

YOUR GUIDE  
TO *Tasmania's World Heritage  
Convict Sites*

AMONG THE 11 THAT TOGETHER FORM  
THE AUSTRALIAN CONVICT SITES  
WORLD HERITAGE PROPERTY

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United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



Australian Convict Sites  
inscribed on the World  
Heritage List in 2010



*Tasmania is an evocative island, one with both ancient and recent stories of settlement.*

The influx of transported convicts, penal administrators, civil and military officers and their families, had a significant and lasting impact on this island. Their labour has filled the Tasmanian landscape with sandstone streetscapes and grand homes. Much of their work is still used today, from Australia’s oldest bridge, to small cottages, public buildings and wonderful streetscapes. Explore their stories on your journey around our island and discover our past.

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# *The Convict Story*

## *Visiting Tasmania allows you to connect with Australia's unique convict past.*

The convict story is an important and compelling story in the settlement of the modern world. It tells of European exploration and colonisation, long ocean voyages, harsh conditions and the settlement of a strange new country. It's also the deeply personal story of the forced migration of over 70,000 men, women and children, transported from their home to an obscure point on the other side of the world, deep in the Southern Ocean.

The importance of this story has led to five Tasmanian sites being given World Heritage status as part of the Australian Convict Sites World Heritage Property. Each of these five sites – together with six others within Australia – tell the broad and complex convict story.

Few convicts shared the same experience and their paths were often unique. Most of the convicts transported to Australia worked hard, bided their time, won their freedom and helped establish the new colonies as fine and upstanding free citizens. However, others spent their lives caught up in the criminal justice system, living out their lives in various elements of the penal process.

Convicts, and the free labour they provided, were vital in the settlement and economic success of a new colony and Nation.

As you travel around and explore Tasmania, there are many places and features that form part of this extraordinary convict story – some more obvious than others. For instance, many bridges still in use today were convict built. Watch out for them and share our awe at the legacy the convict story has left for Tasmania and all of Australia as a proud and modern nation.

**[www.heritage.tas.gov.au/convict\\_sites.html](http://www.heritage.tas.gov.au/convict_sites.html)**



# *Brickendon Estate*

AND WOOLMERS ESTATE (1820-50'S)

## *The hedgerows at Brickendon are silent storytellers, but what stories they may tell!*

They speak of a unique history and story of one early pioneering family. Located just outside the historic town of Longford, Brickendon Estate has been in the Archer family since 1824, now in its seventh generation of farming.

Brickendon was a place of Assignment, where convicts were put under the control of a private land owner as a free labour force and were provided with food, shelter and reformation through religious instruction. Assignment was the most common experience for a convict – some 80 per cent of all convict labour to Tasmania was assigned to work during the 1820-40's. It provided the labour to develop productive farms (wool exports and food production) vital for the growth of the new colony.

The beautiful hedgerows, rolling landscape and original convict buildings of the farm village and magnificent estate gardens and homestead are a testament to the innovative thinking and hard work of William Archer, his convict work force and the Archer descendants.

Still a working farm, Brickendon is an extraordinary example of colonial farming and enterprise through to the current day. Stroll between Brickendon and Woolmers via a scenic walkway.

For more information visit: [www.brickendon.com.au](http://www.brickendon.com.au) or phone: +61 03 6391 1251  
Accommodation available, email: [accommodation@brickendon.com.au](mailto:accommodation@brickendon.com.au)



# *Woolmers Estate*

AND BRICKENDON ESTATE (1820-50'S)

*Woolmers Estate is a grand homestead looking across the plains to the Western Tiers. The property was built by one of the Archer brothers and is now managed by a private foundation.*

Visiting the Woolmers homestead and its outbuildings is like walking through a secret door into the life of a successful early Australian settler, his family and the convicts who supported it all. The experience is one of astonishment as you walk through the homestead where the original fixtures, furnishings and a vast collection of personal possessions are still in position.

A wander around the grounds further demonstrates the wealth created by using assigned convict labour. Woolmers is an incredible example of rural colonial settlement in Australia, and it needs little imagination to create a vivid picture embracing the relationship between masters and servants.

The National Rose Garden at Woolmers is located within the grounds of the World Heritage listed property and offers visitors a broad view of the history and development of the rose.

Woolmers adjoins the Brickendon Estate.

For more information visit: [www.woolmers.com.au](http://www.woolmers.com.au) or phone +61 03 6391 2230  
Tours and accommodation available, email: [enquiries@woolmers.com.au](mailto:enquiries@woolmers.com.au)



# Cascades Female Factory

(1828-56)



## *The Cascades Female Factory – the name as chilling as the place where the ‘factory’ was built, near the base of Mount Wellington in Hobart.*

The journey to this stark site can be an emotional one. The stories of the women and children transported are often neglected and overwhelmed by the male convict narratives, but at this historic site they are given a strong and poignant voice.

Built in 1828, this self contained, purpose built institution was designed for reformation of the thousands of female convicts brought to Van Diemens Land. The inmates did laundry, picked oakum and provided needlework services.

