An Archaeology of Institutional Refuge

The Material Culture of the Hyde Park Barracks, Sydney
1848–1886

Penny Crook and Tim Murray

Volume 12
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SYNOPSIS

The Hyde Park Barracks, built to house government assigned convict workers in 1819, was excavated in 1979–81 during extensive restoration works at the complex. In addition to a substantial assemblage of over 33,000 artefacts from regular, subsurface deposits related to the convict construction of the complex and later uses, an outstanding assemblage of more than 61,000 fragments and artefacts, was recovered from the underfloor cavities on Levels 2 and 3 of the main Barracks building, trapped for 100, 130 and up to 160 years in the space between the floors and their ceilings below. The dry cavity spaces preserved a wide range of fragile materials such as paper, textile and organic products that rarely survive in regular archaeological contexts. Owing to the building’s unique architectural history, nearly 88% of the assemblage could be dated to a phase of occupation beginning in 1848 when the convicts moved out and the complex became an Immigrant’s Depot and later a Government Asylum for the Aged, Infirm and Destitute.

The Hyde Park Barracks assemblage was selected for inclusion in the Exploring the Archaeology of the Modern City project (EAMC), begun in 2001. After an initial review, it was decided to concentrate efforts on the women’s phase of occupation, and a separate cataloguing project to upgrade the catalogue of artefacts recovered from the underfloor deposit was established to run concurrently with the EAMC analysis. Much of this work focussed on splitting ‘mixed bags’ that contained bulk accumulations of paper, textiles and mixed media.

The detailed cataloguing of these additional paper records provided us with many more dates for artefacts in the assemblage and in addition to the spatial analysis of all artefacts via GIS mapping, provided a much greater understanding of the accumulation of deposits in particular areas.

This paved the way to examine many details of life in the Women’s Destitute Asylum and Immigrant’s Depot such as smoking, the distribution of religious tracts, the provision of medicinal care, the ‘make-do’ culture of recycled clothing and makeshift tooling, among other topics. The public and private dimensions that these activities represent are examined in turn. By integrating these findings with the rich, but ‘official’, historical records of both institutions, we reflect on the issues involved in doing an archaeology of an institution in colonial New South Wales.
INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND: EXPLORING THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE MODERN CITY

The ‘Exploring the Archaeology of the Modern City’ project (EAMC) was established in 2001 by the Archaeology Program of La Trobe University and Industry Partners the Historic Houses Trust of NSW, the Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority, Godden Mackay Logan Pty Ltd, the NSW Heritage Office, Heritage Victoria and the City of Sydney, to comprehensively analyse and interpret the large assemblages excavated from historical archaeological sites held in storehouses across Sydney. The primary aim was to develop a clearer and more precise understanding of Sydney’s past material, personal and working worlds from its archaeological remains, than had been previously attempted.

The archaeological collection from the Hyde Park Barracks, excavated between 1979 and 1981, was among the suite of material selected for analysis in this project. Other collections include those from the First Government House, the Royal Mint, Susannah Place, the Cumberland and Gloucester Streets site, the Paddy’s Market site and Lilyvale, the Rocks.

Prior to undertaking intra-site research on each assemblage, the records (excavation records and reports, the artefact database and related historical material) were reviewed for their accuracy and their utility within the research program in February and March 2001 (Crook et al. 2003). At this time, it was decided to undertake cataloguing work outside of the EAMC project. This work was conducted between October 2002 and January 2003 by Sophie Pullar (see Crook et al. 2006). Additional research, within the scope of the original EAMC project was then carried out from December 2003 to March 2004.

ABOUT THIS BOOK

This book presents the results of the EAMC team’s re-examination of the historical and archaeological records of the Hyde Park Barracks and is also intended to provide a useful reference point for future research of the site. Additional, detailed information about cataloguing procedures is contained in a report prepared for the Historic Houses Trust of NSW (see Crook et al. 2006).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This book would not have been possible without the generous support of the Historic Houses Trust and the staff of the Hyde Park Barracks, who provided complete access to the collection and documentary resources, workspace and equipment for the analysis, and ongoing encouragement of the research. Above all else, they provided funding for additional cataloguing to be conducted in tandem with the main EAMC project. We wish to thank Helen Temple, Michael
Bogle, Samantha Fabry, John Peterson, Bridget Berry, Dayn Cooper, and all the museum guides for their enthusiasm.

We especially acknowledge Bridget Berry whose research on the Destitute Asylum has been very useful to our own work and is cited many times throughout this report.

In the case of many objects on display or loan which could not be accessed at the time of cataloguing, we relied on the notes in detailed Object Files compiled and maintained by the curators, conservators and specialists over the past two decades and we acknowledge their information (especially for the complete textile garments).

Sophie Pullar worked tirelessly on the Catalogue Upgrade project which was run in tandem with the main EAMC project, and the analyses presented in this report would not have been possible without her hard work.

Laila Ellmoos, EAMC project historian, prepared the initial site history for the Hyde Park Barracks, a version of which appears in this report.

Thanks also to Martin Carney for providing access to his report and artefact catalogue for the historical archaeology of the Judge’s Cottage where a City Night Refuge was run from 1868 to the early 1970s.

We are grateful to Laila Ellmoos and Bridget Berry for their comments on earlier drafts of this report.

Susan Bridekirk edited the report.

And finally, we must also acknowledge the hard work of the original excavators and cataloguers at the HPB, particularly Dana Mider, who took the time to meet with EAMC staff and discuss the history of the cataloguing of the underfloor assemblage. A full list of archaeologists and specialists who have worked at the Hyde Park Barracks is provided below.

**Excavation Stages I and II, 1980–81**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary team</th>
<th>Volunteer Assistants with special responsibilities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P Burritt</td>
<td>Archaeological Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W Thorp</td>
<td>Site Assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G Marsh</td>
<td>Conservator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V Pavlovic</td>
<td>Photographer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E Higginbotham</td>
<td>Planning (Barracks)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E Pinder</td>
<td>Planning (Mint)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Duque-Portugal</td>
<td>Supervisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R Morris</td>
<td>Supervisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L Newell</td>
<td>Supervisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D Petocz</td>
<td>Supervisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R Varman</td>
<td>Supervisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W Wickman</td>
<td>Supervisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G Wilson</td>
<td>Supervisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H Kerrsmith</td>
<td>Planning (Mint)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F Wyld</td>
<td>Assistant Area A1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J Beard</td>
<td>Assistant Area A2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M Brown</td>
<td>Supervisor Area C6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R Young</td>
<td>Supervisor Area B/I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E Wishart</td>
<td>Finds report for Misc. Objects</td>
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<tr>
<td>D Cass</td>
<td>Finds report on Coins and Tokens</td>
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<tr>
<td>L Smith</td>
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<tr>
<td>K Romot</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>A Wilson</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R Young</td>
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In particular, we acknowledge the meticulous work undertaken by Edward Higginbotham (1981), concerning the dating of floor spaces on Levels 2 and 3, and Robert Varman who prepared a report on stratigraphy of the site as a whole.

**Cataloguing: Underground Assemblage, 1990–1994**


**Cataloguing: Underfloor Assemblage, 1990–1996**

1990 Inventory: Dana Mider, Andrew Wilson and volunteers including: Tony English (bone), Julie Dinsmoor and Barbara Fitzroy.

1991–95 additional inventory: Dana Mider

1995–96 audit and database printout: Dana Mider and Claire Everett

**Limitations**

The Hyde Park Barracks archaeology collection is vast. The original intention of the EAMC project was to work with existing data but this was not possible. The subsidiary project concerned only a select component of the assemblage and the cataloguing process remains unfinished. Specifically over 65% of the collection is recorded to only a basic level, MNVs were only possible for part of the assemblage and we have had to sample some artefacts classes and restrict other analyses (e.g. the paper records) to select locales.

While this necessarily predicates a statement that the information presented here is subject to revision, it is not as alarming as it might seem. Many of the objects in the collection (beads, buttons etc) were small whole items and each element represents a minimum number of one. The artefact classes that are a typical focus of MNV work—ceramics and glass—were highly fragmented and demonstrated a very diverse range (i.e. numerous, mismatched patterns) and early assessments found very few conjoins outside their immediate joist-group context. MNV counts were conducted for the paper sample in stair landing.

Many objects were on display or loan at the time of cataloguing and could only be accessed for weights, measurements and close inspection if the items were on exhibition change-over or returned to their boxes.

The historical resources concerning the Hyde Park Barracks comprise a vast archive. With the aid of the excellent archive prepared and maintained by the Historic Houses Trust, perusing these documents for vital information was a relatively easy matter, however, it must be noted that it was not possible to undertake an analysis of the lengthier documents—particularly the 1873 and 1886 Commissions of Inquiry—with the same rigour applied to the archaeology research.
**TERMINOLOGY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tr>
<td>HPA</td>
<td>Hyde Park Asylum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HPB</td>
<td>Hyde Park Barracks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JG</td>
<td>Joist Group: a group of numbered Joist Spaces, grouped into areas partitioned by principal beams. The JG forms part of the stratigraphic context number in the database for all artefacts recovered from Levels 2 and 3.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JS</td>
<td>Joist Space: the spaces between each joist on Levels 2 and 3 of the Main Building, each JS was numbered and serves as a stratigraphic context number in database for all artefacts recovered from that JS.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 1</td>
<td>The ground floor of the Main Barracks building. Artefacts from this level were recovered via regular, subsurface excavation in Trench A2 of the underground excavations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 2</td>
<td>The middle floor of the Main Barracks building.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 3</td>
<td>The top floor of the Main Barracks building.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MNV</td>
<td>Minimum number of vessels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MVC</td>
<td>Minimum vessel count.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sherd</td>
<td>A fragment, or occasionally small whole item, recovered by archaeological excavation. While traditionally ‘sherd’ has been used to refer only to fragments of glass and ceramic, we extend its application to other artefact classes, and encompass small whole items. Thus, the ‘sherd counts’ presented in various tables tally in The Study Selection each individual fragment of a re-joinable vessel as well as small whole items such as buttons, beads etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TPQ</td>
<td>Terminus Post Quem (‘the date after which’): the date of the latest artefact, after which a single-deposit cannot have been deposited.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UF</td>
<td>Underfloor; Artefacts from the Underfloor assemblage are catalogued as UF00001 and onward.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UG</td>
<td>Underground; Artefacts from the underground assemblage are catalogued as UG0001 and onward.</td>
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Part A

Research Context
THE HYDE PARK BARRACKS: A BRIEF HISTORY

The Hyde Park Barracks was built under instruction from Governor Lachlan Macquarie between 1817 and 1819 to provide secure accommodation for male government-assigned convicts who, until that time, roamed Sydney’s streets after their day’s work and were responsible for their own lodgings.

The Barracks complex was constructed by skilled convict labour to a design specified by the convict architect, Francis Greenway. In Greenway’s original Georgian design, the compound comprised a central dormitory building, enclosed by perimeter walls with corner pavilions that contained both cells and guard houses. Two ranges flanked the northern and southern perimeter walls and included a kitchen, bakery and mess, in addition to residential quarters for the Deputy Superintendent and his family.

The Barracks was intended to house 600 convicts, but up to 1,400 were known to have been accommodated there at any one time. The Court of General Sessions was established in the northern range of the complex in 1830, beginning a long occupation of the complex by the colonial courts.

Figure 1
Louis Freycinet’s engraving of the Hyde Park Barracks published in 1824.
(Courtesy Hyde Park Barracks Museum)

The Material Culture of the Hyde Park Barracks, Sydney, 1848–1886

17
Following the cessation of convict transportation to NSW in 1840, the number of convicts in government service was in decline and new uses for the old Greenway building were soon found. In 1848, the few convicts still living at the Hyde Park Barracks were moved to Cockatoo Island, and the main Barracks building was refitted to accommodate orphans and a new kind of mobile workforce: the single, female migrant:

The building known as Hyde Park Barracks having survived the system of supplying this colony with Labour, to which it so long ministered, has been appropriated as a place in which the Orphan Immigrants will be lodged until provided their places. Situated at the corner of Hyde Park [it] is an open place, which, though in immediate proximity to the business thoroughfares of Sydney, is not one itself, with the Government Domain behind it stretching to the Waters of Harbour, and an uninterrupted view to the Heads of Port Jackson, surrounded by a spacious yard enclosed by high walls, and close to the principal Church of England and Roman Catholic churches, and to the residences of the clergymen who officiate there, this building appears to possess every advantage that could be desired, with reference to the health, the seclusion and the moral and religious instruction of the inmates, and the convenience of persons coming to hire them. It consists of three stories, divided into large airy wards, and affords convenient accommodation for about 300 persons. The females are under the immediate superintendence of an experienced resident matron, who was appointed by the Colonial Land and Emigration Commissioners to the charge of the children who arrived last year in the “Sir Edward Parry”, and where efficiency in that situation caused her appointment to the office which she now fills. (Annual Report of Immigration in NSW 1848, page 5, SRNSW 4/4708 in HPB Research folder: ‘AONSW Immigration and Government Asylum Records’)

The offices of the Agent for Immigration and the hiring rooms of the Female Immigration Depot were located on the ground floor, with temporary accommodation for new arrivals transferred from the Quarantine Station on the second and third floors.
In addition to the Female Immigration Depot, the Hyde Park Barracks also accommodated Irish female orphans (until 1852), the Immigration Office and many other government agencies in the northern and southern ranges of the complex, including the Government Printing Office (1848–1856), the Vaccine Institute (1857–1886), the District Court for Sydney (1858–1976) and the Court of Requests (1856–1859).

In 1862, the top floor of the central dormitory building was given over for the use of the Government Asylum for Infirm and Destitute Women, following the colonial government's assumption of responsibility for the care of the aged and infirm. Over 150 women were transferred from the overcrowded Benevolent Asylum in Haymarket (corner of Devonshire and Pitt Streets, now on the site of present-day Central Station), established in 1821. Matron of the Immigration Depot and from February 1862, of the Asylum, Lucy Applewhaite–Hicks, also lived at the Hyde Park Barracks along with her family. The presence of the Asylum for the care of aged and infirm women placed many demands on the old convict barracks and many modifications were required over the next two decades.

Overcrowding was an ongoing problem and in 1886, the inmates were moved to a new purpose-built facility at Newington on the Parramatta River, and the Immigration Depot was relocated.

Thus began the third major phase of the Hyde Park Barracks’ history: the judicial period. At this time, buildings within the Hyde Park Barracks complex were extensively remodelled for use by the Department of Attorney General and Justice. The complex continued to be used primarily for judicial purposes until 1979, despite some calls for its demolition in the early-20th century.

In 1975, under the direction of the Public Works Department, restoration of the Hyde Park Barracks buildings began while still being occupied by the Department of Attorney General and Justice, and ancillary police departments.
The Barracks was placed on the Register of the National Estate in 1978, and three years later was granted one of Australia’s first Permanent Conservation Orders (PCO) under the Heritage Act 1977.

In 1980 the government of NSW announced that the Hyde Park Barracks would be converted to a museum of Sydney’s history and that the physical fabric of the building complex would be restored to its original convict phase. When restoration work began, artefacts were revealed in the underfloor spaces of the central dormitory building as well as in service trenches within the grounds of the compound. Following test trenching, the PWD embarked on Sydney’s first large-scale public excavation, which attracted media attention and was assisted by the work of many volunteers.

The Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences (MAAS) opened the Hyde Park Barracks to the public in 1984, as the first museum of its kind to focus on the history of Sydney. In 1990, the Barracks was transferred to the Historic Houses Trust (HHT), and after refurbishment, was reopened as a ‘museum of itself’ with permanent displays on the second and third floors and temporary exhibitions in the Greenway Gallery on the first floor. The Trust’s Hyde Park Barracks Museum continues to operate successfully today as a museum depicting its own history, especially its convict phase.

Figure 4
The main building of the Hyde Park Barracks complex in 2006. (P. Crook)
Excavations at the Barracks 1979–1984

After initial restorative work on the Hyde Park Barracks in the last years of the Attorney General’s occupation (Potter [ed.] c.1981: 121–122), the Public Works Department (PWD) began much more substantial construction work in 1979 to restore the Barracks to its convict visage in advance of its conversion to a history museum. The warren of ‘sub-standard additions’ that cluttered Greenway’s original court was demolished (see Figure 3), and the many accretions that had enclosed the main barrack building were also removed.

As restoration and construction work was underway, Carol Powell was employed to compile archival research on the Hyde Park Barracks and the neighbouring buildings of the Sydney Mint which were also being restored at the time. Powell was also asked to record important artefacts exposed during the conservations works (Potter [ed.] c.1981: 1). It was soon realised that the quantity of archaeological material at both complexes was extensive and archaeologist Wendy Thorp was commissioned in September 1980 to undertake a test-trenching program to better identify the nature of the archaeological resource.

At Thorp’s recommendation, an additional and larger-scale excavation program was proposed and Patricia Burritt was commissioned to undertake the work while the PWD’s restoration project continued. This phase of the work came to be known as the ‘Stage II’ excavations and was conducted in 14 working weeks over an 11-month period from 23 December 1980, with 11 archaeologists, a conservator, a photographer and 250 volunteers (Potter [ed.] c.1981: 12, 31).

Both programs revealed archaeological material in trenches dug across the buildings and courtyards of the Hyde Park Barracks complex, and in the underfloor cavities of the main dormitory building. Many smaller excavations were conducted as work continued in preparation for the opening of the museum in 1984 (such as the installation of pipes or the Australian Monument to the Great Irish Famine), and all disturbances to the ground surface since then, have been supervised by an archaeologist.

After excavation, the assemblage was surveyed, select components studied and photographed in detail and parts of it were displayed in the new museum. More detailed cataloguing was to wait for almost a decade and the underfloor and underground components of the assemblage were the subject of two different cataloguing projects undertaken in the early 1990s headed by Wendy Thorp (underground, see Thorp & Campbell Conservation 1994) and Dana Mider (underfloor, see Mider 1996). The assemblage effectively remained divided until 1998 when the curators of the Hyde Park Barracks developed a database to manage the entire collection. (See Appendix A for more information.)
**Research Directions**

While this study deals with issues of charitable care and control, this was not our central focus when we began our research here. We chose to focus on the women’s phase of occupation in consequence of it being responsible for approximately 90% of the rich underfloor deposits from Levels 2 and 3. Our method—like that at other sites in the EAMC—has been materials focussed, driven by the assemblages, not their historical context. This does not mean that we are insensitive to the complex social context in which these deposits were formed (as we hope the analysis and discussion presented in Parts B and C demonstrate) rather that we did not seek to analyse and interpret these as evidence of asylum life first, and material culture second.

The following discussion outlines the primary methodologies used in the analyses and interpretation of this material culture.

**Cataloguing**

One of the recommendations of the initial review of the Hyde Park Barracks collection and catalogue in July 2001 (Crook et al. 2003), was that the existing artefact catalogue of the Hyde Park Barracks archaeology collection be upgraded in order to realise the archaeological research potential of the assemblage. This upgrade was administered as a subsidiary project to the main EAMC project (see Crook et al. 2006) and the bulk of the work was undertaken by Sophie Pullar.

Attention was focussed on the artefacts recovered from the main dormitory building and identified as belonging to Activity groups offering the highest degree of research potential. Bone, shell and building materials were excluded, as they were not intended to be included in the main EAMC analysis (Crook et al. 2003). Altogether, the agreed scope of works encompassed about 28,000 sherds catalogued in 8,151 records.

The catalogue upgrade project began in October 2001 and the bulk of the work was completed in December 2002. Additional work was undertaken in January 2003 and January 2004.

See Crook et al. 2006 for details of the cataloguing project.

**Sampling Paper and Textiles**

The cataloguing of ‘mixed’ textile and paper bags was a major task of the cataloguing project. It required considerable system development to ensure that cataloguing was as comprehensive, and efficient, as possible. Owing to the archaeological rarity of the textile fragments and the past concentration on more complete or readily identifiable fragments (such as bonnets, shirts etc), some of the cataloguing process was unknown territory. We were interested in whether there was any significance in the knotted cording, the regularity of fabric scraps and the kind of stitching evident on them.
In order to identify this, we began by cataloguing 3% of textile records in utmost detail, noting the size and shape of regular and irregular scraps, and where necessary, splitting each bulk bag into on average of six new records. Owing to the time required for this work, we realised that the total collection could not be dealt with in this fashion. A more systematic, context-based sampling strategy was pursued so that systematic, albeit limited, analyses could be undertaken in specific localities. The sample began by weighing all available textiles bags, in bulk, to establish a total measure of all textiles in Levels 2 and 3.

Joist Spaces 6 and 11 were selected as the sample for their distribution, covering east and west rooms on both floors, and for their combined representation of over 7.8% of the textile assemblage, by weight.

The same sample boundaries were then employed for the paper records.

In addition, all paper records from the stair landing deposits were recorded in detail.

**SHERD AND MINIMUM VESSEL COUNTS**

While less common in Australia, the preparation of minimum vessel counts (MVC) is considered best practice in historical archaeology (Sussman 2000, Schiffer 1987: 19–20 & Yentsch 1990), but unfortunately no complete suite of MVCs has been produced for the Hyde Park Barracks. While the calculation of MVCs was undertaken during the cataloguing project, this focused on select artefact groups and excluded 'unidentified' items. With such an incomplete series of calculations, it was considered imprudent to use the partial MVCs recorded to date. Consequently, the assemblage counts and tables of artefact frequency which appear here are based on sherd and fragment counts rather than the preferred, but incomplete MVCs.

For many small items (pins, matchboxes etc), this situation is unproblematic, but it does have an impact on the figures presented for glass, ceramic and fabric.

**MAPPING**

The unique nature of the artefacts within ‘joist spaces’, unaffected by whole-scale demolition or the subsurface water fluctuation which affects most underfloor assemblages, makes the Hyde Park Barracks underfloor assemblage an excellent candidate for artefact distribution analysis.

This was undertaken in ArcGIS based on overlays of the joist groups drawn by archaeologist Ted Higginbotham (1981) and architectural drawings by the Public Works Department of the complete floor plan.

