HYDE PARK ASYLUM FOR INFIRM AND DESTITUTE WOMEN, 1862-1886: AN HISTORICAL STUDY OF GOVERNMENT WELFARE FOR WOMEN IN NEED OF RESIDENTIAL CARE IN NEW SOUTH WALES

JOY NOREEN HUGHES

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I, Joy Noreen Hughes, hereby state that this thesis has not been submitted in whole or in part to this or any other university for the purpose of a higher degree. The dissertation is an original piece of research. It is based on primary sources and, except where otherwise acknowledged, all conclusions are my own. All primary and secondary sources are acknowledged in the citations which are correct to the best of my knowledge.

Joy N Hughes
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Abbreviations

BSNSW  Benevolent Society of New South Wales
HRA    Historical Records of Australia
ML     Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales
CSIL   New South Wales Colonial Secretary, Letters Received
JRAHS  Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society
NSWLAVP New South Wales, Legislative Assembly, Votes and Proceedings
NSWLCP  New South Wales, Legislative Council, Votes and Proceedings
SRNSW  State Records New South Wales
ABSTRACT

Hyde Park Asylum for Infirm and Destitute Women, Sydney was the New South Wales government's first direct initiative in social welfare for the aged with the provision of residential care for women. It was the genesis of a system of destitute asylums (later state hospitals) that lasted for more than a century. For its duration (1862-1886), Hyde Park Asylum was the only one of its type in the colony.

Although the asylum’s major records have not survived, a lengthy search of primary sources in the Mitchell Library and State Records New South Wales has retrieved much information including the identification of some of the 6000 women who passed through the asylum. This empirical study looks at the day-to-day lives of its inmates at Hyde Park Asylum and follows them to their new home at Newington Asylum on the Parramatta River in 1886. There is an overview of the welfare provisions for women prior to the establishment of the asylum in 1862 and a brief comparative study of the residential accommodation provided for women in the other eastern colonies during the existence of Hyde Park Asylum. The external and internal administration of the asylum under the Government Asylums Board and later as a sub-department of the Colonial Secretary’s office is examined, including the roles of the manager and the matron.
INTRODUCTION

THE INVISIBLE ASYLUM

By noon on Saturday 15 February 1862 the hot summer sun had pierced the unseasonable pea soup fog blanketing Sydney Harbour and its foreshores. The city’s inhabitants - relieved to see patches of clear blue sky - made their way to the Outer Domain for the final day’s play between the visiting All England Eleven and the United New South Wales and Victoria team. Caught up, as they were in "cricketomania", few if any, noticed the procession of horse-drawn omnibuses drawing up to the nearby high stone-walled entrance to a compound at the southern end of Macquarie Street. The omnibuses had carried one hundred women from the Benevolent Asylum at the opposite end of the city. They were to become the first inmates of the newly-established government asylum for infirm, destitute women at Hyde Park Barracks.¹ For the next twenty-four years the asylum would share the three-storey brick building in the centre of the compound with a female immigration depot and compete with various government agencies for occupancy of the auxiliary buildings that lined its perimeter.

One hundred and forty years on, Sydney’s "cricketomania" persists although its adherents are long gone from the Outer Domain. They have been replaced by throngs wending their way to workaday lunchtime soccer matches or to weekend symphonies, opera or rock and roll under the stars. The visitor to Hyde Park Barracks still passes through the high stone-walled entrance to reach the impressive colonial edifice beyond but its nineteenth-century sights, sounds and smells, too, are long gone. With the removal of myriad nineteenth and twentieth-century accretions the building now sits pristinely in its dutifully raked gravelled yard. The aural and olfactory presence of blocked drains, stinking latrines, institutional cooking, and of diseased and decaying women nearing their end and young healthy immigrant women beginning anew, have been supplanted by

¹ Sydney Morning Herald, 15 February 1862; Empire, 17 February 1862.
chattering school groups in mock-convict outfits and the aroma of capuccinos and focaccias served to upwardly-mobile patrons of a cafe that once was a convict dormitory.

Hyde Park Barracks, for over a decade, has been a museum "about itself". The displays largely focus on its original male convict occupants (1819-48) and the history of transportation to New South Wales. The Irish female orphans who were sent to the colony (1848-51) and who were temporarily housed in the barracks are commemorated by a modern sculptural interpretation of the great Irish famine incorporated in the compound’s southern perimeter wall. On the middle floor of the three-storey building is an arty display of a remarkable assemblage of artefacts recovered during archaeological investigations. These, while short on contextual analysis, implicitly remind us of a female presence in the barracks. But with the exception of a couple of small panels, its longest nineteenth century occupant, the Immigration Depot (1848-86) through which passed many thousands of single English and Irish immigrant women, is invisible, as was the Hyde Park Asylum for Infirm and Destitute Women (1862-86) until the recent installation of a small display.

And Hyde Park Asylum is also largely missing from the historiography of New South Wales. Some confusion relating to its title and function has contributed to this omission. The word "asylum" in the institution’s name had gradually lost its nineteenth-century connotation of a refuge or sanctuary and there was a general assumption it was a lunatic asylum. The institution was often referred to in the press and official correspondence of the day, as "the benevolent asylum" which led to an ongoing belief that it was a branch of the Benevolent Society of New South

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2 In the 1980s the barracks was used by the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences as a social history museum. At the end of the decade it was transferred by the Minister for the Arts to the Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales with instructions that the building should be regarded as a "museum in itself, directly related to its historic uses". Hyde Park Barracks Museum Plan, unpublished report prepared by Historic Houses Trust of NSW, 1990, p 2.

Wales, a private charity which operated the Benevolent Asylum and from which Hyde Park Asylum’s first inmates came. Thus two somewhat trivial occurrences contributed to the institution’s fall through historiographical cracks.\footnote{For example, Stephen Garton includes the government’s male destitute asylums at Parramatta and Liverpool in his \textit{Out of Luck: poor Australians and social welfare} (1990) but fails to mention Hyde Park Asylum which was the only asylum of its type for women in nineteenth-century New South Wales. Beverley Kingston in \textit{The Oxford History of Australia, Volume 3, 1860-1900. Glad, Confident Morning}, Melbourne, OUP, 1988, p 51, claims by the 1890s only South Australia and Western Australia had government-run pauper asylums.}

Historians seem to have overlooked the political and social significance of the establishment of Hyde Park Asylum in 1862. It marked the government’s first direct intervention into social welfare for the colony’s aged and infirm. Its takeover of residential care for infirm pauper women preceded that for men. This provision of residential care was the genesis of a system of government asylums (later state hospitals) for the indigent that lasted for over a century.\footnote{C J Cummins, \textit{The Development of the Benevolent (Sydney) Asylum, 1788-1855}, Sydney, Department of Health, 1971, p. 21.} It was the decision of one man, Charles Cowper, the Colonial Secretary, rather than the government’s, but not even his biographer noted its importance, nor did the asylum’s establishment rate a mention.\footnote{Alan Powell, \textit{Patrician Democrat: the political life of Charles Cowper 1843-1887}, Melbourne, 1972.}

There is an extensive literature on women in nineteenth-century New South Wales; those concerned with the first half of the century are necessarily predominated by aspects of the convict and immigrant experience. Portia Robinson, in her work on women transported prior to 1828, and Debra Oxley in her quantitative study of women transportees between 1826 and 1840, provided new perspectives on the women’s contribution to the social and economic development of the colony.\footnote{Portia Robinson, \textit{The Women of Botany Bay: a reinterpretation of the role of women in the origins of Australian society}, rev edn, Ringwood Vic, Penguin, 1993; Debra Oxley, \textit{Convict Maids: the forced migration of women to Australia}, Cambridge, CUP, 1996.} Kay Daniels perceptively analysed the existing convict literature in \textit{Convict Women} and expanded her study to include the experiences of women transported to
Tasmania.\textsuperscript{8} Annette Salt and Hilary Weatherburn focused on the inmates of the Female Factory at Parramatta which functioned as a gaol, hospital and employment bureau.\textsuperscript{9} Katrina Alford in her ground-breaking \textit{Production or Reproduction?} encompassed both convict and immigrant women in her extensive examination of the socio-economic options open to them.\textsuperscript{10} In these, and other women’s histories, we see young women - not those who are aged and destitute. We see women still young enough to prostitute themselves but not old enough to be out in the cold. Destitution, if considered, is briefly viewed in the context of the 1840s depression. Elizabeth Windschuttle’s work on the colony’s charities in this period focuses more on the “elite” ladies committees than on the recipients.\textsuperscript{11}

Hyde Park Asylum, although the only accommodation of its type in the colony, is virtually ignored in general women’s histories of the second half of the nineteenth century. Beyond the asylum’s walls, the existence of poverty in Sydney is implicit in accounts by Alan Mayne, Max Kelly and Shirley Fitzgerald of the squalid dwellings in which the poor were forced to live.\textsuperscript{12} Fitzgerald notes female poverty but not in detail.\textsuperscript{13} Increasing employment opportunities for women from 1860 that could help ward off destitution are explored by Beverley Kingston and also by Fitzgerald for the period 1870-90.\textsuperscript{14} Higman looks at the availability and


\textsuperscript{10} Katrina Alford, \textit{Production or Reproduction?: an economic history of women in Australia 1788-1850}, Melbourne, OUP, 1984.


\textsuperscript{13} ibid.

vicissitudes of domestic service for both convict and free throughout the nineteenth century. Assistance to the poor provided by women philanthropists is covered by Judith Godden. Pat Jalland has devoted two chapters to the sick and dying in "benevolent" asylums in her social and cultural history, Australian Ways of Death. Anne O’Brien partially redresses this nineteenth-century imbalance with Poverty’s Prison, a study of the colony’s poor 1880-1918.

New South Wales still lacks a scholarly publication that comprehensively covers the vast range of nineteenth-century social welfare provided by public and private charitable institutions to the various categories of those in need. The colony receives due attention in general welfare histories of Australia, in particular in Brian Dickey’s, No Charity There: a short history of social welfare in Australia, Stephen Garton’s Out of Luck: poor Australians and social welfare 1788-1988 and Noel Gash’s general overview of poverty.

Australia’s other eastern colonies have been better served in print. Joan Brown in "Poverty is not a Crime", traces the development of social services in Tasmania, 1803-1900 and provides a useful appendix of the various institutions that accommodated the sick-poor. Historians R A Cage and Richard Kennedy.

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15 B W Higman, Domestic Service in Australia, Carlton South Vic, MUP, 2002.
17 Pat Jalland, Australian Ways of Death: a social and cultural history 1840-1918, South Melbourne, OUP, 2002. Hyde Park Asylum does not appear to have been part of her study.
have described the unique and extensive voluntary welfare system that operated in Victoria in the nineteenth century. Raymond Evans's chapter, "The Hidden Colonists: deviance and social control in colonial Queensland" published in a welfare anthology, was informed by his detailed thesis on Queensland's charitable institutions, which, regrettably, remains unpublished. Brian Dickey's social welfare history of South Australia, Rations, Residence, Resources is exemplary in its scope and comprehensiveness.

There are printed histories of the Melbourne Benevolent Asylum and the Destitute Asylum in Adelaide. Joseph Goodall's article on the infamous Dunwich Benevolent Asylum on Stradbroke Island near Brisbane covers a twenty-year period of its long existence. His doctoral thesis on the asylum clearly indicates that extensive sources for the institution have survived.

In New South Wales, the Reverend S W Brooks, made an interesting contemporary start in 1878 to record the current operations of the various private charitable institutions that provided welfare to the needy. Although a small publication and narrow in scope, Brooks provides a few on-the-spot gems not mined in later histories. Dora Peyser's scholarly journal article on the history of

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30 S W Brooks, Charity and Philanthropy: a prize essay (historical, statistical and general) on the institutions in Sydney which aim at the diminution of vice, or the alleviation of misery and are supported wholly, or in part, by the gifts of the charitable, Sydney, W B Campbell, 1878.
welfare work in Sydney, 1788-1900, published in 1939, continues as a source for studies on the topic.31 Brian Dickey’s 1966 unpublished thesis provides a comprehensive account of the work of public and private charities in New South Wales 1850-1914.32 It was the first of Dickey’s prolific writings on social welfare history and informed his previously mentioned monograph on Australian social welfare and numerous scholarly articles.33 Aspects of Dickey’s study were expanded in detail by Anne O’Brien in Poverty’s Prison: the poor in New South Wales 1880-1918.34

The Benevolent Society of New South Wales - a private charity - because of its dominant role in the colony’s social welfare for much of the nineteenth century, figured prominently in the work of Peyser, Dickey and O’Brien. It was the subject of a thesis by Noel Gash in 1966.35 Historians have also written on aspects of its administration.36 There is a more recent publication on the extensive operations of the institution which, until 1862, accommodated infirm, destitute women in its asylum.37 Given the richness of the Society’s voluminous records, a scholarly study of the Benevolent Asylum that extends beyond its administration to an analysis of the care and experiences of its inmates, is a significant omission from the social welfare history of New South Wales.

Ironically, Hyde Park Asylum was historically resurrected in 1939 by a recently-arrived immigrant - not fleeing from famine but from tyranny. Dora Peyser was already a trained social worker when awarded a doctorate in sociology from Berlin University in 1934. Her thesis was published and "began to receive favourable reviews in several countries, when Hitler's anti-Jewish legislation caught up with it, and the distribution was stopped".\(^{38}\) By then she had left Germany and settled in Australia where she later resumed her career.\(^{39}\) Peyser's lengthy article, "A Study of the History of Welfare Work in Sydney from 1788 till about 1900", published in 1939\(^{40}\) is remarkable for its scope and the grasp of colonial history by an author new to Australia.

Brian Dickey's thesis sheds further light on Hyde Park Asylum and the government's asylums for destitute men at Liverpool and Parramatta. He, like Peyser, concentrates more on the administrative processes. This thesis expands their work on the administration of Hyde Park Asylum and encompasses the lives of its women inmates.

The asylum's invisibility in the historical record is largely owing to the lack of readily accessible primary documentation. None of Hyde Park Asylum's official records - admission and discharge registers, letterbooks, house journals - has survived. Unlike its predecessor and successor, the Benevolent Asylum and the Newington Asylum respectively, the institution was relatively free of complaint, consequently it did not attract attention from the press, nor was it the specific subject of a government inquiry which can be so revealing on administration and function.

Retrieving Hyde Park Asylum and a proportion of its women inmates has involved a lengthy search of twenty-five years of the Colonial Secretary's correspondence


\(^{39}\) ibid.

indexes and registers to locate references to letters pertaining to the asylum and the women. The relevant papers were then retrieved from several hundred boxes of correspondence. Previous research of the Colonial Architect’s records, was expanded to locate additional information on the physical fabric of Hyde Park Barracks and to determine how the buildings within the compound were adapted for the use of their various occupants. A search of parliamentary papers 1862-87 retrieved the annual reports of the asylum and the Inspector of Public Charities which provided valuable statistics on the women, additional information on the administration and government attitudes towards the colony’s sick-poor. The *Blue Book*, 1861-1888 detailed the employees and their salaries. Records of the Benevolent Society were searched to identify the women who were sent to Hyde Park Asylum. In combination, these major primary sources have drawn together information on the building, women and administration.

Tensions exist where evidence survives and recent changes to the legislation or departmental restrictions prevent its use. Consequently powerful insights into individual experiences found in certain records could not be included. Works such as those by O’Brien and Garton, written before restrictions were in place, and include case histories without surnames, shows the richness this information can contribute to the historical record. It challenges the imagination that it is now considered the use of initials could positively identify a specific individual. The lack of access for scholars to nineteenth-century mental health records, unless for statistical purposes, remains contentious. Caught up in the Department of Health’s restrictions are the late nineteenth-century admission registers of Newington Asylum for aged and infirm women which provided biographical information on a number of former inmates of Hyde Park Asylum. A database of 500 women inmates compiled from scattered sources, and incorporating material

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42 A condition of access is that any written work that draws statistical information from the records is required to be submitted to the Department of Health before release or publication.
since restricted, became problematical and has been omitted from the appendices. There is a curious anomaly. An index to the admissions registers for Liverpool Asylum for infirm, destitute men was compiled and in the public domain before restrictions were introduced.

This thesis is primarily an empirical rather than a theoretical history that seeks to fill the historiographical void. Chapter One is an overview of the welfare provisions available for women and girls in New South Wales between 1788 and 1850. It is drawn almost entirely from secondary sources and briefly examines the range of charitable activities, women’s philanthropy and the importance of vice-regal patronage. The chapter focuses on the Benevolent Society of New South Wales, whose asylum, built in 1821, provided the only residential care for aged or infirm paupers, lying-in women and deserted mothers with children. It was also responsible for the distribution of outdoor relief to those in need.

Chapter Two follows the Benevolent Society through the most troublesome decade of its existence that incurred two parliamentary inquiries into the conditions in its Benevolent Asylum, the first in 1855. The second, in 1861-62, culminated in the government’s decision to assume direct responsibility for the residential care of the colony’s aged, infirm paupers. The government’s first asylum, established in the former Hyde Park Barracks, was for infirm and destitute women.

Chapter Three focuses on the women inmates of Hyde Park Asylum but begins by tracing the evolution of the former convict barracks into a female immigrant depot and pauper asylum. There is a brief analysis of the only identifiable group - its first 150 inmates who were transferred from the Benevolent Asylum in early 1862. It examines how these women, and others that followed, adapted to asylum life, the rules and regimen they were expected to follow and the eventualities if they failed to do so. Information on the spaces they occupied, the conditions in which they lived, their diet, clothing and quality of care all contribute to a picture of daily life in the asylum.
Chapter Four examines the administration of the asylum under a board of management 1862-76. Chapter Five continues the study of its administration 1876-86 as a sub-department of the Colonial Secretary’s office. Throughout the asylum’s existence it was seen as a dumping ground for society’s outcasts and the board, and later the manager, were under continuous pressure from the government to admit women vagrants and those with disabilities for whom there were no other facilities. Chapter Five also discusses the role of the Inspector of Public Charities and includes a brief comparative study of welfare provisions for the aged and infirm in the other eastern colonies.

Chapter Six looks at the life and role of the matron of Hyde Park Asylum who held the appointment for its entire duration. Chapter Seven follows the women inmates from Hyde Park Asylum to their new purpose-built accommodation, Newington Asylum on the Parramatta River in early 1886. Within six months the asylum was the subject of a parliamentary inquiry; its proceedings shed a retrospective light on the women’s lives in their former home. It is only through a detailed investigation of an institution like Hyde Park Asylum that the lives of the aged and destitute can be retrieved for us to understand the past.
CHAPTER ONE

WELFARE FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS IN NEW SOUTH WALES 1788-1850: AN OVERVIEW

Pauperism in the colony of New South Wales in the nineteenth century was exacerbated by the unique composition of its population that was initially predominated by convicts and a half-century later by assisted immigrants. The convicts had been forcibly transported to this other side of the world; the majority of immigrants, also assisted by government, had elected to come. Many of the immigrants, mostly drawn from the working classes of Britain, came as family groups. There were also single young women - including some from Irish workhouses - who, like their convict sisters, suffered the physical and psychological wrench from family, friends and everything familiar.

The lack of employment opportunities for women contributed to the creation of a pauper class of convicts, ex-convicts and the free. Analyses by Portia Robinson and Debra Oxley\(^1\) proved that not all women convicts were whores or the dregs of society. There were, of course, some habitual criminals but the majority were first offenders who did not re-offend. Oxley and Monica Perrott described the diverse skills the women brought to the colony.\(^2\) Perrott and Katrina Alford explored the employment options available to women both convict and free.\(^3\) A few enterprising women emancipists opened successful retail warehouses, an increasing number became publicans, some found work as nurses, milliners, seamstresses and in bakeries. Some women enjoyed material success or the comfort of a family in the new world. Others saw marriage, co-habitation, or prostitution as a source of

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\(^3\) ibid; Katrina Alford, *Production or Reproduction?: an economic history of women in Australia 1788-1850*, Melbourne, OUP, 1984.
food and shelter. Babette Smith’s study of one shipload of women convicts exemplifies the successes and failures experienced by women in making a new life in the colony.⁴

Whilst the colony provided opportunities for advancement for thousands, inevitably some found disappointment. Within decades there was a steadily increasing number of aged and infirm pauper women for whom the only option was life and death on the streets. For those in need, their family networks or a poorhouse to which many would have turned in adversity, were half a world away.

In England assistance to the poor was administered under Poor Law legislation that was relatively unchanged since the reign of Elizabeth I. Throughout the counties every parish levied an annual tax on property owners and occupiers that funded care for its local poor. Prior to 1846 paupers were only entitled to receive relief in the parish of their birth. Assistance to the aged and infirm was commonly outdoor relief in the form of a small pension and occasional grants of rations, clothing and medicine.⁵ Indoor relief was provided in poorhouses. Prevailing local conditions in parishes meant a great diversity in the level of rates imposed and the support provided. There was also a great diversity in the state of the various poorhouses.⁶ In the late eighteenth century local parishes combined to establish a centralised system of large residential workhouses⁷ that also accommodated the able-bodied poor who worked at such tasks as picking oakum, tailoring and trades associated with building.⁸

Under the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834, outdoor relief continued, but significantly, in future able-bodied paupers of working age would only receive

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⁶ ibid.
⁷ ibid., p 74.
assistance by entering a workhouse with their families.⁹ Workhouses were intended to instil dread and deter applicants; in England - and in New South Wales - there was an overarching belief that provision of relief encouraged pauperism, that support of orphans encouraged immorality.¹⁰

The colonial government remained fundamentally opposed to the introduction of a local poor law, which, given the scattered population beyond Sydney and Parramatta, would have been virtually impossible to implement for much of the nineteenth century. In its stead the government wholly funded the orphan schools and partially subsidised private charitable institutions that assisted the sick-poor and the able-bodied destitute and those intended to provide education and training to provide opportunities for employment to ward off poverty. The colony’s charitable societies were largely counterparts of English institutions.

Makeshift hospitals in Sydney, Parramatta and Windsor that served the convict population - usually males - were primarily for acute cases who were treated then promptly returned to their masters or to government service. Two major hospitals - one in Sydney, the other at Parramatta - built during Lachlan Macquarie’s governorship (1810-1821) were used for the same purpose. As convict establishments they were funded by the Imperial treasury.

The convict system ensured no one starved. Food rations and clothing were provided to convicts and thus provided a "safety net". In late 1813 almost one-third of the white population of 12,000 was still on government stores.¹¹ That year the New South Wales Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge and Benevolence was founded with the aims of "relieving the distressed and enforcing the sacred duties of religion and virtue in New South Wales" and of supporting the work of Pacific islands missionaries. In the colony it dispensed outdoor relief in

the form of rations, clothing and blankets and occasionally money for rent and lodgings.\textsuperscript{12}

The Society, lacking the influential support of Governor Macquarie and the Reverend Samuel Marsden, the principal chaplain, was virtually usurped in 1818 by the newly-founded Benevolent Society of New South Wales whose objects were: "To relieve the poor, the distressed and the aged, and thereby discountenance, as much as possible, mendicity and vagrancy, and to encourage industrious habits among the indigent, as well as to afford them religious instruction and consolation in their distress".\textsuperscript{13} Its activities were to be confined to the colony and expanded to provide residential care similar to that provided in English poorhouses.

With Macquarie as patron and subscriptions garnered from the colony's elite, the Society, like its predecessor, dispensed outdoor relief for its first three years.\textsuperscript{14} In 1821 residential care was provided by the Society with the opening of the Benevolent Asylum built at the southern extremity of the town,\textsuperscript{15} on land granted by Macquarie who provided government assistance for both its construction and the master's and matron's salaries. The asylum, designed to accommodate 80-100 of the colony's poor, took in male and female aged and infirm paupers who comprised the majority of inmates; it provided virtually the only available shelter for widows or deserted wives with young children and for unmarried or destitute women awaiting their confinement.\textsuperscript{16}

Vice-regal patronage of a charitable institution attracted support not only from the colony’s elite but also from aspiring parvenus who viewed subscriptions and committee membership as a means to advance their business connections and

\textsuperscript{13} Quoted in each Annual Return of the Society; changed in 1878.
\textsuperscript{14} Currey, "The Foundation of the Benevolent Society", pp 1-17.
\textsuperscript{15} The asylum was on the site of Central Railway station.
mingle with their social superiors. There was also the added kudos of listings of
subscribers and the amounts they contributed that were given prominence in the
local press.

Mrs King, wife of the third governor and Mrs Macquarie, wife of the fifth, were
more than token figureheads of the institutions of which they were patronesses.
Their major charitable activities focused on the plight of the colony's orphans.
Anna Josepha King was instrumental in the establishment of the first female
orphan school in Sydney in 1801 and was also directly involved in its
management. 17 Elizabeth Macquarie carried on this work, instigating the design
and building of a new female orphan school at Parramatta, and, as head of its
ladies' committee, zealously pursued the conduct of its management. 18 Not all the
girls were orphans, some had one surviving parent who, through sickness or
poverty, was unable to care for them. They were trained as domestic servants and
subsequently apprenticed to settlers 19 which increased their chances of future
gainful employment and of avoiding destitution.

At the end of 1825 the arrival of Eliza and Ralph Darling, the colony's seventh
vice-regal appointment, witnessed a new era of philanthropic activities in the
colony. Under Governor Darling's patronage, the Sydney Dispensary was founded
in 1826 to provide treatment for the free sick-poor. Intended to be maintained by
public subscription, subscribers were entitled to have one patient on the books for
each pound subscribed. Members of the committee took on the role of "Visitors",
visiting the poor in their homes to identify the most deserving cases - men and
women, but predominantly men - and referring them to one of the voluntary
medical officers for treatment. With an increasing number of sick-poor and
diminishing subscriptions, the dispensary, located in inadequate rented

17 Elizabeth Windschuttle, "Feeding the Poor and Sapping their Strength": the Public Role
of Ruling-Class Women in Eastern Australia, 1788-1850' in E Windschuttle (ed), Women,
Class and History: Feminist Perspectives on Australia 1788-1978, Sydney,
18 ibid; T Kass, C Liston and J McClymont, Parramatta: a Past Revealed, Parramatta,
19 ibid., p 103.
accommodation, could not meet the demand for its services. A government subsidy from 1835 enabled the employment of a resident surgeon but treatment was still limited to out-patient services which were expanded to include smallpox vaccination of children.\textsuperscript{20}

Eliza Darling, like Elizabeth Macquarie, involved herself in the management of the Female Orphan School\textsuperscript{21} and extended her efforts for young girls by founding the Female School of Industry in Sydney in 1826 and also at Parramatta in 1829, to train young girls to earn their living as domestic servants, with the aim of preempting destitution and concomitant evils such as prostitution. Based on similar schools in England and financed by subscriptions and proceeds from the committee’s annual bazaar, it was the first colonial charity to be founded and managed entirely by women.\textsuperscript{22} Poor and neglected Protestant girls - Catholics were anathema - aged from seven to fourteen who passed the rigorous selection process of Mrs Darling and her elite intimate committee, lived in as boarders\textsuperscript{23} and became a familiar sight on Sundays as they walked to church along Macquarie Street in their "neat blue and white frocks, and white straw bonnets".\textsuperscript{24} In addition to training in "every branch of Household work" they received religious and educational instruction.\textsuperscript{25} Rigid rules limited contact between the girls and their parents, the committee being of the opinion that the lack of parental moral influence was the cause of their neglect and destitution\textsuperscript{26} rather than the prevailing social conditions in what was still predominantly a penal colony.

The Female Friendly Society established in 1827 was largely another Eliza Darling initiative supported by the same elite ladies’ committee.\textsuperscript{27} The Society’s aim was

\textsuperscript{21} Windschuttle, "Feeding the Poor and Sapping their Strength", p 64.
\textsuperscript{23} ibid., p 65.
\textsuperscript{25} Windschuttle, \textit{Taste and Science}, ch 4.
\textsuperscript{26} ibid., p 80 quoting from the first annual report 1826-27.
\textsuperscript{27} ibid., p 78.
to "provide relief in sickness and old age" to women servants and to promote in them a "frugal and industrious spirit". Domestic servants paid an entry fee and contributed a small amount each week. In return, upon becoming ill or injured they received payment while bedridden, and a lesser amount in later stages of recovery. Others contributors, after their confinements, received payment for the first month and then a reduced amount if post-natal problems persisted. It was a novel precursor of maternity benefits, workers' compensation insurance and superannuation, however recipients had to be reputable - unmarried pregnant women or those suffering from sexually transmitted diseases were deemed ineligible for receipt of benefits.28

Under Eliza Darling's patronage the lady visitors' work in the Benevolent Asylum's lying-in wards was revived as a discrete branch of the Society with its own subscribers.29 It continued the work of the "Female Committee of Visitors" begun in 1820, whose efforts were directed to "respectable" destitute pregnant women awaiting their confinement. By restricting their assistance to "respectable" (that is, married) lying-in cases, the intention of the two committees was to "encourage better moral habits" of other pregnant inmates who would then be "eligible to receive attention from the visitors".30

The Benevolent Asylum continued as the primary shelter for pregnant "fallen women" - unmarried or prostitutes - but was hopelessly overcrowded by 1826.31 That year some female paupers and women lying-in were admitted to the small hospital at the Female Factory at Parramatta.32 By 1829 Governor Darling

28 ibid.
30 ibid.
31 Horsburgh, "Government Policy and the Benevolent Society", p 78.
permitted the Factory to accept "all colonial females requiring medical
treatment" but had reversed this decision by mid-1830. Old and infirm
convict inmates were transferred to the Benevolent Asylum when their servitude
ended. The Female Factory had been established in 1804 by Governor King on
the upper floor of Parramatta Gaol and from 1821 was housed in purpose-built
premises built by Macquarie on the banks of the Parramatta River to the design of
Francis Greenway. In ensuing years it evolved from a gaol for recalcitrant female
convicts and those awaiting assignment, to a "house of asylum and probation, a
house for the incapacitated (infirm, blind, aged, nursing mothers), a labour
exchange, a marriage bureau, a hospital and manufactory".

A ladies committee was established there by Eliza Darling in 1829 to teach
inmates needlework that would equip them for domestic service. The renowned
English penal reformer, Elizabeth Fry, was impressed: "So few prisons are yet
visited by ladies in England". The committee faltered after Mrs Darling’s
departure from the colony in late 1830. Governor Bourke, who shared Eliza
Darling’s admiration of Elizabeth Fry, revived the committee but it too was short-
lived. Vice-regal patronage and its attached social cachet was apparently not
sufficiently appealing to Sydney’s female elite, to sustain work with the female
"dregs" of the colony. Problems associated with finding employment for inmates
of the Female Factory were exacerbated in the 1830s by the influx of young
assisted immigrant women who were considered more desirable for domestic
service. This may have led to the revival of the women’s committee for in August
1838 the Sydney Gazette announced a "Ladies Committee for the Improvement of

33 Darling to Murray, 18 February 1829, Historical Records of Australia, I, 15, p 655 cited
in Salt, These Outcast Women, p 112.
34 ibid., p 112.
36 Salt, These Outcast Women, p 46.
37 ibid., p 117.
38 Fry to Marsden, 23 November 1832, Marsden Papers, ML A1992, pp 534-5 quoted in
Windschuttle, "Feeding the Poor and Sapping their Strength", p 65.
Female Convicts" would receive applications for domestic servants.\textsuperscript{40}

The Sydney Dorcas Society founded in 1830 (so named for the biblical needlewoman), provided outdoor relief similar to that of the lady visitors within the Benevolent Society's lying-in department. Reliant on the generosity of subscribers, most of whom were women, the committee visited pauper women in their homes in the month of their confinement and assisted by recruiting midwives or providing clothes for the newborn infant. The mother had to be "respectable", sponsored by a subscriber and help was limited to the first baby and only if no other assistance was available.\textsuperscript{41} "Respectable" to the Sydney Dorcas Society, meant married and Protestant. Poor Catholic women awaiting confinement received similar assistance from The Strangers’ Friend Society established in 1835\textsuperscript{42} as did Jewish women from the Ladies' Dorcas Society for Distressed Jewish Mothers from 1844.\textsuperscript{43}

The first Jewish charity \textit{Ezroth Avyounim} (Aid to the Poor) had been established in 1832 for the purpose of "allowing permanent relief to aged, decayed and meritorious objects of the Jewish persuasion" and that year "six aged or blind Jews" were provided with sustenance.\textsuperscript{44} Whether the Hebrew Philanthropic Society, founded in 1833, was a new organisation or merely a name change is not clarified in relevant secondary sources.\textsuperscript{45}

In 1834 the Hawkesbury Benevolent Society commenced building a two-storey brick asylum in Brabyn Street, Windsor to house paupers; it was completed in


\textsuperscript{41} Windschuttle, \textit{Taste and Science}, p 78.


\textsuperscript{43} Windschuttle, "Feeding the Poor and Sapping their Strength", p 59. Later renamed Hebrew Ladies' Maternity and Benevolent Society.


\textsuperscript{45} Historian Suzanne Rutland dates the founding to 1833 and makes no reference to the earlier society in her \textit{Edge of the Diaspora: two centuries of Jewish settlement in Australia}, 2nd rev edn, Rose Bay NSW, Brandle & Schlesinger, 1997, p 31.
1836 and added to in 1841.\textsuperscript{46} The society was originally the Windsor Charitable Institution founded on 31 December 1818 for the purpose of "devising means of relieving the poor and indigent of the district". Enterprising local residents had endowed the society with a herd of cattle, which was depastured on land grants obtained from Governor Macquarie, at Wilberforce, Currency Creek and on the Penrith road near Windsor. By mid-1820 the institution provided outdoor relief in the form of stores and cash. A shingle-roofed slab cottage built for the stockkeeper, was used in 1832-34 as a poorhouse. The society flourished and by 1835 held over 600 head of cattle.\textsuperscript{47}

The colony's economic boom of the 1830s - primarily on the sheep's back - collapsed at the end of the decade. With a depression looming, a provisional committee of citizens called a public meeting in Sydney in July 1839 to form the Sydney Association for the Temporary Relief of the Poor.\textsuperscript{48} The association raised subscriptions to buy food and fuel to sell to the poor at reduced prices. Persons who refused work for low wages were denied help. When the depression ended the association dissolved and as agreed at its formation, any remaining funds were distributed equally to the Benevolent Society and the Strangers' Friend Society.\textsuperscript{49}

For female immigrants arriving at the height of the depression and unable to find employment, temporary relief was provided in the Sydney Immigrants' Home established by Caroline Chisholm in 1841. Chisholm, her soldier-husband and two young sons had arrived in the colony in late 1838 on leave from India.\textsuperscript{50} While living in Madras from 1832, she became concerned about the welfare of the daughters of the regimental rank and file and set up a Female School of Industry there to provide them with basic educational and domestic skills.\textsuperscript{51} Visiting

\textsuperscript{46} James Steele, \textit{Early Days of Windsor}, Sydney, Tyrrells Ltd, 1916, p 164.
\textsuperscript{47} ibid., pp 160-1.
\textsuperscript{49} ibid.
\textsuperscript{51} ibid., pp 15-19.
Sydney’s Domain in 1839, Chisholm was distressed to find young bounty immigrant women near starvation and sleeping in tents or in the open.\textsuperscript{52} Concerned that the vulnerable young girls may be forced into prostitution to survive, she used her social connections to find employment for some in Sydney; others were taken to her home at Windsor where they were deloused, given rudimentary training in household skills and placed locally.\textsuperscript{53}

In 1841 Governor Gipps granted Chisholm the use of the empty immigration barracks in Bent Street behind Government House to establish the Sydney Immigrants’ Home.\textsuperscript{54} She assumed responsibility for the young women’s moral welfare and escorted groups to various country centres where she had found jobs for them. Chisholm also established an employment registry to assist newly-arrived immigrant families. She succeeded - where the government had failed - in enticing immigrants to the outlying districts and as the demand for their services grew she set up temporary depots at Liverpool, Campbelltown, Parramatta, Maitland and Port Macquarie from where they were distributed.\textsuperscript{55} When immigration ceased, the home closed in July 1842, by which time Caroline Chisholm had achieved the extraordinary feat of finding employment for 156 families, 37 widows, 128 single men and 1404 single women,\textsuperscript{56} many of whom would otherwise have become paupers.

Pauper women who had resorted to prostitution to survive were offered the opportunity of reformation of body and soul by two charities founded in 1848. The House of the Good Shepherd, a Catholic institution run by Sisters of the Good Samaritan, and the Sydney Female Refuge for Protestants, were both residential institutions where the women were taught laundry work (which earned an income for the charities) and also needlework, with the ultimate aim of placing them in suitable positions as domestic servants. Both institutions had been granted

\textsuperscript{52} ibid., p 36.
\textsuperscript{53} ibid.
\textsuperscript{54} ibid., p 51.
\textsuperscript{55} ibid., chs 4-5.
\textsuperscript{56} ibid, p 94.
accommodation in the former convict Carters' Barracks, adjacent to the Benevolent Asylum at the southern end of the town.57

Although the number of charities offering external help had substantially increased by 1840, there was still little accommodation for the free sick-poor who required hospitalisation. A dispensary had been established in the Benevolent Asylum in 1831, its medical officers ministering to the increasing number of chronically ill-infirm, sick and diseased - inmates.58 Some accommodation was provided in the two-storey colonnaded General Hospital in Macquarie Street, Sydney, built 1811-16 for convicts but there was a general reluctance on the part of the free to use this because of its convict associations.59 Infectious cases, the chronically ill and lying-in women were excluded. At Parramatta, a Benevolent Society, established in 1838, used the upper floor of Parramatta Hospital to provide temporary shelter to female paupers.60

At Penrith a Dispensary and Benevolent Society, established in 1846, paid for the medical treatment of patients, and funded the vaccination of 99 local children. In the late 1850s the society built a hospital to accommodate pauper patients and the aged destitute who could spend their declining years "closed in comfort and repose".61 The Righteous Path Society, a Jewish charity founded in 1848, provided its members with free medical aid, sick pay and funerary expenses.62 It is believed to have merged with the Hebrew Mutual Benefit Society in 1851.63

Soon after the cessation of transportation - and the loss of Imperial funding - three rural convict hospitals were closed and reopened as civil institutions under local

59 ibid.
60 Kass, Liston and McClymont, Parramatta: a Past Revealed, p 139.
63 ibid., p 104.
control to treat the free sick-poor: Goulburn and Bathurst in 1842; the Windsor hospital in Macquarie Street, taken over in 1845 by the Hawkesbury Benevolent Society, also admitted aged, infirm paupers.

In 1841 the Sydney Dispensary accepted the government's offer of the General Hospital's southern wing to care for indigent free settlers requiring hospitalisation, albeit on a selective basis, functioning as it did on the subscriber scheme despite its substantial government subsidy. The "Sydney Infirmary and Dispensary" was incorporated in 1843, and, following alterations and repairs, opened in July 1845. In 1848 the hospital's main central block was transferred from the British to the Colonial Government, which offered the infirmary the larger building in place of the southern wing, with the proviso that convicts requiring medical care would also be admitted. In addition to people presenting an order for admission from a subscriber, the government had the right to issue admission orders. The Sydney Infirmary was thus "a public, voluntary and charitable hospital in the English sense, although the government was the principal subscriber".

The Sydney Infirmary excluded pregnant and lying-in women and cases of chronic illnesses leaving the Benevolent Society to shoulder the burden. Since 1826 the Benevolent Asylum had been overcrowded, despite extensions to the building in 1829, 1831 and 1838. By 1849 the situation was intolerable: the asylum's maximum capacity was supposedly 250 inmates but the daily average was 497. Other than the separation of sexes, there was no system of classification of inmates: "the sick, the healthy, the aged, the young, the moral and the profligate" were all thrown in together.

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64 Dickey, No Charity There, p 27.
65 Steele, Early Days of Windsor, p 164.
67 ibid.
68 ibid.
69 Horsburgh, "Government Policy and the Benevolent Society", p 78.
70 Benevolent Society to Colonial Secretary, 15 May 1862, letter 62/2482, CSIL, SRNSW 4/462.
71 Horsburgh, "Government Policy and the Benevolent Society", p 78.
Throughout the 1840s, government buildings associated with the convict and military establishment continued to pass from British to colonial control, while funds from the Imperial treasury which had supported them were reduced accordingly. The Female Factory at Parramatta had closed and from 1849 was used as a lunatic asylum.\textsuperscript{72}

Sydney’s upright citizens self-righteously believed that the poor were responsible for their own poverty: drunk and dissolute, or improvident for producing large families they could not support, or failing to provide for contingencies such as sickness and old age. No concession was made for the unique composition of the colony’s population: thousands of ageing male and female convicts and emancipists and young single female immigrants, all isolated from family networks and friends half a world away and totally bereft of support. Provisions for the poor were unable to keep up with the ageing population. While the government outlaid funds rather than accepting responsibility, it became increasingly difficult for the private charitable institutions to provide the requisite care.

CHAPTER TWO

"THIS FRIGHTFUL AGGREGATION OF DISEASE, INFIRMITY, SIN AND SORROW": THE BENEVOLENT SOCIETY IN CRISIS

In 1850 New South Wales was steadily recovering from the 1840s depression. Since late 1848 shiploads of single young female immigrants had been arriving. They were followed, from 1851 - when gold was discovered - by countless men both young and old seeking their fortune. Many of Sydney's husbands and fathers left wives and families to join them on the goldfields. It was possibly this male exodus from Sydney that caused the Benevolent Society in 1851 to limit the provision of outdoor relief to widows or deserted wives with young children, or to families where the husband was sick and unable to work. They received two pounds of meat and two four-pound loaves of bread weekly and the occasional "luxury" such as small quantities of sugar and tea.\(^1\) Overcrowding in the Benevolent Asylum in Sydney was critical and the government offered the Benevolent Society the use of the former military hospital at Liverpool, agreeing to repay any expenditure on the physical fabric, should it be resumed. On 26 November 1851 the Benevolent Asylum's male inmates were transferred there, but this only slightly alleviated the crowded conditions in the Sydney asylum.\(^2\)

In rural areas former convict hospitals continued to be handed over to local committees for the treatment of the sick-poor and to accommodate aged and infirm men and women. Among the charitable institutions receiving partial government funding in 1855 were hospitals at Parramatta, Windsor, Goulburn, Yass, Bathurst, Newcastle, Maitland, Brisbane, Tamworth, Armidale and Port Macquarie and benevolent societies at Sydney, Liverpool, Parramatta, Penrith, Singleton and

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Tamworth. The Benevolent Society remained the principal provider of residential and outdoor relief to the colony’s paupers.

Since 1822 the Benevolent Society had received an annual government subsidy to cover any shortfall, which by 1855 had risen to 90 per cent of the Society’s expenditure. Additional funds came from fines from Benches of Magistrates, unclaimed poundages and an annual collection service in various churches. Given the Society’s expectation of the government meeting any shortfall, there was no incentive to administer its funds professionally or to review its operations. Motions were regularly passed at the Society’s annual general meetings deploiring the diminution of voluntary subscriptions which averaged only 22 per cent of its running costs between 1819-1861. At a special meeting in February 1860, Andrew Lenehan moved: "That it is a matter of much regret that a Society so beneficial to the community at large, should meet with so limited an amount of Voluntary support, and this meeting would impress upon the minds of all classes that it is not only those requiring aid that are indebted to the institution but all who wish for the relief of misery, and the removal of mendicity from our streets".

There was still no government intervention on how the funds were expended nor in the Society’s administration. Despite the large payment from General Revenue it freed the government of any other responsibilities involved in providing relief to the poor. However, by 1855 the Society’s increasing expenditure on outdoor relief, the care of pauper mothers and children at the Sydney asylum and the rising admissions to the Asylum for Destitute Children at Randwick prompted government action at the instigation of the new governor, Sir William Denison.

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3 Returns of the Colony of New South Wales, 1855, pp 895-7.
7 Benevolent Society of New South Wales, Minutes of the General Committee, 6 February 1860, ML A7157, p 30.
8 Horsburgh, "Government Policy and the Benevolent Society", pp 77, 81, 78.
Denison who took up the vice-regal appointment in New South Wales in January 1855 after seven years as governor of Tasmania, had a large family and was vitally interested in the welfare and education of children. Soon after his arrival the governor inspected the orphanages and the Asylum for Destitute Children. On 19 May 1855, at Denison's instigation, the Executive Council appointed a two-member board to investigate "the operation and general management and condition" of the Destitute Children's Asylum and of the Benevolent Society of New South Wales and to make recommendations on "the position which the Government ought to occupy with respect to Public Charities, which are subsidized from Public Funds".

The two board members, William Mayne, Inspector General of Police and Edward Merewether, Acting Agent for Church and School Estates were instructed to provide "a clear and distinct notion, not only of the theoretical constitution of the Societies in question, but also of their practical working". This included detailed information on the annual income and its source, the degree of responsibility of members of the governing bodies, the methods in which business was conducted and funds collected, and the checks in place to guard against the misappropriation of funds.

The instructions also reflected both the governor's and the government's suspicions of a "mistaken benevolence on the part of the administrators of the funds":

It is a well known fact, that Benevolent institutions ... are very apt (through a natural wish on the part of those, who are called upon to administer them, to assist to the utmost those who appear to be in distress) to enhance those very evils, which it was the object of the institution to

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10 Colonial Secretary to Inspector General of Police and to the Acting Agent for Church and School Estates, 19 May 1855, Inquiry into Benevolent Society and Asylum for Destitute Children, NSWLCVP, 1855, vol 1, pp 981-2.
11 ibid., p 981.
12 ibid.
abate or relieve ... much more it is likely to happen where the money is, to a great extent, derived from the General Revenue ... It is very often the case, that persons who have, for many years been living upon charity, get at last to consider their support as a matter of right.

It should not be lost sight of that institutions of this kind are evidences of an unwholesome state of Society, and that every means should be taken to do away with the state of things which renders such institutions necessary.\textsuperscript{13}

An additional clause inserted at the governor's request was indicative of his prevailing attitude to certain classes of welfare recipients:

A Lying-in Hospital is an evil, if through the facilities it affords to the abandoned of bringing their children into the world, it does away with one of the checks to immoral conduct on the part of women. Again, a Foundling Hospital, or refuge for Destitute Children, is an evil, if it induce the abandonment of children by parents, and thus breaks through that dearest and holiest of ties which binds children to parents and parents to children.\textsuperscript{14}

In its relatively brief report the board reported it was satisfied with the conduct of the Benevolent Society's various committees and the administration of its accounts. Checks against "misappropriation or misapplication of the funds" appeared sufficient "but, in the wider sense of those terms ... since no practical responsibility attaches to the governing body, there is in fact no real check".\textsuperscript{15}

Mayne and Merewether attended three meetings of the committee which dealt with applications for outdoor relief and admissions and were present at the muster of

\textsuperscript{13} ibid., p 982.
\textsuperscript{14} ibid.
\textsuperscript{15} ibid., p 983.
adult male inmates (awaiting transfer to the Liverpool asylum) and the children after which they conducted a thorough inspection of the asylum. They found that "shortcomings" could be traced to "the absence of that direct responsibility, which renders duty paramount to feeling, and precludes any other consideration":

... while recognizing to the fullest extent the labours of the governing body, the spirit of benevolence and kindness by which they are evidently actuated ... that in the application of the rules, certain essentials have been lost sight of, and the practice of the Society thus placed broadly at variance with its theory; and, in the opinion of the Board, the tendency of the Institution is not to discountenance mendicity and vagrancy, to discourage industrious habits among the indigent, or to foster a spirit of independence.\footnote{ibid., pp 984-5.}

The board found that no "searching enquiry" was made of the applicants to determine their eligibility for residential or outdoor relief. It appeared to the board that many inmates were not truly destitute and were taking advantage of the benevolence of the committee. There also seemed an obligation to admit applicants sent by Police Magistrates although the Society's committee considered many were undeserving but could not be left to die on the streets. According to the board there "appeared a remissness" in endeavouring to recover expenses from husbands and fathers of deserted wives and children.

The board undertook similar investigations of the Society for the Relief of Destitute Children which administered the Asylum for Destitute Children. It found the existing premises were entirely unsuited for the purpose but acknowledged that generous private donations were to be used to construct appropriate accommodation for the children. There were concerns that although the Society had been in existence for three years it had not yet formulated a plan of operations. The elementary education provided was considered "extremely
imperfect" and failed to include any industrial instruction for older children. Some admissions seemed not truly deserving: "the Institution partook of the character of a cheap boarding school, rather than of one intended for the reception of children literally or morally destitute".\(^\text{18}\)

The report was tabled in September 1855. Denison considered it contained much that was "worthy of the serious attention of both the Government and the Council", but in view of the colony's impending constitutional changes he could not "recommend the initiation of any specific enactments with relation to these Charitable Institutions".\(^\text{19}\) The report was shelved.

