.

On 10 April 2008 a blessing performance was presented at St. John's Cathedral, Parramatta. Convict women had been married and their children baptised in this heritage building erected in 1803. Funerals were conducted at St. John's and today headstones in the church cemetery are reminders of convict settlers. Amongst the 600 attendees at the 'Blessing' were many descendants of First Fleet convicts, some of whose forebears were buried half a mile away in the first European burial cemetery in Australia established in 1790. Organising the blessing involved approval from the church administration who requested that this performance be termed a 'Memorial of the Bonnets' as their deciphering of scripture disallowed blessing of inanimate objects. This puzzled me as fleets of boats have been blessed for generations (for example, see *Mission to Seafarers*, 2011). As St. John's Cathedral was historically central to this particular blessing I agreed to the request, renaming - on this one occasion - the blessing the *Memorial of the Bonnets* (Figure 11).

Many members of genealogy groups attended the ceremony including Family History Groups representing the Blue Mountains, Botany Bay, Camden, Central

Coast, Hawkesbury, Holroyd, Milton-Ulladulla, Parramatta and District, Port Macquarie and Wyong. Church organist David Osborne attended. Students from the Wollongong Public School and Our Lady of Mercy College Girls High School participated as did the Thomas Pattison School Signing Choir. I specifically desired a signing choir to signify that convict women were restricted to silence within the female factories and that they developed ways of communicating using non verbal gestures.

During the Memorial Canon Bruce Morrison reflected on the convict women's lives. Simone Eastcote sang *The Rose* and harpist Angela Sciberras provided lilting music that created the ambience for the moving ceremony of bonnets being placed into a wooden dinghy whilst the convict women's names were recited. Tessa Simpson, attired in the dress of the day, spoke in the first person about her ancestor convict woman Susannah Lillamont's life. I spoke about *Roses from the Heart*, its concept and its continuation into the future until the aim for a bonnet tribute for each convict woman eventuated. As the performance ended I handed out lavender bags and roses to all. As people had travelled long distances and as many were staying overnight in the city I held a special dinner at Old Government House, Parramatta. I invited local historian, Carol Liston to be guest speaker and share her understanding of the female convicts' experiences at the nearby Parramatta Female Factory. The Parramatta performance art involved a great deal of organising even including people dressing in period costume. I received assistance from the Parramatta City Council through the Parramatta Artists Studios in the provision of refreshments and Helen Walker and her family sourced the boat and supported

my endeavours in numerous ways. Many members of the Family History groups who attended have continued to support *Roses from the Heart* and a number intend travelling to London for the final 'Blessing' in 2013.

On 24-25 October 2009 residents of Beverley, a rural town in Western Australia, displayed bonnets they had made for *Roses from the Heart* in the towns heritage museum, the Dead Finish Museum. An invitation was extended for me to visit the area and on 16 February 2010, I gave a talk on the relevance of my art to cultural tourism in the Lesser Hall to a group of over 140 residents. This event was the impetus for members of the York Country Women's Association of Western Australia deciding to assist me with the arranging for a *Blessing of the Bonnets* in their town. The performance was held in the Holy Trinity Church (1854), York, on 3 July 2010. A full day of festivities generated by *Roses from the Heart* was a resounding success supported by the Shire Council and its constituents. The *RRR Network News*, a publication that connects rural, remote and regional women throughout Western Australia, published an article about the 'Blessing' in the Autumn issue 11 (Murray, 2011, pp. 18-19). Weeks of organising by Jean Wicks and a committee appointed by the York CWA resulted in a memorable event. A number of distinguished guests included the Shire President Mr. Pat Hooper and Councillors Roy Scott, Trevor Randell and Tricia Walters. Mr. Michael Nolan, Honorary Irish Consul in WA and his wife Eleanor, the Hon. Judy Moylan MP and the Hon. Mia Davies MLC were present and the CWA State President, Mrs. Alice Adamson, the State Magazine Officer, Mrs. Maureen Wilson and the York CWA President, Mrs. Janet Taber attended. The Reverend Raymond Molyneux welcomed hundreds of

further attendees. Church members from a number of dominations within the Shire officiated in the event. The towns Freeman, Mr. Gordon Marwick and the Citizen of the Year, Mrs. Gwen Gentle took part and music was incorporated into the performance with Fred Rea, Fiona Rea and Ross Ainsworth contributing. Participants responded to Robyn Murray's narrative reading that revealed the life of her convict ancestor Louisa Underwood. Following this presentation I shared stories from *Roses from the Heart*. Each person present in the church then placed a bonnet tribute into one of the three awaiting antique trunks after which all the clergy present took part in the blessing ritual. A clear memory I retain is of two boys carefully placing bonnets for their ancestors into one of the trunks (Figure 12). The performance concluded with the lighting of four candles in memory of all convict women.

This event attracted enormous interest and brought residents together in a desire to be part of an international memorial. The community was unified as part of a ceremony that places value on life and acknowledges the contribution convict women made as they attempted to forge a place for themselves in their new surroundings. As always the *Blessings* serve as a cathartic experience for descendants of convict women and brings colonial history to the fore for all participants. Many in rural areas in particular empathise with the convict women who were assigned to work as servants often on outlying properties where they experienced hardship and isolation.

On 29 August 2010 I held a *Blessing of the Bonnets* (Figure 13) at the Cobh quayside in County Cork, Ireland. Many convict transport ships bound for Australia, departed from the Cobh wharf. The first convict ship to leave Cobh

was the *Queen* in 1791. Cobh wharf, with its view across Cork Harbour to Spike Island where convicts had been imprisoned awaiting transportation, was the perfect platform to hold this performance art. Debbie Walsh the Cobh Heritage Centre Manager and Irish musician Dave McGilton assisted with organising the event. Although I had arranged to have a wooden boat at the ceremony a last minute setback occurred and an antique trunk substituted as the repository for the bonnets (as mentioned earlier, a trunk easily accommodated metaphors of travel, vessel and containment). Attendees travelled from throughout the north and south of the island and from overseas. The Mayor of Cobh, Finbarr O'Driscoll, and the Australian Ambassador to Ireland, Mr. Bruce Davis attended. Proceedings commenced with Walsh welcoming guests. Musicians Fiona Rea and Latiesha Boucher performed selected songs from my newly released CD, *Roses from the Heart*. Following this I spoke about the *Roses from the Heart* journey including future plans. Father Leamy blessed the bonnet tributes. Amongst the guests were Colin and Lou Gray who travelled from New Zealand to pay their respects to convict woman Mary Connor, Colin Gray's ancestor. The entire day was devoted to highlighting the female convict story and the connection between Cobh, Ireland and Australia.

A *Roses from the Heart* performance was held that evening at the Cobh Heritage Centre which included dialogue and music. Special reference was made to the convict women on board the ship the *Elizabeth 11* that sailed from Cobh on 27 August 1827 arriving in Port Jackson on 12 January 1828 with 194 convict women. Amongst the attendees at the concert in Cobh was Australian academic Julie Gough who was undertaking an artist's residency in Cork. Gough

was in Ireland as an Aboriginal Australian who had recently discovered a number of convict ancestors in her family tree and was researching their lives. I was unaware Gough was in Ireland and it was an impromptu gesture inviting her to join me on stage. Gough is an artist, writer, and curator living in Hobart, Tasmania. Her art explores the notions of ephemerality, absence and recurrence, concentrating on colonial cross-cultural encounters and using tools such as installation, sound, and video. Much of Gough's art addresses contemporary and historical impacts of colonisation. In 2009 American academic and artist Pat Hickman wrote an article 'Why weren't we told? Two Tasmanian artists' that examined both Julie Gough's and my own art with our individual focus on colonisation. Hickman reflected on Gough's use of art in defining her Aboriginal genealogy. At the time Hickman's story was published I would not have foreseen this chance meeting with Gough in Ireland that led to an unrehearsed collaboration in County Cork, bringing the Australian experience back to Ireland. As Gough and I stood arm in arm on stage our emotion was undisguised as we wept tears of empathy for ancestors oppressed and for the women who had left from Cove, sailing as convicts to Australia. That moment of shared experience offered a release for the silenced voices of the past. Clearly Hickman, as an outsider, identified the interconnectedness of Gough's and my art practice when she chose to compare our work.

In contrast to the Blessing performances described above I have chosen to conclude the case studies with documentation on the exhibition I held in England in 2010 when I was offered an opportunity to exhibit in an extremely spacious venue which allowed for the displaying of thousands of bonnets.

In 2010 Andrew Salmon, one of the two directors of *Creative Exhibitions*, a small company that runs major textile events overseas, invited me to be the main exhibitor at the *Festival of Quilts* at the National Exhibition Centre in Birmingham. I was allocated a large section of floor space to house my *Sea of Bonnets* installation of 8000 bonnets. I was lent a beautiful old wooden dinghy, complete with a mast, which featured in the installation. The boat was centred towards the back of the space away from the viewing gallery. The bonnets were placed around the boat in ever increasing circles until all available space was covered. I used drop cloths and sheets to cover the cement floor and then laid the bonnets, completely concealing the fabric underneath. From a distance the work appeared like an enormous quilt. I placed bonnets in the boat and stacked them to a height that allowed the top layer of bonnet's ribbons to hang over the side of the dinghy. The old wooden boat was integral to the installation as reference to the importance of boats in that era.

During the first two days of the *Festival of Quilts* the *Sea of Bonnets* installation was viewed through a specially constructed gap in the wall dividing the public from the exhibition. Directly to the left of this gap I was allocated a stand and a substantial stretch of wall that provided the opportunity to exhibit more bonnets. I specifically requested this arrangement so that the public could connect with the bonnets, closely examine the creativity involved in each separate tribute, see the name of the woman they represented and touch bonnets.

Three rows of bonnets were arranged at eye level for ease of inspection. Amongst the elaborately embellished bonnets were 108 representing the

convict women who died aboard the doomed *Amphitrite*. One of these bonnets was made out of black fabric with colourful embroidery expressly personalised to mirror the 'lucky black bonnet' (Figure 14) owned by convict woman Margaret Dunbar who drowned clutching her hat. The remaining bonnets were made out of calico and unadorned except for the woman's name, the ship's name and a small matching black bow. The details were written in a similar manner using a special fine black fabric pen. The choice of tying identical black ribbons on the caps was to show respect for the women who had died in such dreadful circumstances. Visitor feedback supported this decision. I placed twelve long stemmed roses on the floor beneath the displayed bonnets in memory of the convict women's twelve children who also perished at sea. Throughout the last couple of days of the Festival people took it upon themselves to walk the length of the wall on which the bonnets were displayed and enter the space behind where the *Sea of Bonnets* was installed. Onlookers walked around the edge of the bonnets that I had roped off, simulating the rails on a ship's deck. I had spread rose petals all around the periphery as a gesture for the 8000 convict women the bonnets symbolised, most of whom received no special farewells as they sailed off into the unknown.

Interaction with visitors to the Festival was continuous throughout the four-day period. It was obvious the bonnet installation and the subject matter appealed to the audience. On occasion men and women, alike, wept as they were told the female convict story. I had already received bundles of bonnets from people who knew *Roses from the Heart* was to be featured at the Festival. Over 40,000 people attended the Festival that year and the majority who

viewed the bonnets learnt about convict women for the first time. Hundreds of people promised to participate and a year later bonnets are still arriving with notation that the *Festival of Quilts* was where they heard about the *Roses from the Heart* Memorial. Many of the bonnets that have arrived in Tasmania come from Europe, especially from France, Germany and the Netherlands. I was invited to write articles in magazines including the French magazine *Quiltmania* (issue no 81, pp. 24-27), *Les Nouvelles Patchwork et Creation Textile Magazine* (no 108, 2011, pp. 52-53) and *Patchwork Gilde* (no. 102, March 2011, pp. 42-43, 54). Valerie Nesbitt of *justhands-on.tv* filmed an interview with me and this was placed on the company's website. An image of the individually displayed bonnets as well as the installation, *Sea of Bonnets*, was included in that documentary. Valerie Nesbitt also organised filming on behalf of the company *Twisted Thread* which established the *Festival of Quilts* that has become the largest quilt show in Europe.

Photographs of the *Sea of Bonnets* taken at the *Festival of Quilts* show a collection of bonnets that appear as one major quilt carrying the stories of not only the convict women they recall but the aspirations of those who fashioned them. Quilts function as objects of memory which, as Paul Arnett reminds his audience, encompass family, history, community, patience, work and beauty (in Zegart, 2011).

Kay Polson Grubola, artist and independent curator, Louisville, Kentucky, whose opinions are included in the documentary *Why Quilts Matter* (2011) refers to the array of information that can be gleaned from quilts. Grubola

suggests that anthropologists and historians can gather stories and clues from quilts that cannot be gathered from other sources.

Although *Roses from the Heart* is a collection of bonnets that will eventually be installed in a permanent manner, the process continues of receiving bonnets and conducting *Blessing of the Bonnets* performance art and exhibiting the bonnets in a variety of configurations that attract attention to the art and the history it conveys. Each bonnet is almost a quilt in itself. As Californian artists Diana McClun and Laura Nownes state:

... a quilt is more than fabric .. and stitches. It is a rare and wonderful creation of the soul which expresses our personal statements, feelings, thoughts and loves. It is a bridge that encourages friendships.It links us with those who've stitched before and who will follow as it gives a wordless but meaningful description of who we are and what we feel. A quilt is all these- and more: it is the embodiment of love (Wales, 2011).

I envisage that, like those who participated or viewed the work in these case studies, later generations, will visit the permanent installation of *Roses from the Heart* and be affected by the individual bonnets created by thousands of different pairs of hands and appreciate the gestures that are embodied within the entire collection which will emulate a monumental quilt. When finalised *Roses from the Heart* will require a specially designed venue because its considerable dimensions will preclude its inclusion at any of the female factory sites within Australia. The site that I foresee as the appropriate location lies within a heritage community and incorporating this major art installation would add another layer of interest for the cultural tourist looking to find meaningful ways of engaging with Australia's colonial heritage. Both *Roses*

from the Heart and *Making their Mark* are beacons to shine a light on the differing narratives of convictism. However whereas *Making their Mark* comprises a series of bonnets displayed at a number of heritage sites, *Roses from the Heart* will draw interest because it is the first memorial to all convict women. The project has captivated international involvement and the immensity of the memorial echoes the enormity of the convict experience. It is framed historically, if idiosyncratically.

