A chaining of the living to the dead

Essentially regimented penal environments, charitable institutions were conceived not out of humanitarian concerns for the welfare of the aged and infirm, but as a means to restrict the movement of a particular sub-category of the undeserving poor, and to control their social interaction. Invalids felt the full brunt of the 'hated stain'. In the mid 1850s pauper invalids were perceived as an undeserving social element, a group to be confined in secluded, isolated, penal establishments. An aspect of the transformation of the aged poor to a deserving social element involved the casting off of their perceived criminality, for they could not be considered deserving until they ceased to be seen as criminals.

Initially, a conservative paternalistic benevolence which sought to demonise and criminalise pauper invalids held sway, but over time inmates ceased to be viewed as nefarious and came to be accepted as patients. This chapter examines the role of seclusion, isolation and criminalisation upon maintaining a social conviction that invalids were the carriers of a moral contagion. In particular, it explores this theme through an examination of the treatment of female invalids, who in many respects were seen as far more dangerous disseminators of immorality than their male counterparts.

This chapter also examines facets of the mechanics of the charitable system as practiced in Tasmania, having regard to benevolent societies and the government's outdoor relief scheme. A full analysis of the role played by private charitable organisations is beyond the scope of this research and thus the discussion is limited to some aspects of their involvement with the government's outdoor relief program and the institutionalisation of invalids,
as well as their character. This latter point is discussed in some length as the individuals who made up the membership of benevolent societies tended to be both influential and conservative. It is argued that their conduct inhibited the introduction of progressive reforms to invalid management.

**Economic burden, social contagion and criminalisation**

Having toiled hard for a number of employers in and about the district of New Norfolk, James Senior found himself destitute at the age of 80. On 18 August 1857, the New Norfolk weekly sitting magistrate, Major Lloyd, signed an application for Senior to be admitted to Hobart Town's colonial hospital. Yet another rural pauper was forwarded to an urban centre intensifying pressure on the limited facilities available to accommodate such individuals. This point was not lost on Lloyd who, like others in similar positions, recognised the likely fiscal implications to the colony. Lloyd also observed that pauperism was a developing issue which aroused emotions of both disdain and fear: disdain that individuals would fail to make provision for their old age and fear that numbers of such individuals would continue to rise placing an even greater burden upon the more prudent of society. He, nevertheless, recognised that pauperism was not always an individual's fault and expressed a view that the relief of paupers, such as Senior, was the responsibility of the government. Lloyd was at odds with most members of his class in suggesting that poverty might result from factors other than failing to adhere to the middle class virtues of thrift, self-help, prudence and fortitude.

For many in the elite and middle classes, invalidism had come to be intimately associated with the problem of deviant and criminal behaviour; a connection which remained strong for many decades. This was because pauperism was seen as being occasioned by indolence, intemperance and other kindred vices. In March 1870, for example, *The Mercury* published the

---

1 A proficient review of private benevolence can be found in Brown, *Poverty is Not a Crime.*
2 AOT: CSD 1/119 (Y120)/4172, Lloyd to Colonial Secretary, 18.8.1857.
impressions of a visitor to Port Arthur which described the whole of the invalids as being 'the mere wrecks of humanity' who in their old age were 'suffering the painful consequences of early vicious habits.' This is reflective of middle class thinking as it related to old age. Thomas Cole has argued, in relation to the North American context, that in a dualistic perspective there was the 'good' old age, ensuing from the culmination of proper middle class living, and a 'bad' old age, the punishment for having led an immoral life and indulged in unhealthy behaviour (such as intemperance). He argues that by the middle third of the nineteenth-century a person's 'physical, material, and spiritual condition in old age had become solely a matter of individual responsibility.' Cole states that:

the Victorian vision of disease and decay in later life was harsher and more punitive than the old view, rooted in original sin. Rather than assume that everyone who had lived long enough would become ill and bent with years as a punishment for Adam's sin, Victorians assumed that everyone could be healthy and self-reliant in later life — unless they had sinned against God's laws of nature and morality. Hence poverty, disease, and fragility appeared to be shameful; they were the visible signs of personal moral failure.

He further maintains that this Victorian belief in a dualism of ageing, and the distinction made by the middle class between the deserving and undeserving poor, were rooted in the principle of individual responsibility. This was a doctrine which saw poverty and illness as the consequences of individual failure. From this, Cole reasons, the idea of social sanction developed in which:

those unwilling to save for old age or to follow the bourgeois regime of temperance and virtue could not expect to be coddled with pensions or health care in their dotage. Fear of disease, dependency, and the almshouse would enforce the ethic of work and self-reliance.

For as Shurlee Swain so succinctly expressed it, for Melbourne's poor:

---

3 The Mercury, 25.3.1870, p. 2 c. 7-p. 3 c. 1.
5 ibid., p. 140.
6 ibid.
7 ibid., p. 203.
Old age brought with it the limitation and finally complete cessation of income and a dependence on such resources as the individual had been able to amass during his working life.  

Michael Sturma has argued, in regard to colonial New South Wales, that there pervaded an assumption that criminality was contagious. He cites that colony’s Chief Justice, James Dowling, as stating ‘[v]ice is so fascinating, that she cannot be looked upon without peril to the beholder.’

Several writers, such as Manning Clark, Lloyd Robson, and A. G. L. Shaw, have maintained that this position was particularly resilient and had a long-term influence upon the social position of both convicts and emancipists, and therefore invalids. Michael Roe, in *Quest for Authority in Eastern Australia* has argued that ‘the stigma of convictism was more potent’ in the Tasmanian context. That convicts, and by association, invalids, made up a ‘criminal class’ is a moot point central to many debates regarding ‘convict society’. As Sturma puts it, such arguments ‘are as difficult to disprove as to prove.’ He also points out that there is now a body of evidence contrary to the earlier interpretations of Clark, Robson and Shaw, and that there is reason to doubt ‘whether convict values differed markedly from those of free immigrants’. It is not significant whether the earlier contention or the revisionists’ perspective is the more accurate, what is important is the opinion of the colonial elite and middle class. They perceived a social grouping they identified as criminal and contagious, and it is this perception which is so vital in determining the early administration of invalids and the utilisation of

---

12 Sturma, *Vice in a Vicious Society*, p. 2.
a system of secluded and isolated built spaces for addressing their management. Validity is not the core issue, rather it is the repercussions of beliefs that are important, as it is they which formed the social milieu which facilitated the acceptance of institutions as appropriate solutions to the perceived invalid problem.