In 1858 in response to articles in the *Sydney Morning Herald* relating to the deaths of children in the Benevolent Asylum from measles and typhus, the General Committee insisted that its care of lying-in and foundling cases was "so contrary to the objects of the society".\(^\text{20}\) Denison inspected the Benevolent Asylum on 22 July 1858 and immediately recommended the appointment of an inspector of public charities; the Executive Council appointed the Registrar General, Christopher Rolleston to the position,\(^\text{21}\) however the Legislative Assembly declined to confirm the appointment, because it would be considered a poor reflection on the Benevolent Society's board.\(^\text{22}\) Possibly as a result of the governor's visit, the Benevolent Society negotiated with the Society for the Relief of Destitute Children in 1858 to send some of its children to the Randwick asylum; the government agreed to fund the construction of necessary additional accommodation and to meet the costs of maintaining the children.\(^\text{23}\)

\(^{18}\) ibid., pp 992-6.
\(^{19}\) ibid., W Denison to Legislative Council, 13 September 1855, p 981.
\(^{20}\) *Sydney Morning Herald*, 26, 27 April, 1 May 1858.
\(^{21}\) W Denison to C Cowper, 23 July 1858; C Cowper, Executive Council Minute M14366, 12 August 1858, C Rolleston to Cowper, 25 September 1858, letter 58/3514, CSIL, SRNSW 4/3388.
\(^{22}\) Cowper, annotation 15 April 1859 on Rolleston to Cowper, 2 November 1858, letter 58/3951, CSIL, SRNSW 4/3388; Executive Council, Minute 18 February 1862, Minute Book, SRNSW 4/1541, pp 268-70.
\(^{23}\) Horsburgh, "Government Policy and the Benevolent Society", p 82.
The *Empire* - the Benevolent Asylum's fiercest critic - fell temporarily silent when its editor and proprietor Henry Parkes was declared bankrupt in 1858. Revived by new owners, the *Empire* in July 1860, published a series of Dickensian articles on the asylum during an epidemic of measles and influenza when there were twenty-five deaths in three weeks;24 it continued to keep the public's attention focused on the poor conditions and overcrowding in the Benevolent Asylum.25 The *Sydney Morning Herald* rushed to the asylum's defence: "We cannot build palaces for paupers. We cannot provide them with the dainties and luxuries of life ... the Benevolent Asylum ... is equal to any institution of the kind in the parent country, allowing, we regret to add, for the commonly inferior character of our paupers".26

An inquiry into the conditions of the working classes of Sydney in 1859-60, instigated by Henry Parkes, and who sat as its chairman, had drawn attention to the colony's current unemployment problems, the resulting increase in destitution and the squalid shacks and shanties in which the poor were forced to live.27 By 1861 the Benevolent Society's expenditure on outdoor relief and residential care was £13,459 of which the government contributed £11,916.28 Thus it was hardly surprising that in the Legislative Assembly, on 27 September 1861, John Lucas moved for a "select committee to inquire into the state and management of the Sydney Benevolent Asylum". Lucas claimed there was public dissatisfaction of the organisation, and, given the large amount of public money expended on it, the House had a right to inquire.29

Maurice Alexander and the Colonial Secretary, Charles Cowper, both directors of the Benevolent Society, strongly opposed the motion. Cowper could see no reason for an inquiry, insisting that any existing faults were not those of the Society: "the

24 *Empire*, 10, 15, 16 July 1860.
25 *Empire*, 15 August, 23 November 1860.
26 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 November 1860.
29 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 28 September 1861.
principal evil was the want of sufficient accommodation and the admission of
lying-in women". He referred to the government’s impending grant of a suburban
site to the Society for the erection of a new commodious asylum. Cowper also
reminded the House that the government’s earlier attempt to introduce a system of
inspection had been aborted when members refused to vote the requisite funds.30

Support for an inquiry was divided and hotly debated. John Caldwell, a director of
the Society, stressed the necessity of an inquiry, believing a local Poor Law was
inevitable as the voluntary system had become inadequate; pauperism was
increasing and financial contributions diminishing.31 John Hay confined his
support to an investigation of the adequacy of accommodation and spoke at length
on the evils of the Poor Law in England. He considered it was "better [to] submit
to some abuses and inconveniences, than saddle ourselves with a system we might
never be able to get rid of".32 Among those who supported the motion the
consensus was that an inquiry should not involve any censure of the managers,33
no doubt sensitive of the social and professional standing of members of the
Benevolent Society’s board of management which included three members of the
Assembly, five of the Legislative Council, prominent clergymen and influential
businessmen.34 The motion was amended "to inquire into and report upon the
adequacy of the provision made for the Destitute, through the instrumentality of
the Sydney Benevolent Society, with power to send for persons and papers" and
carried without division.35

Members appointed to the Committee of Inquiry were: Maurice Alexander, John
Caldwell, Joseph Harpur, John Hay, Thomas Holt, William Love, John Lucas,
John Morrice, Richard Sadleir and John Sutherland.36 Sutherland and Lucas were
builders; Alexander a merchant and honorary treasurer of the Benevolent Society;

30 ibid.
31 ibid.
32 ibid.
33 ibid.
35 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 28 September 1861.
Holt, Hay and Morrice were pastoralists; Love and Caldwell were grocers; Sadleir was a retired schoolmaster and former manager of the Male Orphan School; Harpur was a journalist who had worked for the *Empire* and was possibly the author of some of its earlier editorials drawing attention to conditions in the asylum.\(^\text{37}\)

The committee reflected the composition of parliament that, since the introduction of responsible government and new electoral laws, had seen the likes of shopkeepers, publicans, small traders and dealers rub shoulders with and gradually supplant the colony's squattocracy, prominent merchants and bankers.\(^\text{38}\)

According to John Hirst, much to the "dismay of the conservatives, with each election the social standing and educational accomplishments fell lower and lower".\(^\text{39}\)

The inquiry began on 8 October 1861\(^\text{40}\) and in the ensuing two months the committee, chaired by John Lucas, took the evidence of sixty-one persons, made two inspections of the city asylum, one of the Liverpool branch and visited the 50-acre site at Randwick proposed for the new asylum.\(^\text{41}\) Witnesses included board members, visiting clergy, doctors connected to the asylum and others in private practice, employees of the institution and ten inmates who received small gratuities for performing a range of duties, from stoking the copper to teaching, nursing and working as wardswomen.

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\(^{37}\) See Christopher Connolly, *Biographical Register of the New South Wales Parliament 1856-1901*, Canberra, ANUP, 1983 for biographies of members; Julie-Ann Ellis in her article on the inquiry noted John Morrice had displayed little interest in the inquiry and attended only the first session, that Lucas, Alexander, Sadleir and Love attended more than half of the hearings, and were the only members present at the meeting to finalise the report: "in the main it was men with an interest in charity, and without a great deal of political power, who ran the inquiry": Julie-Ann Ellis, "Meetings with Unremarkable Men - The Benevolent Society of New South Wales in 1861-1862", *JRAHS*, vol 77, 1992, p 23. Of the 18 meetings Lucas was present at 17, Sadleir, 15, Alexander and Love, 11.


\(^{39}\) ibid., p 176.


\(^{41}\) ibid., Report of the Committee, p 909.
Thirty-eight witnesses were called in Sydney. Questions to staff on the asylum’s
day-to-day management dwelt mainly on expenditure, accounting procedures, the
difficulties caused by shortage of accommodation, diet, stores, the allocation and
seeming shortfall of medicinal spirits. There were corroborations and denials by
staff on the rumoured drunkenness of the matron, Mrs Mansfield. The examination
of the asylum’s master, Samuel Mansfield, was not rigorous on all aspects of his
duties but focused on his major task of the administration and distribution of
outdoor relief which in the current year was assisting 2800 individuals. To the
end of September 1861, Mansfield had weighed and distributed 1055 loaves, 755 lbs of beef, 1970 lbs of flour, 217 lbs of rice, 17½ lbs of sugar, 20½ lbs of
oatmeal, 2½ lbs of arrowroot and £6 6s 6d for rent payments.

Mrs Louisa Stone told the committee she was employed as nurse of the Children’s
Hale Ward, in which sixty-three children currently ate and slept. The children
were bathed once a week in a large tub in the ward - all sixty-three in the same
water; every morning when their faces, hands and feet were washed, "we are
obliged to change the water then, because sometimes it is very dirty". She
endeavoured to keep the cleaner children separated from those who were admitted
"in a most filthy state - crawling all over, covered with vermin and sores". With
insufficient beds, mattresses were laid close together on the floor, four children at
the head, four at the foot and "one blanket covers the whole."

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42 The remaining twenty-three witnesses were called in connection with the male asylum at
Liverpool. Of the thirty-eight appearing in Sydney: Randwick resident Simeon Pearce, two
representatives of the Destitute Children’s Asylum, Randwick and six of the twelve doctors
were called specifically for their recommendations on planning aspects of the new asylum
and the suitability of the site. There were conflicting opinions on the location; the majority
of doctors believed Randwick’s proximity to the sea exposed it to strong winds which were
dangerous for both young and old and advocated an inland site.

43 NSWLAVP, 1861-62, vol 2, Minutes of Evidence, response to Q205-49.
44 ibid.
45 ibid., Louisa Stone, response to Q356-66.
46 ibid., response to Q373-5.
The committee inspected Number 1 Ward, 95 x 24 feet with a 12 foot ceiling containing 42 bedsteads: "Huddled together in a room only calculated to accommodate 38" were "63 women, including 9 blind, 2 lame, 20 between 65 and 95, 32 young mothers and also 36 infants, 4 of whom were foundlings - in all 99 human beings". More than half the women slept on mattresses on the floor. Ten windows provided ventilation during the day.\(^47\) Dr Henry Graham, the city's health officer, inspected the ward at night when the windows were closed: "The ward was dimly lighted by two open oil lamps, the smoke emitted from which had already partially filled the upper part of the ward. Some open night-pails were placed in the middle of the ward. There was no means of ventilation".\(^48\)

Julie-Ann Ellis in her analysis of the evidence, found the asylum was "clearly uncomfortable and sometimes unhealthy" but doubted the "frightful aggregation of disease, infirmity, sin and sorrow"\(^49\) depicted by the press. In her opinion the overcrowding was "real, although not absolutely appalling" after all it "allowed thirty-five square feet per bed".\(^50\) Number 1 Ward of 27,360 cubic feet allowed 276 cubic feet for each of its ninety-nine occupants, or, discounting the forty infants and children, 434 cubic feet per adult. Military barracks allowed 600 cubic feet for each soldier and in military sick wards 1200 cubic feet per patient.\(^51\)

"If you want to know what is the real stink here", volunteered Mrs Stubbs the Hospital Ward nurse, "you should come at ten o'clock at night".\(^52\) And the committee did: visiting the Children's Sick Ward where "the foul effluvium arising from so many human beings (several suffering from an offensive cutaneous disease) and crowded into a very limited space; was so overpowering that the

\(^{47}\) ibid., Report of the Committee, pp 909-10.

\(^{48}\) ibid., Henry Graham to Committee, 28 November 1861, p 1018.


\(^{51}\) Commission of Inquiry into the Benevolent Asylum, NSWLAVP, 1861-62, vol 2, Minutes of Evidence, John Lucas, Q1546.

\(^{52}\) ibid., Minutes of Evidence, response to Q528.
visitors were unable to remain longer than two or three minutes in the room".\textsuperscript{53}

The selection from the thirty-six member Benevolent Society board to give evidence was judicious. George Allen, Maurice Alexander, Joseph Raphael, Fred Robinson, the Reverends Felix Sheridan and Alfred Stephen were also members of the Acting (or House) Committee which met weekly at the asylum to deal with internal matters including admissions and applications for outdoor relief. The board - also known as the General Committee - usually held its meetings in the charity school in Elizabeth Street opposite the Supreme Court; at times as few as three attended\textsuperscript{54} and some members rarely visited the asylum.

The evidence of the entrenched Allen and newcomer Raphael is interesting to compare. George Allen, MLC, was a respected member of the legal fraternity, a staunch Methodist and a director of the Society from 1821 and honorary secretary since 1836.\textsuperscript{55} He was deferred to, was acquiescent of the status quo, and reflected the philosophy of the Society's committees and their impractical management of the organisation: "No doubt we are frequently imposed upon ... but it is better to let ninety-nine guilty persons escape than one innocent one suffer".\textsuperscript{56}

Allen stated the asylum was never intended for lying-in women but there was no other institution for them; they could not be left to die on the streets. He claimed not many were prostitutes, mainly they were young girls seduced while in domestic service, or on board ship coming to the colony; there were also respectable married women deserted by their husbands.\textsuperscript{57} He agreed that women were allowed to remain too long after their confinement but there was nowhere for

\textsuperscript{53} ibid., Report of the Committee, pp 913-14.
\textsuperscript{54} Sydney Morning Herald, 30 January 1862, report of the annual general meeting of the Benevolent Society.
\textsuperscript{55} Australian Dictionary of Biography, vol 1, pp 5-7; Committee of Inquiry, NSWLAVP, 1861-62, vol 2, Minutes of Evidence, George Allen, response to Q3.
\textsuperscript{56} ibid., response to Q59-62. The Empire of 11 January 1862 declared "the whole institution was virtually ruled by one man" - a blatant attack on George Allen.
\textsuperscript{57} Committee of Inquiry, Minutes of Evidence, response to Q11-13.
them to go, and confirmed that no serious effort was made (as it was in England) to recover expenses from fathers of the illegitimate children living with their mothers in the asylum. The conditions in the Children’s Sick Ward were to be regretted, but the children were in the last stages of disease, and contagious, consequently they could not be sent to the Destitute Children’s Asylum.

Joseph George Raphael, city alderman, hotel proprietor and upstart, had served as a director of the Benevolent Society since 1860 and of the Destitute Children’s Asylum since 1857. Raphael arrived in Sydney in 1839. From modest beginnings as a ribbon seller, his commercial activities had prospered; by the late 1850s he was an active shareholder in several banks and insurance companies and prominent in Jewish affairs. His public life was "characterised by independence, the product of a prickly consciousness of his race and lowly origins". Raphael was not afraid of change and continually ruffled the feathers of his fellow directors.

Despite Raphael’s satisfaction of the "very material" improvement in the running of the asylum in the past two years, he disapproved the current mode of management and believed the government should take "a larger control". He could see no advantage from the appointment of an inspector and believed the asylum should be managed by a resident medical superintendent - elected by the directors and approved by government - who would be in charge of the master and matron. There was also need of an officer to take full charge of the stores. Raphael had found evidence that stores for inmates had been misappropriated by staff, both at Liverpool and Sydney. He was also aware of some people "receiving much larger outdoor rations than they were entitled to".

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58 ibid., response to Q148, Q14-15.
59 ibid., response to Q24.
60 ibid., Joseph Raphael, response to Q1733-4, Q1856.
62 Committee of Inquiry, Minutes of Evidence, response to Q1854, Q1791-3.
63 ibid., response to Q1792-3.
64 ibid., response to Q1793, Q1801-3, Q1872-3.
On lying-in women staying for as long as twelve months, Raphael had long considered the institution was "most grossly abused ... It is nothing but a pleasant domicile for the worst of characters". He would still admit every case, "but my mode of dealing with these women would be very different": "All single girls who come there to be confined with their bastard children should, after two months has elapsed, and themselves and their children have gained strength, be compelled to seek service in Sydney, or the Board should have the power to compel them to go into the interior and seek situations, the Board paying their passages up to the principal townships".

Raphael considered the clergymen were generally "too ready to give their recommendations [for admittance], from Christian charity; perhaps they would not have so much Christian charity if it were to come out of their own pockets, instead of out of the funds of the country". A regular attendant of committee meetings, Raphael had continually drawn attention to the abuses but was "compelled, in consequence of being over-voted, to submit". He believed that "on many occasions ... the committee, if they have erred at all, have erred from too much mercy and kindness". He was disappointed that his fellow directors had rejected [on grounds of economy] his recommendation that the asylum acquire an oven to bake its own bread; the oven while still hot could be used for roasting as an alternative to the monotonous daily diet of boiled meat. Cows should be kept to provide good milk and a garden maintained to supply a variety of fresh vegetables. Raphael's final recommendation - probably to the chagrin of his fellow directors - was the recruitment of more tradesmen to the committee to "greatly assist the better working of the institution".

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65 ibid., response to Q1811.
66 ibid., response to Q1813-14.
67 ibid., response to Q1822.
68 ibid., response to Q1872-3, Q1874. At the Society's annual general meeting, board member M H Stephen declared, "troublesome people like Mr Raphael were always of great use on every committee, and that they did good by ferreting out abuses". Sydney Morning Herald, 30 January 1862.
69 Committee of Inquiry, Minutes of Evidence, response to Q1788-90.
70 ibid., response to Q1874.
The Reverend Alfred Stephen, an Anglican and director of both the Benevolent Society and the Destitute Children's Asylum confirmed Joseph Raphael's allegations concerning outdoor relief: persons that he [Stephen] had recommended three or more years before who were now gainfully employed were still receiving relief. He had recently inspected the books and struck off twenty-one families.71 No doubt, Stephen's new found diligence was prompted by the prospect of giving evidence. He recommended that committee members replace the master on visits to applicants for outdoor relief to determine their eligibility.72 Stephen deplored the overcrowded conditions and regretted it was impossible to segregate the "decent respectable women".73

The four visiting medical officers and James Smith the resident surgeon attributed the prevalence of diseases to overcrowding, lack of segregation and especially to the gases, pervasive smells and leaching from the adjoining large general cemetery. The mortality figures were considered high, given the number of elderly and infirm inmates. Dr Burgon reminded the inquiry that some of the children brought in had been "lying exposed to the air for a night ... [and] would have died if they had been taken to Queen Victoria's Palace and had fifty nurses to wait upon them ... that the child lives - that it struggles on - is the mystery, not that it dies".74 James Smith the house surgeon admitted his failure to notice smoke from laundry coppers daily pervading the children's sick ward75 and was seemingly unaware that sixty-three children were bathed in the same water. It was he who had ordered windows to be closed at night because when left open inmates appeared unwell the next morning. Smith favoured the appointment of a government inspector: it would "tend to make the committee work better - make them attend to their work".76 "Some attend very well - very few of them".77

72 ibid., response to Q1962.
73 ibid.
74 ibid., Joseph Burgon, response to Q1286.
75 ibid., James Smith, response to Q1638.
76 ibid., response to Q1652-3.
77 ibid., response to Q1656.
The Committee's Report was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on 7 January 1862.\textsuperscript{78} The major recommendation was "immediate steps" be taken to build a new asylum in the suburbs to accommodate 1200 men, women and children.\textsuperscript{79} Regardless of its location, a city depot should be maintained to receive urgent cases and to dispense outdoor relief.\textsuperscript{80} The Sydney asylum was deemed unsuitable for its present uses: the buildings were too small, inconveniently laid out, some ceilings were low, the wards were poorly ventilated. The drainage was defective: the large cemetery on higher ground at the rear of the institution "the drainage and exhalations from which, some of the medical gentlemen examined consider to be detrimental to the health of the inmates". The excessive crowding was "not only injurious to the health of the inmates, but dangerous to the citizens generally".\textsuperscript{81}

The Liverpool Asylum with twice the number of inmates that could be conveniently accommodated, was "very much overcrowded" but the overcrowding was not as perceptible as in Sydney, as the building was "well situated with lofty ceilings and good ventilation, having been originally built as a hospital".\textsuperscript{82} There was great concern that in the sick and infirm wards at both Sydney and Liverpool, women and men suffering from "cancerous, scrofulous, and other loathsome diseases" were lying side by side with others in a good state of health, excepting their infirmity. Classification was recommended to segregate those with infectious diseases.\textsuperscript{83} The committee also recommended sectarian classification in hospital wards, "the Roman Catholic and Protestant being disposed to ridicule the religious rites of each other, if administered in a room common to all".\textsuperscript{84}

In the Sydney asylum they had witnessed, "decent respectable married women ... the seduced female ... and the known common prostitute (who has made her second, or perhaps her third appearance) ... all packed together in the same lying-

\textsuperscript{78} ibid., Report of the Committee of Inquiry, pp 909-14.
\textsuperscript{79} ibid., pp 909, 911.
\textsuperscript{80} ibid., p 911.
\textsuperscript{81} ibid., p 909.
\textsuperscript{82} ibid., p 910.
\textsuperscript{83} ibid., p 911.
\textsuperscript{84} ibid.
in ward". It was recommended that the proposed new asylum should have three lying-in wards to separate them. The committee noted the alarming increase - from 53 in 1860 to 98 in 1861 - in the number of women confined. There were conflicting opinions on the necessity of a separate asylum for this class of paupers: classification could obviate the need; regardless the committee felt that management of lying-in women should remain with the Benevolent Society.

That sixty-three children in the Hale Ward shared beds, bed linen and the same bath water and given the fetid atmosphere in the Children’s Sick Ward the committee was "no longer at a loss to account for the large amount of juvenile mortality". The institution was considered "quite unsuited, both morally and physically" for children aged from three to twelve. Immediate action was recommended to remove (monthly) all such children to either the Orphans' or Destitute Children’s Schools; and that "in future, no children of that age should remain above three months in this Institution".

The inmates' food, except for the lack of variety, was found to be of the "best description" and "sufficient in quantity". "More vegetables and less meat" was proposed as were ovens in order to provide baked meat. The committee noted that many inmates had expressed a willingness to work, but "there appeared to be a sort of enforced idleness throughout the establishment". The committee recommended that able-bodied inmates be made to work which could even "yield some revenue to the institution" and possibly deter the "large number of idle imposters who seek there a home, to be clothed, fed, and kept in idleness".

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85 ibid., pp 910-11.
86 ibid.
87 ibid., p 912.
88 ibid., p 910.
89 ibid., pp 911-12.
90 ibid., p 913.
91 ibid.
92 ibid.
93 ibid.
With "twelve-thirteenths" of the Society's expenditure coming from public revenue, the committee were of the opinion that "the Government should have some official knowledge of the state of the Institution" and recommended the appointment of an inspector to "audit the accounts and make periodical reports on its condition". Virtually all matters within its province that the committee found "objectionable", were attributed to the overcrowded conditions which were deemed "impossible" to overcome without the provision of increased accommodation.

There were the matters of "some irregularities" that because of the exclusion from the inquiry of any censure of the "managers", called for the attention of the asylum's committees. The committee believed the institution was "as well managed as can be expected, and also that the thanks of the community are due to those gentlemen who have for so many years devoted much of their time and means to relieve the sufferings of their infirm and destitute fellow-beings".

On 16 and 17 January 1862 members of the Legislative Assembly debated the adoption of the report. There was concensus that the inquiry was justified although in seeking to apportion blame, members disagreed on the significance of various aspects of the report but in general held the resident doctor and visiting surgeons responsible for the conditions in the asylum. The majority of speakers defended the Benevolent Society's management of the asylum; others strongly objected to the report's praise of the Society's committees. There was general agreement on the necessity of a government inspector. Charles Cowper, except for an interjection, did not participate in the debate and was not in the House the following day when the report was adopted twenty-eight votes to four.

94 ibid., p 912.
95 ibid.
96 ibid., p 913.
97 ibid.
98 Empire, 17 January 1862.
99 ibid.
100 ibid.
101 Empire, 18 January 1862.
102 ibid.
Within a month of the debate in parliament, the *Empire* on 14 February 1862 announced a "sweeping alteration" to the management and arrangements at the Sydney and Liverpool Asylums: a board - including one paid officer - was to replace the Benevolent Society's committees, 100 women inmates of the Sydney asylum were to be removed to the immigration barracks at Hyde Park; the former military barracks at Parramatta would be readied to receive a substantial number of male inmates from Liverpool. The *Sydney Morning Herald* on Saturday 15 February confirmed the government's appropriation of part of the immigration barracks for an asylum to which 100 women would be removed that day. Accordingly, the women were bundled into horse-drawn omnibuses and transported from the southern end of the city to their new accommodation in Macquarie Street. "Strange to say" remarked the *Empire* "the only director present ... was Mr. J. G. Raphael, who was unremitting in his endeavours to get these old people away comfortably".  

Two days earlier, on Thursday 13 February, Cowper together with the Benevolent Society's president Edward Deas Thomson and vice-president George Allen had inspected various buildings large enough for an additional women's asylum. When the sugar company's building at Chippendale and premises in Pitt Street were rejected, the Immigration Depot in Hyde Park Barracks was drawn to his attention. The substantial decrease in assisted immigration since 1860 when unemployment in the colony became a problem left the barracks empty for much of the time. It was inspected and considered the most suitable accommodation currently available. The next day (Friday) the three men met at the Sydney Infirmary to discuss arrangements. Deas Thomson told Cowper he "could not sleep at night while those poor inmates were in such a miserable state"

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103 *Empire*, 17 February 1862. The *Freeman's Journal* of 8 February 1879 reporting the death of Joseph Raphael noted he was the antithesis of "a too numerous class of sham philanthropists in our midst, who inflict themselves upon the boards of our public charities for sectarian or party aggrandizement, or to swell their own personal importance".

104 Executive Council, Minute 18 February 1862, Executive Council Minute Book, SRNSW 4/1541, p 268; *Empire*, 19 February 1862.

and "would not leave the room until something was done".\textsuperscript{106} The women were moved the following day.

Between the two meetings with Deas Thomson and Allen, Cowper made other momentous decisions: the government would adapt the military barracks (former commissariat) at Parramatta to accommodate 150 men from Liverpool asylum; all three asylums - Parramatta and Liverpool for males and Hyde Park Asylum for females - would be managed by a government-appointed board with responsibility for admissions. The Benevolent Society would be left with the management of its own asylum and the dispensing of outdoor relief.

Cowper had taken decisions affecting government without formal permission of the Executive Council or the legislature. "Slippery Charlie" had earned the epithet for his political astuteness which even his detractors grudgingly acknowledged. His sudden decisions concerning the establishment of government asylums were perhaps not made overnight; they may have been simmering since the Society’s annual general meeting at the end of January. As Colonial Secretary and a member of the Benevolent Society’s board, he was fully cognizant of the Society’s procrastination over Parramatta which it had originally been offered. The nigirling about spending £75 on the building,\textsuperscript{107} and the indignant outbursts of an entrenched committee at the annual general meeting\textsuperscript{108} gave him little cause for optimism on the Society’s future management.

On 18 February 1862 Cowper addressed a "numerously attended" special meeting of the Benevolent Society. He assured members that contrary to reports in the press,\textsuperscript{109} the government had no intention to remove management of the

\textsuperscript{106} ibid.
\textsuperscript{107} The society had applied in October 1861 for and was granted use of the former commissariat building to alleviate the drastic overcrowding at the Liverpool asylum that could safely accommodate 250 men but currently had in excess of 400 inmates. BSNSW, General Committee, Minutes, 14 October 1861 and 14 January 1862, ML A7157, pp 104, 110.
\textsuperscript{108} Empire, 29 January 1862.
\textsuperscript{109} Empire, 14 February 1862; Sydney Morning Herald, 15 February 1862.
Benevolent Asylum from the general committee.\textsuperscript{110} He related events of the previous week and advised that the Secretary for Lands had been instructed to ready the commissariat at Parramatta for the reception of 150 men from Liverpool, however Cowper added that the government was not prepared to hand over three government buildings\textsuperscript{111} to the Society. Instead the government would assume responsibility for the management of and admissions to Parramatta, Liverpool and Hyde Park and at the latter would accept deserted mothers and widows but not their children. The cost of the three establishments would be deducted from the amount voted to the Society by parliament. The remainder of the vote and fines and poundages would go to the Society for the lying-in women, orphans and the outdoor relief. Cowper informed the meeting he had prepared a submission to the Executive Council and would report its views to the committee the following week.\textsuperscript{112}

The committee conceded the removal of the infirm, aged and destitute women was necessary although the majority of members - especially the clergy - objected to the manner in which it had been executed. Deas Thomson, in response to a question from the Reverend Mr Dougall, confirmed that it had been a joint decision of the three men "in the interests of humanity", that he and Allen had signed the order for removal and not Cowper as had been suggested. Alderman Raphael and the Reverend W Hodgson supported the decision unreservedly.\textsuperscript{113} The Reverend Dr Fullerton was highly critical of Allen acting without the sanction of the committee to which Allen retorted that if left to the committee nothing would have happened for at least three months. Deas Thomson reminded members that the Society had been offered the Parramatta building months earlier and he had been "surprised and grieved" that during his nine weeks absence the committee had done "nothing beyond correspondence".\textsuperscript{114}

\textsuperscript{110} Empire, 19 February 1862.
\textsuperscript{111} i.e. Liverpool, Parramatta and the immigration barracks.
\textsuperscript{112} Empire, 19 February 1862.
\textsuperscript{113} ibid.
\textsuperscript{114} ibid.
Raphael lamented the petulant suggestions to hand over the Benevolent Asylum to the government as well. John Caldwell, who sat on the inquiry insisted the sub-committee had exceeded its powers. He was openly hostile to Cowper and demanded that the Society receive the full amount voted by the legislature.\textsuperscript{115} The Reverend J F Sheridan also protested: the hasty decision had incurred an "odium of unpleasantness" on the committee. He "knew well" that the "new plan would not work so well as was imagined" and knowing how workhouses were managed in Ireland, there would be "salaries for pets of the Government".\textsuperscript{116} A motion was carried sanctioning only the removal of the women; six dissented.\textsuperscript{117}

Cowper's Minute was laid before the Executive Council on the same day, and although he informed the Society of this intention, it seems possible that he had already approached the Council given his delayed arrival at the Society's meeting.\textsuperscript{118} His proposals were identical to those announced to the Benevolent Society and were agreed to by the Council which determined that the "time has arrived" for the government to "take upon itself the management of that portion of the business entrusted to the Committee of the Benevolent Society which relates to the admission of paupers into that Institution and their care and maintenance".\textsuperscript{119}

The Executive Council nominated members of a board to oversee management and "future admissions" to the government asylums.\textsuperscript{120} The Immigration Depot was to immediately receive as many Benevolent Asylum women as it would conveniently hold. (One hundred women had already been moved.) Mr and Mrs Applewhaite currently in the Immigration Department were to be appointed master and matron.\textsuperscript{121} It was noted that these arrangements were to be considered as only temporary until the "mature deliberation" of the legislature.\textsuperscript{122} Curiously,

\textsuperscript{115} ibid.  
\textsuperscript{116} ibid.  
\textsuperscript{117} BSNSW, General Committee, Minutes, 18 February 1862, ML A7157, p 125.  
\textsuperscript{118} Executive Council, Minute 18 February 1862, Executive Council Minute Book, SRNSW 4/1541, pp 268-70.  
\textsuperscript{119} ibid., p 269.  
\textsuperscript{120} ibid., p 270; the appointments are discussed in chapter 4.  
\textsuperscript{121} ibid.  
\textsuperscript{122} ibid.
the inspector so wanted by Cowper, considered so essential by parliament and conceded as necessary by the Benevolent Society, did not rate a mention.

Without waiting for notification of the Executive Council’s deliberations, the Society applied on 21 February for the first quarter of its 1862 vote which it estimated was £3083 10s 7d.123 Cowper reduced the payment to £2100 which, together with fines, poundages and public subscriptions, he maintained was ample to provide for outdoor relief and the orphans and lying-in women remaining in the asylum. The Society retaliated announcing that without a government guarantee to cover any shortfall, it would on 9 April cease to distribute outdoor relief.124 Responding on behalf of Cowper, the Principal Under Secretary reminded the Society that the government had just relieved it of its heaviest responsibilities and had undertaken to pay the cost of maintaining the children and lying-in women. Outdoor relief, it had been "distinctly stated", could not be administered by the government; it was to be hoped that among the thirty-six board members "a working quorum" would be found to "carry out the benevolent intentions of the founders of the Society".125 The committee agreed to continue outdoor relief until "the decision of the Legislature, as to future grants of the Society shall be known".126

In restricting Benevolent Society admissions to lying-in women and orphans, Cowper had overlooked the plight of destitute, homeless mothers with young children. He rejected the Society’s entreaties for permission to admit deserving cases to the Benevolent Asylum; he offered to take the mothers at Hyde Park but offered no solution regarding their children.127 A month later Cowper relented and advised the Society it could admit destitute women with children under two

123 George Allen to Colonial Secretary, 21 February 1862, NSWLAVP, 1862, vol 4, p 317; Colonial Secretary to Allen, 25 February 1862, ibid.
124 ibid., p 322, Benevolent Society to Colonial Secretary, 27 March 1862.
125 ibid., p 323, Under Secretary to Benevolent Society, 31 March 1862.
126 ibid., p 324, Benevolent Society to Colonial Secretary, 10 April 1862.
127 ibid., p 325, Benevolent Society to Colonial Secretary, 22 April 1862, Colonial Secretary to Benevolent Society, 5 May 1862.
years, the expense to be borne by government.\textsuperscript{128}

A sub-committee consisting of Deas Thomson, Allen, Archdeacon McEncroe, the Reverend John Dougall and Maurice Alexander, appointed to respond to the Colonial Secretary on decisions of the past few months wrote on 25 May 1862:

The Committee do not dispute the right of Government to adopt the course they have taken ... but they conceive that they have some right to complain of the time which was chosen for this purpose, and the abrupt manner in which ... their duties in respect to in-door relief were brought to a close, without one word of acknowledgment of the assistance which, for many long years, had been gratuitously rendered to the Government ...

The Committee consented to continue to receive the lying-in women and children of the classes who have hitherto been admitted ... as has been frequently pointed out to the Government, the relief of persons of this description is entirely foreign to the objects for which the Society was formed. It was only because there was no other Institution into which they could be received, and to avert the misery ... that the Committee were induced so far to relax their rules to admit them ...

... it is not too much to say, that by far the principal part in what may not be inappropriately termed the administration of the Poor Laws of the Colony, has devolved on this Society ... and however lightly their services may be regarded by Government, they are quite content with the consciousness of having, in the cause of charity, scrupulously performed, to the best of their ability, an important public duty.\textsuperscript{129}

\textsuperscript{128} ibid., p 331, Colonial Secretary to Benevolent Society, 7 June 1862.
\textsuperscript{129} Benevolent Society to Colonial Secretary, 15 May 1862, letter 62/2482, CSIL, SRNSW 4/462 and published in NSWLA\textsuperscript{VP}, 1862, vol 4, pp 326-7.
The Benevolent Society of New South Wales, left with the relief of destitute lying-in women and children - so "entirely foreign" to the objects of the Society, later rallied brilliantly under Dr Arthur Renwick who developed the Benevolent Asylum into the colony’s leading obstetrics hospital (later the Royal Hospital for Women at Paddington). Among its many activities for the infirm or destitute in the twentieth century, the Society established retirement villages for the aged, day care centres for the elderly and programs to assist sufferers of dementia. Women’s refuges remain prominent in the Society’s provision of social welfare.\(^{130}\)

There was a proliferation of private charities in New South Wales in the second half of the nineteenth century. Many were devoted to assisting destitute women, the majority of which provided relief in the form of rations and clothing. Charities that provided female residential care were mainly involved in the welfare of unemployed domestic servants and unmarried pregnant women.\(^{131}\) The government remained the principal provider of accommodation for aged and infirm pauper women. The City Night Refuge and Soup Kitchen, established in 1868, to assist destitute men, initially found and paid for lodgings for pauper women, and later accommodated them. St Joseph’s Providence Home in The Rocks took in aged and infirm women from 1881 until 1886 when they were moved to the Home for the Aged Poor at Randwick; the Sir Moses Montefiore Jewish Home in Sydney accommodated women of its faith from 1889.\(^{132}\)

Charles Cowper’s decision to establish the government asylums was a watershed for the residential care of the infirm and destitute and was the genesis of a state hospitals system which lasted for more than a century.\(^{133}\) The government’s first


initiative in social welfare for the aged showed it could act swiftly without prior preparation. This intervention was indeed a responsible decision. The inquiry into Sydney’s working classes in 1859-60 had revealed the extent of destitution in the city that was far from decreasing. In 1851 the Benevolent Society’s total expenditure on outdoor relief for 1560 individuals and the residential care of an average of 372 inmates was £5095 of which £3184 came from the colonial government and £750 from the British Treasury for convict and emancipist inmates.\textsuperscript{134} By 1861 the increase was staggering. The Society’s total expenditure for its outdoor relief to 2772 and residential care of 727 at its Sydney and Liverpool asylums, was £13,459. The Colonial Government contributed £11,916 of this amount; British Treasury funding to the Benevolent Asylum ceased after 1853.\textsuperscript{135} Charles Cowper had recognised that government intervention was the only logical outcome.

\textsuperscript{134} Asylums for the Destitute, \textit{NSWLAVP}, 1862, vol 4, p 329.

\textsuperscript{135} ibid.
CHAPTER THREE

THE NEEDY AND UNNEEDED: WOMEN OF HYDE PARK ASYLUM FOR THE INFIRM AND DESTITUTE, 1862-1886

On 15 February 1862 the government asylum for infirm, destitute women opened in the Hyde Park Barracks located at the southern end of Macquarie Street. For the next twenty-four years, the asylum and a female immigration depot would share and jostle for space in the three-storey building in the centre of the compound and compete with various government agencies for occupancy of the range of buildings that lined the compound’s perimeter. The Sydney Mail reported that the building’s "cleanliness, healthy situation, cheerful aspect, and excellent ventilation" together with an attentive master and matron would "present an agreeable change from those in the old establishment and ... leave little to be desired on behalf of the aged and afflicted creatures who find an asylum there".1

Hyde Park Barracks was designed by the convict-architect Francis Greenway, and built 1817-19 by Governor Lachlan Macquarie to accommodate the huge influx of convicts transported to New South Wales after the Napoleonic Wars. Prior to its erection, convicts in government service had to find their own accommodation; they ceased government work at 3pm and worked in private employment to pay for their board and lodgings.2 To fulfil his ambitious program of practical - and impractical - public works and the beautification of the town, Macquarie retained a large number of transportees at the barracks for the requisite work gangs.

The three-storey shingle-roofed brick building dominated the compound. Symmetrical in plan, it had four dormitories of each floor: on either side of the

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1 Sydney Mail, 15 March 1862.
central hallway that ran the length of the building were two dormitories 35 x 19 feet and 65 x 19 feet separated by a cross hall containing two sets of stairs with landings on the upper floors. The smaller dormitories faced Macquarie Street.

The compound’s side perimeters comprised ranges of offices. The southern range held a large central two-storey kitchen block with a mess-room 100 feet long on either side for the convicts. The northern range contained the convict superintendent’s quarters, storerooms, a bake-house and a large dormitory where newly landed prisoners were processed. This range probably housed the Court of General Sessions, established at the barracks in 1830 where both male and female convicts were tried for secondary offences. Along the rear eastern wall were privies, washhouses and a drying shed and, in the yard, stood three large open sheds for the convicts’ recreation. The high stone wall on the western front was punctuated by a pair of solid timber gates bordered by entrance lodges. On the four corners of the compound were domed pavilions - the two on the northern side each contained five cells for refractory convicts.

Transportation officially ceased in 1840. By October 1842 the barracks still held roughly 560 convicts. In the following year an attempt to "declare" Hyde Park Barracks a common gaol was rejected by the Legislative Council. By January 1848 nineteen convicts remained and those ineligible for a ticket of leave were destined for the gaol on Cockatoo Island.

In 1848 the colony was emerging from a severe economic depression, assisted immigration had resumed and the decision was taken to establish an immigration depot at the Hyde Park Barracks. Since 1837 newly-arrived female immigrants had

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3 ibid.
4 Sydney Gazette, 17 July 1819.
5 Bigge, Report ... into the State of the Colony of New South Wales, p 2.
6 Return of convicts, Colonial Secretary, Hyde Park Barracks 1842, CSIL, SRNSW 4/2575.1.
7 Governor Gipps to Stanley, 28 October 1843, Despatch 175, HRA 1, vol 23, p 202.
8 Principal Superintendent of Convicts to Colonial Secretary, 12 January 1848, Colonial Secretary, Transfer of Convicts and Convict Establishments, CSIL, SRNSW 4/801.
been housed in a temporary timber building in Bent Street behind Government House. It was erected annually from 1835 for use as a ballroom for the monarch's birthday ball; in 1837 when the building was needed to accommodate surviving immigrants from the "fever ship" Lady McNaghten, Governor Bourke cancelled the ball, much to the annoyance of the colony's elite. It continued to be used as an immigration depot until 1848.

To adapt the main building at Hyde Park Barracks for its new occupants, major alterations, repairs, painting and whitewashing were undertaken in October 1848. One new ceiling was installed (probably on the top floor to conceal the exposed rafters of the pitched roof), new drains were laid and a force pump installed to convey water to the first floor. Offices were fitted out on the ground floor for the Immigration Agent and seven clerks. Living quarters were prepared for the matron of the Immigration Depot. The caretaker and boatman/messenger were accommodated in the small entrance lodges.

In 1849-51, in addition to the unaccompanied female immigrants, the Immigration Depot accommodated female orphans brought from the workhouses of famine-stricken Ireland, and in 1849-55, the wives and children of convicts sent out at government expense to be reunited with their husbands or parents. Governor FitzRoy insisted on the segregation of each group. The Immigration Agent was responsible for arranging apprenticeships for the Irish orphans; he collected their wages and maintained a separate bank account for each girl. The families of

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9 The first Government House which faced Bridge Street was demolished 1845-46.
12 Sydney Morning Herald, 30 September 1848; Immigration Agent, Annual Return 1848, SRNSW 4/7312.
13 Immigration Agent, Wives and Families of Convicts on Bounty Ships, SRNSW 4/4819.
14 Governor FitzRoy to Earl Grey, 1 December 1848, Despatch 257, HR4, I, vol 26, p 718.
convicts remained for short periods until collected by their relatives. The Immigration Depot was primarily a clearing house for single female immigrants: they walked up from the ship, were processed, and on the same, or the following day, the majority departed with friends or relatives; the remainder used the depot’s hiring day held within a day or two of disembarkation to find employment.

The compound’s northern range was occupied, in turn, by the Government Printing Office (1848-55),¹⁶ a Court of Requests (1856-59) and from 1859 by the District Court which remained there for more than a century.¹⁷ By 1862 a coroner’s court occupied rooms adjoining the north-eastern pavilion.¹⁸ A high stone wall 260 feet long had been erected to separate the northern range from the depot; within this yard, in 1852, a residence was built for the Government Printer’s accountant and foreman who, for security purposes, lived on the premises.¹⁹ In 1856-57 the Stamp Office occupied part of either the residence or northern range as did the Inspector of Distilleries (1857-1862) and the Church and School Estates (1857-1864). In April 1857 the Vaccine Institution, whose officers had visited the barracks daily since 1848, moved into the residence.²⁰

In the compound’s southern range, the Immigration Agent retained the eastern mess-room - the so-called "Long Room" - to store luggage and accommodate immigrants released from the Quarantine Station. The rest of the southern range was taken by the Volunteer Rifle Brigade in 1861.²¹ The various Volunteer Corps, formed in 1854, were revived in the late 1860s on the outbreak of the Maori wars. Following the despatch of Imperial troops of the 12th Regiment to

¹⁷ Colonial Architect, Miscellaneous Estimates and Returns, SRNSW 2/632; SRNSW Map 58 (1863).
¹⁸ Government Asylums Board to Principal Under Secretary, 5 March 1862, letter 62/1142, CSIL, SRNSW 4/3466
¹⁹ ibid.
²⁰ Colonial Architect, Vaccine Institute, SRNSW 2/649.
New Zealand, the Volunteer Rifle Brigade took over garrison duty in Sydney.\textsuperscript{22} The large central kitchen was converted to an armoury and the western mess-room was used as a band room and quarters for the sergeant-in-charge. The brigade's gatekeeper resided in the lodge attached to the south-western pavilion. A high paling fence was erected down the yard to secure the armoury from the public and the young immigrant girls from the Volunteers.\textsuperscript{23}

By 1861 the Immigration Depot was empty for much of the year. Assisted immigration to New South Wales had almost ceased in 1860 when unemployment was rife.\textsuperscript{24} From a peak in 1855 when 46 assisted immigrant ships arrived in Sydney, arrivals decreased to 26 in 1857, 13 in 1859 and 7 in 1861.\textsuperscript{25} In March 1861 a proposal to convert the Immigration Depot into offices for the Public Works Department was deferred and eventually lapsed.\textsuperscript{26} The Colonial Secretary, Charles Cowper, seeking alternate accommodation for the infirm, destitute women in the overcrowded Benevolent Asylum, settled on the Immigration Depot.

The \textit{Sydney Mail} reported the various alterations and repairs to the barracks to accommodate the new inmates: walls were "thoroughly" whitewashed and the floors cleaned; grated apertures were inserted under the windows on one side and near the ceiling in the opposite walls to improve ventilation. A pump was installed to convey fresh water to the top floor. Dormitories already held the folding iron bedsteads and bedding formerly used by the immigrants.\textsuperscript{27} The women's new quarters, filled with sun and light, were a welcome contrast to the pernicious smells and poorly ventilated overcrowded wards of the Benevolent Asylum.

\textsuperscript{23} Immigration Agent to Under Secretary for Lands, 9 July 1861, Colonial Architect, Government Immigration Barracks, SRNSW 2/642B.
\textsuperscript{26} Department of Lands to Under Secretary, Public Works, 22 March 1861, Department of Public Works, SRNSW 2/896, cited in Thorp, Hyde Park Barracks, Section 6.1.
\textsuperscript{27} \textit{Sydney Mail}, 15 March 1862.
From their top floor accommodation the asylum women could gaze easterly over the verdant tree-lined Outer Domain to Woolloomooloo ridge where stately mansions stood amid landscaped grounds that ran down to the bay. Looking south they could see the mellow golden sandstone edifices of St Mary’s Roman Catholic Cathedral and the Australian Museum and over to the right was Hyde Park, criss-crossed by paths, its trees still young saplings. To the west, directly opposite the entrance gates were St James’s Church of England, the Supreme Court and the top of King Street which led down to the bustling retail district.

Immediately to the north stood the three discrete wings of the General Hospital built 1811-16 by Governor Macquarie: by 1862 the southern block adjoining the barracks was occupied by the Royal Mint; the large central building was still a hospital - the Sydney Infirmary, and the northern-most block housed the colony’s legislature. Further north along this eastern side of Macquarie Street was the Presbyterians’ remarkable prefabricated iron church and the Female School of Industry accommodated in the old Horse Guards Barracks.

In addition to the top floor, the asylum had the use of the large ground floor dormitory on the southern side as a mess-room. The immigrants occupied the large dormitories on the middle level; their ground floor dining hall on the northern side doubled as the depot’s hiring room. The Immigration Agent’s office remained on the ground floor. The matron’s quarters occupied two front rooms on the middle floor. A detached kitchen cum bathroom and laundry at the rear of the building was shared - but separately. Immigrants and inmates were completely segregated both inside and out: there were separate entrances (the asylum’s was on southern side), one set of the stairs for immigrants, the other partitioned off for asylum inmates. A plan of the complex in 1863 shows the fenced-off recreation spaces in the yard and their segregation from other government agencies.28

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Who were the infirm, destitute women who found refuge in Hyde Park Asylum from 1862 to 1886? The institution’s registers of admissions and discharges have not survived thus the vast majority remain anonymous, reduced to mere bureaucratic statistics in annual reports published in parliamentary papers. Several hundred individuals have been identified from scattered sources - a minuscule fraction of the approximately 6000 who found shelter there.\(^{29}\) The only women who can be considered collectively are the inmates transferred from the Benevolent Asylum in 1862.

According to the Benevolent Society’s *Annual Report* for 1862 a total of 151 women were transferred to Hyde Park Asylum: 15 February (101), 1 March (36) and 13 March (14).\(^{30}\) Two women were re-admitted to the Benevolent Asylum on 20 February and discharged again to Hyde Park on 13 March\(^ {31}\) which accounts for the total of 149 stated in the Society’s April minutes.\(^ {32}\)

Given the overnight decision to transfer 100 women from the Benevolent Asylum and the logistics involved in a mass removal, the recording of the discharges was expedient and not entirely accurate. There is no comprehensive list of the three batches of women transferred. For most the discharge was noted against their names in the Benevolent Asylum’s admissions index; for those whose names staff could not find in the index, separate discharge lists were compiled of 53 inmates for 15 February, and 13 and 14 for 1 and 13 March respectively.\(^ {33}\) There was however some confusion and duplication where the asylum held several women with the same common names;\(^ {34}\) spelling variations and aliases caused additional

\(^{29}\) Accurate admission statistics for 1873-74 and 1876-85 total 3556; the daily average number of inmates for the years 1862-1872 and 1875 total approximately 1866, giving a minimum number of 5542 admitted. Even allowing for a smaller turnover than that for 1876-85 and re-admissions, the total number of admissions would have exceeded 6000.


\(^{31}\) Amelia Thomas and Jane Smith, BSNW, Admissions and Discharges Register, ML A7191, Admissions and Discharge Index, ML *D575.

\(^{32}\) BSNW, General Committee, Minutes, 8 April 1862, ML A7157, p 144.

\(^{33}\) BSNW, Admissions and Discharges Register, ML *D575.

\(^{34}\) For example there were three women by the name of Sarah Smith.
problems\textsuperscript{35} and no trace has been found in the asylum's records of a few of the women listed in the initial transfer.\textsuperscript{36} Compounding the confusion are 41 women who were listed in the discharge register as leaving the asylum of their own accord on 22 February\textsuperscript{37} of whom 16 are noted in the index as having been sent to Hyde Park.\textsuperscript{38} An aggregation of the discharge lists and annotated index entries totals 165 women, of whom two, when traced through the Society's records, were deceased.\textsuperscript{39}

Nevertheless, by eliminating dubious entries, it has been possible to approximate some statistics based on 140 women using information they provided on their age, marital status, religion, country of origin, year of arrival, whether convict or free, and reason for admittance that was recorded in the Benevolent Society's admissions registers and house journals.

Their ages ranged from eighteen to ninety-two, with an average age of fifty-two. Nine were born in the colony; of the remainder, just over half arrived as immigrants or wives of soldiers; the rest were convicts. There was one Jewess, more than half were Catholic and the rest were Protestant, i.e. a remarkable disproportion of Catholics when compared with the 1861 census statistics of 65.2\% Protestant and 28.3\% Catholic women in the colony,\textsuperscript{40} perhaps to some extent reflecting the preference of employers for English rather than Irish domestic servants.\textsuperscript{41}

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\textsuperscript{35} One woman admitted as Ellen Burns was discharged as Ellen Byrnes; another who was admitted several times as either Bridget Belcher or Bridget Boucher had discharges recorded in both names.

\textsuperscript{36} For example, Elizabeth Judson, Marjory Irvine.

\textsuperscript{37} BSNSW, Admissions and Discharges Register, ML *D575.

\textsuperscript{38} BSNSW, Index to Admissions and Discharges, ML *D564.

\textsuperscript{39} For example, Ann Pearce entered as discharged at own request on 22 February 1862 in the discharge register (ML *D575) and as transferred to Hyde Park Asylum in the index (ML *D565) had died of influenza on 21 September 1860 (ML *D574).

\textsuperscript{40} J C Docherty, Selected Social Statistics of New South Wales 1861-1976, Kensington NSW, History Project Incorporated and UNSW, 1982, p 29. Female Protestants comprised Church of England 45.1\%, Presbyterian 9.9\%, Methodist/Wesleyan 6.8\%, other Christians (excluding Catholics) 4.3\%.