In 2004 Jeannie Mooney, an American artist from Bangor, Maine, visited Tasmania as part of an Emerging Artist Grant awarded through the American Craft Council. Mooney used art and performance to tell the convict women's story. Her ideas incorporated performance art. Titled *28 Aprons* the work symbolised the twenty-eight years between 1828 and 1856 when thousands of Irish and British females were transported to Van Diemen's Land. Mooney travelled from the United States of America to Ireland taking with her the cloth she washed in Irish waters and from which she subsequently produced twenty-eight aprons. As part of her residency Mooney was allocated a space at the Lady Jane Franklin Gallery at Lenah Valley, built for Governor John Franklin's wife in 1843. During her stay Mooney hung the aprons on eucalyptus trees on Mount Wellington. In conversation with Mooney in 2004 I was informed that the symbolism of Mount Wellington related to the mountains constant presence in the convict women's existence at the factory. To complete her performance Mooney positioned a wooden chair on the cement surface in Yard One at the Cascades Female Factory. There she stayed quietly sewing away looking up from time to time at the stone wall directly in front of her, with its

glassless, irregularly barred window spaces. Included on each apron was a number stitched in red representing the years from 1828 through to 1856, the life of the female factory. Later the completed aprons were hung, their numbers in sequence from 1828 to 1856, from a wooden rail that was positioned halfway along the wall dividing Yard One and Yard Two, facing Mount Wellington and included in the visiting artists' *Mountain Festival* event. Mooney's work was highlighted in the New York magazine, *Surface Design Journal* (Beck 2005, pp. 38-41). Mooney elects to work with raw materials and she deliberately chooses to incorporate repetitive processes that mark the passage of time (Mooney, 2011).

My work is imbued with similar ideals. I deliberately engage in techniques that are very time consuming in order to better understand the lives of the subjects with which my art seeks to connect. I find it significant that textile, text, sequence and time-marking are all chosen means of expression for artists wishing to symbolise the experience of convictism and incarceration. The emerging of a shared – largely visual – language to express these experiences indicates its potential as a tool for cultural tourism.

Ann Curthoys and John Docker investigate *Is history fiction?* (2006) in their book of the same name. They offer the reader a number of examples including a section assigned to Australia's History Wars. The authors share an observation made by Tessa Morris-Suzuki in 2002:

We who live in the present did not create the violence and hatred of the past.
But the violence and hatred of the past, to some degree, created us. It formed

the material world and the ideas with which we live, and will continue to do so unless we take active steps to unmake their consequences.

Curthoys and Docker discuss historian Keith Windschuttle's *The Fabrication of Aboriginal History* (2006) in which he asserts that the widely held belief of Tasmania's history stained with the blood of a violent frontier, was untrue, criticising historians Lyndall Ryan and Henry Reynolds who, he states, 'generally emphasised the violence of the Tasmanian frontier from the first British settlement in 1803 onwards...' and offers a rebuttal to their research (2006 p. 230).

Historians responded to Windschuttle's 436 page epistle including Ryan who suggested that, 'in some cases issues raised were more matters of definition and interpretation than 'error' (in Curthoys and Docker, 2006, p. 231).

Curthoys and Docker contend that 'bitter public conflicts over history' should not result in abolishing this form of debate. The authors argue that historians have the opportunity to learn from the history wars, suggesting that recognition of difference must be accompanied by transparent evidence with specific reference to their historical sources to support their opinion. Another problem that Curthoys and Docker raise relates to historians making moral condemnation regarding the past, a situation that can be recognized in attitudes to convict ancestors. They again quote Tessa Morris-Suzuki who considers the weight of 'implication':

'Implication' means the existence of a conscious connection to the past, but also the reality of being (in a legal sense) 'an accessory after the fact'. It is the status of those who have not stolen land from others, but who live on stolen land; the

status of those who have not participated in massacres, but have participated in the process by which the memory of those massacres have been obliterated; the status of those who have not injured others, but allow the consequences of past injury to go unaddressed. 'Implication' means that the prejudices which sustained past acts of aggression live on into the present, and will lodge themselves in the minds of the present generation unless we make the effort to remove them.' (2006, p. 234)

These ideas of history drawn from a revisionist Aboriginal past seem to also be useful as a means to understand the histories of convict women. Author Kate Grenville employs history for evocation and commemoration of the convict past in her trilogy *The Secret River* (2005), *The Lieutenant* (2008) and *Sarah Thornhill* (2011). Grenville has experienced attacks by historians who, as she states, have 'distorted' or 'fabricated her words' regarding her historical fiction. Using her website as an open letter Grenville (2007) has responded to allegations made by historian Inga Clendinnen, contending that:

[Clendinnen's] argument was that, in discussing *The Secret River*, I'd claimed that it was history. She gave no evidence for this view, for the very good reason that there is none.

Grenville concludes with the circumspect observation that:

There's an important discussion to be had about the roles of fiction and history, and the claims each makes for itself. However, that discussion isn't well served by such manipulation of sources.

During 2011 I attended book launches at Fullers Bookshop in Hobart for both Kate Grenville (*Sarah Thornhill*) and Rohan Wilson (*The Roving Party*).

Grenville was cautious in her response regarding the issue of historic novelists,

not wishing to be misquoted. In contrast Rohan Wilson answered unequivocally that historians are not the sole guardians of the truth. In *The Roving Party*, his first novel, Wilson 're-imagines Batman and his eight companions - including Black Bill, an indigenous Tasmanian brought up by a white settler - as they go about their blood-thirsty business in frontier territory' (Stegar, 2011). Wilson does not hesitate to express his views regarding the fate of the Tasmanian Aborigines. 'I'm not pulling any punches in this book at all. I'm trying to paint it as I think it would have been.' Rohan has extensively researched his characters and he believes that Batman was a significant participant in the slaughtering of Tasmania's indigenous population in the 19th century (Stegar, 2011). Wilson contends:

There are historians who think genocide is too strong a word and there are others who think it's appropriate. From my reading, and reading both sides [of the argument], I think it's completely appropriate.

Both Grenville and Wilson's novels have been recognised with the prestigious Vogel Prize Award, Grenville for *Lilian's Story* (1985) and Wilson for *Roving Party* (2011). Grenville's novels sell in the hundreds of thousands and her stories appeal to readers who are attracted to the historical context and learn through the meticulously researched facts that Grenville's characters bring to life. The same may be said of Wilson's work.

Curthoy's and Docker's 2006 questioning of historians' approach to providing the public with 'the truth' about history raises a number of issues. I would contend that there are many different approaches that offer insight into the past including oral history, archival research, artifacts and art. Without Old

Stone Age cave art, for example the famous Horse painting (c. 15,000-10,000 BC), Lascaux, France, our understanding of life some 40,000 years ago would be less understood. Curthoy's and Docker conclude that the global interconnectedness exemplified in today's society through new technology is changing the playing field. Historians are currently facing difficulties in tracing 'local history, societies, economies and cultures' (2006, p.235) as transmigration contributes to the emerging transnational community. The authors reference Minoru Hokari, a Japanese scholar of Australian history who died in 2004 and whose research centred on globalising Australia's indigenous history by connecting theirs and Asian history, moving away from a 'national agenda to a global perspective' (2006, p. 236). This new approach they surmise will invariably produce 'new ways of understanding, assessing and debating historical truth' (2006, pp. 236-237).

In the same way visual arts have the capacity to perform an important function in bringing history alive. The debate as to what history can be is now so open that it is viable for an artist to use history to convey a site, a situation, the plight of a convict women, 'as I think it would have been' to use Wilson's words. No doubt many of the thousands of readers of historical novels will be motivated to search further and connect with historical research. Art in its various forms attracts audiences and informs in a manner that leads to further enquiry. The opportunity is created for historic exploration initiated through personal encounters by way of art-generated avenues. Art is a valuable tool in exploring ways to translate an interest in history into a desire to visit and engage with heritage sites. In the following chapter I investigate and elaborate on the

importance of art as a tool for attracting and captivating the cultural tourist, an important component in the conceptualising of this project.

Chapter Five:

Art, History and Cultural Tourism

Cultural tourism is a growing economic interest world-wide. Tourism Tasmania and private operators have the opportunity to capitalise on the inscription of five Australian Convict World Heritage Sites (2010) within the State. Tasmania's proliferation of colonial properties and rich convict heritage identifies the island as a significant destination for tourists desiring to connect with Australia's colonial history, one that links to many countries including France, Mauritius, Canada, America, England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

Committed cultural tourism operators such as David and Anne Kernke, owners of the historic property Shene in Pontville, built by convict labour, are experienced in heritage management and promote their business in the broader context of the Midlands Heritage Highway tourism venture. Their website is extremely easy to navigate and offers excellent information about their property and neighbouring heritage locations. A survey by Tourism Research Australia undertaken in 2008 records that over fifty percent of all international visitors to Australia participate in at least one heritage activity. International tourists most popular destination, with a sixty-one percent participation rate, was visiting a historical or heritage building (Australia Council for the Arts, 2011). Tourism Tasmania recently launched a new tourism brand that publicises Tasmania as, 'a world apart, not a world away' which is promoted on the Tourism website as DiscoverTasmania (2010a). In

conjunction with this new branding approach Tourism Tasmania has also initiated a 'Visiting Journalist Program' (VJP: Tourism Tasmania, 2010b) that invites carefully selected media from important locations interstate and overseas to come and experience Tasmania's tourism products, in exchange for quality editorial exposure. Editorial promotion is judged to be a more credible option, superseding the once sought after glossy full-page advertisements (Tourism Tasmania, 2009-2010). In Tourism Tasmania's latest electronic subscriber media newsletter, they include a section of *Heritage and Culture* and the sub headings link the topics of World Heritage Convict Sites, Convict History and Genealogy, Historic Railways, Maritime History, Museums and Art Galleries and Walking in History. Under the sub-heading 'World Heritage Convict Sites' information leads the reader to material publicising convict sites such as Sarah Island, the Ross Female Factory and the Richmond Gaol. This linking is a vital marketing strategy to encourage tourists to visit numerous convict sites within Tasmania. The following paragraph from the Department's newsletter (2009-2011): states

The sites offer some of the best-kept records of convict history anywhere in the world. Visitors to Tasmania, especially those from the UK (many of whom have close links to the convict history), will be able to follow the convict trail and trace their ancestors back in time.

The mention of the 'Convict Trail' leads back to my first thinking on this project, recognising the lack of signage on Tasmanian Highways linking tourists to female convicts sites. To date there is no 'convict trail' signage signifying the existence of and directions to such heritage locations as the Cascades, Ross and Launceston Female Factory sites or the Watch House in

George Town. A strong case exists for Tourism Tasmania to include some of the properties where convict women were assigned, such as Runnymede, Clarendon and Entally House, within a bonnet 'convict trail' map. The positive response to my approach in highlighting the convict women's story affirms that there is a huge interest in learning about our convict past.

Under the heading 'Convict History and Genealogy' Tourism Tasmania makes mention of Tasmania's convict history and the Probation System along with the Anti-Transportation League. They provide links for related experiences and under the heading of 'Genealogy' they link visitors with the Family History Society of Tasmania and the Archives Office at the State Library in Hobart. There are accompanying images on the pages of the 'World Heritage Convict Site' and the 'Convict History and Genealogy'. The 'World Heritage Convict Site' section has an image of a male convict dressed in the regulation brown and yellow attire, manacled and sitting on the sandstone steps of a building at Port Arthur. A second image shows a view looking outwards; from inside a convict constructed- building that faces Carnarvon Bay, Port Arthur. On the page 'Convict History and Genealogy' the image is that of a convict-constructed building at Port Arthur World Heritage Site. It is disappointing to note that none of these three images connect in any way with the female convict story.

In 1996 Michael Hall and Simon McArthur edited the book *Heritage Management in Australia and New Zealand – the Human Dimension*. In the introduction to Chapter 22, 'European Culture and the Built Environment', Hall, McArthur and Chris Harmon (1996, p. 250) discuss cultural heritage management. They point out that within Australia and New Zealand cultural

heritage has mainly been interpreted through the eyes, first and foremost, of the British and then Europeans, especially from a middle class perspective. They suggest that although change is gradually occurring within the two countries, cultural heritage remains predominantly the province of European life, often personified by the houses of the landed gentry.

Interestingly, in Tasmania two major estates owned by brothers William and Thomas Archer were, up until recently, heralded as ‘much admired typical English pastoral landscape’ tourism destinations. Brickendon and Woolmers, as discussed in Chapter 2, were depicted as colonial Georgian/Victorian picturesque agricultural properties (Tasmanian Heritage Register entries, 2008, p. 4). The images accompanying the entry in the Tasmanian Register all relate to buildings at Brickendon and make no mention of convict contribution to their construction.

Hall et al (1996, p. 250) agree that the general opinion in the 1990s was that cultural heritage required safeguarding and nurturing on a number of fronts. As Butts (1993) posits, cultural heritage consists of both concrete and abstract elements that are closely interwoven: ‘The traditions of history (oral and written) of artifacts, buildings or historic places must be preserved (recorded or remembered) if they are to retain significance.’

Rogerio Dias (2010) points out the [New Zealand] Department of Conservation’s (DoC) most significant policy regarding planning and management of visitor services recommends five inter-related goals (DoC, 2009c): Dias addresses two of these missions, managing tourism concessions, and informing and educating visitors. The latter is referred to as a ‘soft

approach' that embraces communication and education (Dias 2010, p. 9). Dias quotes Ham and Weiler (2005, p. iv) who believe that: 'Over the past five decades, tourism providers across the world have recognised the importance of high quality interpretation as central to their mission.'

On March 11, 2011 Sam Ham, Professor of Communication Psychology in the College of Natural Resources at the University of Idaho, USA was the visiting convener at a workshop organised by Deb Lewis, the then Manager, Cultural and Heritage Tourism, at Tourism Tasmania. Staff from the five Tasmanian World Heritage Sites attended the event. Also included were Government representatives from Heritage and Tourism, Associate Professor Hamish Maxwell-Stewart, University of Tasmania and myself as the honorary artist-in-residence at the Cascades Female Factory Site. The meeting was arranged to discuss joint promotion and product development to attract visitors to the World Heritage Sites and ergo other heritage sites and tourist attractions within Tasmania. Participants were invited to brainstorm ideas on fostering patronage and stimulating the flow of interest between the sites. Essentially participants were searching for common denominators without wishing to detract from the unique qualities associated with each site. For example the *Matron's Morning Tea* is a unique experience held in the Matron's cottage at the Cascades Female Factory, and delegates agreed that to replicate this event throughout all the sites would devalue its appeal.

During the process of the nomination of Australia's eleven convict sites for World Heritage status, a number of requirements had to be fulfilled in order to progress to the actual submission of the 250 page document to UNESCO in

Paris. All of the sites included in the nomination, apart from the Cascades Female Factory had a number of solid structures defining their association with the convict era. With the exception of the Great North Road, the Cascades Female Factory Historic Site is relatively sparse having only one building, the original Matron's cottage.

Within the application for World Heritage Listing, the Cascades Female Factory is said to have an annual number of approximately 13,000 visitors. There is a small visitors' centre and the Matron's Cottage that includes the Winifred Daphne Booth Gallery. The Matron's parlour provides the setting for the *Matron's Morning Tea* that offers insights into life at the female factory from Matron Hutchinson's (1 January, 1832 – June 1851) perspective. Interpretation panels in Yard One tell of the site's female convict history. In addition, artworks are actively used to interpret the site (DEWHA, 2008, p. 149). The most recent art acquisition donated to the site is Elizabeth Lada Gray's triptych, *The Colonial Dispersion of the Incarcerated*. Oil paint and ink on paper, wood and mountboard. Each panel is 128 x 84 cm. This work explores the connections between three institutions within Tasmania, the Cascades Female Factory, the Queen's Orphan School in New Town and the Lunatic Asylum at New Norfolk.