Like convicts, invalids were viewed as social contaminants, as carriers of what Robin Evans has referred to as 'the contagion of immorality', and thus they were seen as potential conveyors of pauperism amongst elements of the working poor.¹⁴ In defining the 'dangerous classes', J. C. Symons proclaimed that they were not only made up of 'criminals, paupers and persons whose conduct is obnoxious to the interests of society but of the proximate body who are within reach of its contagion and continually swell its number.'¹⁵ Henry Reynolds has argued that '[f]ear of moral corruption [through contact with emancipists] influenced the behaviour of prominent free settlers.'¹⁶ John Hargrave also argued that the 'incidence of poverty in Hobart was seen to be closely linked to the convict population', and that observers at the time attributed responsibility for this poverty to the individual who was in each and every case characterised as either a convict or emancipist.'¹⁷ Blame was fairly laid at the feet of the individual pauper as opposed to the particulars which circumscribed that individual's life. It was the individual and not the system which was at fault. The Bishop of Tasmania was reported to have said at a public meeting in 1859 that:

the poverty of which they [paupers] complained was the result of their own vices, of their own misconduct and of their want of desire to work, in short, of their want of social honesty.'¹⁸

¹³ ibid., p. 3.
¹⁴ R. Evans, Translations from Drawing to Building and Other Essays (London, 1997), p. 94.
In the third quarter of the nineteenth-century this was to be expected, as a result of the then widespread philosophy amongst the middle class of individualism and self-help. This was a philosophy which unified various factions of the middle class, such as liberals, conservatives, Fabians, Utilitarians and all proponents of laissez-faire. It was a concept which emphasised the moral virtues of self-exertion and the sanctity of private property.\footnote{See F. Driver, *Power and Pauperism: The Workhouse System, 1834-1884* (Cambridge, 1993), pp. 20-1.} It was a belief which reinforced a perspective that poverty resulted from vice, a vice which was communicable. Invalids were seen as the agents carrying this contagion. They were the spreaders of vice, of immorality, of disorder, of sickness (infirmity), of poverty.

Mary Douglas has argued that beliefs in contagion arise out of a response to an anomaly, and that reaction to ‘anomaly leads to anxiety and from there to suppression or avoidance’.\footnote{M. Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London, 1980), p. 5.} In the case of this study the anomaly was the appearance of numbers of invalids on the streets of Hobart Town and Launceston in the mid 1850s. This created the anxiety which fomented into suppression and avoidance through incarceration. In an argument related to Judaic dietary practice, Douglas has postulated that imperfect members of a class of animals, or a class which in itself confounds the general scheme, become imbued with concepts of contagion.\footnote{ibid., p. 55.} By applying this argument to colonial Tasmanian society it is possible to gain some understanding as to why a perceived aberrant social element, the invalid, was seen as akin to an infectious body. This can be observed in the manner in which the social system, in guarding against the danger of the perceived disorderly elements, tends to permanently marginalise those who deviate from prescribed social norms. It also goes some way towards explaining the increasing focus on classification. Thomas Markus has argued, in relation to measures introduced to contain the spread of ‘moral contagion’ within British prisons, that ‘[i]f vice
could spread like disease, the sanitary precautions could be extended by classifying and segregating prisoners.\textsuperscript{22} Douglas maintains that there is a degree of acceptance of deviancy up to a point but beyond that, at the point at which a person is formally classified as wayward, and in particular where they are institutionalised, tolerance is withdrawn and the behaviour which was formerly judged acceptable is forever deemed abnormal, and the individual permanently marginalised.\textsuperscript{23}

The government addressed the issue of pauper contagion by incarcerating invalids in charitable institutions. These invalid depots were founded as a means to isolate pauper emancipists who were perceived as both social contagion and economic burden. Institutionalisation can therefore be viewed as a form of moral quarantining of those lower class elements of society, perceived by the elite and middle classes as lacking in virtue.\textsuperscript{24} In a paradigm paralleling the emerging germ theory of disease, it was believed that without isolation invalids would spread the contagion of their vices and corrupt the rest of society.\textsuperscript{25} Thus, it is the same period, the late 1850s and early 1860s, that witnessed the quarantining of patients suffering from epidemic diseases in purpose constructed infectious diseases hospitals and the development of

\begin{enumerate}
\item T.A. Markus, \textit{Building and Power: Freedom and Control in the Origins of Modern Building Types} (London, 1993), p. 120.
\item This is a point which Michael Meranze has discussed in relation to the development of an institutional system in the United States during the first decades of the nineteenth-century. He has described the development of prisons as a means to create an environment which could serve as a 'moral quarantine'. (M. Meranze, \textit{Laboratories of Virtue: Punishment, Revolution, and Authority in Philadelphia}, 1760-1835 (Chapel Hill, 1996), p. 179.) He has further stated in relation to poor relief it was structured around a belief in the ability of 'segregative and reformative incarceration to remove inmates from potential corrupting influences (in order to reform them) and prevent inmates from corrupting the wider community. In this way, the dangers of uncontrolled public communication could be averted.' (ibid., p. 157.)
\item It is probable that this awareness was amplified as a result of Britain's experience with infectious diseases experienced as a result of nineteenth-century colonialism. The impact of this exposure is detailed in P. Curtin, \textit{Death by Migration: Europe's Encounter with the Tropical World in the Nineteenth Century} (Cambridge, 1989). In just the same manner that other scientific discoveries, such as new theories regarding evolution, were being adopted and applied to society, likewise new medical understanding was used to justify and further theories related to social contamination.
\end{enumerate}
specialised invalid establishments. Building upon this argument, Stanley Cohen has added yet another dimension to society's enthusiasm for the institution. He reasoned that:

The asylum represented not just isolation and confinement, like quarantining the infected, but a ritual of physical exclusion. Without the possibility of actual banishment to another society, the asylum had to serve the class social function of creating a scapegoat; the animal driven into the wilderness, bearing away the sins of the community.