\textsuperscript{41} Higman, Domestic Service in Australia, p 63.
For those women whose marital status was recorded, there were 76 widows, 40 married or in a de facto relationship and 22 were single. Of 30 of the 40 with living partners for whom there is information, 20 were deserted, 4 had husbands who were ill and unable to support them, 4 had husbands in gaol, 2 were battered wives. Some of the women were physically or intellectually disabled: 15 were blind or visually impaired, 4 paralysed, 4 physically handicapped and 5 were described as being of unsound mind. According to the 1861 census there were 5739 widows in the colony comprising 1.64% of the female population of 152,372 of whom 83,373 were aged under twenty and approximately 9000 were aged over fifty; 53,509 women were married. Of the 152,372 females, there were 82,138 women and girls born in Australia, 38,671 born in England, Scotland and Wales and 27,218 born in Ireland.

According to the *Empire* a few of the women had been in the Benevolent Asylum "upwards of twenty years, one twenty-eight years".42 Many had long histories in and out of the Benevolent Asylum, working when they could, taking shelter when leg ulcers or sore hands, or rheumatism in winter made work impossible. Others were brought in drunk by police and left when dried out. It was a different story for most of the younger women; they were mainly blind or had physical or intellectual disabilities, one of the latter suspected of infanticide. Young infirm or drunken mothers admitted from the Benevolent Asylum were separated from their children who were sent to orphanages. The women's experiences provide some insight into the scale of human misery confronting infirm, destitute women.

Eliza Clyde, an English immigrant, was first admitted - destitute, deserted and with failing sight - to the Benevolent Asylum in 1853 with her three daughters aged between six years and twenty months. She absconded with them ten days later, possibly with the intention to make some alternate provision for her girls as they were not with her in subsequent admissions, the last in 1855. She was

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42 *Empire*, 17 February 1862.
transferred to Hyde Park Asylum on 15 February 1862.\footnote{BSNSW, Inmates Journal, ML A7227, Admissions and Discharges Registers, ML A7191, ML *D575.} Jewess Amelia Howe had travelled from England to Melbourne on the Ballarat in 1854 under the auspices of Caroline Chisholm's Family Colonization Loan Society. Her husband was in Cockatoo Island gaol. Aged twenty-one and destitute, her "bad hands" had forced her to leave domestic service.\footnote{BSNSW, Inmates Journal, ML A7232, Admissions and Discharges Register, ML *D575; for Ballarat, see Mary Hoban, Fifty-one Pieces of Wedding Cake: a biography of Caroline Chisholm, Kilmore Vic, Lowden Publishing, 1973, pp 327-8.}

Single mother, Jane Lloyd, an English immigrant who arrived in 1851, was sent from Maitland to the Benevolent Asylum in 1861 with her eight-year-old son George. He was sent to an orphan school, she to Hyde Park Asylum on 15 February 1862.\footnote{BNNSW, Inmates Journal, ML A7232, Admissions and Discharges Register, ML *D575.} Margaret McDonald (nee Hogan), an Irish convict transported on Elizabeth in 1828 had married emancipist Matthew McDonald (Earl St Vincent, 1818) in 1831. After thirty years of marriage, both were admitted, ill and destitute, to the Benevolent Asylum in January 1862. Matthew was sent to Liverpool Asylum and Margaret to Hyde Park Asylum on 15 February and possibly did not see each other again.\footnote{Convict Indents, SRNSW 4/4013; Convict Marriage Banns, SRNSW 4/2126.2; BSNSW, Inmates Journal, ML A7232, Admissions and Discharges Register, ML *D575.}

Louisa King's first stay at Hyde Park was in the Immigration Depot as a young twenty-year-old fresh off the Forest Monarch in December 1858.\footnote{Immigration Board, Persons on Bounty Ships, SRNSW 4/4974.} She had no friends or relatives in the colony and was an epileptic. Today it is impossible to comprehend how or why her parents back in King Stanley, Gloucestershire would have allowed her to travel alone to the other side of the world, or perhaps they wanted to be rid of her given the superstitions attached to epilepsy. According to Benevolent Asylum records, within her first year in the colony Louisa had been admitted twice to Sydney Infirmary suffering fits and twice to the Benevolent Asylum ill and unable to find employment. She left the asylum at the end of December 1859 but almost two years later, in August 1861, was readmitted in
premature labour; a son Samuel was born on 12 October. She was unmarried, the father was a labourer in Wollongong. Louisa discharged herself and son on 31 October. She returned to the Benevolent Asylum on 2 December, the register noting: "brought in from court where she had just been tried touching on the death of her infant. No recommendation suggested by Judge". Louisa was allowed out "to service" a week later and re-admitted "very ill" on 23 December. She was transferred to Hyde Park Asylum on 1 March 1862.48

The three government asylums for infirm paupers (Hyde Park for women, Liverpool and Parramatta for men) were administered by the Government Asylums Board, whose members were high-ranking civil servants (discussed in Chapter 4). Frederic King, the board’s secretary had his office in its boardroom at Hyde Park Asylum. Lucy Applewhaite, a young mother of four and matron of the Immigration Depot since May 1861, was given the additional appointment of matron of the asylum. Her husband John Applewhaite who had been employed as an "extra clerk" in the Immigration Agent’s office since July was appointed master; they lived-in. A medical officer and a dispenser visited the asylum daily and were required to be on call at all times. The only paid servant was the head laundress.49

The Regulations for the Internal Management of the Government Asylums for the Infirm and Destitute were drawn up by the all-male board and directed Hyde Park Asylum’s daily regimen that more or less hinged on the messes. Inmates who were not bedridden were organised into messes of eight. The matron selected the most able-bodied and capable women to serve as head of each mess and for their supervisory duties they were entitled to a weekly gratuity of their choice: tea,

48 BSNSW, Inmates Journals, ML A7231-2, Admissions and Discharges Registers, ML *D574-5. Variously listed in the records as Louisa, Esther Louisa and Hester.
sugar, butter, tobacco, snuff, or some article of dress to the value of one
shilling. At mealtimes they delivered the soup tureen and large tea pot to the
table and ensured that a soup dish or cup, plate, pannikin [for tea], cutlery and salt
were provided. On Saturdays they oversaw the weekly bathing of their mess. They were expected to ensure their respective messes observed all regulations
relating to dining, bathing and work. According to their ability and aptitude the
inmates were required to do all the work in the institution. The head of each mess
was responsible for the "faithful performance" of the labour delegated to her group
by the matron.

The Regulations stipulated that inmates were to rise at 6am in spring and summer
and 7am in autumn and winter and retire at 7.30pm and 6.30pm
respectively, although many years later the matron would admit these hours had
never been strictly observed. The women washed and dressed before breakfast
which was served at 7.30am in spring and summer and one hour later in the
colder seasons. Throughout the year dinner was at 1pm and tea at 5.30pm.

Inmates who "used tobacco", were allowed small quantities of snuff or tobacco,
and smoking was permitted but only at a location designated by the matron.
Recreation times were half an hour after breakfast, three-quarters of an hour after
dinner, and half an hour after tea either within the building or in the yard where there was an open shed with seating. Before breakfast, weather permitting,
the inmates (in the order of their messes), could take three-quarters of an hour's "airing" in the outer domain, under the care of the master or matron, assisted by the heads of messes.61

On Sundays and public holidays, inmates undertook only "indispensable" work; they could attend divine service under the care of persons appointed by the respective clergymen who were held responsible for their return to the institution immediately after the close of the service62 - presumably to preclude side trips to the nearest pub. Ministers of religion and members of any religious order had daily access for the religious instruction of those of their own faith.63 The master or matron were to ensure that when visits from persons of different denominations coincided, separate accommodation was to be provided for each group.64 Relatives and friends could visit inmates any day 2-5pm except Sundays or public holidays.65 Any gifts were to be presented through the master or matron and were not to be any items prohibited by the board, including drink of any kind.66 The master and matron were empowered to search for and seize any alcohol smuggled into the building and to report any such occurrence to the board.67

The matron was responsible for the general welfare of the women, enforcing personal hygiene and orderly conduct, the punctual and proper preparation of meals, cleanliness of the mess and cooking utensils and the airing of bedding and buildings. The master was responsible for the records of, and distribution of, stores, provisions, medical comforts and clothing. He also maintained the register of admissions and discharges and a daily diary of any occurrences that should be drawn to the board's attention.68

61 ibid., p 5.
62 ibid., p 7.
63 ibid., p 8; By-Laws, p 7.
64 Regulations, p 8.
65 By-Laws, p 7.
66 Regulations, p 4.
67 ibid.
68 By-Laws, p 5.
Louis-Claude de Saulle de Freycinet, Port Jackson. Plan et elevation de la caserne des convits à Sydney. Ink and watercolour, c. 1819. Historic Houses Trust of NSW
John Armstrong, Plan of the Site of the Immigration Depot, District Court, Vaccine Institution ... Ink and watercolour, 1863. State Record NSW
Hyde Park Barracks photographed from the spire of St James’s Anglican Church. Stereograph, c. 1872. Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW
Newington Asylum for the Infirm and Destitute to which the women of Hyde Park Asylum were removed in 1886. This photograph, taken 1886-90, shows the women attired in clothing made by inmates: plaid or check brushed cotton dresses and shawls, calico aprons and bonnets of calico or floral print. The verandahed corrugated iron building is possibly the dining hall. The women were excluded from dormitories during the day, hence their tanned complexions. Small Picture File, Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW (erroneously identified as Parramatta Lunatic Asylum)
The Government Asylums Board met on Tuesday and Friday mornings to interview men and women seeking refuge in the asylums. Infirmity and "an inability to do anything to support life" were the criteria for admission; destitution alone, rendered applicants ineligible. Examination of the applicants was rigorous; board members were pragmatic and rejected many deserving cases in order to avoid the overcrowding that had plagued the Benevolent Asylum. At Hyde Park Asylum the inmates' annual daily average did not exceed 165 between 1862 and 1869 (see Appendix 2). On occasions the board displayed compassion for those whose situation was extremely desperate but shared the prevailing attitude that the poor brought their misfortunes on themselves through dissolute habits and a failure to provide for the future. The Colonial Architect was asked to provide some form of shelter for male and female paupers waiting at the asylum door on board days: "in several instances, the old infirm applicants have become quite paralised [sic] by the cold and exposure".

At Hyde Park Asylum, upon admission, the matron insisted all women took a bath before "going into one of my beds"; their clothing was immediately soaked, then washed (or burnt if the new arrival had the "itch" or other infectious skin diseases). Each inmate received a complete change of new clothing. This comprised a dress, shawl, apron, flannel petticoat, chemise, night cap, a pair of woollen stockings, a pair of boots and slippers. In 1873 the matron changed the dresses from plaid to plain brown wincey (brushed cotton), a decision she quickly regretted because of its poor appearance. The women were expected to wear the asylum "uniform" but were not prevented from wearing their own clothing - some

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69 Commission of Inquiry into Public Charities, *NSWLAVP*, 1873-74, vol 6, Minutes of Evidence, Christopher Rolleston, response to Q1232.
71 Government Asylums Board to Principal Under Secretary, 28 June 1862, letter 62/3234, Colonial Architect, Hyde Park Asylum, SRNSW 2/642A.
72 Commission of Inquiry into Public Charities, *NSWLAVP*, 1873-74, vol 6, Minutes of Evidence, Lucy Applewhaite Hicks, response to Q2373-4.
73 *Regulations*, p 3.
74 Secretary, Government Asylums Board to Colonial Secretary, 12 June 1867, *NSWLAVP*, 1867-68, vol 4, pp 107-8; Commission of Inquiry into Public Charities, *NSWLAVP*, 1873-74, vol 6, Minutes of Evidence, Lucy Applewhaite Hicks, response to Q2281.
75 ibid., response to Q2360-1.
were said to be "too proud" to don institutional apparel; others, when in mourning wore black dresses.\textsuperscript{76} When inmates were discharged or left of their own accord they were permitted to retain the clothing; if they absconded in asylum apparel they could be prosecuted for theft.\textsuperscript{77} Used dresses were turned into "second" petticoats for additional warmth in winter.\textsuperscript{78} On Saturdays the women washed their clothes and took their weekly bath. They washed every morning and hair was combed for head lice twice a week.

Three women were granted leave every day but each was only permitted this liberty once a month, unless in exceptional circumstances such as the death of a relative, when they were given a special leave of absence.\textsuperscript{79} If women failed to return from leave by the specified hour, they were expelled and had to apply to the board in the hope of readmission. They were also expelled for insolence, insubordination or intolerable behaviour or if they returned from leave drunk.

For the duration of the asylum the only employed servant was the head laundress who was paid twelve shillings a week. The inmates performed nursing duties, did all the cooking, tidying, cleaning and scrubbing, worked in the laundry and made and mended all the clothing, bed ticks and sheets. Heads of messes received gratuities in kind; others received cash for their duties at a daily rate: the head wardswoman and head cook received one shilling, the two head hospital nurses, sixpence, and their assistants in the dormitories, hospital wards, kitchen and laundry were paid amounts ranging from threepence to sixpence; the caretaker of needlework received twopence and the asylum messenger fourpence.\textsuperscript{80}

\textsuperscript{76} ibid., response to Q2359; Report of the Government Asylums Inquiry Board, \textit{NSWLAVP}, 1887 (2), vol 2, Minutes of Evidence, Elizabeth Carroll, response to Q618.
\textsuperscript{77} \textit{Regulations}, p 4.
\textsuperscript{78} Secretary, Government Asylums Board, 12 June 1867, \textit{NSWLAVP}, 1867-68, vol 4, pp 107-8.
\textsuperscript{79} ibid., Minutes of Evidence, Lucy Applewhaite Hicks, response to Q2290.
\textsuperscript{80} Commission of Inquiry into Public Charities, \textit{NSWLAVP}, 1873-74, vol 6, Lucy Applewhaite Hicks to Secretary, Public Charities Commission, 12 July 1873.
Their diet was monotonous: for breakfast and tea it was dry bread (each inmate had one half-loaf of bread per day) and black tea, only women in the asylum's hospital wards were permitted milk. Inmates could help themselves to dripping from the kitchen to spread on the bread; those who were paid for their duties purchased "luxuries" such as butter and sugar. Dinner was served at 1pm and comprised watery vegetable soup, boiled beef or mutton and a pint of tea. Tickets for the meat were issued to the heads of messes who, on presenting them, the cook would say "Oh, you got mutton yesterday, you get beef today". The head of the mess carved the joint at the table.\(^1\)

The occasional feast provided a welcome variety to the women's diet. To celebrate the marriage of the Prince of Wales in 1863, the Sydney press reported:

> The inmates of Hyde Park Asylum were regaled with an excellent dinner, that was washed down with a liberal allowance of good ale. In the afternoon, the health and prosperity of the youthful couple were sincerely given by the aged inmates, and after that they were amused with music and dancing, the very excellent matron supplying the music from her piano and leading off the dance.\(^2\)

Dr George Walker, previously visiting surgeon at the Benevolent Asylum, was appointed medical officer in March 1862.\(^3\) His duties involved attendance at the asylum for an hour every morning, being on call day and night for emergencies and submitting a written report to the board weekly. Few of Walker's weekly reports - and none of his successors' - have survived. The extant reports are mainly those in which Walker requested action by the Colonial Architect and are held in the latter's records. Regrettably they only date to 1866 for the majority of the Department of Public Works' records from 1867 have been destroyed. Consequently the surviving reports deal more with the physical fabric of the

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\(^1\) ibid., response to Q2347, Q2327-8.
\(^2\) *Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 June 1863.
\(^3\) *Blue Book*, 1862, p 25.
asylum than its inmates. Nevertheless they provide some of the best descriptions of
the existing conditions. In May 1862 Walker reported there were currently 141
inmates of whom 29 were bedridden and under medical treatment:

I am happy to report that since the inmates of the Benevolent Asylum were
transferred to your Institution there has been a most satisfactory
improvement in their general health. This result I attribute to the salubrity
of the situation, the general cleanliness of the establishment and the more
ample allowance of vegetable diet. The general demeanor of the inmates is
more respectful since they have become accustomed to habits of regularity
and discipline.

The cases of sickness are with few exceptions of that class incidental to
infirmitry and old age, such as rheumatism, paralysis, and the use of
fermented liquors at an early period of life. Most of these persons are
incurable, and my attention is therefore principally directed to the palliation
of suffering. The few examples of skin disease which have come under my
notice are without exception traceable to syphilis & are rapidly
disappearing. 84

Walker added that since his appointment there had been only one death - that of
Eliza Brown, aged sixty-five, from cancer of the stomach. Eliza Brown was one of
two convicts by that name transported on Numa in 1834, both were in their mid-
thirties and Protestant. 85 In the first of her many admissions to the Benevolent
Asylum from 1853, the records noted she had arrived from Maitland, drunk and
suffering from venereal disease caught from her de facto with whom she had lived
for the past ten years. Eliza was among the group of women sent to Hyde Park
Asylum on 1 March 1862. 86

84 George Walker to Government Asylums Board, 12 May 1862, with letter 62/2430, CSIL,
SRNSW 4/3469.
85 Convict indents, SRNSW 4/4018.
86 BSNWS, Inmates Journals, ML A7227-31, Admissions and Discharges Index ML *D562,
Admissions and Discharges Register ML *D575.
On 24 November, Walker regretted to report that "several of the more infirm inmates exhibit symptoms of speedy dissolution, attributed to intense heat". But of more concern to him were the serious consequences of the Volunteers' enthusiastic band rehearsals day and night. He urged the board to find a remedy for "the Volunteer disturbance under our windows, if these sick outcasts are to be cured it is imperative that they should have some fair play and not be drummed into their coffins". On 8 December the Brigade Adjutant advised that the nightly drumming would cease.

In June the board had requested the Colonial Architect to partition off part of a dormitory to segregate infectious cases or lunatics whose transfer to a lunatic asylum was often delayed for several weeks awaiting the requisite paperwork. In the first year at least ten women were certified insane and transferred. The rigidly observed protocol involved an examination by two qualified doctors in the presence of each other; their reports, a statement by the master or matron that the woman was unable to pay for her maintenance and a declaration of guardianship by the board's chairman, accompanied his petition to the governor for a warrant for admission to a lunatic asylum. The warrant was then issued by an officer of the Supreme Court.

Catherine Savage, an elderly blind widow and conwoman, was one of the inmates transferred from Hyde Park to Tarban Creek Lunatic Asylum in 1862. On 28 April, dictating to a friend, she had written to the governor, Sir John Young commending him for the "great charity that you done by removing them poor

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87 George Walker to Government Asylums Board, 24 November 1862 with Board to Principal Under Secretary, letter 62/5972, CSIL, SRNSW 4/3483.
88 ibid., annotation on 62/5972 by Brigade Adjutant, Volunteer Brigade Office, 8 December 1862.
89 Secretary, Government Asylums Board to Colonial Architect, 20 June 1862, Colonial Architect, Hyde Park Asylum, SRNSW 2/642A.
90 Initially George Walker the medical officer and Dr Peter Smithwick who was connected to the Immigration Agent's department signed a joint statement. The Colonial Secretary, Charles Cowper, changed the procedure insisting on two independent doctors and separate reports.
91 For example, papers relating to Maria Wormleighton at letter 62/3258, CSIL, SRNSW 4/3472.
creatures from the Benevolent Asylum to Hyde Park". She thanked him for the gift of two sovereigns, wished the vice-regal family "eternal happiness" and suggested that Lady Young may care to send her some "old things". Referring to her time in the Benevolent Asylum, she accused the medical officer Dr Smith of showing preference to "Scotch people" and of selling the women's clothes and spending the proceeds on drink. Smith, who by then was medical officer at Liverpool Asylum, was asked by the board to respond to Mrs Savage's accusations.

The doctor denied the widow's claims but was not surprised: "Mrs Savage is one of the worst of women & well known to the B Division of Police". He suggested that the board ask George Allen of the Benevolent Society or Hyde Park Asylum inmates about her or perhaps the board may have already heard of Mrs Savage - "being one of old Sam Lyons' women". Perceptively he warned them: "When her attempts at imposition fail you will very soon have an application from her for admission to Hyde Park Asylum".

Smith was not to know that since the end of April when Catherine Savage had complained to the governor, she had already been in and out of Hyde Park Asylum; on her second admission the medical officer George Walker certified her on 9 June 1862 as "very insane, very violent and dangerous". Savage was sent to Tarban Creek Lunatic Asylum on 16 July 1862 and later moved to the asylum at Parramatta where she died from epilepsy on 19 June 1879.

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92 Catherine Savage to Governor Sir John Young, 28 April 1862, letter 62/2240, CSIL, SRNSW 4/3471.
93 This could suggest an alternative interpretation of a newspaper reference to Lyons as a "foster father" which heretofore has been associated with his charitable activities.
94 J Smith to Government Asylums Board, 2 June 1862, with Board to Principal Under Secretary, 9 June 1862, letter 62/2891, SRNSW, CSIL 4/3471.
96 Parramatta Lunatic Asylum to Colonial Secretary, 20 June 1879, letter 79/4749, CSIL, SRNSW 1/2445.
Eighteen-year-old immigrant, Ann Sheldrick was another inmate sent to Tarban Creek in July 1862. Born in Hackney, London, she had arrived in the colony in 1858 with her parents and two brothers.\textsuperscript{97} She was admitted to the Benevolent Asylum on 3 March 1862, described as "idiotic and subject to fits" and was among the last group of women transferred to Hyde Park Asylum on 13 March.\textsuperscript{98} She was probably the Ann Sheldrake who died in 1866 aged 23 at Parramatta.\textsuperscript{99}

Ann Welsh who was in her sixties, was sent to Tarban Creek at the same time as Catherine Savage. She was a danger only to herself; she had senile dementia and required constant supervision to thwart her attempts to jump out of the top floor windows.\textsuperscript{100} Like the many inmates transferred to an insane asylum, her fate would be recorded in the comprehensive mental asylum records that are restricted.

The various symptoms or evidence of insanity described in the medical reports of 1862 are typical of those located in the Colonial Secretary’s correspondence throughout the 1860s and 1870s. The women were abusive or inclined to obscenities, undressed and destroyed their clothing, smeared faeces on themselves, their beds or walls. They were prone to wandering at night and removing the bedclothes of other inmates. Some were also violent and attacked other inmates or inflicted injuries on themselves. Many suffered imaginary grievances such as the matron or doctor were conspiring to poison them or had stolen their children.

Others had visions of their husbands or children or believed they were being pursued by people intending to harm them. Those with senile dementia were unaware of their surroundings and could not recall their names or other personal information. Most crooned throughout the night. In 1873, the matron had only a "small room to put them in, and that one woman will perhaps keep 100 poor souls awake night after night".\textsuperscript{101}

\textsuperscript{97} Immigration Board, Persons on Bounty Ships, Stebonheath, SRNSW 4/4977.
\textsuperscript{98} BNSW, Inmates Journal, ML A7232; Admissions and Discharges Register, ML *D575.
\textsuperscript{99} Indexes to Deaths, Ann Sheldrake 1866/5995, died Parramatta aged 23. The place of death suggests that she was in Parramatta Lunatic Asylum.
\textsuperscript{100} Papers with 62/2970, CSIL, SRNSW 4/3471.
\textsuperscript{101} Commission of Inquiry into Public Charities, NSWLAVP, 1873-74, vol 6, Minutes of Evidence, Lucy Applewhaite Hicks, response to Q2372.
Joseph Goodall in his dissertation on Queensland’s Dunwich Benevolent Asylum,\textsuperscript{102} drew on the work of the renowned American sociologist Erving Goffman, a contemporary of Michel Foucault. An asylum for the aged and indigent is one of the many places of confinement termed "total institutions" by Goffman who maintained that institutionalisation often led to insanity by the dispossession of self.\textsuperscript{103} The process began with the admission procedures: recording personal particulars, removal of possessions to storage, undressing and bathing and the issue of clearly marked institutional clothing.\textsuperscript{104} Whereas individuals "outside" were likely to work, play and sleep in different places and choose their own company, in the "total institution" all three activities took place under the one roof, with the same people and "under the same single authority" and usually at a pre-arranged time.\textsuperscript{105} Such regimentation removed the sense of self and gradually built up a barrier between the inmate and the wider world.

Hannah Dodd had probably fallen a victim of the "total institution", moving between Hyde Park Asylum and Tarban Creek Lunatic Asylum over the years. Transported from Ireland as Johanna Quinn/Quaine on the \textit{Hooghly} in 1831, she married James Dodd in Maitland in 1835. She was sent from Newcastle to the Benevolent Asylum in 1857 and admitted "very far from sober" with a bad leg. Hannah was in and out of the asylum, including a brief period in a lunatic asylum in 1858; she was among the first inmates transferred to Hyde Park Asylum on 15 February 1862.\textsuperscript{106} In July, when she had to be restrained, the Government Asylums Board requested her urgent transfer to Tarban Creek.\textsuperscript{107} Her whereabouts for the next decade is not known, but she was back in Hyde Park Asylum by June 1871, when her transfer to a lunatic asylum was again requested.

\textsuperscript{104} ibid., pp 25-6.
\textsuperscript{105} ibid., p 17.
\textsuperscript{106} Convict Indents 1831, Convict Marriage Banns, SRNSW 4/2224.1; BSNSW, Inmates Journals, ML A7229-30, Admissions and Discharges Registers, ML *D574-5.
\textsuperscript{107} Government Asylums Board to Principal Under Secretary, 21 July 1862, letter 62/3633, CSIL, SRNSW 4/3479.
She was returned from Gladesville Asylum in December 1871 and by February 1872 the Government Asylums Board when yet again seeking her admission to a lunatic asylum, noted that she had been repeatedly sent to Tarban Creek. This time she was not a danger to herself but habitually walked through the wards "perfectly nude, disturbing the sleep of others". She may have been the Hannah Dodds who died in Sydney in 1880. For women such as Hannah, the "total institution" experience probably began with transportation.

Once the barracks had more permanent occupants additional works were required particularly to the existing kitchen, laundry and bathing facilities which to date had shared a shed at the rear of building. A new laundry was established in the northeastern pavilion and clothes lines were moved to the northern side of yard. The board’s urgent requests included a "proper Warm Bath" in the bathroom with hot water piped from the kettle in the kitchen, a large kettle to be built into the fireplace in the eastern dormitory and ten tables, fifty forms and shelves for plates for the dining room, and an oven "to bake for 200" in the kitchen.

The window on the middle floor landing was repaired or altered to enable it to open to improve ventilation and a handrail was erected up the staircase wall. "Washing places" on the first floor landing were also requested. The Colonial Architect duly installed a single lead pipe with twenty-four taps which subsequently alarmed the medical officer who proclaimed the dangers of lead piping and demanded its removal. This was refused on the grounds of expense and

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108 Government Asylums Board to Principal Under Secretary, 24 June 1871, letter 71/4479, 22 February 1872, letter 72/1416, with letter 72/3785, CSIL, SRNSW 1/2171.
109 NSW Index to Deaths, 1880/1428.
110 Government Asylums Board to Principal Under Secretary, 5 March 1862, letter 62/1142, CSIL, SRNSW 4/3466.
111 J Applewhaite to Colonial Architect, 10 May 1862, Colonial Architect, Hyde Park Asylum, SRNSW 2/642A.
112 ibid., Government Asylums Board to Colonial Architect, 1 and 25 April 1862.
113 ibid., J Applewhaite to Colonial Architect, 10 May 1862.
114 ibid., Secretary, Government Asylums Board to Colonial Architect, 4 September 1862.
115 ibid., Secretary, Government Asylums Board to Colonial Architect, 9 September 1862.
116 ibid., Government Asylums Board to Colonial Architect, 1 April 1862.
it was suggested the women should avoid drinking from the taps.\textsuperscript{117} Construction of a dispensary attached to the rear of the building was completed in April.\textsuperscript{118} There was much dissatisfaction with the "disgraceful work" and the small timber building was constantly saturated by water running off the roof of the main building resulting in considerable internal damage.\textsuperscript{119}

In January 1863 Walker reported that while the general health of the majority of inmates was good, there had been frequent occurrences of "simple continued fever" and that of the four cases in the past week, one - that of Catherine MacNally [sic] - had assumed the characteristics of typhus. He noted that most of the cases of fever had occurred amongst inmates who had been in the asylum for some time.\textsuperscript{120} Catherine McAnally, an immigrant widow who arrived on the Stamboul in 1854 and admitted to the Benevolent Asylum in July 1861 was in the first intake to Hyde Park Asylum on 15 February 1862.\textsuperscript{121} Walker attributed the cause to the prevailing hot weather and "the abominable night bucket. The exhalations from this sickening spectacle are a good source of suffering and disease."\textsuperscript{122} He recommended the "entire expulsion of the night stools - night buckets and slop pans from all the wards - hospital included" and the erection of "one or more conveniently placed water closets within the building for night purposes and the substitution of bedpans in the sick wards."\textsuperscript{123} He also urged the board to "devise some means of punishing" those inmates who were not incapacitated but "who from actual laziness or the baser motive of giving trouble - are in the habit of soiling their beds".\textsuperscript{124}

\textsuperscript{117} ibid., Clerk of Works to Colonial Architect, 29 September 1862.
\textsuperscript{118} Government Asylums Board to Principal Under Secretary, 14 April 1862, CSIL, SRNSW 4/3468.
\textsuperscript{119} Government Asylums Board to Principal Under Secretary, 12 July 1864, letter 64/3881 in Colonial Architect, Hyde Park Asylum, SRNSW 2/642A.
\textsuperscript{120} ibid., copy of George Walker to Government Asylums Board, 12 January 1863.
\textsuperscript{121} Shipping records for Stamboul, SRNSW 4/4942; BSNSW, Admissions and Discharges Index, ML *D575, Inmates Journal, ML A7232.
\textsuperscript{122} George Walker to Government Asylums Board, 12 January 1863, copy in Colonial Architect, Hyde Park Asylum, SRNSW 2/642A.
\textsuperscript{123} ibid.
\textsuperscript{124} ibid.
The Colonial Architect responded to the board’s request for internal water closets with an elaborate scheme of wide full height verandahs encircling the front and two sides of the building with external weatherboard water closets on each side of the two upper floors, at a rough estimate of £2000. The board, astonished that a simple request for water closets should prompt such extravagance indignantly rejected the proposal. Frustrated by the impasse Walker continued to draw the board’s attention to the filthy state of the outdoor earth closets "all fermenting and concocting noisome smells and gases" - the asylum’s and those of the district court and coroner that were shared by the public on court days. Adding to the unsanitary conditions were the cartload of bones outside the kitchen and the adjacent full ash-pit that he insisted the manager should remove regularly.

Again, in February 1864, Walker reported to the board that some inmates were exhibiting symptoms of "Purpurea Hoemorrhageia ... a disease closely allied to Scurvy". Satisfied it was not the inmates’ diet and that ventilation of the wards was "excellent", he attributed the presence of the disease to the continuing use of night pails and their removal down the central stairs: "That the Air of the building is heavy & unwholesome none can deny. The Gentlemen engaged in the Emigration Department and in your office, and the numerous visitors who attend in the hiring room complain loudly of the stench and nausea. And the atmospheric poison is now beginning to leave its inimitable purple brands upon the bed ridden inmates" - inmate Mary Tracy who had died that day from diarrhoea was severely afflicted with purpurea.

In July 1864 the board approved a proposal to erect verandahs at the rear of the building with water closets on the middle and top floors and stairs to the ground that would obviate the necessity to carry night pails from hospital.

125 ibid., estimate attached; Colonial Architect, SRNSW Plan 1067.
126 Government Asylums Board to Principal Under Secretary, 31 March 1863, Colonial Architect, Hyde Park Asylum, SRNSW 2/642A.
127 ibid., copy of George Walker to Government Asylums Board, 6 August 1863.
128 ibid., George Walker to Government Asylums Board, 6 February 1864.
129 SRNSW Plan 1845; Government Asylums Board to Under Secretary, Public Works, 29 July 1864, Colonial Architect, Hyde Park Asylum, SRNSW 2/642A.
wards down the internal stairs. Eaves guttering and down-spouting were to be fitted to the roof to reduce runoff and prevent continuing water damage to the dispensary below.\textsuperscript{130} To overcome the problems of surface water which stagnated in pools, the inadequate stone watercourses and "unbearable" smelly drains - all sources of continuous complaints from the Immigration Agent and the asylums board - a large drain was to be constructed to connect with one running through the Colonial Architect's premises behind the compound.\textsuperscript{131} Such improvements to sanitation were essential for the health of inmates and immigrants and the importance of their segregation became more obvious in 1865 when children in the depot off two immigrant ships were still suffering the effects of measles and whooping cough contracted on the voyage.\textsuperscript{132}

Assisted immigration had resumed in 1863; that year sixteen ships arrived and twelve the following year.\textsuperscript{133} On two occasions in both 1863 and 1864 two shiploads of immigrants arrived within days of each other which meant in these periods there were more than 300 immigrants and at least 160 asylum inmates in the building.\textsuperscript{134} Reporting the simultaneous arrival of two ships in September 1864, the Immigration Agent complained that there was insufficient dining space which "obliged the greater portion of the girls, as on many previous occasions, to take their meals in the yard, exposed to the heat of the sun". A new skillion-roofed shed was attached to the wall that divided the district court and depot yard.\textsuperscript{135} The fluctuations in immigrant arrivals caused temporary accommodation crises and led to territorial disputes between the Government Asylums Board and the Immigration Agent.

\textsuperscript{130} ibid; W Harmer, with the lowest tender of £437 10s was awarded the contract for the works, August 1864.
\textsuperscript{131} ibid., Government Asylums Board to Under Secretary, Public Works, 29 July 1864.
\textsuperscript{132} Immigration Agent to Colonial Architect, 3 March 1865, Colonial Architect, Government Immigration Barracks, SRNSW 2/642B.
\textsuperscript{134} George Walker to Government Asylums Board, 6 August 1863, copy in Colonial Architect, Hyde Park Asylum, SRNSW 2/642A.
\textsuperscript{135} ibid., Immigration Agent to Under Secretary, Lands Department, 28 September 1864.
In 1865 when the pressure for admission was far beyond the means at the board’s disposal, the decision was taken, to fit out part of the former convict quarters at Port Macquarie to accommodate inmates drafted from the three asylums. On 13 August 1866 the first inmates destined for Port Macquarie comprising twenty-seven women from Hyde Park Asylum and nineteen men from Liverpool left Sydney on the Grafton steamer. By October there was a total of forty-three women who were "apparently comfortable and contented" and showed "no general desire to return to Sydney". The surgeon reported an improvement in their general health but there had been five deaths.

When Frederic King, the board’s secretary inspected Port Macquarie in May 1867 there were forty-seven women there and he had issued instructions for part of the large dining hall to be partitioned off for a dormitory to accommodate a further nineteen. With the asylum’s proximity to the sea, the easterly winds were "keen and piercing" and he agreed to the matron’s request to supply each woman with an extra petticoat. The matron also asked for knitting cotton and needles for the blind women.

Elizabeth Mills, one of the first inmates of Hyde Park Asylum, was sent to Port Macquarie. Born in the colony in 1836, she and her Irish immigrant mother, Flora Brown aged 43, of Maitland, were admitted to the Benevolent Asylum on 20 November 1861 where Flora died a week later. Young Elizabeth who was paralysed, remained in the Benevolent Asylum until transferred to Hyde Park Asylum on 15 February 1862. She died at Port Macquarie in 1866 aged 29. Ellen Wright and Rose Collins, in their sixties and former convicts, who

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137 ibid.
138 Government Asylums Board to Colonial Secretary, 14 August 1866, letter 66/4082, CSIL, SRNSW 4/573.
139 Sheriff to Principal Under Secretary, 24 October 1866, report of visit to Port Macquarie, NSWLAVP, 1866, vol 4, p 43.
140 Secretary, Government Asylums Board, Report of visit to Port Macquarie Asylum, 12 June 1867, NSWLAVP, 1867-68, vol 4, pp 107-8.
141 BNSW, Inmates Journal, ML A7232, Admissions and Discharges Register, ML *D575.
142 NSW Registry of Births Deaths and Marriages, 1866/6272.
were in the initial intake at Hyde Park Asylum in February 1862, died at Port Macquarie: Wright in 1868,\textsuperscript{143} Collins in 1869.\textsuperscript{144}

Lucy Applewhaite, the matron of Hyde Park Asylum had opposed the decision: "There never was a more cruel thing than moving the institution to Port Macquarie" and she claimed the women "would rather starve in the streets of Sydney".\textsuperscript{145} Christopher Rolleston, the board's chairman confirmed that many of the men and women had the "greatest horror" of being sent there and "shut out of the world". Hyde Park women who had refused to go were expelled by the board. Rolleston had been astonished to find that some Port Macquarie inmates had managed to find their way overland to Sydney where they applied for readmission\textsuperscript{146} although it is not clear if any who did were women.

At Hyde Park Asylum in 1865 there were the usual complaints from the medical officer and the Immigration Agent about the privies in the yard. The coroner found his own solution; when the stench became unbearable, he adjourned the court to Riley's Hotel.\textsuperscript{147} The major work that year was a new bathroom erected on the northern side of the yard. It contained three 6 foot baths served with hot water by a copper specially installed in the adjoining laundry.\textsuperscript{148} At the request of the master of the asylum the interior was whitewashed and painted.\textsuperscript{149} There was a high turnover of inmates, but while the drunks and dissolute came and went (and often came again) there was obviously a small core who took some pride in their surroundings. In 1865 the board asked the Colonial Architect to pave the

\textsuperscript{143} BSNSW, Inmates Journal, ML A7232, Admissions and Discharges Register, ML *D575; NSW Registry of Births Deaths and Marriages, 1868/6204.
\textsuperscript{144} BSNSW, Inmates Journals, ML A7191, A7230, Admissions and Discharges Register, ML *D575; NSW Registry of Births Deaths and Marriages, 1869/5706.
\textsuperscript{145} Commission of Inquiry into Public Charities, NSW/LVP, 1873-74, vol 6, Minutes of Evidence, Lucy Applewhaite Hicks, response to Q2379, Q2391.
\textsuperscript{146} ibid., Christopher Rolleston, response to Q1362, Q1364, Q1344.
\textsuperscript{147} Sydney Morning Herald, 17 March 1865; Colonial Architect, City Coroners Office, SRNSW 2/640A.
\textsuperscript{148} Government Asylums Board to Under Secretary, Public Works, 16 September 1865; Crown Solicitor to Under Secretary, Public Works, 6 December 1865, John Guile tender £72, Colonial Architect, Hyde Park Asylum, SRNSW 2/642A; Proposed Bath Room for Hyde Park Asylum, SRNSW AO Plan 1846.
\textsuperscript{149} Government Asylums Board to Colonial Architect, 30 October 1865, SRNSW 2/642A.
shed in which the women sat during the day as their continuous sweeping of the gravel floor had created dangerous potholes.\textsuperscript{150} The Colonial Architect was also requested to supply a load of "soft sand stone" for scrubbing floors - the women were very proud of their white "snowy boards".\textsuperscript{151}

On the recommendation of the medical officer, two half register stoves were installed in the fireplaces of the two hospital wards and the original Greenway timber lintels were removed and replaced by brick arches.\textsuperscript{152} The hospital wards occupied the two top floor rooms overlooking Macquarie Street. There was an urgent request to seal the ceilings of the master and matron's apartments directly below to prevent the occasional "inconvenience arising from the leakage" of the incontinent women above.\textsuperscript{153} A new kitchen range was installed in the matron's apartment in 1866. The existing one had fallen to pieces, having been in constant use since 1848 and shared by the matron, the sub-matron, the ships' matrons (who lived in the depot while awaiting a return passage) and also by immigrants when their number was small.\textsuperscript{154}

There was also the threat of fire from within and without. In 1865 the women had a front-row seat to view the conflagration that destroyed St Mary's Cathedral which no doubt alarmed inmates and officials alike given its proximity and the asylum's timber-shingled roof. Within the asylum the threat derived from the older women who ignored the board's regulations that restricted smoking to designated locations. They smoked their pipes in bed "after the hours of Midnight", lighting them from the candles left burning in the wards. The matron's concern led to the

\textsuperscript{150} Secretary, Asylum to Colonial Architect, 3 October 1865, Colonial Architect, Hyde Park Asylum, SRNSW 2/642A.

\textsuperscript{151} ibid., Government Asylums Board to Colonial Architect, 20 June 1865; Sydney Morning Herald, 3 March 1886.

\textsuperscript{152} ibid., Government Asylums Board to Colonial Architect, 17 May 1865.

\textsuperscript{153} Immigration Agent to Colonial Architect, 3 March 1865, Colonial Architect, Immigration Barracks, SRNSW 2/642B.

\textsuperscript{154} Immigration Agent to Principal Under Secretary, 31 May 1866, Immigration Agent, letters to Public Officers, SRNSW 4/4658, pp 655-7.
installation in 1866 of gas lighting with padlocks fitted to each lantern.\textsuperscript{155}

Rats had become a problem. Dr George Walker reported that the dispensary was "so infested by rats that the destruction of drugs and breakage of glass is really very serious". They chewed the corks of medicine bottles, then tipped them over spilling the contents; the room was covered with their excrement. Rain saturated the walls and there was overflow from the water closet on the landing above. The Colonial Architect lined the dispensary with galvanised iron. Now rat-proof and water-tight it was unbearably hot in summer.\textsuperscript{156} A large deal clothes press, 12 feet long and 7 feet high erected against the laundry wall in 1866 had to be lined with galvanised iron to prevent rats nesting in the women's clothes and bed linen.\textsuperscript{157} The Colonial Architect's solution to the inadequate drains and stagnant surface water was to pave the yard in front of the bathroom and laundry with bricks. Finally in 1867 the long awaited block of water closets was erected behind the kitchen in the south-western corner of the compound. There was a separate closet for the matron and also enclosures for coal and ashes.\textsuperscript{158} And in 1869 a new kitchen was built.\textsuperscript{159}

In 1867 the Immigration Agent complained about the "very uncleanly appearance" of the front wall and gates and asked for them to be repaired and painted.\textsuperscript{160} To improve the appearance of the compound he asked for the yard in front of the building to be cleared and gravelled, and the circular grass plot refenced. He lamented that "since the establishment of asylum in the same building ... the grass has been trampled down and the fencing broken, chiefly by a number of men and

\textsuperscript{155} Government Asylums Board to Principal Under Secretary, 24 January 1866 and Gas Company estimate, Colonial Architect, Hyde Park Asylum, SRNSW 2/642A.
\textsuperscript{156} ibid., George Walker to Government Asylums Board, 5 September 1866, Colonial Architect estimate, c.8 September 1866.
\textsuperscript{157} ibid., Government Asylums Board to Colonial Architect, 6 February 1866.
\textsuperscript{159} Colonial Architect, Proposed New Kitchen, Government Asylum, Hyde Park, 1869, SRNSW Plan 1716.
\textsuperscript{160} Immigration Agent to Colonial Architect, 12 July 1867, Immigration Agent, letters to Public Officers, SRNSW 4/4568 p 881.
women who are assembled in the yard in front of this office twice a week for the purpose of gaining admission”. The plantation - trees and shrubs - had been gradually destroyed by the matron’s goats and poultry.\textsuperscript{151}

Thus for a visitor to the Hyde Park compound in 1867 there was a multitude of sights, sounds and smells. There was the cacophany of the Volunteer Rifles and band parading in their yard, the excited chatter of young female immigrants, infirm pauper applicants at the asylum door on board days or the crowds of prospective employers on hiring day, the general public awaiting hearings at the district court, smoke belching from the asylum’s kitchen and laundry, cooking smells emanating from the kitchen and the cartload of bones outside, rats amok, stagnant surface water, fetid privies, the pervasive odour of night pails indoors, washing flapping on clotheslines, the incessant clucking of the matron’s thirty-five chooks and the pathetic garden plot devoured by her goats.

Assisted immigration was almost negligible in 1868 and the asylum board was granted use of the unoccupied immigrants’ dormitory on the middle floor. At the end of 1869 the Port Macquarie establishment was abandoned and fifty-five women were returned to Hyde Park Asylum. These together with inmates occupying the immigration dormitory would account for the sharp increase in the daily average from 165 in 1869 to 209 in 1870.\textsuperscript{162}

In July 1869 upon the death of the asylum’s master, John Applewhaite, his widow Lucy was given sole charge of the establishment.\textsuperscript{163} She relied heavily on the voluntary assistance of eighteen-year-old daughter Mary, the eldest of their six surviving children, who, in 1875, was appointed sub-matron.\textsuperscript{164} In 1870 Lucy Applewhaite married family friend and journalist William Henry Hicks.

\textsuperscript{151} ibid., pp 892-7, Immigration Agent to Principal Under Secretary, 27 July 1867.
\textsuperscript{163} Government Asylums Board to Principal Under Secretary, 8 June 1869, letter 69/4335, CSIL, SRNSW 4/660; \textit{NSW Government Gazette}, 6 July 1869.
\textsuperscript{164} \textit{Blue Book}, 1875, p 33.
In November 1870 following the removal of the Volunteer Rifle Brigade to Victoria Barracks, the western half of the southern range was handed over to the asylum,\textsuperscript{165} however it remained virtually uninhabitable until February 1874 when the government finally approved expenditure for corrugated iron roofing to waterproof the building.\textsuperscript{166} In the meantime the women had access to the former Volunteers’ yard which greatly increased their recreation space.

Since 1862 there had been a library at the asylum. Fat skimmed off the soup and cartloads of bones from the kitchen were sold and the proceeds used to purchase books and periodicals for the inmates.\textsuperscript{167} After the installation of gaslight, one of the women’s "greatest comforts", particularly for those who could not read, was to have the newspapers read aloud at night.\textsuperscript{168} In 1878 the asylum received a bequest from a former inmate Mrs Rodder (or Rudder) who died in England, to be used for the provision of music for "the old women" and pictures for the hospital wards.\textsuperscript{169}

The annual feasts at Christmas and on Queen Victoria’s birthday gave some relief from the daily regimen and monotonous diet. The celebratory dinner for the monarch, provided by the governor from his personal funds, was held at most of the colony’s charitable institutions and comprised roast beef, potatoes, plum pudding, a glass of ale, a pipe and fig of tobacco.\textsuperscript{170} And in January 1868 the Colonial Secretary provided £50 for a dinner at the board’s three asylums to

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{Government Asylums Board, Annual Report, 1871, \textit{NSWLaVP}, 1872, vol 2, p 405.}
\footnote{Government Asylums Board, Annual Report, 1873, \textit{NSWLaVP}, 1873-74, vol 5, pp 221; Government Asylums Board to Principal Under Secretary, 13 January 1874, letter 74/290 with 74/1301, CSIL, SRNSW 1/2250.}
\footnote{Government Asylums Board to Principal Under Secretary, 5 November 1862, letter 62/5430, with 63/474, CSIL, SRNSW 4/494.}
\footnote{Lucy Hicks to Colonial Secretary, undated [May 1887], CSIL, SRNSW 4/876.1.}
\footnote{Manager, Department of Government Asylums to Principal Under Secretary, 15 May 1878 (letter 78/4258), 30 August 1878 (letter 78/7477), 14 March 1880 (letter 80/2297), CSIL, SRNSW 1/2478.}
\footnote{Government Asylums Board to Principal Under Secretary, 17 June 1874, letter 74/5040, CSIL, SRNSW 1/2262. Annotation indicates the Queen’s birthday dinner was funded by governors since 1862. In 1874 the governor paid £68 13s 1d for dinner for 1179 inmates of the board’s asylums.}
\end{footnotes}
celebrate the visit of the Duke of Edinburgh. A committee founded by Quong Tart, inaugurated feasts for asylum inmates in 1885 and were a "source of great pleasure to the old people, who gratefully appreciated the sympathy which was so practically evidenced".

The journalist husband of the matron, William Hicks, who was a contributor to, and later owner of the *Sydney Punch*, provided copies of the journal for the inmates and was probably responsible in some way for the "grand performance" at Hyde Park Asylum in October 1877 where a large immigration dormitory was "turned into a theatre ... tastefully decorated with flowers and evergreens from the Botanical Gardens":

After a sumptuous tea, about 200 of the old ladies - conspicuous among whom were four Islanders, who throughout appeared highly delighted with the performances, - wended their way to the theatre, and after all were seated, the "Rough Diamond" was given by an amateur company, and very creditably too. Sundry tricks and illusions, including acts of ventriloquism, followed, which created great surprise to the old people. Songs and dances became the order of the evening, and a glass of brandy and water, duly administered to each inmate, sent the party away thoroughly delighted with their treat, showering blessings on the donors thereof.