The nomination document for World Heritage Listing refers the reader to examples of the artwork shown at the Cascades Female Factory Site and other properties. Under the heading of *Policies and Programs related to the presentation and promotion of the property* (p. 151) the first paragraph tells us that: '....cultural significance of the sites is communicated to visitors through

strategies tailored to the special features of each of the sites. The only picture on that page is a photograph of my 900-cloth bonnet installation, *Departures and Arrivals* (2004), displayed in the courtyard at Hyde Park Barracks, Sydney. The image depicts the back of the bonnets with the display facing towards the Hyde Park Barracks building which is also included in the photo.

On p.152 of the nomination document, there are two images. One shows two people looking at some interpretive panels attached to a stone wall at the Coal Mines Historic Site, operated by Port Arthur Historic Site; the second is a photograph of *Departures and Arrivals* when it was first installed in Yard One at the Cascades Female Factory. This time the photograph depicts the bonnets viewed from the front. The display was deliberately positioned so that the bonnets would face towards Mount Wellington. The sandstone wall in the background was also intentionally included in the image.

Janine Cullen, Director of the Historic Heritage Assessment Section emailed me (2007) in relation to the inclusion of my art at the site and I include part of the correspondence, which identifies many key points about the potential of art for cultural tourism:

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the importance of your work to this World Heritage nomination. The World Heritage Convention requires that a nominated place is not only identified, protected and conserved but also presented and transmitted to future generations. The Convention also requires that World Heritage places have a life in the community.

Your artistic work 'Roses in the Heart' and 'Departures and Arrivals' have

powerfully engaged with the history of convict women and motivated and connected people all over the world from different walks of life. The bonnets in particular have had a resonance with and impact on the community which has made people think more deeply and compassionately about convict women and the lives they led.

Your artistic works are an important way for us to demonstrate the relevance of the history of convict women on a global scale. The lack of physical fabric associated with the lives of convict women anywhere in the world is not sufficient reason to ignore their important history and contribution.

When Professor Sam Ham visited Tasmania in 2011 as a guest of Tourism Tasmania, amongst his commitments he visited the Cascades Female Factory World Heritage Site on 9 March. The opinion that he gave to the Site Project Manager, Shirley McCarron, was that the female convict story was one of the greatest untold stories. Ham commented that because of the lack of buildings at the Cascades Female Factory it allowed for an amazing opportunity to tell the site's story in a way that does not apply to any of the other Australian Convict World Heritage Sites. (McCarron, 2011)

On 16 April, 2011 I attended a symposium organised by the *Centre for Colonialism and its Aftermath (CAIA)*, 'Crime in the Colonies', held at the Penitentiary Chapel, Campbell Street, Hobart. Noel Frankham and Julia Clarke discussed aspects of the topic *Challenge of Interpreting Convict Sites*. They both spoke specifically about the importance of using art as an interpretive tool to mediate heritage sites in the service of history. Professor Frankham gave as an example the successful partnership with the bi-annual Tasmanian

Festival *Ten Days on the Island*, the School of Art, University of Tasmania and Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority (PASHMA). In 2007 Frankham and Clarke curated The Port Arthur Project, *Revelation for Ten Days on the Island*, which brought twenty-five leading visual artists to explore innovative ways of looking at one of Tasmania's most marketed places. The Port Arthur Project – *Revelation* proposed an alternative perspective on the stories behind the infamous site. Artists responded to the theme 'revelation' with site-specific installations using a range of techniques such as photography, video, sound-scapes, sculpture and performances. The artists brought their own particular set of skills and interpretation to their 'way of seeing' and all contributed to the success of the event. With my interest in convict women and their offspring I found the work of Anne Ferran, Fiona Hall, Brigita Ozolins and Colin Langridge particularly compelling.

Inviting Anne Ferran to participate in the *Port Arthur Project* was an astute decision. As discussed in Chapter Two Ferran's art (since 1995) has been prominent in advancing the female convict story with her focus on the convict women and their children and in 2001 her art began examining those confined within the Ross Female Factory and the Cascades Female Factory Sites.

In the Ground, on the air represents 715 infants who died within their first year of life at the Cascades Female Factory. Some men, such as Pierre Grace, incarcerated at Port Arthur were husbands of women whose babies were born at the Cascades Female Factory (Henri, 2008, p.18). Ferran's Port Arthur installation consisted of eleven woolen blankets, each approximately 900 X

600 mm plus a video loop. The exhibition was set up in the Watchman's Quarters at the Port Arthur Historic Site (Frankam, Clarke, 2007, p. 6). Ferran says of her work that she chose to produce woven textiles simulating cot blankets, just big enough to cover a baby yet too flimsy and abrasive to provide comfort (Ferran, 2011).

In his book *Female Factory Female Convicts*, Tony Rayner named his chapter on the infants at the Cascades Female Factory 'Pity the Children' – and that sums up Ferran's focus. Rayner describes the act of forced weaning and separation of babies from their mothers at an early age and informs that this practice directly contributed to the babies demise. (Rayner, 2005, p. 145). Ferran uses the symbolism of the small blanket to reflect the lack of care the babies received from within the system. It seems incongruous that mothers and babies were denied adequate clothing (Rayner, 2005, p. 163) and blankets when right there at the female factory convict women were producing blankets. For example during the months of January and February 1843, one hundred and sixty-five blankets were manufactured (although a further six hundred and ten were scoured for reuse) at the Cascades Factory Mill (Lovell Chen, 2008, p.38).

On nine of Ferran's eleven blankets are two letters, each letter pair epitomises one of the causes of death most commonly recorded for the babies: PN for pneumonia, MA for marasmus – general emaciation and wasting, especially of infants, thought to be associated with severe malnutrition, DY for dysentery, C for convulsions et cetera. Ferran collaborated with designer, Frederique Denniel, who wove the blankets in England. The letters seen on the blankets

were cut away from the surface to reveal a separate colour of weave that gave form to the characters. A further statistic was coded into the design – this percentage figure represented the ratio of deaths from each disease. The work also included two additional blankets, one light and one dark, separate in design from the others, which Ferran refers to as representational of the air and the ground (Ferran, 2011). A video segment lasting seventy-five minutes which incorporated *In the ground, on the air* provides a contemporary approach to conjuring the babies' names as if 'out of thin air'. Ferran summons the babies, parading their names slowly across the screen, to correspond to the length of each baby's life. The names move coherently from right to left, progressing from the first-born to the last. Once each baby's life span is attained, movement ceases and the name fades and gradually vanishes into the ground. A brief gap between each sequence represents a decade (Ferran, 2011). Ferran's work installed at Port Arthur highlights the incredibly long time since the identified babies names were spoken or heard. At her exhibition she invited visitors to interact with her work by breaking the silence and speaking the children's names out loud (Frankham, Clarke, 2007 p. 6).

Fiona Hall's art practice includes major public commissions and her installations cover a broad range of interpretation including history. For the *Port Arthur Project* Hall's approach was very different from that of Ferran. In *Breeding Ground* (2007) Hall placed eleven individually painted beehives in the garden at Trentham Cottage, Port Arthur. Hall chose to place her work on a section of the Site housing a typical post-convict home, built around 1900 for

the Trentham family. The house has been restored to its former 1915 glory. Hall planted the Trentham Cottage garden with an assortment of vegetables and flowers of varieties that would have been transported to Van Diemen's Land in the 1800s. The beehives were lined up in a row within the garden, painted in the contemporary military camouflage markings of the countries of origin of each chosen plant species, the use of the camouflage designs on the beehives prompting thoughts of the English military involvement in bringing the convicts to Australia and keeping order in the colony. The reference to camouflage is also a reminder of concealment and how much of the truth about Port Arthur's convict history was covered up by those wanting to forget the 'convict stain', a position turned around by families becoming eager to learn about their past. As Babette Smith writes:

The trickle of family researchers that began in the late 1960s turned into a flood during the '70s, and by the '80s Australians regularly descended on the archives in droves. Initially motivated by the 1970 bicentenary of Captain Cook's mapping of eastern Australia, they had been further intrigued about family antecedents by the popular television series created for the American bicentenary in 1976 called *Roots*. (Smith, 2008)

The concept of *Breeding Ground* (Figure 15), although set up at Port Arthur, equally references other convict or prison sites. The work ties together several aspects of Tasmania's early history as a penal settlement and uses the transportation, commanding, coercing and constraining of nature as analogous to prison systems (Frankham, Clarke 2007). In comparison to Ferran's transitory art, Hall has made her mark on the landscape with the enduring garden and seed and plant retail opportunities, profits from which

feed back into conservation at the site. Her work provides a lasting legacy to the heritage site and provides a site specific interest to the cultural tourist. Photos of Trentham Cottage and garden are for sale, acting as envoys, perpetuating interest in the site, and a reminder that art mediates and enriches the visitor's experience.

Following on from *the Breeding Ground* (2007) Hall utilised the symbolism of the bees, beehives and the act of pollination in her work *The Barbarians at the Gate* (2010) at the 17th *Sydney Biennale*, (May/August 2010) installed at the Royal Botanic Gardens. As at Port Arthur, Hall installed a group of beehives, painted in military camouflage patterns associated with different countries in the gardens. Hall describes these as 'foreign objects analogous to the shipping in of people in colonial times'. In this instance one of the hives contained a live colony of *Trigona carbonaria*, commonly known as the Sugarbag Bee (stingless bee), native within Australia as far south as Sydney. It is not surprising that Hall has used the bee as a metaphor for disciplined human productivity and imprisonment within a system. Described by Keith Pigdon as 'social insects' (Pigdon, 2004), bees regimented, hierarchical colonies can be likened to the controlled management systems typical of prison life. Hall's work is both arresting and provocative and her use of plants at Port Arthur is a reminder of life and death and engages with the dark aspects of the convict story in a non-confrontational manner.

In January 2007 Brigita Ozolins began a one-month artist's residency at Port Arthur Historic Site. Ozolins has been using the written word, books and libraries as metaphors in her art since the late 1990s. In her artist statement

Ozolins speaks of the links she makes between 'language, knowledge, history, bureaucracy and identity.' (Ozolins, 2011) Central within her work Ozolins believes that, 'language is a powerful cultural tool that both shapes and restricts who and what we are and what we think'.

As with the Maria Island program, this residency was funded through Arts Tasmania and provided Ozolins with the opportunity to research Henry Savery, a convict transported to Australia in 1825 for forging bills of exchange. Once in Van Diemen's Land, Savery's skills were utilised and he was given work at the Hobart Treasury. In 1831 he wrote a mainly autobiographical novel *Quintus Servinton* but it is his collection of short stories, *The Hermit in Van Diemen's Land* (1829) that put him in the spotlight. Savery's short stories supply the reader with descriptions of the transportation system through the author's eyes. In 1832 Savery received his Certificate of Freedom but on reoffending and was sent to Port Arthur, where he died in 1842 (Port Arthur Historic News, 2007). Ozolins is taken with the dichotomy of the relationship between fact and fiction, the authentic and the copied and her work expresses this interest as she uses her art to investigate the duality of Savery's life as a convict and a writer. To honour Savery's authorship Ozolins planned to create an artist's book to be displayed at Port Arthur on completion.

As a second part to her residency Ozolins' work entitled *The truth shall make you free* (2007), segued into a reading and writing performance presented as part of the *Port Arthur Project*. Inspired by Port Arthur and Savery's perceptions of the site, the exhibition features a recording of repetitive readings from *Quintus Servinton* and sustained writing for a number of hours

per day in the Separate Prison Chapel. Metaphorically, the artist aims to set Savery free from his fateful past through the repetitiousness of reading aloud, and writing over, the pages of his novel, *Quintus Servinton* (Port Arthur Historic News, 2007). The ritual of repetition and speaking aloud, seen in Ferran's work, and present in my *Blessing of the Bonnets*, is revealed as a way of performing history.

This performance awakens memories of sitting at a desk at school writing over and over, a particular word or sentence, as a form of punishment for misdemeanors in the classroom. Photos of Ozolins sitting, writing at a table surrounded by torn out pages scattered around the furniture are reminiscent of Ann Hamilton's installation *Indigo Blue* (Figure 16), where a table and chair are positioned in front of an enormous pile of 18,000 folded blue indigo cotton work pants and shirts belonging to workers in a number of service industries. This concept was originally showcased at the Spoleto Art Festival in Charleston, South Carolina in 1991 where Hamilton was focusing on the local cotton, textile and indigo workers of the Old South. In 2006 the exhibition was reassembled in San Francisco. On this occasion Hamilton excluded herself from the performance. As substitution a variety of people were employed to sit from 12.00 to 4.00 daily at the San Francisco Museum of Modern art. Their chore was to systematically erase lines from a Naval War College book, titled *International Law Situations* (Vincent, 2007). The erasure process began on the last page of the manual and proceeded through to the first. The paid volunteers worked in silence ignoring any attention or questions from the public. The repetitive work simulated the monotonous routine manual

workers in South Carolina were forced to undertake in order to earn their wages. The boring nature of the work is mind numbing, the prolonged muscle activity creates physical pain, yet the strokes must be continually maintained for the performer to be paid. Hamilton's art brings attention to the role worker's played in their bosses' affluence and the State's prosperity. The sheer size of the installation gives weight to the labourers' value. The clothes, with their lost nametags, signify the inconspicuousness of the workers. Like Ozolins and Ferran, Hamilton wants to redress the fact that history has passed over their story (Hamilton, 2006).

In her art at Port Arthur, *The truth shall make you free* (Figure 17), Ozolins created a second part to the installation in memory of convict Henry Savery who was buried on Port Arthur's Isle of the Dead. The title Ozolins has chosen is a quote from the Bible (John 8:32) 'that refers to the Judeo-Christian belief in the liberating power of revelation' (Port Arthur Project, 2007, p.11).

Ozolins has placed the words *The truth shall make you free* on the wall close to her performance exhibition in the Prison Chapel and also in front of Henry Savery's grave on the Isle of the Dead. In the chapel Ozolins sat at a table made of lead and on the Isle of the Dead Ozolins placed a free standing inscription, made out of lead, which states *The truth shall make you free*. Such decisions challenge the onlooker to query why, and learn more through this questioning (Port Arthur Project, 2007, p. 11). Through her art installations Ozolins invites the visitor to engage with Savery's story in a vastly different way than merely reading about him.

Colin Langridge used sculpture to express his interpretation of the Port Arthur story and to home in on the desolation of the inmates in an isolated environment. Langridge was taken by the fact that from 1834 to 1848 convicts at Port Arthur constructed over one hundred and fifty-five vessels. At least fifteen of these were large sailing boats. *The Sculptural Ship Project* (2006) enabled both Langridge, and fellow artist Ben Booth, to analyse the extensive research undertaken at Port Arthur and gather material that informed the resulting sculpture. The eye catching twenty-five metre sculpture symbolises a ship, one of the many built at the site. The sculpture complements the dockyard area drawing attention to the skills of the convicts who produced the boats. The metal framework of the boat stands out, yet at the same time is assimilated into the surrounding scenery. Through the boat's outline the onlooker glimpses a very similar view to what the convicts would have observed across the water to the Isle of the Dead, where 1,000 burials occurred between 1833 and 1877 (Port Arthur Historic Sites 2010/2011).