There are minor discrepancies between the two, for example some masonry elements mismatch slightly. Where discrepancies occurred, the location of the joist space was interpolated. Overall most joists are a direct trace of the joist position but where they did not align with masonry elements on the Public Works drawing, we have drawn the joist group relative to its position on the Higginbotham plan, i.e. if it overlapped a doorway, the group was moved left or right by a joist width.
**HISTORICAL RESOURCES**

The Hyde Park Barracks has been documented in rich historical resources—the parliamentary inquiries of 1873 and 1886, the daily journal of the Immigrant Depot—but they can be regarded as incomplete and prejudicial resources. Several of the records and daily books of the Asylum (mentioned in the 1873 and 1886 inquiries) do not survive in public archives and in any case, give only the official view—they overlook private lives. Even though we have lists with dozens of names of Asylum inmates, very few of them can be traced—perhaps because they gave false names, perhaps because their lives did not follow the pattern that leads to the kind documentation we are used to exploiting in historical archaeology.

It is for these reasons that we pursued a complementary research strategy at the HPB, integrating historical and archaeological analyses and interpretations about Asylum life.

Historian Joy Hughes is currently undertaking extensive research into the history of the Asylum women and while it is unfortunate that this information was not available during the course of the Archaeology of the Modern City project, it is likely to be a great benefit to future archaeological research projects at the Hyde Park Barracks.

**A Note on the Parliamentary Inquiries**

The two main public inquires into the operation of the Hyde Park Barracks (later Newington) Infirm and Destitute Asylum, among other government asylums, were conducted in 1873 and 1886 (see Public Charities Commission 1874 and Commission of Inquiry 1887). While published a year later, they are referred to in this publication as the 1873 and 1886 Inquiries owing to the fact that most of the evidence and testimonies were gathered in those years. Note that the 1886 Inquiry began just six months after the Asylum was relocated to Newington. While much of the focus of the inquiry is predictably centred on the new facilities at Newington, several references are made to facilities and daily practices at the Hyde Park Barracks, prior to the move.
Part B

THE ASSEMBLAGE
**THE UNDERFLOOR ASSEMBLAGE**

The most outstanding component of the Hyde Park Barracks Archaeology Collection is the underfloor assemblage, concealed for 100, 130 and up to 160 years in the cavities between the floors on Levels 2 and 3 and their ceilings below. This assemblage is significant for two reasons. First, its survival in the dry cavity spaces has preserved a wide range of fragile materials such as paper, textile and organic products that rarely survive in regular, subsurface archaeological contexts. Second, owing to the unique architectural history of the main Barracks building we can establish minimum dates for components of the assemblage. These provide us with an independent dating tool for linking assemblages from particular areas to the different phases of the building’s history.

**ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT: THE SUBFLOOR CAVITIES**

When the Hyde Park Barracks was first constructed as a convict barracks, the floorboards were butted and fixed with machine-cut floor brads, as was typical for the time. None of this original flooring survived on the ground floor, but the majority of boards on the first and second floors were original—although, after decades of repairs and refits for various government bureaucrats, there were many areas of disturbance. The most affected areas were those around principal beams, near windows and under doorways (Varman 1981: 11). In other locations, boards were pulled up, buttressed with iron girders then renailed (Varman 1981: 11). Originally the boards ran across the width of the rooms but few had survived to their full length by the late 1970s (Varman 1981: 7).

Little is known of the floor coverings during the second-half of 19th century, but it is possible that some areas of the Asylum and Depot were covered at some stage, although not for their full length of occupation as evidenced by the large underfloor assemblage. Oral histories revealed that in the 20th century most floor areas were covered in linoleum or carpet, at least on the third floor (Crockett n.d., p. 1), and it is likely that the floors were systematically covered with linoleum in 1886 when the law courts moved in.

The original ceilings of the Hyde Park Barracks were a mix of lath-and-plaster and exposed, white-washed beams (Varman 1981: 22). Ceiling boards were introduced in most parts of the building when the Immigrant Depot moved in 1848 (Potter [ed.] c.1981: 48).

These either sealed the formerly exposed beams or where lath-and-plaster ceilings had been installed, these were removed and replaced with the new boards. Lath-and-plaster survived at the western end of the ground floor hallway, the stair landing on Level 1 and traces were recorded in the clock weight case (Varman 1981: 7).

The new ceiling boards were adjoined by tongue-and-groove fittings (Varman 1981: 22) which trapped many of the tiny artefacts able to fall through the butted floorboards above. These were in turn sealed by lower lying ceiling boards which were installed during the 1886 legal phase renovations and which were removed during the 1979–80 conservation works (Varman 1981: 22).
In the few places where no ceiling boards had been installed in 1848 (e.g. the corridors on Levels 1 and 2) the ceiling boards of the legal phase provided the first opportunity for deposit to be accumulated below the floor boards.

**DATING THE UNDERFLOOR ASSEMBLAGE**

Owing to this unique architectural history, we can date the deposit that accumulated in different parts of the building by the kind of ceiling that survived below it. That is to say, we can establish *minimum* dates or a *terminus post quem* (TPQ) for each area. The areas where lath-and-plaster ceilings survive date from 1819. Those sealed by tongue-and-groove ceiling boards with patent nails date from 1848. In all remaining areas where ceilings survive the deposits date from the late 1880s.

This analysis has significant consequences for the underfloor assemblage. Despite the great importance of the convict origins of the Barracks, when it comes to the underfloor assemblage, the areas that are *potentially* convict comprise only 3.6% of floor space on Levels 2 and 3. Those dating to women’s phase, from 1848, comprise over 71% of the total area, and those dating from the legal phase, 16.2%.

In four areas on the ground floor, the ceiling boards fell through during conservation works and all the deposit that had accumulated from the below the boards on Level 2 was lost (see hatched areas on Figure 7). Altogether this comprises 8.8% of floor space.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artefact Class</th>
<th>L1</th>
<th>L2</th>
<th>L3</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bone</td>
<td>5,269</td>
<td>2,152</td>
<td>5,011</td>
<td>12,432</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building Materials</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>709</td>
<td>541</td>
<td>1,491</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ceramic</td>
<td>2,446</td>
<td>464</td>
<td>1,309</td>
<td>4,219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glass</td>
<td>1,783</td>
<td>1,935</td>
<td>4,655</td>
<td>8,373</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leather</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>426</td>
<td>872</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metal</td>
<td>5,025</td>
<td>11,593</td>
<td>12,086</td>
<td>28,704</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mineral</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organic</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>348</td>
<td>1,701</td>
<td>2,068</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>519</td>
<td>837</td>
<td>1,381</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1,452</td>
<td>3,292</td>
<td>4,769</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plastic/Synthetic</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>411</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seed</td>
<td>351</td>
<td>1,247</td>
<td>2,600</td>
<td>4,198</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shell</td>
<td>416</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>333</td>
<td>883</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textile</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>884</td>
<td>2,226</td>
<td>3,332</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wood</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>2,976</td>
<td>3,641</td>
<td>6,822</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total** 16,476 24,877 38,814 80,167

Table 1
Total quantity of artefacts in the main building of the Hyde Park Barracks.
These areas were carefully mapped by Edward Higginbotham (1981) and have been reproduced in Figure 7.

It must be remembered, however, that these dates represent the *minimum* date for the accumulation of the deposit. The Hyde Park Barracks underfloor assemblage is a palimpsest deposit, and contains a range of materials dating from 1819 up to the mid-20th century. The presence of artefacts from the legal phase of office occupation cannot be overlooked (see ‘Official and Administrative Records’, p. 84), but it is unlikely to be as intrusive as one might think.

The distribution of dated artefacts (Figure 8) shows a predominance of artefacts dating from the convict (post-1820, green dots) and women’s (post-1850, orange dots) phases. The number of green (post-1820) dots may seem surprising for a deposit that predominantly accumulated from...
1848, but note that this is the minimum date range of the artefacts. That is, an unmarked ginschnaps bottle probably introduced to the building in the women’s phase will be recorded as post-1830 (and therefore grouped as ‘post-1820’ on this diagram) because the form in which it was blown was first introduced in 1830 but continued in use until the 1860s. This is why the green dots are not confined to the areas with the earliest ceiling types (outlined in green on the map).

The post-1880s material (the red dots) appears in fairly limited numbers, which suggests that the floors were covered (probably with linoleum) in 1886 when the building was refitted for use as offices. Interestingly, in at least four areas the red dots are clustered in the one joist space (see especially the northwest corner of Level 2), which indicates a localised intrusive deposition of refuse, probably occurring during repairs.¹

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¹ The deposition during a maintenance event does not necessarily imply that the objects were spatially de-contextualised. It is possible, for example, than a bundle of a paper which had fallen behind a piece of heavy furniture over a number of years were placed under the boards during works which require the movement (or replacement) of the furniture.
Figure 8
Distribution of dated artefacts on Levels 2 and 3 of the main building allocated to the ceiling typology TPQ groupings. Green dots represent the earliest artefacts (first made before 1820), red the latest (made after 1880). Note that these largely represent the earliest production dates of each artefact type, not the precise year in which each item was made.
**Processes of Deposition: Accidental Loss, Rats and Concealment**

Underfloor assemblages are palimpsest deposits, comprising a range of material lost, swept or placed beneath the floorboards over a long period of time. The majority of an underfloor deposit is usually considered to be an accumulation of small items, such as buttons, beads, pins, paper clips, that fall through the cracks of the boards when accidentally dropped, or incidentally swept between the cracks, in fallen-through timber knots or other holes such as abandoned nail shafts. Fragments of larger items, such as glass bottles or ceramic vessels might also be lost this way if a vessel shatters when dropped. Many of these filtered items probably fell through the boards unnoticed.

The old, warped butted floorboards on Levels 2 and 3 would have allowed ample opportunities to lose small items this way. Once they had fallen through the narrow gap, they were concealed between joists that run perpendicular to the boards. In this scenario, items should fall within a metre or so of where they were last used, and therefore the deposit below should represent a fairly accurate reflection of activities within a room.

Once under the floor, the archaeological resource is subject to further taphonomic processes: firstly, disturbance or refuse deposition when boards are pulled up for maintenance work. The disturbance can be caused by human traffic in the underfloor spaces as work is carried out, or relocation or partial removal of deposit to make way for cables or other fixtures. It is also common that when a few boards have been pulled up, other ‘above board’ rubbish can be discarded below the ground.

The second taphonomic process is disturbance from rats and other rodents.

There is ample historical and archaeological evidence for rats at the Hyde Park Barracks. In 1864, Matron Hicks protested against Medical Officer Dr Walker’s plan to lay rat poison in the building owing to the smell and ‘injurious’ effects it may have on the expected immigrants (Daily Reports, 25 June 1864, SRNSW 9/6181b). Two years later Dr Walker was still struggling with the rats in his dispensary, ‘so much infested by rats that the destruction of Drugs and breakage of Glass is really very serious’ (SRNSW 2/642A, for full quote see p. 57).

Higginbotham (1981: 32) recorded gnaw marks along the window bay joists, a considerable number of rat carcasses were found and many rodent nests survived in the underfloor spaces. Higginbotham (1981: 32) noted that there were more nests on Level 3 (especially R3-5 and R3-3) than Level 2.

Rats and mice form nests from any soft, portable material they find in their immediate environment. At the Barracks the nests comprised paper, straw, grasses and thousands of scraps of cotton fabric. Rodents are known to travel great distances in the wild to collect material for their nests, and can climb vertical surfaces and squeeze into narrow spaces. Higginbotham considered that mice could have easily squeezed through mortise and tenon joins between the principal beams and joists, giving them ‘free access throughout the underfloor spaces’, but that rats, being larger rodents, may have been confined to joists along the window bays—where much of the gnawing was observed (1981: 32).
The implications for the archaeological assemblage are that some items, especially light and portable material such as fabric scraps, may have been 'stolen' from above the floorboards during the night and that these and items lost below the boards may be relocated within the underfloor space between 'rooms' and even levels.

In addition to accidental loss and rodent disturbance, another means of deposition below the floor boards is intentional discard or concealment. Notwithstanding the large gaps between the butted floorboards on Levels 2 and 3, many of the items recovered simply could not have been lost accidentally or dragged by rats below the boards. Matchboxes, for example, are too large to fall through the widest cracks or even large knots in floorboards, but may easily slip through or be put in a small disused cut in a board. Larger vessels, such as the complete pharmaceutical and schnapps bottles, can only have been deposited by lifting a board. Given that these large items mostly occurred along windows and door frames where Varman noted that boards were shortened for repairs, the opportunities for lifting boards would have been greater.

It would be unwise to conclude that in all cases where an item was recovered whole and a board had to be lifted, that the item was deliberately concealed, but there is a high probability that this was the case. It remains possible, however, that items were placed beneath the boards during repairs.

In summary, the majority of the Hyde Park Barracks underfloor assemblage is likely to derive from accidental loss and incidental sweepings, most of which will survive in the general locale of where they were lost. A small, but unquantifiable, percentage of the assemblage was probably dragged beneath the floorboards by rats and mice, and a much greater proportion of the remaining deposit is likely to have been disturbed or relocated by rodents. It is possible that some items were dragged from room to room, or even floor to floor for nest-building. A similarly small percentage of the assemblage probably derives from refuse following maintenance work, and a small number of items were probably deliberately concealed beneath the floorboards. Consequently, we need to look for strong patterns in the underfloor assemblage, not individual cases, in order to identify the processes at work with confidence.

**RECOVERY OF THE UNDERFLOOR ASSEMBLAGE**

Floorboards were removed to allow the recovery of the underlying deposit (Potter [ed.] c.1981: 30), and were returned to their original location in the later stages of the restoration program. Samples of the deposit (including what appeared to be intact rats nests) were removed and retained, and the remainder of the deposit in each JS and each JG was vacuumed and sieved (Potter [ed.] c.1981: 41).

The underfloor assemblage was recovered from discrete spatial units: the spaces between each joist ('Joist Space' or JS), grouped into areas partitioned by principal beams ('Joist Groups' or JG). All JGs were numbered 1–62 and the JSs within each group numbers from one to a maximum of 14 running north to south for the main rooms and east to west for the corridor and stair landing spaces (see Figure 9).
Figure 9
Joist Groups on Levels 2 and 3, showing Joist Spaces numbered from north to south and east to west (P. Crook after Higginbotham 1981).
CHARACTERISATION OF THE UNDERFLOOR ASSEMBLAGE

When you look at the distribution of sherds across Levels 2 and 3 (see Figure 11), you notice that overall, the deposit is fairly evenly spread across both floors, excepting a marked concentration of artefacts in the stairwell landing on Level 3, which will be discussed below. It is clear that some Joist Spaces stand out amongst their neighbours as having a higher density of sherds (See Level 2 JGs 23, 27 and 60 and Level 3, JGs 16, 14, 40, 1, 2, 6, 10–12). These may be evidence of increased rodent activity, or areas where damaged boards allowed greater accumulation or were lifted for refuse placement.

The distribution of each class of artefacts presents a more complex picture (see Figure 11). On Level 3, glass and ceramic sherds (represented by the blue dots) are concentrated along the windows and walls, with the exception of a concentration fanning out in front of the fireplace in JG7 and in the middle of JG 14. Where organic materials (bone, shell and seeds appear), they also tend to be in concentrations.

Figure 10
Distribution of sherds across Levels 2 and 3 of the main dormitory building.
Figure 11
Distribution of sherds across Levels 2 and 3 of the main dormitory building, by artefact class.

Material Classes
1 Dot = 1
- Building Material
- Glass
- Ceramic
- Mineral
- Metal
- Wood
- Bone
- Seed
- Shell
- Organic
- Leather
- Textile
- Paper
- Other
- Plastic
Figure 12
Distribution of sherds, by weight (where recorded) across Levels 2 and 3 of the main dormitory building. Green dots are the lightest, red the heaviest.

Level 2

Level 3

No artefact deposit

Weight per Artefact

1 Dot = 1 Artefact

- 0–1g
- 1–5g
- 6–10g
- 11–15g
- 16–20g
- 21–25g
- 26–30g
- 31–35g
- 36–40g
- 41–45g
- 46–50g
- >51g
THE STAIRWELL LANDING ON LEVEL 3

One of the greatest concentrations of artefacts across the upper two floors of the main Barracks building is on the stairway landing on the third floor of the building (see Figure 14), in Joist Groups 37, 38 and 39 (see Figure 9). This includes an area of flooring in place of the original southern stairway (a mirror image of the one that survives today) that was probably installed in 1862 when the Asylum moved in, to create additional floor space on all three levels (HHT 1994: 15).

A total of 7,425 fragments were recorded in the landing spaces on each side of the corridor. This represents 12.7% of the total underfloor assemblage (by sherd count) in an area that comprises approximate 2.6% of the available floor space. As previously discussed, this area was selected for a complete analysis of paper records and all ‘bulk bags’ from this area were split and catalogued (see ‘Sampling Paper and Textiles’). While this might seem to be the cause of the density in this area (i.e. that the more precise recording simply counted more individual items not registered in the existing catalogue), when paper is removed from the distribution map, the concentration is still significant (see Figure 16).
Another possible reason for the density may be the age of the cavity space, as determined by the ceiling below, but even this fails to satisfy speculation because only one of the landings, JG 37, dates from 1819. While it is certainly denser than the landing to the southern stair (removed c. 1862), containing almost double the amount of sherds, JG 39 is still a dense deposit in comparison to the remainder of Levels 2 and 3. This suggests that the density of the deposits must be related to activity on stairs. The assemblage displays a very different signature to the other deposits across Levels 2 and 3 (see Figure 15).

The group is also interesting for the high integrity of the artefacts recovered from these deposits. There were 35 complete match box sets (i.e. cover and tray), many with labels still attached and others with matches (mostly burnt) still inside. In addition to these there were 22 complete covers that found their way under the floor. Interestingly, while few complete pipes were found and most stems (the more fragile, and notably smaller, element of a pipe) were considerably smashed, more than 40 bowls were complete or near complete. While it may be easy to lose a fragment of a bowl or stem, dropping the whole bowl (usually 2cm diam and 3cm high) through the cracks is far less likely. This is doubly so for the match boxes: they measure roughly 6 x 4 x 2 cm, suggesting that they were deliberately stashed or trashed.

Most of the paper fragments dates to the 1870s, with some exceptions. In addition to 111 fragments of newspaper dating from 1870 to 1886, there were 50 datable match boxes, 42 of them post-dating 1873. These two independent means of dating—one being printed dates on newspapers or mentioning known, datable events, and matchboxes ‘registered at Stationer’s Hall’

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2 The corridor space between the two landings lies above 1848 ceiling boards, but the deposit itself is more characteristic of the adjacent post-1880s corridor deposits that the adjacent, pre-1880s landing deposit. It is possible that this part of the corridor was cleaned out in the 1880s, even though the ceiling below was not replaced.

3 31 fragments date from 1861–1869, four pre-date 1854 and another two post-date 1901. Note these represented minimum dates in some cases.
or produced in the aftermath of the *Trade Mark Act*—are rarely available to archaeologists and corroborate the dating of this deposit to the early 1870s.

On this basis, it is reasonable to argue that the deposit on the stairwell landing largely (but not exclusively) represents the last 10 or 15 years of the Asylum’s life, and significantly between the two parliamentary inquiries of 1873 and 1886 and during the period in which the Matron is thought to have moved out from her Asylum lodgings. This escalation in refuse disposal on the landing is suggestive of a breakdown in the workings of the institution. Whether or not this may be attributed to the surging numbers of inmates, the decay of building, or the fact that new behaviours were developing outside of the watchful eye of Matron Hicks can only be speculated.

Figure 15  Percentage of sherds by activity grouping in the landing deposits compared to all other deposits on Levels 2 and 3.

Figure 16  Comparison of sherd distribution in the Level 3 stair landing with paper fragments (left) and without (right).
Part C

The Hyde Park Barracks
Destitute Asylum and
Immigration Depot, 1848–1886
BACKGROUND: CHARITY AND IMMIGRATION IN 19TH-CENTURY NSW

In the first decades of the 19th century as the population of the colony of New South Wales grew, the welfare of poor and ailing settlers and former convicts became a matter of increasing concern to the benevolent ranks of Sydney’s elite and its clergy. They responded by forming charitable societies, such as the New South Wales Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (1813) and the Colonial Auxiliary Bible Society (1817), based on English models and funded by private benefactors. In 1818, the Benevolent Society of New South Wales was established and while this too was based on English models, its benefactors secured the patronage of Governor Macquarie and established a successful model for government support. The objectives of the Society were:

…to relieve the poor, the distressed, the aged, and the infirm, and thereby to discountenance as much as possible mendicity and vagrancy, and to encourage industrious habits among the indigent poor, as well as afford them religious instruction and consolation in their distresses. (Cummins 2003: 51)

Initially it was concerned only with outdoor relief, providing rations, clothing, small loans or cash grants to those in need, but soon the need to provide shelter became imperative. With the support of Macquarie, an asylum for 60 disabled and infirm persons, built by convict labour at government expense, was opened on 12 October 1821 on the corner of Pitt and Devonshire Streets (where Central Station stands today). By 1830, 144 men and women sought refuge there. The depression of 1842 placed greater pressure on the asylum and despite the establishment of the Sydney Infirmary in 1845, the asylum remained the ‘only repository for persons suffering from chronic and long term illnesses for the whole of NSW’ (Cummins 2003: 52). In 1849 there were more than 500 inmates, and in 1851 the Governor granted the Society use of the former convict hospital in Liverpool.

Three years earlier, as part of the dismantling of the infrastructure of convict transportation (officially ceased in 1840) the former barracks at Hyde Park had been given over to the use of an Immigration Depot (as discussed in Part A). The protection of single women migrating to Australia was a matter of concern, equal to, but arguably of greater significance than the cogitations of benevolence with regard to the aged, infirm and destitute. Young Irish, English, Scottish and Welsh women were the future wives and domestic servants of the colony, and their safe, healthy and uncorrupted arrival was considered a vital element in the economic and social development of New South Wales.