For such feasts and entertainments the women were issued with new dresses and aprons. Every year the inmates made hundreds of calico petticoats, chemises and night caps. They also produced countless dresses; the matron had obviously abandoned the unsatisfactory brown wincey she used for dresses in 1873 and

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171 Commission for the Public Reception of His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh to Colonial Secretary, 14 January 1868, letter 68/299, CSIL, SRNSW 4/616.
173 *Sydney Punch*, 6 October 1877.
reverted to plaid or check for winter and a mauve floral print cotton for summer.\textsuperscript{175} A quantity of black dresses was also produced, probably for women when in mourning.\textsuperscript{176} The calico, delivered 1000 yards at a time, was also made into sheets. When sheets were worn, the sides were turned to the middle and used again. According to the matron "the old women are celebrated for patching".\textsuperscript{177} Items were mainly hand-sewn until 1878 when a second-hand treadle sewing machine was purchased for £8,\textsuperscript{178} and another was acquired in 1880.\textsuperscript{179}

There were regular visits by the Sisters of Mercy, the clergy, missionaries and the Flower Mission ladies; the latter distributed bunches of flowers tied with white ribbon and a religious text attached.\textsuperscript{180} Stephen Robens, a "City Missionary" and regular visitor since the asylum’s establishment, told an 1873 inquiry, he distributed tracts, read to women in the hospital wards and held a service for other inmates in the downstairs dining room.\textsuperscript{181} Lady visitors brought the women "a little tea and sugar", and spoke kindly to them, although according to Robens "the Protestants get the best privileges, as there are more people to visit them".\textsuperscript{182} The institution's rules were such that religious were only permitted to approach inmates of the same denomination.\textsuperscript{183} He suggested that within the asylum there

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{175} A bodice of mauve floral printed cotton was retrieved during between-floor archaeological investigations. Information from Bridget Berry, assistant curator, Hyde Park Barracks Museum.
\item \textsuperscript{176} Report of the Government Asylums Inquiry Board, NSWLA\textsuperscript{P}, 1887 (2), vol 2, Minutes of Evidence, Mary Ann Kennedy, response to Q2836. Kennedy stated that checked and black dresses had been made at Hyde Park Asylum.
\item \textsuperscript{177} Commission of Inquiry into Public Charities, NSWLA\textsuperscript{P}, 1873-74, vol 6, Minutes of Evidence, Lucy Hicks, response to Q2368.
\item \textsuperscript{178} Manager, Department of Government Asylums to Principal Under Secretary, 17 October 1878, letter 78/8941, CSIL, SRNSW 1/2422.
\item \textsuperscript{179} Manager, Department of Government Asylums to Principal Under Secretary, 28 October 1880, letter 80/8989, CSIL, SRNSW 1/2500.
\item \textsuperscript{180} Beverley Kingston, My Wife, My Daughter and Poor Mary Ann: women and work in Australia, Melbourne, Thomas Nelson, 1977, p 27.
\item \textsuperscript{181} Commission of Inquiry into Public Charities, NSWLA\textsuperscript{P}, 1873-74, vol 6, Minutes of Evidence, Stephen Robins [sic], response to Q2514. His surname was mispelt in the Minutes of Evidence. For an account of Stephen Robens's missionary work, see June Owen, The Heart of the City: the first 125 years of the Sydney City Mission, Kenthurst, Kangaroo Press, 1987.
\item \textsuperscript{182} ibid., response to Q2515.
\item \textsuperscript{183} ibid., response to Q2516.
\end{itemize}
was "a good deal of partiality shown" to Protestants, but declined to elaborate.\textsuperscript{184}

The board was abolished in 1876, Frederic King its secretary was appointed manager of the newly-created Department of Government Asylums for the Infirm and Destitute. From 1873 the annual reports for Hyde Park Asylum included information on the inmates' age at death (see Appendix 3). Some were in their twenties and thirties indicating that the asylum had continued to admit young women however it is likely they were either blind or physically disabled. In 1873 the matron told the commissioners inquiring into public charities, there were currently eight young women in the asylum who were either blind, "idiots" or "complete cripples" who were kept together in a small ward and a wardswoman was assigned to look after them.\textsuperscript{185}

Inmate Alice Clifton was not blind but had poor sight that prevented her employment and was probably the reason she had resorted to prostitution to survive. A former Orphan School girl, she was admitted, aged nineteen and pregnant, to the Benevolent Asylum in 1857 where a son was born in January 1858. She was numerous in and out of the asylum until March 1862 when she was transferred to Hyde Park Asylum.\textsuperscript{186} She was back in Hyde Park Asylum in September 1864 and in an "advanced state of pregnancy" when the Board sought her transfer to the Benevolent Asylum;\textsuperscript{187} a daughter was born in 1865. In 1871 the Benevolent Asylum reluctantly agreed to admit her for another confinement. The Society informed the Colonial Secretary this would be her fourth "illegitimate" confinement at the asylum; all four children were by different fathers. It objected to the pressure imposed on the Society to admit women of such "grossly immoral character".\textsuperscript{188} According to birth and death indexes, Alice

\textsuperscript{184} ibid., response to Q2521-3.
\textsuperscript{185} ibid., Lucy Hicks, response to Q2311, Q2314.
\textsuperscript{186} BSNSW, Inmates Journals, ML A7229-32; Admissions and Discharges Register, ML D575.
\textsuperscript{187} Government Asylums Board to Colonial Secretary, 29 September 1864, letter 64/5317, CSIL, SRNSW 4/531.
\textsuperscript{188} Benevolent Society to Colonial Secretary, 24 February 1871, letter 71/1459, CSIL, SRNSW 1/2138.
appears to have borne at least five children between 1858 and 1874; she may have
been the Alice Clifton who died in Sydney in 1879. To assist blind inmates to earn
a "respectable" living, Catherine Davey, a teacher at the Industrial School for the
Blind, in 1880, offered to take four young blind women into her home for a year
to teach them netting and chair caning which would enable them to find
employment. The Inspector of Public Charities agreed to the proposal providing
Davey found better premises in which to accommodate them. 189

The number of admissions and discharges were also included in annual reports of
the asylum from 1873 (see Appendix 2). The turnover was remarkable, for
example, in 1874: 265 were admitted and 198 discharged; in 1879: 285 admitted,
214 discharged; in 1884: 341 admitted, 245 discharged. These figures indicate that
the asylum provided temporary shelter for many women when illness or injuries
rendered them incapable of working, and there were those who left when they
dried out of their alcoholic stupor. For others it was their last home on earth. And
despite the rats and regimen, for some it was a roof over their heads and three
meals a day. Women were free to leave of their own accord, and some perhaps
decided if they had to work inside they may as well be out working and earning a
living. Obviously it was in the matron's interest to retain a few fit hardworking
women to run messes and do the heavy work.

According to Frederic King, the board's secretary, the turnover could be attributed
"to a great extent" to "paupers whose dissolute habits prevent them from staying
out of the Asylums, but who cannot content themselves while in". 190 Hugh
Robison, the Inspector of Public Charities, found that amongst the inmates of
Hyde Park Asylum were "many women of the most irreproachable character who
once occupied highly respectable positions, and who are now destitute through no
fault of their own" and sympathised "the more sensitive feel it a grievance that

189 Catherine Davey to Principal Under Secretary, 23 August 1880, letter 80/7116, CSIL,
SRNSW 1/2494. The Industrial School for the Blind did not accept women in the
institution until 1896.
190 Government Asylums Board, Annual Report, 1876, NSWALVP, 1876-77, vol 4, p 927.
they are unavoidably forced into constant and close contact with other females, possibly of disreputable antecedents and of coarse habits and speech".\textsuperscript{191}

Robison posited: "Intemperance, self-indulgence and self-neglect, may in large measure be responsible for main streams of pauperism" but given the squalid cottages and shacks which "our lowest classes" were forced to inhabit where they were "poisoned by the foul atmosphere around", he was not surprised they were driven to "seek a temporary relief in stimulants, and thus acquire habits which result in pauperism".\textsuperscript{192} The hovels tucked away in courts and back lanes in the western part of the city between George Street and Darling Harbour, The Rocks and Chippendale had very low ceilings, were often windowless and vermin-infested, with open sewers and shared privies. Many condemned as uninhabitable in 1859 remained in the 1870s to shock Sydney's Sewage and Health Board. Alan Mayne in \textit{Fever, Squalor and Vice} and Shirley Fitzgerald in \textit{Rising Damp}, provide evocative accounts of the conditions in which the poor existed, drawn from reports of the Select Committee on the Condition of the Working Classes of the Metropolis in 1859-60 and those of the Sydney City and Suburban Sewage and Health Board, 1875-77.\textsuperscript{193}

Hyde Park Asylum remained under pressure to admit destitute women from a growing number of country benevolent hospitals that were reluctant to fill their beds with the long-term chronically-ill (as discussed in the following chapter). In 1872 the Parramatta Lunatic Asylum also needed more beds and emptied patients from its non-lunatic ward into Hyde Park Asylum. The majority of these were young with physical and intellectual disabilities. Among these women was Clara Morris, who although not young, had temporarily lost the use of her limbs when she was sent from Sydney Infirmary to Parramatta Lunatic Asylum in 1865. She remained there until her transfer to Hyde Park Asylum in 1872 when she was

\textsuperscript{191} Inspector of Public Charities, Annual Report, 1879, \textit{NSWAVP}, 1879-80, vol 2, p 856.
\textsuperscript{192} Inspector of Public Charities, Annual Report, 1877, \textit{NSWAVP}, 1877-78, vol 2, p 640.
about fifty-five. Officials at Parramatta declared that she was never considered to be insane and attributed her long detention to the "persistent neglect" of her family. Clara could not remember how long it had been since her husband deserted her. She must have been overjoyed in 1874 when her son Frank in Cooktown, Queensland sent for her in September. But her pleasure was short-lived. In November Frank Morris notified the Government Asylums Board that he had put his mother on the steamer for Sydney:

I have sent Clara Burton or so called Mrs Morris back to your establishment simply because it is a matter of impossibility to live with her ... Another reason is ... she has no right to the name of Morris never having been married to my father & I only incur danger of being daily bastardized as in her weak state of mind she has no knowledge of her utterances to visitors in this place, she cannot neither use her feet & her hands but very little & she is nothing but a drag on me ... and had I known the truth she should never have left your Institution which was & is quite good enough a home for her.\(^{195}\)

The board, out of compassion for Clara, readmitted her. Frank Morris's letter tells us much about prevailing social attitudes and as much about him; his handwriting and vocabulary indicate that the mother he scorned had ensured he received a more than adequate education to give him a good start in the world.

The Inspector of Public Charities had repeatedly urged a variation to the asylum's diet which had been drawn up by the medical member of the board in 1862. But the breakfast and supper of dry bread and black tea, and dinner of watery vegetable soup and boiled meat, remained unchanged - except for the occasional roast and the few annual feasts - for the twenty-four-year life of the asylum. In

\(^{194}\) Lunatic Asylum, Parramatta to Principal Under Secretary, 25 June 1874, letter 74/3581, Statement of Clara Morris, 30 July 1874 and other papers with letter 74/7293, CSIL, SRNSW 1/2270.

\(^{195}\) ibid., Frank Morris to Manager, Hyde Park Asylum, 22 November 1874.
1885, Frederic King, the manager, vigorously defended the asylum's meals as "suitable food for old and worn out persons ... it has not been attempted, to supply luxuries to people who, even in the days of their health and independence, were never accustomed to them".\textsuperscript{196}

Surveys of the dietary scales of various asylums in New South Wales and other colonies conducted for various government inquiries reveal that unlike Hyde Park Asylum, authorities elsewhere made some attempts to provide variable and more nutritious meals. At all asylums surveyed, bread and tea were the staple for breakfast and supper. In South Australia the two meals were identical to Hyde Park Asylum. At the Sydney Benevolent Asylum and in New South Wales lunatic asylums, inmates had treacle for their bread at breakfast and at the latter asylums there was also butter, sugar, milk and coffee. Victorian country benevolent asylums also served porridge for breakfast in winter as did the Melbourne Benevolent Asylum where inmates had treacle and dripping for their bread, and sugar, while tea alternated with cocoa and coffee. Queensland destitute asylums served gruel two mornings a week.\textsuperscript{197}

Dinner was served in the middle of the day, and mostly included soup, and always potatoes and other vegetables. The Sydney Benevolent Asylum and destitute institutions in South Australia and country Victoria alternated roast and boiled beef or mutton and the latter served thick pea soup in winter. In Queensland the destitute asylums had more variety: Irish stew, corned beef, boiled or roast meat. The Melbourne Benevolent Asylum provided boiled meat or corned beef; no meat was served on Friday, in deference to Catholic inmates, instead they were given rice pudding. There is no indication that meat was not served on Fridays at Hyde Park Asylum, although fish was provided on that day when the women moved to Newington Asylum. Dinner at the New South Wales lunatic asylums were the


most adventurous with roast mutton or beef or meat pie or Irish stew, and a wide variety of vegetables such as pumpkin, tomatoes, artichokes, onions, leeks, carrots, pickled red cabbage and cauliflower.\textsuperscript{198}

Also in New South Wales lunatic asylums, those patients actively employed were allowed a half-pint of ale, one ounce of cheese and additional bread. At the Melbourne Benevolent Asylum, women who sewed for the institution received a weekly allowance of butter. Inmates engaged in active work received larger servings and, on Sundays, a baked bread and currant pudding. Males undertaking "special work" received an allowance of draught-ale. The medical extras for hospital inmates of the various benevolent asylums were more generous and varied than at Hyde Park Asylum.

Annual reports from 1873 included statistical information on the number of deaths which fluctuated, often markedly (see Appendices 2 and 3). There was a dramatic decrease in 1881 when the women were confined to the asylum during a smallpox epidemic; conversely there was a sharp increase in 1885 (discussed in chapter 5). From 1875 the causes of death were recorded in annual reports: most years bronchitis, senility and phthisis (tuberculosis) were the three major causes of death. The matron commended the women for being "very good to the dying and the dead".\textsuperscript{199} Every corpse was bathed and dressed in a clean chemise and nightcap, for which a stock of worn clothing was kept aside.\textsuperscript{200} Later at Newington Asylum the women inmates escorted the body to the dead-house; at Hyde Park Asylum it is likely they did the same. If unclaimed by relatives, the women were buried in pauper graves at government cost. After 1867 they were interred in the Rookwood Necropolis, in consecrated grounds of the various denominations.\textsuperscript{201}

\textsuperscript{198} ibid.
\textsuperscript{199} Report of the Government Asylums Inquiry Board, \textit{NSW LAVP}, 1887 (2), vol 2, Minutes of Evidence, Lucy Hicks, response to Q98.
\textsuperscript{200} ibid.
\textsuperscript{201} It is difficult to reconcile Pat Jalland's comment that it was commonly assumed that paupers were unlikely to be Christians. Jalland, \textit{Australian Ways of Death: a social and cultural history 1840-1918}, South Melbourne, OUP, 2002, p 199.
In his annual report for 1885 the manager of the government asylums noted the premature death of the sub-matron Mary Applewhaite: "the inmates lost an ever kind and sympathizing friend, and the Public Service has lost a most faithful and efficient officer". The Hyde Park Asylum women contributed to a plaque in her memory placed in St James’s Church opposite the barracks gates.

At the end of February 1886 Hyde Park Asylum became "a thing of the past" when its 306 women inmates moved to a new asylum at Newington on the Parramatta River. In the 1980s archaeologists examining the spaces between ceilings and floors of the upper levels of Hyde Park Barracks, retrieved hundreds of artefacts that had been hidden by the women or spirited away by the rats for their nests. Among them were medicine bottles with Hyde Park Asylum labels, fragments of the textiles used for dresses and aprons. Also found were a bonnet, stockings and a mauve floral print bodice bearing the Hyde Park Asylum’s stamp, the latter had been stitched and restitched by several hands, both expert and amateur. Religious tracts and texts (perhaps some of those distributed by Stephen Robens or the Flower Mission ladies) were also recovered together with jewellery and rosary beads, fragments of letters, clay pipes and fine tooth combs. Thus, almost a century after the women left Hyde Park Asylum, their presence in the building was restored by this rich material culture.

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204 I am indebted to Bridget Berry, assistant curator, Hyde Park Barracks Museum for additional information on the archaeological artefacts.
CHAPTER FOUR

MANAGING DESTITUTION 1862-1876: THE BOARD OF GOVERNMENT ASYLUMS FOR THE INFIRM AND DESTITUTE

The Board of Government Asylums for the Infirm and Destitute was rushed into existence at the instigation of the Colonial Secretary, Charles Cowper, when the government assumed responsibility for the residential care of the colony’s aged and indigent. It was constituted on 3 March 1862 and comprised Christopher Rolleston, the Registrar-General (chairman), Charles Cowper junior, Clerk of Executive Council, Richard O’Connor, Clerk of Legislative Assembly, William A Duncan, Collector of Customs and Haynes G Alleyne, Health Officer and member of the Immigration Board - all salaried civil servants and Cowper supporters.¹

In the political sphere, Charles Cowper and Henry Parkes were the two most influential men in matters pertaining to the development of welfare provisions for the colony’s indigent. Allies, and later enemies, in their political careers the two men were at the opposite ends of the colony’s social spectrum: Cowper was a member of the gentry,² Parkes an assisted immigrant and sometime retailer.³ Both men were often in financial difficulties and in order to remain solvent, desperately needed to be in office, for ministers of the Crown were the only members of parliament to receive a salary. They were Legislative Councillors prior to responsible government, and subsequently, members of the Legislative Assembly where each served six terms of varying length as Colonial Secretary: Cowper between 1856 and 1870 and Parkes between 1866 and 1891.⁴

¹ Colonial Secretary to Christopher Rolleston et al, 3 March 1862, NSWLAVP, 1862, vol 4, p 319.
⁴ Christopher Connolly, Biographical Register of the New South Wales Parliament 1856-1901, Canberra, ANUP, 1983, pp 65, 263.
When the establishment of government asylums for the infirm and destitute was first mooted, the Reverend John Felix Sheridan’s prophesy that there would be "salaries for pets of the Government" was not entirely unwarranted. "Slippery Charlie" Cowper’s patronage was legendary - his machinations are well documented by his biographer Alan Powell and historian John Hirst.\(^5\) For Cowper, official appointments were a means to reward supporters and remove troublesome opponents, while loyalty was sustained "by the prospect of obtaining civil service appointments for sons and nephews and for constituents and their relatives".\(^6\)

Christopher Rolleston, the board’s chairman, had been Governor Denison’s and Cowper’s choice as the first inspector of public charities in 1858, a position that was aborted by the Legislative Assembly. Rolleston had arrived in the colony in 1838 and acquitted himself as Commissioner of Crown Lands for the Darling Downs from 1842-53. He served as private secretary to Governor Denison from January 1855 until the following December when he was appointed Registrar-General. In this role he oversaw the introduction of both civil registration and Torrens Title (the land registration system) and was responsible for compilation of the \textit{Statistical Register}. In 1864 he was appointed Auditor-General.\(^7\)

Frederic King, appointed secretary to the board,\(^8\) was the son of Admiral Phillip Parker King and grandson of the colony’s third governor, Philip Gidley King. The Cowper and King families were related through the Lethbridge family.\(^9\) Unlike his six brothers, Frederic King was not professionally or socially prominent. Prior to his civil service appointment he worked on the family’s pastoral holdings at

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\(^7\) \textit{Australian Dictionary of Biography}, vol 6, pp 55-6.

\(^8\) \textit{Blue Book}, 1862, p 25.

Bungendore\textsuperscript{10} and possibly at Tenterfield. King who had a serious speech defect,\textsuperscript{11} appears to have had little or no previous administrative experience.\textsuperscript{12}

The board administered three asylums from 1862 to 1876: Hyde Park Barracks for women, Liverpool and George Street, Parramatta for men. A fourth asylum established in Macquarie Street, Parramatta in 1875 was initially used as an erysipelas hospital for male and female paupers and later accommodated indigent males.

Cowper and the board moved swiftly. On 15 March 1862 the board assumed control of Liverpool asylum; Cowper had dismissed the Benevolent Society's master Mr Mulholland and appointed Mr and Mrs Burnside master and matron. Work on the Parramatta building was completed and about half of Liverpool's inmates were transferred there. Cowper appointed Mr and Mrs Dennis master and matron and invited Dr Richard Greenup, superintendent of the Parramatta Lunatic Asylum, to join the board.\textsuperscript{13} Cowper had already given Lucy Applewhaite-matron of the Immigration Depot since May 1861 - the additional appointment of matron of Hyde Park Asylum; her husband John Applewhaite, an "extra clerk" in the Immigration Agent's office since July 1861, was appointed master.\textsuperscript{14} Dr George Walker and William Walsh were approved by the board to serve as visiting medical officer and dispenser respectively.\textsuperscript{15} The government asylums for the infirm and destitute were run by a minimal staff of paid officers. At Hyde Park Asylum the master and matron and the head laundress were the only employees.

\textsuperscript{10} Advertiser (Ashfield), 27 July 1895.
\textsuperscript{11} Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Public Charities, NSWLAVP, 1873-74, vol 6, p 63.
\textsuperscript{12} Christopher Pratten has King employed for five months from October 1861 as a temporary clerk in the Department of Lands. C Pratten, "Frederic King of Gidleigh, Ashfield", Ashfield and District Historical Society Journal, April 2003, p 46. The Blue Book, 1861 identifies said clerk as "F. King". The Blue Book, 1862, p 25 records his employment as secretary as his first civil appointment.
\textsuperscript{13} Asylums for the Destitute, NSWLAVP, 1862, vol 4, p 319.
\textsuperscript{14} Blue Book, 1862, p 25.
\textsuperscript{15} ibid.
By April a boardroom was set up in Hyde Park Barracks; Rolleston had drawn up by-laws for the board\textsuperscript{16} and issued regulations for the asylums' internal management.\textsuperscript{17} The by-laws defined the role of the board, the procedures of its twice-weekly meetings, the criteria for admissions, and the duties of the secretary and asylums' staff.

The secretary was to attend board meetings and maintain the accounts and correspondence of the institution.\textsuperscript{18} The surgeon was to visit Hyde Park Asylum every morning, to be on call day and night, to keep a full record of daily visits and medical prescriptions and to submit a weekly report on the asylum's sanitary state.\textsuperscript{19} The dispenser was to attend daily at 11am or such other times as required and to give "timely notice" of his requirements of medicines and medical comforts.\textsuperscript{20} The role and rules pertaining to the master and matron and regulations for inmates are dealt with in chapters 3 and 6.

Persons eligible for admission were to be those whom the board considered physically infirm and truly destitute and without relatives or friends who could take them in and support them. There were to be no admissions except through the twice-weekly board meetings with the exception of cases of extreme urgency. Any person recommending an admission had to know the applicant and certify his or her bodily infirmity and actual destitution.\textsuperscript{21}

From the outset the board assumed financial control and signed the cheques. Rolleston's appointment as Auditor-General in 1864 meant he could not ethically pass accounts that he would be ultimately responsible for auditing. These duties


\textsuperscript{17} New South Wales, Government Asylums Board, \textit{Regulations for the Internal Management of the Government Asylums for the Infirm and Destitute}, Sydney, NSW Government Printer, 1862.

\textsuperscript{18} Government Asylums Board, \textit{By-Laws of the Board}, p 4.

\textsuperscript{19} ibid.

\textsuperscript{20} ibid.

\textsuperscript{21} ibid., p 6.
devolved to Frederic King who was required to sign a £1000 bond and whose salary was increased from £300 to £400.\textsuperscript{22}

In 1863 when the board was concerned about the number of deserving women it had to reject, the Colonial Secretary offered to rent an additional building to accommodate more women. The board’s suggestion that instead it be given the Volunteers’ quarters in the southern range was rejected.\textsuperscript{23} When a suitable house in the city could not be found, the Volunteer Brigade offered to vacate the southern range providing new quarters were erected for them in Sydney Gymnasium.\textsuperscript{24} This did not eventuate. Admissions to Hyde Park Asylum continued to be restricted to prevent overcrowding and the daily average increased slightly from 153 women in 1862 to 161 in 1865.

When the board was appointed the Executive Council agreed it would have absolute power to determine who was admitted.\textsuperscript{25} However the board’s authority was constantly overruled or undermined by the Colonial Secretary or other government agencies working through him. The establishment of the government asylums for the infirm and destitute was instantly regarded by some agencies and institutions as an open invitation to dump society’s outcasts there - the blind, epileptics, the physically and intellectually disabled, the chronically and terminally ill - for whom there were no other facilities. The board maintained its asylums lacked the resources to provide adequate care for such cases. But stringent economic management and the unpaid work of inmates meant the cost per head in the board’s asylums was substantially less than in the Sydney Infirmary, rural benevolent asylums, gaols and lunatic asylums and were thus an attractive economic alternative to government.

\textsuperscript{22} Government Asylums Board to Colonial Secretary, 12 November 1864, letter 64/6094; 6 December 1864, letter 64/6469, CSIL, SRNSW 4/534.
\textsuperscript{23} Government Asylums Board to Colonial Secretary, 16 February 1864, letter 64/965, Colonial Architect, Hyde Park Asylum, SRNSW 2/642A.
\textsuperscript{24} Government Asylums Board to Colonial Secretary, 6 December 1864, SRNSW 2/642A.
\textsuperscript{25} Executive Council, Minute Book, 18 February 1862, SRNSW 4/1541, p 270.
In 1862 the Parramatta Benevolent Society advised that it could no longer support the destitute in Parramatta Hospital; the beds were needed for the sick and the Society had taken the decision to only dispense outdoor relief. It sought admission of the elderly women in its care to Hyde Park Asylum.\textsuperscript{26} The local committees of rural benevolent hospitals also saw the government asylums as a means of emptying beds occupied by long-term aged and infirm patients. In April 1862 Maitland Hospital sent four aged and infirm men to Sydney for admission to the Parramatta or Liverpool asylums. The Colonial Secretary assured the asylums board that as such hospitals received government grants and were endowed with local fines they were bound to maintain their own poor and that he would circularise hospitals to this effect.\textsuperscript{27} The Maitland committee responded that it would be left without beds for acute patients and maintained that in any case, the men would have found their own way to the asylums.\textsuperscript{28}

Again in October 1864 Maitland Hospital applied for the admission of four old men. The asylums board issued orders for two and offered to take the other two when there was room. The hospital threatened that if orders were not issued for all four, they would send them down together with six more. The board relented and sent orders for the four, nevertheless at the end of November the other six were deposited at the gate of Hyde Park Asylum "in a most destitute condition" including sixty-year-old Mary Fitzpatrick, of "sound mind" but without a relative or friend to support her. The board felt they could not be left on the streets and admitted them.\textsuperscript{29} Mary was admitted to Hyde Park Asylum but discharged herself on 2 December. Found by the Water Police wandering along George Street at 1am on 19 December she was locked up for her own protection. Mary rejected the board's offer of readmission.\textsuperscript{30}

\textsuperscript{26} Parramatta Benevolent Society and Committee of District Hospital to Principal Under Secretary, letter 62/3046, CSIL, SRNSW 4/3471.
\textsuperscript{27} Government Asylums Board to Colonial Secretary, 2 April 1862, letter 62/1588 annotated by Cowper, CSIL, SRNSW 4/3468.
\textsuperscript{28} Maitland Hospital Committee to Colonial Secretary, letter 62/3485 CSIL SRNSW 4/3468.
\textsuperscript{29} Government Asylums Board to Principal Under Secretary, 28 November 1864, letter 64/6312, CSIL, SRNSW 4/533.
\textsuperscript{30} Water Police Office to Principal Under Secretary, 19 December 1864, letter 64/6665, CSIL, SRNSW 4/534.
The admission of pauper patients from lunatic asylums was an another ongoing problem. In June 1863 the board complained to the Colonial Secretary that it was "highly inexpedient, in any way, to countenance a system of transfer ... were it for no other reason than the total absence ... of all means of providing for the treatment of such cases, in the not improbable event of relapse".31

In October 1864 the board informed the Colonial Secretary of its "grave reservations" when directed to admit Ellen Toole from Parramatta Lunatic Asylum. Ellen, a servant, had been sentenced in Picton in August 1860 to fourteen days in Parramatta Gaol for vagrancy and transferred in September to Parramatta Lunatic Asylum.32 The board remonstrated that such requests should be accompanied by a medical history indicating the patient’s current physical health, whether there was any tendency to violence or self-destruction and if she had been pronounced sane. However, as Dr Greenup, a board member, had already advised that Ellen, although "not very wise" had no delusions, and "being not dangerous to other inmates" the board admitted her.33

Mary Jones, on the other hand, was inclined to "attacks of maniacal violence and abusive and obscene language" and had been in and out of lunatic asylums and Hyde Park Asylum.34 Remanded in Darlinghurst Gaol in June 1868, Mary was sent to Tarban Creek Lunatic Asylum where, upon examination, she was deemed sane and discharged.35 One year later the board advised the Colonial Secretary that Mary Jones, released yet again from a lunatic asylum, was at large in a "miserable condition". The board considered it would not be safe to admit her to Hyde Park Asylum because "her conduct towards the old women was of so violent

31 Government Asylums Board to Colonial Secretary, 10 June 1863, letter 63/3198, CSIL, SRNSW 4/503.
32 Parramatta Gaol to Colonial Secretary, 6 September 1860, letter 60/3727, with 64/5918, CSIL, SRNSW 4/532.
33 ibid., Government Asylums Board to Principal Under Secretary, 4 October 1864, letter 64/5918.
34 Sheriff to Principal Under Secretary, 1 June 1868, letter 68/2782, CSIL, SRNSW 4/664.
35 ibid.
a character" and stressed the need for a separate institution to cater for such cases.36 The Colonial Secretary directed that as Jones had been pronounced sane, she was to be admitted to Hyde Park Asylum "with a warning".37

The board's control of admissions came under further pressure when the Martin ministry, which took over from Cowper in October 1863, viewed the asylums as an economical alternative to gaols for the growing number of male and female vagrants. Persons brought before the bench and found guilty under the Vagrancy Act were usually sent to gaol. In 1864, William Forster, the Colonial Secretary, granted police magistrates the right to send vagrants direct to the asylums. The board politely - but firmly - objected to the usurping of its powers of admission and advised that magistrates' applications would be dealt with, and favourably considered, at board meetings. This, it advised, did not apply to cases of extreme urgency who were always admitted at irregular times and without personal inspection.38 Forster responded that any orders given by the Police Magistrate or Inspector General of Police "should be seen not merely that they get [an] order but that they are acted upon".39 In November 1864 Forster distributed a circular to magistrates in the colony:

Courts of Petty Sessions often, with perhaps humane intentions, strain the law so as to commit to Gaols as Vagrants, and in fact as Criminals, persons suffering from extreme old age, disease, or general debility. This appears to the Colonial Secretary to be highly objectionable both on social and moral grounds; and it is desirable that this practice, which is calculated also seriously to interfere with prison discipline and accommodation, should be discontinued.40

36 ibid., Government Asylums Board to Principal Under Secretary, 20 July 1869, letter 69/5470.
37 ibid., annotation 23 July 1869.
38 Government Asylums Board to Colonial Secretary, 21 October 1864, letter 64/5701 with 64/6483, CSIL, SRNSW 4/534.
39 ibid., annotation by Forster, 25 October.
40 Colonial Secretary to the Bench of Magistrates, Government Circular 64-5744, 29 November 1864, Admission of Aged and Destitute Persons in Country into Government Asylums, CSIL, SRNSW 4/809.1.
Forster's circular directed that "where no criminality or wilful vagrancy is proved" a sick or infirm person was to be sent to an infirmary or benevolent institution in the district and he was to be notified to this effect "in order that your proceedings may receive the sanction and assistance of the Government". If there were no such local institutions, the persons "if afflicted with illness" were to be sent to Sydney Infirmary, or, "if suffering from old age or other infirmity", to one of the government asylums.\textsuperscript{41}

The board again protested that delegation of the power of admission would negate the "essential caution and discrimination" it exercised to prevent improper admissions. Moreover, if admissions were allowed at irregular hours by the master or matron, paupers would apply after office hours to avoid the scrutiny to which they were subjected on board days - "control and discipline", the board insisted, "would be at an end."\textsuperscript{42} Forster insisted: "The object is to provide against Persons being left to die in the Streets ... it is desirable that there should be some arrangements to facilitate admissions at any time": the police surgeon would provide recommendations on behalf of magistrates and police; similarly the board was to instruct the master or matron to consult the asylums' medical officers,\textsuperscript{43} which for Hyde Park Asylum, was a highly impractical direction, given that the doctor was not in residence.

When Cowper returned to power in February 1865 the board soon apprised him of the consequences: country benches were sending their local paupers to Sydney to be supported at the public's expense and the asylums were becoming dangerously overcrowded. Cowper conceded "The Circular of my Predecessor seems to be working in a way which I can hardly suppose could have been contemplated by him" and promptly countermanded its instructions.\textsuperscript{44}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[41] ibid.
\item[42] Government Asylums Board to Colonial Secretary, 7 December 1864, letter 64/6483, CSIL, SRNSW 4/534.
\item[43] ibid., annotation by William Forster, 10 December 1864.
\item[44] Government Asylums Board to Colonial Secretary, 10 March 1865, letter 65/1040 and Cowper memorandum, 11 March 1865, Admission of Aged and Destitute Persons in Country into Government Asylums, CSIL, SRNSW 4/809.1.
\end{footnotes}
In 1865 Rolleston reported the pressure for admission was far beyond the means at the board’s disposal and, at the beginning of 1866, could only admit half of the deserving applicants. As a temporary solution, the decision had been taken in 1865 to establish an asylum in the former convict quarters at Port Macquarie to accommodate inmates drafted from the three asylums. The opening was delayed by a change of ministry until August 1866 when the first intake of twenty-seven women from Hyde Park Asylum and nineteen men from Liverpool left Sydney on the Grafton steamer.

When blind inmate Honora Everard, a Scottish immigrant in her early thirties, was put out of Hyde Park Asylum in 1866 for impertinence to the matron, she was picked up by the police and taken back. The board refused to readmit her and she was brought before the bench "totally blind and helpless" and sent to Darlinghurst Gaol for protection. Captain Scott of the Police Office informed the Colonial Secretary that unless some shelter was provided, the woman would be "picked up dead in the streets". The board stood its ground: Everard had been previously cautioned and her conduct was "so atrocious", it had sanctioned her expulsion, "there being no other mode of punishment". The board approached the Colonial Secretary, Henry Parkes, on the necessity to institute some means of punishing refractory inmates of asylums. At present it had no means of controlling or punishing offenders except by expulsion, an extreme punishment which the

46 Government Asylums Board to Colonial Secretary, 23 February 1866, letter 66/977, CSIL, SRNSW 4/570.
49 Everard was among the initial intake transferred from the Benevolent Asylum in February 1862. BSNSW, Inmates Journal, ML A7231, Admissions and Discharges Register, ML *D575.
50 Captain Scott, Police Office, Sydney to Principal Under Secretary, 15 May 1866, letter 66/2362, CSIL, SRNSW 4/574.
51 ibid., Scott to Principal Under Secretary, 17 May 1866.
52 ibid., Government Asylums Board to Principal Under Secretary, 18 May 1866, letter 66/2429.
board was "always loath to inflict". Parkes advocated a "reduced diet or confinement for a short time ... These temporary privations of comforts would of course be attended with some humiliation".

Colonial Secretary Cowper in 1865, and his successor Henry Parkes in 1866, were under constant pressure from the sheriff to rid Darlinghurst Gaol, especially its hospital, of vagrants. Both were aware of the high cost of accommodating vagrants often brought before the bench by sympathetic policemen as a means of providing shelter for them in gaol. Cowper suggested the board give preference to vagrants from Darlinghurst Gaol when their sentences expired. The board objected to this attempt to force a criminal element into its asylums in preference to "respectable, but broken down, people, who, on every Board day, they are compelled to turn away". Johanna Hunt was probably one of the vagrants the board objected to receiving from gaol. An alcoholic pauper, she was no stranger to Sydney's gaols and asylums. As Johanna Brown, the seventeen-year-old, was convicted of theft and transported on *Princess Royal* in 1829. After several years of stable employment, her sad downward spiral began with various reassignments from the Female Factory and charges of drunkenness. In 1839 the authorities removed her from evil associations in Sydney to Port Macquarie where, in 1840, she married ticket-of-leave man Jonathan Hunt. By 1843 she was in gaol in Sydney for the first of twenty times until 1849. In the 1850s Johanna moved between gaol and the Benevolent Asylum, with "delirium tremens from alcoholic poisoning". In February 1862 she was transferred to Hyde Park Asylum where this pattern was likely repeated until her death in Darlinghurst Gaol in 1869.

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53 Ibid., Government Asylums Board to Principal Under Secretary, 22 May 1866.
54 Ibid., annotation by Parkes, 18 June.
55 Correspondence between Sheriff, Colonial Secretary and Government Asylums Board, 1865-66, with letter 66/977, CSIL, SRNSW 4/570.
56 Ibid.
58 Ibid., BSNW, Inmates Journals, ML A7229, A7231, Admissions and Discharges Registers, ML *D575*. 
Probably through Parkes's influence, James Martin, in 1866 introduced radical legislation for the control of social deviants: the Workhouse Bill. In the second reading of the bill, reported in the *Sydney Morning Herald* on 16 August 1866, Martin claimed that vagrants who roamed the streets begging should be cared for by the government, in the past year 322 females and 168 males had been convicted of vagrancy of whom only 32 females and 30 males were incapable of work. He wanted these loiterers off the streets, taken into custody, put into a workhouse and compelled to work and there they would remain until reformation of their habits. While many were under the age of twenty-five, the workhouse was primarily intended for older people and would be much cheaper than retaining such people in gaol. Martin proposed the workhouse be established as far as possible from Sydney, suggesting that Port Macquarie gaol, if adapted, was a definite possibility.

Cowper objected to the proposed bill; there seemed no necessity for it as according to the provisions of the Vagrancy Act the governor could authorise the removal of vagrants confined in the nearest gaol to any other place of imprisonment. Cowper also objected to the immense power it would give to justices of the peace who could sentence these vagrants to "perpetual imprisonment". Martin maintained "The terror inspired by this power given to Government would no doubt cause the reform of a great number of these persons. The very knowledge of the existence of so stringent an Act as this would induce them to alter their evil course, and thus an enormous amount of vagrancy would immediately be checked". The Workhouse Act of 1866 was passed in September and provided for the establishment of government institutions to which persons found without lawful means of support, including prostitutes, alcoholics and habitual disorderly persons, could be committed by benches for indefinite periods.

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60 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 16 August 1866.

61 *Workhouse Act of 1866*, 30 Vic. no. 6.
There was also legislation pertaining to the government asylums for infirm and destitute. The Public Institutions Inspection Act of 1866, passed in December provided for the appointment of an Inspector of Public Charities to inspect and report annually to the legislature on the management of all hospitals, infirmaries, orphan schools and charitable institutions wholly or partly funded from public revenue. Robert Cooper Walker, a minor civil servant since 1855, was appointed the first inspector on 17 April 1868 with an annual salary of £500. Parkes had earlier prevented his selection as parliamentary librarian because of his "lack of literary attainments and knowledge of books".

With the appointment of an inspector, the board members tendered a joint resignation on 19 June 1868:

The Board of Management ... accepted their functions ... with the understanding that the arrangement was of a temporary character, and on the condition that so long as it lasted they were to be at liberty to exercise their own discretion in the management.

In consequence of the supervision recently established by law, it is no longer possible, even if it were desirable, for them to exercise those functions on that condition; they feel, therefore, that they ought to resign them, in order to afford the Government the opportunity of making some other arrangement more in harmony with the changes so brought about.

Parkes, still Colonial Secretary, asked the board to continue as it did not appear to him that the inspector could "possibly discharge the duties which you have with such general efficiency and satisfaction to the public", nor did he think the

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52 Public Institutions Inspection Act of 1866, 30 Vic. no 19; Dickey, Charity in New South Wales 1850-1914, 1966, p 161.
54 Secretary, Government Asylums Board to Colonial Secretary, 19 June 1868 forwarding resignation of board, Correspondence, Appointment of Manager, NSWLaVP, 1876-77, vol 4, p 923.
inspector’s duties would conflict with board’s. By 1868 the board was reduced to three - Rolleston, Alleyne and O’Connor; Duncan and Cowper junior had resigned; Greenup had died in 1866 and Edward Wolstenholme Ward, MLC and deputy Master of the Royal Mint, appointed in 1864 left the colony in 1866.

In 1869-70 there were various administrative changes, both external and internal, that affected Hyde Park Asylum, its inmates and the governing board. John Robertson was Colonial Secretary from October 1868 until his resignation in January 1870. His replacement, Charles Cowper, retained the same ministry for much of his tenure which terminated in December 1870 when he resigned to take up the appointment of Agent-General for New South Wales in England. In October 1869 the Robertson ministry repealed the Workhouse Act. A workhouse had not eventuated although the Colonial Architect had prepared plans for the conversion of "the old Invalid Institution" at Parramatta for the purpose.

The master of Hyde Park Asylum, John Applewhaite, died on 27 May 1869. On the board’s recommendation, his widow Lucy, who had performed her role as matron with "skill, energy, and tact", assumed the master’s duties and full charge of the asylum with an increase in salary from £100 to £150. To support its recommendation the board had pointed to the economic benefit of not having to pay a master’s salary, but, ironically, eight months later recommended a further increase for the matron to £200 which would negate any saving. In 1870 Lucy Applewhaite married journalist and family friend, William Henry Hicks.

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65 ibid., Principal Under Secretary to Board, 27 July 1868.
66 Information compiled from the Blue Book published 1864-67. Greenup was fatally stabbed by a Parramatta Lunatic Asylum inmate.
68 Workhouse Repeal Act, 32 Vic. no. 10.
69 Inspector of Public Charities to Principal Under Secretary, 14 April, 1869, letter 69/2825, CSIL, SRNSW 4/693.
70 Government Asylums Board to Principal Under Secretary, 8 June 1869, letter 69/4335, CSIL, SRNSW 4/660; New South Wales Government Gazette, 6 July 1869.
71 Government Asylums Board to Principal Under Secretary, 7 February 1870, letter 70/2274, CSIL, SRNSW 4/690.
The matron’s increase in salary to £200 and that of the asylum’s medical officer, Dr George Walker, from £125 to £150 were largely due to their increased duties at the end of 1869 with the sudden influx of forty-nine women into Hyde Park Asylum when the Port Macquarie establishment was abandoned. The board had always considered the latter as a temporary solution, but did not anticipate the extent of expenditure it would incur: supplies had to be shipped from Sydney which together with the outlay on steamer fares meant the annual cost per inmate at Port Macquarie was £17 2s 3d per inmate compared with £14 4s 11d at Hyde Park and £12 18s 9d at Liverpool.

The board was pleased to report to parliament in 1869 that since being permitted to negotiate its own contracts for supplies, the annual expenditure per pauper had reduced. In 1870 the decrease in expenditure per inmate was attributed "in some measure" to the transfer of salaries of the secretary and medical officers to other votes and not to "undue parsimony".

There were other economies in 1869 when Frederic King, the board’s secretary and his clerks moved back into offices at Hyde Park Asylum. Since 1866 when King’s health was affected by the pernicious smells emanating from drains beneath the boardroom’s window, he had occupied rented premises in Phillip Street. In mid-1869 when assisted immigration was negligible, the board informed the Colonial Secretary that the Immigration Agent’s offices were vacant and could be used for a boardroom and office, thus saving £91 in rent. The board added that, "As there are now no other duties conducted within the walls other than those

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72 Government Asylums Board to Principal Under Secretary, 11 March 1870, letter 70/2248, SRNSW 4/690. Walker died on 18 September 1870 and was replaced by Dr John Macfarlane.
74 ibid; Commission of Inquiry into Public Charities, NSWALVP, 1873-74, vol 6, Minutes of Evidence, Christopher Rolleston, response to Q1358.
77 Government Asylums Board to Principal Under Secretary, 19 January 1866, letter 66/327, with 69/1631, CSIL, SRNSW 4/651.
78 Government Asylums Board to Principal Under Secretary, 8 June 1869, letter 69/4334 with 69/4652, CSIL, SRNSW 4/661.
pertaining to the asylum", it would be necessary to have a person under its control in charge of the entrance gates. It was proposed that the board’s messenger occupy the entrance lodge thus providing an out-of-hours male presence to assist the matron "in the prevention or quelling of disturbances".\(^79\)

Robert Walker resigned as Inspector of Public Charities on 30 September 1869 to take up the appointment of librarian of the Free Public Library.\(^80\) His annual report was pedestrian, merely lengthy descriptions of the institutions without constructive comment, however, several of his letters indicate an earnest interest in his duties.\(^81\) Frederic King succeeded Cooper as Inspector of Public Charities on 1 October 1869 with a salary of £400; it was agreed he would continue as secretary to the board without remuneration.

In 1870 the Cowper ministry was conscious of the need of separate accommodation for incurable and chronically-ill women and men who were unsuited to the existing pauper asylums and ineligible for admission to the Sydney Infirmary. With the impending withdrawal of British regiments, the board’s suggestion that Hyde Park Asylum be moved to Victoria Barracks was investigated by the government between July and November. Instead, the decision was taken to move all Volunteer Corps to Victoria Barracks which would leave the vacated southern range of the Hyde Park complex as additional accommodation for the asylum women.\(^82\)

In November 1870, one of Charles Cowper’s last decisions as Colonial Secretary, before taking up his appointment as Agent-General in London, was to appoint two new members to the board. They were John McLerie, the Inspector General of Police and Harold Maclean, the Acting Inspector of Prisons and Sheriff of the

\(^79\) ibid.
\(^80\) Blue Book, 1869, p 35.
\(^81\) Inspector of Public Charities, Progress Report for 1868, NSWLAVP, 1868-69, vol 3, pp 481. For example see the case of Bridget Keys discussed below.
\(^82\) Victoria Barracks, Proposed Conversion to a Hospital, NSWLAVP, 1870-71, vol 4, pp 149-51.
Colony,\textsuperscript{83} two of the protagonists in the move to force the board to admit vagrants from gaols. Cowper's motive is unclear. It may have been to make the men aware of the difficulties this incurred for the board, or, considered a means to enforce a recent government decision. The board's annual report for that year pointed out that overcrowding and lack of accommodation would be exacerbated by recent decisions of government: "This want of space is likely to press more hardly on paupers personally applying to the Board; by reason of the instructions lately issued to the Benches of Magistrates, to report all cases of vagrancy to the Government with the view to their admission into the Asylums, instead of committing them ... to the local gaols for protection".\textsuperscript{84}

The case of Bridget Keys exemplified the lack of facilities and the difficulties associated with finding suitable shelter for a young, visually-impaired vagrant. Bridget, aged about sixteen and born in the Yass district, was blind in one eye with impaired vision in the other and unable to work.\textsuperscript{85} She had been sentenced to one month's imprisonment for vagrancy. A letter from the gaoler at Yass on 5 December 1867 to the sheriff in Sydney, requesting her admission to a reformatory or an asylum, was forwarded to the Colonial Secretary who recommended an order of admission be issued and the remainder of Bridget's sentence be remitted.\textsuperscript{86} Asked to recommend an appropriate asylum, the sheriff nominated the Sydney Female Refuge (a Protestant institution). The gaoler telegraphed that Bridget was a Catholic.\textsuperscript{87}

The Vicar-General's office advised the Colonial Secretary on 18 January 1868 that because Bridget could not work she was ineligible for the House of the Good Shepherd (a Catholic institution) which relied on the "labours of the penitents" for its income.\textsuperscript{88} When a suitable institution could not be found, each time Bridget's

\textsuperscript{83} Blue Book, 1870, p 33.
\textsuperscript{84} Government Asylums Board, Annual Report, 1870, NSWALVP, 1870-71, vol 4, p 96.
\textsuperscript{85} Gaoler, Yass Gaol to Sheriff, Sydney, 5 December 1867, letter 67/7108, CSIL, SRNSW 4/659.
\textsuperscript{86} ibid.
\textsuperscript{87} ibid; one of a series of telegrams with 69/4980.
\textsuperscript{88} ibid., Vicar-General's Office to Principal Under Secretary, 18 January 1868, letter 68/423.
sentence expired, she was immediately re-apprehended and sentenced to imprisonment for her protection. In desperation the Yass Gaoler wrote to the Acting Inspector of Prisons in August 1868 that she was "so unfit for gaol", an asylum should be found. The Benevolent Society, when approached, reminded the Colonial Secretary it only took in pregnant women and mothers with young children.

On 11 September the Government Asylums Board informed the Colonial Secretary that Bridget could be admitted to Hyde Park Asylum: "whilst they do not approve the introduction of girls of the libidinous habits attributed to the girl", the board would waive objection, "merely suggesting that as there is no power of retaining her, she will most likely very soon add to that unfortunate class with which this City abounds". There was no suggestion in the correspondence that Bridget was promiscuous or a prostitute; possibly this was assumed by the board because of the nature of the other institutions that had been approached.

The next phase of Bridget Keys's life, was one example of the ongoing antagonism between officials of Sydney Infirmary and Hyde Park Asylum, their respective matrons, and, in this instance, the Inspector of Public Charities. Bridget was admitted to the infirmary for medical treatment in March 1869 and according to Walker, the inspector, when she returned to the asylum in May, her head was in a "very filthy state". Keys had told him she was vermin-free before entering the infirmary and while there her head had not been examined and she had had only two baths. Walker suggested to the Colonial Secretary there was some fault in the supervision of Lucy Osburn, the Lady Superintendent. Osburn informed the Colonial Secretary that Bridget had been admitted to the infirmary in a "miserable dirty state" and although a " refractory obstinate patient in continual rebellion", she

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99 ibid., Gaoler, Yass Gaol to Acting Inspector of Prisons, 28 August, 1868, letter 68/4821.
90 ibid., Benevolent Society to Principal Under Secretary, 4 September 1868, letter 68/4907.
91 ibid., Government Asylums Board to Principal Under Secretary, 11 September 1868, letter 68/5047.
92 ibid., Inspector of Public Charities to Principal Under Secretary, 26 May 1869, letter 69/3989.
was not discharged because of pity for her helpless condition. It was maintained that Bridget had baths daily until water restrictions prevented them and that able-bodied ambulatory patients were left to comb their own hair, but heads were regularly inspected by nurses. In future, conceded Osburn, there would be "a stricter watch on patients" and despite "piteous pleas" their long hair would be cropped as a more effective control of vermin. Walker had the last word, reiterating that Keys's hair and clothes had most definitely been clean before entering the infirmary but conceded that according to the matron of Hyde Park Asylum, Bridget was "very troublesome and difficult to manage".

In a more conciliatory case the Sydney Infirmary requested the board to admit thirty-year-old Elizabeth McLaughlin to Hyde Park Asylum. She had been admitted to the infirmary on 1 July 1870 as a "government pauper patient" suffering from paralysis. As nothing more could be done for her the infirmary wished to discharge her but was concerned she would probably die in the streets if turned out. The board agreed to provide temporary shelter in Hyde Park Asylum.