The Sculptural Ship Project revolves around life as it was at the dockyards. It involves more than just highlighting a ship. It also includes rusting steel outlines of bygone boatsheds, steamers, a sawpit, a blacksmith's hut and the overseer's hut all featured on the manicured grass delineating the original sites. A combination of technologies was used in the project including auditory tactics – spatial sounds. As one walks by the various sculptural forms sounds are triggered. Visitors are alerted to former activities by the noise of tools, such as hammers, in action (Tourism Tasmania, 2007). Langridge continued to reference the boat industry at Port Arthur through his sculptural

concept *Aspirations* (2007). He installed a small, unfinished wooden boat inside a prison cell at Port Arthur, in the vein of a boat-in-a-bottle souvenir. The piece represents the yearnings of a hypothetical convict who longed to escape in one of the boats he was building. The boat trapped inside the cell is a metaphor for the convict's ensnared life; incarcerated at Port Arthur he is destined to eke out his days working at the dockyards unable to sail away in any of his creations. Wood shavings, evidence of the convict's endeavours, are strewn across the cell floor around the 'boat' and the aroma arising from this residue and the recently worked timber was a deliberate act by the artist to arouse the onlookers olfactory senses. As Frankham and Clarke (2007, p.9) observe, 'This evocation of human labour and the sensation of entrapment ask for an empathetic response to the tragic circumstances of a convict at Port Arthur.'

At Port Arthur, even though absconding by boat was difficult, attempts were made. Contact between visiting sailors and convicts was prohibited. Seamen had to check in their sails and oars upon landing. Unlike the multiple escapes from Maria Island, attempting to break out via the sea at Port Arthur usually resulted in recapture or death (EaglehawkNeck.com, 2011). Through both the *Sculptural Ship Project* and *Aspirations* Langridge connects the audience with a part of Port Arthur's history that may be little known, the Port Arthur dockyards being amongst the most productive in Van Diemen's Land between 1834 and 1848 (Australian Heritage, 2011).

There was a great deal of publicity surrounding the opening of the *Port Arthur Project* with the publishing of a high quality University publication, an

accompanying two-day symposium, promotional assistance from Tourism Tasmania interpretive on-site tours and in-house publicity on the Port Arthur website. The Port Arthur Historic Sites website included an article and photo of Langridge and Booth standing in front of their steel boat art installation at the launch (2007).

Visitor numbers for attendance at *the Port Arthur Project* were estimated to be 20,000. The project had a number of aims relating to visual arts, historic site interpretation, communities of interest and visitor experience (Port Arthur Project, 2007). Nothing of the scale of the *Port Arthur Project* had been undertaken in Tasmania before. This program provided visitors with a unique insight into grasping the site's story. The various approaches taken by the twenty-five artists moved away from the more traditional ways of interpretation where didactic signs were commonplace. Social agendas were embedded into the work and activity contributed to the performance-based artwork. The art concepts were layered with symbolism. Some presentations alluded to brutality without unduly distressing or offending the viewer. The artists highlighted stories in a manner that provided insights and was intentionally thought provoking. They were mindful that Port Arthur is not only a memorial to colonial violence but to the more recent tragedy of the Sunday, 28 April 1996 massacre (Wainwright, 2009).

It could be argued that there was not enough contentious material relating to the disturbing history associated with the site (The Port Arthur Project, 2007). It is difficult to know how the public would have coped with work such as artist Joyce Scott's installation, *Believe I've been sanctified*, part of *Places with a*

Past, held in Charleston, South Carolina in 1991. Scott's work symbolized both death and regeneration. She chose to work on a site where four columns rose from the ground, the only remains of a mansion that once graced the property. The artist suspended a black tree dangling like a burnt, lynched figure rising up from the ashes of the painted logs lying below. In a less maudlin fashion the artist also hung rustling beads from the tops of four columns simulating weeping willow trees (Sozanski, 1991). The burnt log alluding to the racial conflict that has marred much of modern South Carolina's history (1960-1970) painted a sinister picture (Porter and Prince, 2011, p. 16).

American independent curator, Mary Jane Jacob, was invited to be keynote speaker at the *Revelations* conference held at the Tasmanian School of Art, Hobart in conjunction with *the Port Arthur Project*. Her visionary approach that uses art, as a tool, to evoke history has changed the nature of presenting the past, and elaborating historic sites. *Places with a Past: New Site-Specific Art in Charleston* was a remarkable installation art project connecting visitors with Charleston, South Carolina. Part of the *Spoletto Festival*, 1991, and curated by Jacob, *Places with a past* is often cited as a leading public art exhibition that opened up history and historic sites to the community in a manner that provoked attention rather being informative (The Port Arthur Project, 2007). *Places with a Past* as an art event had an extraordinary impact and connected the public with history in an exciting way. The fact that this visual art continues to receive on-going worldwide acclaim is testament to the importance of using creative interpretation to engage the community in a dialogue with past events.

At the CAIA, 'Crime in the Colonies' Symposium in May 2011 Julia Clark, Interpretation Project Officer at Port Arthur Historic Site, looked back at my cloth christening bonnet installation *Departures and Arrivals* discussing the impact of this installation at Port Arthur in 2006. In an email to me in July 2011 Clark reiterated her sentiments as expressed at the symposium.

...the fact that [*Departures and Arrivals*] produced such an intense emotional reaction in some visitors that must surely have made an indelible memory of their visit and also been a powerful learning experience. It gave them another insight into the male convict history of the site, seeing our [convict] men as husbands and fathers, people with social connections and emotional lives, rather than simply subjects to be ordered about and punished.

Here Clark makes the point that although *Departures and Arrivals* primarily spoke of convict women and the loss of their infants there is a broader context that links the convict men who fathered some of the children. *Departures and Arrivals* was a metaphor for grief and loss and the impact the work has created within the community primarily relates to the personal nature of the subject matter. The art acknowledged the babies who died unnecessarily and were buried without dignity, their mothers afforded no opportunity to grieve their loss (Frost, 2004). However more importantly *Departures and Arrivals* has highlighted the story of the ill treatment of convict women transported to Australia and the neglect of their babies within the penal system, bringing the story to international attention through inclusion in the World Heritage Nomination Process. It is the genesis of this current project.

Roses from the Heart has linked over twenty thousand people around the world in a project that focuses on the female convict story and also on the

heritage sites where the women spent time. Participants in countries such as Africa who were aware of their own history of slavery knew nothing of the convict story. Participants have engaged with *Roses from the Heart* in a manner far exceeding my expectations. One family in Africa sent me examples of African bonnets, similar in style to the colonial pattern I have chosen but with additional cloth covering the nape of the neck. What I have found extremely moving is that people incorporate special material or trinkets from the family sewing box. A family in England included lace from the grandmother's wedding veil to be incorporated in the bonnet being made by relatives in Australia for their mutual ancestor. Involvement in *Roses from the Heart* has generated interest by many within communities throughout the world reaching students, members of a variety of groups - including U3A and other senior citizen organisations provoking participants to consider life in colonial times. In some instances this has led to visits from families to personally present their bonnets and connect with colonial heritage sites within Australia. People living interstate regularly phone me to arrange to meet with me in Tasmania. Since commencing this project I have received thousands of emails. Letters or cards usually accompany bonnet tributes. Members of sewing Guilds and associated organisations such as embroiderers have embraced *Roses from the Heart*. Each bonnet is a story unto itself. It represents the convict woman's life it commemorates and the bonnet maker adds layers of meaning to the bonnet depending on their skills and artistic ability. Observers of the bonnets often learn more than the women's names. Bonnets vary from being heavily embellished to being quite plain. Some reflect where the woman once lived, what her trade was, why she was

sentenced and other details of her life. Bonnets are often adorned with a time piece (a watch) or a memento – button or brooch of, for example, a cow, often lace is specially made or added, sourced because it is from the colonial era. Visitors to the Cascades Female Factory Historic Site ask to see the bonnets. They interact with the staff and take bonnet patterns, leave their bonnets or pass on details of their convict ancestors. Judith and Chris Cornish who present ‘Louisa’s Walk’, a live history theatre experience that incorporates a visit to the Cascades Female Factory are often asked about *Roses from the Heart* and have a supply of bonnet patterns ready to distribute to their customers. I am aware that hundreds of people plan to travel to Tasmania for the opening of the permanent installation when *Roses from the Heart* is completed.

The participation in ritual is a key to heritage or historical tourism and that ritual can be individual or as part of a group, as I observe at each *Blessing of the Bonnets*. Dean MacCannell (1998) quotes Rene Girard who believes that ritual ‘keep[s] violence *outside* the community’. MacCannell agrees to a point but elaborates by saying (1998, pp. 264-265) this may have been so in the ‘old community based on its social solidarity on religious unity’, but he [Girard] cannot be correct for the new composite community where social order can only result from a successful negotiation between all the gods.’ MacCannell cites the example of Erving Goffman’s 1956 definition of ritual as ‘perfunctory, conventionalised acts through which one human being pays his regard for another to that other,’ to which MacCannell suggests that (1998, p. 261) ‘perhaps there are grounds here for intercourse across absolute human

difference.' The ritual re-enactments at the site of 1863 Gettysburg offer a means of social expression and involve thousands of people who chose this tactile approach to learn about this part of America's Civil War history. They become part of the event through the performance, just as others do with the *Blessing of the Bonnets*, the personalising of one of thousands of convict 'caps' or the making of paper boats.

The *Blessing of the Bonnets* performances add another level to private ritual and draw interest to the female convict story through performance. Decisions regarding relevant music to include in the 'Blessing' performance led to initiating the *Roses from the Heart* CD (2010), a compilation of traditional and specially written female convict related songs. The accompanying booklet details the songs and adds to a further understanding of the female convict story. The fact that one of the new songs on the album *Christina Take me Home* (Fred Rea/Fiona Rea) won the 2010 Western Australian Music Industry (WAMI) Song of the Year Awards, People's Choice category was a significant recognition of the interest in the CD's content highlighting convict women's lives.

Roses from the Heart has reached audiences who might not have heard about Australia's convict story through other channels. This year prisoners at the Arbour Hill Prison in Dublin have been sewing bonnets for *Roses from the Heart*. Female staff at the prison, comprising officers, nurses, clerks, probation officers, psychologists and members of their families have embellished the bonnets. Teachers in the Education Unit became involved in September, and prisoners in the female prison, the Dochas Centre, at the Mountjoy Prison

Complex in Dublin's north inner city have commenced embellishing bonnets. In the Arbour Hill Prison pottery section two clay model female heads are being made for displaying bonnets. During 2010-2011 bonnets will be displayed in the Cork and Dublin civic offices. The display units required will be made in the prison carpentry shop. The Prison Governors have taken a keen interest in the project. An article has been written to be included in the Prison Service magazine that is distributed to fourteen prisons and a number of civic offices throughout the Republic of Ireland. An event is being organised for the President of Ireland and myself to attend next year where I will be presented with the hundreds of bonnets being made for convict women transported from Dublin to Australia. The discerning cultural tourist wants to engage with a site in a unique way and *Roses from the Heart* and *Making their Mark* offers an approach that has not been used anywhere else in the world. The letters and stories that accompany bonnets are a wonderful resource and in March 2008 I approached Garry Bailey, editor of the *Mercury*, regarding an opportunity to trial a weekly convict woman story. This has become a regular column, which Bailey has advised me is one of the most read segments of the *Mercury*. Word of mouth is a vital resource in promoting heritage sites and through my various projects interest in the female convict story is attracting considerable attention.

Stepping back from the particular, and generally always the site-responsive, which must always characterise art in the service of cultural tourism, I have found it is useful to look at other artists such as Ann Ferran, Fiona Hall, Brigita Ozolins and Antony Gormley who have successfully engaged public interest in

history and culture, and who may contribute ideas to working at the art/history/tourism coalface. I conclude this chapter with brief considerations of the work of Matthew Ritchie, Anthony Gormley, Fred Wilson, Yinka Shonibare and Romuald Hazoume.

The enormity of Matthew Ritchie's multiple artforms requires other people's help in the construction, assembly and painting processes and the artist states that the contribution of these workers imparts an energy into the installation that becomes embedded within the 'history' of the work (Art21, 2005). I think that the success of his experimental methods show that the boundaries within art are infinite. Ritchie's work deals with information and the artist invites the viewer to question the meaning of his work. I am drawn to *The Universal Cell* (2004) (Figure 18) because this piece directs attention to the act of imprisonment and the function of gaols and the system of detention. Ritchie's digital art offers riveting ways to enthrall an audience. Lessons can be learned from his approach that could be applied within cultural tourism where each heritage site needs to captivate the visitor with something extraordinary. Ritchie deliberately involves others within his creativity to deliver the product he envisages in an inimitable style. His installations are large and assembling the work requires a team of helpers, as do mine –should a team be available.

In a previous study, *Redeeming Memories* (2007) I referred to artists such as Anthony Gormley and Vivienne Binns, whose art practices have involved using others to assist in the creation of their vision. In particular I focused on Binns' imaginative *Mothers' Memories*, *Others' Memories*, a postcard project which was included in the 1982 Sydney Biennale, and Gormley's stellar works

Field (2005) (Figure 19) and *Asian Field* (Sydney Biennale, 2006). In the creation of both of these works Gormley utilised local communities in the making of thousands of clay pieces. *Asian Field* work comprised 180,000 hand sized sculptured clay figures crafted by 350 Chinese villagers over a five day period using one hundred tons of red clay. In 1993 Gormley had produced *Field for the British Isle* – a collection of 40,000 figures made by a group of residents of St Helens, Merseyside. Gormley invited the participants to form clay into specified figures that were then fired and exhibited en masse in the gallery space. To date Gormley has designed six adaptations of the *Field* concept, each involving different clay makers and each one having their own unique approach to the displaying of the terracotta figures. Assembling each work requires a team of helpers and extensive directions are provided to ensure that every detail is replicated exactly to the artists' specifications. Those who participate in Gormley's installations are asked to create a figurine with their own hands and in doing so they will leave their imprint on the work thereby creating a distinctive sculpture. Similarly, I invite people to make a bonnet because I want an individually personalised tribute and by inviting others to be a part of the work their engagement not only connects them to the convict woman and her story but also imbues the installation with a greater emotional 'voice'. Gormley provides instructions regarding size and proportion along with explicit guidance as to the placement of the eyes. Likewise in *Roses from the Heart* participants are asked to use a prescribed bonnet pattern and follow instructions regarding location for the convict woman's name, ship and year of arrival in Australia.