In the first decades of colonial self-rule, invalids were seen as nothing more than 'dross' left in the wake of the receding tide of the imperial convict system, a regime which had imposed 'a fearful amount of crime, disease and pauperism' upon the colony. They were mere pawns in an ongoing exchange in which an aggrieved colonial government sought to extract maximum financial compensation from its former imperial master. In a most revealing statement those responsible for the care and management of invalids unambiguously exposed their loathing for these people:

A sentiment shared by many of the Tasmanian elite was that an injustice had been done to the colony, in that it had to shoulder an unequal share of the repercussions of the British convict system. This was evident in the opposition to the concentration of the convict system to Van Diemen's Land after 1840, as well as animosity towards the prohibition on the movement of many emancipists wishing to relocate to Victoria by the means of that

---

26 Jeremy Taylor argues that: 'The architecture of purpose-built infectious diseases and isolation hospitals is essentially one of construction activity from the 1860s on. It was only then that there was a general awakening to the benefits of isolation for infectious fever cases, and the need to organize a system of infectious diseases hospitals throughout the country.' (J. Taylor, Hospital and Asylum Architecture in England 1840-1914: Building for Health Care (London, 1991), p. 105.)


28 AOT: CSD 1/155/5061 (vol. 1), Kennerly, Maxwell and Crowther to Colonial Secretary, 28.2.1860.
colony’s Convict Prevention Bill. Stefan Petrow has discussed the grievance Tasmania felt in relation to its convict background with regard to the Port Arthur Penal Establishment. He argues that ‘the imperial episode left a legacy of dependency and Tasmania became known as the least enterprising and progressive of the Australian colonies.’

Joan Brown has reasoned that the dispute between the imperial and colonial governments as to who was financially responsible for the maintenance of pauper emancipists helped to create resentment against invalids. She argues that:

It was this issue, the maintenance of the ex-convict pauper, which did much to poison the atmosphere in which charitable relief was discussed. In the Imperial period the poor were only just beginning to feel the results of this. The full weight of the displeasure of the colonists was to be felt once independence had been attained.

Raymond Evans has written, in relation to colonial Queensland, but of equal applicability to colonial Tasmania, that:

The fallen individual had shown a deficiency of moral responsibility, lacked the correct motivation and was therefore to be condemned.

This emphatic interlocking of indolence and sin was of greatest significance when judgement was collectively passed upon the unfit, for the pauperized, the incapacitated and the infirm did not fit comfortably anywhere within the grand colonial plan. The normally active, committed colonist, eager for success and suspicious of dependency and uselessness, readily tended to stigmatize such deviants as immoral... And where long-term incapacity, whether mental or physical, was rapidly identified as the logical achievement of protracted immorality, social and official reactions tended to harden along punitive, exclusionist lines.

It was also felt that Tasmania’s reputation, particularly in relation to the other Australian colonies, had been adversely affected by the extent of convict transportation. In this affair, however, the colony was not at fault, rather the rising tide of pauperism was regarded as a misfortune which had been

29 ibid. (Emphasis mine.)
imposed upon it. Nevertheless, an inferiority was felt with The Hobart Town Daily Mercury reporting, in 1859, that it was 'high time that the prejudice which has been entertained towards Tasmania should be allowed to die out.'33

In many respects paupers and invalids were scapegoats for the economic woes then prevailing in the colony. Reynolds, for example, has argued that the perception of emancipists, for at least a generation following the ending of transportation, was that they were predominantly responsible for the persistence of crime, disease and poverty.34 While Shayne Breen has contended that social relations in colonial Tasmania were marked by an edge of anxiety, that apprehensions related to emancipist 'insurrection, insubordination and disorder became entrenched in the minds of many colonists' worried about their safety and security, and the moral standing of society.35 He states that after 1850 'emancipists were often portrayed as the bogeyman.'36

The social perception of invalids as a moral contagion and economic burden was maintained by official measures which sought to criminalise these people. For example, in 1860, the HBS wrote to the Colonial Secretary seeking assistance, in the form of a building, which it could use as an asylum to relieve destitute paupers.37 They sought to implement a system similar to that in place in Sydney where the indigent received, through that city's benevolent society, lodgings for the night and a light breakfast. It was the practice in Sydney that the police, when encountering such destitute persons, took them to the benevolent asylum and not the watch-house, as was the case in Tasmania. There they were treated with a degree of sympathy and charity.

---

33 Hobart Town Daily Mercury, 7.2.1859, p. 2 c. 5.
36 ibid.
37 TLCP, 5, 1860, Paper 47, Executive Committee HBS to Colonial Secretary, p. 3. This letter was published in The Hobart Town Daily Mercury, 27.10.1860, p. 3 c. 7 and the Hobart Town Advertiser, 29.10.1860, p. 3 c. 2-3.
In Tasmania they were dealt with under the auspices of the justice system as if they were criminals.\textsuperscript{38}

Thus, in 1859, during works associated with converting his quarters at the Cornwall Hospital into invalid wards, John Miller, the Superintendent, had iron bars installed in two ground floor windows in order ‘to prevent anyone getting out at night’.\textsuperscript{39} Rather than being installed for safety reasons, such as preventing senile and demented inmates from wandering at night and potentially harming themselves, the measure almost certainly had more to do with preventing intoxication amongst the more able-bodied of the invalids who, after absconding, were likely to spend the night indulging in the demon drink. The bars added penal overtones to the Cornwall Hospital and are indicative of the disposition of both the political and medical elite in regards to best invalid management practice. A proposal to frost the windows indicates a desire to seclude and isolate invalids and medical patients from the external world. The inmates were to be placed outside the realm of the community through the erection of a physical barrier, excluding those within from those without. But no amount of paint and frosting could erase the institution and the affect it had on the community’s psyche, especially in the role of exemplar control agency. For the poor it was a powerful reminder of what could befall them should they encounter misfortune, behave intemperately or fail to provide adequately for their old age.