British campaigns to assist women to emigrate to Australian colonies began in the 1830s (Gothard 2003: 10). In the 1840s, the final cessation of convict transportation sparked renewed interest in securing migrant labour, and hundreds of thousands refugees were fleeing the Great Famine in Ireland. Under a new scheme, orphans from Irish poorhouses and industrious single women were brought to Australia under free passage, and from 1848 they were received at the Hyde Park Barracks where they remained—protected from unscrupulous employers and vagabonds—until suitable work could be found.
In the 1850s, as the colony moved toward self government (1856), the subsidisation of community-run charitable institutions such as the Benevolent Society came under increasing scrutiny (Cummins 2003: 53). The ongoing debates culminated in the creation of the Board of Government Asylums for the Infirm and Destitute in 1862, with Frederick King serving as Secretary. In addition to the acquisition of Liverpool Hospital (established by the Benevolent Society of NSW in 1851 in the former convict hospital) and the establishment of another asylum in Macquarie Street, Parramatta, for blind and senile males (Cummins 2003: 54–55), 150 inmates from the Benevolent Society Asylum were moved into the top floor of the Immigration Depot. For the first time the government was fully responsible for the management and operation of a colonial destitute asylum.4

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4 In 1866, a destitute asylum for 200 persons was established at Port Macquarie. In 1884 a second destitute asylum was established in Macquarie Street, Parramatta in the former Erysipelas Hospital.
THE WORKINGS OF AN INSTITUTION

The Destitute Asylum and Immigration Depot were two separate institutions, serving quite different purposes: one, the long-term care of aged, disabled or at times terminally ill women who could no longer support themselves; and two, the short-term care of single women making a new life in the colony. Despite these different purposes, the aims of both institutions were very similar: providing shelter, food and medical care to women who, for the time they spent at the Hyde Park Barracks, were without support from their customary family and social networks.

It was perhaps these common needs that prompted the colonial government to serve both facilities from the same building, and under the same Superintendent: Matron Lucy Applewhaite, later Hicks (hereafter referred to as Hicks where appropriate). While each facility was financed from separate budgets, and the complex itself was compartmentalised with separate entrances, the line between Depot and Asylum was much harder to identify in the daily management of the institutions.

When the 150-odd inmates were transferred from the overcrowded Benevolent Asylum in 1862, they were allocated the third floor of the Hyde Park Barracks and a separate entrance was constructed at the eastern end of the building. Matron Hicks moved asylum inmates into Immigration Depot wards when immigrant numbers were low (Public Charities Commission 1874: 74). While during both the 1873 and 1886 parliamentary inquiries, Matron Hicks was adamant that immigrant and aged women were segregated, in practice, an absolute separation may not be have been possible. In the 1886 Inquiry conducted after the Asylum had moved to Newington, it was reported that:

At Hyde Park, Mrs. Hicks states she superintended the Immigration Barracks, as well as the Infirm and Destitute Asylum. The institutions were practically merged as regards furniture and utensils—that is, if the Infirm and Destitute Asylum required anything the Immigration Barracks could spare it was taken, and vice versa. No inventory existed at Hyde Park. (Commission of Inquiry 1887: 52)

It is likely also that the immigrant women, should they have needed it, relied on the Asylum dispensary from time to time. While partitions may have separated wards and parts of the building, the noises, the chatter, the moaning of aged women, could not have been excluded from the floors below. And in the 1860s, other liquid matter could not be excluded from the floors above. In 1865, there was a request to fit ceilings above the Matron’s and Submatron’s apartments (thought to be in the front rooms of the main building, see discussion below) to prevent:

the inconvenience arising from the leakage\(^5\) which occasionally takes place from the upper rooms. Should be charged to Hyde Park Asylum as the necessity for such expenses [sic] arises from their occupation of the upper part of the building. (G. F. Wise, Agent for Immigration, to Undersecretary for Lands, 2 March 1865, p. 301, SRNSW 4/4658, quoted in Berry 2001: 19)

\(^5\) It is uncertain if this 'leakage' refers to the general problems of the leaking roof during wet weather or spills and other accidents occurring during the daily routine of the Asylum.
The tug-of-war between the two main institutions, the Immigrant Depot and Offices and the Asylum was often interrupted by another annoyances, such as the census calculations, the Master in Lunacy and other government departments who vied for corners of the aging building (for evidence of their occupation, see ‘Official and Administrative Records’ p. 84). The convict-built complex was subjected to shifting wards, offices, hiring rooms, yards and hospital rooms. The Colonial Architect was called in on many occasions to build a kitchen, a washhouse, a new entrance and water closets, and to make repairs like removing lead pipes, cementing the yard and sheathing the shingled roof with corrugated iron (in 1880).

The negotiation of space eventually favoured the Government Asylum and the pressing needs of aging women over the dwindling numbers of single immigrant women. By 1873, the Government Asylum had taken over about half of the main building and acquired the ancillary buildings of the NSW Volunteer Rifle Corp, although these were inadequate for use at the time.

There are no internal floor plans of the Asylum while in use; and while the physical evidence of partitions and other room markings have been destroyed or superseded by later occupation, the struggle for and negotiation of space within the main and auxiliary buildings is apparent in the various Government reports, special inquiries and general correspondence from 1862 to 1887. They also pass judgement on the administrative skills of Matron Lucy Hicks whose public-service career slips from a competent, thrifty and admirable matron of the Hyde Park Asylum in 1873, to a tyrannical, overpaid alcoholic accused of bringing about the untimely death of several inmates upon their transfer to Newington in 1886.

It is owing to the richness of these historical records, the physical dominance of the Asylum within the Barracks building and consequently the archaeological assemblage that the following discussion of the operational concerns and daily activities at the Hyde Park Barracks during the period between 1848 and 1886 is focused strongly upon the operation of the Asylum more so than the Immigrant’s Depot.

**Room Use**

For the entire occupation of the Hyde Park Barracks as an Immigrants’ Depot and Destitute Asylum, we have no maps or diagrams of the internal layout of the main building. However, from evidence given at the 1873 Inquiry and various requests to the Colonial Architect for repairs, we can speculate on how the rooms may have been used. For example, Lucy Hicks reported:

> The Government did speak of turning my apartments into two wards, and that would give up accommodation within the building for forty more women; and they would build me a cottage at the gate. (Q2298, Public Charities Commission 1874: 74)

From this we confirm that the Matron’s apartments were in the main building and learn that they were equivalent to the size of a forty-woman ward, and probably in an area with two distinct parts. A likely place for such accommodation is the two, smaller western rooms on Level 2 at the front of the Barracks building overlooking Queens Square. Being close to the stair, the Matron had easy access to other parts of the building and it is possible that the corridor was enclosed with a door and partition to give the family more privacy—although there is no physical evidence to suggest this one way or the other.
When asked how much of the main building was set apart for the immigrants, Mrs Hicks replied:

Two large rooms, a large ward, and dining hall. I had formerly three other rooms and an office, 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. I have now no office or any other accommodation. (Q2302, Public Charities Commission 1874: 74)

The office and very probably the ‘three other rooms’ would have been on the ground floor, a level always occupied by offices and semi-public functions such as the Hiring Room of the Immigrant’s Depot. This is reinforced by Matron Hicks’s later comments on cutting out calico in preparation for making the women’s clothing:

And 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... Many times I 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. (Q2368–9, Public Charities Commission 1874: 76)

She went on to explain that the rooms had ceased to be used for the purposes of the census, but that she still did not have access to them. So in September 1873, ‘she had not the use of rather more than half the building’ for the purposes of the Asylum.

In another line of enquiry regarding the accommodation of disabled inmates:

2316 The room in which they [the idiots] were seemed very damp and dark? The room is dull, but I see them cheerful. I always make it my business to say, “Well, girls, are you comfortable here?” and I never have any complaints.

2317 How many are there? I have eight in that room; one has St. Vitus’s dance very badly [and] cannot sit up from it. I cannot say that they are all idiots. There are eight very bad cases in that room.

(Public Charities Commission 1874: 75)

It is likely that this ward to accommodate these eight cases was on the third levels, and was likely to be a partition of a larger, 20 or 40 woman ward.

The dispensary was likely to be outside the main building, possibly part of the water closet and verandah extension, because the visiting doctor George Walker made reference to unfortunate circumstance of excrement coming from the water closets above him.

The main Building also accommodated a Board Office. A Public Works estimate in 1866 for papering the walls of the Office noted that the walls were too damp to hold paper. It is most likely that the Board Office was located on the ground floor in the ‘public’ space of the building.

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6 St Vitus’s dance or Sydenham’s chorea is a motor control disorder which usually affects children. It is associated with rheumatic fever and characterised by jerky, uncontrollable movements, either of the face or of the arms and legs.
The Matron

Editions of Cassell’s Household Guide in the 1880s outline the duties of matrons in English workhouses (institutions similar to a destitute asylum but for fit persons unable to get work) in a section entitled ‘Occupations Accessible to Women’:

The last occupation suitable to women under Local Government and other official Boards is that of matrons of workhouses. There seems no good reason why women from the middle and educated classes should not hold this situation. The one usually urged is that the positions of master and matron are generally held by a man and his wife, and that a superior woman could not hold a subordinate post under a master of the stamp at present employed. A recent authority writing on this subject says that, “as gentlemen of small means, military and naval officers on half-pay, and many others, have accepted the governorship of prisons, there can be no reason why they should not take charge of workhouses.” The entire charge of a workhouse, containing from 500 to 700 souls, would seem as worthy of any man’s powers as any sphere of work that could be pointed out; and if the Poor Law orders were better administered, by an educated man, the salary would very probably be increased, as a matter of wise economy. In all workhouses the position of both master and matron is most important. Their authority is very great, and the post affords immense facilities for doing good. They are responsible only to the Board of Guardians, and cannot be dismissed even by them, without the consent of the Local Government Board.

Board, lodging, washing, and attendance, are all found; and the combined salaries of master and matron generally amount, in the larger workhouses, to over £200 per annum. Here, also, the work mainly consists in super-intending their subordinates.

The general duties of the matron are to superintend the female inmates, to look after the cutting-out of clothes, &c., to visit the sick in the infirmaries once a day, to see that the kitchen and laundry-work are properly attended to, and the whole house scrupulously clean and tidy. She has also to give out the stores of linen and of provisions, and to see that the children are well, and to superintend the schoolmistress. Many, if not all, of these duties are such as every lady habitually undertakes in her own home; and when, in addition to this, we understand that the work of a matron is a real work of Christian charity, it is not too much to say that the post is a suitable one for any educated woman, with some force of character, and sound health. The classes of people who come under her charge are the old, and the sick, and orphans, and deserted children, who will look to the matron for all they will ever know of a mother’s loving care. In addition to this, to a good religious woman, there would be the opportunity of sometimes being able to hold out a hand of mercy to a lost and miserable sister; who, under her kindly ministrations, might yet aspire to a better life. (Cassell’s Household Guide, New and Revised Edition (4 Vol.) c.1880s, ‘Occupations Accessible to Women’, p. 173)

While the Hyde Park Barracks had fewer children to care for than a regular destitute asylum or poorhouse, this is a fairly accurate description of the kinds of the duties the Matron of the Immigration Depot and later Asylum was expected to undertake, and the kind of woman she ought to be.

When the Immigration Depot was established at the Hyde Park Barracks in 1848, quarters for a live-in matron were provided. The names of the first Matron (and possibly Master) are not known, but a Grace Tinckham was Matron of the Depot in 1860 (Statistics of NSW 1860: 21). Grace was followed by Lucy Applewhaite (later Hicks) who came to have the most enduring impact on the shape of the Depot and later Asylum and retained the position of Matron until and shortly after the move to Newington in 1886.
Lucy was appointed Matron on 13 May 1861 (1876–77 Blue Book, p. 32 [V&P NSW Assembly vol. 4, p. 90]), at the same time that her husband John was awarded a position of clerk in the Immigration Office. When the Government Benevolent Asylum was established at the Hyde Park Barracks in February 1862, Lucy became Matron of both the Immigration Depot and the Asylum and John seems to have relinquished his position as clerk in the Immigration Office and become Master of the Asylum alone (Journal of the NSW Legislative Council, Vol XII 1865 p. 489). For the extra duties they received additional income, but the balance of the income shifted from Immigration to Asylum. When asked at the 1873 Inquiry about the wages she received in the early years of the Asylum, she replied:

Well, I held a double appointment in the Government Service previously. When Mr. Cowper—Sir Charles Cowper7—placed me there, I was matron of the Immigrants’ Depot, and Mr. Applewhaite was a clerk in the Immigration Department, with a salary of £285. We had a very good appointment then; and when the old people were brought there, Mr. Cowper wished us to undertake the duties connected with the Asylum, and promised us a salary of £300 per annum. When the other institution was formed our salaries for the Asylum duties were reduced to £200 per annum, and to make good the promise of the Government £100 each was given from immigration. (Q2273, Public Charities Commission 1874: 73)

When her husband died in 1869, she took over his duties and eventually her income was reduced to ‘£200 a year from the Asylum, and…a nominal salary of £20 a year from the immigration’ (2274). This was later increased to £50 (by at least 1885, see Blue Books, V&P NSW Assembly vol. 8, p. 30), so she was still earning £250 in her own right. By way of comparison, Dr Robert Ward, the Surgeon and Dispenser at the Hyde Park Barracks was paid £225 per year (but note that this was likely to be one of several salaries or income streams).8

Lucy was initially supported by a submatron, originally Alice Gorman9, then Mrs Kennedy, who resigned in August 1864. It is unknown whether there was some conflict between the two because it appears Mrs Kennedy gave notice on 30 March 1864, but then withdrew it. The Daily Reports written by Matron Hicks give little away. The entry for 1 Aug 1864 simply reads: ‘Mrs Kennedy Sub-matron has left the Institution today’ (Daily Reports, SRNSW 9/6181b).

It is unclear who held this post thereafter but in the 1873 Inquiry, Matron Hicks indicated that her daughter, although not ‘an officer of the institution’, maintained the stock book (p 73, Q2281). Mary E. Applewhaite was officially appointed Submatron on 1 January 1875 with a salary of £50—raised to £75 by 1885 (V&P NSW Assembly 1885–86, vol. 8, p. 148). Mary held that post until her death in 1885 when Mrs C. J. Hyrons was appointed Submatron (Commission of Inquiry 1887: 525). Another daughter, Miss Clara Applewhaite, also assisted Mrs Hicks as an unpaid officer in 1886 (Commission of Inquiry 1887: vol. 2: 446) and probably had done so earlier.

(For further discussion of the Applewhaite–Hicks family, see p. 86.)

7 Son of Archdeacon William Cowper.
8 For example, in 1886 the Visiting Surgeon to the Macquarie Street Asylum, Charles E. Rowling, was also the attendant to other Parramatta institutions—the George-Street Asylum, gaols and police barracks—and the area’s Vaccinator for which he was paid extra fees. (Commission of Inquiry 1887: 427)
9 Mrs Gorman was again working at the Asylum in 1886 after the move to Newington. At the Inquiry, Mrs Hicks noted she was submatron 23 years prior, i.e. 1863.
While the Matron was responsible for the care of inmates, she was not responsible for deciding who could be admitted to the Asylum. Such weighty decisions were made by the Board of Government Asylums for the Infirm and Destitute—a situation Matron Hicks was glad of (Q2387, Public Charities Commission 1874: 77). The sick and indigent must have waited anxiously during the Board's sitting days to learn whether a bed could be found for them. Distinguishing between the urgency of needs within a population suffering the after effects of half a century of convict transportation, mass migration, illness and economic downturns was a difficult task. Many deserving cases were turned away at the gate.

The prerequisites for admission to the Asylum were infirmity and inability to support oneself. Cases were brought to the attention of the Board by the Benevolent Society, other charities, clergy, well-meaning employers, the police and the Sydney Infirmary, nearby on Macquarie Street. The cases referred by the Infirmary often caused the greatest disruption to the Asylum. These were patients deemed to have chronic conditions and long-term diseases, such as cancer and mental illness, that could not be cured by the medical resources of the dispensary. Mrs Hicks complained of receiving insane persons:

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. (Q2373, Public Charities Commission 1874: 77)

Of course there were the exceptions—cases that should have been referred to the Newcastle Lunatic Asylum.11 The more common chronic medical conditions affecting the inmates at Hyde Park were blindness, idiocy12 and crippled limbs. At least one case of St. Vitus’s Dance13 was recorded in the 1873 Inquiry. These inmates were lodged in the same small ward, and one of the able-bodied inmates was responsible for their care.14 The majority of inmates suffered from the effects of ageing, and had no family networks to fall back on. The oldest recorded inmate at the Hyde Park Asylum was 106 in 1873 (Q2291, Public Charities Commission 1874: 74). While her name is unknown, she was probably an ex-convict:

One who has attained the age of 106 'goes,' said Mrs. Hicks, 'into a tub every Saturday morning like my own baby.' This old woman, whom we saw in her bed, is doubtless an ex-convict. She told us she had

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10 The Ladies’ Evangelistic Association lamented its members being ‘dismissed at the gates of the old women’s asylum’ and that the inmates, ‘these poor friendless old creatures… [were] debarred the privilege of their visits’ bringing gifts and flowers (Sydney Morning Herald 22 May 1882, p. 5, col. 4).
11 At the 1873 Inquiry, Matron Hicks noted that the Board had applied to remove the ‘idiots’ to Newcastle.
12 ‘Idiocy’ was the 19th-century scientific term for people today classified as having profound mental retardation, or a mental age of two or less. ‘Imbecile’ was the term for intellectual disability less extreme than Idiocy. ‘Lunacy’ referred to mental illness or legal insanity.
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Profound_mental_retardation#Traditional_terms
13 See Footnote 6.
14 From the Public Charities Commission Inquiry (1874: 74):
2314 Have you sufficient means to look after them [the idiots]? They are well looked after; we tell off one woman for that business entirely—one of the inmates.
2315 Do you think they are comfortable? Yes, I think that they are happy.
2317 How many are there? I have eight in that room; one has St. Vitus’s dance very badly [and] cannot sit up from it. I cannot say that they are all idiots. There are eight very bad cases in that room.
come out in Governor ——'s time (we could not catch the name), a genteel way of concealing the manner of her arrival. (Hill & Hill 1875: 336)

For many of these bed-ridden, chronically ill or elderly inmates, their admission to the Asylum was their final life transition, even though many survived for several years. For the able-bodied inmates, the Asylum was more like a depot, they stayed for short periods while their illnesses were at their worst, and were discharged as soon as they were well enough to work outside, or a new situation arose.¹⁵

We know the names of only a few inmates of Hyde Park Asylum. Those we do know derive largely from records produced after the transfer to Newington. A detailed register dating to 1896¹⁶ lists 44 inmates noted to have been admitted to Hyde Park. In addition, we have the names of inmates who gave evidence, or who were discussed at the parliamentary inquiries.

Of the 43 former Hyde Park Asylum inmates, 17 were identified as immigrants, nine as former convicts, one the daughter of a convict and five native-born. The birthplaces of the remainder were not recorded. The brief biographies recorded for each woman present sad tales of life in the modern city, for example:

**Bridget Cullen**  
Admitted 18.10.1884, aged 70, Roman Catholic  
Born Londford, Ireland. Came out as passenger with her father, a soldier. Mostly living about Sydney.  
Transferred from HPA to NA. Memory failing, blind, and almost totally deaf.

**Ellen Howard**  
Admitted 27.5.1886, aged 36  
Emigrant per Marlinsay 1864. Married. Has not seen her husband for 10 years. Used to do needlework in Sydney but has been paralysed for 3 years.

**Mary Ann Murray**  
Admitted 18.11.1880, aged 70, Roman Catholic  

The evidence given decades earlier at the 1873 Inquiry tells a similar story. When tested on whether the inmates were fit for work outside the Asylum (and thus undeserving of their place there), City Missionary, Mr Stephen Robins responded:

…I could not see a women there who were able to do anything more than the work of the house. They are very old women there. There is one woman of the name of Elizabeth Mills, who asked me to get her a situation. She is one of the nurses up stairs, and she says that she does not like stopping there, and she does not know where to go to outside. She has no home, and would go for small wage if she could get them. It requires someone with strength to nurse these old women. That is the only woman whom I saw that could do anything. There was another woman of the name of Dawes—I do not think that any

¹⁵ Most of the inmates interviewed during the parliamentary inquiries were those holding in-house positions, and therefore able-bodied. When asked how long they had been in the Asylum, many replied ‘five or six years, on and off’ (e.g. see Ann Ballard, Margaret Gannon).

¹⁶ Register of Inmates, Government Asylums for the Infirm & Destitute (SRNSW 7/3801, in HPB Research Folder). The Register primarily comprises information about each inmate recorded at the time of their admission, with additional notes and annotations and about their conduct in the Asylum, dates of discharge and in many cases death.
one could take her for a servant, because she is very deaf. They are all very old women except the blind ones and a few that are paralysed. It does not seem to be scarcely enough to do the work of the house. (S. Robins, Q2514, Public Charities Commission 1874: 83)

**Asylum Work**

The Hyde Park Asylum was a place of refuge and also a place of work. The Asylum was self-supporting and able-bodied inmates were responsible for ‘...all the work of the institution, including cooking, laundry, hospitals, wards, cleaning, making and repairing all clothes and house linen, &c.’ (Public Charities Commission 1874: 109). The only paid officers of the Asylum were the matron, the visiting medical officer, a head laundress and, in the early 1860s and after 1875, a submatron.

All the remaining chores relating to feeding, cleaning, clothing and caring for up to 310 women were undertaken by the inmates themselves, for small wages. In 1873, 21 inmates earned between tuppence and one shilling for a day’s work, as set out in the following schedule of workers at the Hyde Park Asylum:

**Officers employed at Hyde Park Asylum are:**

- Surgeon, Dr. Ward £ 122 per annum
- Matron, L. H. Hicks 190

**Servants:**

- Head laundress, Nancy Bell 12s. per week

**Servants selected from inmates:**

- Head cook, Ann Bertha 1s. per diem
- 2nd cook 6d.
- 3rd cook 4d.
- Assistant laundress 6d.
- 4 assistant laundresses at 4d.
- Head wardswoman, M. Haggerty 1s.
- Assistant wardswoman, 1 at 6d. per diem
- Assistant wardswoman, 3 at 4d.
- Assistant wardswoman, 2 at 3d.
- Head hospital nurses, 2 at 6d.
- Assistant hospital nurses, 2 at 4d.
- Care-taker of needlework 2d.
- Messenger,—M. Jackson 4d.

