

## 'ROSES FROM THE HEART'

The 'Blessing of the Bonnets' Ceremony, at Sts Peter and Paul's Church  
South Melbourne, Vic.  
2<sup>nd</sup> May 2009



MGFHS members travelled to Melbourne by train to attend the 'Bonnets' ceremony, where ourselves, and our 31 bonnets were warmly welcomed. The event, held to commemorate and note the existence and worth of our convict women ancestors was well attended and the service quite moving. A short history of the 'Girls' and their plight as transported convicts was given by Christina Henri. Later the Irish Ambassador Martin O'Fainin spoke about the Irish ladies predicament. He finished his address with some words in his native Irish tongue, the first time I have ever heard it spoken...

It was a pleasure to be entertained by singers Mossie Scanlon and Digney Fingus who were accompanied by Greg Hunt. These gentlemen are very gifted musicians and it was a real delight to listen to their songs, dedicated to the convict lasses. Father Peter Rankin spoke warmly of the convict ladies in his Homily and it was clear to see that he had a great understanding of the difficulties these women had had to face.

Two sisters Glad Wishart and Joy Sharpe read a narrative about the life of their convict ancestors Ludlow Tedder and her daughter Arabella that clearly showed the hardships of early colonial life.



A small boat was lying at the foot of the altar in the church, it was empty. Near the end of the service Christina asked those attending to place their bonnets of commemoration into the boat. At the end of the procession the boat was overflowing with bonnets. One lady had bought along 60, she had made them all herself.

The day concluded with a sumptuous afternoon tea provided by the parishioners of Sts Peter and Paul's Church. The 'tea' provided an opportunity to mingle and speak to other attendees.

The Irish Ambassador to Australia, Mr. Mairtin O'Fainin was present as was the honorable Professor Barry Jones.

For a copy of the bonnet pattern and instructions email: [macore@tadaust.org.au](mailto:macore@tadaust.org.au)

Mailing address for the completed bonnets is:  
Christina Henri

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