A desire to isolate invalids and to exclude the public from observing inmate management practices was also evident in the construction of the LGH. Miller had lobbied hard for a fence to be erected around the new hospital.⁴⁰ Ostensibly this was to prevent uninvited public scrutiny.⁴¹ The desired six foot high fence would have created a spatial divide between the world of the wider community and the world of the institution, placing the control of movement and the control of the flow of information between these two realms more efficiently in the hands of authority.⁴² It would also have allowed greater control and surveillance of the internal movements of invalids and staff, and restricted the capacity for external observation. Fencing the new hospital would neutralise this particular precept of the Benthanian panopticon model.⁴³ Miller saw fences as a necessary barrier in order to exclude the public from the hospital.⁴⁴ Such was the pressure brought to bear on the government that the matter was addressed by a select committee inquiry.⁴⁵ In particular, concern was expressed that wards and the rear of the hospital would be open to public view. It was this area, more than any other, which would reveal the institution's dirty linen, figuratively and literally, for it was here that bodies were carried to the dead house, the linen and bedding laundered and dried, the slops emptied and new admissions fumigated.⁴⁶ While it would be possible to seclude the inhabitants of the wards from public gaze by whitening the windows or keeping blinds drawn, these outdoor activities could not so easily be concealed without a fence. The desire to conceal external activities, coupled with an inclination to restrict the movements of invalid patients, doubtlessly fuelled demands that the

⁴⁰ AOT: CSD 1/84/72, McCracken to Director Public Works, 13.8.1859.
⁴¹ AOT: CSD 4/1/13, Miller to Colonial Secretary, 16.12.1861.
⁴³ Michael Ignatieff has argued that high walls were one of the key developments of the new institutionalisation, functioning as a means to 'enforce a markedly greater social distance between the confined and the outside world.' (M. Ignatieff, 'State, civil society and total institutions: a critique of recent social histories of punishment' in S. Cohen and A.T. Scull (eds), Social Control and the State: Historical and Comparative Essays (Oxford, 1985), p. 81.)
⁴⁵ AOT: CSD 4/1/13, Miller to Colonial Secretary, 14.11.1862.
⁴⁶ AOT: CSD 4/1/13, F. M.[...?] I.[...?] to Mayor Launceston, 10.12.1862.
⁴⁷ AOT: CSD 4/1/13, Miller to Colonial Secretary, 24.11.1862.
government fund enclosing the new hospital. That checking patient movement was an important factor in the thinking of hospital authorities was borne out by subsequent moves taken to further restrict invalids by locating them in the upper storeys of the new building. The whole of the hospital reserve was eventually surrounded by a fence sufficiently high to prevent it from being overlooked.

Like Miller, John Withrington, the Superintendent of the Brickfields, had also pushed for a timber fence enclosure to that depot. There is no one specific explanation as to why this particular item was held to be a vital work but rather several possibilities, each representing a facet of a more complex rationale. A fence is a barrier, it is a demarcation of space which separates one group of people (the invalids) from another (the wider community). Fences can therefore be interpreted as lines of demarcation. They were also lines of order, discipline and control. There is a defensive/protective aspect. On the one hand fencing the institution would protect the old men from any unwanted intrusion but it would also be a physical barrier stopping inmates communicating with the external community and possible trafficking in contraband. It would have shielded the middle classes from being assailed by old lame vagrants begging for alms, something many found distressing and repugnant. The desire for a fence at the Brickfields, and the LGH, also represented a desire to seclude from view the treatment of invalids. A fence was the means by which to isolate and confine pauper invalids in institutional space. In mid 1865, for example, B. Travers Solly, the Assistant Colonial Secretary, became concerned with reports of deficient accommodation and treatment of invalids housed in the Hobart Town Male House of Correction. As a remedy to this situation, he recommended that vacant public buildings be investigated in order to determine their suitability as temporary or additional spaces for accommodating invalids. He specifically suggested that the old Artillery School (located on premises adjoining the Office of the Inspector of Police) be examined by the Public

47 TLCP, 11, 1865, Paper 8, p. 3.
Works Department with the aim of costing works necessary to modify the
space for use as an invalid depot. In his instructions to William Falconer, the
Director of Public Works, he expressly requested that ‘heightening and
repairing the fence and gates and hanging a bell’ be included in the costing.48
These were seen as essential works in order ‘to render the Premises fit for the
occupation of Invalid men.’49 They were also the very means by which to
seclude, confine and regulate the lives of such men.

The middle class was not unified in the demonisation and criminalisation of
pauper invalids. While there were those who viewed invalids as a moral
threat, there were others prepared to respond to the invalid crisis of the late
1850s and early 1860s, if not with sympathy, then at least with rectitude. In
particular, many felt that the use of Port Arthur as an invalid depot was too
harsh an imposition on invalids, particularly given its penal function. An
1858 Joint Committee reviewing charitable institutions, for example,
expressed a view that invalids were kept at Port Arthur:

under regulations too nearly approaching to those of a Penal Establishment, at
the same time cutting off the inmates from the view of nearly all society, and
placing them beyond the reach of such sympathy and kind attention as the
well-disposed might be desirous of offering.50

As Earnshaw put it, to ‘pass from the convict system into the charity system
was to exchange one form of restraint for another.’51

Although some inmates may well have once been recidivist criminals, they
were by this time little more than aged and ailing men suffering from chronic
conditions such that they were incapable of supporting themselves.
Nevertheless, northern male invalids were subjected to the supervision and
control of the Superintendent of Launceston’s Penal Establishment, and were

48 AOT: CSD 4/74/122, Solly to Falconer, 1.6.1865.
49 ibid.
50 TLCP, 2, 1858, Paper 37, p. 5.
51 B. Earnshaw, ‘The lame, the blind, the malingerers: sick and disabled convicts within the
colonial community’, *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society* 8, part 1 (June 1995),
p. 37.
required to dress and pray as if they were criminals. This not only reflected contemporary thinking but followed the precedent established by the first invalid depots, which were all operational convict stations. Struma has argued that the criminalisation of emancipists was intertwined with the concept of respectability. He views this pervasive colonial term as being intimately connected with the diffusion of middle class virtues. As he puts it, respectability was 'largely a code of middle class propriety which displaced the convict code in regulating the boundaries of socially acceptable behaviour once transportation ended.'

It was a product of a social relationship in which the middle class sought to create a moral image of themselves by portraying emancipists as immoral and disreputable. This is in keeping with an argument put by Douglas that it is only by exaggerating differences that any semblance of order can be imposed upon a social system. Sturma has further argued that:

In its crudest form, respectability was a synonym for upper-middle class pretensions to moral superiority and power. At a more subtle level, respectability entailed a 'competitive struggle' for status by persons anxious to confirm their place in a new and rapidly changing social environment.