Henry Parkes had brought Lucy Osburn and five other Nightingale-trained nurses to the colony in 1868 to work in the Sydney Infirmary and to introduce a scheme for training nurses. Osburn lacked the support of the infirmary's house committee in her endeavours to rid the building of vermin; her implementation of new nursing methods met with opposition from the visiting surgeon Alfred Roberts. Growing concern of the infirmary's unsanitary state and its increasing subsidy together with the government's substantial and rising expenditure on the fully funded orphan schools led to calls for an official inquiry. On 15 February 1873, the Australian Town & Country Journal reported Captain Arthur Onslow's motion

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93 ibid., Lucy Osburn, Sydney Infirmary to Colonial Secretary, 4 June 1869, letter 69/4252.
94 ibid., Inspector of Public Charities to Principal Under Secretary, 12 June 1869, letter 69/4470.
95 Sydney Infirmary to Principal Under Secretary, 19 August 1870 (with annotation by board), letter 70/7061, CSIL, SRNSW 4/703.
to the Legislative Assembly to petition the governor for an inquiry into the management of the colony’s charitable institutions. David Buchanan lauded his colleague’s action claiming that if the motion were carried, Onslow would have done a far greater service "than he ever did on board her Majesty’s ship Featherbed". The *Journal* expressed concern that for some establishments, "very little is known, but a good deal suspected", and for others "what is known is anything but satisfactory":

Our whole charitable system - a sort of mixture of public and private benevolence - is getting dreadfully overgrown, and it may be doubted how much longer we shall be able to avoid that disagreeable necessity, - on our immunity from which Dr. Lang the other night congratulated us - a Poor Law. At any rate with a Benevolent Asylum which may perhaps be best described as a feeder for the Registrar-General’s Department, and an Infirmary which offers to our sick poor the alternative of death in the streets or being eaten alive of vermin, it cannot be denied that the hon. and gallant gentleman has a good *prima facie* case for his motion.

The inquiry was commissioned in April 1873; Henry Parkes appointed as chairman, his close friend and barrister, William Charles Windeyer, with a brief to primarily focus on the "working and management" of the Sydney Infirmary and orphan schools with secondary attention to the other charities wholly or partly supported by the government. 97 The commission’s first report in September 1873 which dealt solely with the Sydney Infirmary vindicated Lucy Osburn and revealed the prejudices of the infirmary’s all-male board and the hostility of the surgeons towards her and her campaign to improve conditions and the training of nurses.98 The second and final report in May 1874 covered the remaining public charities including the government asylums for the infirm and destitute. The committee had visited all the relevant institutions in and around Sydney; country benevolent

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asylums and hospitals were excluded because time and distance prevented the committee from inspecting them and making its own determinations.

In his evidence to the commission Christopher Rolleston described the gradual disintegration of the board. For the first five years the board had sat several hours twice weekly diligently examining every applicant. But when it was forced to take in country "vagrants and vagabonds" with magistrates' admission orders and therefore had to reject the more deserving local applicants, members became disheartened and considered their attendance a "waste of time". Ultimately admissions were delegated to Frederic King who referred only exceptional cases to the board. Rolleston explained that while the board still sat twice weekly it was effectively only Dr Alleyne and himself; O'Connor had resigned in 1872 and the most recent appointees McLerie and Maclean were both "busy men and never attended meetings". The monthly inspections of the asylums by members had been abandoned with the exception of Rolleston who continued to visit them about three times a year. These he considered worthwhile because it kept the officers "up to their work". Otherwise, Rolleston concluded, the present board was "of very little use" and it would be more effective to have a board of paid officers. He praised the "very capable" work of Frederic King who had virtually held "full power" the past five years.

Board member, John McLerie, the Inspector-General of Police stated that he was unable to attend morning meetings without severe disruption to his official duties;

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99 Commission of Inquiry into Public Charities, *NSWLP*, 1873-74, vol 6, Minutes of Evidence, Christopher Rolleston, response to Q1271.
100 ibid., response to Q1271.
101 ibid., response to Q1271.
102 ibid., response to Q1231-3.
103 ibid., response to Q1269.
104 ibid., response to Q1248.
105 ibid., response to Q1246-7.
106 ibid., response to Q1249.
107 ibid., response to Q1268, Q1292.
108 ibid., response to Q1330.
he was willing to attend if afternoon meetings could be arranged.\textsuperscript{109} He firmly believed that as government funding to charitable institutions now totalled £112,000 there should be a paid officer in charge.\textsuperscript{110}

Of Hyde Park Asylum, Rolleston considered the building quite unsuitable and lamented it was not the place for "imbeciles" and "young idiot girls" for whom there should be other facilities and complained about having to hold "mad" women until their transfer to a lunatic asylum.\textsuperscript{111} Hyde Park Asylum was so overcrowded inmates were sleeping in passages.\textsuperscript{112} He was highly complimentary of the matron "it is wonderful that Mrs Hicks does what she does with the people there".\textsuperscript{113}

Rolleston was not enthusiastic about the master and the uncleanliness of Parramatta Asylum and even less about the building which he considered should have a match put to it.\textsuperscript{114} Frederic King, the board’s secretary shared his chairman’s opinion of Mr Dennis, the master of Parramatta, while on the other hand, Mrs Burnside, the matron of Liverpool Asylum was exceedingly active and efficient in every way.\textsuperscript{115}

King complained of his constant disputes with Sydney Infirmary officials who endeavoured to offload chronically-ill and infectious patients into the destitute asylums; he attributed the pressure to the comparative cost per inmate of £46 in the infirmary to £14 in a destitute asylum.\textsuperscript{116} For humanity’s sake King had admitted a young girl with erysipelas whom the infirmary refused to treat, much to the consternation of Hyde Park Asylum’s medical officer who was alarmed by the introduction of a contagious disease into Hyde Park Asylum.\textsuperscript{117}

\textsuperscript{109} ibid., John McLerie, response to Q1580-86.
\textsuperscript{110} ibid., response to Q1590.
\textsuperscript{111} ibid., response to Q1350-4.
\textsuperscript{112} ibid., response to Q1272.
\textsuperscript{113} ibid., response to Q1344.
\textsuperscript{114} ibid., response to Q1251-2, Q1366.
\textsuperscript{115} ibid., Frederic King, response to Q1485, Q1501, Q1509-10.
\textsuperscript{116} ibid., response to Q1352, Q1540.
\textsuperscript{117} ibid., response to Q1541, Rolleston, response to Q1327-8.
In his dual role of secretary and inspector, King's duties were onerous. He informed the commissioners that in his role as secretary, he visited the government asylums frequently, interviewed all applicants for admissions, controlled expenditure and contracts for supplies, attended board meetings twice weekly, prepared the annual report and held occasional musters at the three asylums in order to discharge those inmates considered capable of employment. As Inspector of Public Charities, he inspected other charitable institutions, usually at the direction of the Colonial Secretary and occasionally on his own initiative when there were untoward occurrences, such as the riots at the Newcastle Industrial School for Girls. In 1871-72 he had undertaken over fifty inspections of wholly or partially funded institutions throughout the colony ranging from Newcastle in the north, west to Mudgee and Gulgong and south to Goulburn and Braidwood.

King agreed that he had previously reported more often but since the present government had been in office he had not been called upon to report in consequence of some objection on the part of Henry Parkes, the Colonial Secretary. Parkes had objected to one of King's annual reports because it was "worded too strongly". He had been instructed to remove remarks on the Biloela School and references to soiled underclothing and patients covered in vermin in Sydney Infirmary. Parkes had described King in the Legislative Assembly in February 1873 as "a gentleman of a timid disposition" who was not up to performing necessary duties "when they were the most unpleasant". Parkes maintained the office of the inspector was in an unsatisfactory state and believed King was not in a position to perform his dual roles as secretary to the board and inspector efficiently.

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118 ibid., King, response to Q1376-7.
119 ibid., response to Q1380, Q1411.
120 ibid., response to Q1515.
121 ibid., response to Q1514.
122 ibid., response to Q1551-54.
123 Sydney Morning Herald, 5 February 1873.
124 ibid; for King's response, see Inspector of Public Charities to Principal Under Secretary, 4 February 1873, letter 73/1003, CSIL, SRNSW 4/810.2.
King had a senior and a junior clerk to assist him in the government asylums' office. Albert Gyulay's position as senior clerk had been created after King's appointment as inspector; he attended board meetings and assumed other secretarial duties when King was away on inspections. Gyulay reported that sometimes he worked in the office until 6 or 8 o'clock at night to "keep up" and quite often had to handle applications from police that came in late.

In their report, tabled in May 1874, the commissioners recorded that the colony's charitable institutions were outmoded; they were based on models and systems that had prevailed in England fifty years ago, where they have "since have either been entirely abandoned or greatly modified, as experience has shown them to be unsound in theory or defective in working". They found that the institutions for the infirm and destitute were rapidly increasing in size, and, without a "resolute determination that their doors shall only be opened to those absolutely without means of support, they must inevitably tend to the development of a pauper spirit in the community". They had been greatly disturbed by the disclosure that sturdy vagrants dismissed for insubordination from infirm asylums were immediately gaining admission to the infirmary at treble the cost per inmate.

The public charities of the colony were found to require a "more complete system of supervision and a more prompt and vigorous administration than the present departmental arrangements afforded". They considered it would be highly beneficial to appoint a Comptroller of Public Charities, to be "empowered to exercise all the functions of the Inspector of Public Charities under the Public Institutions Inspection Act of 1866 but with more authority to obviate the current

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125 Commission of Inquiry into Public Charities, Albert Gyulay, response to Q1677-85.
126 ibid., response to Q1714.
128 ibid., p 64.
129 ibid., pp 61-2.
130 ibid., p 60.
necessity of referring all decisions to the colonial secretary".\textsuperscript{131} They further recommended that upon creation of the office of Comptroller, the Board of Management of Government Asylums should be abolished "as its members already had onerous jobs and could not satisfactorily attend to board duties".\textsuperscript{132}

It was apparent to the commissioners that it was virtually impossible for the board's secretary who was also the inspector to perform both roles satisfactorily,\textsuperscript{133} and upon the proposed re-organisation of the office, "some suitable post in it should be found for the present Inspector of Charities, whose long connection with the Board would enable him to render valuable assistance to the Comptroller, though his much to be regretted infirmity of speech would unfit him for the efficient discharge of the duties of that office".\textsuperscript{134}

The commissioners recommended the introduction of a boarding out system for the destitute aged and infirm (where they could perform light tasks) which would greatly benefit country hospitals by relieving them of a number of persons whose presence interfered with their efficiency as hospitals.\textsuperscript{135} They also supported Frederic King's recommendation for legislation similar to that in South Australia where parents, grandparents, children and grandchildren of every person unable to support themselves and in receipt of charitable relief from government, either in an asylum or a hospital, were compelled by law to contribute to their support.\textsuperscript{136}

Hyde Park Asylum, the commissioners agreed, was "very overcrowded". Since visiting the former Volunteers' quarters that were "so dilapidated as to be unsafe and almost useless", they were pleased to note that repairs had begun and when completed would relieve overcrowding to some extent. However the outdoor recreation yard was considered too small for the number of women inmates and

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{131} ibid.}  
\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{132} ibid., pp 60-1.}  
\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{133} ibid., p 62.}  
\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{134} ibid., p 62.}  
\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{135} ibid., p 64.}  
\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{136} ibid., p 65.}
there were no "verandahs or sheds for the protection of inmates in hot or
iclement weather".137 The asylum’s location in the heart of the city was quite
unsuitable and the commissioners were not in favour of more expenditure on the
buildings "as seems to be contemplated by government".138 The management of
Hyde Park Asylum by the matron Mrs Hicks, was "highly efficient and most
economical".139

Among his various reports presented to the committee Frederic King included the
case of Minnie Perks. At the time it was unresolved but further exemplifies the
lack of facilities for young disabled paupers and the ongoing antipathy between the
destitute asylums and the Sydney Infirmary. Minnie Perks, a young, blind
Aboriginal girl was admitted to the infirmary in March 1873. In accordance with
its policy of non-retention of incurables the infirmary wrote to the Colonial
Secretary’s office in July requesting her transfer to a charitable institution.140
Frederic King in his role as Inspector of Public Charities, interviewed Minnie and
reported she was a "half-caste, in good health, apparently intelligent and of sound
intellect, quite blind but her speech and hearing are perfect ... age about 15 girlish
in appearance". He suggested the Deaf, Dumb and Blind Institution as the most
appropriate accommodation.141 In mid-September, its officials indicated their
willingness to receive her but in October advised they anticipated "some difficulty
in the matter" and suggested she be sent to Windsor Hospital or the Benevolent
Asylum: "The Girl being an aboriginal and without friends will scarcely be able to
give an account of herself".142 In November the Deaf, Dumb and Blind
Institution examined Minnie and considered she was "not a fit subject for

137 ibid., p 108.
138 ibid., p 108. The government had proposed building a cottage in the south-western corner
for the matron and using her quarters in the main building to accommodate an additional
forty inmates.
139 ibid., p 108.
140 Sydney Infirmary to Principal Under Secretary, 29 July 1873, letter 73/6153, CSIL,
SRNSW 1/2253.
141 ibid., Inspector of Public Charities to Principal Under Secretary, 6 August 1873, letter
73/6404.
142 ibid., NSW Institution for the Deaf Dumb and Blind to Colonial Secretary, 18 September
1873, letter 73/7758, 7 October 1873, letter 73/8185.
admission ... she not being capable of being educated from the circumstances of half idiocy about her" and recommended the Newcastle Asylum for Imbeciles and Institution for Idiots as more appropriate. It is not difficult to imagine that Minnie's intimidation when confronted by a committee could have been interpreted as "half idiocy".

The Sydney Infirmary's application for her admission to Newcastle was rejected by the Colonial Secretary's office on the grounds that she did not qualify under the provisions of the Lunacy Act. On 5 March 1874 the infirmary complained to the Colonial Secretary that Minnie was said to be too old for the Deaf, Dumb and Blind institution, too young for Hyde Park Asylum, not eligible for Newcastle which had refused to certify her, thus she was also ineligible for the hospital for the insane at Gladesville. Frederic King agreed to admit her to Hyde Park until the state of her intellect could be determined.

When Minnie Perks was transferred from the infirmary on 13 March, the asylums board claimed she had arrived "in so lousy a condition that it was necessary to cut all her hair off" and requested the Colonial Secretary to notify the Sydney Infirmary to this effect. Matron Lucy Osburn angrily refuted the claim and provided a long dissertation on the lay person's inability to distinguish between live headlice and eggs. As Minnie was "blind and partially idiotic" her hair had been combed and washed with the children every morning" and, Osburn added, "Owing probably to her nationality Perks was very difficult to keep clean". The board declared "there was no exaggeration of her condition" when admitted to Hyde Park Asylum. What happened to Minnie? While government mental

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143 ibid., NSW Institution for the Deaf Dumb and Blind to Colonial Secretary, 11 November 1873, letter 73/9159.
144 ibid., Sydney Infirmary to Principal Under Secretary, 12 November 1873, letter with 74/2154, annotated "can only be placed there under section 11 of 7 Victoria: No 14".
145 ibid.
146 ibid.
147 ibid., Government Asylums Board to Principal Under Secretary, 19 March 1874, letter 74/1804.
148 ibid., Report of Lucy Osburn, 2 April 1874, with letter 74/2154.
149 ibid., annotation of Frederic King.
health records are restricted her fate remains unknown.

The board had always endeavoured to find alternate accommodation for afflicted teen-aged girls to avoid their association with diseased, demented and often dissolute aged women at Hyde Park Asylum. For some years they had been sent to a "non lunatic" invalid ward at Parramatta Lunatic Asylum but this arrangement had ceased in August 1872 when the Newcastle Asylum for Imbeciles and Institution for Idiots opened and received the young girls eligible under the Lunacy Act; the remainder was sent to Hyde Park.150 In April 1873 the board received an application from Matron Betts of the Protestant Orphan School at Parramatta for the admission to Hyde Park Asylum of Alice Kilpatrick, aged about thirteen and paralysed down one side. When her elder sister was unable to care for her, Betts had agreed in 1871 to take Alice for one year. Their younger brother was also put in an orphan school. Alice’s sister was now refusing to take her.

Police confirmed that both parents were dead, the eldest sister was married to a greengrocer at Pyrmont, another sister aged seventeen lived with her. An uncle was trustee of the parent’s house in Cumberland Street and paid one-half of the rent collected on the property to the eldest sister and her husband; the remaining half was held in trust for Alice and her brother. Two years later, in September 1875, Matron Betts applied again to the board. She was keen to make space for another child, Alice was now sixteen and "might with advantage" be moved to Hyde Park Asylum "which is a more suitable place for her than this".151 Alice was not imbecile consequently ineligible for the Newcastle institution. The board still considered Hyde Park Asylum "an unsuitable place for young girls of decent character", but if no better provision could be made, would receive her.152 No alternative accommodation could be found and an order for the admission of Alice

150 Parramatta Lunatic Asylum to Principal Under Secretary, 25 June 1874, letter 74/3581 with 74/7293, Statement of Clara Morris, 30 July 1874, CSIL, SRNSW 1/2270.
151 ibid., Matron, Protestant Orphan School to Under Secretary, Justice and Public Instruction, 18 September 1875.
152 ibid., Inspector of Public Charities to Principal Under Secretary, 20 October 1875, letter 75/6838.
Kilpatrick to Hyde Park Asylum was issued on 5 November 1875.\textsuperscript{153}

A serious outbreak of erysipelas\textsuperscript{154} in November 1875 led to the establishment of a hospital in the former military barracks in Macquarie Street at Parramatta to treat male and female victims of the virus. The board appointed Frederic King manager of the establishment with an additional salary of £100. When the crisis abated the building accommodated indigent males.

On 1 September 1875, Henry Parkes's successor as Colonial Secretary, John Robertson, had replaced King as Inspector of Public Charities with George Fullerton, coroner and police magistrate at Warralda since 1871.\textsuperscript{155} Fullerton reported favourably on Hyde Park Asylum in January 1876: "the complete cleanliness and order reflect the greatest credit on the management", the women seemed "happy and contented and made no complaints" and their heads "could not be cleaner".\textsuperscript{156} In May an accident rendered him temporarily incapacitated; he was subsequently granted leave of absence, resigned in September 1876 and left without preparing an annual report.\textsuperscript{157}

When Albert Gyulay the senior clerk on an annual salary of £300, died in September 1875, the board considered that as King was no longer inspector, he could manage with a junior clerk at £75-100. King’s salary had derived from his position as inspector - he had worked as secretary without remuneration. The board was anxious that he should not "suffer a pecuniary loss" and recommended he receive a salary of £500. At same time the board offered to "retire" leaving

\textsuperscript{153} ibid., annotation of Frederic King, 1 November 1875; Government Asylums Board to Principal Under Secretary, 5 November 1875, letter 75/7880.
\textsuperscript{154} Erysipelas (also known as St Anthony's Fire) was a contagious skin infection that could be fatal.
\textsuperscript{155} Blue Book, 1875, p 32.
\textsuperscript{156} Inspector of Public Charities to Principal Under Secretary, 25 January 1876, letter 76/658, CSIL, SRNSW 1/2321.
\textsuperscript{157} Fullerton to Colonial Secretary, 26 May 1876, letter 76/3769, 76/5854 date (information from Colonial Secretary's Correspondence Register); Fullerton to Colonial Secretary, 6 September 1876, letter 76/6672, CSIL, SRNSW 1/2342.
Frederic King as sole manager of the government asylums\textsuperscript{158} but first sought assurance that his position and salary were secure.\textsuperscript{159} On 18 January 1876 board members in tendering their resignations, recommended the abolition of the board.\textsuperscript{160} The Executive Council on 14 February confirmed the appointment of Frederic King as "head of the Department of the Government Asylums for the Infirm and Destitute with the title of Manager".\textsuperscript{161}

Like many preceding government inquiries, there was little action taken on the recommendations of the commissioners of the Inquiry into Public Charities in 1873-74 pertaining to the government asylums and the role of the inspector. The comptroller did not eventuate, no additional authority was given to the Inspector of Public Charities. The most significant action eighteen months later was the appointment of a new inspector to replace Frederic King who, as secretary of the board, should never have been given an additional appointment. The motives of Christopher Rolleston in recommending King as inspector and of the government in acquiescing are questionable. Obviously it was economically expedient for the government to have two onerous jobs undertaken for the price of one. Henry Parkes had maintained in early 1873 that it was a most unsatisfactory arrangement. He should have removed King; their antagonism interfered with the inspector’s performance of his duties as did his personal life: King’s wife died in 1873 leaving him with a young family and he was also dabbling in real estate subdivisions.\textsuperscript{162} Possibly personal motives overruled Parkes’s interest in taking logical decisions to improve the administration of the colony’s social welfare system. The inspector’s eldest brother Philip Gidley King was a good friend and financial supporter of Henry Parkes. It was left to John Robertson to see reason.

\textsuperscript{158} Government Asylums Board to Principal Under Secretary, 21 September 1875, Correspondence re appointment of Manager, NSWLAVP, 1876-77, vol 4, p 924.
\textsuperscript{159} ibid., Principal Under Secretary to Government Asylums Board, 22 October 1875; Government Asylums Board to Principal Under Secretary, 4 November 1875.
\textsuperscript{160} ibid., p 925, Government Asylums Board to Principal Under Secretary, 18 January 1876.
\textsuperscript{161} ibid., pp 924-5, Executive Council, Minute No. 8, 14 February 1876.
CHAPTER FIVE

MANAGING DESTITUTION 1876-1886: THE DEPARTMENT OF GOVERNMENT ASYLUMS FOR THE INFIRM AND DESTITUTE AND THE INSPECTOR OF PUBLIC CHARITIES

Upon the abolition of the Board of Government Asylums in March 1876 the asylums for the infirm and destitute were administered by a department - still under the control of the Colonial Secretary - with Frederic King as manager. His successor as Inspector of Public Charities, George Fullerton, following an accident and leave of absence, had resigned\(^1\) and was replaced by Hugh Robison on 12 September 1876 at an annual salary of £500\(^2\). Robison was born in Calcutta in 1825, the son of an Indian Civil Service judge. According to family tradition, as a child, he had visited Australia with his grandparents, later returning to India.\(^3\) In c.1850 he joined Alexander Stuart on a sheep station in Otago, New Zealand; when the venture failed in 1852 the partners moved to New South Wales.\(^4\) In 1862 Robison married Charlotte Eliza, daughter of Charles Cowper, then Colonial Secretary,\(^5\) and along with Stuart, Cowper, Rolleston and Robert Towns, invested in squatting runs in Queensland.\(^6\) It was surely no coincidence that Alexander Stuart who entered the political scene in 1874, was Colonial Treasurer in the Robertson ministry in 1876\(^7\) when Robison received his first civil appointment as Inspector of Public Charities.

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1. George Fullerton to Colonial Secretary, 6 September 1876, letter 76/6672, CSIL, SRNSW 1/2342.
5. Mowle, A Genealogical History, p 106. Robison was left a widower with four young sons in 1875.
6. Robison Family Papers, ML MSS 1306; Records of Calliungal Station, Mount Morgan Queensland, ML DOC 725; Sydney Morning Herald, 28 July 1900.
In addition to the asylums for infirm and destitute at Hyde Park, Parramatta and Liverpool, Robison was also responsible for the inspection of other institutions wholly supported by government and under its direct control. These comprised the Erysipelas Hospital, Parramatta, Protestant and Roman Catholic Orphan Schools, the Female Industrial School, Biloela and the Nautical School Ship Vernon. Also in his portfolio of inspections were those institutions largely subsidised by government but managed by boards elected by subscribers and included the Destitute Children’s Asylum, Randwick, the Benevolent Asylum, the Institution for the Deaf, Dumb and Blind and the Sydney Infirmary and country hospitals.\(^8\)

With the exception of removing Frederic King as inspector, successive ministries had largely ignored the recommendations of the 1873-74 inquiry into public charities that called for "a more complete system of supervision and a more prompt and vigorous administration". No additional authority was granted to the inspector and Robison’s frustrations throughout the ensuing decade were echoed annually in his reports, as in 1877:

> The office of Inspector of Public Charities, as at present constituted, is so isolated, and so utterly devoid of administrative power or control ... The Inspector has no power to make his views or opinions felt directly by the persons in charge of the Institutions, but his ideas have to pass through the channel of the Colonial Secretary’s Office without his knowing in what manner they have been communicated to such persons, or whether in fact they have been communicated at all.\(^9\)

Indeed, Henry Parkes, one of the framers of the relevant 1866 Act later insisted:

> ... it was never contemplated ... that this officer should do more than see that the purpose of the institutions to which money was granted was strictly carried out. It was never intended that he should interfere, make

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\(^8\) Inspector of Public Charities, Annual Report, 1876, *NSWLA*, 1876-77, vol 4, p 903.

recommendations, or suggest plans, but he was an executive officer appointed under an act of Parliament for one class of duties, which were distinctly stated in the act ... to see that the grants from the public Treasury are properly applied, to see that the regulations ... are strictly carried out. There his duties stop".  

But Hugh Robison, inspector and Frederic King, manager, persisted. Using the medium of their annual reports - and occasionally voicing opposing opinions - they continued to draw to the attention of parliament the anomalies and difficulties in the welfare provisions for paupers, and to urge for new legislation to overcome the major problems. But their recommendations and complaints about overcrowding in the destitute asylums were largely ignored. Economic rationalism inevitably ruled given the cost per head in hospitals and gaols was triple that of pauper asylums. The situation steadily worsened under the pressure to admit sick pauper women to Hyde Park Asylum who were in need of hospitalisation and the care of trained nurses.

Ann Griffiths was being treated in the Sydney Infirmary for advanced gonorrhoeal ophthalmia when doctors determined that surgery would have to be deferred for some time until the inflammation subsided.  

11 She was initially rejected by Hyde Park Asylum in April 1876 on the grounds of her youth and the inability to provide adequate treatment. When Sydney Infirmary refused to keep her she was admitted into the asylum in July.  

12 The next time Griffiths surfaced in the official records in 1880, she was in Hyde Park Asylum and incurably blind.  

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11 Inspector of Public Charities to Principal Under Secretary, 19 July 1876, letter 76/5162 with Sydney Infirmary to Principal Under Secretary, c.9 August 1876, letter 76/5890, CSIL, SRNSW 1/2338.

12 ibid.

13 Catherine Davey to Principal Under Secretary, 23 August 1880, letter 80/7116, CSIL, SRNSW 1/2494.
Frederic King raised the ire of the Colonial Secretary, Henry Parkes when he refused to admit Mary Hayes, an English immigrant, who, when begging door-to-door in Berrima in July 1877, had fallen and broken her leg. A resident took her in but she was so debilitated that Berrima police reported her plight to the Colonial Secretary who ordered her admission to Hyde Park Asylum. King’s suggestion that Sydney Infirmary would be more appropriate for Hayes met with rebuke from Parkes but this time King stood his ground insisting his refusal was in the interests of "the sufferer".

Robison, in his first annual report for 1876, praised Frederic King’s economic administration of the government asylums and commended Mrs Hicks, the matron of Hyde Park Asylum, for "the general cleanliness of the wards, the tidiness of the inmates, and good order throughout the establishment". The inspector believed that male and female inmates of the asylums should be compelled to work and suggested suitable small industries like straw-plaiting, hat and paper bag making. Frederic King countered in his 1876 annual report that the "chief recommendations" for admission to the asylums were "infirmity and an inability to do anything to support life". He pointed out that the asylums were not poorhouses and if inmates recovered their health sufficiently to earn a living, they left of their own accord or were put out. The inspector later conceded that able-bodied inmates were primarily required for the domestic work of the asylums. He also regretted that classification of the women was impossible, hence "Revolting forms of disease cannot be withdrawn from the general observation". Robison empathised with King’s lack of power when he was forced to readmit expelled refractory inmates who had obtained a government order through the police "on

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14 Police Office, Berrima to Principal Under Secretary, 9 August 1877, letter 77/6543, CSIL, SRNSW 1/2380.
15 ibid., annotations by Colonial Secretary and Frederic King, August 1877.
16 Inspector, Annual Report, 1876, NSWLAVP, 1876-77, vol 4, pp 903, 905.
17 ibid., p 904.
18 Department of Government Asylums for the Infirm and Destitute, Annual Report, 1876, NSWLAVP, 1876-77, vol 4, p 928.
the grounds of utter helplessness or destitution". But the inspector undermined the manager when he asserted there was no necessity for trained nursing staff except for the infectious cases in the Erysipelas Hospital, yet continued to recommend the transfer of convalescent female patients from the Sydney Infirmary to Hyde Park Asylum.

Hugh Robison had drawn attention to the lack of facilities for women suffering from "epileptic mania or mental weakness", whom he believed required treatment that could not be provided in destitute asylums. Under the Lunacy Act such women were not eligible for the Newcastle asylum for idiots and imbeciles and he recommended an amendment to its rules of admission or the setting up of a "branch ward" in one of the asylums (presumably the Erysipelas Hospital in Parramatta) where they could receive special care.

In desperate need of such care was sixteen-year-old Anna Read (alias Styr) who was "blind, idiotic and subject to fits". She was convicted of vagrancy in Tuena in February 1876 and sentenced to a month in Bathurst Gaol "with a view to her protection and her ultimate admission to some institution". Her unmarried mother, Sarah Read, had sold all her meagre possessions to support Anna and her sister and was now destitute. When Anna’s epileptic fits increased in frequency, the Bathurst gaoler urgently requested the Comptroller General of Prisons for a remission of her sentence to enable her to be sent to Sydney for treatment. When Frederic King recommended her admission to the Newcastle asylum, the gaol’s visiting surgeon insisted Anna was epileptic, not insane, and refused to certify her. Nevertheless the Colonial Secretary issued an order for Newcastle on 14 March. Dr Frederic Norton Manning, Inspector of the Insane, after a visit to

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24 James Hall, JP, Tuena to Police Magistrate, Bathurst Gaol, 23 February 1876, with letter 76/4421, CSIL, SRNSW 1/2333.
25 ibid., Bathurst Gaol to Comptroller General of Prisons, 28 February 1876, with 76/1623.
Newcastle notified the Colonial Secretary in May 1876 that Anna was not a "fit subject" for the asylum, that the epileptic fits had not affected her intellect. He believed she was older than her stated age and it was evident she had borne a child. Manning complained that the matron was obliged to isolate her from the children "owing to her teaching them much that it is advisable they should not learn". Young Anna was transferred to Hyde Park Asylum in June 1876.

Frederic King had always maintained that Hyde Park Asylum was not the place for young women and until 1872 had been able to accommodate many of them in the non-lunatic invalid ward at Parramatta Lunatic Asylum. In 1877 when the erysipelas scare was diminishing, he received approval to move sixteen young paralysed women to the Erysipelas Hospital in Macquarie Street, Parramatta, having assured the Colonial Secretary their wards would be "quite isolated from those occupied by the old men". This arrangement seems to have lasted only a year. The Erysipelas Hospital subsequently became the Macquarie Street Asylum and housed infirm, destitute men although wards on the upper floor were retained for infectious cases both male and female. Overcrowding at Hyde Park Asylum and the inability to accommodate more women in need was still of overwhelming concern to King. His proposal in 1878 that the "Police Building" in Parramatta be taken over for use as an additional female asylum met with hostile objections from the Inspector of Police and the matter was dropped.

Robison in 1877 recommended that measures be taken to prevent the "importation" to New South Wales of men and women seeking admission to the destitute asylums. He maintained they should be supported in the colonies in which they

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26 ibid., F Norton Manning, Inspector of Insane to Principal Under Secretary, 18 May 1876, letter 76/3619.
27 ibid., Government Medical Adviser to Principal Under Secretary, 21 June 1876, letter 76/4421.
28 Manager, Department of Government Asylums to Principal Under Secretary, 9 May 1877, letter 77/3972; 23 July 1877, letter 77/6102, CSIL, SRNSW 1/2378.
29 Department of Government Asylums, Annual Report, 1884, NSW ALP, 1885, vol 2, p 611.
30 Manager, Department of Government Asylums to Principal Under Secretary, 11 March 1878, letter 78/2286, CSIL, SRNSW 1/2431.
had previously resided. And in 1878 King once again urged for legislation similar to that in Victoria where the landing of "lunatic, idiotic, deaf, dumb, blind or infirm" passengers was prohibited and if any slipped in, the master of the ship was obliged to pay for their maintenance for five years. Since 1869 King had been reporting the large number of infirm paupers sent from other colonies, in particular, Queensland and also from New Zealand, with the express purpose of gaining admission to one of the government's asylums. Dr Alleyne, then board member and health officer, was very sceptical that this "Class of persons" would be capable of finding their way by ship. Dr Norton Manning of Gladesville Hospital, disagreed and confirmed that persons he had admitted were "clearly insane" before starting their journeys: "One had been in an asylum in Queensland for years, another from New Caledonia two years in an asylum" and supported the passing of an act. Nothing eventuated.

King was still under pressure from the Comptroller of Prisons and Benches of Magistrates to admit vagrants to Sydney asylums rather than incarcerate them in country gaols. In 1878 and again in 1879 he recommended the establishment of branch asylums in the principal inland towns intended principally for infirm, destitute men and women. King maintained the centralisation of all paupers in Sydney meant that often the infirm and destitute from upcountry became confirmed paupers whereas if left in their own district near friends they could, after short-term respite, resume their lives. As a trial, King proposed the leasing of a building in Yass, "which could take in paupers from Gundagai, Tumut, Wagga

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33 Manager, Government Asylums to Principal Under Secretary, 3 August 1869 with 71/4321, CSIL, SRNSW 1/2146.
34 ibid., F N Manning to Government Asylums Board, 16 June 1871, letter 71/4231.
35 Manager, Government Asylums to Colonial Secretary, 22 November 1878, letter 78/10034, CSIL, SRNSW 1/2431.
Wagga". As requested, in January 1879 he submitted a "specific proposal" including costings but Parkes concluded it "does not strike me favourably at first sight" and the matter dropped.

Frederic King probably gazed longingly at neighbouring Victoria with its demographic spread of benevolent asylums such as he had advocated for New South Wales. But King's envy may have been short-lived upon the realisation that Victoria's unique welfare system for the infirm and destitute would have left him jobless: the asylums were owned and run by autonomous voluntary benevolent societies, largely subsidised by the public purse but without government intervention. The establishment of country asylums to meet local needs in Victoria was largely the result of the gold discoveries in the mid 1850s which had seen a dramatic shift in the spread and composition of its society. Prior to separation in 1851 many of the 73,000 European residents in the Port Phillip district were associated with pastoral pursuits but by 1861 the population had grown to 540,300 and was predominantly single male immigrants, without families, in pursuit of gold.

By the early 1860s Victoria had two metropolitan and four country benevolent asylums whose role and functions are described by R A Cage in his study of the colony's charitable network. The Melbourne Benevolent Asylum, built in 1851 (with later additions) by the Melbourne Benevolent Society, accommodated aged and destitute men and women. The other Melbourne benevolent asylum which by 1866 was known as the Immigrants' Aid Society's Home for Houseless and Destitute Persons, incorporated a hospital for chronic diseases and a blind asylum and had taken in children until 1864. Men and women, if they were able, were

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38 Manager, Government Asylums to Colonial Secretary, 22 November 1878, letter 78/10034, SRNSW 1/2431.
39 Manager, Government Asylums to Principal Under Secretary, 3 January 1879, letter 79/111, CSIL, SRNSW 1/2431; Parkes's annotation on ibid, 18 January 1879.
41 ibid., in particular chapter 3.
42 ibid., pp 33-42.
expected to work and the Society later built a laundry to generate income. The Society’s initial premises, acquired in 1854, was converted to a night refuge.\textsuperscript{43} Inmates of the Bendigo and Ballarat asylums were predominantly male victims of the goldrush, either disabled by mining accidents or suffering chronic diseases related to mining. Miners’ widows and deserted wives were also accommodated. Ballarat Asylum took in deserted children and had a lying-in ward.\textsuperscript{44} The other two country benevolent asylums - Castlemaine and Ovens - provided similar services on a smaller scale.\textsuperscript{45}

Throughout Victoria there was a benevolent society in almost every town.\textsuperscript{46} Many were Ladies Benevolent Societies, run by local women who distributed outdoor relief - generally sourced from fund-raising activities or voluntary contributions - to the "deserving poor". Recipients were usually women with children whom members visited regularly in their homes and sometimes provided equipment such as a mangle or sewing machine to enable them to earn a living. Melbourne Ladies Benevolent Society was the largest in this network of which there were sixty-four by 1897.

Victoria was also the most progressive colony in the humane provision of cottage homes - beginning in the early 1860s - where aged couples could live out their lives together.\textsuperscript{47} The establishment of the Old Colonists’ Homes, an "artificial village" in North Fitzroy\textsuperscript{48} was a precursor of the large retirement villages (usually built by religious organisations) that have proliferated throughout Australia. It was not until the late 1880s that the New South Wales government embarked on a row of twenty-two stylish semi-detached cottages in Parramatta that

\textsuperscript{43} ibid., pp 43-48; Richard Kennedy, "Charity and Ideology in Colonial Victoria", in Richard Kennedy (ed), \textit{Australian Welfare History: critical essays}, Melbourne, Macmillan, 1982, p 64.
\textsuperscript{44} Cage, \textit{Poverty Abounding Charity Aplenty}, pp 47-66.
\textsuperscript{45} ibid., pp 67-72.
\textsuperscript{46} ibid., in particular chapter 4.
\textsuperscript{47} ibid., see Appendix 1, pp 139-45 for the various categories of charitable institutions in colonial Victoria.
were ready for occupation by the aged by 1891.\textsuperscript{49} The Hebrew Philanthropic & Orphan Society had opened the Sir Moses Montefiore Jewish Home in Sydney in 1889,\textsuperscript{50} although in 1877 it had let a cottage it owned to a "pensioner" at a nominal rental.\textsuperscript{51}

Victorian commissioners of an 1871 inquiry, and also Hugh Robison later in the decade, called for some form of cooperation between all colonies regarding men who deserted their wives and families leaving them dependent upon charity. The deserters had only to cross a border to escape prosecution for maintenance.\textsuperscript{52} Robison and officials of Victorian benevolent asylums continually urged their respective governments to enact legislation to compel relatives to support destitute family members.\textsuperscript{53} The inspector drew attention to a "curious anomaly" in the regulations of his colony's asylums for the infirm and destitute: "Should a friend of any inmate offer to reimburse the Government for his [or her] maintenance the offer is not accepted, but the having such a friend renders the inmate no longer eligible to remain in the Asylum".\textsuperscript{54}

South Australian legislation was enacted as early as 1843 to make direct relatives - including parents and grandchildren - legally responsible for the support of a pauper.\textsuperscript{55} According to Brian Dickey, South Australian welfare services in the


\textsuperscript{51} S W Brooks, \textit{Charity and Philanthropy ... a prize essay ... on the institutions in Sydney which aim at the diminution of vice, or the alleviation of misery ...} Sydney, W B Campbell, 1878, p 40.


nineteenth century were largely selective and intended only for the "deserving poor" who were "unable to support themselves and not themselves responsible for their destitution".\textsuperscript{56} By 1867 the Destitute Board in South Australia, which had functioned since 1849, was empowered by legislation to administer the vote for the destitute.\textsuperscript{57} It housed in its Adelaide asylum, aged and chronically ill women and men and destitute widows, deserted wives and children and lying-in women; later a shed was erected for "destitute, immobilized" Aborigines who were kept segregated.\textsuperscript{58} Inmates were expected to undertake the work of the asylum and the more able-bodied women did laundry work including the washing for Adelaide Hospital which covered almost half the running costs of the lying-in department.\textsuperscript{59} The women also sewed garments and furnishings including window blinds, consequently the board indirectly contributed to the destitution of women outside the asylum who relied on washing and sewing to earn a living.\textsuperscript{60} By the early 1880s Adelaide had the Hospital for Incurables and Mary MacKillop’s Sisters of St Joseph were operating a home for aged and infirm women.\textsuperscript{61}

While Victoria’s outdoor relief was provided by its unique voluntary charitable network, in South Australia outdoor relief was the direct responsibility of the government through an equally unique colony-wide system. The Destitute Board administered outdoor relief on a selective basis: it was not provided to the able-bodied. In country areas relief was distributed by auxiliary boards. In the city and country the Destitute Board also contracted local doctors to provide medical services.\textsuperscript{62} And just as in New South Wales where Frederic King and Hugh Robison had long recommended the adoption of Victoria’s provisions of penalties for any ship’s master who landed lunatic, disabled or infirm passengers, the South Australian government, in 1885, was urged to enact similar legislation.\textsuperscript{63}

\textsuperscript{56} ibid., pp xiv, 13.
\textsuperscript{57} ibid., p 39.
\textsuperscript{58} ibid., pp 38, 51.
\textsuperscript{60} ibid., p 29.
\textsuperscript{61} Dickey, \textit{Rations, Residence, Resources}, pp 51, 106.
\textsuperscript{62} ibid., p 85.
\textsuperscript{63} Geyer, \textit{Behind the Wall}, p 30.
Tasmania and Queensland had no welfare exemplars to offer their sister colonies. Rather, the treatment of their infirm, destitute women was the antithesis of humanity, particularly in the latter. Prevailing attitudes to the indigent were likely influenced by the genesis of the various colonies. Whereas Victoria and South Australia were late starters in the colony stakes and were populated by supposedly more "respectable" free settlers, New South Wales, Tasmania and Queensland were front runners sharing penal origins and an ageing convict population.

Tasmania was still predominantly a penal settlement. Transportation had continued until 1853 and with the many thousands of men and women convicts arriving in the last decade, the government focused on their administration and accommodation. It was also responsible for the indoor care of the destitute aged and infirm which Joan Brown found in her study of welfare in the colony, was provided in sub-standard buildings. In the 1850s aged and invalid women were accommodated in the General Hospital, Hobart, and in the Cornwall Hospital, Launceston. The government, under pressure from both the hospital and the benevolent society in Launceston, opened the Launceston Invalid Depot for men in 1868 and set aside part of the gaol - already condemned as uninhabitable - to accommodate aged, infirm destitute women. In Hobart, the government provided for women in the Cascades Invalid Depot (a former female factory) from 1869 where bedridden inmates were housed in damp and poorly ventilated wards. The women were moved in 1874 to improved accommodation in the New Town Charitable Institution, but it too lacked adequate medical care. The criteria for admission was much the same as New South Wales: the combination of an inability to work and the absence of family or friends to provide support.

64 Queensland was not a colony until its separation from New South Wales in 1859 but the Moreton Bay district was a penal settlement 1824-39 and two shiploads of convict "exiles" were landed there 1849-50.
67 ibid., p 122.
68 ibid., pp 122-4.
69 ibid; see also appendix, p 175.
From the early 1860s the Tasmanian government increasingly provided outdoor relief but generally insisted that married couples and single or widowed, aged, infirm women enter a government establishment to receive assistance.70 The Hobart Dorcas Society and the benevolent societies in Launceston and Hobart distributed their meagre resources, in the form of rations. Widows or deserted wives unable to support their children were expected to put them in the Cascade depot or orphan asylum and work to contribute to their maintenance.71 From 1872 the government's outdoor relief was administered by a Department of Charitable Grants. Increasing outlays by 1880 prompted the government to hand over relief in Hobart to the Hobart Benevolent Society which had exercised stringent economy and regular examination of its own recipients but the arrangement ended in 1889. The department distributed relief to country recipients by means of allowances paid through local wardens, police and the clergy.72

In Queensland, the Dunwich Benevolent Asylum, according to historian Raymond Evans, "took out of sight, out of mind to new extremes".73 After a tentative start in 1865 the asylum was permanently established the following year in the old quarantine station on Stradbroke Island in Moreton Bay. In 1867 the Colonial Secretary assumed control from the Immigration Department74 and the government provided outdoor relief previously administered by Brisbane Hospital.75 Prior to the establishment of Dunwich, the colony's hospitals received funding to set aside wards as benevolent asylums which caused resentment76 as it did in New South Wales when there were insufficient beds for acute cases.

70 ibid., p 126.
71 ibid., pp 128-31.
72 ibid., pp 128-31.
76 Evans, "The Hidden Colonists", p 80.
Virtually anyone who was deemed socially unacceptable was dumped at Dunwich and forgotten. They included young and old men and women who were able-bodied vagrants or inebriates, physically disabled or senile. During the 1870s they were joined by blind, paralysed, terminally-ill, imbecile and epileptic men, women and children aged from ten to seventy-eight. Tubercular cases also sent there were doomed in the unsuitable tropical climate. The women were initially housed in the original brick hospital but the majority of the dilapidated buildings were unlined timber sheds which were not waterproof; tubercular inmates were completely isolated and lived in tents. After several sexual assaults the women’s quarters were enclosed by a high paling fence. Adequate bathing and laundry facilities were not built until 1880. The only lighting was candles made by the inmates. Inmates slept on stretchers and were locked out of the buildings during the day even when it rained. Men and women inmates did all the work of the asylum including the tending of a herd of cattle and the cultivation of a large vegetable garden.

Although Dunwich was forty miles downstream from the nearest hospital there were no trained nurses. A doctor paid weekly fleeting visits to the inmates who by 1884 numbered 390. He was rarely summoned at other times, although as Evans noted, men and women were "dying painful deaths" and there was never an inquest yet hundreds died there. The asylum received little attention from the clergy for the first twenty years - in the early 1880s a Presbyterian minister called every six months; burial services in the cemetery were conducted by the superintendent or an inmate.

77 Evans, Charitable Institutions, pp 152-3.
78 Goodall, Whom Nobody Owns, pp 39-40.
79 Evans, Charitable Institutions, p 52.
80 Goodall, "Nothing beyond myself and Mr Watkins": James Hamilton and the Dunwich Benevolent Asylum 1865-1885" in Brisbane: Moreton Bay Matters, Brisbane History Group Papers, no 19, 2002, p 42.
81 Evans, Charitable Institutions, p 177.
82 ibid., pp 177-8.
83 ibid.
84 Evans, "The Hidden Colonists", pp 79, 84.
85 Evans, Charitable Institutions, p 182.
86 ibid; Goodall, Whom Nobody Owns, p 130.
The first superintendent in 1865 was a doctor and former inmate of a lunatic asylum who was dying from alcoholism. In 1868, James Hamilton, a warden since 1866 and a former lime burner possessing no medical knowledge, was appointed superintendent and remained until 1885. Hamilton's approach was punitive rather than protective and he inflicted regular floggings. The inmates were said to be dressed in rags and their diet was short of milk, vegetables and fruit, despite the presence of cattle and a large vegetable garden. Hamilton and George Watkins, his assistant from 1871, were suspected of robbing inmates of food and clothing. In 1884 Hamilton was accused by inmates of conducting a shop on the island where he sold government stores.

Following an 1884 inquiry into Dunwich Benevolent Asylum, legislation was introduced to improve the conditions and management of the colony's charitable institutions but as Evans has pointed out, the emphasis was still on discipline rather than compassion. Hamilton was dismissed and replaced by a medical superintendent in 1885 who introduced measures to improve security for the women.

Like Tasmania and Queensland, New South Wales had continued to receive an annual payment from the Imperial treasury for the maintenance of British convicts still under imperial sentence who were confined in lunatic and "invalid" asylums. By the late 1870s the amount payable to the New South Wales government covered approximately forty convicts: £1038 6s 8d in 1876 and £996 10s in 1877. The 1877 claim included only the lunatic asylums at Parramatta and Newcastle and the Liverpool asylum for infirm, destitute men. Why the government asylums at Hyde Park and Parramatta were omitted is difficult to

87 Evans, Charitable Institutions, p 47.
88 Evans, "The Hidden Colonists", p 83.
89 Evans, Charitable Institutions, p 178; Goodall, "Nothing beyond myself and Mr Watkins", pp 41-2.
90 ibid., p 40.
91 Evans, Charitable Institutions, p 184.
92 ibid., pp 185-6.
93 Colonial Secretary, Convict Returns 1876-79, CSIL, SRNSW 4/818.2.
comprehend. But for Hyde Park Asylum this was not a recent decision - its women were not included in claims in the 1860s when it was even more likely that some inmates were still under imperial sentence. It could not have been a general exclusion of women for the 1877 claim included seven female inmates of Parramatta Lunatic Asylum. $^{94}$ Perhaps the large turnover of women at Hyde Park Asylum mitigated against the collection of the necessary data. In 1879, 285 women were admitted and 214 discharged; the daily average number of inmates was 269. $^{95}$ Hyde Park Asylum was overcrowded and numerous deserving applicants were being turned away. The government finally acknowledged the absolute necessity to provide increased accommodation for infirm, destitute women and purchased fifty acres of the Newington estate on the Parramatta River and set aside just under four acres as the site for a new asylum. Newington had been granted in 1807 to John Blaxland who built the existing mansion in 1831-32. Since the 1860s it had been used as a private boys' school. $^{96}$

In May 1881 Sydney was hit by a major smallpox epidemic which lasted until mid-February the following year. In his study of the epidemic, Peter Curson describes the "wave of hysteria and panic" that swept across the city, "the like of which had never been seen before". $^{97}$ On 17 June 1881 Frederic King advised the Colonial Secretary that at Hyde Park Asylum, he had banned the women's visitors and their monthly leave of absence. All applicants for admission to the infirm asylums would be required to supply a medical certificate and any "doubtful" female cases would be isolated in a cottage in the vicinity of the Macquarie Street Asylum at Parramatta. $^{98}$

By mid-September restrictions had been lifted at Sydney Infirmary, but King's application to do so at Hyde Park Asylum was refused by the Board of Health on

$^{94}$ ibid.
$^{95}$ see appendix 2.
$^{98}$ Manager, Government Asylums to Principal Under Secretary, 17 June 1881, letter 81/4186, CSIL, SRNSW 1/2523.
the grounds that the women, if granted leave, were likely to visit infected parts of
the city and bring the disease back with them; it was considered essential to
protect the female immigrants in the Immigration Depot. The Board of Health’s
refusal was justified given that the major outbreaks of smallpox occurred in the
heavily populated unsanitary areas of the city where the poor and most
disadvantaged people resided. It eventuated that King’s request was premature:
the outbreak flared again at the end of September. Nevertheless, the women
immigrants’ hiring days, which attracted large crowds to the barracks,
continued.