(Source: Public Charities Commission 1874: 109)

By the time of the 1886 Inquiry, and after the move to Newington, many more inmates were paid gratuities for their labour as bathwomen, dairymaids and wardswomen in the new wards. At Newington there were four bathwomen to assist inmates who could not bathe themselves, and to change the water between baths (two women shared a tub of fresh water). They worked from 9 am until 2 pm each Saturday to bathe all the women, 20 at a time in ten tubs (Commission of Inquiry 1887: 471).

With the possible exception of hat-making (see ‘Hat-making’, p. 76), the women were not engaged in the production or manufacture of goods for sale outside the Asylum, unlike their male counterparts at the Asylum in Liverpool. Women were not permitted to undertake ‘out-door needlework’, even on an individual basis (Public Charities Commission 1874: 109). All their efforts were funnelled into the operation of the institution.
Regulations for the Internal Management of the Government Asylums for the Infirm and Destitute

Provisions

1. The daily ration of each inmate shall be in accordance with a scale to be fixed from time to time by the Board.

2. Snuff and tobacco in small quantities may, on recommendation of the Surgeon or Matron, be allowed to such of the inmates as use tobacco, or withheld from such as misconduct themselves.

Clothing

3. Each inmate shall be provided with a complete change of suitable clothing, upon entrance, if required.

Bedding

4. Each inmate shall, upon entrance, be supplied with a stretcher, a bed, and suitable bedding.

Stores

5. Each mess shall be provided with suitable mess utensils, including a table, forms, soup vessel, dishes, plates, pannikins, knives, forks, spoons, and salts.

6. No person discharged for misconduct shall take away anything belonging to the Institution, except clothing in wear at the time; and any person absconding may be prosecuted as for a theft of anything belonging to the Institution which such person may have absconded with.

Presents

7. No present is to be made to any inmate, except through the Master or Matron.

Drink

8. No present shall consist of or include drink of any kind; and the Master and Matron are strictly charged by every means in their power to prevent the inmates from being supplied with drink, otherwise than as may be ordered by the Surgeon, and are authorized, in their discretion, to search for and seize any that may have been smuggled, or may be attempted to be smuggled into the buildings, taking care to report the same at the next Meeting of the Board.

Classification

9. The sick shall be separated from the healthy, and treated in all respects as the Surgeon may direct, irrespective of these Regulations.

10. The healthy shall be divided into Messes, of from eight to ten in each, and the persons appointed by the Matron to be heads of Messes shall aid at all times in keeping those associated with them to a due observance of the Regulations of the Asylum.

Gratuity to Heads of Messes

11. The heads of messes shall be allowed a gratuity in tea, sugar, butter, tobacco, snuff, or some article of dress, as they may individually prefer, not exceeding one shilling in value weekly.

Rising

12. The hour of rising shall be in Spring and Summer six, and in Autumn and Winter seven a.m.

Washing, Dressing, &c.

13. Half an hour shall be allowed for washing and dressing.

Airing

14. After being dressed, if the weather permit, the inmates shall, in the order of their messes, take three quarters of an hour’s airing in the Outer Domain, under care of the Master, assisted by the heads of messes.

Meals

15. Breakfast shall be on the table in Spring and Summer at half-past seven, and in Autumn and Winter at half-past eight o’clock a.m.; and Dinner at one, and Tea at half-past five o’clock p.m., throughout the year.
16. The heads of messes shall be responsible to the Matron for the becoming conduct of those associated with them at the respective Tables throughout the hour allowed for each meal.

Occupation

17. The inmates shall do all the needlework, washing, tidying, and cleansing required in the Institution; and the Matron shall apportion these several employments, as well as any other she may think conducive to health and comfort, according to the ability and aptitude of the several inmates for the work to be done; and the head of each mess shall be responsible to the Matron for the faithful performance of the labor allotted to those associated with her.

Recreation

18. The times for recreation shall be—half an hour after breakfast, three quarters of an hour after dinner, and half an hour after tea, which may be taken within the building, or in the yard, as the Matron shall direct.

Smoking

19. Smoking shall be allowed only in the place appointed by the Matron to be used for that purpose.

Bath

20. The inmates shall take the bath in messes, once in every week, and oftener if needful, generally, or in particular cases; and such bath may be hot or cold, as the Matron may think fit; and the heads of messes shall assist the Matron in seeing that this regulation is properly carried out.

Rest

21. The hour for retiring to rest shall be—in Spring and Summer, half-past Seven; and in Autumn and Winter, half-past Six p.m.

Sundays and Other Public Holidays

22. The inmates of the several denominations may attend Divine Service on Sundays and other holidays, under the care of persons appointed by the Clergymen of their respective Churches, who shall be responsible for their return to the Institution immediately after the close of the Service, and that they bring with them nothing contrary to the regulations of the Institution.

23. No work that can, in the opinion of the Matron, be dispensed with, shall be required of inmates on Sunday or any other public holiday; and ministers of religion, or members of any religious order, shall have every facility for the religious instruction of those of their own faith, within the Institution, care being taken by the Master or Matron that, in case of any visit for such purpose at the same time from persons of different persuasions, separate accommodation be provided for each.

Misconduct

24. The Master shall report to the Board any infraction of these Regulations, or any other misconduct on the part of any of inmates, that ought to be made known to the Board.

Regulations to be Read Monthly

25. The Master shall keep a copy of these Regulations hung up in each dormitory, and shall read them to the assembled inmates once in each month.

Application of Regulations

26. These Regulations shall apply, so far as applicable, as well to the Asylums at Liverpool and Parramatta as to the Asylum at Hyde Park.
CONTROL

In 1862, when the colonial government assumed responsibility for providing outdoor relief to the infirm and destitute, Chairman Chris Rolleston published eight-pages of ‘Regulations for the Internal Management of the Government Asylums for the Infirm and Destitute’ to be hung up in each dormitory, and to be read aloud to assembled inmates once a month. These rules provided guidelines for the daily routine, meal times, procedures for handling misconduct and so on, and were similar to those found in hundreds of other alms and poorhouses in major towns and cities across the western world.

However, such explicit rules appear to have been of little use at the Hyde Park Asylum and by 1886, there were no printed rules. This was a cause of great concern to the Government Asylums Inquiry Board investigating the operation of the Newington Asylum six months after the move from Hyde Park, but Matron Hicks’s position was that rules were unnecessary in the aged care facility that she managed. When asked whether Rules had been issued to her, she replied:

Not for years. We had some, but they were absurd for the old people. You have to give way to them a little, and sometimes you have to punish. I was called up last night to the cancer ward [at Newington], and found two old women fighting like tigers. One said she would see the other weltering in her gore. I had to take one and put her in the Roman Catholic hospital. (Commission of Inquiry 1887: 448)

Hicks argued that routines of the Asylum were well enough understood, particularly by the wardswomen. So was her position of authority:

I say, “Come, girls, do so and so,” and they do it, and do it well. (Commission of Inquiry 1887: 418)

While mostly confined within the Asylum walls, inmates were permitted excursions, but, as only three women were permitted leave on any given day, they had to ‘wait for their turn’ (Public Charities Commission 1874: 74). Leave was also granted under special circumstances, such as the death of a family member or friend. During the small pox outbreak of 1882, the Hyde Park Asylum was quarantined and these excursions were suspended.

The daily routine of the Asylum was flexible. Assuming it changed little following the transfer to Newington, the inmates rose at 6.30 am in summer and 7 am in winter—‘It is the greatest difficulty to keep these old women in bed’—the water was boiled for tea and sugar, dinner was served at 1 pm or later if the butcher was untimely, tea at 5 pm and then to bed shortly after. The doors to the wards were not locked, musters were taken when the Matron thought it ‘necessary’, certainly not on a weekly basis—’you see it is a long job’ (Commission of Inquiry 1887: 448–9).

Matron Hicks’s resistance to formal strictures was clearly out of step with some of the most fashionable thinking about Institutional control, as indicated by the following exchange:

92. Chairman.] Do you make any classification of the inmates? No; decidedly not.
93. Dr. Ashburton Thompson.] You mean ordinary social classification? No.
94. Chairman.] But you do classify the blind and ill? Of course; there is a classification of them and of gouty cases.
95. Mr Robison.] What about the blind people? I find some of these the worst class we have here.
96. But you mix them among the others? Always. I find the old people very good to each other; always ready to help a blind person.
97. Chairman.] You have already said that you discharge inmates. Have you any means of keeping them in? No; they are not prisoners. A lawyer told me years ago I had not power to keep a woman in if she wished to leave.

(Evidence of Mrs Hicks, 19 August 1886, Commission of Inquiry 1887: 449)

Ultimately this liberal view of institutional management contributed to her downfall. She was condemned by the Board as irresponsible, negligent in her duties to detect and prevent abuses within the asylum. After 25 years of managing the provision of outdoor relief, the government demanded a more controlled and restrictive regime.

While this did not bode well for the Matron, this 'Institution left free from control or inspection' (Commission of Inquiry 1887: 419) may have been to the liking of the inmates. While it is difficult to generalise the experience of the thousands of women admitted to the Asylum from the testimony of the few dozen who gave evidence at the 1873 and 1886 inquiries, the majority had no complaint with the Matron’s management of the institution. Their criticisms were primarily directed at the state of the facilities at both Hyde Park and Newington.

SANITATION

Since the days of convict occupation ablution facilities were provided in outbuildings along the eastern wall of the Hyde Park Barracks complex, and the main building had no water or drainage facilities. At the time of its construction in 1817, indoor plumbing was a luxury for the wealthy, and certainly not a necessity for the convict inmates. While chamber pots would have been used in the main building in the evenings, outside privies would have worked sufficiently well for the 600-odd able-bodied men who lived in the Barracks.

While no more than 312 women were admitted at any one time to the Asylum, they were of course, only occupying half of the main Barracks building, the remainder of which they shared with a fluctuating number of immigrants in the Depot downstairs. Further, many women in the Asylum were bed-ridden or ailing and could not easily access outdoor privies.

The sanitary facilities of the Barracks became a source of bitter complaint within just two years of the establishment of the Asylum on the third floor. In February 1864, the Asylum’s Medical Officer, George Walker, raised concerns about ‘the means adopted for getting rid of night soil—refuse water and other impurities from the Establishment…[and the] non Existence of proper Water Closets to the sick Wards’ (SRNSW 2/642A quoted in Berry 2001: 14). He suggested that only an ‘intervention of a special mercy’ had spared the inmates from ‘severe and fatal epidemics’ and noted also that visitors to the Hiring Room of the Immigration Depot complained ‘loudly of the stench and nausea’ that he described as an ‘Atmospheric Poison’.

A report on the drainage of the Hyde Park Asylum in April 1864 described the problem in more detail:

Another complaint is the heavy and unwholsome [sic] air in the building this must arise in a great measure from the necessity of carrying down all the night tubs in through the stair case which is in the very centre of the Building the effect of which will take some hours to allow the fetid air to be carried off.
It is proposed to erect a verandah on the end facing the east with four water closets one convenient to each dormitory, a door in end of each dormitory to lead to the closet and as it is probable night tubs would still have to be used a stair erected from those balconys [sic] to the ground as shown by the Plan accompanying the stair in the centre of the Building would not be required for those purposes and the Patients would have the benefit of the fresh air on those Balconys when they would not be able to decend the stair… (SRNSW 2/642A quoted in Berry 2001: 14)

In 1865, George Walker was again complaining that:

No drainage exists in the Institution…the means of carrying off refuse Water…[from] the building seems to be very limited and imperfect. This is manifest from the Accumulation of stagnant liquid to be found in every place in the Yards…

[There is] A Cart load of Bones and a full Ash-pit within a few yards of the Cooking Apparatus… I have to suggest that these Accumulations should be cleared Away Every Week.

I am informed by the Emigration Agent that in upwards of four thousand Emigrants may be Expected this Year as on a former occasion—more than three hundred were housed on the premises in Addition to the inmates of your Institution, it is desirable to improve the means for Conducing to their health and safety before warmer weather sets in.

(SRNSW 2/642A, letter dated 6 August 1865 from George Walker MD Hyde Park Asylum Medical Officer to the Chairman of the Board of the Hyde Park Asylum, quoted in Berry 2001: 15)

Ashpits had formerly been cleared on request from the Matron in her daily book (e.g. see 10 May 1864) along with other routine maintenance tasks such as chimney sweeping (e.g. 21 March, 5 April and 23 September 1864).

In 1864 it was agreed to construct a three-storey verandah with four ‘patent valve’ water closets on the eastern face of the main Barracks building at a cost of £326 (Berry 2001: 15).

MEDICINE

At the Hyde Park Barracks all pharmaceutical items and medical comforts were administered by the visiting doctor. While the location of the dispensary is not certain, it is most likely to have been in an addition at the eastern end of the building. In 1866, the serving Medical Officer, Dr George Walker, complained bitterly about its position and condition, barely four years after its construction:

I am compelled to request attention to the present state of the Dispensary attached to this institution. It is so much infested by rats that the destruction of Drugs and breakage of Glass is really very serious. The Animals eat the corks and upset the Bottles and the place is continually covered with their Dung. To this source of annoyance must be added that of damp which is so great that during rainy weather the walls are teeming with moisture, they are also so saturated with fluid excrement from the watercloset above as to be perfectly pestilential. A Gentleman from the Colonial Architects Office recently inspected the place and [told] me he would recommend its being lined with Galvanized iron. But it is already sufficiently and frequently unbearably hot and means must be taken to render it water tight. The Drug Bill of this Institution need never be a very serious item if care is taken to preserve the Stock from deterioration by Moisture of [sic] Vermin. At present the destruction is considerable. Many drugs are moulded and unserviceable and not a day passes without my finding something thrown down and broken by the Rats which even eat the Ointments and Pill Mass.

George Walker MD
Medical Officer
Several pharmaceutical bottles issued from the dispensary were recovered from Levels 2 and 3 of the main dormitory building, and because of the unique preservation conditions of the underfloor deposits, at least two have survived with their labels intact. The names of some patients can still be read: Alice Fry (HPB UF29, Figure 19), [Margaret?] Jackson (HPB UF25, Figure 17) and F. [probably Francis] Cunningham (HPB UF6624). Two of the bottles (HPB UF6624 and HPB UF3059) have two layers of labels—an unsurprising indication of the reuse of bottles—but one that raises questions about the hygiene standards of recycling medicinal vessels in the mid-to-late nineteenth century. If the bottle had been sterilised by boiling, for example, the underlying label ought to have peeled off or boiled away.

There are several other examples of bottles with non-Asylum paper labels marked ‘Raspberry Vinegar’ (used for sore throats and coughs; HPB UF4574), ‘Tinct[ure of] Digitalis’ (for regulating the heartbeat, treating dropsy and as a topical treatment for wounds; HPB UF395), ‘Aconit’ (pain relief for various conditions including neuralgia, used topically for the treatment of rheumatism & arthritis; HPB UI 1600) and ‘Chloroform’ (anesthetic; HPB UF377, HPB UF413 & HPB UF8351).

Most of the fragments of dispensary-issued labels were found on light-blue, oval-sectioned bottles made for pharmaceutical use and found on archaeological sites across Sydney (e.g. Figure 17). Others, such as the Alice Fry label (Figure 19) were found on olive–green, square-section bottles typically associated with gin or schnapps. Whether Fry’s prescription happened to be spirits or, when short of bottles the Medical Officer used whatever vessels were available at short notice, or ‘Gin/Schnapps’ bottles were commonly used for pharmaceutical concoctions, is uncertain.

There is, however, other more concrete evidence for ‘making-do’ when it comes to dispensing medicines. A small wooden disk in the collection, four centimetres wide, is marked ‘The Ointment / Mrs Harris’ in brown-ink (HPB UF17601, see Figure 20). It was probably from a circular match box, or other small, light, disposable box, and seems to have been used as a label in the absence of a paper one, possibly tied or glued to the bottle.

In addition to the medicines issued by the Dispensary, there was evidence of prepared, commercial remedies including a laxative tonic, ‘Dinneford’s Solution of Magnesia’ (e.g. HPB UF4520) and, among the paper fragments, a packet of ‘Cockle’s Antibilious Pills’ for settling the stomach (HPB UF17281).

It is known from the parliamentary inquiries and the Daily Reports, that sick inmates were prescribed alcohol and nourishing meals in addition to medicinal treatments. Women and children in the Immigration Depot were given arrowroot, milk and rice. Traditional treatments were also arranged by Matron Hicks. The entry for 8 July 1864 reported that a mustard poultice had been applied to immigrant Margaret Dailby who complained of a sore throat.

The parliamentary inquiry of 1886 revealed that inmates too were responsible for dispensing medicines in the sick wards, and to the great dismay of the Board of Inquiry, some of these women were illiterate or had limited literacy skills. For example in the cancer ward, Annie Mack could read ‘printing’ but not the hand-written dosage instruction (p. 484) and Ann Simpson could not read or write at all (p. 476). Both relied on the recall of instructions given to them on the doctor’s weekly visits, or the assistance of literate staff such as Miss Applewhaiter.
Figure 17  Light-blue oval pharmaceutical bottle with paper label, dispensed to a woman by the name of Jackson. This is possibly ‘M. Jackson’, a trusted, able-bodied inmate who was recorded as a messenger in the 1873 Inquiry (HPB UF25). (P. Crook 2003)

Figure 18  Remains of a packet of ‘Cockle’s Antibilious Pills’ for settling the stomach (HPB UF17281). (P. Crook 2003)

Figure 19  Hyde Park Asylum Dispensary label for Alice Fry on an olive-green ‘Gin/Schnapps’ bottle (HPB UF26). Alice Fry died on 5 Feb 1868, aged 56 yrs, of a uterine tumour. (P. Crook 2003)

Figure 20  Wooden disc with hand-written identification: ‘The Ointment / Mrs Harris’ (HPB UF17601). (P. Crook 2003)
The medicines were stored on the mantelpiece in each ward and some patients were able to take their own dosage when required, sometimes with serious consequences. Ellen Purnell, who could read but not write, mistakenly took a poisonous lotion instead of medicine, apparently by accident rather than inability to read the label (Commission of Inquiry 1887: 493).

The distribution of pharmaceutical items across Levels 2 and 3 (see Figure 21) suggests that sick wards probably operated on both levels at one time, with a greater use of Level 3 for remedial purposes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Function</th>
<th>L1</th>
<th>L2</th>
<th>L3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td></td>
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<td>Label</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Measure</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Packet</td>
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</tr>
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</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>49</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>556</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2
Fragments of pharmaceutical items in the main building.

Figure 21
Distribution of medicinal bottle sherds and other pharmaceutical fragments on Levels 2 and 3 of the main building.
COMMUNAL MEALS

In the 1873 Inquiry Mrs Hicks (Q2321–47) reported that the women of the Asylum sat down to eat with tin plates (probably versatile soup plates) and cups, each with their own knives and forks, and soup was served from ‘nice soup-tureens’—probably the tin or enamel variety, although possibly utilitarian whitewares.

The women were organised into messes of eight and the strongest women among the group was appointed the ‘captain’ and she carried the loaves of bread, the boiled beef or mutton ‘hot in the joint’ and the pot of hot tea for breaking, carving and pouring amongst the mess. According to Mrs Hicks, the women preferred boiled to roasted meat, and the latter was reserved for ‘special days’. Each inmate was entitled to half a loaf of bread, one pound of meat (cooked; beef during the week and mutton on Sundays) and 1 pint of tea per day. The tea ration could be supplemented by gifts, rewards for daily work, or by purchasing or exchanging supplies with other inmates.

The 1886 Inquiry revealed a marked difference in the diet of Matron Hicks’s family and the inmates of the Asylum following the move to Newington where Mrs Hicks had her own kitchen, it appears, for the first time. It is very unlikely that at the Hyde Park Barracks, the Hicks family shared meals or dining equipage with the Asylum women. Mrs Hicks probably had her own china service and the family may have eaten in their quarters, or perhaps used the Asylum or Immigrants’ dining room off-schedule to the main meals.

The dining arrangements at the Hyde Park Barracks were far superior to those at the Parramatta Asylum where soup and boiled meat was intentionally served cold and the soup—reported to be made with rotten meat—was distributed from slop pails and served in cups that were reused for tea without washing (James Jamieson, wardsman, ‘Minutes of Evidence—Asylums’, Public Charities Commission 1874: 2 & 75). It is within this broader context that we must consider Mrs Hick’s statement:

I assure you that the old people have meat on the table as comfortable as I have myself. (Q2329, Public Charities Commission 1874: 75)

It is highly unlikely that Matron Hicks, on a salary of £250 per annum, sat down to a meal of boiled mutton with tin plates and cups.

Asylums, orphanages and other institutions in the United Kingdom and the Unites States provided crockery for their inmates (Dawson 2000; Hughes 1992; De Cunzo 1995: esp. 50–74). In the cases of the Craiglockhart Poorhouse in Edinburgh, the Royal Edinburgh Asylum and the Wanstead Infant Orphan Asylum, London, the crockery was especially made for, and marked with the names of, these institutions in the 1870s.

The Wanstead Asylum plates were plain with matching copperplate script ‘Infant Orphan Asylum Hall’ on various plates, mugs and slop bowls dumped in Eagle Pond in north-east London in the 1940s—some 70 years after the vessels were first produced (Hughes 1992: esp. 386). The
Craigmichael Poorhouse and Royal Edinburgh Asylum crockery conformed more to the typical form and decoration of later 19th-century 'hotel ware', having red and blue band-and-line borders at the rim and coats of arms. The Craigmichael wares are also marked with a ribbon banner 'CITY OF EDINBURGH POOR HOUSE' and the mugs had reinforced handles typical of hard-wearing, cheap crockery of that period (Dawson 2000: section 3.3). The Royal Edinburgh Asylum vessels appear to be of slightly better quality—a key concern of the Asylum Board. In 1877, they approached W. T. Copeland & Sons to produce the Asylum's crockery, 'hitherto supplied with articles of a somewhat inferior kind', for the '90 to 100 high class patients and...about 650 patients of a humbler rank' (Royal Edinburgh Asylum Letter Book No. 9, p. 418, quoted in Dawson 1999).