The stigmatisation of invalids as immoral and criminal can be seen as part of a competitive struggle by the middle class to enhance their 'respectability' by attenuating the moral differences between themselves and emancipists. It was a facet of the process of class formation in colonial Tasmania, and a means of overcoming the stigma of convictism. In relation to the institutionalisation of invalids it can be seen, not necessarily in a negative light as an aspiration brought on by fear of contamination, but as a concept

55 J. B. Hirst has, however, pointed out that while colonists were 'proud of their status as free emigrants and rigid in their exclusion of ex-convicts, they could not carry their objections to convictism too far.' This was because the settler often had 'dealings with ex-convicts on business and personal matters and within these relationships they were by no means always the superior party'. (J.B. Hirst, *Convict Society and its Enemies: A History of New South Wales* (Sydney, 1987), p. 153.)
motivated by positive desires to re-order the social environment such that it conformed to an ideal.\textsuperscript{56}

From its very beginning the LID shackled the invalid to the penal realm. That invalids and criminals were considered equivalent, was symbolically represented by the fact that LID inmates were, until at least the late 1860s, dressed in the same grey garb as worn by prisoners.\textsuperscript{57} The use of such apparel could only have reinforced stereotypical prejudices in the wider community, blurred the distinction between the poor and the criminal, and reaffirmed social divisions with each and every encounter.\textsuperscript{58} The medical board administering this establishment forcefully objected to the inmates having to attend religious services in the gaol chapel. They felt that religious instruction should be provided for them within the institution. According to Sherwin, the men found it ‘repugnant’ to have to cross the road and enter the gaol in order to attend divine service.\textsuperscript{59} While superficially this issue may seem minor, it in fact ran a lot deeper. The ‘medical men’ felt snubbed by the appointment of a ‘penal man’ to head what was essentially a medical institution and they were engaged in a power play whereby they hoped to win back as much control of the operation of the institution as possible. That the invalids had to enter the bastion of the penal world to hear the word of God was clearly an affront to their power. It was, therefore, stridently opposed. This was in keeping with moves commenced earlier, and occurring elsewhere, in which doctors actively intervened and created a position for themselves in both the development and implementation of public policy. Kay Daniels has discussed this subject in relation to female factories, stressing the increasing responsibility of medical practitioners in the management of public policy.

\textsuperscript{56} For a theoretical expression of this argument see Douglas, Purity and Danger, pp. 1-3.
\textsuperscript{57} AOT: CSD 4/102/1226, Sherwin to Colonial Secretary, 25.6.1868.
\textsuperscript{58} The wearing of uniforms was one way in which a physical distinctiveness was achieved between invalids and the wider community. This was in keeping with a practice that had its origins in the management of convicts. For a discussion regarding the use of uniforms within the convict system as a means to solve problems related to distinguishing convicts and also various classifications of prisoners within the convict population see M. Maynard, Fashion From Penury: Dress as Cultural Practice in Colonial Australia (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 14-23.
institutions and, in particular, their part in bureaucratic professionalisation through the development of case histories and centralised record keeping. She states that the increasing role of doctors in convict administration, first on the transports and later in the penal institutions, is striking.\textsuperscript{60} Jan Kociumbas has argued that this process was heightened in the Australian colonies for a number of reasons. She maintains that:

\begin{quote}
The doctors' need to control medical knowledge was especially acute in the Australian colonies which were more than generously supplied with trained practitioners, many of whom had come out as surgeons on convict or emigrant ships.\textsuperscript{61}
\end{quote}

Coupled with this, Kociumbas has argued that colonial doctors may have also been professionally ambitious as those arriving as ships' surgeons had originally been engaged as experts in both health and discipline. They held a position of authority second only to the captain and, therefore, many may have 'expected to command a similar status when settled on shore.'\textsuperscript{62}

The Board of the LGH might have been vocal in opposing some aspects of the management practices of the LID, such as the holding of religious services in the gaol chapel, but they were noticeably silent on others. This is quite evident in relation to the regulations governing the institution. For example, to curb the vivacity of those men who manipulated the charitable system and merely wintered in the depot, the institution effectively became a prison with rules which declined inmates day passes. Thus, old, sick and poor men were effectively denied liberty, were incarcerated and made to live a prisoner's life having never been publicly accused, tried or sentenced for any crime. The message was clear — emancipist poverty was a transgression. The depot was in many ways another step on the temporal road of the convict system.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{59} AOT: CSD 4/99/1121, Dry to Sherwin, 16.7.1868; and, AOT: CSD 4/99/1121, Sherwin to Dry, 22.7.1868.
\item \textsuperscript{61} Kociumbas, \textit{The Oxford history of Australia}, p. 285.
\item \textsuperscript{62} \textit{ibid.}, p. 286.
\end{itemize}
only was the management of the invalid depot under penal control and
carceral in nature, but so too was the language employed to describe its
administration. The institution was under the charge of a ‘Superintendent’
who was able to dispense ‘passes’ effectively creating ‘passholders’. His
immediate assistant was called the ‘Overseer’ and, just as in the convict
system, this person welded considerable power and influence over the daily
lives of the ‘inmates’.

Northern male invalids were further treated as if they were criminals by
accommodating them within the confines of penal space. Commencing in
1870, male invalids were housed within the precinct of the Launceston Penal
Establishment, in space designed for the incarceration of prisoners. The
physical linking of invalids to criminals by putting them in the same built
space, or the adaptation of prison fabric for invalid accommodation, could
not but instil and perpetuate in the minds of the public that these two groups
were one and the same. At a governmental level this was reinforced in a
number of ways. For example, E. C. Nowell, the Government Statistician and
Clerk of the Legislative Council, consistently combined penal and charitable
institutions under one heading in his official reports. Further, ex-imperial
convicts, who Nowell referred to as a class, made up 60.9 percent of the 1265
paupers maintained in government charitable institutions in 1873. These were
people who Nowell saw as ‘burdens on the State’.

Death did not expunge the contempt that the elite felt towards pauper
invalids. At New Town, for example, St John’s Church, its parsonage and
graveyard were immediately adjacent to the female pauper establishment. As

63 Within Britain, ‘superintendent’ was a term commonly used in medical institutions like
asylums. Similarly ‘overseer’ was mainly a poor law and not a penal term. However,within the Tasmanian context, and indeed throughout nineteenth-century eastern
Australia, these designations were closely connected with the convict system. For detail
on the terminology used in the convict system and a discussion of the various
functionaries of this system, see I. Brand, Penal Peninsula: Port Arthur and its Outstations
1827-1898 (Launceston, n.d.); and, I. Brand, The Convict Probation System: Van Diemen’s
Land, 1839-1854 (Sandy Bay, 1990).
64 See the Statistics of Tasmania in the Tasmanian Parliamentary Papers.
65 TLCP, 20, 1874, Paper 1, p. xvi.
early as late June 1874, the Reverend Canon Hudspeth had objected to the institution burying its dead in the cemetery attached to St John's, the congregation apparently seeking to avoid the taint of pauperism and the still lingering smell of convictism. The institution had to, therefore, inter its dead at the public cemetery at Cornelian Point. This segregation in death between the common pauper and 'Christian elite' differs somewhat to the earlier convict period. If, for example, we examine the graveyard at the Port Arthur penal settlement, the Isle of the Dead, we find that whilst there was a demarcation between differing social groups within the cemetery (as there was at Cornelian Bay) they were not buried in completely separate locations as was the case at New Town. It appears that when completely immersed in the convict system the noses of the elite were not quite so sensitive. There had been a time when convicts had well served the elite but by the 1870s that time had passed, and Tasmanian society sought to put as much distance between itself and 'the hated stain'. In death such a distance could, for those willing and able to pay, like the parishioners of St John's, be physically achieved.