Restrictions were still in place at Hyde Park Asylum in February 1882 by which
time the situation had become ludicrous. Frederic King pointed out to the Colonial
Secretary on 3 February that the matron’s family had been passing freely in and
out of the asylum for the duration. Again on 21 February he complained that
the quarantining of asylum women "out of consideration for the immigrants" was
unreasonable when the "Hall and entrances to the offices are daily filled with the
unemployed who, coming from all parts of the City, attend on the Immigration
Agent for passes to the Country Districts". King added that friends of the
immigrant women were permitted to visit them and asked the Colonial Secretary to
explain "why the old women are to be shut up and deprived of the visits of their
children and friends". The restrictions were lifted soon after.

In his annual report for 1881 King referred to the public criticism to which he and
his department had been subjected over the lengthy quarantining of Hyde Park
Asylum during the smallpox scare. He noted that many of the women had left,
preferring the hardships "outside" to suffering nine months of privation.

99 Ibid., Manager, Government Asylums to Principal Under Secretary, 15 September 1881,
letter 81/6532; H G Alleyne to Health Board, 25 September 1881.
100 Carson, Times of Crisis, pp 94-5.
101 Sydney Morning Herald, 17 July 1881 (Peterborough), 23 September 1881 (Nineveh).
102 Manager, Government Asylums to Principal Under Secretary, 3 February 1882, letter
82/916, CSIL, SRNSW 1/2523.
103 ibid., Manager, Government Asylums to Principal Under Secretary, 21 February 1882,
letter 82/1408.
Nevertheless he pointed to the dramatic decrease in the annual number of deaths to forty-eight which he attributed to the banning of leave which in turn had kept the women "from the evil associations of the city and its public houses".\textsuperscript{104} In the preceding and following years, the number of deaths were seventy-one and seventy-five respectively.\textsuperscript{105}

Despite the number of women who elected to leave the asylum, there was no relief of the overcrowding. In 1879 Hugh Robison had informed the Colonial Secretary there were patients in Sydney Infirmary with "Constitutional and quasi chronic ailments", who, in his opinion, could be moved to the government asylums in order to relieve the shortage of hospital beds.\textsuperscript{106} His suggestion that the Colonial Secretary remind directors of the infirmary that "skilled Medical treatment" was always provided at the asylums was outrageous, given that the medical officer visited Hyde Park for an hour daily and there were no trained nurses. From 1880 owing to increasing admissions from Sydney Infirmary and country hospitals the asylums were to some extent evolving into convalescent hospitals.\textsuperscript{107}

In 1881 when Sydney Hospital was building on the site of the old infirmary, patients were transferred to the asylums, whom Frederic King believed "should have had benefit of skilled treatment".\textsuperscript{108} Again in 1882 the government ordered the asylums to be opened to destitute persons discharged from "Sydney Hospital and other kindred establishments - those who have not recovered sufficiently to work".\textsuperscript{109} And the expansion of the railways was enabling more paupers in outlying districts to reach Sydney.\textsuperscript{110} The cost to government of maintaining

\textsuperscript{104} Department of Government Asylums, Annual Report, 1881, \textit{NSWLAVP}, 1882, vol 2, pp 1134-5.
\textsuperscript{105} see appendix 3.
\textsuperscript{106} Inspector of Public Charities to Principal Under Secretary, 18 July 1879, letter 79/5569, CSIL, SRNSW 1/2469.
\textsuperscript{110} ibid.
paupers in country hospitals ranged from £47 to £92 per annum whereas in infirm asylums it averaged £13 10s 5d per inmate. King noted in his 1882 report that in England the cost of maintaining a pauper under the Poor Law Guardians was £35 11s 4d: "in the old country" they employed "large staffs of salaried officials. Here food is cheaper and the work done by inmates".\footnote{111}

Robison noted in 1881 that the asylums "continue to show excellent and economical management". They were 30s to £2 cheaper per head than benevolent asylums he had inspected in Victoria in 1880 which had paid staff.\footnote{112} The "economic management" of Hyde Park Asylum bordered on parsimony: the expenditure per head on rations in 1863 was £15 8s 4d and in 1885 £15 3s; the overall outlay on vegetables had decreased from £163 in 1863 to £129 in 1885, yet the number of women had doubled from 153 to 307.\footnote{113} In 1881 the total expenditure on public charities exceeded £100,000.\footnote{114} Robison posited that "an influence and inspection larger and more effective than any the Inspector has hitherto been able to exercise", was requisite.\footnote{115} He enviously drew on his Victorian experience where an inspector of public charities appointed in 1879, who like himself, had no executive functions, had subsequently had his powers extended. Moreover the Victorian government had sought their inspector's recommendations for improving administration and supervision.\footnote{116}

By 1881 the number and diversity of the institutions throughout the colony in Robison's portfolio had expanded to such extent that it was seemingly impossible to expect one person to satisfactorily report on them.\footnote{117} The additional institutions included the Prince Alfred Hospital, the Sick Children's Hospital,

\footnote{111} Department of Government Asylums, Annual Report, 1882, NSWALVP, 1883-84, vol 6, p 625.
\footnote{113} see appendices 1 and 2.
\footnote{115} ibid.
\footnote{116} ibid; Cage, Poverty Abounding Charity Aplenty, pp 26, 154.
\footnote{117} Robison was given a senior clerk in late 1883. Blue Book, 1883, p 35.
Glebe, the Children’s Relief Board, the Industrial Institution for the Blind, Infants’ Home, Ashfield, the Sydney Mechanics Institute and Technical College, forty-eight country hospitals and seventy-four country Mechanics Institutes and Schools of Art.\textsuperscript{118} And in 1883, his friend, Alexander Stuart, then Colonial Secretary, added to Robison’s workload by appointing him to the newly-established Aborigines Protection Board.\textsuperscript{119}

An overcrowding crisis in the male asylums in 1881 resulted in the mansion at Newington being used as temporary accommodation for 100 men.\textsuperscript{120} At Hyde Park Asylum where the daily average had increased to 298 in 1882, the matron’s quarters were converted to accommodation for forty women.\textsuperscript{121} In his report for 1882, Robison, whose recommendations had contributed to the crises, noted that Hyde Park Asylum was "dangerously" overcrowded and "only great attention to cleanliness and ventilation prevented consequent bad results". "Altogether" he opined, "the Asylum ... in its present state, is far from being an Institution creditable to the Colony".\textsuperscript{122} The previous year he had urged "the immediate removal of the Institution and its re-establishment elsewhere under extended and more favourable surroundings".\textsuperscript{123}

At the end of 1882 King received permission to rent The Warren, Thomas Holt’s huge mansion at Marrickville as temporary accommodation for the women. Negotiations proceeded during 1882-83 but the subsequent destruction of the relevant correspondence leaves us ignorant of the reasons why the arrangement failed to come to fruition.\textsuperscript{124} Robison urged that the Colonial Architect "push forward" the erection of the new asylum at Newington.\textsuperscript{125} When building began


\textsuperscript{119} \textit{Blue Book}, 1888, p 49.

\textsuperscript{120} Department of Government Asylums, Annual Report, 1881, \textit{NSWLA\textit{VP}}, 1882, vol 2, p 1135.

\textsuperscript{121} ibid.

\textsuperscript{122} Inspector, Annual Report, 1882, \textit{NSWLA\textit{VP}}, 1883-84, vol 6, p 643.

\textsuperscript{123} Inspector, Annual Report for 1881, \textit{NSWLA\textit{VP}}, 1882, vol 2, p 1019.

\textsuperscript{124} Information compiled from Colonial Secretary’s correspondence indexes and registers; the 1883 register noted the voluminous correspondence was destroyed on 25 November 1940.

\textsuperscript{125} Inspector, Annual Report, 1883, \textit{NSWLA\textit{VP}}, 1883-84, vol 6, p 700.
at Newington the men were moved to Parramatta into the former tweed factory adjoining the George Street asylum.¹²⁶

Frederic King reported that during 1884 applications for admission to the asylums included sixty-nine newly-arrived immigrants with phthisical [tubercular] diseases, "who evidently sought to recruit their health in this climate".¹²⁷ In 1885 he noted the deaths of several young women from phthisis in Hyde Park Asylum.¹²⁸ King believed that immigrants were not being given a thorough medical examination prior to embarkation. These together with many of the applicants admitted in 1884 had initially sought treatment in Sydney, Royal Prince Alfred or Little Bay Hospitals, but instead "were compelled to shelter in Asylums". The "conversion of the asylums in such a large measure into hospitals" had increased expenditure on medicines and medical appliances.¹²⁹

Reporting for 1885 Frederic King drew attention to the startling increase in deaths at Hyde Park Asylum to ninety-three compared with seventy-six the previous year. The higher death-rate in all of the government asylums, he attributed to the Inspector of Public Charities' decision to admit people in the last stages of illness who were unable to get into hospitals.¹³⁰ King insisted that surgeons had continually advised the "unsuitability of these establishments for the treatment of such cases" and noted the inspector had recommended 504 of the 2997 admitted to the asylums.¹³¹ He lamented:

¹²⁷ Department of Government Asylums, Annual Report, 1884, NSWLAVP, 1885, vol 2, p 611.
¹²⁹ Department of Government Asylums, Annual Report, 1884, NSWLAVP, 1885, vol 2, p 611.
¹³¹ ibid.
No doubt the expense to the State is less, but ... such economy is hardly desirable or justifiable at the expense of the comfort and care essential in such cases, and which can best be obtained in Hospitals where there are trained attendants, and every proper means of alleviating the sufferings of poor indigent people who are compelled to seek shelter ... in their last hours.\textsuperscript{132}

At Hyde Park Asylum the daily average had grown to 307. King praised the four matrons in charge of the asylums: "It is a matter for congratulation, and reflects creditably on the officials that, although persons have been admitted suffering from almost every kind of infectious disease, the Asylums have been free from any epidemic".\textsuperscript{133}

In January 1886 King informed the Colonial Secretary that as it appeared to him it would be some time before the Newington Asylum could be occupied, work was required at Hyde Park Asylum which "for want of paint & whitewash [had] become very dirty, presenting a most dilapidated aspect".\textsuperscript{134} Because of the anticipated removal to new accommodation, little work had been undertaken to the building since 1880 when the shingled roof had been covered with corrugated iron to make it water-tight.\textsuperscript{135} Hugh Robison in his report for 1885 - compiled in mid 1886 - noted: "It was expected that Newington would have been completed before the end of the year, but it was found impossible to remove there till the first quarter of the present year, and even then the buildings were in a very unready state".\textsuperscript{136} Robison's first decade as inspector ended as it had begun - still constrained by a lack of authority, his recommendations, regardless of their worth, were ignored unless they diminished expenditure. His relationship with King had deteriorated as a result of the pressures he had imposed on the destitute asylums.

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{132} ibid.
  \item \textsuperscript{133} ibid.
  \item \textsuperscript{134} Manager, Government Asylums to Colonial Secretary, 21 January 1886, letter 86/851, CSIL, SRNSW 4/876.1.
  \item \textsuperscript{135} Inspector, Annual Report, 1880, \textit{NSWLAVP}, 1881, vol 4, p 918.
  \item \textsuperscript{136} Inspector, Annual Report, 1885, \textit{NSWLAVP}, 1885-86, vol 2, p 659.
\end{itemize}
CHAPTER SIX

MISTRESS OF ALL SHE SURVEYS:
THE MATRON OF HYDE PARK ASYLUM

Lucy Applewhaite Hicks was matron of Hyde Park Asylum for its entire quarter-century existence. Her appointment may have been due to the patronage of the Colonial Secretary Charles Cowper or, as current matron of the Immigration Depot, she may simply have been in the right place at the right time. Lucy was young and had no experience in the care of infirm, destitute women. Nevertheless, she emerges from the evidence as a self-assured, efficient woman who capably juggled the dual responsibilities of matron and motherhood - and for much of the time as the family breadwinner.

Born Lucy Hannah Langdon in Sydney on 5 November 1833 and baptised at St Philip’s Church of England a month later on 8 December,¹ she was the sixth child and second daughter of John Langdon and his wife Hannah Mary (known as Mary). John and Mary (nee Trinder) married in London in c.1823 and emigrated to New South Wales in 1828. They paid for their passage on the cargo ship Wave arriving in Sydney on 2 December 1828 with their three young sons, John and William (born in England) and Chadwick born on the voyage.² Lucy was one of four children born in the colony; the others were Elizabeth (1831), Thomas Augustus (b&d 1832) and Emily Jane (1835).³

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¹ St Philip’s Church of England Register of Baptisms, NSW Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages, vol 17 entry 332.
² Colonial Secretary: Reports of Vessels Arrived 1828, SRNSW 4/5199 (COD 21); Chadwick Walter Charles Langdon born at sea 25 October 1828, St Philip’s Church of England Register of Baptisms, NSW Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages, vol 16 entry 252. The name of their second son William is confirmed in John Langdon’s will, NSW Supreme Court, Probate series 1, no 719.
³ St Philip’s Church of England Register of Baptisms, NSW Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages, vol 15 entry 407 (Elizabeth); vol 16 entry 254 (Thomas); vol 19 entry 275 (Emily); St Philip’s Register of Burials, vol 16 entry 1505 (Thomas).
Langdon who described himself as a merchant in the Wave’s passenger manifest, had sent ahead a cargo of wine and books to sell and brought with him letters of introduction to the governor in the hope of gaining government employment. In September 1829 having decided to establish himself as a carcase butcher he successfully applied for a grant of land on Darling Harbour on which to erect a slaughterhouse.

Langdon prospered: by the end of 1831 he was "selling large quantities of beef to shipping and for exportation", had obtained a 1280-acre grant of good grazing land in the County of Murray, owned cattle and pigs, and the family had moved from Bathurst Street to premises at 79 lower George Street in The Rocks. In 1829 Langdon had obtained two assigned convicts and twelve in 1832 presumably for his southern holdings. The following year he purchased 1280 acres at East Bargo and was granted one more assigned convict.

In the last quarter of 1835 apparently aware of his impending death John Langdon began to liquidate his assets: the Australian on 20 November 1835 reported that "Langdon’s Wharf" at Darling Harbour had been sold. John Langdon died on 13 December 1835 aged thirty-seven at 95 lower George Street leaving Mary with six children aged twelve years to six months. His rural landholdings passed to mortgagees but she retained the George Street premises and realised £975 from the sale of the wharf which was finalised in April 1836.

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4 J Langdon to Governor Darling, 9 September 1829, 28 July 1831, Colonial Secretary Correspondence re Land, SRNSW 2/7903.
5 ibid; see also Land Titles Office, Book F no 537.
6 J Langdon to Governor Darling, 27 October 1830, 28 July, 27 September 1831, Colonial Secretary Correspondence re Land, SRNSW 2/7903; see also Land Titles Office, Book E no 393, Book F no 694.
7 Enclosure with Darling to Murray, 2 April 1830, Despatch 14, ML A1206, p 354.
8 Enclosure with Bourke to Goderich, 10 May 1833, Despatch 47, ML A1211, p 662.
9 Land Titles Office, Book G nos 479 and 690.
10 Enclosure with Bourke to Glenelg, 23 November 1835, Despatch 111, ML A1214, p 716.
11 Sydney Morning Herald, 14 December 1835.
12 Land Titles Office, Book J no 696.
Eighteen months later on 29 March 1837 at St Philip’s, Mary married Thomas Holmes,\textsuperscript{13} also a carcase butcher. Holmes, a bachelor from Bristol, embraced his new found family life: in his will executed in 1842 he appointed as his executors his stepson John Langdon and Mary’s brother Charles Trinder who had joined her in the colony.\textsuperscript{14} At the end of 1843 he settled on his "beloved wife" Mary, or in the event of her predeceasing him, on her six children, three George Street premises adjacent to Queen’s Wharf, Sydney Cove and allotments at Glebe and Burwood.\textsuperscript{15} By a second deed in 1844 Holmes added two whole sections of a Glebe subdivision to the settlement\textsuperscript{16} and in 1847 appointed John Langdon trustee of his New Zealand holdings near Auckland.\textsuperscript{17} As a butcher, Holmes had been well placed to survive and profit from the 1840s economic depression. Land Titles records reveal he had the ready cash to acquire city, suburban and rural landholdings and to loan substantial funds by way of mortgages.\textsuperscript{18}

At the time the family was still living in George Street but by 1849 had taken up residence in Glebe. Holmes set up the three Langdon sons - John and Chadwick as butchers and William in his other enterprises. The three Langdon daughters, Elizabeth, Lucy and Emily received an education including music lessons - Lucy’s subsequent letters are well structured and punctuated and reveal she possessed a good vocabulary.\textsuperscript{19}

From 1848, Holmes a co-founder of the FitzRoy Iron Mining Company,\textsuperscript{20} invested heavily in coal and iron bearing land near present-day Mittagong. To finance this exciting pioneering iron mining venture he began to sell or mortgage

\textsuperscript{13} St Phillip’s Church of England Register of Marriages, NSW Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages, vol 21 entry 1355.
\textsuperscript{14} NSW Supreme Court, Probate Series 3 no 3664.
\textsuperscript{15} Land Titles Office, Book 6 no 185.
\textsuperscript{16} ibid., Book 7 no 274.
\textsuperscript{17} ibid., Book 13 no 963.
\textsuperscript{18} See Land Titles Office, Vendors’ Indexes 1825-1856, entries for Thomas Holmes.
\textsuperscript{19} For example, Lucy Applewhaitie to Immigration Agent, 19 December 1861, letter 61/4973, with 69/1631, CSIL, SRNSW 4/651.
\textsuperscript{20} Land Titles Office, Book 22 no 716.
his real estate. The FitzRoy mine was the first place in Australia where iron was smelted and Holmes is said to have sent specimens of iron to Bristol for assay and to cutlers in Sheffield for manufacture into knife-blades with promising results. One of his partners in the mining speculation was John Conrad Korff who had married the eldest Langdon daughter, Elizabeth, in 1847.

Lucy Langdon, two months before her seventeenth birthday, married John Lythcote Applewhaite, a thirty-year-old master mariner, at Christ Church St Laurence on 12 September 1849. According to his death certificate, Applewhaite, the son of Ann and Philip Applewhaite (a gentleman), was born at Barbados in the West Indies, and had first voyaged to New South Wales in the early 1840s. At the time of his marriage he was master of the William Hyde, a London-registered barque of 534 tons built in 1841 that carried cargo and passengers. The vessel, under the command of Captain Steward, had made earlier voyages from England to the antipodes: to New Zealand in 1845 and to Sydney in 1846 and plied between Australian ports until early 1847.

John Applewhaite first appears in New South Wales shipping records in 1849 as master of the William Hyde when it arrived from England - the vessel landed passengers and cargo at Adelaide and Port Phillip and arrived Sydney in ballast on 6 August 1849. In his journal of the voyage Scottish emigrant Andrew McCraken recorded that the stowage of luggage had been disorganised and the victuals miserable but "the conduct of Officers and Crew" he considered "must be

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21 For acquisitions, Land Titles Office, Book 22 nos 716, 717; Book 24 no 479; for various mortgages see Land Titles Office Vendors’ Index 1848-1856.
24 Land Titles Office, Book 24 no 479; NSW Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages, vol 32C, entry 23.
25 Christ Church St Laurence Register of Marriages, NSW Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages, vol 34 entry 112.
26 Information from his death certificate, NSW Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages, 1869/648.
27 Colonial Secretary: Reports of Vessels Arrived 1849, SRNSW 4/5236.
far above an average for Gentlemanyness ... so polite and obliging" and was pleasantly surprised by the absence of swearing.  

Two weeks after their marriage Lucy sailed with her husband on the *William Hyde* bound for London via Hokianga, New Zealand. When the vessel returned to Sydney on 25 November 1850 the passenger list included Miss Applewhaites - one-month-old Mary Lucy Adelaide, born on the voyage. During the next three years the *William Hyde* plied between England and New Zealand via the Cape Verde islands, making intermediate trips between Auckland, Sydney and Melbourne. A son Philip was born on board in 1852. 

In February 1853 the *William Hyde* left Sydney for New Zealand calling at Newcastle to take on board passengers and a cargo of 140 cattle, 40-50 horses and 730 merino sheep. Accompanying the valuable livestock were Lucy’s uncle Charles Trinder - then farming at Patrick’s Plains, Mr Holstead a veterinarian and Mr Singleton a horse dealer. Most of the livestock was apparently from Thomas Holmes’s Hunter Valley property. This information comes from the published account of the young peripatetic adventurer, John Askew, who had witnessed the “fine barque” rounding the Nobbies coming into Newcastle and, "having a great desire" to see New Zealand, promptly booked his passage in steerage. 

The vessel departed Newcastle on 26 February, farewelled by Thomas Holmes. Although travelling steerage Askew mixed freely with the cabin passengers and crew; amongst the latter was Jackey Jackey who recounted his tragic expedition with explorer Edmund Kennedy in 1848. Captain Applewhaites was a "stout,

29 Mary Lucy Adelaide born on board, 28 October 1850, Christ Church St Laurence, Baptisms Register, NSW Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages, vol 35, entry 2209; Colonial Secretary: Reports of Vessels Arrived, SRNSW 4/5238.
31 ibid.
32 ibid., p 291.
broad-faced, good-looking Englishman, about 30 years of age, a thorough son of the sea, as strong as two ordinary men." But it was Lucy, on board with her two children and their nurse, who entranced Askew:

She had in perfection the finely chiselled features so peculiar to the women of Sydney. Her hair was dark brown, and was shaded back in luxuriant tresses, fastened behind with a plain black ribbon. She generally wore a black satin dress, and a small white collar round her neck ... and she was as amiable as beautiful. With unfavourable winds and ailing livestock, Applewhaite altered course from Wellington to Auckland. Hospital pens for the sick sheep were set up on each side of the cuddy where Lucy nursed them "as carefully as ever Miss Nightingale nursed the wounded soldiers at Scutari; but ... die they would and did, in spite of all her efforts to save them". Fifty sheep, eight cattle and two horses died on the voyage; the remaining livestock landed in poor condition but all except the horses recovered quickly in time for their scheduled sale.

The William Hyde left Auckland on 22 April 1853 bound for Melbourne and whatever calamity occurred to the vessel en route changed the course of the Applewhaites' lives. A twentieth-century account of the voyage records that the barque, when approaching The Bluff in New Zealand's south island, ran aground and was wrecked. The William Hyde was not wrecked, for after an obvious delay it docked in Melbourne on 28 May where it landed forty-six passengers and a cargo of potatoes, timber and hay. But the vessel then disappears from shipping records for some years which suggests that it had sustained sufficient

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34 Askew, *Voyage to Australia & New Zealand*, p 311.
35 ibid., pp 310-11.
36 ibid., p 318.
37 ibid., p 354.
38 *Southern Cross*, 23 April 1853.
40 *Argus*, 28 May 1853.
damage to warrant major repairs.\textsuperscript{41}

Lucy, children and nurse sailed from Melbourne on the \textit{Shamrock} arriving Sydney on 8 July;\textsuperscript{42} John Applewhaite followed in August and during the next six months he travelled as a passenger several times between Sydney and Melbourne.\textsuperscript{43} In February 1854 the family left for Melbourne but Lucy was back in Sydney by April 1855 when their third child Elizabeth was born at Glebe.\textsuperscript{44} In August and September of that year Applewhaite again sailed to Port Phillip as a passenger.\textsuperscript{45} Lucy gave birth to two more daughters at Glebe: in 1857, a namesake Lucy Hannah who died soon after birth and Emily in 1858.\textsuperscript{46} John Applewhaite had apparently given up the sea, for by 1859, he and a relative, Edward Applewhaite, were keeping livery stables in Pitt Street when they were declared insolvent.\textsuperscript{47}

On 8 May 1861 the Immigration Agent informed the Colonial Secretary that the matron of Hyde Park Immigration Depot had taken up an appointment at Darlington Gaol and requested a "suitable person" be found to fill the vacancy.\textsuperscript{48} Five days later Lucy Applewhaite, with the Executive Council’s approval, commenced duties as the new matron with an annual salary of £70\textsuperscript{49} and living quarters provided on the middle floor of the main building in the compound. The resignation of the former matron was fortuitous. The

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\textsuperscript{41} Melbourne shipping notices had no listing of the \textit{William Hyde}'s departure for some time and it was not listed in \textit{Lloyd's Register of British and Foreign Shipping}, 1854-55; a barque by that name of the same tonnage arrived Sydney from Bluff Harbour, NZ on 29 March 1856 under the command of John Raymond.

\textsuperscript{42} \textit{Sydney Morning Herald}, 8 July 1853.

\textsuperscript{43} Colonial Secretary: Shipping Reports, SRNSW 5/4244; \textit{Sydney Morning Herald}, 2 September, 1 November 1853, 18 January, 7 February 1854.

\textsuperscript{44} \textit{Sydney Morning Herald}, 17 February 1854; Christ Church St Laurence Baptism Register, NSW Registrar of Births Deaths and Marriages, vol 42 entry 3014.

\textsuperscript{45} Victorian shipping indexes; \textit{Sydney Morning Herald}, 13 September 1855.

\textsuperscript{46} NSW Registrar of Births Deaths and Marriages, Lucy 1857/3061, 1857/1602; Emily 1858/2556.

\textsuperscript{47} NSW Supreme Court, Insolvency Papers, SRNSW 2/8976, no 4578. Edward Applewhaite was apparently a relative; he was a witness to one of Thomas Holmes's land titles deeds (Book 36 no 36 dated 29 January 1855).

\textsuperscript{48} Immigration Agent to Colonial Secretary, 8 May 1861, Immigration Agent letters to Public Officers, SRNSW 4/4655, pp 300-1.

\textsuperscript{49} \textit{Statistical Register of New South Wales for the year 1861}, p 106.
Applewhaite’s circumstances must have been desperate to prompt Lucy to seek employment. Her stepfather Thomas Holmes was either unwilling or, because of the failure of the FitzRoy mining venture, unable to render financial assistance.\textsuperscript{50} But it seems likely that he played a role in Lucy’s appointment by Charles Cowper, the Colonial Secretary, who was well known to Holmes through a political - and possibly financial - interest in the FitzRoy mine.\textsuperscript{51} No official record of Lucy Applewhaite’s application for government employment has been found in the Immigration Agent’s papers or the Colonial Secretary’s correspondence indexes.

A position as matron was one of the very few employment opportunities open to a woman of Lucy’s circumstances.\textsuperscript{52} Such appointments, according to Katrina Alford, were biased towards “free and middle-class women” of “respectable background and credentials”, with the emphasis on respectability being equated to some extent with marriage.\textsuperscript{53} While Lucy fitted these requirements, she was only twenty-seven and mother of four or five (another daughter was born about this time) and had no prior experience as matron. But she had not led a comfortable middle-class existence and no doubt had developed a pragmatism and maturity beyond her age through life at sea.

In \textit{Hen Frigates} (a traditional term for merchant ships with the captain’s wife on board), Joan Druett describes the vicissitudes faced by the multitude of "sea sisters" like Lucy: tempestuous weather, risk of shipwreck, becoming expert in taking observations, tending to injuries, playing hostess to cabin passengers and overseeing the pantry steward. They also gave birth without medical assistance and had to cope with cramped living quarters and the isolation of life at sea.\textsuperscript{54}

\textsuperscript{50} R Else Mitchell, “Mittagong and District, its Industrial Development”, \textit{JRAHS}, vol 26, 1940, pp 428-30.
\textsuperscript{51} \textit{NSWLCP}, 1854, vol 1, p 288. Cowper vacated the chair during a debate on the mine.
\textsuperscript{52} K Alford, \textit{Production or Reproduction?: an economic history of women in Australia 1788-1850}, Melbourne, OUP, 1984, p 184.
\textsuperscript{53} ibid., pp 184-5.
Lucy could empathise with the young female immigrants in her charge who had endured the long sea voyage to face the challenges of a new life in the colony. As matron, her duties were relatively light: for the remainder of the year only three ships arrived carrying assisted immigrants leaving the depot empty much of the time. The young women were received in the Immigration Depot usually on the day of arrival, a religious service was held the following morning, the majority were collected by relatives or friends, and on hiring day the rest quickly dispersed upon their engagement as domestic servants. The couple's fortunes improved when John Applewhaite commenced duties on 20 July 1861 as an "extra" clerk in the Immigration Agent's office at Hyde Park Barracks at a salary of 10s per day.55

Their responsibilities increased dramatically in February 1862 upon the government's sudden decision to establish an asylum for infirm, destitute women on the top floor of Hyde Park Barracks. Charles Cowper, the Colonial Secretary, elevated John Applewhaite to master of the new institution; Lucy was appointed matron while retaining her position in the Immigration Depot.56 The couple were given twenty-four hours to prepare quarters to receive the first 100 women being transferred from the Benevolent Asylum.

The master's duties were largely clerical and involved recording the receipt and issue of all stores including provisions, clothing and medical comforts (usually brandy) and the preparation of monthly abstracts for the board.57 He also maintained the register of inmates' admissions and discharges for submission at weekly board meetings together with a diary noting any matters requiring the board's attention58 which included any assistance provided to the matron with refractory inmates.

55 ibid.
56 Executive Council, Minute Book, 18 February 1862, SRNSW 4/1541, p 270.
58 ibid.
The matron was responsible for all matters pertaining to the general welfare of the inmates: maintaining discipline, enforcing personal hygiene, supervising the preparation of meals, ensuring cleanliness of the cooking and eating utensils and airing the building and bedding. Lucy Applewhaite’s years at sea would have prepared her for many exigencies but it must have been rather confronting to inherit overnight the care of infirm women aged from eighteen to ninety-two, some bedridden by age or illness, others with physical or intellectual disabilities, others suffering from the effects of alcohol. The only paid servant was the head laundress, and it fell to the matron to organise able-bodied inmates to undertake all other chores including the making of clothing and to oversee meals for the women who numbered 150 by mid-March. She was pregnant again with a son who was born in August but died the following year. It was a seven-day-a-week job besides the added demands of a young family. There was little or no time for socialising as the master and matron were not permitted to be absent at the same time nor were they to be "without the walls" after 10pm.

With none of the asylum’s records maintained by John Applewhaite surviving, as master he remains fairly anonymous except for occasional letters to the Colonial Architect requesting removal of ashes or small repairs to the building and some warrant applications prepared for the board for the transfer of inmates to lunatic asylums. His annual salary for the first year during the setting up of the establishment was £200 and reduced to £100 the following year. Lucy’s salary as matron of the asylum was £100 and in 1863 her salary as the Immigration Depot matron increased from £70 to £100. At the destitute male asylums at Parramatta and Liverpool the masters each received £150 and their wives as matrons £50, the latter amount reflecting their subordinate roles in comparison to Lucy’s responsibilities. In England the salary of the master of Birmingham workhouse that held 1994 inmates was £250 and at Manchester (1894 inmates) was

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59 ibid.  
60 ibid.  
62 ibid.  
63 ibid.
£240. Large institutions such as these had a fair number of paid staff and the matron’s salary was usually about one-third of the master’s with accommodation provided.\(^{64}\)

Lucy’s duties as matron of the Immigration Depot were usually onerous only for the brief period that the young women were present but occasionally married women and their children were accommodated longer while the husbands went upcountry in search of work. Each group of new arrivals required strict attention to hygiene. In March 1865 the Immigration Agent reported that children admitted to the depot from the previous two ships had been suffering the effects of measles and whooping cough contracted on the voyage.\(^{65}\) And the following year the single women on the Peerless did not use the baths during the whole voyage and arrived at depot "in a very dirty state and much covered with vermin".\(^{66}\)

The matron’s living quarters on the middle level comprised the two front rooms each 19 x 35 feet, one of which contained a kitchen and, for some years, the sub-matron’s accommodation. In 1865 the Colonial Architect installed ceilings in the matron’s quarters to prevent "leakage" from the incontinent inmates in the hospital wards above.\(^{67}\) And the following year he replaced the kitchen range that had been there since 1848 and which was also used by the sub-matron, ships’ matrons and sometimes by female immigrants when only a few were left in the depot.\(^{68}\)

The Colonial Architect however rejected the Applewhaites’ application for one of the three baths in the new bath house to be partitioned off for their exclusive use as this would substantially reduce bathing accommodation for the inmates, besides it was not customary to "provide such accommodation at the public expense for

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\(^{65}\) Immigration Agent to Colonial Architect, 3 March 1865, Colonial Architect, Government Immigration Barracks, SRNSW 2/642B.
\(^{66}\) Immigration Agent to Colonial Secretary, 18 July 1866, Immigration Agent, Reports on Arrival of Immigrant Ships, SRNSW 4/4624, pp 185-6.
\(^{67}\) Immigration Agent to Colonial Architect, 3 March 1865, Colonial Architect, Government Immigration Barracks, SRNSW 2/642B.
\(^{68}\) Immigration Agent to Principal Under Secretary, 31 May 1866, Immigration Agent, letters to Public Officers, SRNSW 4/4638, pp 655-7.
Overseers of Establishments". And the matron’s goats and poultry were a source of irritation to the Immigration Agent who complained that they destroyed the trees and shrubs in the plantation in front of the building. Her cow was depastured in the Domain.

On 18 May 1865 in addition to his master’s duties, John Applewhaite was re-appointed clerk in the Immigration Agent’s office at an annual salary of £100. This would have been financially convenient for on 9 May his estate had been sequestrated by the Official Assignee on the petition of Thomas Gregan who had obtained a judgment for £65 8s 4d in the Supreme Court on 30 December 1864 for non-payment of several promissory notes the first of which had been due on 16 April 1863. The debt was apparently settled as the order was superseded on 1 June 1865. But this was not the end to Applewhaite’s financial difficulties. On 31 July 1866 the Crown Law Office informed the Colonial Secretary of writs granted by the District Court against members of his department since January including six against John Applewhaite totalling £36. The letter conveyed the Attorney General’s concern that such indebtedness interfered "to some extent with their efficiency as Public Servants, as well as to reflect discredit upon themselves"; he would be "glad to hear of their so arranging their affairs" to prevent another appearance on this type of return.

On 23 January 1867 the Immigration Agent informed the Colonial Secretary that on 4 January Applewhaite had sequestrated his estate but had assured him the liabilities amounting to £500 arose chiefly from "business misfortunes" that

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69 Secretary, Government Asylums Board to Colonial Architect, 15 December 1865, Colonial Architect, Hyde Park Asylum, SRNSW 2/642A.
70 Immigration Agent to Principal Under Secretary, 27 July 1867, Immigration Agent, letters to Public Officers, SRNSW 4/4658, p 897.
72 Blue Book, 1865, p 65.
73 NSW Supreme Court, Insolvency Papers, SRNSW 2/9147, no 7116.
74 Crown Law Office to Principal Under Secretary, 31 July 1866, letter 66/3898, CSIL, SRNSW 4/577.
75 Ibid.
occurred prior to his civil service appointments.\textsuperscript{76} Schedule D of Applewhaite’s insolvency papers indicates that while some debts dated from 1856, the majority had been incurred since 1862.\textsuperscript{77} They mainly comprised unpaid promissory notes but there were also amounts due to doctors and druggists, substantial accounts for meat and groceries, and in particular, for drapery and wearing apparel. The latter were for Lucy’s purchases from such erstwhile establishments as Madame Ponder of Maison de Paris, Farmer’s and David Jones for expensive fabrics, mohair dresses, black mourning clothes for the family, "best kid" boots and shoes for the children, innumerable pairs of gloves, ribbon and lace.\textsuperscript{78} Lucy had not made any concessions to her middle-class standard of living and dressed herself and children in the latest fashions. The mourning apparel was required following the deaths in 1864 of her brother William Langdon and stepfather Thomas Holmes and in 1865 when their seven-year-old daughter Emily died of heart disease.

The Official Assignee at the first (and only) meeting on 27 February took into account the couple’s combined income of £400 per annum and accepted John Applewhaite’s offer to pay off his creditors at £7 10s per month. He allowed the family to retain their furniture and apparel valued at £26.\textsuperscript{79} The official inventory of the Applewhaites’ quarters in Hyde Park Asylum contained an ill assorted, inadequate assemblage for a family of seven which suggests valuable items had been sold or perhaps spirited away to another part of the building. Lucy’s piano with which she had entertained the inmates on special occasions was not listed nor was there any reference to the children’s bedroom/s or furnishings.\textsuperscript{80} Applewhaite exhausted the Official Assignee’s patience. He had paid only one instalment and after many threatening letters eventually called on the assignee to advise he "was out of the employ of Government & was scarcely able now to keep his family" but hoped to resume payments if he could obtain another "government

\textsuperscript{76} Immigration Agent to Colonial Secretary, 23 January 1867, letter 67/483, CSIL, SRNSW 4/589.
\textsuperscript{77} NSW Supreme Court, Insolvency Papers, SRNSW 2/9226, no 8090.
\textsuperscript{78} ibid.
\textsuperscript{79} ibid.
\textsuperscript{80} ibid.
situation".  

Applewhaite was not exactly truthful; he had lost his job in the Immigration Office in September 1867 but was still master of the asylum with a salary of £100. There is no record in the insolvency papers of further payments.

While the Immigration Agent had promptly reported Applewhaite’s pecuniary embarrassment to the Colonial Secretary, the secretary and the board of government asylums were silent - possibly in deference to Lucy. In August 1867 the board submitted to the Colonial Secretary, Henry Parkes, her request "to cause a new carpet to be laid down in my parlour. I feel that when this building is visited by the HRH Duke of Edinburgh there will be no other place than my parlour to show him into". She regretted that under her present circumstances she was "not able to make it fit for his reception". Parkes thought it unlikely the duke would visit Mrs Applewhaite’s parlour "but if the furniture is found by Government & a new carpet is merited I give my approval". And in September 1868 approval was given for a room to be partitioned off the matron’s kitchen for use as a bedroom.  

Lucy had borne a daughter Clara in 1865 and a son William in June 1868.

Applewhaite again came to Parkes’s attention in 1868 when Punch reporter Frank Hutchinson complained that he had acted dishonourably in a dispute concerning a promissory note for £60. Applewhaite acknowledged existence of the note but rigorously denied the charges, casting doubt on the character of Hutchinson who had been seen one night attempting to auction off his wife to a crowd in King Street. Applewhaite insisted, and Parkes concurred, that it was a private issue and the matter was dropped.

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81 ibid., Official Assignee, Statement, 14 November 1867.
82 Lucy Applewhaite to Government Asylums Board, 26 August 1867 with Board to Principal Under Secretary, 28 August 1867, letter 67/5400, CSIL, SRNSW 4/603.
83 ibid., annotation by Parkes.
84 Department of Public Works to Principal Under Secretary, 12 September 1868, letter 68/5066, CSIL Register, SRNSW 5/2517.
85 F Hutchinson to Colonial Secretary, 28 March 1868, letter 68/1636, CSIL, SRNSW 4/623.
86 ibid., J Applewhaite to Colonial Secretary, 6 April 1868, letter 68/1845.
John Applewhaite died of heart failure at Hyde Park Asylum on 27 May 1869, aged forty-nine,\textsuperscript{87} survived by his widow Lucy and six children aged between eighteen years and eleven months. The board officially notified Henry Parkes of Applewhaite’s death on 8 June informing him that "for some time past, the late Master was only useful in so far as the knowledge of his presence on the premises might be of assistance in preventing or quelling disturbances". Taking into consideration "the skill, energy, and tact, displayed by Mrs Applewhaite in the fulfilment of her duties" the board recommended the master’s position be abolished and that "sole charge be vested in Mrs Applewhaite as Matron". They proposed a salary of £150 per annum equal to that of the male officers in charge of Liverpool and Parramatta asylums.\textsuperscript{88} On Parkes’s recommendation, Lucy’s appointment was confirmed by the Executive Council on 21 June 1869.\textsuperscript{89} This was an early recognition of equal pay for equal work but Lucy was not better off financially as a decline in immigrant arrivals had resulted in the reduction of her salary as matron of the Immigration Depot from £100 to £20 in April 1869.\textsuperscript{90}

According to the Blue Book for 1869, the forty women employed in the civil service, comprised twenty-eight matrons, two sub-matrons, seven teachers and three postmistresses. With her combined salary of £170, Lucy, along with the matrons of the two orphan schools who received £164, were the most highly remunerated matrons in the civil service. Lucy Osburn, brought to the colony in 1868 by Henry Parkes as Lady Superintendent of Sydney Infirmary and to introduce a training scheme for nurses,\textsuperscript{91} was not a civil servant but her salary came from government funds. Despite Osburn’s onerous responsibilities her salary remained at £150 for several years.\textsuperscript{92} She did not draw, as has been claimed, "the highest salary of any woman paid from government funds in the colony".\textsuperscript{93}

\textsuperscript{87} NSW Registrar of Births Deaths and Marriages, 1869/648.
\textsuperscript{88} Government Asylums Board to Principal Under Secretary, 8 June 1869, letter 69/4335, CSIL, SRNSW 4/660.
\textsuperscript{89} New South Wales Government Gazette, 6 July 1869.
\textsuperscript{90} Blue Book, 1869.
\textsuperscript{91} Australian Dictionary of Biography, Carlton Vic, MUP, 1974, vol 5, p 377.
\textsuperscript{92} ibid; J Godden, "On Writing a Biography of Lucy Osburn", Locality, Winter 2003, pp 8-9.
\textsuperscript{93} ibid.
Eliza B Daly, postmistress at West Maitland, the largest provincial post office in the colony, received a base salary of £300,\(^4\) supplemented by commissions on stamp and money order sales,\(^5\) making her the highest paid woman in the civil service. Postmistress Jemima Wickham at Parramatta received £280 and Faith Kellett at Penrith, £200.\(^6\) Their salaries greatly exceeded those of the matrons. The matron of Newcastle Reformatory for Girls earned £120; further down the scale were matrons of the two lunatic asylums and the Newcastle Industrial School for Girls who each received £100. Mary Burnside at the destitute asylum at Liverpool, who in similar circumstances as Lucy Applewhaite, succeeded her husband in 1869, but her salary remained at £50 until 1872. Sixteen of the matrons were employed in gaols: the matron at Darlinghurst was paid £100; the rest were located in the country, four in major towns received £42 and the remainder £20. The salaries of the seven women teachers - two at the Newcastle Industrial School for Girls, the others at the orphan schools at Parramatta - ranged from £40 to £75.

In February 1870 as a result of the transfer of forty-nine inmates from Port Macquarie asylum to Hyde Park which substantially increased her duties, Lucy applied to the board for an increase in salary adding "I need hardly remind the Board that all the Dresses & Underclothing of the Inmates are cut out and made up under my own superintendence at a great saving".\(^7\) Despite the board’s support, the request was deferred until 1871 when both Lucy and Mary Burnside’s salaries were increased to £200.\(^8\)

Lucy Applewhaite married William Henry Hicks on 4 June 1870 at St James’s Church opposite the asylum.\(^9\) Hicks, who was born c.1827 in Caston, Norfolk,

\(^{4}\) *Blue Book*, 1869.
\(^{5}\) D Deacon, *Managing Gender: the state, the new middle class and women workers 1830-1930*, Melbourne, OUP, 1989, p 75.
\(^{6}\) *Blue Book*, 1869. Not listed was Eliza Pearson, whom Deacon notes was postmistress at Camden at that time. Deacon, *Managing Gender*, pp 33-4.
\(^{7}\) Government Asylums Board to Principal Under Secretary, 7 February 1870, letter 70/2274, CSIL, SRNSW 4/690.
\(^{8}\) *Blue Book*, 1871, P 33.
\(^{9}\) NSW Registrar of Births Deaths and Marriages, 1870/507.
the son of John Raby Hicks (gentleman) described himself as a bachelor, but he had previously married a Charlotte Bailey in London around 1850. He was a family friend; in 1867 he had issued a promissory note for £150 as security on one of John Applewhaite's debts and the last Applewhaite child, born in June 1868, was baptised William Henry. Hicks was also known to Frederic King, secretary of the Government Asylums Board whom he used as a referee in 1867 when applying for a civil service appointment. In this application to the Colonial Secretary for "any appointment for which you may consider me eligible", Hicks wrote that he was a Cambridge graduate and in England had served "on the Commission of Peace for Norfolk, and took a leading part in educational and other matters connected with the district and County in which I resided". He had also been a visitor at the gaol and lunatic asylum and "a regular weekly attendant at the Poor House Board".

Hicks stated that he had resided in the colonies for about six years, part of the time in New Zealand where he was engaged in "mercantile business" until the outbreak of war. In New South Wales he was employed for some time as a private tutor by Dr Traill of Collaroy Station near Merriwa who had "kindly expressed his interest for me in my recent application for an Inspectorship of Schools". As well as Frederic King and Dr Traill, Hicks's other referees included George F Pickering, MLA and publisher of Bell's Life in Sydney and Dr Campbell of Tarban Lunatic Asylum. Curiously, Hicks neglected to mention that he was an ordained anglican priest and a Bachelor of Laws. He matriculated from Corpus Christi, Cambridge at Michaelmas 1847 and was re-admitted on 13 October 1849. In 1851 he was ordained a deacon at Salisbury and a priest the following year. In 1853-55 Hicks was curate of Ramsbury, Wiltshire. He graduated Bachelor of Laws in 1855 and until 1864 was listed in a church directory as vicar (and patron)

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100 NSW Supreme Court, Probate Series 4 no 8206; NSW Registrar of Births Deaths and Marriages, 1894/3988.
101 W H Hicks to Colonial Secretary, 20 February 1867, letter 67/1164 with 68/5403, CSIL, SRNSW 4/635.
102 ibid.
103 ibid.
of Watton, Norfolk. Hicks was the author of *A Concise View of the Doctrine of the Baptismal Regeneration* (London, 1856) and of numerous tracts.\(^{104}\)

William Hicks’s various applications for government employment were unsuccessful but he apparently found casual employment as a journalist. In June 1872 he privately sent Henry Parkes his account of a trip to Ironbarks published in the latest issue of the *Australian Town and Country Journal*, taking the opportunity to remind the Colonial Secretary of his experience "in the old Country in the management & examination of Schools".\(^{105}\)

In 1873 Parkes was responsible for an inquiry into the public charities wholly or partially funded by government, with instructions to the commissioners to focus primarily on the Sydney Infirmary and the two orphan schools at Parramatta.\(^{106}\) Lucy Hicks was examined on 24 September 1873 and her evidence is presented here largely verbatim to provide an insight into her personality and her perceived status, fully confident of the board’s and the secretary’s support:

"When Sir Charles Cowper brought them [the women] here he said that he wished the place to be as self-supporting as possible and that has been my great aim".\(^{107}\) Lucy informed the commissioners she had "no clerical assistance or anything of that sort" and had "to keep a good many books" - "I make them up every night when all the people are in bed".\(^{108}\) They comprised admission and discharge registers and daily diary, store book, ration returns, rough book of boots and shoes issued. There were also the weekly returns of inmates and monthly abstracts of rations required by the board.\(^{109}\) Her eldest daughter Mary maintained the stock book: "She puts every woman’s name down as she gives them boots and


\(^{105}\) W H Hicks to Henry Parkes, 1 June [1872], Parkes Papers, ML A888, pp 136-8.


\(^{107}\) ibid., Minutes of Evidence, response to Q2353.

\(^{108}\) ibid., response to Q2270, Q2279, Q2281.

\(^{109}\) ibid., response to Q2279.
slippers, lest they should require them a little too often. She is not an officer of
the institution, but she does that in a kind way for me". The head laundress
was still the only paid servant. Twenty-one inmates were paid amounts
ranging from twopence to one shilling a day to work in the kitchen and laundry,
or as wardswomen, nurses, needlework-caretaker and messenger.

Lucy with some satisfaction informed the commissioners that the inmates did "all
the house-work" and made "everything that they wear". The brown wincey
Lucy selected for their dresses was a disappointment: "We used to have plaid until
this winter and I acknowledge that I made a mistake when I asked the Board to
change it". For undergarments and sheets they received "perhaps 1,000 yards
of calico, and [I] set to and cut it out. There are sheets to be patched - because
when a sheet goes into holes I do not throw it away; I turn the sides to the middle,
and make it do again; the old women are celebrated for patching". She
complained "I have felt greatly the loss of that office I used to have at the bottom
of the stairs where I used to cut out". She previously had this room and three
others, "but Mr Wise, at the time the Census was in preparation, applied and got
these rooms, and his having them has put me to very great inconvenience". Many
times she had "an hour to cut out, and I could lock the room up and leave
it; but now I am obliged to keep at it, and say I am not at home, for I cannot
leave the material when I once begin to cut it out". As the census had been
completed, she wanted the rooms back.

\footnote{10}{ibid., response to Q2281.}
\footnote{111}{ibid., response to Q2282.}
\footnote{112}{ibid., Special Appendix 4, Lucy Hicks to Secretary, Public Charities Commission, 12 July
1873.}
\footnote{113}{ibid., response to Q2351, Q2353.}
\footnote{114}{ibid., response to Q2360.}
\footnote{115}{ibid., response to Q2368.}
\footnote{116}{ibid., response to Q2368.}
\footnote{117}{ibid., response to Q2302.}
\footnote{118}{ibid., response to Q2369.}
\footnote{119}{ibid., response to Q2303.}
Quizzed about the inmates' meals, Lucy assured the commissioners "We endeavour to give them their meals as comfortably as we can - it adds to their comfort". The meat was served hot in a joint to each mess of eight and she would "go round whenever I think it necessary" assisting those unable to cut up their meat. The soup was "as nice as possible, and I am sure that any one could take a plate of it. We skim the soup you know ... and sell the fat, besides giving the old women all that they want of it". She or the cook faithfully weighed the bread every day to ensure it was the correct weight. When concern was expressed about the condition of the tin cups and dishes, Lucy insisted they were cleaned and polished every morning - "I find that tin dishes are discoloured by tea ... when very old they are discarded".

She was quite indignant when it was suggested that the inmates bathed in cold water: "No, poor creatures, not cold water; there are hot and cold taps". They bathed every Saturday and washed every morning: "if it is a very cold wet day I stop the bath, because aged people require different treatment". And she asserted "I certainly do not approve of a person going into one of my beds without a bath. When they come in they go into a bath, and all the clothes belonging to them are put into a vessel of water and taken out and washed; I never allow a dirty rag to come into my place".

