



PRESS RELEASE

Issued by Celia Miller

President Swan Guildford Historical Society

4th April 2017

GUILDFORD COLONIAL GAOL RELAUNCH

The Swan Guildford Historical Society has reopened the Guildford Colonial Gaol after an almost \$300,000 renovation program carried out by the City of Swan. The Colonial Gaol is a fine example of colonial architecture largely built by convict labour and is significant as an example of a public building dating from the early decades of colonial settlement in the State. It lies at the heart of Guildford's Heritage Precinct – both the Gaol and its neighbouring Courthouse are on the register of Heritage Places.

‘These buildings which date back to the 19th century were not built to today's standards with important things like damp courses. We needed to strip back the layers and make the building good for the next 100 years.’ says Paul Bridges, Curator of the Swan Guildford Historical Society. The whole project entailed putting in new drainage; restoring the windows (particularly the Georgian windows in the Justice Room); cutting out areas of dry rot and re-rendering the interior walls.

“We were able to find out more about the building due to the renovation” says Paul. “We uncovered new doorways; the manure pit for the next door Police Stables and discovered new artefacts under the floorboards. A particularly poignant example is a couple of clay pipes which reminds me of the story of Mrs Ellis and Mrs Saunders who fought over a pipe with much hair pulling and name calling. They were brought in front of the bench in 1852.”

The Colonial Gaol within Guildford's Heritage Precinct is looked after and opened to the public by the Swan Guildford Historical Society. "Our members are passionate about Guildford's very special history" says Celia Miller, President. "They love to uncover the stories behind the buildings and share them with our visitors". The Society has developed a new exhibition for the building that reveals much about law and order in the early days of settlement, and includes artefacts from its important collection – the third most significant collection in WA.

"New research has been used to produce our 'Rogue's Gallery' telling tales of the Gaol's various inmates". One of Celia's favourites is Thomas Jackson who was charged with stealing grapes from Mr Devenish's garden in 1854. "What's really interesting" says Celia "is that Thomas was sentenced to 12 months working in the Convict Depot for just stealing grapes. The court report does state that he was of 'very bad character'".

The Prisoners Day Room will be full of items showing Guildford's colourful past and illustrating what a busy and vibrant place it was. Guildford was a very important centre for many industries including brick making; flour milling; and wood merchants. It was also the first place in Western Australia to have a built church on land given by Captain James Stirling, the first Governor. Grapes for winemaking were grown in Guildford even before the Swan Valley. "Our visitors find many of the artefacts surprising – did you know that leather horse slippers were used to stop the horses' hooves sinking in the sand?"

"We believe there is something for everyone with a visit to the Colonial Gaol" says Celia. "The tours also include our settler's cottage dating back to the 1860s and the story of Edward Taylor and his family, and a turn of last century wash house." The Swan Guildford Historical Society are grateful to the City of Swan for their detailed work on the renovation and ongoing support to make sure that these important buildings continue to be enjoyed by all.

NOTES TO EDITORS

Admission Prices

Adults \$5, Children \$3 (aged 5-15), Children under 5 Free.

School parties and groups by arrangement – group rates are available.

Opening Times

Open Tuesdays to Saturdays

10am – 2pm. Last admission 1.30pm

How to get here

The museum is a ten minute walk from Guildford Railway Station. It takes 20 minutes by train from Perth Central Station on the Midland Train Line – daytime trains run every 15 minutes.

Guildford is also served by the 36 bus from Elizabeth Quay to Midland.

Two hours free parking is allowed in the adjacent public car park.

Guildford Colonial Gaol and Taylor's Cottage

Meadow Street, Guildford 6055

Swan Guildford Historical Society online

Main website: www.swanguildfordhistoricalsociety.org.au

Facebook: www.facebook.com/sghistsoc

The Colonial Gaol and Taylor's Cottage are run by the Swan Guildford Historical Society Inc.

Swan Guildford Historical Society

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