

PORT ARTHUR MEMORIES REVISITED

20-21 OCTOBER 2012



MEDIA RELEASE

Port Arthur Memories Revisited

Monday 27 August 2012

Reminders of early tourism and village life in celebration of a unique community heritage

Port Arthur is famous (or infamous) for its convict past. It was a penal settlement for a little under fifty years, from 1830 to 1877. But what happened at Port Arthur after that?

The question will be answered, and celebrated, in *Port Arthur Memories Revisited*, a weekend of festivities at the Port Arthur Historic Site on 20 and 21 October.

Local resident Roseanne Heyward is chairing the committee of volunteers that is putting the *Port Arthur Memories Revisited* celebration together.

"When the Port Arthur penal institution closed in 1877, land was sold to people who established homes and farms in the area," explained Ms Heyward.

"At the same time, steamships started bringing inquisitive visitors from Hobart for the late-Victorian equivalent of a short break, so they could explore this notorious settlement, the major function of which had been, until that point, to inspire fear and trepidation to deter convicts from a life of crime."

"This unique and curious mix – the recreational visitation and the gentle rural existence of local families – is as important and significant to members of the local community as the convict-era story of Port Arthur."

"The aim of the event is to bring people together to remember and share memories of sport and recreation, industries, tourism, the township and school, and families," said Ms Heyward.

"We have already been contacted by many people who are planning to return to Port Arthur for the event, and we would love to hear from anyone else who has lived, worked, visited, played sport or camped at Port Arthur and would like to participate, send a message or share a memento."

Activities include the performance of a play written especially for the weekend, a high tea in the recently refurbished Visiting Magistrate's House, guided house tours, a sheepdog trial and display, performances by the Tasmania Police Pipe Band and activities for children.

"The weekend will also mark the opening of a permanent exhibition at the Historic Site celebrating the history of the post-convict era at Port Arthur. People can contact us if they have photos, tickets, brochures, posters or letters of the post-convict era – as copies of them could be incorporated in the display or as part of a community photo display that will be part of the weekend's events".

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"We are all terribly proud of and excited by Port Arthur's World Heritage status," said Ms Heyward.

"*Port Arthur Memories Revisited* is a chance for us to remember the area's long history after the convict era by acknowledging the community and their contribution while embracing and looking forward to the future of Port Arthur and the region."

Port Arthur Historic Site CEO Stephen Large said the Board and staff were indebted to the organising group for taking on such a worthwhile initiative in bringing many people back to Port Arthur.

"It will be a fabulous opportunity for PAHSMA to showcase the Site and the wonderful work done here the last few years, particularly for those attendees that have not been to Port Arthur for some time".

People interested in attending are urged to contact Roseanne Heyward on (03) 6250 3372 or 0448 503 333, or email roseanne0409@yahoo.com to register or visit www.portarthur.org.au/pamr for further information.