

GREYSTONES ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL SOCIETY

“Grangegorman – The Convict Transportation Story”.

Presented to the Society meeting held at the
Family Centre Holy Rosary Church, Greystones, County Wicklow
given on 15th April 2026

Presented by: Dr Joan Kavanagh

Chaired by : Dr. Cormac Moore



Female penitentiary as it is today, Grangegorman

Subject

In 1836 the only all-female prison in the British Isles was set up to house female prisoners, many of whom were being held prior to transportation to Van Dieman's Land where they generally became servants. In fact, the Grangegorman Women's Prison became a hub for female prisoners from all over Ireland who were taught useful skills, such as needlework, before beginning the long journey to the far side of the world.

In all, over 3000 female prisoners and more than 500 of their children left from Grangegorman, many perishing on the way. To this day, people from Australia and Tasmania travel to Grangegorman to trace their ancestry to one of these women.

Presenter

Dr Joan Kavanagh has spent many years studying the history of these women and with her friend wrote the wonderful book “Van Dieman's Women – A History of Transportation to Tasmania”.