In 1992 Fred Wilson, an artist of African, American Indian, and European descent, was invited to remodel the Maryland Historical Society's museum. Acting out the role of a curator Wilson challenged convention through his manipulation of objects belonging to the museum's collection. In *Mining the Museum* (Figure 20) he transposed exhibits, changing the sequence and the arrangement of the artifacts, in order to highlight the museum industry's entrenched institutional racism. His juxtapositioning of museum artifacts was a ploy to challenge the viewer's perceptions of the meaning of the work. Wilson has a strong background within this genre, having previously used a similar formula during the 1980s. His interest is in changing the museum policy. He compares his unique art approach to 'offering the public a *trompe l'oeil* of a museum space' (Art 21, 2001-2011). At times the onlooker is tricked into believing the displays are merely regular museum practice, not the work of an artist. In an interview with *Art 21* Wilson explains that his displays only provide a certain amount of information. He aims to provoke the emotion of the onlooker. This is the argument that Susan Best subscribes to – the importance of *affect* - 'what occurs between work [art] and participants [audience]' (Best, 2011, p.52). Wilson's opinion is what you see and what you experience – the feelings that are unleashed because of the art - is just as important as any explicit material he as an artist includes within his work. Wilson 'sees the museum space as a constructed kind of design space, as an installation environment. He manipulates objects, light, colour and spatial relationships.'

It is the installation work that Wilson produced at the Museum of World Culture in Sweden in 2004 that excites me. Wilson accepted an invitation to complete an installation at this museum and set about his usual process of interacting with people, evaluating the collection, discussing his ideas, researching the acquisitions and undertaking a reconnaissance of the area. In the case of the Swedish museum collection there was a history to the material but not so the building that was still under construction. That there were no long-serving employees meant that there was no personal connection with the objects. The collection was made up of both ethnographic and archaeological material. It was the latter that drew Wilson's attention. It was by default that he engaged with the material that was to be the keystone of his installation. The ceramics collection caught his attention although he was dismissive of the selection of stones. What followed held similarities to the evolving nature of my *Roses from the Heart* Memorial art. As with my discovery of having convict connections, Wilson's research showed that the stones he had considered ignoring belonged to his Caribbean ancestral island home and conceivably held significance to Wilson's Caribe Indian ancestors. Now, centuries later, Wilson was connecting with items that had been sitting in boxes, on shelves on a basement floor with no provenance denoting any special meaning to their origin or purpose on their island home. Wilson reflects on the fact that Columbus came to his family's island in 1498 followed by the colonialists (Art21, 2001-2011). This is a similar story to Australia's recent past of discovery and colonisation. Wilson reflects on the conundrum that the stones he stumbled across had been transported then buried out of sight and out of mind within a museum collection. He observes, 'How much of the world

is moving around like this, where people have no idea where their cultures or the things that might relate to them have ended up.' (Art 21, 2001-2011).

Thinking about global travel, the movement of artifacts and how museums have emerged as storage centre for these treasures, were housing enormous collections, became central to Wilson's work which he eventually named *Site Unseen: Dwellings of the Demons*. Wilson views the 'site unseen' as 'the literal things that are never seen before by the public, but also these invisible processes of museums as things that are unseen'.

Wilson agrees that historians are keenly interested in the history of the object but not so focused on the environment in which the objects are displayed. In comparison he sees an artist's role as one that evaluates the visual aspects of the space in which the object is being shown and gives consideration to the juxtaposition of each article to stimulate an aesthetic experience for the audience. His aim is to critique the notion of museums and create a better narrative to arouse greater interest in these institutions. Wilson suggests that the stones featured in *Site Unseen: Dwellings of the Demons* hold memory within their structure. The visitor takes with them a memory of the stones as displayed within the setting Wilson has created. The audience is stimulated to ask questions about the stones and about the reasons why they have been placed alongside certain other objects. This careful placing of items in a museum setting is equally as important in a heritage site.

Watching Wilson uncovering boxes in Sweden I was reminded of opening the boxes of christening bonnets at Narryna Heritage Museum in Battery Point and the feelings that I experienced as I gazed at bonnets not often viewed by

anyone else. These items had been donated to the Museum and were stored in white boxes, encased in white tissue paper and packed neatly onto shelves in a very small room accessible only to staff, hidden away from the public gaze. Their story is only partly known. Data shows who donated the items but little else. The curator knows the approximate age of the bonnets but the stories these bonnets could reveal remain a secret, as with the stones Wilson stumbled across. In using an actual servant's bonnet as part of my research to symbolise the 'assigned' convict woman's life, that particular bonnet's value has been extended through the *Roses from the Heart* Memorial. On his website Wilson shares his belief that within his art the process is as important as the outcome (Wilson, 2011). Within his practice a major part of his creative process involves organising community outreach (Wilson, 2001).

Yinka Shonibare's major solo touring exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Art (MCA), Sydney, in 2008 covered twelve years of his art practice, including sculpture, painting, photography, film and installation art. The work addressed Shonibare's African identity and the effects of colonisation and social injustice. To interact personally with this exhibition allowed for a connection unattainable through any other means. The impact was astonishing. The piece that engaged me the most was *Scramble for Africa*, 2003. The background to this work relates to a conference in Berlin in the 19th century when Africa was being fragmented by Europeans. In this sculpture fourteen life-size fibreglass figures dressed in period costume are seated on fourteen chairs, assembled around a table – dimensions 132 x 488 x

280 cm. An image of the African continent is incorporated into the tabletop's surface. In describing his work Shonibare says (2009):

I am very interested in using the idea of something which is visually very beautiful because I think that I want my audience to engage with my work even though I am actually tackling quite serious issues...

This is exactly how I view my art practice. In highlighting the death of the babies who were born to convict women (*Departures and Arrivals*, 2004) I chose to use a beautiful motif such as the precious christening bonnet rather than a grim metaphor such as a small black coffin. In *Scramble for Africa* (Figure 21), Shonibare dresses his figures in vividly coloured cotton coats. The figures of the headless negotiators have been arranged in a variety of poses, as if in conversation, some more intimately than others, some turn their backs in a deliberate snubbing or avoidance of one another. The viewer is able to walk around the table and feel a 'bit player' within the work. The narrative is expressed through the gestures and the ostentatious extravagance of the costumes worn by the players in this *game* of colonial take over. Karen Rosenberg notes that sometimes the positioning of the effigies has been copied from famous paintings and sometimes Shonibare has improvised (Rosenberg, 2009). The powerful colonialists, all Europeans, are attired in material sourced from Africa. As Shonibare explains the batik cloth is considered genuinely African although this is not the case (Saharan Vibe, 2008):

...the fabrics are not authentically African – they were produced by the Dutch in the 19th century and then subsequently by the English for sales to the African market.

Historically the fabrics were originally manufactured in Holland for export to the Indonesian batik market. However Indonesian traders were unhappy with the designs so the fabrics were sold to African traders who transformed this reject into a cultural necessity that has endured as the staple attire for every African woman. Linda Hales writing for the *Washington Post* (2005) describes Shonibare as:

...a post-colonial provocateur in the best sense. The Anglo-Nigerian artist uses pseudo-African cloth, headless mannequins and humor to deconstruct stereotypes about race, class and culture.

Like Wilson, Shonibare's art is imbued with and tied to his ancestry and personal experiences. He may well have worked in a similar vein as Wilson because originally Shonibare visited the British Museum to study African masks and other relevant artifacts. In conversation with Richard Lacayo (Lacayo, 2009) Shonibare explained that he began some paintings that depicted his juxtaposing images of the African masks from the museum collection, 'with commonplace objects, tacky consumer goods, almost like down at Wal-Mart'. To take this idea further he visited the markets. It was then that he learned about the reality of the 'African textiles', observing that, 'this is actually a very good metaphor for the whole issue of authenticity. Even the things that were supposed to represent Africa didn't fulfill the fantasy of that history' (Lacayo, 2009).

Benin-born artist Romuald Hazoumé's multi-media installation *La Bouche du Roi* (Figure 22) was displayed at the Merseyside Maritime Museum in Liverpool as part of the commemorative events celebrating the anniversary of the abolition of the 1807 British slave trade. The installation title translated means 'the mouth of the King' and alludes to the port of Cotonou in Bénin, from whence an estimated twelve million African slaves were transported to the Americas and Caribbean.

Hazoumé's installation comprises of three hundred and four 'masks' made from plastic petrol cans, each with a simulated open mouth, eyes and a nose. The masks have an eerie reality about them, each one personifying an African slave. The layout of the installation parodies the drawings of stowage plans of a late-eighteenth century Liverpool slave ship, the *Brookes*. Abolitionists commissioned the work to illustrate the barbarity of the slave trade. The woodcut (290 X 440 mm) printed by Thomas Clarkson was the work of an unknown artist. Tom Lubbock (2007) points to the fact that although the print documents the 454 licensed bodies, it is believed that 609 captives were crammed aboard the *Brooke* on a previous voyage. The first print run of 700 copies in 1789 was followed by a number of other editions. As Lubbock observed (The Independent, 2007):

Perhaps the most politically influential picture ever made is not a painting but a diagram; and it was devised not by an artist but by a campaign group. Its full title is *Stowage of the British Slave Ship 'Brookes' under the Regulated Slave Trade Act of 1788*.

In *La Bouche du Roi*, Hazoumé turns the two-dimensional print into a three-dimensional installation. The artist adds another layer of meaning to the work through his use of petrol canisters, aware that motorcyclists were moving black market petrol in containers between Bénin and Nigeria. His installation recounts the story of oppression through the slave trade and in addition directs attention to the more recent economic discrimination still being experienced in Bénin. Hazoumé's art may not be a historical artifact connected to the slave trade yet it affords the British Museum a unique opportunity to captivate large audiences in an on-going narrative on the subject matter of brutality and oppression. Inviting artists such as Hazoumé and Wilson to exhibit within the historical context of museum spaces offers visitors an alternative approach to history (Coghlan, 2007).

Ritchie offers multiple disciplinary experiences that are exciting to the new generation who see the world through a barrage of mass media and digital technology. Ideas such as these should be investigated for implementation at heritage sites. With the growth of tourism, heritage sites need to find an edge to entice the discerning visitor to their property in order to remain financially viable and an effective purveyor of the history they guard. Mitchel Resnick notes (2002, p. 33) that 'learning is an active process in which people construct new understandings of the world around them through active exploration, experimentation, discussion, and reflection'. To corner the market and to survive, heritage sites need to offer the visitor something unexpected, something that will make them think about the subject through

participation. As Resnick states (2002, p. 33) 'people don't *get* ideas; they *make* them'.

Conclusion:

Roses from the Heart initiated as a concept to highlight the social and economic value of the 25,566 convict women transported to Australia through the making of a cloth bonnet and it has developed into a memorial of major magnitude. *Roses from the Heart* has become synonymous with bonnets which in turn have become a recognisable symbol representing convict women. I have been labeled the 'bonnet lady' and have gained recognition as the columnist for the *Mercury* writing a weekly female convict story. My choice to use boats as a symbol for the vehicles that brought the convicts to Australian shores and then carried them further afield to isolated locations proved an effective tool to tell history. Boats were a necessity in colonial life – they were essential in attempted escapes, in the thriving boat building trade and in the whaling and fishing industry. Performance art incorporating the paper boats on the Parramatta River, New South Wales and in the Mercury Passage, the channel of water between Tasmania's east coast and Maria Island, offered participants an appealing way to understand the value of convict lives.

The effect *Roses from the Heart* has engendered throughout the international community has been inspiring and enriches the understanding of the convict experience. As documented, the *Blessing of the Bonnets* performance will continue with an annual event at Cobh in County Cork, Ireland and I intend to develop a similar event in Hobart at the wharf in Mawson Place. *Making their Mark* serves as a 'convict trail' of bonnets that will focus attention on many convict related

heritage sites in England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales and within Australia. A collection of bonnets has been permanently installed at Woolmers World Heritage Site in Longford and at the Supreme Court Museum in Oatlands. *Roses from the Heart* has attracted an enormous amount of media interest which in turn has promoted the convict history and associated heritage sites. I have negotiated a number of sites in Ireland, including the Cork City Gaol and the Cobh Heritage Centre where 194 bonnets will be permanently displayed – a reminder of the worth of the convict women transported on the *Elizabeth II* in 1828.

The thousands of connections made by participants as they sewed a cloth bonnet for their ancestor, or the creator of a bonnet for an ‘adopted’ lass whose story was learnt as they stitched and embellished will become a living document to the memory of the female convicts. These reflections and stories have created a link with the places and spaces where convict women spent time, they have revealed insights into the women’s experiences. The vast emptiness of the Cascades Female Factory, void of almost all original structures soaks up the stories and visitors are welcomed who arrive delivering cloth tributes or who leave with a bonnet pattern having enlisted to sew a bonnet. The sandstone walls of the Cascades Female Factory guard the collective memory of all who have eked out an existence within. Living art, live history, theatre performance, digital technology and film production provide opportunities to bring the women’s stories alive.

Opportunities have developed that have yielded surprising results. Prisoners in Dublin are sewing bonnets for convicts transported from their own city. They have already completed tributes for three ships of women and are commencing a fourth. My touring of Ireland with *Roses from the Heart* events in 2010 facilitated

connections across the seas that will be lasting and significant as people become more interested to learn about female convict history and assist in the realisation of the required 25,566 tributes. The four days I exhibited 8,000 bonnets at the Festival of Quilts in Birmingham allowed for 40,000 visitors to engage with the *Sea of Bonnets* and become acquainted with Australia's convict woman story. This opportunity has generated many enquiries, the making of thousands of bonnets, connections with people in countries throughout Europe including Sweden, Norway, the Netherlands, Spain and Belgium and invitations to tour *Roses from the Heart* to Canada, Germany and New Zealand.

Amphitrite Goddess Reclaims and *Neva Not Forgotten* will be undertaken and continued in 2012 accruing further interest in the colonial story and creating links between communities in rurally isolated areas. The *Mailing Maria* postcard exhibition will travel and maintain the focus on the links between Maria Island and the Cascades Female Factory World Heritage Site. There are further opportunities to develop permanent installations on Maria Island World Heritage Site to highlight the weaving industry. Almost all trace of this industry has disappeared and the development of an interactive APP is worth consideration to provide visitors to the island with the acumen to discover more about this and associated industries that once thrived on the island. Woolmers World Heritage Site is particularly fortunate to have so many original buildings which lend veracity to the delivery of living history being played out through art, theatre and narrative.

The artists I have referenced within my research, among them Anne Ferran, Fiona Hall, Julie Gough, Fred Wilson, Romuald Hazoumé and Yinka Shonibare have all

contributed to the richness of diversity of interpreting heritage sites attractions for visitors. The cultural tourist is becoming more discerning and heritage sites competing for visitors need to respond to the market with modes of interpretation that are specifically designed to highlight individual histories pertaining to specific sites. Artist in residencies and art projects such as the Port Arthur Project provide wonderful bodies of work that attract large audiences. Diversity, individuality, authenticity are all hallmarks of successful operators such as demonstrated by David and Anne Kernke the 'caretaker' owners of the convict built property Shene in Tasmania. The idea of what history can be has been promulgated through the creative writing of Kate Grenville and Rohan Wilson, that is, history as an affective, living thing.

The project demonstrates that art works can be used by historians and site custodians to evoke story, memory and a sense of place and time that enriches the visitor experience and can elicit poignant and sometimes surprising responses from those who choose to participate in the collaborative aspects of the project, from simply attending a site or exhibition, through to having direct input to installations and related site-responsive activities. Installing the final art work *Sea of Bonnets* (Figure 25) in a theatrical setting in a colonial city demonstrates yet again the potential adaptability of simple metaphors, cultural objects and living history.

