Convicts in Quandamooka Country

Convict Love Token

A convict love token is a coin with a special message of affection engraved on it. The love tokens were made by the convicts while they were waiting to be transported. The love tokens were made of copper and left behind as a memento for their loved ones. These small love tokens are also called ‘leaden hearts’. The love tokens often included the convict’s name and their loved one, the length of the convict’s sentence and popular phrases and rhymes of separation. The tokens were engraved or stippled. They were crafted by professionals and amateurs.

Challenge: Design your own convict love token with a special message to a loved one.

The National Museum of Australia holds the world’s largest collection of convict love tokens. The collection can be viewed at: http://www.nma.gov.au/collections/highlights/convict-tokens with more than 310 in the collection.