The treatment of female invalids

Female invalids were subjected to a far grimmer penal experience than most of their male counterparts. This may be a reflection of the patriarchal nature of colonial Tasmanian society, in which men were valued more highly than women, and invalid emancipist females were valued the least of all. The linking of paupers, particularly female invalids, with criminals is well exemplified by the accommodation assigned them in Launceston. As early as 1862, a great many of the prisoners in the Launceston Female House of Correction were old and infirm. It is hard to imagine what serious crime geriatric cripples could commit such that they warranted imprisonment unless their age, state of health and economic dependency were indeed the

---

66 AOT: CSD 7/60/1463, Solly to Scott, 29.6.1874.
67 For the most accurate description of burial on the Isle of the Dead see L. S. Ross, 'Death and burial at Port Arthur 1830-1877', unpublished Bachelor of Arts (Honours) dissertation, University of Tasmania, 1995.
68 AOT: CSD 4/31/321, Frost to Reid, 10.9.1862.
basis of that incarceration. Whatever the case may have been, increasingly female invalids found themselves directly accommodated within penal space.

Prior to September 1857, Launceston’s female invalids had been juggled between penal and medical institutions. According to Miller, there were several old women who spent their time between the female factory on charges of vagrancy, and the hospital for ‘infirmities of old age.’ Having no facility in the north for housing female invalids, and having heard of wards set aside for them at the HGH, Miller proposed a management solution which had already been determined as unacceptable for their male counterparts. He wrote to the Colonial Secretary asking whether female invalids could be transported south. Inquiries made in response to Miller’s request, however, revealed that part of the HGH was being used as a female infirmary but the space was limited and there was only a single vacancy. When Miller heard of this vacancy he immediately saw an opportunity to transfer a very troublesome woman out of his domain to Hobart Town. This old woman was, according to Miller:

a legacy [left] by the former Col: Hospital. Having been trained in the old convict establishment I find her a regular stumbling-block in the way of all my new regulations, as she does her best to corrupt both my immigrant nurses, and her fellow patients. I hope that the order for her admission to Hobartton [sic] hospital, accompanied by the order for her coach hire will be received here as soon as possible.[72]

This case reveals that, like many other male institutional administrators, Miller had difficulties in managing female inmates. In particular, he had an aversion to their mode of resistance to authority and regulations, and the manner in which they attempted to gain some control over their world. The option to transfer old infirm female patients south, away from friends and a

70 ibid.
71 Note, Principal Medical Officer to Henty attached to AOT: CSD 1/119/4219, Miller to Henty, 21.9.1857.
72 AOT: CSD 1/119/4219, Miller to Henty, 6.10.1857. (Emphasis in original.)
familiar world could have been used as a means to control through threat, and to punish through action. Like all weapons there were means to fight such moves but these depended upon the individual’s capacity to resist. In the case detailed above, the woman resisted by leaving the Cornwall Hospital when she heard it was likely that she would be sent south. Insubordination came at a price, in this case the hardships of life outside the Cornwall Hospital, a daunting prospect for an infirm aged person.

New ward space was constantly surpassed by demand and the establishment of a Female Infirmary attached to the HGH was no exception. For this reason it is questionable whether any Launceston female invalids were transferred to Hobart Town at this time. The Female Infirmary rapidly filled with southern invalids, with the Principal Medical Officer reporting in early October 1857 that no further cases could be admitted. As early as July 1857, all beds in this establishment were occupied. As the Colonial Secretary came to terms with the size of the female invalid problem, he soon realised that some form of accommodation would have to be found in the north as there could be no possibility of centralising female invalids in Hobart Town, when that city lacked the means to fulfil its own needs. He wrote to the Sheriff inquiring whether some portion of the Launceston Gaol could be converted into an infirmary for aged and infirm pauper females. This overture possibly developed as a result of a suggestion made by the Chairman of the Cornwall Hospital’s Board of Trustees, Isaac Sherwin, who, noting that Launceston’s Penal Establishment could house 1000 persons, had asked whether some part of it could not be appropriated as a refuge. After all ‘for the most part the applicants [were expiries, or at least ha[d] been or [we]re convicts’. The result of the Colonial Secretary’s inquiries was that alterations were made and female invalids were accommodated within the ‘very defective’ walls of

74 AOT: CSD 1/119/4219.
76 AOT: CSD 1/156/5061, Sherwin to Henty, 30.[?].1857.
this prison for several decades to come; and subsequently male invalids were likewise housed.\(^7\)

The conditions and spaces that the females were confined to were appalling even by the standards of the day. In 1860 a Select Committee of the House of Assembly described the buildings as being 'very defective', overcrowded and having insufficient space in both dayrooms and dormitories, and being incapable of any classification.\(^8\) Evidence given before this committee unanimously agrees that it was not only the main gaol building and male house of correction which were defective, but also the buildings used for the female house of correction which were to become the receptacle for northern female invalids. Apart from overcrowding, security concerns and want of classification, the three major problems facing inmates in these spaces were insufficient sanitary facilities, negligible ventilation and an infestation of lice.\(^9\) The establishment of the LID did nothing to relieve female invalids from these conditions. The new invalid depot was restricted to males and therefore it did not reduce the numbers of the female invalids at the LGH who occupied space which the Board felt was more fitting for the sick. They therefore drew the government's attention to the desirability of removing these invalids to a more appropriate institution.\(^10\)

Part of the rationale for accommodating female invalids within the female house of correction was that they were still tarred with the same brush that convict administrators had applied to female convicts, who were generally regarded as being more dissolute and irredeemable than their male counterparts.\(^11\) Southern authorities declined to receive northern female

\(^{77}\) TLCP, 5, 1860, Paper 45 and THAP, 5, 1860, Paper 89.