Postscript:

Next steps.

Roses from the Heart is a stand-alone memorial to all convict women transported to Australia, nevertheless two significant events, namely the sinking of the *Amphitrite* and the *Neva* have become the catalysts for two permanent monuments now in progress – *Amphitrite Goddess Reclaims* and *Neva Not Forgotten*.

The *Amphitrite* sank in the English Channel on 25 August 1833 with the loss of all lives other than three crewmen. One hundred and eight convict women and their twelve children will be remembered at a memorial event in Boulogne-sur-Mer, France in 2012. In France participants are sewing bonnets in readiness for a *Blessing of the Bonnets*. Following this ceremony the tributes will be permanently exhibited in a venue in Boulogne, to be announced. Although still in the planning stages there has been an excellent response in anticipation of this tribute that will remain as a permanent reminder of this regrettable loss.

The *Neva* sank at Cape Wickham, off King Island, Tasmania on 14 May 1835 with the loss of 229 lives. All these lives will be remembered by cloth tributes. In the week before installing the boat and bonnets for my examination I will travel to King Island to be part of the Cape Wickham 150th Anniversary Celebrations (3-7 November 2011). This will mark the first stage of *Neva Not Forgotten*. Recalling Jeannie Mooney's 2004 project referred to in Chapter 3, but played in reverse and with a focus on community, I will be taking calico and linen that will be washed in

the ocean along the coast where the *Neva* sank. The cloth will be dried near the *Neva* memorial plaque at Cape Wickham and once the fabric has dried a communal effort of cutting out the fabric ready for sewing will commence. The ritual of connecting with the sea and the land where the ship sank and where the burial sites exist is important to be commemorated during the 150th anniversary celebrations.

The second stage entails my returning to King Island in February 2012 for a week to engage with the community in sewing bonnets and handkerchiefs ready for next stage of the project. The handkerchiefs pay tribute to all the free passengers aboard the *Neva*. I plan to involve the Countrywomen's Association, textile artists, sewers, the local drama group, and students from the King Island District High School and family history groups.

The third stage involves travelling to Ireland in August 2012 with the sewn, non-embellished bonnets. I intend to visit each of the counties where the convict women originated and I will invite Irish participants to embellish one side of the bonnet and I will embellish the other. The bonnets will include the name of the convict woman, the ship the *Neva* and the date, 1835. The women who drowned will be remembered with black ties on their bonnets and those who survived will have coloured ribbons. The handkerchiefs will be sewn at the Cohb Heritage Centre on the quayside from which the *Neva* departed. The completed bonnets and handkerchiefs will be blessed at the annual *Blessing of the Bonnets* at the Centre in 2012 (date yet to be announced). Following this the bonnets will accompany me back to Tasmania.

The fourth stage of the memorial involves returning to King Island with the

completed 185 bonnets and fifty-nine handkerchiefs for the free travellers and crew. There will be a special event on King Island after which the bonnets will be displayed permanently at the King Island museum in Currie. Plans include the involvement of King Island men who belong to the Men's Shed organisation in the collecting of driftwood and rope from along the coastline to be used in the fashioning of model heads for the bonnets permanent display. The handkerchiefs will be hung to simulate a sail.

Stage five will be the creation of video clips sourced from film taken during the previous stages. A copy of this video will be donated to the Cobh Heritage Centre in County Cork and the museum at Currie, King Island. Short clips of this visual documentation will be shown on my website, YouTube and other social media. This project will not only bring residents of King Island together but it will link the local King Island community with people in Ireland. This Memorial will draw attention to the story and perhaps attract descendants of those who survived the tragedy. A Facebook page for the overall project will allow participants and interested parties to interface with the project. I will continue a dialogue with the public via Twitter that will link participants on King Island with others interested in the *Neva* story and this symbolic way of remembering the victims of this tragedy using art as the catalyst. Family History and genealogy groups on King Island will be able to pursue the story further and extend their networks. I will link groups on King Island with similar organisations in Ireland and I will connect students on King Island with students in County Cork with the *Neva* shipwreck as the initial link.

The nature of art performance and installation art is often transitory therefore

capturing the various components of this project on film is vital. Publicity and promotion of the *Neva Not Forgotten* will raise the profile of the community, as well as that of the tragic incident of the shipwreck and its associated history, to the heritage sites in Ireland and King Island and to my professionalism as an artist.

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Final Installation: *Sea of Bonnets*

Annexe Theatre,

School of Visual and Performing Art

Inveresk, Launceston

November 2011.

Three thousand bonnets were used to create the *Sea of Bonnets* installation. I was fortunate to gain access to a wooden boat owned by the 1st Tamar Sea Scout Group in Launceston, Tasmania. Alan Butt the Group Leader not only provided the Huon pine bosun dinghy but also assisted in the positioning of the craft ready for assembling the bonnets to create the installation.

The bosun was born out of a desire by the United Kingdom's Royal Navy Sailing Association to replace their fourteen foot training and recreational dinghy with a new design. Ian Proctor of Bossoms Boatyard won the tender and began manufacturing the bosun for the Royal Admiralty in 1963. This connection to the British ship building industry influenced my choice of boat. The Sea Scouts dinghy was in excellent condition and fulfilled all my expectations fitting perfectly within the allotted space. Over twenty people were required to assist with the maneuvering of the dinghy into the Annexe Theatre. The camaraderie amongst fellow university students and members of the local community and their willingness to assist me was invaluable. Although *Sea of Bonnets* was specifically installed for the examiners to consider the installation remained open to the public for a few hours after the conclusion of the examination process.

The theatre space with its black curtains covering the walls surrounding the installation plus the black painted floor and ceiling offered the perfect setting for the installation. The darkness conveyed a sense of night. The cargo of bonnets signifying convict women spilled out from the boat that was positioned centrally towards the back of the room. The lighting was set to mimic the glowing of the moon beaming down onto the craft accentuating the white sails and the cloth bonnets spilling out over the sides of the boat across the floor.

Plastic zip-lock bags containing individual bonnets positioned close to the boat and then randomly amongst the rows of bonnets stretching out across the floor were used to achieve an undulating effect. Light on these strategically placed plastic bags suggested the rippling of waves. Each bonnet overlapped onto the neighbouring bonnet to present as one and the entire work was spread over sheets of paper and cloth. The unique embellishment of each bonnet tribute created a visual patterning that developed the concept of movement within a large body of water. A space was deliberately left to allow the public to walk around the entire installation and view the work intimately from all angles. A balcony above also afforded an opportunity for engagement with the art from a different angle.

Black seats were placed in the corners of the room facing the installation allowing the viewer to reflect on the symbolism of the installation. These seats were chosen to blend in with the surroundings so as not to be conspicuous or detract from the work. The chairs allowed for repose and a calm reflection of the

installation that embodied thousands of participant's involvement and empathy. Visitors were encouraged to walk around the perimeter of the *Sea of Bonnets* and to connect with the bonnets that delineated the border. The ribbon ties were intentionally placed, flowing unrestrictedly away from the cloth bonnets making an asymmetrical impression, simulating the imprints in sand made by lines of seaweed brought to shore by the tide. As I placed the last row of bonnets on the floor I contemplated the fate of the many convict women who died on the voyage out and were buried at sea. The bonnets sewn in their memory are a testament to their lives.

Appendix:

Roses from the Heart: Performance and Exhibition Diary

***Blessing of the Bonnets* 14 March 2008, Geelong Heritage Gaol,
Geelong, Victoria, Australia**

I chose to present the '*Blessing*' performance in the Geelong Gaol because convicts built this prison. There was a theatrical focus on the convict woman Mary Clarke's story with the inclusion of the *Drop of A Hat Productions* who re-enacted a court scene from an 1840s trial in London. Students from the local Geelong primary school attended and the Geelong Gaol was overflowing with participants on a day when temperatures soured to over 40 degrees C. Geelong residents Pat and Barry Whitford worked tirelessly with me to ensure the performance was a truly memorable one. Prior to the 'Blessing' bonnets were displayed in the Geelong library. GO TV filmed the performance at Geelong. Local Amity nursing home residents made over 150 bonnets and I held a special event at the nursing home prior to the 'Blessing' as the weather was too hot for the residents to attend the historic gaol. After the *Blessing of the Bonnets* the majority of bonnets remained installed at the Geelong Gaol for a number of

months and the remainder were exhibited at the Geelong Wool Museum for three months.

Memorial of the Bonnets, 10 April 2008, St John's Cathedral, Parramatta, New South Wales, Australia.

Over 600 participants attended this ceremony and more than 3000 bonnets were presented. Canon Bruce Morrison and Reverend Graeme Begbie asked that the performance be named the *Memorial of the Bonnets* and I acquiesced to this request as the church held great significance with its history of being built by convicts and convicts regularly attending church services within the building and this association was important. As the bonnets were presented and placed into a dinghy Alex Walsh read out the names of the convict women aboard the First Fleet and Angela Scaberras played the harp. When the last bonnet was placed into the boat Angela stopped playing and presented her bonnet and as her hand was poised above the mound of bonnets her convict woman's name was called out.

Bonnets and Boats: Paper Boats on the Parramatta River. September 2008, Parramatta, New South Wales.

This event was the culmination of a number of workshops I held with students from Parramatta and surrounding suburbs. The paper boats were launched at the Parramatta River close to the convict-built

Lennox Bridge (opened in 1839). The Parramatta City Council supported this venture and provided a boat from which two council workers collected the paper boats, as they became water-logged. These rescued boats were subsequently displayed in the *Bonnets and Boats* exhibition.

***Bonnets and Boats* exhibition, September-October 2008, Parramatta Artists Studios, Parramatta, New South Wales.**

The 1000 plus bonnets I installed in this exhibition came from a variety of sources including bonnets presented earlier in the year at the *Blessing of the Bonnets* at St. John's Cathedral; bonnets made in workshops held at the Parramatta Artists' Centre, and others made by participants living in New South Wales. Many of the latter came from members of Family History Groups. The bonnets were displayed side by side, completely covering the walls from floor to ceiling. Padding the walls with bonnets in this manner created a sense of containment. This was an intentional ploy to draw attention to the congested spaces convicts lived in whilst on board ship. As part of the *Bonnets and Boats* exhibition I assembled 120 bonnets to evoke the shape of a boat. This collection of bonnets made a craft, measuring 280 x 132cm, which hung from the ceiling by two slender wooden beams that gave shape to the structure. The ephemeral

creation took up considerable space, greatly restricting movement within the room, a deliberate intention. Additional to the boat of cloth bonnets I reintroduced the boat symbolism through the medium of paper with a display of paper boats made by students living in the Parramatta area. A looped DVD set up as part of the exhibition documented the associated Parramatta paper boat making workshops along with interviews I had conducted with participants and footage of the paper boats being set free on the Parramatta River. All this documentation tied the work and the bonnet installation together. The exhibition opening attracted a large gathering and as word spread, people travelled from within New South Wales and interstate, to visit the exhibition. The Lord Mayor of Parramatta, Councillor Paul Barber, attended the exhibition launch that was opened by Julie Owens, MP, member for Parramatta, New South Wales.

The Burial Ground Installation, September 2008, St. John's Cathedral grounds, Parramatta, New South Wales, Australia

My installation of bonnets within the grounds of St. John's Cathedral created interest amongst the community. The mall adjacent to the church was a thoroughfare for workers, families, tourists and shoppers frequenting the space. Many passers-by stopped to ask

about the significance of the bonnets installed on polystyrene balls, connected to the ground by wooden dowelling, encircling the trees on the grassy verge. I wanted to confront the public with the female convict story. The bonnets created a spectacle focusing attention on the women whose graves lie in the Cathedral's cemetery. The St John's Church cemetery was the first European burial cemetery in Australia established in 1790. Originally it was sited on the outskirts of the Rose Hill settlement (now Parramatta). The burial site is located half a mile away from St John's Cathedral. The convict built wall surrounding the grounds protects the graves from traffic noise emanating from O'Connell Street (Buxton, J. St John's Cemetery, 2000). In colonial times, bodies from the convict hospital were taken to their graves by the chain gang, in marked contrast to the elaborate funerals of the colony's upper class. By placing the bonnets within the grounds of St. John's Cathedral, where many convict women had attended services, gave focus to their lives.

***Roses from the Heart* display, 12 – 15 February 2009, Telecentre, Boyup Brook, Western Australia.**

I exhibited a selection of bonnets made by women in Western Australia including some made locally. The bonnets were displayed in the town's Telecentre as part of the annual Boyup Brook Country

Music Festival. The display was located in the centre of town and was well attended. It was interesting to note the number of men who returned to reconnect with the work, most knowing either nothing or very little of the female convict story.

***Roses from the Heart* performance, 27 February - 2 March 2009,**

Nannup Folk Festival, Nannup, Western Australia

I was asked to be involved in a performance of *Roses from the Heart* enacting the convict woman's story through music, prose and bonnet making. Amongst the audience was a man from County Tipperary and he read the letter written to convict woman Mary Walsh from her husband in Clonmell, Tipperary, Ireland. The letter belongs to the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery collection in Hobart. Music written about Mary Walsh by Pete St. John was included in the performance.

***Blessing of the Bonnets*, 9 November 2009, Highfields Heritage Village, Toowoomba, Queensland, Australia.**

The *Blessing of the Bonnets* performance in Toowoomba was held outside at the heritage, Highfields Pioneer Village with the assistance of three residents of Toowoomba, Pat Turton, Robyn Debnam and Betty Carter. In conjunction with the 'Blessing' performance I exhibited bonnets in one of the heritage cottages on site. Participants

throughout Queensland had made all of the bonnets on display. Calico hammocks took the place of a wooden boat. A number of musicians took part including the *Women's Harmony Choir*. Each participant received a small candle, stories of convict women were shared and there were refreshments. The components of the 'Blessing' performance involved ritual, symbols, music, stories and all in a setting highlighting Australian Pioneers. As the *Blessing of the Bonnets* took place hundreds of people sat on seats under a canvas canopy surrounded by artifacts which had survived from bygone years. Many of the bonnets were made by participants of the Toowoomba district, an area known to be mainly settled by German migrant settlers and squattocracy.

Blessing of the Bonnets, 8 March 2009, St. Paul's Basilica, Western Australia, Australia.

The Parish of St. Paul's was established around 1850. I chose this church for the 'Blessing' ceremony because of its proximity to the wharf and its connection with so many of Fremantle's thousands of immigrants. Many of the new arrivals prayed in this church, prayers of thanks for survival at sea. The early arrivals were mainly Irish but were followed by large numbers of Italians, Portuguese and Croatian migrants. Father John Sherman performed the blessing. Church

Councillor, Mary Jardine-Clarke and Councillor Shirley Mackay participated and a number of professional musicians were involved in the performance including highly respected performers, Bernard and Eleanor Carney. Local Irish business-man/musician Fred Rea sourced the Irish currach that was also used in the *Vessel of Hope* installation. Hundreds of people travelled long distances to be part of this performance that linked them to the lives of women exiled from their homeland. As part of this performance I presented participants with sprigs of rosemary.

