

SOUTHERN
MIDLANDS
COUNCIL



Centre for Heritage
at Oatlands



HERITAGE EDUCATION AND SKILLS CENTRE

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For Immediate Release

Living History and the convict past in Central Tasmania Exciting new finds in the Southern Midlands.

A little under a year ago a group of archaeological students descended upon Oatlands in the Southern Midlands to uncover what they could about the town's convict history. The students uncovered the gallows and the solitary cells of the unique Oatlands Gaol. This summer the program will run again with the aim of uncovering more about the history of the town.

Students will come from all over Australia to participate in the Oatlands summer archaeology program. This program aims to equip Australian students with essential workplace skills whilst at the same time providing insight into the history of the town and of Tasmania.

Oatlands was settled in the early Nineteenth Century and was home to the only gallows and Supreme Court outside of Hobart and Launceston. This gives the town a special place in Tasmanian history. With the recent World Heritage listing of Australian convict sites, investigation into Tasmania's convict heritage has taken on greater meaning than ever before.

This year the program hopes to discover more about the original Oatlands Gaol, investigate the site of the early convict barracks and possibly discover the purpose of the 'mystery building' that used to stand on the site of the Oatlands public works depot. We will also be conducting some test excavations on the commissariat guard house.

There will be a public open day on Sunday the 10th of February with tours of the archaeological findings and of the historic section of town. Bookings are essential and

they will sell out fast. In addition, the centre for heritage at Oatlands will be running a series of school tours in the week prior to the public open day. Teachers looking for more details should contact Brad Williams at bwilliams@southernmidlands.tas.gov.au or Samantha Fidge at fidg0009@uni.flinders.edu.au. For general information on the archaeology and the background of the program please contact Brad Williams or Ilona Bartsch at bart0286@uni.flinders.edu.au