



Louisa's Walk Hobart Tasmania

Words by Warren Harmer, N20233 Pictures by Reflective Images

Tasmanians call their beautiful island state 'The world's best kept secret' and, after a relaxing 5 months spent motorhoming around taking in its many attractions, Wendy and I are inclined to agree with them. No, it's not for those who want the fast lane. Friendly service and warm greetings are included in a pace of life that is slower than we are used to on the mainland. But it is a place where some hidden gems can be discovered; some off the beaten track and non-commercial ventures flourish in this state of artists and craftspeople.

One such place is called 'Louisa's Walk' and it starts right outside the historic Cascade Brewery in South Hobart. Wendy and I booked in to experience this piece of Strolling Theatre with another couple of motorhomers, John and Kay McIntyre whom we met on our travels, and all four of us thought it a piece of magic. The four of us were fortunate enough to be the only ones booked to enjoy the show on this particular sunny afternoon, so it was an intimate and personal experience.

Once you have met and booked in with 'Louisa' (who stands in her costume outside the Brewery, so she's hard to miss) she whirls you off in what she describes as "an emotional roller coaster ride of laughter and tears". She hands you over to her fellow actor,

who plays several roles in the drama that is to follow, and Louisa appears again after the scene has been set. The audience then follows Louisa through the trials and tribulations of being transported out to Van Diemen's Land. The couple cleverly use the topography of the park to simulate the Magistrate's bench and the top deck of the Rajah (the ship on which you are all being transported). Once you arrive within the grim walls of the Female Factory (women's prison) the sometimes lighthearted mood changes into a much more sombre tone as the daily events of the convict women are re-enacted within the space of Yard One.

The tears are hardest to hold back in the Nursery Yard of this roller coaster ride, but then, in a piece of time travel, Louisa allows you to recover by transporting you back to the 21st century. It is then that you have the chance to examine some of the memorials to these convict women placed here in more recent years. It is also a time when you have the opportunity to ask all the questions that may have come to mind during the Show, which Chris is more than able to answer.

Once outside the Prison Yard, Louisa re-appears and invites you to re-join her in the 19th century (the 21st is "too fast for her"). Now the story reaches a satisfying conclusion (at least for the

romantically inclined) and the couple takes their audience back up to the top of the Cascades explaining some interesting history as they do so.

Back in the beautiful Cascade Gardens underneath some shady poplar trees, the actors come out of character, drop their accents and introduce themselves. A toast is proposed using the locally produced Cascade blackcurrant and the significance of the little patchwork quilt is explained. Now is the chance for more questions, not the least being "how did you come up with such a unique idea?" Judith and Chris Cornish (for these, we discover, are their real names) are happy to answer all questions and explain the inspiration of their venture. It seems they are both professionally trained actors who love Tasmania and 'Louisa's Walk' is the solution to earning a living in the island of their dreams.

The four of us found 'Louisa's Walk' a really inspiring experience - moving, amusing, creative and informative; not to be missed if you are visiting Tasmania.

For more information visit their web site on www.livehistory.com.au or ring Judith and Chris on 03 6229 8959. Bookings are essential. 📖