\(^{78}\) TLCP, 5, 1860, Paper 89.

\(^{79}\) TLCP, 6, 1861, Paper 27.

\(^{80}\) TLCP, 15, 1869, Paper 3, p. 3.

\(^{81}\) This argument is well expressed by Kirsty Reid in "Contumacious, ungovernable and incorrigible': convict women and workplace resistance, Van Diemen's Land, 1820-1839' in I. Duffield and J. Bradley (eds), \textit{Representing Convicts: New Perspectives on Convict Forced Labour Migration} (London, 1997), pp. 106-23.
invalids. They were to be kept in Launceston.\textsuperscript{82} Female convicts were perceived as being not only responsible for their own plight but also for the intemperate and immoral behaviour of men.\textsuperscript{83} Their apparent promiscuous and wayward behaviour led them to be regarded as little more than common prostitutes.\textsuperscript{84} Female invalids were viewed as being the very lowest and worst of humanity; a contagion best avoided, best left in Launceston.\textsuperscript{85} In order to keep them there the Colonial Secretary wrote to Launceston’s Police Magistrate, William Gunn, requesting that he secure suitable local accommodation for these women.\textsuperscript{86} It was Gunn who suggested that six of the strongest women be removed from the LGH to the Female House of Correction. He further advocated that these women be compelled to accept this change in residence or else face expulsion from government care.\textsuperscript{87} They would, of course, retain the option of leaving the gaol at any time they wished. But where (or more appropriately what) would they leave to? This apparently did not cross the mind of the Governor, or if it did, it was not something he found disagreeable. He approved the proposal, and Miller was informed of this decision on the last day of September 1867; a day when there were five females without beds in the LGH. Miller had no option but to enact Gunn’s proposal, and thus the Launceston Female House of Correction became the de facto female invalid depot for northern Tasmania some eight months before the establishment of the male depot.\textsuperscript{88}

\textsuperscript{82} AOT: CSD 25/16/1361, Solly to Miller, 19.9.1867; and, AOT: CSD 25/16/1361, Miller to Colonial Secretary, 24.9.1867.
\textsuperscript{84} For a discussion on this subject see Daniels, Convict Women, pp. 211-3.
\textsuperscript{85} Given the numbers of female invalids presenting themselves in Launceston, coupled with the want of institutional space to accommodate them, this was not a position which could be successfully maintained. By early 1871 female invalids from the LGH were drafted to the Cascades. (TLCP, 17, 1871, Paper 47, p. 48, paragraph 79.)
\textsuperscript{86} AOT: CSD 25/16/1361, Miller to Colonial Secretary, 24.9.1867.
\textsuperscript{87} AOT: CSD 25/16/1361, Police Magistrate Launceston to Assistant Colonial Secretary, 28.9.1867.
\textsuperscript{88} Note, Dry to Miller, 30.9.1867 appended to AOT: CSD 25/16/1361, Police Magistrate Launceston to Assistant Colonial Secretary, 28.9.1867.
\textsuperscript{89} AOT: CSD 25/16/1361, Miller to Assistant Colonial Secretary, 30.9.1867.
### TABLE 5.1: Numbers of female invalids accommodated in the Launceston Female House of Correction, 1876-1901.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>Nos. present 1 January</th>
<th>Nos. Admitted</th>
<th>Nos. Discharged</th>
<th>No. of Deaths</th>
<th>Nos. Remaining 31 December</th>
<th>Av. Daily Nos.</th>
<th>REFERENCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1876</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
<td>TLCP, 24, 1877, Paper 13, p. 5.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1877</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
<td>TLCP, 26, 1878-9, Paper 19, p. 4.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1878</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
<td>TLCP, 28, 1879-80, Paper 18, p. 4.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1882</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>TLCP, 34, 1883, Paper 25, p. 25.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1884</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>TPP, 5, 1885, Paper 25, p. 17.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1885</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>TPP, 8, 1886, Paper 26, p. 19.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1886*</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>TPP, 12, 1887, Paper 116, p. 32.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1887</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>TPP, 14, 1888-9, Paper 12, p. 3.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1889</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>TPP, 20, 1889, Paper 12, p. 3.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>TPP, 23, 1891, Paper 15, p. 3.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>TPP, 26, 1892, Paper 15, p. 3.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1892</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>TPP, 28, 1893, Paper 12, p. 3.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1893</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>TPP, 31, 1894, Paper 6, pp. 3 and 4.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1894</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>TPP, 33, 1895, Paper 16, p. 3.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>TPP, 35, 1896, Paper 6, p. 3.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1896</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>TPP, 37, 1897, Paper 8, p. 3.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1897</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>TPP, 39, 1898, Paper 26, p. 3.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1898</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>TPP, 41, 1899, Paper 7, p. 3.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1899</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>TPP, 43, 1900, Paper 4, p. 3.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>TPP, 45, 1901, Paper 16, p. 3.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Administratively incorporated with Launceston Invalid Depot in this year.

The Launceston Penal Establishment was to accommodate in the order of 20 female invalids for most of the latter quarter of the nineteenth-century (see Table 5.1). Information on this invalid facility is sketchy. However, an 1883 Royal Commission into penal discipline in Tasmania recorded in detail all spaces within the Launceston Penal Establishment. The report describes the
main dormitory accommodation occupied by invalids as being "infested with bugs, badly ventilated, although fire-place has recently been built in it." It would seem that the aged and infirm women held in this institution were subjected to a cold, stuffy, lice ridden environment.

Like Launceston, Hobart Town continued to experience ongoing problems identifying institutional space to accommodate invalids, particularly male invalids. In order to relieve pressure on the Brickfields it was proposed in July 1863 to transfer approximately 70 female invalids at both the HGH and the Female Infirmary to the Cascades Female Factory and to reallocate this space for use by male invalids. As was the case in the north, no one questioned the propriety of a proposal that would ultimately see female invalids incarcerated in a penal space. Indeed, upon receiving this request the Comptroller General merely asked to know how many women it was intended to send to the Cascades and what number of these were bedridden. The Colonial Secretary informed the Comptroller General that the number would be 70, but that only four of this number were bedridden. A possible reason why the Comptroller General was so receptive to the above request was that the Cascades had to some extent been functioning as a de facto pauper depot for imperial female invalids for the previous three years. In the same manner that Port Arthur acted as the repository for imperial male invalids, the old Cascade Female Factory became a holding institution for imperial female invalids. In both instances the imperial invalids were accommodated within a fully operating prison.