***Vessels of Hope* exhibition, 11 March – 7 June 2009, Fremantle Prison World Heritage Site, Fremantle, Western Australia.**

Bonnets made by participants in Western Australia were filled with bubble wrap to provide shape and then huddled together in an original Irish currach. Bonnet tributes made for the 149 convict women aboard the ship *Hope* that arrived from Dublin to Van Diemen's Land in August 1842 were displayed encased in glass cabinets. The bonnets were made by various groups of Irish women, many living in and around Fremantle. Being amongst the women as they sewed was inspiring. There was a strong sense of pride in their heritage and so many stories – tales of heartache and hardship yet also anecdotes of courage and joy that were shared as bonnets were

sewn and embellished. Many of these women had no connection to the convict story but they belonged to migrant families and they had an understanding of the grief that dislocation and separation brings. Groups of women met together to sew bonnets in an assortment of places in Western Australia all determined to see *Roses from the Heart* realised as a testament to the resilience of Australia's convict settlers. As part of the *Vessels of Hope* exhibition the limestone walls of the Fremantle Prison Gallery were lined with paper boats made by students who had attended workshops I held at St. Patrick's Primary School and at the co-ed Ursula Frayne Catholic College, Perth. The 279 paper boats representing all the convicts on board the *Hougoumont* were displayed end to end, at a height 140 cms above the stone floor. The intent was to create a horizon line of paper boats encircling the currach and glass containers of bonnets.

Blessing of the Bonnets, 2 May 2009, St Peter and St. Paul's Church, South Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

This 'Blessing' performance included local musicians Greg Hunt, Val Embling and Bianca Montesano, Mossie Scanlon from Ireland and American musician Digney Fignus. Deborah Swiss – who wrote the *Tin Ticket*, an historic novel, published November 11, 2010 – spoke of our association that saw her decide to write a book on convict

women. Glad Whishart and Joy Sharpe spoke about their great, great, great grandmother Ludlow Tedder and her daughter Arabella. The Irish Ambassador Mairtin O'Fainin spoke, focusing on the Irish convict women. The Hon Prof. Barry Jones, Chairman of the Port Arthur Management Authority (PASHMA), also attended. Father Peter Rankin of St. Patrick's Church, Kilmore, officiated and blessed the bonnets, Ken and Eileen Raphael loaned a rigged sabot for the occasion and Anthony Sharpe videoed the event. Eileen Raphael has been responsible for making over 140 bonnets.

Blessing of the Bonnets, 1 July 2009, Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Lesmurdie, Western Australia

This was a real community ceremony that brought many members of the Lesmurdie neighbourhood together in the making of bonnet tributes along with other participants from throughout Western Australia. What started off as four women from the Lourdes Craft Group, visiting the *Vessels of Hope* exhibition in Fremantle, grew into a major bonnet making project which encompassed at least three craft groups in the Kalamunda/Lesmurdie area, a small group of history graduates from Murdoch University, plus others who wanted to join in the creation of over a hundred bonnets. Irene Gierczycki and Chris Milton organised the venue and invitations and the antique

trunk in which the bonnets were placed. One member sewed a bonnet in memory of her convict ancestor Elizabeth Cross from Somersetshire. A luncheon followed the performance.

***Roses from the Heart* exhibition, 18 July – 30 August 2009, Centre for the Arts, Beaudesert, Queensland.**

The Scenic Rim Council invited me to spend time in their municipality and outlying district as a guest artist and involve constituents in learning about the female convict story via *Roses from the Heart*. The project involved three trips to Queensland in 2009. In July I flew north from Tasmania. The Council provided me with a hire car to facilitate driving to a number of outlying areas, including Boonah, Rathdowney, Kooralbyn, Kalbar, Aratula, Canungra and the Hinterland Town of Tamborine Mountain. Members of the Boonah District Girl Guides and Brownies groups attended the bonnet making workshop that I held in Boonah and bonnets made by these students were exhibited along with bonnet tributes created within the broader community. The experience of making the bonnet tributes formed part of the Guides and Brownie members 'acquiring new skills' activities. These bonnets contributed to the *Roses from the Heart* exhibition at the Scenic Rim Regional Gallery in Beaudesert.

***Blessing of the Bonnets*, 18 July 2009, Centre for the Arts,**

Beaudesert, Queensland.

This particular *Blessing of the Bonnets* performance was held as part of the *Roses from the Heart* exhibition opening. The local choir *A-Chaired Taste* performed throughout the ceremony. Local resident, Gail Mulhern, spoke about her convict ancestor Eliza Davis. Hundreds of bonnets made by participants within the Scenic Rim Regional Council Shire were presented and blessed. A commemorative calico cloth was signed by those attending and is being embroidered by Beaudesert resident Bernie Grodecki. This cloth will travel with Christina to Ireland in 2012. Sprigs of rosemary and heart shape tags inscribed with a convict woman's name were given to participants at the end of the performance.

***Vessels of Hope*, 31 July – 13 September 2009, Hawkesbury Regional Art Gallery, Windsor, New South Wales.**

This installation consisted of ninety-six bonnets hung from three connected slender wooden boughs suspended from the ceiling by nylon thread. The bonnets creating each vessel shape were joined together using a lighter weight nylon thread that was woven through the bonnets. Eight of these 'vessels' were each attached to the ceiling by hooks. Spacing allowed for gallery visitors to walk between each of the hanging forms. The bonnets included in the installation had

been made by people in New South Wales, Queensland, Victoria and New Zealand. A number of the bonnets had been sewn by descendants of convict women and contained mementos such as photographs, or materials from clothes or sewing boxes, all holding associations of family significance. These memory-laden objects added not only visual interest but also contextualised the narrative. The gentle shifting of the bonnets simulated the action of rippling waves adding to the spectacle of ships traversing the ocean. A single line of bonnets placed along four walls positioned to represent the horizon line surrounded the boat structures. *Vessels of Hope* was displayed in conjunction with Jill Kennear's *Diaspora: textiles as paradox* curated by Diana Robson.

Blessing of the Bonnets, 2 August 2009, St Matthews Anglican Church, Windsor, New South Wales.

Many people travelled from interstate and some from New Zealand along with locals to attend the performance. This event coincided with an exhibition of thousands of *Roses from the Heart* bonnets at the nearby Hawkesbury Regional Art Gallery. I chose St. Matthews Church because of the large number of First Fleeter convicts buried in the adjacent cemetery. In fact after the 'Blessing' performance the descendants gathered at the cemetery to reflect on their ancestors.

Peter and Sandra Tolson lent a beautiful wooden boat for the performance. Helen Walker shared her ancestor Susannah Lallemont's story, Helen Everingham sang, Linda Jackson and Stephanie Fischer read the convict women's names as the bonnets were brought forward to be blessed by Rev. Aleks Pinter. *Roses Only* supplied long stemmed roses that were handed out at the end of the event. Afternoon tea was served outside the church allowing people the opportunity to mingle.

Blessing of the Bonnets, 8 October 2009, Unley District High School, Adelaide, South Australia.

This *Blessing of the Bonnets* ceremony was held as part of the 'Beating Around the Bush' International Embroiderers Convention at Unley District High School, South Australia. Margie Bauer, who was the owner of the embroidery company *Country Bumpkin* at the time, hosted the 'Blessing' performance as part of the 2009 International Embroiderer's Convention. I exhibited bonnets during the convention that were blessed on the final day with participants from around the world present. Clients of the Edwards Town Correctional Services in South Australia made 1200 of the bonnets presented for blessing. An Irish embroiderer and an English magistrate read out the convict women's names as the bonnets were placed in an antique trunk.

Some of the attendees have remained in contact and were further involved with *Roses from the Heart* when I toured overseas in 2010.

***Mailing Maria* postcard exhibition, August 2009- 2010, Post Office, Maria Island, Tasmania.**

Documented in Chapter One.

***Transported by Water*, August 2009 – 2010, Chapel, Maria Island, Tasmania.**

Documented in Chapter One.

***Roses from the Heart*, 2009 – September 2010, Jersey Museum, the Weighbridge, St Helier, Jersey, Channel Islands.**

Bonnets representing three ships' contingent of convict women were exhibited at the Jersey Museum over several months in 2009 in conjunction with an exhibition of Marilyn Monroe's artifacts. Both exhibitions ran until September 2010. Thousands of visitors walked through and admired the bonnets and connected with convict women's stories. I was interested to exhibit on Jersey as this island has a history of slaves constructing tunnels for Adolf Hitler in World War 11 between 1940 until the island's liberation on 9 May 1945. Today the tunnels are museums to the myriad of stories concerning the German occupation of Jersey.

***Roses from the Heart* exhibition 29 April – 2 May 2010,
'Australasian Quilt Festival', Royal Exchange Building,
Melbourne, Victoria.**

Exhibiting *Roses from the Heart* bonnets at the 'Australasian quilt Festival' offered an opportunity to converse with thousands of visitors who engaged with the bonnets during the four-day festival. Bonnets are still arriving made by people who attended and spoke with me during that time.

***Blessing of the Bonnets* 3 July 2010, Holy Trinity Church, York,
Western Australia**

Documented in Chapter Four.

***Sea of Bonnets* exhibition, 28 – 31 August 2010, 'Festival of
Quilts', National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham, England.**

Documented in Chapter Four.

***Roses from the Heart* performance, 31 August 2010, Cork City
South Parish History Group Rooms, Cork.**

I chose to present my first *Roses from the Heart* art performance in Ireland to a group of both professional and involved family historians who had shown interest in my work. The female convict story was

presented through a combination of music, prose, art projection and installation art.

***Roses from the Heart* performance, 2 September 2010, West Cork Hotel hall, Skibbereen, County Cork, Ireland.**

It was important for me to hold an event in Skibbereen because this district was one of the most severely stricken regions in Ireland during the Great Hunger - an *Gorta Mor* - with an estimated 8,000-10,000 unidentified famine victims buried in the famine burial pits at Abbeystrewery Cemetery. The performance was part of a series of events hosted through the County Cork *Heritage Week* festivities. Members of the local community were involved in the performance including musicians from the *Comhaltas Ceoltoiri Eireann* who provided traditional Irish music. Women from the Irish Countrywomen's Association attended and participants travelled from as far as Northern Ireland, France and Tasmania.

***Blessing of the Bonnets*, 28 August 2010, Cork City Gaol, Cork, Ireland.**

Elizabeth Kearns, the Manager of the Cork City Gaol, invited me to hold a 'Blessing' at the gaol to highlight the female convict story with particular focus on the convict women who had spent time at the gaol, prior to being transported to Australia on board the *Elizabeth*

(2). Some of the 194 women transported on that particular ship had participated in a riot that occurred at the County Cork Gaol in July 1827. Suzanne Voytas author of the historical work, *Elizabeth 1828 the worst and most turbulent*, launched her book to coincide with the *Blessing of the Bonnets* celebration. I had organised 194 bonnets to be made by women in Ireland for the Cork City Gaol *Blessing of the Bonnets* Performance Art Ceremony and invited guests placed these into an antique trunk. The Australian Ambassador to Ireland, Mr. Bruce Davis welcomed guests to the event. The Lord Mayor of Cork, Michael O'Connell attended and took part in the ceremony, as did Bishop Colton and Monseignor O'Callaghan. The owner of the Cork City Gaol, Diarmuid Kenneally, made the event possible and Elizabeth Kearns organised the proceedings. Visitors, including descendants of convict women transported aboard the *Elizabeth* (2) had travelled from Northern Ireland and overseas to participate. It was an unforgettable experience speaking to and performing for those present in such a befitting space. I invited Elizabeth Kearns and Margaret McBride, a guest from Northern Ireland, to read the names of the convict women from the *Elizabeth* (2) voyage. There was a particular relevance in holding the 'Blessing' at the Gaol. The performance was held in the central section of the west wing. A

section of the wall on either side of the large space contains a series of doors that lead into small cells. As you enter the main room of the west wing two sections branch off, one to the left and one to the right. Views down the corridors of these two cross sections provide a glimpse into the cavities where convicts were held prisoner. To date this area has not been renovated and the wings are closed to the public. Perspex doors however allow visitors the opportunity to see into the area and connect with this space that once held convicts.

***Blessing of the Bonnets* performance, 29 August 2010, Cobh quayside, Cork.**

It was significant holding the 'Blessing' performance at the Cobh quayside because 102 transport ships departed from the Cobh wharf with convicts bound for Australia. The first convict ship to leave Cobh was the *Queen* in 1791. Cobh wharf, with its view across to Spike Island in Cork Harbour, where convicts had been constrained awaiting transportation, was the perfect platform to hold this performance art. The entire day was devoted to highlighting the female convict story and the connection between Cobh, Ireland and Australia. A *Roses from the Heart* concert was held that evening in the Cobh Heritage Centre by the quayside. Special reference was made to the 194 convict women on board the ship the *Elizabeth* (2) that sailed

from Cobh on August 27, 1827. Amongst the attendees at the evening concert was Australian academic Julie Gough who was undertaking an artist's residency in Cork. I was unaware Gough was in Ireland and it was an impromptu gesture inviting her to join me on stage. Gough is an artist, writer, and curator who lives in Hobart, Tasmania. Her art explores the notions of *ephemerality, absence and recurrence*, concentrating on colonial cross-cultural encounter using tools such as installation, sound, and video. In 2009 Pat Hickman wrote an article 'Why weren't we told? Two Tasmanian artists' that examined both Julie Gough's and my own art. The article was included in *Surface Design Journal*. (Hickman, *Surface Design*, 2009). At the time Hickman's story was published I would not have foreseen Gough and my chance meeting in Ireland that led to an unrehearsed collaboration in County Cork. The date chosen for the 'Blessing' was the weekend closest to the anniversary of the departure of the *Elizabeth* (2), Sunday, August 29, 2010. Amongst the dignitaries who attended was the Australian Ambassador to Ireland, Mr. Bruce Davis and the Mayor of Cobh, Councillor Finbarr O'Driscoll. The event received excellent media coverage including promotion from the *Irish Examiner*.

***Blessing of the Bonnets* performance, 3 September, 2010, St.**

Kilian's Community School, Bray, County Wicklow, Ireland.

The 'Blessing' performance at the St. Kilians Community School was an extraordinarily emotional experience. Students, staff, parents and other invited guests were part of the performance art. It was exciting to see the students so involved with all aspects of the performance including music, singing, performance, art and prose. The hundreds of bonnets made over a period of weeks by the school community were blessed. The reality of the convict story created empathy when the students realised that some convict 'women' had been similar ages to them. They tried to imagine how it must have been, how they would feel being estranged from their families, most likely, forever. Principal, Michael Sheridan, Deputy Principal, John Murphy and member Helen Dodd supported *Roses from the Heart* activities and encouraged student involvement in making bonnets for the 150 convict women aboard the *Tasmania* on its second voyage, departing from Dublin 3 December, 1845. The head student, Leah O'Brien played a prominent role and Christopher Smith played the violin as Kevin Kaviza and Aoife Murray read the convict women's names aloud whilst over 100 students brought the bonnets forward to be blessed by Anne Daly BA, Rel. Ed.

***Roses from the Heart* performance, 3 September 2010, St.**

Michael's Theatre, Centre for the Arts, New Ross, County Wexford, Ireland.