Approximately 25,000 female convicts were transported to Australia (some 15 per cent of the convict population). Female factories were designed to house, employ, manage, control and reform female convicts and as a place where their infant children were accommodated.

This ‘factory’ was separated and hidden from the main settlement of Hobart. The factory women were assigned as house labour to free settlers or punished by undertaking labour within the factory walls. However, many of them married and nurtured large families and thus became the mothers of a young country.

Once a busy and crowded place, the Cascades Female Factory site today comprises three of the original five yards, the matron’s cottage and substantial ruins of perimeter walls. It is one of the most intact surviving female convict sites in Australia.

For more information visit [www.femalefactory.com.au](http://www.femalefactory.com.au) or phone 03 6233 6656

Tours available, email: [info@femalefactory.com.au](mailto:info@femalefactory.com.au)

# Coal Mines Historic Site

(1833-48)



*Much like its intrepid colonial history, Tasmania's forests and landscape are places of renown. The Tasman Peninsula has sea cliffs and secretive coves and bays that rival Cradle Mountain for beauty.*

In the north-western corner of the Tasman Peninsula, beside the tranquil waters of Little Norfolk Bay, is the secluded Coal Mines Historic Site. Less is known about the island's first operational mine than its peninsula counterpart Port Arthur, but the penal colliery played a vital role in the occasionally precarious development of Van Diemen's Land.

The mines were developed to limit the colony's dependence upon costly imported coal from New South Wales. Serving as a punishment station for men who had committed a serious offence in the colony, by the late 1830s the mines produced most of the coal used in Van Diemen's Land. By the 1840s, almost 600 prisoners with officers and their families lived and worked at the mines. While the underground workings are no longer accessible, you may visit the picturesque ruins of houses, barracks, offices and punishment cells.

Dotted across the 214 hectare site are over 25 ruins and dozens of mining features, surrounded by beautiful regenerated bush land. The bush's allure, the bird song and wallabies, as well as the water views, are at times incongruous with the rancid past reputation of the mines. Indeed this reputation was used to sway British public opinion against the further transportation of convicts to Van Diemen's Land.

For more information visit [www.portarthur.org.au](http://www.portarthur.org.au) or phone 1800 659 101  
Tours available, email: [reservations@portarthur.org.au](mailto:reservations@portarthur.org.au)



# *Darlington Probation Station*

(1825-32; 1842-50)

*Darlington Probation Station was placed strategically on a large island on Tasmania's east coast. A place of outstanding natural beauty and heritage, the peaks of Bishop and Clerk and Mt Maria make Maria Island visible from many places along Tasmania's east coast.*

Established to take advantage of the many natural resources at hand, life for a convict sent to Darlington was one of contradictions. The island's beauty betrays the hard work that took place here. As one of many probation stations that were built in Tasmania, convicts were sent to Darlington to be reformed through work, education and religious instruction. Though a grand scheme, the vision of the probation stations was ultimately not realised and highly costly. The island landscape is today covered with the evidence of the well organised and structured probation system and plentiful natural resources. Make your Darlington convict experience complete by sleeping in the 1830s convict Penitentiary, preparing your meal in the Mess hall or hiking along one of the many convict roads.

But Maria is not only worth visiting for its outstanding convict heritage. The entire island is national park. There are no private vehicles and the wombats, Cape Barren geese and kangaroos run with far more freedom than the convicts ever had. The Painted Cliffs, Fossil Cliffs and stunning views, all near the settlement of Darlington, are another of nature's highlights.

For more information visit [www.parks.tas.gov.au](http://www.parks.tas.gov.au) or phone +61 03 6257 1420  
Tours and accommodation available, email: [Maria.island@parks.tas.gov.au](mailto:Maria.island@parks.tas.gov.au)



# Port Arthur Historic Site

(1830-77)

*The contrasts of Port Arthur have seen it described as harsh and stark, yet a strangely evocative and beautiful place to visit.*

Undoubtedly an iconic convict site, this famous penal settlement has many layers of history and a fascinating story to tell. Built on the shores of the deep and picturesque Mason Cove, the settlement is surrounded by hills of dense native forest. Port Arthur spreads over 135 hectares (334 acres) and contains more than 30 historic buildings and ruins. There are avenues of towering oaks, open expanses and meticulously reinstated convict gardens to enjoy.

Such beauty belies a stark reality. This was a place of brutality, but also of reform, training and education. Lieutenant-Governor Arthur envisaged that Port Arthur would be 'a place of terror', a daunting combination of hard labour and unremitting surveillance.

The conservation program and cleverly refined ways of story-telling allow visitors to soak up the fascinating and brilliantly varied themes of Port Arthur. It is possible to make an emotional connection to the Site – by lingering about ruins, attending one of the historical summer plays or visiting one of the house museums. The meticulous conservation of the Separate Prison provides a memorable insight to 19th century prison life and philosophy.

Unlike the convicts who sometimes ingeniously tried to escape, don't be in any rush to leave.