When asked if the institution was too crowded, Lucy retorted "Decidedly so ... We have some fine rooms in the Volunteer Department ... the large band-room for instance; it would be invaluable if it were in proper repair ... It is in a most deplorable state ... I could not sleep myself with the knowledge that people were in such danger ... The roof might come down". Currently the institution held

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120 ibid., response to Q2232.
121 ibid., response to Q2328, Q2331.
122 ibid., response to Q2351.
123 ibid., response to Q2320.
124 ibid., response to Q2332-3, Q2337.
125 ibid., response to Q2367.
126 ibid., response to Q2364.
127 ibid., response to Q2374.
128 ibid., response to Q2293-8.
220\textsuperscript{129} but "there are many turned away who should be admitted".\textsuperscript{130} Some of the current inmates, she believed, were capable of supporting themselves or had relatives who could support them - "the fault lies with the pauper laws of this Country"\textsuperscript{131} - "the Board cannot refuse to admit them, because they are really destitute".\textsuperscript{132} "I grieve to say that children will not always keep their parents. They should do so, but they do not".\textsuperscript{133}

The small number of young inmates were "blind and we have a few idiots ... and some complete cripples who are very young".\textsuperscript{134} While Lucy felt that Hyde Park was not the place for any young women and the "imbeciles" would be better off in the Newcastle institution,\textsuperscript{135} she assured the commissioners they were well looked after: "we tell off one woman for that business entirely - one of the inmates".\textsuperscript{136} Ignoring the comment that the room in which the eight worst cases were accommodated was "very damp and dark", she conceded it was "dull" but nevertheless thought they were happy.\textsuperscript{137} She voiced her concern for the inmates "when insane people are sent to me ... it is a source of bitter complaint. We have to keep them for ten days or a fortnight sometimes, and I have only a small room to put them in, and that one woman will perhaps keep 100 poor old souls awake night after night. I think that it would be well if we were permitted to send them at once to the receiving house".\textsuperscript{138}

Lucy resented the high-handedness of the Sydney Infirmary committee in sending infectious and terminal cases whom the board were "compelled to admit ... out of pure charity".\textsuperscript{139} "I have had chronic cases sent from the Infirmary as incurable

\textsuperscript{129} ibid., response to Q2283.
\textsuperscript{130} ibid., response to Q2300.
\textsuperscript{131} ibid., response to Q2286.
\textsuperscript{132} ibid., response to Q2287.
\textsuperscript{133} ibid., response to Q2285, Q2287.
\textsuperscript{134} ibid., response to Q2310-11.
\textsuperscript{135} ibid., response to Q2389.
\textsuperscript{136} ibid., response to Q2314.
\textsuperscript{137} ibid., response to Q2315.
\textsuperscript{138} ibid., response to Q2373.
\textsuperscript{139} ibid., response to Q2312.
cases, and I have known them afterwards go out to service. I think that we are treated unfairly in that respect. We get cancer cases, and I have no ward for cancer cases. It is not right to put such cases with the old women".140 In full flight concerning the Sydney Infirmary, Lucy added "and another thing, it is not more than a week ago since I had a case of itch [scabies] ... such cases should not be brought to me. I have no room to put them by themselves... and I cannot tell you what care we had to take with it to prevent the disease spreading through the institution ... it was only by the greatest care and always sending things to be burned, that it was prevented from spreading".141 Vagrants ordered to the asylum by magistrates were sometimes brought in by the police escort at 7 and 8 o'clock at night, "when our fires are all out"142 - "I now have to get nurse up, and in the best way we can, we sponge the patient over, and in the morning we give her a bath. It is very disagreeable".143

Asked to suggest how the institution might be improved, Lucy responded "There are many improvements which might be suggested; for instance if we had a casual ward there, it would be a great blessing".144 Such a ward would allow her to isolate the problematical cases including patients covered in vermin sent from the infirmary.145 When the possibility of re-opening Port Macquarie asylum was put to her, Lucy remonstrated with the committee: "There never was a more cruel thing than moving the institution to Port Macquarie"146 - the women had "cried so bitterly" - "they would rather starve in the streets of Sydney".147

In earlier evidence Christopher Rolleston, chair of the board of government asylums had deemed Lucy Hicks "an admirable woman"148 and while he agreed

140 ibid., response to Q2372.
141 ibid., response to Q2373.
142 ibid., response to Q2374.
143 ibid., response to Q2376.
144 ibid., response to Q2370.
145 ibid., Frederic King, response to Q1554. King, Inspector of Public Charities confirmed that patients received from Sydney Infirmary were covered in vermin.
146 ibid., Lucy Hicks, response to Q2379.
147 ibid., response to Q2391.
148 ibid., response to Q1355.
that Hyde Park Asylum was not suitable to the purpose that "it is wonderful that Mrs. Hicks does what she does with the people there".\textsuperscript{149}

Stephen Robens, a "city missionary" and regular visitor since the asylum opened observed that the inmates were happy and comfortable: "I think as far as the sick women go, there is not a better institution to be found".\textsuperscript{150} However he had some reservations about the onerous work expected of aged inmates, particularly those whose tasks involved nursing that "required some one with strength".\textsuperscript{151} Robens read and prayed with the dying women, held services in the downstairs dining hall and distributed tracts.\textsuperscript{152} In an oblique reference to the matron, he criticised the "good deal of partiality" shown to Protestants but when warned such charges would be followed up and the findings published in the proceedings, he declined to continue.\textsuperscript{153} While there is no other evidence of Lucy Hicks favouring Protestants, she showed some prejudice against the aged blind inmates, later condemning "some" as "the worst class" in the asylum.\textsuperscript{154}

The inquiry continued until February 1874. In the final report in May the commissioners found that Hyde Park Asylum was "altogether too confined" and its city location "quite unsuitable".\textsuperscript{155} In conjunction with their recommended closure of the Catholic Orphan School at Parramatta they proposed that ultimately the asylum be moved there.\textsuperscript{156} The commissioners strongly urged government action on the undesirable presence of lunatics and imbeciles in the asylum. The representations of Rolleston and Lucy Hicks concerning the dilapidated volunteer

\textsuperscript{149} ibid., response to Q1344.
\textsuperscript{150} ibid., response to Q2515. Robens was well known for his work with the organisation which later became the Sydney City Mission; his surname is mispelled as Robins in the minutes of evidence. June Owen, The Heart of the City: the first 125 years of the Sydney City Mission, Kenthurst NSW, Kangaroo Press, 1987.
\textsuperscript{151} ibid., response to Q2514.
\textsuperscript{152} ibid.
\textsuperscript{153} ibid., response to Q2522.
\textsuperscript{154} Report of the Government Asylums Inquiry Board, NSWLAVP, 1887 (2), vol 2, Minutes of Evidence, response to Q95.
\textsuperscript{156} ibid.
quarters had had the desired effect: after years of inaction the commissioners noted that repairs had already commenced.\textsuperscript{157} Having recommended that the asylum be moved the commissioners were opposed to any other major building expenditure.\textsuperscript{158} This was an oblique reference to new quarters proposed for Lucy and her family which she alluded to in her evidence - that the board and the Colonial Architect had discussed building a cottage for her "at little expense" by erecting it on part of the existing foundations at the western end of the volunteer quarters; her removal from the main building would allow accommodation for an additional forty inmates.\textsuperscript{159}

The commissioners reported that Mrs Hicks's management of Hyde Park Asylum was "highly efficient and most economical"\textsuperscript{160} but she failed to score the effusive praise bestowed on Mary Burnside, the matron of Liverpool and its surgeon-superintendent, Dr Strong, who discharged their duties "in the most efficient manner, and the perfect harmony with which they work the institution is highly creditable to both".\textsuperscript{161} Their "vigour and energy", according to the commissioners appeared to have "infused themselves into the very inmates", the workers applying themselves "with a cheerfulness and eagerness pleasant to witness".\textsuperscript{162}

English social reformers, Rosamund and Florence Hill's unannounced visit to the Liverpool asylum in 1873, echoed the commissioners' experience: "so cheerful and industrious an air prevails that it was difficult to recognise, as we walked through the wards, the workshops, and the garden, that we were among sick and aged paupers".\textsuperscript{163} The Hill sisters also called at Hyde Park Asylum, "in one of

\textsuperscript{157} ibid.
\textsuperscript{158} ibid.
\textsuperscript{159} ibid., response to Q2298-9.
\textsuperscript{161} ibid., p 113.
\textsuperscript{162} ibid., p 114.
\textsuperscript{163} Rosamund Hill and Florence Hill, \textit{What we Saw in Australia}, London, Macmillan, 1875, p 335. The Hill sisters who were visiting relatives in South Australia, took the opportunity to inspect asylums in the colonies and were invited by the commissioners to give evidence on
the fashionable quarters of the town", and were equally impressed by Lucy Hicks "whose qualifications are as remarkable as those of Mrs. Burnside".  

On 1 January 1875 Lucy's twenty-four-year old daughter Mary Applewhaite who for some time had been her mother's unpaid assistant was appointed to the newly-created position of sub-matron of the asylum with an annual salary of £50. The same year Frederic King the secretary of the board wrote to the Colonial Secretary concerning the "unhealthy state" of the matron's quarters and urged for provision of new premises to be included in the 1876 estimates. The Colonial Secretary's correspondence registers for the remainder of 1875 and for 1876 record an ongoing exchange about the matter: initially a proposal to rent a house for Lucy and subsequently a request for additional rooms to be provided in the asylum. Eventually, in January 1877, King requested the Public Works Department to instal gas lighting in the matron's "new" quarters. Just where this "new" accommodation was located within the barracks is unknown but it was certainly needed for Lucy's increasing family. In addition to the surviving children of her first marriage - four daughters and two sons aged from twenty-six to eight - she had borne three children by Hicks: Lucy in 1871, John in 1874, and in 1876, Claud who died soon after birth.

The barracks was bursting at the seams. The daily average number of asylum inmates had grown from 152 in 1867 to 269 by 1877. The same year there was a dramatic increase in the number of female immigrants passing through the

their work in England with neglected children.

154 ibid., pp 336-7.
155 Blue Book, 1875, p 33.
156 Secretary, Board of Government Asylums to Colonial Secretary, 10 August 1875, letter 75/5691, CSIL Register, 1875, SRNSW 5/2532.
158 Manager, Department of Government Asylums to Principal Under Secretary, 4 January 1877, letter 77/184, CSIL Register, 1877, SRNSW 5/2536.
159 NSW Registrar of Births Deaths and Marriages, births 1871/1083 (Lucy), 1874/509 (John), 1876/499 (Claud); deaths 1876/477 (Claud).
160 Information compiled from Annual Reports; see Appendix 2.
depot. Since 1866 the annual number of immigrant ships arriving had not exceeded four; in 1877 there were seventeen arrivals, some within days of each other.\textsuperscript{171} Lucy’s salary as matron of the Immigration Depot had dropped from £100 to £20 in 1869 with the decline in arrivals; it increased to £35 in 1872 possibly in recognition of her increased workload during the previous three years when she and the Immigration Agent, George Wise were the only staff and had to process the immigrants at the depot and organise hiring days.\textsuperscript{172} Her salary was raised to £50 in 1875 and by 1877 when immigration resumed in earnest, staff had been augmented by a permanent chief clerk/accountant, a clerk and a temporary sub-matron who was paid thirty shillings per ship.\textsuperscript{173}

The clerk and Lucy Hicks suffered great personal anguish in 1877. Lucy and William Hicks were sued for slander by the clerk, Mr Schreyer when they accused him of the rape of their eleven-year-old daughter in his office in the barracks. The Immigration Agent had immediately suspended Schreyer. The matter was heard in the Banco Court before the Chief Justice; the jury of four found in favour of the defendants but declared Schreyer innocent of the charges. Nevertheless he resigned as he felt it was impossible to return to the immigration office. The Immigration Agent recommended to the Colonial Secretary that Schreyer be compensated by payment of his salary from the date of suspension to his resignation.\textsuperscript{174}

Lucy’s distress over events concerning her young daughter may have been responsible for the anguish she caused the husband of an inmate. In September 1877 the police officer at Trunkey notified the Colonial Secretary that he had not received replies to his letters to the matron of Hyde Park Asylum seeking information on Ellen Clarke who had been sent from Bathurst Gaol to the asylum in February or March 1877. At that time her husband James Clarke was in

\textsuperscript{172} Blue Book, 1869-1872.
\textsuperscript{173} ibid., 1875, p 28; ibid., 1877, p 29.
\textsuperscript{174} Immigration Agent to Principal Under Secretary, 12 June 1877, Immigration Agent, letters to Public Officers, SRNSW 4/4659 p 787; Sydney Morning Herald, 30 May 1877.
Bathurst Hospital, but was now gainfully employed and able to support her.\textsuperscript{175} Henry Parkes demanded an explanation.\textsuperscript{176} It eventuated that Ellen Clarke was admitted as Ellen Murphy and had died on 8 March;\textsuperscript{177} Lucy had failed to pass the letters to the manager for reply and they were now mislaid. Frederic King lamely reported to Parkes: "Mrs Hicks has been cautioned to be more careful in future".\textsuperscript{178} It was quite heartless of Lucy to have ignored enquiries concerning an inmate, particularly one who had died. One could also attribute negligence to Frederic King, who as manager, surely should have notified the next of kin at the time of death.

Immigrant ships continued to arrive regularly: thirteen in 1878 and twelve in 1879. The \textit{Evening News} reported on 1 July 1879 that the single women from the \textit{Samuel Plimsoll} were at the Immigration Depot "under the stern though benevolent rule of Mr. Wise, the immigration agent, tempered by the gentle authority of Mrs. Hicks". Two days later the paper described the melee of hiring day: "Before the doors had been 20 minutes open nearly all the girls had found employers ... Too much praise cannot be given to the authorities for the care which has been exercised in guarding against the girls meeting with undesirable employers, and no one who visited the depot this morning could possibly come away without having admired the business-like style and kindliness displayed by the matron, Mrs. Hicks".\textsuperscript{179}

The \textit{Australian Town & Country Journal} of 19 July 1879 depicted scenes of the chaotic crowded conditions of the hiring room, immortalising Lucy Hicks, fashionably dressed and "business-like" behind the counter. On hiring day on 31 October for the single women off the \textit{Strathleven}, the \textit{Evening News} recorded that

\textsuperscript{175} Police Officer, Trunkey to Principal Under Secretary, 13 September 1877, letter 77/7560, CSIL, SRNSW 1/2382.
\textsuperscript{176} ibid., Parkes, annotation 19 September on Manager, Government Asylums to Principal Under Secretary, 18 September 1877, letter 77/7711.
\textsuperscript{177} ibid.
\textsuperscript{178} ibid., King, annotation 20 September on Police Officer, Trunkey to Principal Under Secretary, 13 September 1877, letter 77/7560.
\textsuperscript{179} \textit{Evening News}, 3 July 1879.
"Mrs. Hicks, the matron at the depot, was untiring in her exertions to satisfy all parties concerned". A fortnight later, just after her forty-seventh birthday, Lucy gave birth to her fourteenth and last child, Francis.\textsuperscript{180} Earlier that year her daughter Helen Applewhaite had married Thomas William Garrett, a civil servant cum law student and member of the Australian cricket team. His father was Thomas Garrett, MLA and a former newspaper proprietor, thus it seems likely that William Hicks's journalistic connections had brought the young couple together.\textsuperscript{181}

Lucy Hicks seems to have continued as the family's major breadwinner. In the early 1870s William Hicks had served as secretary to the "General Election Committee"\textsuperscript{182} and in 1875 applied unsuccessfully yet again for a civil appointment - this time as Inspector of Public Charities.\textsuperscript{183} A year later he contemplated carting away blood from abattoirs to make fertiliser.\textsuperscript{184} In 1878 Hicks became joint proprietor and editor of \textit{Sydney Punch}, a satirical, often cutting, political, but unprofitable, journal. The articles in \textit{Punch} reflect a recondite knowledge of the classics but unfortunately - and perhaps judiciously - carried no bylines. Hicks probably contributed an intellectual rigour to his family that more than compensated for his lack of pecuniary support. The high regard in which William Hicks was held became evident when he sold \textit{Punch} in 1881. An illustrious - and significantly - non-partisan assembly of the community's "more intellectual classes ... lawyers, doctors, politicians, journalists" marked the occasion with a grand banquet to honour, according to the Minister for Mines, Ezekiel Baker, "a man who had performed one of the most difficult duties of a journalist - that of showing up the folly of the times without being malignant".\textsuperscript{185}

\textsuperscript{180} NSW Registrar of Births Deaths and Marriages, 1879/3513. A daughter Kate died soon after birth in 1878, ibid. 1878/1290; 1878/940.
\textsuperscript{181} NSW Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages, 1879/305. Garrett was later Public Trustee, 1914-24. \textit{Australian Dictionary of Biography}, vol 6, p 625.
\textsuperscript{182} W H Hicks to Sir Henry Parkes, 5 June 1891, Parkes Papers, ML A888, pp 4-7.
\textsuperscript{183} Hicks to Colonial Secretary, 30 August 1875, letter 75/6081, CSIL, SRNSW 1/2301.
\textsuperscript{184} Hicks to Principal Under Secretary, 10 and 23 August 1876, letters 76/5888, 76/6265, CSIL Register for 1876, S2534. He withdrew the application a fortnight later.
\textsuperscript{185} \textit{Sydney Morning Herald}, 23 June 1881; \textit{Daily Telegraph}, 23 June 1881.
In his annual report for 1879 Frederic King commented "It is a noticeable feature ... that all the Asylums are under the immediate control of matrons and that the old people, both men and women, are peculiarly amenable to feminine discipline".\textsuperscript{186} It indeed became a cosy asylum coterie, Lucy and daughter Mary, matron and sub-matron of Hyde Park, Mary Burnside at Liverpool and daughter Jane was appointed sub-matron in 1881; at Parramatta, Catherine Dennis whose inactivity as matron there was recorded in the 1873 inquiry was put in charge upon the death of her husband at the end of 1879 and one of her daughters was appointed sub-matron in January 1880.

Repeated pleas from the manager for the employment of trained nursing staff in the destitute asylums were ignored by government. The changing role of the asylums meant that the matrons were increasingly called upon to care for inmates whose treatment was beyond their capabilities. Such was the case when the Sydney Infirmary was demolished in 1879 for the construction of Sydney Hospital and many of the patients were transferred to the asylums.\textsuperscript{187} The manager noted in 1884 that the asylums' hospital wards were now crowded with invalids and "accommodation was not so suitable for their care as that of the hospitals where proper appliances and trained nurses were obtainable". "These remarks", he added "are intended to show that the Asylums having gradually become in a large degree Convalescent Hospitals, are now Institutions where cases requiring active treatment are frequently admitted".\textsuperscript{188}

Lucy Hicks had to police the restrictions imposed on Hyde Park Asylum by health officials in 1881 when Sydney suffered a major outbreak of smallpox. Inmates were confined, deprived of their usual leave and not permitted visitors. Many women left preferring to chance it on the streets rather than suffer the deprivations

\textsuperscript{188} Department of Government Asylums, Annual Report 1884, \textit{NSW LAVP}, 1885 (2), vol 2, p 611.
inside. The isolation was effective - there were no recorded deaths or cases of smallpox in the asylum.\textsuperscript{189}

William Hicks complained to the Colonial Secretary in April 1883 that there were immigrants with scarlatina in the Immigration Depot and a fortnight later Lucy, through the manager, sought "consideration of her case through fever being introduced into Hyde Park Asylum".\textsuperscript{190} The correspondence has been destroyed; no mention is made of an outbreak of scarlatina, nor any resulting deaths, in the annual reports of the manager or the Inspector of Public Charities for that year. Ever conscious of the threat of infectious diseases in the overcrowded asylum, the inspector, Hugh Robison, in his annual reports unfailingly attributed their absence in Hyde Park Asylum to Lucy Hicks's vigilance and scrupulous attention to cleanliness.

By 1883 the department had rented a house for the matron and her family at 143 Phillip Street, near Hunter Street and her former quarters in the asylum were converted to desperately needed additional accommodation for women inmates.\textsuperscript{191} Frederic King wrote to the Principal Under Secretary in 1885 recommending that in future matrons of government asylums such as Lucy Hicks be styled "Superintendent" seemingly because the recent Civil Service Act had downgraded matrons in status and salary.\textsuperscript{192}

In his annual report for 1885, the manager, Frederic King, lamented the death of Mary Applewhaite the sub-matron: "in her the inmates lost an ever kind and sympathizing friend, and the Public Service has lost a most faithful and efficient

\textsuperscript{189} Department of Government Asylums, Annual Report, 1881, \textit{NSW LAVP}, 1882, vol 2, p 1135.
\textsuperscript{190} Hicks to Principal Under Secretary, 6 April 1883, letter 83/2963; Manager, Government Asylums to Principal Under Secretary, 18 April 1883, CSIL Register, SRNSW 5/2548.
\textsuperscript{192} Manager, Government Asylums to Principal Under Secretary, 30 January 1885, letters 85/1301-4, CSIL, SRNSW 1/2567.
The inmates contributed to a marble plaque in her memory in St James’s Church in King Street where she had worshipped. Mary Applewhaite died of inflammation of the lungs on 21 September 1885, aged thirty-four. When informing the Colonial Secretary of her death, Frederic King added that Matron Hicks was "dangerously ill, and, I am told today, is not expected to recover". He had arranged for Miss Chicken, an immigrant ships' matron, to oversee the asylum with the assistance of another of Lucy’s daughters.

Anticipating Lucy Hicks’s death, Mrs Anna Adams, wife of the messenger in the Immigration Agent’s office, immediately applied to Frederic King for the positions of matron and sub-matron for herself and daughter Beatrice. The following day Mrs Cecilia Jane Hyrons submitted her application for the sub-matron’s position. Hyrons advised that she was forty-seven, twice widowed, respectable and Protestant. She had raised a large family, had been a resident governess and had also conducted a "Ladies School" in Sydney for some years but was now "in very poor circumstances". Her numerous referees included prominent businessmen and parliamentarians such as Sir John Robertson and the current Colonial Secretary, Sir Alexander Stuart, and one from Frank Treatt, the chief clerk in the Immigration Agent’s office who neglected to mention that he was her son-in-law. Treatt also privately sought support for his mother-in-law from Critchett Walker the Principal Under Secretary emphasising she was well educated, possessed a "splendid hand" and was "quick at accounts".

On 28 September, Jane Chicken, aware that Lucy Hicks was recovering, also applied for the position of sub-matron which King forwarded with his

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194 Manager, Department of Government Asylums to Principal Under Secretary, 21 September 1885, letter 85/10392, with 86/1293, CSIL, SRNSW 1/2576.
195 ibid., A Adams to Manager, Department of Government Asylums, 21 September 1885, letter 85/10461.
196 ibid., C J Hyrons to Manager, Department of Government Asylums, 22 September 1885, letter 85/10495.
197 ibid., Frank Treatt to Critchett Walker, 23 September 1885.
recommendation to the Colonial Secretary.\textsuperscript{198} Alexander Stuart on 6 October authorised Miss Chicken to continue as matron of the asylum until Lucy Hicks resumed her duties meanwhile the latter "as a longstanding public servant" was to receive her full salary. Mrs Hyrons was to be sub-matron for three months, "& if found competent", a permanent appointment would be considered but with the asylum’s forthcoming move to Newington it was "essential that sub-matron be a person who can take charge during any temporary absence of the matron".\textsuperscript{199} Margaret Gorman, who many years before had been sub-matron in the Depot under Lucy Hicks, applied for the position of matron of the Immigration Depot upon its becoming vacant when Hicks moved to Newington; her application was accompanied by glowing references from Matron Hicks and George Wise the Immigration Agent.\textsuperscript{200}

On 9 December 1885, Cecilia Hyrons’s application for her position as sub-matron of the asylum to made permanent, was annotated by Frederic King: "The inmates of Hyde Park Asylum will shortly be removed to Newington and Mrs Hyrons services will not be required. Mrs Hicks will accompany the old people and her office as matron of the Immigration Depot will become vacant". He suggested this position be offered to Mrs Hyrons.\textsuperscript{201} Lucy Hicks suggested to the Colonial Secretary on 14 December that her daughter Clara who "renders me very valuable service both in the Asylum & Immigration" was entitled to be appointed the asylum’s sub-matron. Frederic King endorsed the application.\textsuperscript{202}

Cecilia Hyrons wrote to Critchett Walker, the Principal Under Secretary on 2 January 1886 requesting her position be confirmed and in a similar vein on 5 January to Sir John Robertson, the Colonial Secretary: "I was appointed Sub-Matron to this institution by Sir Alexander Stuart three months ago but as Mr

\textsuperscript{198} ibid., J Chicken to Frederic King, 28 September 1885, letter 85/10639.
\textsuperscript{199} ibid., A Stuart, annotation 6 October 1885 on letter 85/10392.
\textsuperscript{200} ibid., Margaret Gorman to Colonial Secretary, 13 November 1885, letter 85/12514.
\textsuperscript{201} ibid., Cecilia Hyrons to Manager, Government Asylums, 9 December 1885, letter 85/13217.
\textsuperscript{202} ibid., L Hicks to Colonial Secretary, 14 December 1885, letter 85/13555.
Hicks went crying to Sir Alex and said his wife was dying at that time, Sir Alex made the appointment temporary to be confirmed at the expiration of three months". She reminisced that Robertson had known her first husband and was responsible for her son-in-law's appointment to the immigration office.  

On 4 January 1886 Frederic King wrote a private letter to Critchett Walker the Principal Under Secretary: "Mrs Hyrons probation will be up tomorrow, I do not wish to report on her unfitness to fill the position of sub-matron, and having acted as you suggested with regard to her application ... I leave the matter in your hands". To Sir Alexander Stuart's minute of 6 January concerning Hyrons, King responded immediately that he could not recommend her appointment, that she "has made little effort to render that assistance which was clearly her duty to do, and she has failed in many ways to carry on the work of the Asylum". 

Cecilia Hyrons was not to be denied; in her petition to the governor, laid before the Executive Council on 12 January 1886, she claimed that her appointment was only made temporary "because the husband of the matron of the said asylum represented to the Colonial Secretary that it would retard the recovery of his wife (who was then ill) if an appointment were made in her absence". Hyrons maintained she had properly performed her duties but had "not received fair play" and that the "matron and manager determined long since to have the matron's daughter appointed to the position". She humbly submitted as a consequence of the treatment she had "received and experienced that the reports of the officers before mentioned are certain to be prejudiced". 

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203 ibid., C Hyrons to Principal Under Secretary, 2 January 1886, Hyrons to Colonial Secretary, 5 January 1886.  
204 ibid., Frederic King to Critchett Walker, 4 January 1886.  
205 ibid., Manager, Government Asylums to Colonial Secretary, 6 January 1886, letter 86/165.  
206 ibid., Petition of C J Hyrons, January 1886, with 86/1293.  
207 ibid.
In a bureaucratic sleight of hand, on 22 January, the Executive Council appointed Margaret Gorman as sub-matron of Newington Asylum under Lucy Hicks from 1 March.\textsuperscript{208} Cecilia Hyrons was given the position of matron of the Immigration Depot.\textsuperscript{209}

Lucy Hicks's final hiring day at the Immigration Depot on 20 January 1886 was even more chaotic than usual. Competition for the domestic servants was keen and additional crowds had been attracted by the rumoured visit of Lady Carrington.\textsuperscript{210} The new governor's wife had already visited the immigrants on board the \textit{Parthia}.\textsuperscript{211} She was dissuaded by the Immigration Agent from attending their hiring day and instead joined the young female immigrants for the customary religious service held in the hiring room the day before.\textsuperscript{212} Afterwards Lady Carrington visited the asylum women: "with some of these she shook hands, and said a few kindly words. Amongst the poor creatures seen were a few who were so enfeebled that they were unable to leave their beds, and in these Lady Carrington seemed to be particularly interested". Upon her departure the other inmates grouped in the yard "manifested their pleasure at seeing the lady of the Governor by giving hearty cheers".\textsuperscript{213}

In the usual melee of hiring day, prospective employers crammed the narrow hall of the Immigration Depot in the hot January weather. The proceedings were halted when two cases of measles were discovered and ambulances were called to remove the young immigrant women to quarantine. Tempers frayed when the crowd was asked to vacate the building and there were protests when one woman announced that she had overheard the matron promising a servant to a parliamentarian's wife. Lucy "excitedly" responded: "I hope that I may drop dead if that's true" and provided a satisfactory explanation of the event to the eavesdropper. The doors

\textsuperscript{208} ibid., Minute, Executive Council, 22 January 1886 with 86/1293.
\textsuperscript{209} \textit{Blue Book}, 1886, p 29.
\textsuperscript{210} \textit{Sydney Morning Herald}, 21 January 1886.
\textsuperscript{211} ibid., 19 January 1886.
\textsuperscript{212} ibid., 20 January 1886.
\textsuperscript{213} ibid., 21 January 1886.
were thrown open again at 2.50pm, when 231 prospective employers vied for the 116 immigrants who were all hired by 4pm.214

The *Sydney Morning Herald* announced on 18 February 1886: "In a few days time the Hyde Park Asylum for aged and infirm women will become tenantless, as the inmates are now in course of removal to the newly-erected institution at Newington on the Parramatta River". On 10 February, almost twenty-four years from the asylum’s establishment on 15 February 1862, the first batch of eight women were sent to Newington. In the ensuing two weeks the rest of the inmates were transferred in groups of about sixty with the last of the 306 women arriving on 1 March. They travelled in covered vans, "as the old dames protested very strongly against being brought under the curious eye of the public ... Most of the inmates felt the abandonment of their old home very keenly, and it was only after considerable difficulty that Mrs. Hicks was able to induce them to enter the vans".

The government rewarded Lucy Hicks (at her prompting) with a bonus of £25 for her tireless efforts in the safe removal of her charges and the asylum’s stores to their new accommodation.215

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214 ibid.
215 L Hicks to Manager, Government Asylums, 13 April 1886, letter 86/3941, CSIL, SRNSW 1/2585.
CHAPTER SEVEN

THE NEGLECTED AND THE NEGLECTFUL: THE ASYLUM AT NEWINGTON

Reporting the removal of the infirm, destitute women to Newington Asylum, the Sydney Morning Herald in February 1886 noted that amongst the inmates were a few who had been part of the "memorable exodus" from the Benevolent Asylum to Hyde Park Asylum nearly a quarter-century before.1 Agnes Barr said she was "the oldest inmate ... indeed I was the first. I came up from the other house, down past the Haymarket".2 And indeed she was Hyde Park's "oldest" in terms of time and had never taken a day's leave since her admission on 15 February 1862.3 Agnes Barr (or McLean) had been admitted to the Benevolent Asylum in 1856, "of unsound mind" and unable to provide further information other than she was thirty and Presbyterian.4 Another permanent inmate was Mary Ann Kennedy, an Irish immigrant who came to the colony in c.1849, and had been admitted to the Benevolent Asylum in January 1862 and six weeks later transferred to Hyde Park Asylum. She had been deserted by her husband and had lost the use of her "limbs".5

Later visiting Newington, the Herald's reporter coyly remarked: "amongst the inmates, there are some to be seen whom age and adversity have not altogether robbed of comely features" but he added there were "other poor creatures smitten with dreadful afflictions and terrible to contemplate". The women who were busily scrubbing complained bitterly to him that despite their labour the dark hardwood

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1 Sydney Morning Herald, 18 February 1886.
3 Agnes Barr to Colonial Secretary, 12 May 1887, CSIL, SRNSW 4/876.1.
4 Benevolent Society of New South Wales, Inmates Journal, ML A7229, Admissions and Discharges Register, ML *D575. She may have been the Agnes McLean who arrived with her parents and siblings as Scottish bounty immigrants on the Duncan in 1838. Persons on Bounty Ships, SRNSW 4/4829.
5 BNSW, Inmates Journal, ML A7232, Admissions and Discharges Register, ML *D575.
flooring would never look white: "They recall with sorrow the memory of their old home at Hyde Park, with its snowy boards.\textsuperscript{6}

The new purpose-built asylum followed the hospital-design principles espoused by Florence Nightingale and promoted by members of the colony’s medical fraternity who had witnessed their effectiveness in England. The use of detached pavilions was intended to separate functions and to prevent cross-infection.\textsuperscript{7} At Newington, as elsewhere in the colony, the design was adapted to counter the hot antipodean summers by incorporating wide verandahs for shade and shelter and which were essential for an asylum where the able-bodied inmates were excluded from dormitories during the day.

The two main buildings were two-storeyed brick structures encircled by timber verandahs, with large high-ceilinged wards on both floors; the hospital wards with separate accommodation for "Catholics and Protestants" were located on the ground floors. The other scattered structures were single storey of either brick or corrugated iron and comprised dining hall, kitchen block, bath house, laundry, sewing room, morgue and an isolated ward for cancer and sore-leg [ulcer] patients.\textsuperscript{8} The matron (now styled matron-superintendent) and her family, the sub-matron and the head laundress had quarters in nearby Newington, the mansion built on the estate by John Blaxland in the early 1830s.\textsuperscript{9}

The removal of inmates from Hyde Park Asylum which began on 10 February 1886 was completed on 1 March.\textsuperscript{10} The \textit{Sydney Morning Herald} declared: "It may be said at once that a great mistake has been made in removing the inmates to it in its present unfinished condition. The workmen are still busily engaged upon it

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  \item \textsuperscript{6} \textit{Sydney Morning Herald}, 8 March 1886.
  \item \textsuperscript{8} \textit{Sydney Morning Herald}, 8 March 1886; see plan of Newington Asylum, \textit{NSWLAVP}, 1887 (2), vol 2, appendix D.
  \item \textsuperscript{10} \textit{Sydney Morning Herald}, 18 February, 3 March 1886.
\end{itemize}
in various places, the ground is not yet levelled, there is no gas, and the water supply is deficient". The hasty exodus from Hyde Park is said to have been prompted by the government’s wish to convert the main building to courts, rid the compound of its unsightly smelly latrine blocks and to spruce up the exterior in time for Queen Victoria’s jubilee in 1887 and the various celebrations intended to be held at her statue in Queen’s Square opposite the barracks’ gates. Just as it was extraordinary that Hyde Park Asylum had been created so swiftly, it was equally remarkable that within five months the new asylum at Newington, would be the subject of an official inquiry.

From the beginning of Newington’s construction to the arrival of its new inmates there were changes in government and five colonial secretaries of whom three presided over critical phases of its establishment. Alexander Stuart, in power from January 1883 and for most of its construction, was absent October 1884-May 1885 recovering from a stroke; he resigned on 6 October, moved to the Legislative Council the next day and as a member of the Executive Council participated in the selection of the sub-matron. Sir John Robertson imposed the deadline for vacating Hyde Park Asylum. George Dibbs took over on 26 February 1886 during the transfer of the women to Newington and remained in office until January 1887.

By May 1886 the Benevolent Society was concerned about the number of applications for relief it was receiving from aged women who had voluntarily left Newington: "They uniformly spoke of the hardships they had experienced at Hyde Park before they were removed to Newington, and one of them who pleaded with us for relief stated that rather than go back [to Newington] she would throw herself in front of the tram car". On 14 May six members of the Benevolent

11 ibid., 3 March 1886.
12 Hyde Park Barracks, Glebe NSW, Historic Houses Trust of NSW, 1994, p 24; Photographs of the celebrations are held in Small Picture File, Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW.
14 Sydney Morning Herald, 7 August 1886, letter to editor from John Roseby, chairman of the Benevolent Society.
Asylum’s House Committee visited Newington to judge for themselves "whether there was any just grounds for the bitter complaints and strong aversion manifested by all the aged women". The fifty inmates they interviewed seemed "very miserable"; there were no fires and, women without money for the ferry, were unable to visit their friends in Sydney. Upon inspecting the meat and the soup that "appeared little more than greasy water", there was no doubt complaints about the paucity and poor quality of the food were valid.

Francis Abigail, MLA, board member of the Benevolent Society and friend of Henry Parkes, wrote to the Colonial Secretary, George Dibbs on 15 June 1886 expressing his concern on the inadequacy of the inmates' diet of dry bread and black tea for breakfast and supper: "Now you must know that a decent cup of tea to the poor creatures is more than half their lives ... Milk is pretty cheap, and should be supplied, as well as other small comforts, to smooth the last hours of the old women". In the Legislative Assembly on 17 June, William Foster questioned Dibbs on the high number of deaths at Newington and the qualifications of the nursing staff.

On 2 July Dibbs inspected the asylum with the governor medical officer, Dr MacLaurin, and the following day sent Frederic King a lengthy minute on a range of issues. He instructed that in winter fires were to be kept burning in the dining hall and dormitories during the day and for twenty-four hours in the hospital wards. He considered the "dietary" was insufficient to sustain life and directed changes that included increased servings of potatoes, more milk and rice and softer foods for the aged who could not chew meat. He demanded a "full" explanation on the lack of fires and the "entire absence" of water to baths and

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15 ibid.
16 ibid.
17 F Abigail to Colonial Secretary, 15 June 1886, Report of the Government Asylums Inquiry Board, NSW LAVP, 1887 (2), vol 2, Appendix A, p 674. In his letter Abigail urged Dibbs not to separate "old married couples" by placing a wife in Newington and her husband in Parramatta or Liverpool, and to adopt the Melbourne system of allowing them to share a room to "live out their last days together".
18 ibid., p 668.
19 ibid., G Dibbs to F King, [3 July 1886], Appendix A, p 674.
toilets on the day of his visit. Dibbs was also dissatisfied with the lighting and concerned about the manner in which certain medical records were maintained. He instructed King to liaise with the ferry proprietor for reduced fares for the women. The Herald reporting on the inspection, noted the institution was still not finished; that Dr MacLaurin was satisfied the nursing staff was sufficient and that generally "the women were fairly well attended to".  

Lady Carrington, the governor's wife, had visited the asylum independently the same day and inspected the various buildings paying "close attention to hospital patients" and distributing a "variety of comforts she had taken with her". The timing of Lady Carrington's inspection may have been coincidental but soon after, the government - on Dibbs's recommendation - appointed a board of ladies to visit Newington periodically to report on the inmates' welfare. The board comprised Lady Martin (president), Misses Alice Stephen and Eleanor Bedford, Mrs Townshend, Mrs Goodlet and Mrs Pottie. Lady Martin was the widow of Sir James Martin, former Colonial Secretary and Chief Justice of the Supreme Court; Alice Stephen, a daughter of Sir Alfred Stephen, the Lieutenant-Governor, and Eleanor Bedford were related. Eliza Pottie (a Quaker), Katherine Townshend and Ann Goodlet were well known for their philanthropic activities. Pottie had frequently called at Hyde Park Asylum; Stephen had occasionally, and they and Bedford had visited Newington several times prior to their official appointment.

The Ladies Board paid unannounced visits to Newington and in reports to the Colonial Secretary complained about the food, its preparation and the eating

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20 Sydney Morning Herald, 3 July 1886.
21 ibid.
22 ibid., 20 July 1886.
23 ibid; Mrs Goodlet was not present at the inquiry, nor was she mentioned in the evidence as having been a visitor.
24 Report of the Government Asylums Inquiry Board, NSWLAVP, 1887 (2), vol 2, Minutes of Evidence, Alice Stephen had known Mrs Hicks by sight for ten or fourteen years at Hyde Park Asylum as she had been in the habit of going there, response to Q3876; Eliza Pottie's first visit to Newington was on 22 April, response to Q2354; Eleanor Bedford had visited Newington on 6 May, 17 and 29 June; Alice Stephen had accompanied her on two occasions, response to Q2319.
utensils, suggested various improvements including furniture and articles for the inmates' comfort and strongly recommended the employment of an experienced male cook and trained nurses. Following a visit on 3 August the lady visitors reported on the tyrannical cook, brutality in hospital wards, dead bodies (often unscreened) left lying in wards for hours, the inmates' fear of the matron and the irregularity of her records: "In every particular there is neither method, management nor discipline".

On 5 August 1886, "in consequence of numerous complaints ... regarding the treatment of inmates and of the management of the Asylums for Infirm and Destitute at Newington, Liverpool and Parramatta", George Dibbs appointed a board of inquiry "to investigate and report upon the general management and mode of conducting those Institutions". The board comprised Thomas Kingsmill Abbott, Stipendiary Magistrate, Dr John Ashburton Thompson, chief medical officer to the Board of Health and Hugh Robison, Inspector of Public Charities. Dibbs excluded Liverpool before the inquiry began. The inclusion of Robison was questionable. As inspector his knowledge of the institutions would be pertinent but as he was likely to be called to give evidence there was a potential conflict of interest given that he was responsible for reporting to government on their management.

The board sat for thirty-seven days between 18 August and 7 December 1886, reconvened for one day on 28 March and completed its report on 29 April 1887. In its investigation of Newington ninety witnesses were examined including sixty inmates, gardeners and groundsmen, members of the Ladies Board, Lucy Hicks, the matron-superintendent, Frederic King, the manager of the asylums, Dr Charles Rowling, the medical officer and Hugh Robison. Virtually every aspect of the asylum was examined ranging from serious allegations against staff to minutiae

25 ibid., Ladies Board to Colonial Secretary, 30 July 1886, Appendix A, p 665.
26 ibid., Ladies Board to Colonial Secretary, 4 August 1886, Appendix A, p 667.
27 ibid., Letter of Appointment, p 406.
28 ibid.
29 ibid.
such as the quantity and type of soap used by the laundress.

Sifting through the voluminous proceedings and correspondence filled with conflicting opinions, claims and counter claims, grave and farcical allegations—many by witnesses bearing grudges or civil servants anxious to shift blame, it is difficult to determine the truth, particularly as the board neglected to satisfactorily resolve many of the serious charges, especially those made against the matron. Regardless, few of the principals emerged unscathed and it was clearly established that all was not running smoothly at Newington - the tight ship run by Lucy Hicks at Hyde Park Asylum had sunk.

There was consensus on the decided improvement of conditions at Newington as a result of Dibbs's inspection and the visits of the Ladies Board. Some improvements were a matter of course as structures and necessary alterations were completed, essential items such as fire grates and register stoves were installed, and defective new equipment was put in working order. There were conflicting opinions on whether the asylum had been fit to receive the women inmates. Hugh Robison and Principal Under Secretary Crichtett Walker had determined during an inspection of the asylum in mid-January 1886 that it was ready for occupation.³⁰ Lucy Hicks and Frederic King maintained otherwise and the evidence would seem to substantiate their claims. King was silent when Chairman Abbott insisted none of his correspondence to the Colonial Secretary during January and February hinted of his concern that the asylum was not ready, yet he had indeed written to the Colonial Secretary on 21 January, "it appears to me that so long a time must elapse before I can attempt the removal of the old women".³¹

And in February, even before the bulk of inmates had moved in, King - as "a matter of urgency" - had to erect an additional fence to contain the "old women"

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³⁰ ibid., Robison, response to Q4890-3.
³¹ ibid., Abbott, Q5167; Manager, Department of Government Asylums for the Infirm and Destitute to Principal Under Secretary, 21 January 1886, letter 86/851, CSIL, SRNSW 4/876.1.
who "continually wandered into the Bush from the Pavilions and some of the more active walked to the Hotel on the road and procured spirits creating much disturbance in the Asylum".32 The fact that one year later the matron was still "far removed from police protection", a requisite for assistance with refractory inmates is indicative of the lack structural support and the asylum's isolation.33

The verandahs - some six feet above ground level - had no guard-rails; Robison had ordered their installation but not in time to prevent several inmates falling off and injuring themselves.34 At the time Robison considered the guard-rails were the only necessary work,35 yet when questioned by Ashburton Thompson, he confirmed the laundry was unfinished, the drying-ground had no posts or lines, there was no dispensary or dispenser, no covered way from the kitchen to the dining hall, the yard was covered with shale and clay, numerous piles of timber were lying around the site, there were no pathways and drains were choked.36

Frederic King had also complained that water closets were blocked and stoves and cooking arrangements were incomplete.37 In June two kitchen boilers used to cook soup and potatoes fractured and were not repaired for several weeks.38 Inexplicably, the Colonial Architect's contract had omitted the recreation hall demanded by Alexander Stuart to provide shelter for the women who were shut out of dormitories during the day.39 Frederic King, frustrated by the Colonial Architect's inactivity, issued building contracts for this and numerous minor works, his interference attracting criticism from Robison who nevertheless agreed the work had been necessary.40

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32 Manager, Government Asylums to Principal Under Secretary, 26 February 1886, letter 86/2274, CSIL, SRNSW 1/2579.
33 L Hicks to Manager, Government Asylums, 14 February 1887, CSIL, SRNSW 4/876.1.
34 Report of the Government Asylums Inquiry Board, NSWAVP, 1887 (2), vol 2, Minutes of Evidence, Robison response to Q4891; Lucy Hicks, response to Q4125.
35 ibid., response to Q4904.
36 ibid., response to Q4903.
37 ibid., response to Q5098.
38 ibid., Inspector of Public Charities to Principal Under Secretary, 9 July 1886, Appendix A, p 682; ibid., Minutes of Evidence, Lucy Hicks, response to Q4006-9.
39 ibid., W Coles, Clerk of Works, response to Q5031-2.
40 ibid., response to Q4900.
Robison conceded he had been concerned about the adequacy of the water supply; for the first six weeks the inmates were unable to take baths and during the inquiry the supply had failed for three weeks. Water had to be drawn from a well, carted to laundry boilers and heated, then carried in buckets to the bath house. The Colonial Architect had made no provisions for gas to be laid on and the primitive use of candles was unsatisfactory and dangerous. William Hicks, the matron's husband had purchased lamps with reflectors to improve the lighting.

The Chief Clerk of Works admitted the verandah guard rails had not been in the original design; he could not explain the delay in installing grates and stoves in the fireplaces, nor why the recreation hall had been omitted from the contract. Significantly, it was established that the site was not formally handed over until August; in other words the building contracts were completed just prior to or during the first weeks of the inquiry, yet the board's finding was that Newington Asylum had been ready for occupation.

Isolated from their friends in Sydney, without money for the ferry, and the combination of unfinished buildings, lack of water, warmth and light and especially the scant, badly cooked food and an uncaring medical officer, the inmates' discontent was hardly surprising. A few enterprising inmates on leave in the city, used money begged from Frederic King for the return fare, to buy grog to console themselves. Others retaliated by choking the water closets and drains with assorted clothing, bottles, boots - even a basket. Lady Martin found the

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41 ibid., response to Q4895.
42 ibid., Lucy Hicks, response to Q4116, Q4119.
43 The Colonial Architect approved Frederic King's request for an Alpha gas-machine in January but had not supplied it. King to Principal Under Secretary, 7 July 1886, Report, Appendix A, p 683.
44 ibid., Minutes of Evidence, Lucy Hicks, response to Q4120.
45 ibid., W Coles, response to Q5017-20, 5028-9, 5030-2.
46 ibid., Frederic King, response to Q5100.
47 ibid., p 419. The board held the Colonial Architect responsible for the totally inadequate water supply, ibid., p 416.
48 ibid., Lucy Hicks, response to Q103-4.
49 ibid., Joseph Ibbott, response to Q1636-68.
effluvium unbearable: "I had to use a vinaigrette". 50 Mary Ann Kennedy a long-
term bedridden inmate complained "I suffered more misery here than in all the
years I have been in the Asylum ... I did not get the nourishment or the care that I
got at Hyde Park". 51 Shortly before her death Alice Batho, a young consumptive,
wrote to a friend "I am nearly starving; I can't get anything to eat only the dry
bread and hard meat and black tea. I never thought there was such an inhuman
place. I feel that it is killing me". 52

Eleanor Bedford of the Ladies Board condemned the hospital wards as "not fit for
anyone but the very lowest class of people, and they had only enough food to keep
them from starvation ... They said they had never been so wretched ... that Hyde
Park was a paradise to this". 53 Eliza Pottie, another Ladies Board member said
inmates "were clamouring for food" and in a hospital ward she had been distressed
to see a dying woman with her eyes, nose and mouth "filled with flies". 54
Inmate, Ellen Purnell, however, did not miss Hyde Park Asylum: "We are far
better off here; we are without the rats; it was a regular pig-stye down there". 55

The inmates' most serious charges concerned the gross neglect of the doctor,
Charles Rowling. As government medical officer of the Parramatta district,
Rowling's prescribed duties included daily visits to the two Parramatta destitute
asylums and Newington. There was overwhelming testimony that prior to the
inquiry his visits had been irregular; 56 that often they were only twice weekly to
the hospital wards 57 and at times he walked through without examining or
speaking to an inmate. 58 Rowling continually ignored nurses' requests to examine

50 ibid., response to Q2313. A vinaigrette is a small ornamental bottle containing smelling-
salts.
51 ibid., response to Q2808-9.
52 ibid., Alice Batho to Agnes Hewitt, 1 July 1886, Appendix A, p 686.
53 ibid., reponse to Q2320-2.
54 ibid., response to Q2354.
55 ibid., response to Q646.
56 ibid., Ashburton Thompson, Q4497.
57 ibid., Jane McDonald, wardswoman, response to Q1829.
58 ibid., Sarah Bath, response to Q2765; Norah O'Brien, response to Q3299, Q3304.
patients in hospital wards and in the cancer and sore-leg hospital,\textsuperscript{59} and even ignored pleas of the Ladies Board to tend to a delirious woman.\textsuperscript{60} He neglected to ensure patients received medical comforts and was seemingly ignorant of the various medical comforts available for him to prescribe.

