

# **MEDIA RELEASE**

**NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA**

DATE: FRIDAY 15 APRIL, 2011

ATTENTION: Chiefs of Staff, News Directors

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## Treasure trove 'taken for granted'

Many Tasmanians take for granted the treasure trove that is our colonial court and criminal records, says leading historian Associate Professor Hamish Maxwell-Stewart.

"It will probably surprise many people to learn that these records were admitted to the UNESCO Memory of the World Register before any of our renowned historic sites," he said today as a two-day symposium devoted to exploiting this incredible resource began at Hobart's Penitentiary Chapel.

"These records were registered by UNESCO in 2008. Our best-known convict site, Port Arthur, wasn't registered until last year – after a 12-year campaign of writing reports and building a case."

The symposium, organised by the University of Tasmania's Centre for Colonialism and its Aftermath, is basically a 'how-to' workshop, aimed at instructing participants in extracting maximum value from the colonial records.

Panellists – which include speakers from the universities of Tasmania, Sydney, New South Wales, Melbourne, Adelaide and Keele (UK) plus Tourism Tasmania – will discuss such themes as Criminal Lives, Crime on the Frontier and The Challenge of Interpreting Convict Sites.

The Criminal Lives session (**Friday, 3.30-5pm**) will address the "incredibly detailed archives which cover all facets of peoples' lives ... information that is not normally recorded," Prof Maxwell-Stewart explained.

"We will show how to create vibrant and compelling histories from the plethora of court and criminal records."

**Assoc Prof Hamish Maxwell-Stewart and the other panel speakers are available for media interviews today and tomorrow at the historic Penitentiary Chapel.**

**Program attached.**

**Information Released by:**

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