For more information visit [www.portarthur.org.au](http://www.portarthur.org.au) or phone 1800 659 101  
Tours and accommodation available, email: [reservations@portarthur.org.au](mailto:reservations@portarthur.org.au)



## Suggested Convict Journey



### Day 1, Arrive in Hobart

Experience the heartbreak of female convict life at this World Heritage listed site, the Cascades Female Factory, located in South Hobart, only minutes from the heart of the city. Enjoy the tranquillity of the Memorial Garden and be moved by the stories of the women while touring the site, or take 'Morning Tea with The Matron' in the restored Matron's Cottage.

From here, walk up the rivulet towards Mount Wellington to the Cascade Brewery, built around the same time as the Female Factory and Australia's oldest Brewery (free beer tastings are part of the tour). Head back into town and explore the charming workers cottages and village green of Arthur's Circus in Australia's finest colonial-era suburb of Battery Point, before winding your way down Kelly's Steps to Salamanca Place. When your thoughts turn to food, visit the restaurants and cafes near the historical Hobart docks and Georgian-era sandstone warehouses. These local eateries feature more of Tasmania's acclaimed local produce.

*Overnight in Hobart*

### Day 2 and 3, Tasman Peninsula

From Hobart take a picturesque 90 minute drive to the Tasman Peninsula and Port Arthur, stopping at Eagle Hawk Neck and the famed dog line. The amazing Port Arthur Historic Site spreads over 40 hectares. Its convict buildings have been meticulously conserved. Take a boat tour to the Isle of the Dead, and a tour

through the site with a guide brimming with captivating stories. If you are feeling brave, sign up for one of the ghost tours which run from sundown.

#### *Overnight at Port Arthur*

Drive across the picturesque peninsula to the Coal Mines Historic Site. Set in a beautiful waterside location, take the morning to self explore the site.

In the afternoon, you may want to explore some of the Tasman Peninsula's amazing natural heritage. Meet a Tasmanian Devil at the Tasmanian Devil Conservation Park or for a bit of water excitement take a boat trip to see Australia's highest sea cliffs and perhaps think about what it would have been like to be the first convicts to arrive on this coast.

Drive north for an overnight stay in Orford and confirm your ferry booking to Maria Island for tomorrow. On the journey to Maria Island you pass through Orford or Triabunna. These laid back coastal villages have some great little cafes.

#### *Overnight in Orford.*

## **Day 4, Maria Island and Swansea**

Drive to Triabanna to catch a Ferry to Maria Island, picking up a packed lunch on the way. Explore the Darlington settlement, and the natural beauty of the island's national park. The Painted Cliffs, near the settlement of Darlington, are one of nature's highlights, along with the abundance of wombats, Cape Barren Geese and kangaroos. Catch the ferry back in the afternoon and drive up the coast to Swansea.

On your way to Swansea, stop off at the Spiky Bridge, convict-made with thousands of fieldstones and no mortar back in 1843. You'll find a collection of historic buildings in Swansea, including the Morris' General Store, built in 1838 and the Glamorgan Community Centre which houses a museum of local history. At dusk, enjoy the parade of Little Penguins shuffling up the beach on an evening tour.

#### *Overnight in Swansea.*

## **Day 5, Longford – Brickendon and Woolmers Estates**

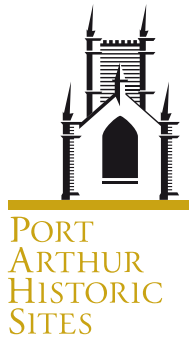
Drive from Swansea and take the Lake Leake highway to historic Campbell Town, stopping for coffee.

Just a short 30 minute drive up the road, turn off to Brickendon and Woolmers Estate, twenty minutes from Launceston, and the only World Heritage sites in northern Tasmania. These extraordinary properties add another dimension to the convict history of Tasmania.

Graceful homesteads, convict built outbuildings and magnificent gardens can be discovered with self guided tours – the unique personal collections in the Woolmers House is by guided tour only. Enjoy a tea or light lunch and then meander along the Convict Farm Walk to explore the delightful farming country of the Norfolk Plains. Overnight at any of the self contained cottages on offer at either property.

Several historic homesteads, wineries, fabulous restaurants and the staggering Cataract Gorge are within ½ hours drive. From Longford you can head south along the Heritage Highway back to Hobart or north to Launceston.

*This itinerary is easily reversed if you are travelling from the north.*



### Heritage Tasmania

Department of Primary Industries,  
Parks, Water and Environment



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



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#### AUSTRALIAN CONVICT SITES

Brickendon-Woolmers Estates, Darlington Probation Station, Cascades Female Factory, Port Arthur Historic Site, Coal Mines Historic Site [Tasmania] are among the 11 that together form the *Australian Convict Sites World Heritage Property*.

The other Australian convict sites included in the *Australian Convict Sites World Heritage Property* are: Cockatoo Island, the Old Great North Road, Hyde Park Barracks and the Old Government House & Government Domain in New South Wales; the Fremantle Prison in Western Australia; and the Kingston and Arthurs Vale Historic Area on Norfolk Island.