The board was alarmed that nurses in the cancer and sore-leg hospital who had charge of potentially lethal drugs could not read.\textsuperscript{61} It was the same story in the Catholic hospital ward, where the head nurse had to rely on a young patient to read aloud the directions for use.\textsuperscript{62} The board was shocked to find on mantelpieces easily accessible medicines - including morphia - liniments and carbolic acid, all in similar shaped bottles.\textsuperscript{63} In the sore-leg ward the dispenser had used brandy, gin and beer bottles for potent prescriptions; the "poison" labels and instructions whether for internal or external use were not a safeguard in the hands of illiterate nurses.\textsuperscript{64} In the Protestant hospital ward, bottles of various liniments and medicines were left on window sills next to patients' beds.\textsuperscript{65}

Damning evidence was presented against Anne Simpson, formerly in charge of the cancer ward, and called "the murderess"\textsuperscript{66} by inmates after she had beatem patient Biddy Maloney "black and blue" who died shortly after.\textsuperscript{67} The "foul-mouthed" Simpson\textsuperscript{68} was accused of stealing the patients' presents of tea and sugar and their medical comforts,\textsuperscript{69} and of hitting women who snored at night

\textsuperscript{59} ibid., Evidence of Annie Mack, response to Q2006: Rowling did not look at her ulcerated leg for a week despite repeated requests by the wardswoman; evidence of Ellen Purnell, response to Q2397; Rowling had never examined Ellen Clark after she suffered a stroke.
\textsuperscript{60} ibid., Eleanor Bedford, response to Q2323.
\textsuperscript{61} ibid., p 428.
\textsuperscript{62} ibid., Bridget McCarthy, response to Q842-3.
\textsuperscript{63} ibid., notes following Q625.
\textsuperscript{64} ibid; Eliza Jenner, response to Q1784.
\textsuperscript{65} ibid., notes following Q970, Q971, Q973.
\textsuperscript{66} ibid., Ellen Purnell, response to Q2441.
\textsuperscript{67} ibid., Annie Mack, response to Q1950-2; Ellen Purnell, response to Q2426-32, Anne Wire, response to Q2619-23; Cecilia McFadden, response to Q2755-6.
\textsuperscript{68} ibid., Ellen Purnell, response to Q2439; Cecilia McFadden, response to Q2753.
\textsuperscript{69} ibid., Annie Mack, response to Q1960-5, Ellen Purnell response to Q2452, Q2567; Ann Wire, response to Q2594.
and disturbed her sleep. Simpson admitted using her stick to "tap" Maloney on the shoulder when the woman scratched her face and blackened an eye. When the sub-matron failed to act on the repeated complaints, an inmate appealed to Lucy Hicks who removed Simpson from nursing duties prior to the inquiry.

Lady Martin and Eliza Pottie were distressed by the rough handling of inmates by wardswomen responsible for supervising the bathing and whom they had seen slapping a young blind woman. The water supply had suddenly failed when Lady Martin was present and she criticised the matron for allowing the women to undress in cold weather before ensuring there was an adequate supply for the baths.

The tragic case of Emma Redding provided the most revealing evidence of the vengeful practices that insinuated the asylum. Emma, paralysed and bedridden from a young age, had spent fifteen years in Hyde Park after her transfer from the Destitute Children's Asylum at Randwick. She was scolded and bullied by wardswomen who refused to lift her and demanded payment for anything she wanted done. As a consequence her clothes had not been changed for five or six weeks, and when, through the efforts of the Ladies Board, she was moved to another ward her hair was so matted, it had to be cut off. She told the inquiry on 16 September that since she had been at Newington the only two visits by the doctor had occurred in the current week. Redding testified: "All the wardswomen are afraid of the matron ... they all combine together to make the matron believe that everything is right". Emma stated that Lucy Hicks was

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70 ibid., Ellen Purnell response to Q2493-4, Anne Wire, response to Q2626, 2648-9, Mary Murphy, response to Q2648-9.
71 ibid., Q1577-8. Inmate Annie Mack testified that she had seen Simpson's scratched faced and bruised eye and witnessed Maloney pulling her hair. ibid., response to Q1948-9.
72 ibid., Anne Simpson, response to Q1544.
73 ibid., Lady Martin, response to Q2307; Eliza Pottie, response to Q2362.
74 ibid.
75 ibid., response to Q2844-5.
76 ibid., response to Q2849, Q2851.
77 ibid., response to Q2876, Q2851-2.
78 ibid., response to Q2865-6.
79 ibid., response to Q3558.
"always very kind", but on re-examination told the board the matron had promised to "get a woman to attend upon me, but she did not do so, and seemed to forget all about it". By default, Margaret Haggerty, the head wardswoman for over twenty years at Hyde Park Asylum and now at Newington, was co-conspirator in the persecution by failing to exercise any authority over the wardswomen who refused to assist Redding because she had complained to the Ladies Board.

There were other instances of standover tactics: blind Mary Wright said most inmates assisted her but others wanted money or tobacco to do so and Elizabeth Cross had to give a woman lollies to lead her about. Among the inmates there was some resentment that only some were paid for their work. Mary Rabey in charge of sewing believed the best seamstresses deserved payment. Bedridden Mary Ann Kennedy earned money for a few "luxuries" by buying the tobacco allowance from inmates who did not smoke and selling it at a profit to women who did.

As well as criticism of her culinary acquirements, there were numerous complaints about Mary Rooney, head cook for two years at Hyde Park and Newington. Described as "a bully" and "abusive" with an inclination "to throw anything at anyone who displeased her", the tyrannical Rooney also prevented the hospital nurses from preparing arrowroot and other slops and they had to resort to using the matron's kitchen. She was said to be "often drunk" which caused resentment among other inmates who faced expulsion if found intoxicated. Lucy Hicks had repeatedly warned Rooney about her conduct and dismissed her.

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80 ibid., response to Q2870.
81 ibid., response to Q3561.
82 ibid., response to Q2854, Q2868.
83 ibid., Mary Wright, response to Q2279-80; Elizabeth Cross, response to Q3051.
84 ibid., response to Q3211.
85 ibid., Mary London, response to Q3178-86.
86 ibid., Anne Wire, response to Q2606; Ellen Purnell, response to Q2499.
87 ibid., Sarah Bath response to Q3516; Jane Nightingale, response to Q970.
88 ibid., written testimony of Mary Anne Burkray, former inmate, Appendix A, p 675.
89 ibid., response to Q2562.
during the inquiry.\textsuperscript{90}

Members of the Ladies Board had relentlessly gathered information from women in the asylum and obtained statements and letters from former inmates, all of which was passed to the Colonial Secretary, then to the board of inquiry. Much was of inestimable value: it had led to immediate improvements in the inmates’ comfort and had also uncovered instances of objectionable practices and negligence for the board of inquiry to investigate further. The rest was scuttlebutt, innuendoes and half-truths concerning the matron submitted by the Ladies Board without verification but vigorously pursued during the inquiry. And in a move that could not have failed to prejudice the inquiry board’s attitude to Lucy Hicks, the Ladies Board sought protection for inmates willing to give evidence to the inquiry: “the influence of the matron and her assistants is so unbounded … she may without difficulty, if so disposed, adduce any amount of evidence favourable to herself, and prevent inmates desirous of speaking against her management from speaking unreservedly”.\textsuperscript{91}

The charges by inmates against Lucy Hicks included selling thirty pairs of asylum fowls; retaining three inmates to tend her poultry; there was the insinuation she had sold hundreds of the asylum’s new chemises and night-gowns; that she had retained money of deceased inmates and opened inmates’ mail containing money and stolen it; that she had kept a sovereign donated to the women by Lady Carrington.\textsuperscript{92} Joseph Ibbott, the groundsman claimed that when he rejected Lucy Hicks’s suggestion that his wife open a store there, the matron had done so and sold goods to inmates at inflated prices.\textsuperscript{93} His wife Margaret denied any knowledge of the offer or the store but took the opportunity to accuse Hicks of drunkenness.\textsuperscript{94}

\textsuperscript{90} ibid., Lucy Hicks, response to Q4034.
\textsuperscript{91} ibid., Alice Stephen to Colonial Secretary, 18 September 1886, Appendix A, p 690.
\textsuperscript{92} ibid., statement of Mary Ann Burkay, 10 August 1886, enclosure, Alice Stephen to Colonial Secretary, 13 August 1886, Appendix A, pp 675.
\textsuperscript{93} ibid., response to Q3404-12.
\textsuperscript{94} ibid., response to Q3476, Q3478, Q4223.
It was accusations of her intoxication, especially by the Ladies Board, that caused the utmost distress to Lucy Hicks. Alice Stephen testified Dr Rowling was the first to tell her about the matron's drinking but she had also heard it from others.\textsuperscript{95} Subsequently when at the asylum on 29 July, Stephen said the matron was "undoubtedly intoxicated - very red in appearance, excited in manner, and smelling very strongly of spirits" and again on 12 August, "she was undoubtedly confused ... It was simply her manner and the smell of drink about her that led us to that conclusion".\textsuperscript{96} Eleanor Bedford who had been present on 12 August agreed the matron was "not coherent; she talked in a foolish way" and claimed that previously she had seen Hicks drunk on the ferry to Newington after her brother John Langdon's funeral.\textsuperscript{97} Katherine Townshend said Dr Rowling had informed her the matron had been intoxicated on more than one occasion;\textsuperscript{98} she had never seen the matron drunk but "in a very excited state and when she has spoken to me I have smelt spirits".\textsuperscript{99}

Cecilia Jane Hyrons, sub-matron of Hyde Park Asylum for three months from October 1885 and now matron of the Immigration Depot, had never seen the matron intoxicated but knew her to take the occasional stimulants.\textsuperscript{100} She confirmed she had raised complaints with the Inspector of Public Charities concerning the management of the asylum, the matron's undermining of her authority and the continual interference of the matron's young daughter Clara whom she said was an imbecile.\textsuperscript{101} Hyrons told the board of Frederic King's animosity; she had been locked out of the office and he would not allow her to take responsibility for granting the inmates' leave and had delegated the task to Clara.\textsuperscript{102}

\textsuperscript{95} ibid., response to Q3879-80.
\textsuperscript{96} ibid., response to Q3881-2.
\textsuperscript{97} ibid., response to Q2329-32.
\textsuperscript{98} ibid., response to Q3734, Q3738-9.
\textsuperscript{99} ibid., response to Q3752.
\textsuperscript{100} ibid., response to Q3886, Q3891-4.
\textsuperscript{101} ibid., response to Q3896, Q3919-20, Q3907. Hyrons had received her appointment from Sir Alexander Stuart, who had known her late husband and was an intimate friend of the Inspector of Public Charities.
\textsuperscript{102} ibid., response to Q3911.
Partially-blind inmate Anne Ritchie informed the board she was the author of anonymous letters to Lady Carrington and the Colonial Secretary in October 1885 complaining of the conduct of wardswomen in Hyde Park Asylum. She claimed Margaret Haggerty the head wardswoman had struck her when she asked for a new pair of boots and that Eliza Burns had threatened to give her a "mark" she would carry to her grave. She said the beatings had ceased when she complained to Mrs Hicks. In letters written from Newington, Ritchie must have complained about the gatekeeper Eliza Carroll, who subsequently confronted her: "You bloody letter-writing wretch, you have put me in your letters, and you did it in Hyde Park to Dr Ward". Ritchie claimed she had written at the urging of other inmates but refused to identify them. She confirmed she had absconded in May 1885 but lied when she insisted she had never returned from leave drunk or carrying liquor.

The Lucy Hicks who appeared before the board was a shadow of the self-assured competent matron at the public charities inquiry just over a decade earlier. During her nine interviews, she was at times vague or offhand and hardly engendered the board's confidence with a response to an early question on how many of her children were residing at Newington: "You must give me time to think". Hicks laboriously dealt with the various charges against her. She admitted that for a period of about five weeks she had sold goods to inmates, but only to accommodate them and had suffered a pecuniary loss. At Hyde Park the messenger had attended to the women's requirements; at Newington this was not possible and they "had been so robbed by people coming down from Sydney", or by other inmates going out on leave entrusted with money who failed to purchase the goods or return the money. If she allowed women out of Newington to go

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103 ibid., response to Q3340, Q3387.
104 ibid., response to Q3341-4.
105 ibid., response to Q3372-7.
106 ibid., response to Q3344.
107 ibid., response to Q3349.
108 ibid., response to Q3345-8.
109 ibid., response to Q8.
110 ibid., response to Q4088-9.
111 ibid., response to Q4089-91.
to the nearest shop, they invariably returned with bottles of grog.\textsuperscript{112} She had since found a reliable trader to call at the asylum.\textsuperscript{113}

Evidence, stocktakes, receipts and asylum records proved many of the inmates' charges against the matron were spurious. The fowls that were sold were her own. She was obeying the asylum's rule that any inmates' mail suspected of containing money was to be opened in their presence and the funds handed to the manager for safekeeping because in the past money sent to blind inmates had been stolen from them by other women in the wards.\textsuperscript{114} Government House subsequently confirmed that Lady Carrington's £1 donation for an inmates' feast had been passed on to the Quong Tart organising committee.

Lucy denied charges that she drank: "I have been too well brought up for that" and when pressed about the day of her brother's funeral angrily responded: "Do not insult me. I never was under the influence of liquor in my life".\textsuperscript{115} At her request the board examined numerous witnesses she nominated to respond to the allegations. They included Dr Rowling, long-term inmates, family friends, the cab driver who had delivered her to the ferry and the captain of the ferry on the day of her brother's funeral, all of whom declared they had never seen her intoxicated.\textsuperscript{116} Confronted by Hicks, Rowling confirmed that at no time had he considered she had been drinking and implied such claims had originated from Alice Stephen.\textsuperscript{117} Rowling had back-pedalled earlier in the proceedings, denying having told members of the Ladies Board he had seen "Mrs Hicks so intoxicated that she could hardly stand". He claimed "when I was first here I had seen her in such an excited state that I believed her intoxicated, but that on knowing her better I was quite sure I was mistaken".\textsuperscript{118}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{112} ibid., response to Q4126. \\
\textsuperscript{113} ibid. \\
\textsuperscript{114} ibid., reponse to Q4080-7. \\
\textsuperscript{115} ibid., response to Q4169, Q4172. \\
\textsuperscript{116} ibid., responses to Q4226-71, Q4415-26. \\
\textsuperscript{117} ibid., response to Q4256-60. \\
\textsuperscript{118} ibid., response to Q3402.
\end{flushleft}
Despite overwhelming testimony to the contrary, Lucy Hicks foolishly claimed any changes at Newington were not a consequence of the Ladies Board and the inquiry and dismissed suggestions the dramatic decrease in deaths from eleven per month March-June to three in both July and August was related to improved conditions. She initially attributed the high mortality rate to the upheaval of the removal to Newington of many inmates already near death, then vacillated, claiming (erroneously) the average number of deaths was the same as in previous years.

Although she had removed Anne Simpson from nursing duties, Hicks at first denied any knowledge of Simpson's attack on Biddy Maloney but upon the suggestion it had led to her death, declared that was a "gross untruth". The board raised the matter of a woman who was scalded by hot tea and died ten days later. According to both the matron and Gorman, the sub-matron, the woman was already extremely ill, the tea had spilt onto a large bedsore, the scalding was not serious and had not contributed to her death. Dr Rowling had prescribed a salve and subsequently recorded "a burn" as the cause of death. Referral to a coroner was mandatory in the case of accidental deaths, yet Hicks elected to ignore the protocol "because I knew this woman did not die from the effects of the burns".

Lucy Hicks was seemingly unconcerned that poisonous medicines and liniments stood on open shelves in wards; nor did not she consider it untoward that they were ministered by nurses who could not read: "You would not get educated people to do filthy dirty work". She rarely accompanied the doctor on rounds, had no idea of the treatment individual women received or what he prescribed for

119 ibid., response to Q4185-6.  
120 ibid., response to Q3944.  
121 ibid., response to Q3946-7. There were 93 deaths at Hyde Park Asylum in 1885, i.e. an average of 7.75 per month.  
122 ibid., response to Q3977-9.  
123 ibid., Gorman, response to Q3812-13, Q3821; Hicks, response to Q3766-84.  
124 ibid., response to Q3856-7.  
125 ibid., response to Q3981, Q3983.
patients, nor did she ensure his recommendations were carried out - such duties, she said, were the responsibility of the sub-matron and nurses.\textsuperscript{126} Nor could she offer a satisfactory explanation as to why the body of a woman who died at night remained in the ward until 2 or 3 o'clock the next day.\textsuperscript{127} As to complaints concerning other bodies left unscreened in full view of inmates, Hicks informed the board the screens had been broken in the move; that despite requesting new ones from the manager before she left Hyde Park, they had only recently arrived.\textsuperscript{128}

Hicks confirmed the manager had not issued printed rules for her guidance; those printed in 1862 included some rules "absurd for these old people. You have to give way to them a little" but the rest still formed the basis of her operations and were given verbally to inmates.\textsuperscript{129} When Ashburton Thompson said this implied she had "power to manage the place in your own way", Lucy stated "Well, I may say I have".\textsuperscript{130} She also confirmed that no attempt was made to classify the women and on the proposal by Thomas Abbott that educated inmates of "refined feeling" would be happier if placed next to "similar persons, rather than in proximity to a prostitute, or a foul-mouthed old convict", Lucy responded "I do not think it could be worked."\textsuperscript{131}

The board which had engaged an accountant to report on the "books" at the asylums and in head office examined Frederic King at length on the "grave discrepancies" between the records and stores at Newington.\textsuperscript{132} He was forced to agree that had his management and inspections been more effective such errors and discrepancies would have been brought to light earlier.\textsuperscript{133} Much was made by Abbott of the substantial number of missing articles, and as if to cast doubts on

\textsuperscript{126} ibid., response to Q4151, Q3792-4.
\textsuperscript{127} ibid., response to Q4146-9.
\textsuperscript{128} ibid., response to Q4141, Q4144, Q3988, Q3993.
\textsuperscript{129} ibid., response to Q37-9, Q47.
\textsuperscript{130} ibid., response to Q43.
\textsuperscript{131} ibid., response to Q4176-7.
\textsuperscript{132} ibid., response to Q5105-30.
\textsuperscript{133} ibid., response to Q5123.
the matron's honesty or judgement, he nit-pickingly queried why Frederic King
did not check articles that she had deemed "worn out". The lengthy stocktake
which involved thousands of new and used items down to bath bricks, boxes of
pins and clothes pegs, revealed clothing deficiencies of 38 chemises, 61
nightdresses, 34 pairs of stockings, 95 aprons and 6 caps, hardly the stuff of major
misappropriation. But no one could satisfactorily account for the missing
medical comforts of more than twelve gallons of brandy and two of wine. Frederic
King reluctantly agreed with the board that Lucy Hicks must have "falsified or
altered entries in her books" in an attempt to cover the shortfall. According to
Abbott, the records also indicated the matron had been "very liberal" with the
dispensing of various spirits and porter of which King had to admit ignorance.

The board had mustered the Newington women on 10 September: there were 305
inmates with an average age of 59.5 years, the number in hospital wards,
including attendants, was 149. That almost half of the women required nursing
care, confirmed Frederic King's past annual reports that the asylum was evolving
into a convalescent hospital. In 1862 soon after the institution had opened at Hyde
Park 29 of the 141 inmates were bedridden and under medical treatment, i.e. just
over one-fifth. When examined, Christopher Rolleston, chairman of the
former board of government asylums, stated that the increase in inmates and the
rising proportion of hospital patients was such that responsibility for the asylum's
management was "too much for any one individual". He favoured the re-
introduction of a board as a "very valuable check upon the administration".

134 ibid., Abbott Q5114, Q5124.
135 ibid., D McAllister to Government Asylums Board, 3 November 1886, Appendix A.
There were excesses of 320 petticoats, 168 shawls, 34 plaid and 21 print dresses.
136 ibid., response to Q5118.
137 ibid., response to Q5119.
141 ibid., response to Q7799.
Physician, Sir Alfred Roberts, a director of the Prince Alfred Hospital and who years before had objected to the authority delegated to Lucy Osburn at Sydney Infirmary, believed that any institution with more than 200 inmates should have a resident medical officer in charge, supported by a well-trained matron and nurses.\(^{142}\) He pointed to the growing custom in London of removing chronically-ill inmates of asylums and hospitals to a "sick asylum" where they were treated by trained nurses.\(^{143}\) Roberts criticised the design of Newington Asylum: the buildings were too scattered and the administration should have been located centrally and not away in the mansion which made supervision "less effective".\(^{144}\) He agreed with the practice of keeping able-bodied inmates out of dormitories during the day but condemned the current use of forms without backs on which the women sat in the yards as "cruel" and "unmerciful".\(^{145}\)

The completion of the inquiry was delayed when Ashburton Thompson had to investigate an outbreak of typhoid at St Leonards and later take charge of the quarantine station upon the arrival of a ship infected with smallpox. Abbott's leave to chair the inquiry expired and he was obliged to return to magisterial duties.\(^{146}\) Robison who was anxious to resume his country inspections, pre-empted the inquiry's findings by submitting a report on "desirable improvements in the management of the Asylums" to the Colonial Secretary on 4 January 1887.\(^{147}\) Without reading it, Dibbs passed the report to Thomas Abbott who was incensed and rightly accused Robison of "violating his position as a member of the Board". Dibbs concurred.\(^{148}\) In his letter to Dibbs, Abbott pointed out that as Inspector of Public Charities for ten years, it had been Robison's duty "to have discovered and put an end to the horrors and miseries".\(^{149}\)

\(^{142}\) ibid., response to Q7814, Q7832.
\(^{143}\) ibid., response to Q7816-19.
\(^{144}\) ibid., response to Q7831.
\(^{145}\) ibid., response to Q7843-5.
\(^{146}\) ibid., p 415, footnote.
\(^{147}\) H Robison to Principal Under Secretary, 4 January 1887, Report, Addendum p 443.
\(^{148}\) ibid., T Abbott to Principal Under Secretary, 13 January 1887, Report, Addendum, p 446.
\(^{149}\) ibid.
Robison had prefaced his offending report, with a claim that a "considerable portion" of the evidence presented to the inquiry was "unreliable". He considered Frederic King had placed "implicit reliance" on the asylums' officers who had "deputed to their subordinates duties requiring their personal supervision". He maintained King was responsible for much of the women's "irregularity and discomfort" by diverting his attention to building contracts and neglecting to requisition essential items and furnishings for the institution.

As to Lucy Hicks, Robison suggested "had the matron's attention been less occupied in her family concerns she would have been at liberty to better attend to her official duties". He also claimed had Hicks had a more efficient sub-matron, "many defects ... would have been forced on her notice, and might have been quickly rectified". He criticised the "unauthorized position" held by the matron's daughter, Clara Applewhaite, whose duties were more the responsibility of the matron or sub-matron. Robison condemned the existing practice of appointing daughters of matrons as sub-matrons. He favoured the existence of a committee of lady visitors, but was adamant their attention should be "restricted to clearly defined subjects".

The board's report which appears to have been largely written by Thomas Abbott was completed in April 1887. When Hugh Robison declined to sign the document, Abbott included his colleague's pre-emptive report as an addendum but contemptuously prefaced the official report with statements intended to refute Robison's claim that some of the evidence was unreliable:

That it is a mistake to suppose that all the inmates of these Asylums, or indeed a majority of them, are persons of such a character ... as to render their statements unworthy of belief...

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150 ibid., Robison to Principal Under Secretary, 4 January 1887, p 445. Report, Addendum.
151 ibid.
152 ibid., pp 445-6.
That no person can judge so well the value of testimony given as those who hear it; and so every statement made in this Report is founded either upon evidence which the Board believe to be thoroughly trustworthy, or upon facts which have come within their own personal observation...\textsuperscript{154}

Discussion of the board's lengthy, detailed findings has been confined to the major issues relating to Newington Asylum although comments on Frederic King's management and Dr Rowling's medical supervision implicitly extend to the two Parramatta asylums.

The board found the Colonial Architect's office responsible for the "wholly inadequate and defective" water supply;\textsuperscript{155} it rejected the matron's and manager's claims that the asylum had been unfit to receive the inmates,\textsuperscript{156} and dwelt on the shortcomings of the officers and conditions in the institution. The board was unimpressed by Frederic King's supervision: the "very grave discrepancies" in the medical comforts issued and the stocks supplied indicated improved methods of maintaining the records was imperative.\textsuperscript{157} It appeared to the board that the manager had never taken stock or inspected the books "with a view to testing their accuracy", or if he had it seemed "almost incredible that such grave discrepancies" discovered by the independent accountant had not come to King's notice.\textsuperscript{158} Nevertheless, the board considered that while King had "endeavoured conscientiously and faithfully to discharge his duties", the volume of work at head office - which had not been "satisfactorily performed" - did not allow sufficient time for inspections. The board was convinced that had King devoted more time to inspection and supervision the grave abuses "would never have crept into existence" and it was apparent that he relied "too much on the honesty of the matrons", without introducing measures that would detect any dishonest acts.\textsuperscript{159}

\textsuperscript{154} ibid., p 415.
\textsuperscript{155} ibid., p 416.
\textsuperscript{156} ibid., p 419.
\textsuperscript{157} ibid., p 417.
\textsuperscript{158} ibid., p 418.
\textsuperscript{159} ibid., p 420.
It was of some concern that in the absence of printed rules for internal management, the matron was "a law unto herself" and without supervision it was "not difficult to account for the gradual growth of the abuses and irregularities now existing, which have been the natural outcome of incompetence and mismanagement extending over a long period". These comments had followed a summary of the complaints by the Ladies Board and women inmates which had been accepted unreservedly. Moreover the board maintained that were the matron unaware of the abuses, "the want of knowledge of such a wretched state of things … is almost as inexcusable as knowing and deliberately permitting them would have been". To the board, the "absolute irresponsibility" of the matron's opening of a store and selling "luxuries" to inmates, "characterised her conduct" at the institution. The board condemned the neglect and cruelty of ward attendants at both Newington and the Macquarie Street asylums and the ministering of medicines by persons who could not read.

Dr Rowling, for whom the board reserved its gravest condemnation, was unaware of these occurrences nor had he taken action to secure potentially lethal drugs. The board believed the doctor's failure to refer to the coroner, the case of an inmate who possibly died from scalding, may have been influenced by the matron whose interest was to keep the matter hidden. But Rowling's "utmost laxity" in rubber-stamping his signature on numerous blank death certificates which he left "unprotected" at the asylums, was deemed totally inexcusable.

The board's enumeration of instances of the medical officer's neglect and callousness filled twelve pages of the report. Presented with such overwhelming testimony the board was compelled to denounce Rowling's attendance on the sick-poor in his care as "irregular, careless, perfunctory, and devoid of reasonable
kindness".\textsuperscript{167} The board added that if such cases at Newington and especially at Macquarie-street had "escaped the notice of the respective matrons-superintendent" there was the assumption that both had neglected their duty.\textsuperscript{168} Even more incredible to the board was that Frederic King "could have been ignorant of them ... if his system of management is of any practical value whatever".\textsuperscript{169} And in a veiled reference to Robison, the board advocated a "searching inquiry" into the nature of duties of other long-term officers and the manner in which they have been performed.\textsuperscript{170}

When the inquiry was proceeding, a jury at an inquest into the death of a George Street inmate had made adverse comments on the deceased's medical care, yet to the board's dismay, King had not instigated an internal inquiry and neither he nor Robison had drawn this matter to its attention.\textsuperscript{171} The board, aware of Robison's limited powers as Inspector of Public Charities, found that he had acted without authority, when he and Canon Gunther had formed an "irresponsible board" to investigate inmates' complaints at the Macquarie Street asylum.\textsuperscript{172}

The board in its recommendations called for a complete overhaul of the administration and management of government asylums for infirm, destitute men and women, cognisant that in the past decade the number of inmates had increased from 600 to over 2000. The most sweeping change was the recommendation that the "obligations, restrictions, and disabilities" of destitute persons supported at public expense, be defined by an act of parliament. The proposed legislation was to confer power on a person or persons - independent of the institutions - to enforce the labour of able-bodied inmates and to inflict punishment for disobedience. To this end the board suggested a re-enactment of a modified version of the 1866 Workhouse Act.\textsuperscript{173}

\textsuperscript{167} ibid., p 430.  
\textsuperscript{168} ibid., p 434.  
\textsuperscript{169} ibid.  
\textsuperscript{170} ibid.  
\textsuperscript{171} ibid., p 431.  
\textsuperscript{172} ibid., p 420.  
\textsuperscript{173} ibid., p 441.
The board advocated the re-constitution of a board of management, to include the government’s medical adviser and whose members should be remunerated. A secretary was to be employed whose duties were to be limited to those as undertaken for the previous board.\textsuperscript{174} In regard to employees it was recommended that not more than one member of a family be employed at the same institution. Professed cooks were to be employed and "cooking should never be entrusted to paid inmates". There was need of an improved dietary scale.\textsuperscript{175} The board acknowledged that the time had arrived for the centralisation of chronically-ill inmates of both sexes in one asylum with a resident medical superintendent and a comparatively small staff of trained nurses under the direct supervision of the government’s medical adviser. Able-bodied inmates were to be drafted from other asylums to undertake menial work.\textsuperscript{176}

On 10 May 1887, George Dibbs (no longer Colonial Secretary), sought an adjournment in the Legislative Assembly to speak on the report which had not yet been tabled. In a highly emotive speech he claimed kudos for instigating the inquiry and quoted extracts of the most sensational evidence and findings, in particular those concerning Matron Hicks and Dr Rowling.\textsuperscript{177} Henry Parkes, back in power since January, condemned the length of the inquiry and the trivial nature of some matters that had occupied much of the board’s time. He maintained the investigations could have been completed in a month, that the government should have instigated changes immediately and not waited nine months for the report. Some members defended Lucy Hicks and drew attention to her past admirable performance at Hyde Park Asylum and the Immigration Depot; others called for her immediate suspension along with King and Rowling. Robison also attracted criticism.\textsuperscript{178} The \textit{Bulletin} of 9 July 1887 cynically remarked the report was being "burked" [smothered], because certain asylum officials (i.e. Hicks,

\textsuperscript{174} ibid., pp 441-2.
\textsuperscript{175} ibid., p 441.
\textsuperscript{176} ibid.
\textsuperscript{177} \textit{Sydney Morning Herald}, 11 May 1887.
\textsuperscript{178} ibid.
King and Robison) had relatives in high places.\textsuperscript{179} Christopher Rolleston and Charles Cowper junior, former members of the government asylums' board who had continued to visit Hyde Park Asylum had written to the Colonial Secretary, almost in disbelief of the criticism, and praised the superior performance of, and the inmates high regard for, the matron at Hyde Park Asylum.\textsuperscript{180}

On 16 May the Colonial Secretary sent copies of the board's report to King, Rowling and the respective matrons requesting "any explanations" they may care to furnish.\textsuperscript{181} Frederic King's response primarily covered the complaints and criticisms which he considered were unfounded.\textsuperscript{182} He reiterated the distress of the women inmates on being moved to Newington, far from Sydney, family and friends. He recounted how Sir Alexander Stuart and his close friend, the Inspector of Public Charities, had ignored his early urgings to purchase The Warren at Marrickville for the women, and instead had determined to proceed with the Newington site. As for the inspector's criticism of King's "want of forethought" in preparing for the move, the latter informed the Colonial Secretary: "I acquit Mr. Robison of any want, or even exercise of thought, in regard to the removal of the women. I am responsible for all the arrangements, and they were as little interfered with by the Inspector as the Institutions have been".\textsuperscript{183}

Lucy Hicks informed the Colonial Secretary she was "wounded, almost to death" by the "so utterly unfounded" charges against her.\textsuperscript{184} She objected to her treatment by the board and certain members of the Ladies Board:

\textsuperscript{179} Frederic King's brother was a member of the Legislative Council and close friend of Parkes', his relative by marriage Charles Cowper junior was Sheriff of the Colony; Lucy Hicks's daughter was married to the son of Thomas Garrett, MLA.
\textsuperscript{180} Christopher Rolleston to Colonial Secretary, 18 May 1887, Charles Cowper to Colonial Secretary, 23 May 1887, Government Asylums Inquiry, Reports of Manager, Matrons &c, NSWLAVP, 1887-88, vol 4, p 633.
\textsuperscript{181} ibid., p 617.
\textsuperscript{182} ibid., pp 618-19, Frederic King to Colonial Secretary, 25 May 1887.
\textsuperscript{183} ibid., p 619.
\textsuperscript{184} ibid., p 628, Lucy Hicks to Colonial Secretary, undated [May 1887].
I must ... protest against the ungentlemanly and offensive way in which I was treated by the Chairman (more as a criminal, without the privileges accorded to a criminal), suppressing and checking any evidence in my favour, and encouraging and noting fully all evidence damaging to my management, or my character as Superintendent ... I must also mention the conduct of certain of the Ladies Committee, which was imperious and insulting to a degree, treating me as though I were the commonest servant.¹⁸⁵

Others agreed that the treatment of the matron had been less than fair. Margaret Haggerty, the head wardswoman at Hyde Park Asylum and Newington, wrote to the Colonial Secretary on behalf of many inmates:

It is more than flesh and blood can stand to read the dreadful lies in the newspapers taken by the ladies committee and the gentlemen Board. Now, we would all wish you to understand it to as all one side, and we like fair play. If any one of us said a word in favour of Mrs. Hicks or our treatment we were told that would do, and Mr. Abbott’s finger went up, and he told the writer not to put it down. We wish your honor to know this, and send up gentlemen who will act proper.¹⁸⁶

Notwithstanding the irrefutable charges against Matron Hicks, her objections were somewhat justified. There were some allegations made against her which the board accepted without testing the veracity of the witnesses and there were other charges that the board, by ignoring them in its report, left the implication of guilt. The minutes of evidence replete with innuendoes were tabled in parliament and became a matter of public record.

In her lengthy response to the Colonial Secretary, Lucy Hicks drew attention to the dubious evidence of some women inmates and raised other matters that suggest

¹⁸⁵ ibid.
¹⁸⁶ Margaret Haggerty to Colonial Secretary, undated [May 1887], CSIL, SRNSW 4/876.1.
she was the victim of a witch hunt that was possibly instigated by Cecilia Hyrons, the former temporary sub-matron at Hyde Park Asylum. Hicks referred to "the deep anxiety displayed by certain of the Ladies' Committee to oust me from my position at all hazards" and in her evidence to the board had stated it was through Cecilia Hyrons that "we have all this misery" (i.e. the inquiry). Hyrons had previously been "Resident Governess with the Misses Martin" thus was well known to Lady Martin. Both the matron and Frederic King had reported Hyrons's unsatisfactory performance as sub-matron at Hyde Park and King had thwarted her appointment to Newington.

Lucy Hicks warned the Colonial Secretary to treat with caution the evidence of Ann Ritchie who, when at Hyde Park Asylum, had been expelled for drunkenness. She was the author of a series of anonymous letters of complaint to the Colonial Secretary and Lady Carrington which by coincidence had begun in October 1885 just after Hyrons was appointed sub-matron - although Ritchie maintained that it was inmates who had urged her to write them. Hicks pointed out that, despite the overwhelming testimony to the contrary, the board's report had not absolved her of the charges of intoxication that had originated from Miss Alice Stephen and were promulgated by other members of the Ladies Board. She also noted the unethical behaviour of Stephen of soliciting evidence from former inmate M A Buckray who did not appear before the board. Buckray, when expelled from Newington for smuggling in grog, had sworn revenge on the matron.

Thomas Abbott had unreservedly accepted Joseph Ibbott's evidence of Hicks's attempted collusion with him to open a store at Newington to sell goods at a

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187 ibid., p 632.
188 Government Asylums Inquiry Board, Minutes of Evidence, response to Q4162.
189 Cecilia Hyrons to Frederic King, 22 September 1885, letter 85/10495, CSIL, SRNSW 1/2576.
190 Government Asylums Inquiry, Reports of Manager, Matrons &c, NSWLAVP, 1887-88, vol 4, p 629.
191 ibid., p 632.
192 ibid., p 629.
profit. Ibbott, the former Newington caretaker, now groundsman, had resented his eviction from the mansion to make way for the matron; Frederic King subsequently removed the man and his family from a cottage on the estate and he was then forced to pay rent for premises beyond the boundary.\textsuperscript{193} His wife Margaret who accused the matron of drunkenness had been reported by Lucy Hicks for stealing inmates’ money.\textsuperscript{194}

As to Robison’s accusation that attention to her family had led Hicks to neglect her duties, she informed the Colonial Secretary, that for some years she had employed a governess for her children, "so as to enable me to devote my attention wholly to my official duties, which generally occupy me ten hours daily".\textsuperscript{195} Hicks expressed surprise that Robison would have any knowledge of her circumstances given his first official visit to Newington was not until July 1886 and she had not seen him at Hyde Park Asylum during its last eighteen months.\textsuperscript{196}

That Lucy Hicks spent "ten hours daily" on official duties is undoubtable given that she was solely responsible for maintaining the records of the institution. They included the admissions and discharges register, records of clothing stock, stores, rations received and distributed, daily ration order books for bread and meat, a visitors’ book, a daily diary and an undertaker’s requisition book for coffins and graves. There were also the various weekly and monthly returns for submission to head office.\textsuperscript{197} The record-keeping would have kept the matron cooped up in the mansion which, as Sir Alfred Roberts had pointed out, was too far removed from the wards and dormitories to allow effective supervision. At Hyde Park Asylum with everyone under the same roof Lucy Hicks could keep a finger on the pulse.

\textsuperscript{193} Government Asylums Inquiry Board, Minutes of Evidence, Joseph Ibbott, response to Q236-44.
\textsuperscript{194} Hicks to Colonial Secretary, Government Asylums Inquiry, Reports of Manager, Matrons &c, NSWLA/VP, 1887-88, vol 4, p 630.
\textsuperscript{195} ibid., p 631.
\textsuperscript{196} ibid.
\textsuperscript{197} Government Asylums Inquiry Board, Minutes of Evidence, Lucy Hicks, response to Q15-34.
At Newington those she entrusted to provide support - the medical officer, sub-matron and wardswomen - proved to be negligent or not up to the task.

Sub-matron, Margaret Gorman's appearance before the board was not impressive; she was either very guarded with her responses or surprisingly ignorant of her duties. She lacked initiative. Gorman had no previous experience with the care of infirm, destitute women and told the board that having applied for the position of matron of the Immigration Depot - "they gave me this". Like her predecessor Cecilia Hyrons, Gorman was resentful that tasks normally within the realm of a sub-matron, had been delegated to Clara Applewhaite, the matron's daughter.

Clara was responsible for the arrangements and records pertaining to the granting of the inmates' leave and for recording the deaths of inmates. The latter were the very records that Alice Stephen had complained to the Colonial Secretary in September 1886 were not up to date. Clara was said to have also dispensed the spirits and wine to patients, which according to Thomas Abbott had been "very liberal". Lucy Hicks's silence about the "missing" stocks of brandy and wine and her alleged fiddling of the records was possibly because of her daughter's involvement with their distribution. All in all, it seems that twenty-two-year-old Clara was not entirely competent and certainly did not fill the void created by her sister Mary's death.

Mary Applewhaite the matron's eldest child had been appointed sub-matron of Hyde Park Asylum at the age of twenty-four in 1875 but had assisted her mother for much of the previous decade. At Hyde Park, in addition to her sub-matron's

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198 ibid., response to Q415-548.
199 ibid., response to Q416-18.
200 ibid., response to Q425, Q547-8.
201 ibid., Lucy Hicks, response to Q17-18, Q86, Q101; Margaret Gorman, response to Q425, Q547-8.
202 ibid., Alice Stephen to Colonial Secretary, 13 September 1886, Appendix A, p 690 690.
203 ibid., Bridget McCarthy, response to Q812-16; Abbott, Q5119.
duties, Mary had maintained the records.\textsuperscript{204} Cecilia Hyrons, despite her disdain of Clara Applewhaite, considered the matron had worked her daughter shamefully and had never given her a holiday;\textsuperscript{205} Mary had probably suffered the same fate.

The disintegration of the asylum's orderly management appears to have begun in September 1885 upon the premature death of Mary Applewhaite. At the time Lucy Hicks was seriously ill and not expected to survive. Earlier that year she had been involved in Supreme Court proceedings concerning the distribution of her late step-father's estate.\textsuperscript{206} She had not recovered from the exhausting task of moving her charges to Newington when soon after, the last of her siblings, brother John Langdon, died. At Newington in addition to six of her children in residence, she often cared for her three grandchildren and the son of her late sister. Hugh Robison may perhaps have been justified in commenting that family concerns had distracted the matron from her official duties.

At Hyde Park Asylum, Lucy Hicks had the support of a diligent medical officer and a dedicated sub-matron daughter. At Newington Asylum, she had neither. Her ignorance of the vengeful and negligent practices that had insinuated parts of the asylum and of the early near-starvation of the women was inexcusable. Her faith in the "loyal" servants in the institution was misplaced.

Young inmate Emma Redding’s perceptive comment summed up the situation: "All the wardswomen … combine together to make the matron believe that everything is right".\textsuperscript{207} Lucy Hicks received many accolades for her dual performance as matron of Hyde Park Asylum and the Immigration Depot, however it would seem that Mary Applewhaite had been the person responsible for much of the orderly management of the institutions.

\textsuperscript{204} ibid., response to Q4161.
\textsuperscript{205} ibid., response to Q4206.
On 5 June 1888 the Colonial Secretary informed the matron:

As it has been found necessary to make a change in the management of Newington Asylum ... the government have decided to abolish the office held by you and to grant you three months leave of absence on full pay to date from 1st proximo; at the expiration of which you will be retired upon a pension under the provisions of the Civil Service Act 1884.\textsuperscript{208}

The government had acted more swiftly on Dr Rowling, who was removed in June 1887, surfaced as medical officer in the remote Bellinger River district in 1888, and the following year disappeared from civil service records.\textsuperscript{209} Frederic King retired at the end of 1887.\textsuperscript{210} Hugh Robison was sacked at the same time as Lucy Hicks.\textsuperscript{211}

\textsuperscript{208} Colonial Secretary to Lucy Hicks, 5 June 1888, CSIL, SRNSW 1/2736.
\textsuperscript{209} Blue Book, 1888, p 30; ibid., 1889, p 33.
\textsuperscript{210} ibid., 1887, p 210.
\textsuperscript{211} ibid., 1888, p 211. Lucy Hicks died, aged 75, in 1909, survived by five of her fourteen children. Her second husband William Hicks had predeceased her in 1894.
CONCLUSION

"PLUS ÇA CHANGE ..."

The findings of the 1886-87 inquiry into the government asylums for the infirm and destitute led to the removal of the department's manager (King) and the matron of Newington Asylum (Hicks) and also to the abolition of the office of the Inspector of Public Charities. The inquiry board, although inimical to the manager, had acknowledged that he had not been given the requisite senior staff for his department to function effectively. Yet, in 1888, when Henry Parkes, Premier and Colonial Secretary, created a new sub-department - the Department of Charitable Institutions - its new head, in addition to the four government asylums, was given the administration of the boarding-out system for orphaned or abandoned children who had been brought under his protection. Obviously unable to cope, within eighteen months he was given an assistant boarding-out officer who was also appointed inspector - a subordinate, lacking the independent voice of his predecessor. Parkes had rid himself of the irritating former inspector (Robison) who had continually exceeded his authority by recommending in his annual reports measures to improve the government's administration of public charities, but they were not always in the best interests of the infirm and destitute inmates' welfare.

The government's intervention in 1862 when it assumed direct responsibility for the residential care of infirm, destitute, men and women was a watershed for social welfare in the colony. The virtual overnight establishment of the Hyde Park Asylum for women showed that the government could move swiftly when it chose to do so, and here the motivation was pragmatism and not a sudden twinge of altruism. The Benevolent Society's impractical management of its asylums could no longer be propped up by an annual government subsidy that met any shortfall. It could not be allowed to continue to drain the public purse.

1 Jean Baptiste Alphonse Karr, Les Guepes, January 1849. "Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose" (The more it changes the more it is the same thing).
The Hyde Park Asylum although overcrowded for most of its near quarter-century existence provided efficient and humane care for its women inmates. The diligent attention to hygiene and cleanliness is evident, for, despite the presence of rats, contagious diseases, and the occasional outbreak of influenza, the asylum remained free of the scarlatina, smallpox and typhoid epidemics that raged outside the walls from time to time. Its management emerged unscathed from the one inquiry into public charities held in its duration and, unlike its predecessor, the Benevolent Asylum, it does not seem to have attracted the attention of Sydney’s press that was ever ready for a whiff of scandal.

Because of its economic management and the absence of facilities for some of the colony’s other social outcasts, Hyde Park Asylum was the loser in the social welfare game of musical chairs. It was forced by government to take in vagrants and the sick-poor whose respective maintenance in gaols and city and country hospitals was treble the cost. It became a dumping ground for women with physical disabilities, epilepsy and uncertifiable mental illnesses.

While the government had acknowledged its responsibilities, the prevailing attitude was that the aged and indigent had brought their problems on themselves. There was little recognition of the unique composition of a society populated by ageing convicts and assisted immigrants without family networks to support them in adversity. Public sympathy was less evident while the convict taint persisted - the young women transported in the 1830s were, to some extent, the asylum’s ageing inmates of the 1870s and 1880s.

The Newington inquiry should have been another watershed for the welfare of infirm, pauper women in need of residential care. It clearly established that the government’s only asylum for these women had gradually evolved from a temporary refuge for women and a minor proportion of bedridden cases, to a convalescent hospital with half of its inmates suffering a range of diseases and terminal illnesses that called for professional nursing and palliative care.
The government had ignored the changing nature of the asylum and it was inevitable that the system would founder. The warning signs were there at Hyde Park Asylum in 1885 but it took the move to Newington and a hasty inquiry to make them public. The breakdown in the asylum’s good order seems to have originated in the last quarter of 1885 and coincided with the death of the sub-matron, Mary Applewhaite and the near fatal illness of her mother, Matron Lucy Hicks. Mother and daughter had managed to hold together the unravelling system, especially the latter to whom the most onerous duties had been delegated and whose devoted support had been critical. Soon after there were letters of protest to the Colonial Secretary about the conditions. Eliza Pottie, a Quaker philanthropist, who had visited Hyde Park Asylum inmates for some years without unfavourable comment, later claimed the place had been filthy in 1885. There was a staggering increase in the death rate that year which the manager attributed to the number of near-death patients sent from hospitals but one could speculate that the head cook may have already embarked on her near-starvation diet for the women - a diet that soon became evident at Newington.

The majority of asylum inmates were inner urban dwellers. At Hyde Park they could feel the pulse of the city beyond the walls and felt part of the community. The move to Newington alienated them from society, they were cut off from friends and loved ones and completely isolated if bedridden or without the fare for the ferry. Their plight was exacerbated by the harsh treatment of inmate wardswomen and an uncaring doctor. The physical and psychological removal from the wider world unwittingly caused further loss of self: otherwise "normal" inmates developed institutional dependence.

A competent medical officer was appointed to Newington Asylum in mid 1887 soon after the conclusion of the inquiry; a qualified matron and a few trained nurses were employed from 1888 but otherwise, in the interests of economy, the government wrought few changes. Inmates still undertook the bulk of the work, the able-bodied still nursed the sick and dying. Without paid servants, it was impossible to provide adequate care to the sick-poor.
There was another inquiry into public charities in general in 1898. Yet again in 1904, a Royal Commission investigated "alleged abuses" by inmate attendants at Newington.\(^2\) Parliamentary papers are littered with reports of commissions of inquiries. In the nineteenth century, as in the past and present centuries, they resulted in parliamentary debates more intent on apportioning blame than considering improvement, there were the sensational stirrings in the press, a few key principals were removed, a department was reorganised or renamed. The little boxes were ticked. But little action occurred then, or now, to improve the lot of the hapless subjects whose circumstances had instigated such inquiries.

There was a proliferation of private charities in the second half of the nineteenth century. Many provided outdoor relief and/or residential care for women but focused mainly on unemployed domestic servants, unmarried mothers and deserted wives with children. The government and charities of various denominations were humanely providing cottage homes to enable aged couples to live out their lives together. Anne O’Brien, in her study of poverty in New South Wales, 1880-1918, noted the state’s introduction of the Old Age Pension in 1901, "did not achieve one purpose for which it was initially intended" - that of assisting the aged and infirm to remain independent.\(^3\) Nor did the Commonwealth’s Invalid and Old Age Pensions Act of 1908. Six new private homes for the aged had been founded, and by 1911, admissions to government asylums and private homes had increased in number, although, as a percentage of the population, it was a decrease of almost three per cent.\(^4\) Newington Asylum survived as Newington State Hospital until 1968.\(^5\) Hyde Park Asylum’s establishment in 1862 marked the beginning of the government’s direct responsibility for the residential care for aged, destitute women. It was the forerunner of a welfare system that evolved into State Hospitals

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\(^2\) Anne O’Brien, *Poverty’s Prison: the poor in New South Wales 1880-1918*, Carlton Vic, MUP, 1988, p 54. It persisted in 1907 when the Director of Charitable Institutions pointed out that this system of nursing care was “too frequently attended with grave abuses”, ibid.

\(^3\) ibid., p 60.

\(^4\) ibid.

\(^5\) The asylum’s two main dormitory blocks and Newington House were saved from demolition following protests by the National Trust of Australia (NSW). The buildings are now part of the Mulawa women’s prison complex.
that lasted for just over a century. This study of Hyde Park Asylum has made one
nineteenth-century aspect of this evolution less invisible.

In the twenty-first century, legislation has been introduced to improve the
accommodation provisions for the infirm and destitute. In February 2004 the
Salvation Army announced it was selling its nursing homes, ironically because it
could not afford to comply with the new regulations. What will be the fate of the
aged pensioner inmates? "Plus ça change, plus c’est la même chose".
APPENDIX 1
Hyde Park Asylum for the Infirm and Destitute Average Cost per Inmate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Inmates daily average</th>
<th>Salaries</th>
<th>Rations per head</th>
<th>Vegetables overall cost</th>
<th>Milk overall cost</th>
<th>Clothing per inmate</th>
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1 Compiled from Annual Reports published in *NSWLA* 1863-1886.
2 Includes gratuities paid to inmates.
3 Includes medicines, medical comforts (brandy, eggs, etc), burial expenses, light and fuel, soap, postage and straw for mattresses.
APPENDIX 2

Hyde Park Asylum: Admissions, Discharges, Deaths and Daily Average

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1 Compiled from Annual Reports published in NSWAVP, 1863-1886.
APPENDIX 3

Hyde Park Asylum: Ages at Death¹

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