It is not simply the presence of ‘high-class’ patients that compelled all these institutions to supply china rather than tin or enamelled ware—the infant orphans and poorhouses too had crockery, albeit of a more roughly finished kind. In London and in Edinburgh, these boards of management were much closer to the source of crockery production (in the midlands of England and also in Scotland) and could arrange orders with greater ease than colonial boards of management might have done. Factor in the cost of shipping, and the difficulty feeble inmates had lifting heavy crockery (see Crowther 1981: 120 for a 20th-century example) and the use of enamelled tin serving ware at the Hyde Park Barracks was quite reasonable.

The location of the dining hall of the Hyde Park Barracks Asylum was probably in the yard near the kitchen and here the able-bodied women could gather at 1pm for their dinner, their main daily meal. Thus, the central location for communal meals is outside our archaeological radar because the deposits on the southern and eastern sides of the main Barracks building were heavily disturbed prior to excavation or were excluded from the main areas of excavation (Potter [ed.] c.1981: 47–48).

The ceramic assemblage from Levels 2 and 3 of the main building is scant. It comprises 2.9% of the assemblage by fragment count and less than 1% of assemblage excluding tobacco pipes. As discussed (see 'Sherd and Minimum Vessel Counts ', p. 23), the preparation of MNVs was found to be too problematic owing to the highly fragmented nature of the assemblage. Of the recorded ceramics sherds from Levels 2 and 3, 38% are estimated to be less than 10% complete.19

This leaves us with a very small assemblage, too fragmented to pursue a substantial analysis of functional categories, or identify the kinds of ceramic vessels we might expect in institutional or infirmary accommodation, for example pap boats, sick feeders20 or bouillon cups (for drinking broth or beef tea), vessels which may well have been supplied in enamel and tin wares.

Looking at the total assemblage of food serving vessels, including glassware and cutlery, we see the familiar pattern of a greater proportion of vessels on Level 3 rather than Level 2, and a strong concentration of items along the skirting boards both along the windows on the south side of Level 3, and along the corridor in the northern wards.

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19 Once sherds with unidentifiable and unassessed sherds are excluded, the figure rises to 65% (i.e. 65% of sherds whose percentages could be estimated were found to be 10% or smaller).

20 Mrs E. Pottie makes reference to a sick 'feeder with the spout chipped off' (p. 492) in one of the Newington wards during the 1886 Inquiry. It is reasonable to expect they were also used at Hyde Park.
**VISITORS, SPECIAL OCCASIONS AND DAILY RECREATION**

As previously discussed, women in the Asylum and Immigrant Depot were confined within its walls, unless granted permission to leave or sent on errands. They were not, however, entirely cut-off from the outside world. The Hyde Park Asylum was the subject of many visits by well-meaning individuals and organisations, including the Ladies Evangelical Association, the Sisters of Mercy and the Flower Mission (SMH 1 February 1882). While the motivations for these visits were largely religious, and arguably political advocacy (see discussion below, p. 65), they served as an important distraction from the daily routine for the Asylum inmates.

At the 1886 Inquiry, one of the visitors on the Ladies’ Board, Miss E. Bedford reported that many inmates disliked the isolation of the new Newington Asylum:

> They said they had never been so wretched at Hyde Park; that Hyde Park was a paradise to this; there the old women had friends who could visit. (Commission of Inquiry 1887: 490)

Distinguished travellers also paid visits to the institution. For example, sisters Rosamond and Florence Hill published an account of their visit in their book *What We Saw in Australia* (Macmillan & Co., London, 1875):

> A similar asylum for women at Sydney [i.e. similar to the Parramatta Asylum] standing on high ground in a beautiful situation, and in one of the fashionable quarters of the town, was also erected by Governor Macquarie, traces of whose tenure of office seem to pervade all parts of the colony settled during his
rule. It contains more than two hundred inmates, the greater proportion of whom are old or sick. The few young women are either blinds, cripple, or idiots, for whom there is no other refuge. As the asylum is in the metropolis, it does not require a resident medical officer, but is managed by the matron, Mrs. Hicks, whose qualifications are as remarkable as those of Mrs. Burnside [Matron of the Parramatta Asylum]. She and one laundress are the only paid officers in the institutions, the whole of the work, nursing included, being performed by the inmates, who also make all their own clothing, with the exception of boots and shoes.

The house affords good bathing accommodation, and the old women have their warm baths regularly. One who has attained the age of 106 “goes,” said Mrs. Hicks, “into a tub every Saturday morning like my own baby.” This old woman, whom we saw in her bed, is doubtless an ex-convict. She told us she had come out in Governor ——’s time (we could not catch the name), a genteel way of concealing the manner of her arrival. At meals the old women are divided into messes of eight, the strongest being chosen captain of the mess. She fetches the dinner, and, we conclude, carves for her mess-mates; but every woman pours her own tea. Small gratuities are given for the work performed, as at Liverpool, and the women looked as cheerful and happy as the old men there. Their annual cost per head is only 10l. 16s. 11½d. (Hill & Hill 1875: 336–337)

Another well-known visitor to the Hyde Park Asylum was the prominent local merchant and philanthropist Quong Tart:

On one occasion, in the year 1885, he was asked, along with others, to speak at a treat given to the inmates of the Asylum for Women at the head of King Street. Speaking of that address a daily paper of that day said, “Mr. Tart’s speech differed from that of others in that while they spoke high-sounding words, he determined to make the treat an annual affair;” and this he afterwards attempted to do, not only for the unfortunates of that asylum alone, but for the indigent poor in the benevolent asylums of the State. How far he succeeded in this attempt may be seen by casually scanning the large list of institutions where every year such festivals were held. (Tart 1911: 25)

Tart maintained his relationship with the Asylum after its move to Newington:

“When nearing the wharf on the day of the feast of the inmates of the Newington Destitute Asylum,” says “The Echo” of 16th October, 1888, “Mr. Tart seemed suddenly seized with a fit; he waved his arms and rushed out to the old women how glad he was to see them. The moment they recognised who it was, the look of joyous gratitude that came over those wrinkled faces was worth going over from Sydney to see. The moment he reached the enclosure he was surrounded by the poor old creatures, who danced round and clapped their hands like children in a pantomime. ‘Ah! God bless you for a good ‘un, Mr. Tart!’ ‘The Lord preserve you and yours, dear Mr. Tart!’ ‘Have you brought Mrs. Tart?’ and dozens of similar ejaculations, and when he told them Mrs. Tart would be there directly with the little ‘Tart,’ which they mustn’t eat, their enthusiasm knew no bounds.”

“Long time since I saw you!” “Now, you have a good bit of fun to-day, but don’t flirt with the gentlemen from Sydney!” “How are you, Mary? I must have a dance with you when Mrs. Tart goes away,” and similar expressions, with a kindly word for all, as he wended his way amongst them, raising his hat each time he shook hands with one of them, with as much grace as he would have done to his own wife. (Tart 1911: 26)

Not all special occasions were sponsored by philanthropists. Religious and public holidays were honoured in the Asylum with special feasts:

QUEEN’S BIRTHDAY was celebrated at the Hyde Park Asylum on Wednesday with the usual tokens of rejoicing. The old ladies were regaled with a bountiful dinner of roast beef and plum pudding, washed down with a glass of ale. A harper and violinist were afterwards introduced, to whose music some of the old girls danced jigs as merrily as they would have done some 50 or 60 years ago. The whole party seemed to enjoy themselves greatly, and were loud in their praises to the matron (Mrs. Hicks) and the Government, to whom they were indebted for the treat. (SMH 29 May 1882, p. 5)
These banquets were important events for the inmates of the overcrowded Hyde Park Asylum which Frederick King noted in 1886 to be unsuitable for the care of old women, there being:

little room for recreation, and the wards are badly adapted for the healthy accommodation of large numbers of aged, and in many cases bed-ridden paupers. (King, 1876 report, V&P NSW Assembly 1876–77, vol. 4., p. 928).

RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION AND DEVOTION

One of the benefits of founding the Immigration Depot at the Hyde Park Barracks was its proximity to 'the principal Church of England and Roman Catholic churches, and to the residences of the clergymen who officiate there', thus satisfying the needs of 'the moral and religious instruction of the inmates' (see full quote, p. 65). While this was important to ensure the moral integrity of young vulnerable women at the start of their new lives in Australia, it was also important to bring comfort to older women at the end of lives and to other women unable to work and care for themselves owing to illness.

The clergymen often held services within the main Barracks building, and along with various evangelical societies, visited the women to bring them small comforts and read and pray with them. In his testimony to the 1873 Public Charities Commission, Stephen Robins, a Sydney City Missionary and regular visitor to the Institution said:

…I was there [at the Hyde Park Barracks] yesterday, and I have been in the habit of going there for eleven years. Now, I went in a different way yesterday (I go to read and pray with the sick and dying women, and then I go down stairs to hold service in the big room), but yesterday I went in a different way. I took a few tracts with me, and went to a few individuals—nearly all I could get access to—and I spoke to them, … (Mr S. Robins 1 Oct 1873, Q2514)

He also noted that the Protestant and Roman Catholic inmates at the Hyde Park Barracks were segregated into separate wards:

…a great many ladies go in and give them [the old ladies] a little tea and sugar, and speak kindly to them. The Protestants side stands better than the other. They are divided there—the Protestants from the Roman Catholics—and the Protestants get the better privileges, as there are more people to visit them… (Mr S. Robins 1 Oct 1873, Q2515)

When asked if they were unduly favoured, he replied:

No, not at all, but the people seem to care more for them [i.e. the Protestants], and they are not allowed, you know, according to the rules of the institution, and the priests and that, to go on the other side. (Mr S. Robins 1 Oct 1873, Q2516, emphasis added)

This testimony provides a remarkable insight into the religious activities of the Asylum (and we will return to the issues of segregation and the distribution of tracts further on) but it also points to the importance of these ‘visitors’ to the institution. They were more than just well-intentioned visitors, they were great political agitators. Not only did they have a great influence on the public inquiries (especially the 1886 inquiry), they used the news media to challenge the management of the institution. During an outbreak of small pox in 1881, Mrs Hicks, under direction from Mr King, Manager of the Government Asylums, quarantined the Hyde Park Barracks, halting all day leave for inmates and disallowing visits from outsiders for several months. The Ladies Evangelical
Association brought it to the attention of the general public in a brief note in the Sydney Morning Herald on 20 January 1882. Matron Hicks then issued a statement, via her husband:

When the smallpox first broke out, it was thought advisable that Hyde Park Barracks should be quarantined and an order was forwarded from the Colonial Secretary’s Office that all liberty should be stopped to the inmates, and all visitors—Sisters of Mercy, Flower Mission ladies—should be refused admission. This has been perfectly understood by these ladies, to whom the matter has been explained, and, as far as the Sisters of Mercy are concerned, cheerfully complied with, the order was forwarded in due course through the manager of asylums (Mr. King) to Mrs Hicks, as matron superintendent of Hyde Park, and acted upon by her. As a matter of fact, Mrs. Hicks has made applications to the Board of Health to free the institution from quarantine, and each time has met with a distinct and peremptory refusal. (SMH Friday 1 Feb, 1882, p. 5)

An anonymous ‘observer’ wrote to the Herald two days later complaining that while the quarantine kept the old women in and visitors out, Matron Hicks and her family continued to come and go as they pleased (SMH Friday 3 Feb, 1882, p. 7).

The personal disapproval of Matron Hicks seems to have been widespread among the evangelical visitors. While it was not unleashed in full until the 1886 Inquiry (when the Matron was accused of being a drunkard, of bribing inmates, impersonating Lady Martin and using asylum produce for her family’s benefit), evidence of it can be seen in Stephen Robin’s testimony (1 Oct 1873, Q2521–4, Public Charities Commission 1874: 83). When asked whether he were ‘satisfied’ with all he had seen at the Hyde Park Barracks over the eleven years of his visiting, i.e. ‘the mode in which it is conducted—and what [he had] seen of the inmates’, he replied, ‘I would not like to say all I think sometimes, but I think that there is a good deal of partiality shown there…’ and hesitated. When reminded by the President of the Inquiry that his evidence would be recorded and printed, he responded, ‘Then I shall say nothing more.’ (Q2521–24)

Advice to the Dejected: Religious Tracts at the Hyde Park Barracks

In addition to their political efforts to safeguard the good management of the Asylum, visitors were also responsible for bringing into the Barracks one of the most intriguing groups of artefacts found under the floorboards: religious tracts. At least 42 and probably 109 fragments from 19th-century tracts survive in the archaeological collection (in addition to other religious matter such as bible pages, prayer books and periodicals), but dozens more are likely to be hidden in the ‘mixed bags’ of paper.

Religious tracts are a phenomenon of the early 19th-century, a predictable outcome of the growing evangelical movement throughout the Western world that coincided with innovations in printing-press production. Sermons, theological debates and prayer books were soon supplemented by fables, Bible stories, advice books and even tracts on current events and world history. They ranged from four- and eight-page pamphlets to bound volumes of 100 or 200 pages.

Tracts were not respected literary devices of their time. William Thackeray lamented that, while in days gone by, it ‘required some learning…to write a book’,

...now, in the age of duodecimos, the system is reformed altogether: a male or female controversialist draws upon his imagination, and not his learning; makes a story instead of an argument, and, in the course of 150 pages (where the preacher has it all his own way) will prove or disprove you anything.
And, to our shame be it said, we Protestants have set the example of this kind of proselytism—those detestable mixtures of truth, lies, false sentiment, false reasoning, bad grammar, correct and genuine philanthropy and piety—I mean our religious tracts, which any woman or man, be he ever so silly, can take upon himself to write, and sell for a penny, as if religious instruction were the easiest thing in the world. We have set the example in this kind of composition, and all the sects of the earth will, doubtless, speedily follow it. (Thackeray 1840, ‘Madame Sand and the new Apocalypse’)

The Religious Tract Society was founded in London in 1799 to publish and promote Christian literature. A local branch, the Australian Religious Tract Society, was established in Sydney in 1823 by leaders of the Anglican, Presbyterian and Wesleyan churches\(^{21}\), the primary object being:

\[\ldots\]to afford the means of cheap, useful and pious Reading; that the poorer Classes of the Community, and the young People more especially, who may be able to read, may obtain some of the most instructive and important Lessons of Life at a very small Expence [sic]. (Sydney Gazette, 9 Oct 1823, p. 31, courtesy www.anglican.org.au)

The Religious Tract and Book Society Depot was just a few blocks away from the Hyde Park Barracks, on the corner of King and Pitt Streets, in the late 1860s\(^{22}\) and there was a Wesleyan Book and Tract Depot at 95 King Street in the early 1870s.

\[\text{Figure 23} \quad \text{Pages 7 and 8 from a pamphlet published by the Religious Tract Society, London, entitled James Gibbons (HPB UF8774).}\]

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\(^{21}\) In later decades, its ranks included agitators and government officials such as Samuel Goold who sat on the Commission of Public Inquiry into the Hyde Park Barracks in 1886 (he was secretary of the depot in 1869 (Sands Alphabetical 1869, p367).

\(^{22}\) ‘The Religious Tract Society Depot was listed at 100 Pitt Street in 1869 (Sands 1869: 369) with Samuel Goold identified as Secretary.'
At least three and potentially two other volumes of the Religious Tract Society can be found among the Hyde Park Barracks archaeological collection and it is not too hard to imagine Stephen Robins popping into the depot to pick up a few pamphlets and books before heading to the Asylum with the publications ‘under his arm’. Two title pages from tracts published by the London-based society, one by the Dublin division, and another tract by the Society of Promoting Christian Knowledge have been found.

From the 135 torn pages and complete books containing religious or moral texts identified so far in the collection, the titles of only 26 tracts could be identified. Some of the titles include:

- Are you Afraid to Die
- Are you Hired?
- James Gibbons (published by the Religious Tract Society London)
- Matt the Idiot Boy
- Old Dinah
- Prayers for Morning
- Prayers of St Bridget
- Advice to the Dejected (Religious Tract Society’s Tract No. 357, published by at least 1842)
- Richard Weaver’s Leaflets (No. 16)
- Self Help
- Strange Tales, from humble life (first published 1863)
- Sunday Rest
- Litany for the Sick
- The Believer’s Pocket Companion or one thing needful to make poor sinners rich, and miserable sinners happy, by William Mason
- The Levites
- The Life of Havelock by Rev Thomas Smith
- The Portuguese Convert by Mrs. P. H. Gosse.
- The Prison Death-Bed

Titles such as the Prison Death-Bed, Are you Afraid to Die? and Advice to the Dejected suggest confronting reading matter for aged and destitute women, many of them bedridden, but they were probably the target audience for tracts of this kind. A tract with oversize and widely spaced font (HPB UF17381, Figure 24) is possibly one ‘for the Aged or others’ as listed in the Religious Tract Society Catalogue of 1842 (see Davis 1842).

The title Are you Hired? (HPB UF6977 found on the stair landing) is likely to have been brought to the Asylum for the young women of the Immigrant Depot.
At least one of the tracts, *The Believer’s Pocket Companion*, has a name written on the inside of the cover: ‘Ann Sarran [indeterminate]’ (HPB UF8226, L2-3 JG27 JS4). This small, leather-bound tract survived complete, although the majority of the pages have been eaten away. The identity of Ann Sarran is unknown. This edition is likely to have been printed between 1801 and 1816, so she may predate the Asylum records.

Official church literature was also discovered among the assemblage. In addition to 31 fragmented pages from bibles, hymn books and prayer books recorded in the Level 3 stair landing sample, an intact leather-bound edition of the King James Bible, published by the British and Foreign Bible Society in 1830, also survived under the floorboards (HPB UF28).

A fragment from the Scots–Gaelic Book of Common Prayer (HPB UF17513) suggests that an attempt was made to supply inmates with texts in their native language, or that such inmates made certain to carry copies of these texts with them.

Many of the pages of the religious books were incomplete or single leaf, providing no evidence of whether they were stitch-bound in a book, or stapled, pinned or tied in a pamphlet. Most of the books were small: 4.5” high, reflecting their ‘pocket companion’ nature.

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Figure 25
Story of the ‘Prodigal Son’ from *The British Workman* (HPB UF17512).

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23 The publication details in full are: ‘London: Printed by J. Cundee, Ivy-Lane; / FOR M JONES, (LATE TRAPP), / No.1, Paternoster Row’. Maurice Jones was operating from No. 1 Paternoster Row, London, from 1801 to 1816 (www.bbti.bham.ac.uk/, www.polybiblio.com/heritage/)
Rosaries and Devotional Medals

In addition to the religious tracts are a number of rosary elements and devotional medals. The most remarkable example is a complete rosary with crucifix, six large red beads and 43 smaller beads joined by a copper-alloy link chain (HPB UF62). In addition there were two Sacred Heart medals with tri-point attachments for use in a rosary (HPB UF682, HPB UF10932) and three lengths of chain with the smaller bead were also recovered (HPB UF9515, HPB UF11377, HPB UF7593).

Evidence of another type of rosary was also recovered in the form of 47 royal blue and five clear plain round beads strung on thick white cotton (HPB UF61). While most of the beads are now loose, one intact section has 10 blue beads between two clear beads, suggesting that it is the decade of a rosary.  

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24 A copper-alloy ‘rosary’ is recorded in the database (HPB UF11366), but no further details of the item’s integrity or style were recorded and the item is now missing. Given the material allocation, it is probably that this is an element of a rosary, e.g. Sacred Heart medal, rather than a complete chain.
In addition to the rosaries were seven devotional medals, including:

- **HPB UF17835** Crucifixion: ‘MERE DE DIEU PRIEZ POUR NOUS’ (‘Mother of God pray for us’). Reverse: ‘CHRIST AYEZ PITIE DE NOUS’ (‘Christ have mercy upon us’)
- **HPB UF17834** Mary: ‘MERE DE DIEU PRIEZ POUR NOUS’ (‘Mother of God pray for us’)
- **HPB UF10552** Miraculous: ‘MARIA CONCEVID / SIN PECADO PNEGA / PORNOS’ / ‘QUE. RECURRIMOS A. VOS’ (‘O Mary conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to you.’)
- **HPB UF10527** Saint Bernard: ‘SAINT BERNARD’ and a depiction of a saint reading a book. Reverse: ‘….POUR NOUS’ and a depiction of a saint with a crook, reading 25

While it is certainly possible that some of these devotional objects were given to the Asylum women as gifts, most were probably among the private possessions of Roman Catholic inmates in the asylum. Regardless of how the items were acquired, these forms of evidence for religious activity in the Asylum speak more of private faith and private prayer than do the various tracts which were brought into the institutions and probably read to the women.

### Sectarian division

As previously discussed, it is known through historical records that Protestant and Roman Catholic inmates at the Hyde Park Asylum were segregated into separate wards. Very few religious artefacts in the assemblage could be attributed to the various sects, but of others that do, no Catholic items appear on the northern side of the building on either Levels 2 or 3, excepting the common area of the stairwell on Level 3 (see Figure 27). Similarly, only one explicitly Protestant item was found in the southern ward areas, in addition to three ‘Evangelical’ texts. These latter fragments relate to tracts for which the specific denomination could not be identified from the surviving text and could represent either sect, but are more likely to Protestant than Catholic given the greater numbers of Protestant tracts produced in the 19th century.

While this pattern only reflects the small number of paper records that have been catalogued (and may change significantly should further research be undertaken), the suggestion that the southern wards were for Catholic patients and the northern wards for women of Protestant faith does concord with the building’s local settings. St. Mary’s Cathedral would have been visible from the windows of the Hyde Park Barracks at the time of the Asylum, and may have been some comfort to the Catholic inmates with beds along the southern elevation.

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25 Another three were indecipherable (HPB UG1096) or not available for inspection (HPB UF661 & HPB UF10020).
SEWING, CRAFT AND FANCY WORK

The tools and equipage of sewing activities—buttons, beads, pins and occasionally needles and lace bobbins—are a common component of typical archaeological assemblages, and often touted as a significant representation of women’s work in the domestic sphere (e.g. Lydon 1993). The survival of fabric, the primary material element of sewing, among the assemblage of sewing-related artefacts at the Hyde Park Barracks provides an excellent opportunity to expand this area of research.