This performance was held in the community based arts centre not far from a replica of the *Dunbrody* sailing ship that carried Irish emigrants to America in the late 19th century. Hundreds of people attended and engaged in the performance.

***Roses from the Heart* performance 5 September 2010, Parish of Mary Immaculate, Inchicore, Dublin.**

The performance at the Church of the Mary Immaculate Parish, Inchicore was significant because the venue was representative of the convict era and I personally felt close to the Irish convict women whilst in the building. The Oblate Order of priests opened the first wooden church on the site in 1856 and then the existing stone cathedral in 1876. The Oblate priests have always followed a vision of assisting those less fortunate and today they continue to assist needy members of the community, especially drug addicts. This philosophy of community support drew me to accepting the invitation of Father Paul the head of the Oblate Order at Inchicore to hold a *Blessing* performance. In attendance were many from the Parish and neighbouring areas as well as musician Pete St. John. His legendary song *Fields of Athenry* was included in the 'Blessing'.

Amongst the bonnets presented were four representing the Cuddihy family, fifty year old widowed Bridget Cuddihy and her three daughters Honora (aged 20), Mary (aged eighteen) and Catherine (aged seventeen) all transported together from Dublin on the *John Calvin* (1848). Bridget's son had been transported to Australia some five years earlier in 1843 on the *Duke of Richmond*. There was a very apparent emotional response during the 'Blessing' performance, especially by the more elderly attendees.

***Roses from the Heart* performance, 4 September 2010, The Railway Club, Rosslare, County Wexford.**

This performance was delivered to the senior citizens of Rosslare and the venue was fully booked. The audience interaction was the highlight of the evening. Opportunity was afforded for attendees to talk with me after the performance and relevant stories were shared.

***Blessing of the Bonnets* performance, 9 September 2010, Claremorris, County Mayo.**

In response to an invitation by Una Murphy I held a 'Blessing' performance in Claremorris. Hundreds of participants travelled from neighbouring counties, including from Sligo, Leitrim, Roscommon and Galway to attend this event. Bonnet tributes made in County Mayo and surrounding counties were presented and blessed. Some in

the audience had family members who had been transported out of Ireland; a few amongst those present were visiting from Australia. Una Murphy as well as members from the Irish Countrywomen's Association supported the event. Traditional Irish dancing and sean-nós singing was incorporated into the ceremony leading to the bonnets being blessed by Father Maloney.

Blessing of the Bonnets performance, 12 September 2010, Rostrevor, County Down, Northern Ireland.

Northern Ireland was the final destination in the *Roses from the Heart* Irish Tour. I held a 'Blessing' performance at Kilbroney Church, Rostrevor, County Down. Women had made bonnets from the counties of Down, Antrim, Derry and Armagh. In particular hundreds had been sewn and embellished by Margaret McBride and Laura McClelland from County Down. The most poignant moment was listening to McBride and McClelland reading the convict women's names with great affect as the bonnets were brought forward to the wooden dinghy. The church was well attended as Canon Jamieson blessed hundreds of bonnets representing Irish convict women transported aboard ships including the *Kinnear* (2) and the *Roslin Castle* (5). The Lord Mayor of the Newry and Mourne District Council, Michael Murphy attended. A large contingent of media

covered the event. Journalist Barbara Collins's interview culminated in the BBC4 'Women's Hour' Program on Sept 15, 2010. BBC Ulster 'Good Morning Program' also aired an interview on September 13, 2010. Journalist Denis Tuohy, attended and wrote a full-page article in the *Belfast Telegraph*, September 16, 'Hat's off to the Irish Convict Women'. As with so many of the events I held in Ireland, people travelled long distances, sometimes in coach loads, to take part.

***Blessing of the Bonnets* performance, 19 September 2010, Methodist Church, Bulwarks, St. Aubin, Jersey, Channel Islands – British Crown Dependency.**

Bonnets made by participants living on Jersey and the neighbouring island of Guernsey were included in the 'Blessing' performance held at the Methodist Church on St. Aubin's Bay. Prior to the event co-founders Pat Robson and Liz Le Gall of the Harbour Gallery, a shop gallery and textile workshop space complex, promoted *Roses from the Heart*. Robson and Le Gall also sponsored the special dinner held after the 'Blessing' performance. Rosalie Hollis, Chairman of the Embroidery Guild in Jersey, also publicised *Roses from the Heart* and these women's combined endeavours were vital to the overwhelming response that saw the church filled with spectators and participants for the 'Blessing' event. The performance brought a diverse section of

the community including students from the Preparatory School of the local Jersey College for Girls and their families. Susie De Carteret, the United Kingdom representative for Tourism Tasmania, was present at the 'Blessing' performance accompanied by her family. De Carteret's expertise in the field of tourism assisted the advertising of my *Roses from the Heart* events, particularly in Jersey, but also in the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland. The service concluded with all attending crossing the road to throw thousands of rose petals, donated by the Jersey Rosarians, into the water of the St Aubin's port that opens out into the Gulf of Saint-Malo. The petals floated on the water drifting out with the tide towards the Fort, just outside the harbour. The local Centeniers (police) stopped traffic from moving in front of the church in order to allow the hundreds of participants to scatter the petals. The connotation of throwing the petals out on the bay referred to the female convicts leaving on the tide, taken away by ships across the seas. People were affected by emotion as the rose petals moved out like a brightly coloured quilt being pulled away from the harbour's edge off towards the horizon. They 'felt' something, empathy for those convict women and others who experience forcible expulsion.

***Blessing of the Bonnets* performance, 6 November 2010,
Hamilton, Queensland.**

As discussed in Chapter Three.

***Roses from the Heart* display and performance, 7 November
2010, Kingston, Queensland.**

As discussed in Chapter Three.

***Roses from the Heart* performance concert, 10 January 2011,
Subiaco, Western Australia.**

This event offered an opportunity to reconnect with supporters of *Roses from the Heart* in WA and share significant moments from the 2010 overseas tour.

***Roses from the Heart* display, 10 February – 10 March 2011,
Nedlands Library, Nedlands, Western Australia.**

I exhibited bonnets and was invited to discuss the *Roses from the Heart* memorial as part of the 'Love your Library Week'. A number of descendants of convict women attended this event.

***Roses from the Heart* display, 4 – 6 March 2011, Bothwell
International SpinIn, Bothwell, Tasmania.**

This event involved three days of meeting the spinning community and sharing the convict women's story through the bonnet

symbolism. Members of the public shared stories of convict ancestors and offered to make bonnets or delivered completed bonnets.

***Roses from the Heart* exhibition, April 2011, Bega Valley Library, Bega, New South Wales.**

Regional Arts, New South Wales sponsored my travelling to Bega to be part of the State's *History Week* celebrations. I exhibited bonnets in the Bega library and addressed members of the community, many of whom had participated in sewing bonnet tributes.

***Annual Blessing of the Bonnets*, 24 May 2011, Cobh quayside, Cork, Ireland.**

As documented in Chapter Three.

***Making their Mark* permanent installation, 8 October 2011, Woolmers World Heritage Site, Longford, Tasmania**

As documented in Chapter Two.

***Making their Mark* permanent installation, 16 October 2011, Supreme Court Museum Oatlands, Tasmania.**

On September 9 and 10 the Southern Midlands Council, Tasmania invited me to facilitate bonnet-making workshops at the historic Supreme Court Museum, Oatlands. These bonnets were displayed as part of the *Oatlands Spring Festival* on 16 October 2011. Tasmanian Premier, the Honourable Lara Giddings MHA, attended this Festival

and officially launched the *Making their Mark* art with bonnets commemorating the life of three convict women – Nora Corbett, Mary Ann Scace and Eliza Lacking -who served part of their sentence in Oatlands at the Callington Mill, the Supreme Court and the Gaol.

Neva Not Forgotten, 4-5 November 2011, Cape Wickham and Currie, King Island, Tasmania.

As documented in Chapter Three.

Hickman, J 2009, 'Why weren't we told? Two Tasmanian artists'

Surface Design Journal, USA, vol. 33, no. 3, Spring edition, pp. 26-31.



Figure 1.
Christina Henri
900 Bonnets, 2003
Silk screen, mixed media



Figure 2.
Christina Henri
Departures and Arrivals, 2004
900 cloth bonnets, stockings, polystyrene balls, wooden dowelling



Figure 2.
Christina Henri
Departures and Arrivals, 2004
Yard One, Cascades Female Factory Heritage Site



Figure 2.
Christina Henri *Departures and Arrivals*, 2004 George Town, Tasmania





Figure 3.
Christina Henri
Roses from the Heart, 2008 -Elena Love, Romanian Lace bonnet for convict woman Eleanor Carter,



Brenda Mills bonnet for convict woman Ann Joy



Figure 4.
Christina Henri
Mailing Maria, 2009
A collection of postcards, Post Office, Maria Island.





Figure 5.
Christina Henri
Transported by Water, 2010
The Chapel, Maria Island, Tasmania



Christina Henri
Transported by Water, 2009
Parramatta River, Parramatta, NSW

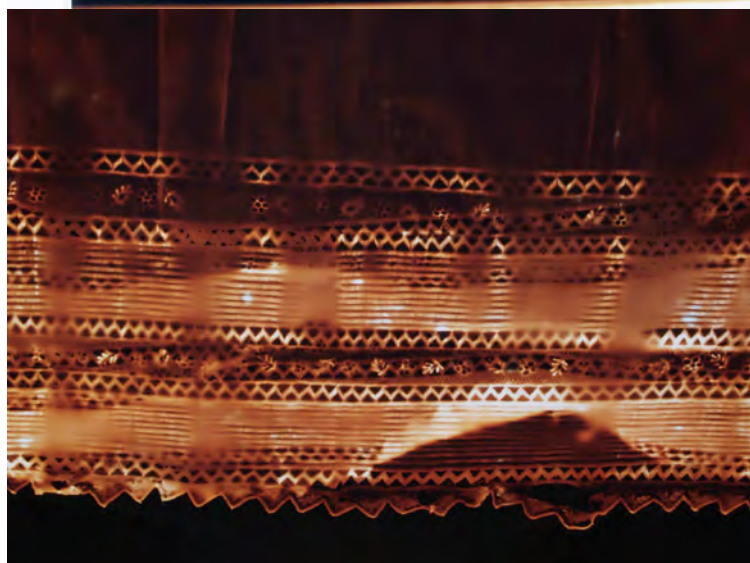


Figure 6.
Christina Henri
Hopes and Dreams, photogram 2007



Figure 7.
Christina Henri
HandMaid, photogram 2006



Figure 8.
Christina Henri
Making their Mark
Bonnet for Mary Wade made by Jill Cartwright
Received by Governor General of the Commonwealth of Australia, Her Excellency
Ms Quentin Bryce AC, 2009



Figure 9.
Anne Ferran
The ground, the air, 1999-2008,
Digital print on aluminium, 120 x 120 cm



Figure 10.
Christina Henri
Sea of Bonnets, 2010. 8,000 bonnets and a wooden boat
'Festival of Quilts', National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham, England



Figure 11.
Christina Henri
Memorial of the Bonnets, 2008
St. John's Cathedral, Parramatta, NSW



Figure 12.
 Christina Henri
Blessing of the Bonnets, 2010
 Holy Trinity Church, York, WA





Figure 13
Christina Henri, *Blessing of the Bonnets* 2009 Cobh, County Cork



Christina Henri
Blessing of the Bonnets, 2010
Cobh Wharf, County Cork, Ireland



Figure 14.
Christina Henri
Roses from the Heart
National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham, England, 2010



Bonnets with black bows made by Jean Rolls, and black bonnet made by Iris Smith, all pay tribute to the convicts who died tragically with the sinking of the *Amphitrite* in 1833. Graham and John with their wives, Robyn and Norma and other friends, assisted me to tell Australia's convict women's story.



Figure 15.
Fiona Hall
Breeding Ground, 2007
Installation at Port Arthur, Tasmania



Figure 16.
Ann Hamilton
Indogo Blue, 2006
San Francisco Museum of Modern Art
Conceived in 1991 as a site specific installation for the Spoleto Festival,
Charleston, South Carolina, USA



Figure 17
Brigita Ozolins
The Truth shall Make You Free, 2007
Port Arthur Project





Figure 18.
Matthew Ritchie
The Universal Cell, 2004
Whitney Museum of American Art, New York,
June 2 –October 9, 2005



Figure 19.
Antony Gormley
Field, 1991
Tate Museum, Liverpool, England 2004



Figure 20.
Fred Wilson
Mining the Museum, 1992
Cabinetmaking 1820-1960, selections from the Maryland Historical Society

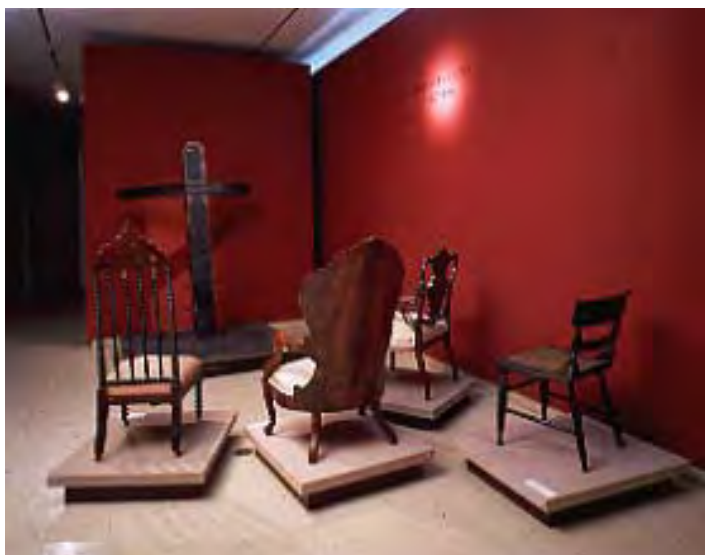




Figure 21.
Yinka Shonibare
Scramble for Africa, 2003
14 chairs and table, mixed media 52x192x110"



Figure 22.
Romuald Hazoumé
La Bouche du Roi, created between 1997 and 2005



Oil drums, plastic, glass, shells, tobacco, fabrics, mirrors, metals.
10 x 2.9cm



Figure 23.
Christina Henri
Blessing of the Bonnets, Performance
Cork City Gaol, County Cork, Ireland 2010



Figure 24.
Christina Henri
Neva Not Forgotten, 2011
Cape Wickham, King Island

Included in the Cape Wickham Lighthouse 150th Anniversary Weekend Program
Cloth washed in the sea lies drying near the monument commemorating the lives of those lost from the *Neva* shipwrecked off shore in May 1835. The material was subsequently cut on King Island ready to make bonnets for the convict women transported on the *Neva*.

The *Neva* had been bringing convict women and children from Cork and it was one of only four convict ships wrecked enroute to Australia. The ship crashed into the Harbinger Reefs while trying to enter the strait. Only 15 out of a complement of 241 survived.

Figure 25.
Christina Henri
Sea of Bonnets, 2010
School of Visual and Performing Art, Launceston
University of Tasmania
Photographer Robert Boldkald