Altogether, 6,782 items in the underfloor collection can be directly linked with sewing activities (see Table 3), that is 11% of the collection as a whole.26 This includes over 5,000 pins, needles,

26 While two smaller underfloor deposits at the Lilyvale site (168 and 170 Cumberland Street, 3,100 and 5,500 artefacts in total, respectively) both comprised 40% sewing items, this is an unprecedented high figure for an assemblage of this size. The large, i.e. 7,000 plus underfloor assemblages at the Cumberland and Gloucester Streets site comprised a maximum of 5.6% of the assemblage being associated with sewing artefacts:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>House</th>
<th>Sewing</th>
<th>Total artefacts</th>
<th>% sewing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Carahers Lane</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>29,324</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Carahers Lane</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>7,062</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Carahers Lane</td>
<td>399</td>
<td>86,808</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Cribbs Lane</td>
<td>372</td>
<td>11,349</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101 Gloucester Street</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>11,056</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>128 Cumberland Street</td>
<td>529</td>
<td>9,498</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>093b Gloucester Street</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>7,176</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
thread reels, bobbins and pin cushions and 1,754 fabric scraps that have been recorded to date. It is expected that this number will multiply considerably should all the remaining bags of ‘mixed textile’ be sorted and catalogued. In addition, many items of clothing in the collection—including the bonnet stamped ‘HPA’—were probably sewn on site, but being complete items were worn by the women and not discarded as part of the processes of sewing activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>L1 (UG)</th>
<th>L2 (UF)</th>
<th>L3 (UF)</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pins (including Safety Pins)</td>
<td>1501</td>
<td>1965</td>
<td>2788</td>
<td>6252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needles</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Packets (needles, tapes, hook/eye and pattern books)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knitting Needles &amp; skein</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thread Reels, skeins, balls</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thimbles</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needlework Tools (Bobbins, Crochet hooks etc)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fabric Offcut</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>392</td>
<td>1248</td>
<td>1749</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fabric Offcut: Structural</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Ribbon, tape, receipt, bag etc</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1650</strong></td>
<td><strong>2491</strong></td>
<td><strong>4291</strong></td>
<td><strong>8430</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3  Sewing Equipment from all three levels of the Main Building (sherd count). Note that Level 1 was an underground deposit so far less likely to produce fabric or other paper remains relating to sewing.

Over 63% of the sewing assemblage was recovered from Level 3, pointing to a clear association with the Asylum that occupied the upper floor for the longest period of time. From the minutes of evidence to both the 1873 and 1886 Inquiries it is clear that sewing was a prominent activity in the Asylum. Able-bodied women were responsible for making and patching the Asylum’s bed linen and making their own clothing to wear within the Asylum. (Only their boots, shoes and slippers were made outside the institution, supplied by contract [Public Charities Commission 1874: Q2354]). The ‘uniform’ was initially plaid until the winter of 1873 when Matron Hicks changed to a brown wincey fabric—something she later regretted (Public Charities Commission 1874: 76). New fabric was purchased by the Board following a tender process and was probably supplied by local fabric houses, although of course the fabric would have come from overseas producers. One offcut from the end of a bolt of fabric in the collection (HPB UF4713) bore the ‘British Cambric’ stamp of Thomas Hoyle and Sons who operated in Manchester from the late 18th- through to the mid-20th centuries.

Another two items in the collection bear the Hyde Park laundry stamp: a complete hand-sewn ruffled cap with plain cotton-tape tie in a plain white cotton fabric (HPB UF55) recovered from Level 3 (JG11 JS14) and a well-worn and poorly darned stocking (HPB UF11734) from Level 2 (JG35 JS2). These and hundreds of other garments and scraps in the collection still bear the hand-sewn stitches of women inmates. Unsurprisingly just 21 (4.8%) of 439 fabric scraps with surviving stitching were recorded as being machine-stitched.

A hand-operated sewing machine was purchased by the Asylum in 1875.
Some of the needles used by the inmates, the thread reels from which they unwound their cotton and pins they used to fasten their works-in-progress, also survived. Altogether, 6,252 pins were counted from all three levels of the Main building. In addition to regular crewel and darning needles (rarely identifiable in subsurface deposits), paper packets of needles (‘drill eyed sharps’) and hooks-and-eyes (see Figure 29) made by English manufacturers were found, along with a single needle pinned to a small piece of cloth, which survived under the floor for at least a century as it had been put down after the day’s work. There were a total of 158 thread reels, reel and skein labels—all manufactured in England, hand-wound balls of thread and at least two ‘makeshift reels’. Twenty-four thimbles survive in the collection, one marked 'FROM A FRIEND', along with three pincushions and nine pairs of scissors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ID</th>
<th>Mark</th>
<th>Artefact</th>
<th>Context</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HPB UF52</td>
<td>'HPA' [laundry stamp]</td>
<td>Hand-sewn, cotton floral short-sleeve jacket with calico lining</td>
<td>JG3 JS14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HPB UF55</td>
<td>'HPA' and broad arrow device</td>
<td>Hand-sewn cotton cap with ruffle around face.</td>
<td>JG11 JS14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HPB UF120</td>
<td>'HPA'</td>
<td>Piece of fabric, possibly hand towel or bath towel</td>
<td>L3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HPB UF11734</td>
<td>'HPA'</td>
<td>Stocking</td>
<td>JG35 JS2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HPB UF51</td>
<td>'BO' [Board of Ordinance]</td>
<td>Shirt</td>
<td>L3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HPB UF56</td>
<td>'BO'</td>
<td>Man’s right shoe, incised 'BO’ on the inside of the shoe.</td>
<td>JG27 JS13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 Artefacts marked with Asylum or Board of Ordnance stamps.

Figure 28
Thread reel with labels (HPB UF8953) (P. Crook 2003).
Fancy Work

In addition to the pins, needles, thread and thimbles associated with common, practical sewing, at least 34 items in the collection demonstrate the practice of more specialised needlework. These include 20 elements from bobbins for lace-making, one bodkin, three tatting shuttles, two crochet hooks, one spool-spacer from a workbox and seven other unidentified bone tools probably associated with needlework.

Asylum women were not allowed to undertake out-door needlework because the demands of sewing for Asylum needs were considered too great (M. Hicks, Public Charities Commission, 12 July 1873). The immigrant women who stayed at the Depot for short periods of time were encouraged to work on their needlework, but this would have been of a calibre far more fanciful than the practical and economic ‘re-workings’ of the Asylum seamstresses. The women worked from their ship’s work box. The Hyde Park Barracks Daily Report of Wed 3 February 1864 noted:

> The work box belonging to the Seracco was opened today the work which was exceedingly good was distributed.

It is interesting to note that despite the fact that 63% of underfloor sewing assemblage was recovered from Level 3, 20 of the 34 more specialised sewing tools came from Level 2 (Table 3). This is one of the few patterns where differences between the Asylum-occupied Level 3 and predominantly Depot-occupied Level 2 are apparent.
Hat-making

Another possible activity unrepresented in the historical accounts was hat-making. A minimum of 56 strands of plaited straw used in hat-making have been recovered from the underfloor assemblage on Levels 2 and 3, and dozens are more likely to lie unrecorded in the bulk textile bags. While it is possible that plaited strands are nothing more remnants or repairs to hats and bonnets, the presence of a palm-leaf shredding tool (HPB UF11648 from JG12 JS14) used to cut fibre into equidistant strips before plaiting suggests that hat- or basket-making was an activity within the Hyde Park Barracks at one point in its history.

As a low skilled task requiring few tools and relatively inexpensive raw materials, hat-making was a common form of institutional labour in the 19th century. As discussed, however, there is no record that the Hyde Park Asylum inmates made products for sale outside of the institution, although it remains a possibility that a small number of items were sold. It is more likely that the manufacture of hats was for use by the inmates, or perhaps was undertaken by the immigrant women for their own purposes after they left the Depot.

Figure 30
Strands of plaited straw used in hat-making (HBP UF4435). (P. Crook 2004)
Figure 31
Distribution of sewing equipment (pins, needles and tools) across Levels 2 and 3.
Thrifty Women: Mending and Makeshift Tooling

Other offcuts in the collection provide a fascinating insight into the processes of recycling clothes. The textile sampling process (see ‘Sampling Paper and Textiles’, p. 22), produced 1,640 scraps of printed and plain cotton, linen and silk fabrics. Over 70% of the scraps were plain, over 10% striped (including striped ticking), and the remainder comprised of floral and other geometric designs. Over 45% of the offcuts were rectangular in shape, another 4% were square, circular or triangular and the remaining 35% were irregular in shape (see Table 5).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shape</th>
<th>L2</th>
<th>L3</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>% of total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Circular/Ovoid</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Irregular</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>492</td>
<td>610</td>
<td>34.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rectangular</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>643</td>
<td>801</td>
<td>45.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scalloped</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Square</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Triangular</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unidentified</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>420</td>
<td>1335</td>
<td>1755</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5   Shape of fabric offcuts from Levels 2 and 3.

In addition to these flat offcuts, the textile sampling project also revealed 112 offcuts that have been carefully cut around the seams or hems of a former garment to maximise the area of unstitched sheet fabric with which to make a new garment or item. Because this cutting procedure left behind only the spine or structure of the former garment, we have called them ‘structural offcuts’.

Figure 32
‘Structural offcut’, cut away along the hem of an unknown garment (HPB UF16443).
(P. Crook 2003)
While they comprise just 6% of all fabric scraps, they are compelling evidence of the regular recycling of garments at the end of their life-cycle within the Asylum institution. Other evidence for this economical practice can also be seen in some of the remarkably complete garments that survived intact under the floor boards. A purple floral bodice (HPB UF52) was cut down to form a jacket with short calico lined sleeves, suitable for working. The calico lining is stamped with the Asylum’s laundry stamp: ‘HPA’ alongside a broad arrow as previously discussed. This suggests that the ‘uniform’ of plaid and later wincey fabrics were supplemented from time to time with whichever fabrics were on hand.27

A similar ‘make-do’ approach was taken to sewing and other domestic equipment. A tatting shuttle was crafted from wood-sheet covered with blue paper (see Figure 33). A small pouch was roughly made from cardboard backing stitched to a leather cover and protective flap (HPB UF17347), possibly to hold a penknife or other tool. At least two clothes pegs were hand carved (HPB UF37 and HPB UF14414).

We will discuss the significance of these makeshift items in Part D.

Figure 33 Front and back of a makeshift tatting shuttle, crafted from wood-sheet covered with blue paper joined by rough stitching (HPB UF33). (P. Crook 2003)

27 It is possible, indeed likely, that second-hand clothing was donated to the Asylum but there are no records of such in any of the surviving documentation.
Printed Matter: Literature, Reading and Other Activities

In addition to the numerous religious tracts found in the collection, there was a large array of other reading material, including newspapers, periodicals and other books. Fragments from at least 13 books or pamphlets without overt religious references were recorded, but dozens more are likely to be lurking in uncatalogued bulk bags. These titles are both historical or non-fiction works, along with likely advice manuals and include:

- The Matchmaker (HPB UF17681 & HPB UF17739)
- Everybody’s Garden (HPB UF17519)
- Chapters on Common Sense (1854–) (HPB UF17442)
- For Young Children (HPB UF14432)
- Story of Lucknow (1857–) (HPB UF17418)
- The Abkhasian Insurrection (1866–) (HPB UF17418)
- The World’s Fair (1851–) (HPB UF133)

Some of these titles may well have been published by the Religious Tract Society or other Christian Publishers (see ‘Advice to the Dejected: Religious Tracts at the Hyde Park Barracks’, p. 66).

A more interesting category of printed material is the newspaper assemblage. Among the 791 fragments of newsprint recorded so far, the following local, regional and European newspapers and periodicals were identified:

- Sydney Morning Herald daily by Charles Kemp and John Fairfax, 1842– (36 fragments, MNV: 15)
- The Sydney Mail weekly by Fairfax, 1860–1938 (2 fragments, MNV: 1)
- Town and Country Journal weekly by Frank & Christopher Bennett, Sydney, 1870–1919 (8 fragments, MNV: 4)
- The Illustrated Sydney News by Walter George Mason, 1853–1872 (1 fragments, MNV: 1)
- The Evening News by Samuel Bennett, Sydney, 1867–1931 (11 fragments, MNV: 9)
- The Empire: Sydney journal of news, politics and commerce by Henry Parkes, 28 Dec 1850 to 14 Feb 1875 (2 fragments, MNV: 1)
- The Freeman’s Journal, Sydney edition, 1850–1932 (tentative attribution: 1 fragments, MNV: 1)
- The Cumberland Mercury (1868–1895), The Parramatta Advertiser (1844–) or The Parramatta Chronicle and County of Cumberland advertiser (1859–1867) (1 fragments, MNV: 1)
- Pastoral Times and Deniliquin Telegraph (tentative attribution: 1 fragments, MNV: 1)
- Queensland Daily Guardian (April 1863 to June 1868, Brisbane, QLD) (2 fragments)
- The Tablet, London, Weekly, 1840– (2 fragments, MNV: 2)
- The Graphic: an illustrated weekly newspaper by Edward Joseph Mansfield, London, 4 Dec 1869 to 23 Apr 1932 (2 fragments, MNV: 2)
- The British Workman, periodical to educate the Working Classes illustrated 4-page monthly by Thomas Bywater Smithies, 1855–[at least 1907] (5 fragments, MNV: 3)
- Public Opinion (4 fragments)
- The European Mail (5 fragments)
- The Home News (1 fragments, MNV: 1)
The newspaper fragments proved to be an invaluable source of assemblage dating. By recording the small fragments of the mastheads with the date of publication, or weather reports or shipping data giving dates of the previous week’s rainfall or next week’s shipments, very specific production dates could be recorded. In other cases, dates or years could be gleaned from discussions of local or global events—a more closely dateable notation following the opening of the telegraph line in 1872 (Isaacs and Kirkpatrick 2003: 9). One third of the newsprint fragments (270 fragments) recorded so far offered specific production dates or date ranges, and of these 92.6% date to women’s phase of occupation (1848–1886), and nearly three-quarters to the last 15 years of the Asylum and Depot’s occupation (see Table 6).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>L2</th>
<th>L3</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>% of total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-1848 (1839–1844)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1848–1886 (1854–1886)</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>92.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1850s</td>
<td>(0)</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(0.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860s</td>
<td>(13)</td>
<td>(34)</td>
<td>(47)</td>
<td>(17.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870s</td>
<td>(55)</td>
<td>(77)</td>
<td>(132)</td>
<td>(48.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880s</td>
<td>(69)</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(70)</td>
<td>(26.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1886–(1896–1967)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>152</strong></td>
<td><strong>117</strong></td>
<td><strong>270</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6
Fragments of dateable newsprint from Levels 2 and 3 of the Main Barracks Building.

In addition, the assemblage of newspaper fragments is an intriguing collection in its own right, for three main reasons: historical records suggest that few women in the Asylum were literate; some of the fragments of newspaper are off-sheets, direct from the printers and not sold to the public for reading (see Figure 35); and a small number of fragments have been cut in unusual patterns (see Figure 39). This raises certain issues about the uses of the paper that led to their being found under the floor boards.

The six newsprint fragments with diamond cut edges or mid-sections were all recovered from the stair landing on Level 3—the only area where paper records were recorded in total. While it is possible that examples recovered in other areas in Levels 2 and 3 and await cataloguing, the small number comprises just 2.1% of the 285 fragments found in this area. It is possible that these are simply a rare and purposeless activity, randomly cutting shapes into spare newspapers. If so, it did occur more than once: two of the fragments date to February 1871 (HPB UF17510 & HPB UF17568 each has a unique masthead) and another dates to 1876 (HPB UF17358).

It may also suggest other uses for newspapers beyond reading. While it is difficult to draw firm conclusions on the strength of one or two fragments, it is reasonable to speculate that newspapers were utilised in the daily operations of the asylum not as, or perhaps as well as, reading matter. Newspapers may have been used in lieu of temporary table or mantel placements or floor coverings and the sawtooth edges were minor attempts at decoration. Other, undecorated fragments may have been deliberately placed under the floorboards to manage leaks, or used to cut out patterns for dresses—a task well suited to the large, uncut broadsheets.
Figure 34  Front and back of the first page of The Empire issued 2 January 1872 (HPB UF17479). (P. Crook 2003)

Figure 35  Front and back of uncut broadsheet off-prints from the Sydney Morning Herald (HPB UF17320). (P. Crook 2003)
Figure 36  Another example of a possible off-print: the masthead appears on both the obverse and reverse of the first page. Front and back of HPB UF17585. (P. Crook 2003)

Figure 37  Uncut broadsheet of the front page of the Sydney Morning Herald issued 4 February 1871 (HPB UF3989). (P. Crook 2003)

Figure 38  Some periodicals were identified by matching partial headers or mastheads, e.g. this fragment from The British Workman (showing front and back, HPB UF17517). (P. Crook 2003)
OFFICIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE RECORDS

In addition to the literary material there was also much documentary evidence of government administration, including that concerning by the other institutions that shared the Hyde Park Barracks with the Asylum and Immigration Depot, or occupied the main building after its full conversion to government and legal offices. The latter category includes documents from the NSW Parliamentary Library (HPB UF4279), fragments from the Government Gazette and most prevalent among the group: blue forms from the 1871 Census, known to occupy an office in the main building (probably on the ground floor), much to the annoyance of Matron Hicks.28

In addition there were at least four documents associated with the office for the Agent for Immigration which occupied the building in conjunction with the Depot. The included regulations for immigrants wishing to come to Australia (HPB UF17756), a ‘Notice to Immigrants’ for single female immigrants wishing to be hired (HPB UF11612, HPB UF11585), a hand-written letter or document making reference to numbers of immigrants present (HPB UF3311) and a Ship Surgeon’s Requisition form for the provision of medical comforts to various assisted female immigrants (mostly married) aboard the General Caulfield on 4–6 Aug 1865 (HPB UF131, HPB UF132 and HPB UF207).

28 At least 33 fragments have been recorded so far: HPB UF17488, HPB UF17341, HPB UF17371, HPB UF17377, HPB UF17462, HPB UF17476, HPB UF17762, HPB UF17672, HPB UF17588, HPB UF17597, HPB UF17604, HPB UF17616, HPB UF17621, HPB UF17742, HPB UF17752 and HPB UF17467.
It is unknown how some of these documents found their way to the upper floors, but like the newspaper fragments it is possible that scrap paper had meaningful uses in the self-sufficient asylum and once their clerical purposes had been served, they were provided to the Matron for her use.

These documents are an important reminder of the fact that the Asylum did not maintain exclusive access to the Hyde Park Barracks and consequently neither is the archaeological assemblage an exclusive representation of Asylum life.
PRIVATE LIVES

Concurrent with the official history and material culture of the institutions run from the Hyde Park Barracks are the family histories, private lives and ephemera of long-term residents and transient individuals who lived or sought refuge there. In this section we will examine the archaeological evidence for private or personal activities within the broad machinery of the institution, beginning with a brief biography of the rise and fall of the most significant individual associated with the Hyde Park Barracks during the women’s phases of occupation: Matron Lucy Hicks.

THE APPLEWAITE–HICKS FAMILY

Matron Lucy Hannah Langdon, later Applewhaite and then Hicks, was born on 5 November 1833 in George Street North, The Rocks, the child of English immigrants John and Mary Langdon. John was a merchant by trade and ran a butcher’s shop in George Street (Dawes n.d.). He died when Lucy was two years old. Her mother remarried 18 months later, in March 1837, wedding Thomas Holmes (Riley n.d.).

At the age of 16, Lucy married 30-year old, Barbados-born English Mariner, John Lithcot (or Lythcote) Applewhaite on 12 September 1849 at St Lawrence’s Anglican Church, Sydney. John was Captain of the 532-ton barque the William Hyde and the couple spent the early years of their marriage at sea and in port in London, Adelaide and also New Zealand in Lyttelton, Canterbury and New Plymouth. Their eldest daughter Mary was born aboard ship at Port Adelaide in 1850, and their son Philip was born in Christchurch in May 1852 (Thompson n.d.).

An account of one of their journeys from England to New Zealand was published in the Lyttelton Times by one of the passengers, and this gives a sense of what life was like for the family in the first years of the their marriage:

The William Hyde

The William Hyde weighed anchor at Deal on the morning of Tuesday, October 21, 1851, and having a favourable wind went at once down the English Channel, and across that terror of English landsmen, the Bay of Biscay, where the wind and sea were both somewhat rough. On October 31 we passed Maderia at midnight, bearing S.E. by E. On November 8 we caught a shark, from which some excellent steaks were cut. On the 14th we sighted San Antonio (Cape Verds), bearing E. by S. and distant by about 40 miles. From thence to the Line the N.E. trades were very light, and it was not until November 25, thirty-five days from Plymouth that we passed the Equator. On the following day, Wednesday we sighted (lat. 1.48S.), the schooner Marmora, which had been taking in cargo alongside us in the East India Docks, and sent off a boat to her which brought back Captain Kelly and the two Messrs. Rochfort, her passengers to dine with us. From this day we saw no more of her till the day we entered Port Victoria, the Marmora dropping her anchor within an hour of the William Hyde. The Marmora sailed from England two days before the William Hyde. From this point to about lat. 54.8 our course was slow and uninteresting, the S.E. trades entirely failing us. To beguile the time, however, the

29 Witnessed by R. Holmes of the Glebe, Emily Jane Langdon, of the Glebe & Charlotte Rosina Banks. John’s death certificate says they were married in Christchurch.
play of the “Merchant of Venice” was got up, and performed before the passengers and crew. The
costumes, thanks to the taste and industry of the ladies, were most appropriate and even elegant, and
the female roles, were sustained by ladies and not as was the case in the performance of “The Rivals” on
board the Randolph by gentlemen. (Heavens! Lydia Languish by a gentleman). This incident proved to be
a great source of amusement, and furnished the topic of conversation for what else would have proved
many a weary hour. On December 19, 47 days from Plymouth, we passed the meridian of Greenwich,
latt. 34.19. On Xmas Day we were off the Cape, and the day was spent as nearly as possible after the
Old English fashion. On New Year’s Day the children of the cuddy and the forecabin had an
entertainment in the cuddy, and the children of the steerage passengers were regaled with fruit, tarts,
cakes and wine on the quarter deck. On Saturday, January 3, we made our best run during the voyage,
having gone over 281 miles in twenty four hours, and from this time a good pace was kept up to
Stewart Island, which we sighted on Saturday January 30, at break of day, lying N.E. by E., passing it so
close as not to see the “Traps”. At noon of the same day, we were off Otago where the wind headed us
and kept us out till the 5th, when we safely anchored in Port Victoria, having accomplished our passage
under the protection of a merciful Providence without a single casualty or serious disagreement and all
in good health.

The live stock brought on board were a pure Devon cow, six pheasants, six partridges, two rare geese,
two muscovy ducks, a couple of wild ducks of a peculiar breed and some lopped eared rabbits, the
property of Mr Brittan, the surgeon and two fawns and a goat consigned to Mr Godley. Of these the
only survivors are the cow, one hen pheasant, the geese, the muscovy ducks, one doe rabbit, and the
goat. (The unfortunate death of the fawn we noticed last week.)

Lyttelton Times, 14 February, 1852, trans. by Judy Clark,
http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.com/~nzbound/wmhyde.htm

Altogether Lucy and John had eight children but only five are known to have survived childhood:
Mary L A (b. Adelaide 1850, d. 1885), Phillip (b. Christchurch 1852), Elizabeth J M (b. Glebe 1855),
Lucy H (b. 1857), Emily A. (b. Glebe 1858, d. 1865), John C B (b. Sydney 1862, d. 1863), William
H (b. Sydney 1868) and Clara (no details known).30

In 1861 the Applewhaites took up positions in the Immigration Office and Immigration Depot and
moved into the Hyde Park Barracks. It is not known precisely where their quarters were but, as
noted, it is likely they were the western rooms on the second floor, overlooking the entrance to
the Barracks. John Jnr and William were both born while the family was living at the Hyde Park
Barracks.

At the age of 49, after almost 20 years of marriage, John died of heart disease on 27 May 1869, at
the Asylum. His death certificate shows that he was suffering from ‘syncope’ and ‘fatty
degeneration of the heart’ for a period of 3 months and he was attended to by the Asylum’s
dispenser, Dr G Walker. Like most of the inmates, he was buried promptly, the following day, 28
May.

Just over a year later, on 4 June 1870, Lucy married English-born ‘bachelor’ and ‘gentleman’
William Henry Hicks at St James’s Church. The official witnesses to the marriage were Ferdinand
Hamilton Reuss Jnr and Lucy’s eldest daughter, Mary Lucy Adelaide. Ferdinand Reuss was an
architect and surveyor based in Glebe. Hicks was living nearby in Darlington at the time of the

30 John Applewhaite’s death certificate (1869) lists two males and four females living. The two males were Philip and
William. The four females would have included: Mary, Elizabeth, Lucy and probably Clara, the ‘Miss Applewhaite’
recorded as helping her mother in the 1886–7 inquiry. Clara’s birth certificate has not been located and it is
possible that she was born at sea between 1850 and 1855.
marriage and it is possible that Hicks and/or Reuss were known to Lucy via her family connections in Glebe.

Lucy was 37 when she married William, and together they had five children, three of whom survived to adulthood: Lucy E M R (b. Sydney 1871, d. 1892), John Raby (b. 1874, d. 1941), Claud A R (b. 1876, d. 1876), Kate R (b. 1878, d. 1878), Francis A R (b. 1879, d. 1896). All five were born at the Hyde Park Barracks while Lucy continued to run both the Asylum and Immigration Depot. She was 46 when she had her last child, Francis, in 1879.

There was talk at the 1873 Inquiry of erecting quarters for Matron Hicks and her family on the Macquarie Street frontage of the building, but it appears these plans did not eventuate. By 1885, the family was living at 143 Phillip Street, just a block from the Asylum but it is unknown whether this was a private or government-sponsored accommodation.31

Some of the artefacts in the Hyde Park Barracks assemblage can be linked to the Hicks family. A handwritten letter (HPB UF3312) that seems to have been written to William Hicks describes a camp at Stony Creek (probably Stony Creek, Victoria) and concludes by wishing ‘you [i.e. William Hicks,] Mrs Hicks and family all a M[erry] Christmas’. Unfortunately, the writer’s name has been torn away, but the letter notes that an account of the Stony Creek settlement ‘should go in the paper’ suggesting that this may have been a work-related letter from a newspaper correspondent. William was a journalist by trade (Joy Hughes, pers. comm.).

Another, much smaller scrap was probably written by Lucy herself (Figure 42). While the bottom half of the signature has torn away, it resembles other documented examples of Lucy’s handwriting (Bridget Berry, pers. comm.). The sentences cannot be fully strung together, but some phrases were identifiable:

‘...your...uld [have?]…
...I must ask yo[ur]...
...to excuse them...
...I never...which...
...I have...paper...’

‘...[ock?] is still up at...
...Strony’s [sic], the Baby...
...[su]ch a dear little...
...and how dear...
...I must conclude...
...love [L...H..ks]’

Figure 42  Front and back pages of a letter that appears to have been written by an L Hicks (HPB UF17784).

Note Mrs, Not Wm H was listed at 143 Phillip St in 1885.
Figure 43  Remains of letter probably written to Mr. Hicks (HPB UF312), (P. Crook 2003)
Figure 44  Sketches of the Hiring Room at the Immigration Depot at the Hyde Park Barracks showing Matron Lucy Hicks in the foreground leaning over the counter 'conversing with an employer'. *(Town & Country Journal, 19 July 1879, p. 120, reproduced in HHT 1994: 23).*
Lucy’s eldest daughter, Mary Lucy died on 20 September 1885, at the age of 34, at the Phillip Street property. A memorial to her still hangs in St James’s Church across the road from the Barracks, it reads:

Mary Lucy Adelaide Applewhaite who died 20th September 1885 aged 34 years. Erected by the inmates of Hyde Park Asylum, Sydney in loving remembrance of their late sub-matron and sympathizing friend. (http://www.stjameschurchsydney.org.au/OurHistory/Memorials/memorials_a-b.asp)

This suggests a different kind of relationship than one might expect from what might be considered superficially a paternalistic system.

When the Asylum moved to Newington, the family moved with them.32

Lucy Hicks

It is difficult to establish just what kind of matron Lucy Hicks was because there are several conflicting reports of her manner and managerial capabilities. Surviving records such as the Day Books for the most part are dry and official, noting requests for ash pits to be cleared, coal to be ordered and other tasks necessary for the management of the institution. Few remarks offer any glimpse of the personality beyond that of the ‘Matron’. Those that do, suggest a staunch and judgemental attitude toward the women in her care. An entry in 1862 Day Book regarding a sick child, John McMatton, reads:

Mrs McMatton’s child worse in consequence of the Mother’s neglect. She is a most disobedient woman refusing to do everything she is told. Dr Allengbe has just been with it. Inform her that she will be sent away from the Depot if her conduct is again unfavourably noticed. (SRNSW 9/6181a HPB daily reports 1862)

The child died, aged 3 yrs and 3 months on 2 Aug 1862 and was buried at 3 pm the same day.

The 1873 Inquiry presents Mrs Hicks as a competent, prudent and fair Matron, deftly managing the needs of the swelling numbers of inmates to a satisfactorily level and most importantly, on budget. Having been in the job for over a decade, she had the confidence to politely critique the decisions of the Board, in a manner appropriate to a woman in her position. She moralised about old women whose daughters were prostitutes and boasted about her efforts to prevent drunkards from drinking.

By 1886, a very different portrait of the Matron had emerged:

There appears to be grounds for thinking that 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; also, had she been supported by a more efficient sub-matron, many defects in matters of detail would have been forced on her notice, and might well have been quickly rectified. (Commission of Inquiry 1887: 445)

Hicks was accused of withholding basic provisions—rice, sago, arrowroot and gruel (p. 55)—from sick inmates, of fleecing dead inmates of their pocket change and savings (p. 501, 16 Sept. 1886) and strangely, of impersonating one of the Ladies’ Board members, Lady Martin (Sarah Bath, 16

32 Lucy and William were listed in Parramatta District (i.e. Newington) in 1892 when Lucy Jnr died.
Sept. 1886, p. 54) to test the loyalty of the inmates or find out what their accusations would be. She was also accused, not by the inmates but by the visiting 'evangelical' ladies, of being drunk.

To counter such reports by these 'stooges' or 'half-wits' as Matron Hicks called many of them, there were several accounts of the devoted testimony of some long-standing inmates, e.g. Elizabeth Cross, inmate of 10 years (p. 505) and her superior of 24 years, Frederick King (p. 519).

The glowing approval of Mrs Hicks in 1873 seems genuine enough—just as legitimate as the charges brought against her thirteen years later. This was just one year after the tragic loss of Mrs Hicks’s daughter, Mary Lucy Applewhaite, who had been Submatron at the Asylum for at least seven years. It is possible, that while Matron Hicks was on the stand answering the questions, that it was in fact her daughter or the efforts of her whole family that had maintained the excellent state of Asylum up until that time. Concurrently, the number of inmates was increasing, and the condition of the buildings declining. It is very difficult to determine whether or not Mrs Hicks was actually abusing alcohol, but it is clear that her formerly dependable conduct gave way to an ‘excitable’ demeanour that made her unworthy in the eyes of her peers. It is interesting to observe the unravelling of her career along with the institution of the asylum. Nonetheless, it is interesting also that Mrs Hicks was only caught out once the Asylum had relocated to Newington.

Marked: Individuals and Institutions

While Matron Hicks and her family had the most enduring impact on the Asylum and Immigration Depot, thousands of individual women passed through the institutions’ doors. As previously discussed (see ‘The Inmates: the ‘Poor friendless old creatures’, p. 50) we know the names of a few hundred of these women from historical records, and the archaeological record offers the names of a handful more.

Artefacts marked with individuals’ names are very rare finds in archaeological contexts (see Iacono 1999: 85 and Karskens 1999: 177–178 for artefacts recovered from the Cumberland and Gloucester Streets site.) There were at least seven examples recovered from the underfloor assemblage at the Hyde Park Barracks (see Table 7).

Those which appear on the medicinal vessels have already been discussed, but other more unique examples were found. These include: a name stamp marked ‘T Brown’ and a lace-edge handkerchief with ‘M Probert’ hand-written in ink on one corner. Two owner’s names were also hand-written on the fly-leaves of a two pocket books (HPB UF8225 and HPB UF8226). One definitely pre-dates the establishment of the Asylum and both may represent second-hand donations or possessions brought into the institution rather than represent the names of asylum or immigrant women, or form part of the institution’s library of religious tracts.

Another artefact marked with an individual’s name is a luggage tag with the inscription ‘Francis H[...re]ll’ may post-date the Asylum phase.

Of all these women, only two could be identified and both of these were the inmates of the Asylum recorded on the medicinal bottles. Francis Cunningham is on the list of inmates transferred from the Benevolent Asylum in 1862, but no more is known of her life.
Alice Fry was not recorded on any of the inmate lists, but her death certificate lists her address as Hyde Park Asylum. She died on 5 February 1868 of a uterine tumour, aged 56 years. Nothing is known of her life prior to entering the Asylum.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ID</th>
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<th>Artefact</th>
<th>Context</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HPB UG1058</td>
<td>T Brown</td>
<td>name stamp marked ‘T Brown’</td>
<td>L3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HPB UF11500</td>
<td>M Probert</td>
<td>Lace edged Handkerchief with 'M Probert' hand-written in ink on one corner</td>
<td>L3-3: JG10 JS1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HPB UF6624</td>
<td>T or F Cunningham</td>
<td>Pharmaceutical bottle marked: ‘HYDE PARK ASYLUM/Name T. [or F.] Cunningham/Age [no age written]/Date of Admission 21 May/[Th?]e Lotion/[T? Cu]nningham’</td>
<td>L3-1: JG16 JS10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HPB UF26</td>
<td>Alice Fry</td>
<td>Gin bottle re-used for medicinal purposes: ‘HYDE PARK ASYLUM/Name…Alice Fry/Age…[nil]/Date of Admission…[nil]/…[unid]’</td>
<td>L2-6: JG36 JS13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HPB UF5479</td>
<td>Alice Peacock</td>
<td>Rectangular cotton fragment (52 x 38 mm) with ‘Alice Peacock’ handwritten in cursive style. Possibly part of a name tag, or a marker on a larger piece of fabric.</td>
<td>L2-2: JG51 JS3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HPB UF8226</td>
<td>Ann Sarran</td>
<td>Small leather bound, hard cover religious book, The Believers Pocket Companion or one thing needful to make Poor Sinners rich, and Miserable Sinners Happy with brown cursive script on inside of front cover ‘Ann Sarran [indeterminate]’.</td>
<td>L2-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HPB UF8225</td>
<td>William ? and Betty Scott?</td>
<td>Hardcover leather bound pocket companion by the Society of Promoting Christian Knowledge, with lead pencil and brown ink script on the lining of the back cover; Name: William [surname indet] &amp; '[Betty Scott??]'; and dates: 1830, 1836 (twice) &amp; 1837.</td>
<td>L2-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HPB UF4372</td>
<td>Francis H …[re]ll</td>
<td>Cardboard tag with handwritten script: 'Francis H …[re]ll' and a series of numbers, including what appears to be a date: ‘24/5/[16]?’.</td>
<td>L3-5: JG3 JS2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7 Artefacts marked with the names of individual inmates, immigrants and other unknown persons.

**Anonymous Ephemera**

In addition to the evidence for the daily activities of the institution as a whole, a small number of artefacts from the HPB assemblage speak of the private lives or personal moments of the inmates, staff and office workers within its walls. This class of artefacts goes beyond the typical categorisation of ‘personal’ artefacts in a regular archaeological assemblage—the perfume bottles and hair care—although these were present; and even some remarkable keepsakes in the Victorian sentimental tradition such as the shellcraft album marked ‘FORGET ME NOT’ (HPB UF3339, see Figure 45).
The survival of paper and fabric from the assemblage has offered a number of extraordinary finds, objects preserved as they were in use and discarded or lost ‘in motion’: a white square handkerchief with an 1869 six pence tied in one corner (HPB UF160), a flask with a hemmed silk strap (HPB UF4321) and a cherry liqueur bottle with a hessian stopper in lieu of a cork (HPB UF6626).

It is unknown what precise function the coin tied in the hanky served. While it is possible it was used to weigh down a cover for a jar or bowl, the presence of only one weight suggests the purpose was probably more to secure the coin by means of a makeshift purse or tied, chatelaine-style, to a skirt or apron.

Similarly, it is unknown who may have required a strap to carry the flask, but it too was probably tied to a skirt or worn around the wrist.

The Hessian-stoppered liqueur bottle presents another mystery. While initially made as a container for Danish liqueur and cordial maker, P. F. Heering, the bottle may well have been reused for medicinal tonics or lotions. However, the presence of a makeshift stopper in lieu of a cork—so easy to obtain from the Dispensary—and its survival intact under the floor boards alongside the window (in the southern eastern wing of the building) where repaired boards may have been easy to lift, does imply deliberate concealment of contraband liquor.

Another ephemeral fragment in the collection appears to be a list of personal possessions (HPB UF6716). Interestingly, the handwritten document includes some apparently phonetic spelling: ‘Umbraler’, probably meaning ‘Umbrella’—particularly if pronounced in a broad Irish or Scottish brogue.
CHILDREN AT THE HYDE PARK BARRACKS

While the underfloor assemblage contains some rare and very impressive artefacts that can be directly associated with children, overall less than 0.1% of the 61,000 fragments recovered have been identified as child-related. Only 92 gamepieces, toys and other recreational items were recovered from the underfloor cavities and of these only 26 can be directly linked with children: three dolls, 12 marbles, and 11 toys. Given the impressive survival rate of artefacts in the underfloor cavities, the absence of large numbers of children’s artefacts can only be interpreted as an indication of the relative absence of children from the Hyde Park Barracks.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recreation Item</th>
<th>Qty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cards</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doll</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entertainment</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fishing</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gamepiece</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hoop</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marble</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recreation Item</th>
<th>Qty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table Tennis Ball</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ticket</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toy</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unidentified</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total 92**

While some Immigrant women migrated with small children, their stay at the Hyde Park Barracks was often fleeting. The more likely cause for creating the child-related assemblage is Matron Hicks’s family. Interestingly, the few recreation items in the collection are concentrated in the area thought to be the family’s apartments.
Figure 47
Wooden picture blocks with paper coverings, possibly part of a puzzle or alphabet set (HPB UF88). (P. Crook 2003)

Figure 48
Distribution of recreational items across Levels 2 and 3.
SMOKING

Smoking was permitted in the Asylum but was on occasion subject to controls. One of the major concerns about ‘lighting up’ was not due to a concern for health or impropriety, but because of safety. The lighting of pipes and the careless handling of lit pipes put the Asylum at risk of fire. At the Magdalen Society Asylum in Philadelphia (for ‘fallen’ women), smoking was banned in 1821 following a fire that nearly burnt the building to the ground (De Cunzo 1995: 92–93). At the Hyde Park Barracks, they merely attempted to control the access to open flames and installed gas lighting with sealed, lockable brackets to prevent the women from ‘lighting up’ at night.

Tobacco was distributed to the inmates by Mrs Hicks or could be bought from Mrs Kennedy, but not all women smoked (Commission of Inquiry 1887: 488). Thus the product became a commodity of barter and trade among the women. A blind woman, Mary Wright, would give other inmates a box of matches or a bit of tobacco in exchange for them leading her about or making her tea (Commission of Inquiry 1887: 488).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>L1</th>
<th>L2</th>
<th>L3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cigar</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cigarette</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cigarette packaging</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pipe</td>
<td>1,559</td>
<td>304</td>
<td>1,011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tobacco</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>1,559</td>
<td>381</td>
<td>1,050</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9 Smoking-related artefacts from all levels of the main building.

Figure 49 Wad of tobacco recovered from Level 3 (HPB UF4405). (P. Crook 2003)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>L1</th>
<th>L2</th>
<th>L3</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>160</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>114</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>301</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10 Clay pipe manufacturers from all levels of the main building (where known).
In addition to three recorded wads of tobacco (many more are likely to survive in ‘mixed’ paper and textile bags), a modest collection of clay pipes and thousands of matches survives in the underfloor collection (see Table 9). Several pipes (e.g. HPB UF3115) still have tobacco inside the bowl.

The majority of pipes actually came from the ground level of the Main Building and most of these date to the convict period and were produced by local (often ex-convict) makers. The second largest group of pipes were Scottish imports, dating largely from the 1850s to the 20th-century (although some pipe makers are earlier than this)—a pattern common on most archaeological sites across Sydney. These date to the women’s phase.

The five most commonly stamped pipes of this period bore the marks of pipemakers Duncan McDougall and Thomas Davidson of Glasgow, Charles Crop of London and tobacconist Thomas Saywell and warehousemen Myers & Solomon of Sydney. With the exception of Myers & Solomon, these and many other common pipes were also present in the archaeological record of the Sydney Night Refuge in Kent Street (Carney c. 1991). The Night Refuge, run by the Sydney City Mission, relied entirely on subscription (Carney & Kelly 1991: 25) and the donations of wealthy Sydney merchants. It is very likely that some of the pipes in that assemblage were donated in this way, and conceivable that similar donations were made to the female inmates of the Government Asylum, if not via Matron Hicks, then by the regular visitors (some of whom were City Missionaries).

Interestingly, there were five times more pipes on Level 3 than Level 2 (Table 10 and Figure 52), supporting the notion that women of the Asylum rather than the young Immigrant women were the smokers at the Barracks. This presents an interesting opportunity to examine the association of smoking equipment and lighting devices, namely matches and match boxes which survived in the thousands in the collection.

It suggests that smoking was permitted throughout the wards on both levels, and that the stairwell was a central location for ‘lighting up’.

On the Level 3 landing, there is a curious pattern in which pipes, predominantly pipe-stems, are clustered on the north-eastern side of the corridor and matches and match boxes are clustered on the south-western corner of the landing (see Figure 54). While the precise meaning of this pattern is not yet clear, it does point to a particular and distinct suite of behaviours with regard to the habit of smoking in the Asylum.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>L1</th>
<th>L2</th>
<th>L3</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Matches</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2173</td>
<td>2565</td>
<td>4752</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Match boxes</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>358</td>
<td></td>
<td>388</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Match box and match sets</td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2203</td>
<td>2940</td>
<td>5157</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 11  Matches and matchboxes recovered from all Levels of the Main Building.
Figure 50
Hardened string matches from Level 3 (HPB UF4404).
(P. Crook 2003)

Figure 51
Matchboxes from Levels 2 and 3 (HPB UF17634–6). (P. Crook 2003)
Figure 52
Tobacco pipe fragments across Levels 2 and 3.

Figure 53
Distribution of matches and match box fragments across Levels 2 and 3.
Figure 54
Detail of the distribution of clay pipe fragments, matches and matchboxes on the Stair Landing on Level 3.
Figure 55
Tobacco pipe fragments (red) overlaid with matches and match box fragments (blue) across Levels 2 and 3.
Part D

DISCUSSION
The Archaeology of 19th-Century Institutions

Historical archaeologists have long been interested in the archaeology of institutions—be they missions and government outposts regulating the lives of indigenous peoples (see for example foundational work by Deetz [1963] in the USA and Birmingham [1992] in Australia), or more mainstream entities such as hospitals, orphanages, asylums, workhouses, almshouses, schools, charitable institutions or places of correction such as gaols and juvenile homes (see reference list for many examples). In recent years the nature of that interest has begun to change away from a focus on the institution per se to a consideration of the impact of institutions on the lives of their inmates. Thus what was already a complex and highly varied field of investigation (due if nothing else to the great range of institutions, the organisations responsible for their creation and management, and of course the diverse purposes of such institutions) has become yet more complex. In some contexts institutions are the embodiments of ideologies, in others they are more simply places where charity might be given or accepted, or where the sick can be made well or their passing eased. Thus our first point is very simple—the archaeology of institutions is no single pursuit, and the nature of our inquiries can intersect with a wide diversity of issues that in themselves might well require a diversity of approaches.

Surveys, such as the recent comprehensive discussion offered by Lu Ann De Cunzo (2006), might be read as tending to argue the opposite. In De Cunzo’s view the institutions archaeologists need to focus on are those of reform, confinement and social change: ‘Places of reform, surveillance, confinement, protection, control, ritual, punishment, resistance, inscription, segregation, labor, purification and discipline’ (2006: 167). For her the problematic of institutional archaeology is straightforward and linked with the archaeology of social institutions in the modernizing world of the 18th century and afterwards:

almshouses, poorhouses, prisons, asylums, hospitals, and schools. Material culture is used to accomplish and thwart institutional goals; as students of material culture archaeologists offer vital insights into the cultures and histories of institutions. (2006: 167)

Flowing from this is a focus on the notion of such places as ‘total’ institutions (see Goffman 1968) and the connection of discourse about the design and operation of such places to more abstract notions of social control, discipline and behavioural modification (see for example Foucault 1965, 1973, 1977). But this is only a partial picture of where, and how, the archaeology of institutions might intersect with other discourses and bodies of knowledge, such as archaeologies of the body, of sexuality and of course, ‘queer’ archaeology (see for example Casella 1999, 2000a, 2000b, 2001a, 2001b, 2001c, 2001d, 2002; De Cunzo 1995, 2001). Such archaeologies are built around the notion that ‘total’ institutions act in totalising ways, that all such institutions serve such purposes, and that the primary goal of an archaeology of institutions is to map out the ways in which buildings and other items of material culture, when integrated with other documentary data, contribute to the ideological objectives of institutions.

We have no particular issue with this as one reading of the goals of an archaeology of institutions. However, it seems to us to contain logical flaws and overstatements that open the way for a less
mechanistic (or perhaps more nuanced) approach. While we fully accept that managing the poor, the deviant, the sick, or the criminal spawned technologies and processes of management that allowed for the treatment of individuals to occur at an industrial scale during the 19th century, we do not see a logical distinction between institutions such as gaols and others such as factories or the military. In our reading one of the critical elements of modernity was the institutionalisation of many aspects of life ‘outside’ such totalising places. Flowing from this is the suspicion that institutions were generally far less successful in achieving their goals of punishment, modification, purification etc than they (or their historians) have claimed. Again and again we are presented with information that is read as evidence of ‘resistance’ as distinct from evidence of corruption, ineptitude, or more simply a yawning gulf between the rhetoric of institutions and what actually transpired. Finally, in the bulk of cases archaeological analysis is focused more on buildings as items of material culture (and on the analysis of written documents outlining the purposes of such places) than on the material culture that is found on the sites. While there is absolutely no problem in drawing the connections between the design of buildings and the ‘totalising’ goals of the managers of such institutions, a limited recourse to other items of material culture (or in other cases simply a very limited array of material culture to work with) can lead to over interpretation of available evidence.

At the Hyde Park Barracks many of these tenets of the archaeology of institutions are difficult to apply. On the one hand we have a built space that changes its purpose (and its internal organisation) over time. This is not a building designed in the modern way to discipline or punish, merely to accommodate people who had been punished by transportation, emigrants who were housed temporarily, and sick and destitute women who were in charitable care. After its closure as a convict barracks, the building was no longer associated with punishment or indeed the modification of behaviour. While it is true that the inmates were offered pastoral as well as physical care, and that there were ‘rules’, we have noted many instances where authority was exercised in less rigid ways. On the other hand the Hyde Park Barracks has a positive superabundance of material culture that provides a firm basis on which we can seek to gain a clearer picture of life in this particular institution over some 40 years of its history. The singularity of the Barracks thus itself becomes a significant point of inquiry. Was it really so different from charitable institutions (both public and private) that came before and after it?

almshouses and poorhouses dating to the late 18th, or very early 19th centuries, and many have tended to focus on the labour of the workhouse and its perceived reforming qualities (Lucas 1999; McCartney 1987; Peña 2001). The Hyde Park Barracks is a special case because it served both destitute and aged women and arriving immigrants, and was never intended to be a vehicle of reform. It was a place of refuge, concerned more with the ailing health of many of its inmates than with reforming their characters or exacting punishment for crimes (either of omission or commission).

The only directly comparable Australian institution is the Adelaide Destitute Asylum (Piddock 1996, 2001), but the archaeological remains of these two institutions differ greatly. The artefacts of the Adelaide Asylum were heavily culled and those that remain are largely unprovenanced, whereas at the Barracks the artefacts can be traced to within a foot of the point of their original recovery. Consequently, Piddock’s study concentrated on spatial analysis of the buildings of the Adelaide Asylum, and while it is of considerable interest in and of itself, it does not provide a comparable case study. Of perhaps greater relevance is the study undertaken by Joanna Dawson (2000) of a selection of artefacts from a rubbish dump attributed to the Edinburgh City Poorhouse (1870–1944) in Craiglockart on the outskirts of Edinburgh, Scotland. But there must be more places across the western world where the archaeology of charitable institutions can be pursued at a depth comparable to what we believe the Hyde Park Barracks will support.

**LIFE AT THE HYDE PARK BARRACKS ASYLUM: A HISTORICAL-ARCHAEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE**

The Hyde Park Barracks does not readily conform to our conventional understanding of a 19th-century institution. It was divided between two different arms of the colonial government—one ushering in the workforce and life blood of a growing society; the other caring for the 'poor friendless old creatures', the residue of past cultural structures now in decay. Its Matron of 26 years, Lucy Hicks, had a free hand to shape the daily routine of Asylum life and seemed to do so unaffected by the broader intellectual debates about workhouse control. In the shift and swagger of late 19th-century colonial politics, it plummeted from a well-run facility in the hands of a competent but fair mistress, to an establishment riddled with the neglect and physical abuse of inmates, the abuse of property and privilege by the Matron and her family, and general disorder.

The archaeological assemblage from the Barracks offers a different perspective—a glimpse of daily life, not only of the institutional routine, but fleeting and probably private moments in the lives of the inmates, and the Matron’s family, who shared the space. Trapped beneath the floorboards for over a 100 years, the minutiae of beads, buttons, pins, newsprint, fabric and bottle glass offer a different means to interrogate life within the Asylum walls. Admittedly, the collection is small relative to the vast numbers of women (and their possessions) that passed through the corridors. But while small, it is significant. The collection has shed light on everyday practices such as the lighting of pipes, the dispensing of medicines or mending of garments that were rarely touched upon in the ‘official’ account of daily life recorded by the Commissions of Inquiry. While our research to date has not so much challenged these official accounts, it has certainly established that we have the clear potential to add much more texture to our understanding of institutional life at the Hyde Park Barracks.
As a result the archaeological record of the Barracks provides an opportunity to create a less mechanistic view of almshouses as being institutions that were run on the same rigid lines and that were inevitably oppressive of their inmates. In this way a detailed analysis of the archaeological record of the Barracks acts in the same way as the archaeology of 'slums' has promoted an understanding that the residential housing of working class people was not inevitably the 'slum'.

‘Making do’: Institutional Consumption and Private Adaptation

The government outlay on its destitute asylums rose from £8 995 in 1862 when it took over many of the responsibilities of the Benevolent Society, to £26 885 in 1885, just prior to the second major overhaul of the administration of these institutions. The rate per inmate across the four asylums (Hyde Park, Macquarie Street Parramatta, George Street Parramatta and Liverpool) fluctuated between, roughly £10 and £15 per annum, averaging £13 14s. 8¾d. over the period. Until the mid-1880s, the Hyde Park Asylum was usually the most cost effective of the four, having the lowest cost per inmate—being £10 16s. 11½d. in 1873, £13 6s. 10d. in 1876 and £15 6s. 6d. in 1885 (see V&P NSW Assembly 1873, p. 109; 1876–77 vol. 9, p. 929; and 1885–86 vol. 2, p. 721 respectively)—a source of pride for Matron Hicks:

When Sir Charles Cowper brought them [the old women] here he said that he wished the place to be as self supporting as possible, and that has been my great aim. (Q2353, Public Charities Commission 1874: 76)

Most of the food consumed at the Barracks was supplied on contract under the direction of the Board, in consultation with the Matron. Bread, meat, vegetables, grains, dairy produce and fuel were supplied to the Asylum on a daily or weekly basis. Fabric for Asylum garb was ordered by the bolt, from local wholesalers, under approval of the Board but in consultation with the Matron (Public Charities Commission 1874: 76). Kitchen, laundry and mess equipment were probably also ordered from local suppliers on the government books, and the purchase of substantial appliances such as stoves and boilers was arranged directly by the Colonial Secretary’s office. Medical supplies and consumables were arranged by the Visiting Surgeon and Medical Attendant. Gifts, in the form of tea and sugar, flowers and reading matter were also brought on site by visitors with kind hearts and benevolent spirits.

It is difficult to imagine in this climate of wholesale, mess-hall consumption, that individuals experienced any degree of control over their material world. It is true that the female inmates were disrobed and bathed on admission to the Asylum and supplied with Asylum clothing, but they retained their own garments for visits away from the place. It is also likely that they were able to retain whatever personal possessions had survived the impoverished circumstances that led them to seek government assistance. Those who were able-bodied could earn small wages to purchase additional tea, sugar and tobacco from other inmates, and these funds could also be spent wherever they chose on their days of leave in the bustling markets of Sydney.

The Immigrant women, too, had greater control over their goods and chattels, but within the confines of the Depot those on short stays probably had limited access to their trunks, and as discussed, only the Matron could unlock the fancy work they began onboard the ship.
Despite these limitations, the marks of several individuals have been made on artefacts trapped under the floorboards. These include, not only the items bearing the tags of ownership—the handkerchief and name stamp—but also those preserved in their state of consumption—the hessian stopper in the liqueur bottle, the silk strap around the bottle, the sixpence tied in the hanky—each bearing the mark of a crafty, nameless individual making use of the limited resources on hand to perform tasks (or to engage in behaviours) not catered for in the Asylum’s operational budgets.

This ‘make-do’ strategy was not limited to the private customs of the inmates. The medical attendant or ward nurses made do with general purpose bottles and wooden discs when prescription labels were hard to come by.

While the practice of ‘making do’ is a phenomenon invariably associated with the poorer classes, or periods of extreme economic hardship (such as the Great Depression) it is also frequently noticed among pioneer settlers in remote regions, where distance from the commercial supply houses of the cities makes supplies costly or uncertain. Rustic ‘bush furniture’, such as meat safes and pantries modelled from tin drums are iconic artefacts in this class (e.g. Measham 1994: 71), and the use of common newsprint cut into scalloped or sawtooth patterns to serve as mantelpiece lambrequins is also well documented (e.g. Lane & Serle 1990: 248 & 325). (See also Praetzellis & Praetzellis 2004.)

It is surprising, then, to discover an assemblage of makeshift material culture in the centre of a commercial hub such as the city of Sydney in the 19th century. It demonstrates how those on the economic and social margins of society can be disengaged from a marketplace in their midst.

Assemblages from institutional sites such as the Barracks also afford us an opportunity to look at consumption on an organised scale. While these artefacts statistically represent a small slice of the assemblage, they provide a unique and extraordinary insight into the management and utilitarian exploitation of material culture in the 19th century.

Figure 56
Unidentified kitchen, thought to be in a selector’s house, c. 1900 (Lane & Serle 1990: 325), showing a makeshift lambrequin along the mantle cut in a sawtooth fashion from a newspaper.
(Powerhouse Museum Tyrrell Collection reproduced courtesy of the Powerhouse Museum, Sydney)
‘Doing good’: Care and comforts at the Hyde Park Barracks

While the stories of institutions in the 19th century frequently focus on the inadequacies, limitations and failures of their worst examples, the archaeological record of the Hyde Park Barracks reveals evidence of medical and pastoral care, religious comforts and personal items. The historical records suggest that until the move to Newington in 1886, the old women were ‘very happy and comfortable’ with their accommodation at the Hyde Park Asylum (Public Charities Commission 1874: 83, see also Hill & Hill 1875: 337). In contrast to their fellow inmates at other government asylums, they were well fed. The able-bodied were rewarded for their labours with small gratuities that allowed them to buy additional tea, sugar and tobacco. The aged and infirm were prescribed medicines and other medical comforts that they could not provide for themselves outside the Asylum walls.

Visiting clergymen and benevolent ladies societies who brought them tea, sugar, flowers and reading material—including the vast archive of religious tracts. In any other context, the presence of so much religious matter might imply a paternalistic attempt at influencing or controlling the morals of the inmates. But the Barracks was no prison or house of reform. Here it seems the presence of Christian paraphernalia might be best interpreted as evidence for spiritual comfort extended to disadvantaged women in their hours of need.
CONCLUDING REMARKS

The historical archaeology of the Hyde Park Barracks is unique on a number of levels. The preservation of such a large assemblage of paper, fabric and other ephemera in the dry cavity spaces is unparalleled in Australian historical archaeology. The unique history of the building provides a rare opportunity to directly link the artefact assemblages with specific different phases of occupational history, specifically the Immigration Depot and Government Asylum for Infirm and Destitute Women. These institutions in themselves were unique in their time, and their management under the one Matron, Lucy Hicks, for 26 years make them an exceptional example in the history of 19th-century institutions.

This remarkable case study gives cause to reflect on the New South Wales government’s attempts to find a bed for every sick and indigent person in one of their four benevolent asylums across NSW, and their success as a bureaucracy in a political landscape of limited surveillance of publicly funded institutions.

Within this meta-machinery of the institution, lie the public and private histories of the Hyde Park Asylum itself, its inmates and governors. It is the story of private and public lives, and a remarkable, if fallible woman, Lucy Hicks, whose family history is tightly interwoven with the history of the asylum.

This Archaeology of Institutional Refuge merely touches upon the many facets of the world inside and outside the institution. Aside from the continued research on the vast assemblage and the eagerly anticipated results of forthcoming historical research by Joy Hughes, we must learn more about the archaeology and specific histories of comparable asylums to fully appreciate how unique the Hyde Park Barracks is.

There is scope for contextualising this institution within the domestic settings of the people who passed through, by tracking the lives of the Asylum women before their admission—deserted by their husbands or struck down by illness. We can do the same for the immigrant women who passed the Depot’s doors. The archaeological studies of medical care, religious comfort, bureaucracy and making-do at the Hyde Park Barracks provide incentives to foster this integration of archaeological and historical information.

Above all the historical archaeology of the Hyde Park Barracks demonstrates that an Archaeology of Institutions can do more than support or challenge the Dickensian view of Asylum life, or compare and contrast patterns in architectural typology. It can detect the provision of care and comfort within the broad processes of control and governance, it can explore the private and public facets of a diverse range of institutions, and can spark individual histories about the people who lived and worked inside their walls.
Appendix A

HISTORY OF THE HYDE PARK BARRACKS ARTEFACT ASSEMBLAGE AND CATALOGUES

The archaeological collection at the Hyde Park Barracks (hereafter referred to as the ‘collection’) is the result of archaeological excavation of the main building and grounds in 1980–1981. The record of this collection, the catalogue, has been effectively in the making from its excavation in 1981 until 1998 when the curators of the Hyde Park Barracks developed a database of the entire collection. Until 1998, the collection was divided into the ‘underfloor’ and ‘underground’ collections, and each component had been organised, analysed, recorded and assessed by several project teams.

The underground collection comprises artefacts retrieved from soil-based contexts in the grounds of the Hyde Park Barracks (which are typically encountered in archaeological excavations), distinct from the material retrieved from the underfloor spaces of the main building. The latter survives in superior condition to the former, and with a greater range of materials, hence the division of the catalogue. The underground material is composed of artefacts retrieved during test-trenching by Wendy Thorp, excavation by Patricia Burritt in the Main Building and elsewhere, and salvage work undertaken by Graham Wilson at the Northern Gatehouse.33 Artefacts retrieved from other monitoring work (e.g. Pinder 1983, Greaves 1993 and 1994, and Tonkin 1997) do not appear in the database. Artefacts from Tonkin’s (1997) monitoring work await cataloguing and entry into the database.

On completion of the excavation in 1980–1981, the artefact assemblage was cleaned, sorted, inventoried and rebagged. The Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences (MAAS), who became managers of the Hyde Park Barracks Museum and its collection at the same time, undertook conservation work on several items (see MAAS artefact files, held at the Hyde Park Barracks Museum). The collection was stored on site for some time, then moved to the MAAS store at Redfern. At the MAAS store, it was affected physically by flood waters and its archaeological integrity diminished. Some objects, including items selected for display, were separated from their context numbers. Parts of the Mint and the Hyde Park Barracks collections were also mixed together (Wilson 1985: 20; Thorp 1994: 6).

In 1985, a major review, re-catalogue and reassessment of the underfloor collection was begun by Andrew Wilson (then of the MAAS) funded by a National Estate Grant. The collection was moved to the University of Sydney for that purpose (Thorp 1994: 6). The project involved the preparation of a ‘research design’ for the analysis, specifying elements of the catalogue and fields required, and tested the use of the proposed database system, Minark, on a bibliographic inventory of reports and references (Wilson 1985, 1989). Artefact recording was undertaken at the Centre for Historical Archaeology, Sydney University, by Dana Mider, Andrew Wilson, Julie Dinsmoor and Tony English34 between 1990 and 1996 (see Mider 1996, Vol 1: 1). No analytical or

33 It is not yet clear whether artefacts retrieved from the Bakehouse and Southern Gatehouse where Graham Wilson also undertook salvage work have been included in the database.

34 Tony English catalogued the bone and shell; Julie Dinsmoor catalogued some metal and glass; Dana Mider catalogued the remainder of the collection and undertook all data entry (between 1991 and 1995). All work was voluntary and unpaid. (Mider 1996: 1 and pers. comm. May 2003)
interpretive work was undertaken in the capacity of this project and no final report was produced.

In 1990, management of the Hyde Park Barracks and its collection was transferred to the Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales (HHT) (Riley 1992: 2). When the Hyde Park Barracks Museum opened in 1991, the majority of the collection was moved to its new home in the Archaeology Store and Study Room on Level 2 of the central dormitory building. In 2001 when the Exploring the Archaeology of the Modern City Project (EAMC) began work on the HPB collection, the artefacts continued to be stored and maintained there, well protected in clearly labelled, durable plastic boxes. The Room was the first such archaeological research facility of its kind in Australia (Riley 1992: 2) and its system for accessing artefacts in the boxes was established by consultant curator Margot Riley. At the time of its opening, the two Minark databases (underground and underfloor) would have been accessible in the study room, and print-outs were available, although the two databases would have only contained preliminary information gathered at the end of the excavation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year/s</th>
<th>Project</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>Excavation and analysis by Carol Powell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>Test-trenching by Wendy Thorp and team in the main building, north range and yard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>Excavation by Patricia Burritt and team of underfloor and underground deposits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981–83</td>
<td>Salvage excavation by Elizabeth Pinder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981–84</td>
<td>Salvage work by Graham Wilson at Bakehouse, Southern Gatehouse, Northern Gatehouse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>Artefact conservation by Glennda Marsh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985–c.1994</td>
<td>Sydney University research design and preparation for catalogue of underfloor artefacts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Museum opened with display of artefacts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Wendy Thorp Artefact Review and Management Recommendations: completed underground catalogue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Finalisation and reporting of the catalogue of underfloor artefacts, by Dana Mider</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Wendy Thorp unstratified artefacts report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Peter Tonkin artefact 'stock-take' of underfloor and underground collections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998–2001</td>
<td>The Hyde Park Barracks database</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Exploring the Archaeology of the Modern City project</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table A Outline of projects affecting the Hyde Park Barracks collection and its catalogue.

In the late 1980s, the Department of Planning commissioned Wendy Thorp and Campbell Conservation Pty Ltd to review the Hyde Park Barracks, Royal Mint and First Government House archaeological collections and provide recommendations for their management (Thorp & Campbell Conservation 1990, 1994). The project, completed in 1994, required the ‘sorting and consolidation’ of the Hyde Park Barracks assemblage and was the first project to provide a
comprehensive catalogue of the material, albeit only of the underground component. Artefacts were re-examined and rebagged. Artefact recording information was written directly on stamped paper bags in which the artefacts are kept.

In 1996, Dana Mider completed the catalogue of the underfloor collection for the HHT (Mider 1996: 6 volumes). Her report, commissioned by the HHT in 1995, was the culmination of the work originally proposed under the National Estate Grant in 1985 and 1989. Mider, assisted by Claire Everett, also undertook an audit of the artefacts and their records, rematching several objects dissociated from their provenance with their original identification number. Although they remained in separate and somewhat incompatible databases, the artefact catalogue for both parts of the Hyde Park Barracks collection was now complete.

In 1997, Peter Tonkin was commissioned by the HHT to ‘stocktake’ the collection held on site and at the HHT’s Ultimo store. Tonkin identified several groups of provenanced artefacts that previously had not been gathered for cataloguing. These were catalogued by a small team of specialists and entered into the database.

In 1998, the Hyde Park Barracks began developing a database for public viewing of the archaeological collection. The two databases of underfloor and underground material were exported from Minark, into Access, and re-organised into a new database structure, that facilitated simple searching mechanisms for broad categories of artefacts. This work was undertaken by subconsultant Brian Robson, in consultation with assistant curators Gary Crocket and Samantha Fabry. In April 2001, the database is largely complete and a few minor adjustments will be made in the near future. (The same database structure has been used for the Mint archaeological collection, and the collection from Susannah Place.)

In 2001 the EAMC team began to utilise the data in this new Hyde Park Barracks database, and exported it to a database designed to meet the project’s analytical requirements.

35 Cataloguers were: Leah McKenzie, Mafalda Rossi, Julie Byrnes, Wendy Thorp, Wayne Johnson, Brett Noble, Graham Wilson and Dominic Steele. Jocelyn Brown, John Macdonald and Wendy Thorp undertook data entry.

36 Kevin Barnes, Nadia Iacono and Dominic Steele undertook the cataloguing. Judith Fethney undertook the data entry.
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