---

90 THAP, 44, 1883, Paper 41, p. 61.
91 AOT: CSD 4/14/122, Turnley to Colonial Secretary, 18.7.1863; and, AOT: CSD 4/14/122, Turnley to Colonial Secretary, 30.7.1863.
92 Bedridden cases were, however, particularly vulnerable and dependent. For example, The Mercury of 1 January 1873, (p. 3 c. 2:3) stated that 'there are altogether eleven nurses employed to attend to the 114 women who were inmates a few weeks ago. Some of them are very helpless, and can scarcely move about, while it is painful to see some of the poor bedridden creatures, barely able to move, their faces covered in gauze to prevent flies from annoying them.' (Emphasis mine.)
93 AOT: CSD 4/14/122, Turnley to Colonial Secretary, 3.8.1863.
The conversion of the Cascades had progressed sufficiently that by early July 1867 the new wards were able to receive the female invalids then accommodated in the Female Infirmary.\textsuperscript{94} These wards were described by George Turnley, the HGH's Resident House Surgeon, as being 'dull and dismal'.\textsuperscript{95} With their occupation, the principal female invalid institution was positioned within the confines of the principal female penal institution. What this case study on the treatment of female invalids in the third quarter of the nineteenth-century exemplifies is that in the minds of the colonial elite poverty, age, infirmity and crime were inextricably linked.

\textbf{Keeping a watchful eye: the attitudes and role of private benevolence}

Full comprehension of Tasmania's colonial charitable institutional system requires consideration of what occurred outside the realm of the institution. The public system of adult pauper relief in Tasmania was based upon three pillars. First, relief was extended through admission to pauper asylums. Second, it was afforded by private philanthropy principally delivered by organised benevolent societies supported by government grants in aid. The third avenue was by direct government allowances under a program known as outdoor relief. These three inter-linked components formed the basis of Tasmania's response to invalids and paupers. While initially public and private relief was delivered independent of one another, increasingly cooperation and intertwined mutual delivery was to be the hallmark of the relationship between these two bodies. This was especially evident as professional bureaucratic record keeping came to prominence in the management of paupers.

The two principal private charities in colonial Tasmania were the HBS and the LBS. They were organisations made up of members of most of the various Christian denominations who were able to put aside their religious differences in pursuit of a common goal. Like their counterparts in Britain

\textsuperscript{94} \textit{TLCP}, 14, 1868, Paper 2, p. 3.

\textsuperscript{95} \textit{THAP}, 5, 1860, Paper 46, p. 5.
and North America, these benevolent organisations were absorbed with determining the worthiness of applicants for relief. Their doctrine was articulated in the first and fundamental rule of the HBS:

That the objects of this Society be to relieve the poor, the distressed, and the afflicted, and thereby to discountenance, as much as possible, mendicity and vagrancy, and encourage industry amongst the indigent, irrespective of religious creed or denomination.\

This objective was 'most scrupulously adhered to' and in its attainment the various elements of the Society were harmoniously united. Such consonance was also sought in their relationship with the government and this can be seen in the role played by the HBS in supporting persons awaiting admission to an invalid depot. The Society was passionate in its disdain of vagrancy and begging. For the unsupported pauper invalid existing outside of a charitable institution, begging alms was essential to survival. As invalid depots were regularly full to capacity, the only means the HBS had to combat this mendicancy was for it to maintain these individuals until such time as space could be allocated within the tender embrace of bricks and mortar. In this manner it achieved its own objectives and also supported the government's system of institutional control of paupers. Maintenance of these individuals allowed the HBS to work with the government in imposing controls and limitations upon the behaviour and liberty of emancipist paupers. This it achieved through continuous surveillance, inspection and the restricting of relief to set places.

Benevolent societies were bastions of middle class conservatism. They held a narrow view of who was deserving and rigidly adhered to the tenets of the

---

* Quoted in TLCP, 12, 1866-7, Paper 5, p. 5.
* ibid., p. 3.
* For example, in 1863 the HBS supported 53 persons awaiting invaliding. (TLCP, 10, 1864, Paper 5, p. 3.) The operation of this stop-gap measure of assisting those awaiting entry into the invalid depots continued throughout the 1860s, 1870s and until at least the late 1880s (see annual reports of the HBS in TLCP). It was not only the HBS which supported invalids in this manner. The LBS did likewise, for example in 1893 they gave casual support to 196 old men awaiting admission into the LID and 98 such cases the following year. (TPP, 31, 1894, Paper 7, p. 3; and, TPP, 33, 1895, Paper 15, p. 3.)
new poor law; in particular the principle of ‘less eligibility’ believing that every penny bestowed in rendering the condition of the pauper more eligible than that of the independent labourer was a bounty on indolence and vice. Begging represented mendicancy, imposition and idleness which were anathema to their conservative values. However, poverty struck both those deemed deserving and those held to be undeserving. Indeed, the undeserving was a great deal more affected than the deserving, necessitating benevolent society involvement in their relief. These organisations believed in the existence of widespread ‘systematic and professional beggars’ and these persons they sought to purge from the community. Yet, their own experience told them that this was a fallacy. For example, the LBS actually encountered extremely few cases of imposition. They told an 1871 Royal Commission that the Society had not even been faced with one case of imposition in 50. Nevertheless, this did not stop G. P. Crouch, when representing the HBS at the First Australasian Conference on Charity in 1890, from reiterating the Society’s belief that there were many who made ‘begging a trade because they find it pays better than working.’ That this belief was based upon unsubstantiated prejudice is reflected in the Society’s own statistics for persons refused aid. From their own annual reports it is evident that, out of the hundreds of applications made to them each year, only a handful were ever refused. In 1884, for example, out of 116 new applications, representing 251, individuals only five cases, or 4.3 percent, were rejected. The following year 3.4 percent were refused. The indication is that these years were not exceptional. Imposition if it did occur was at such a level that it should not have raised any concerns.

The HBS was noteworthy for the hard line it took in the granting of relief, the substance of a person’s character and morality bearing considerably more

100 TLCP, 14, 1868, Paper 12, p. 3; and, TLCP, 24, 1877, Paper 16, p. 3.
101 TLCP, 17, 1871, Paper 47, p. 46, paragraph 159.
influence on their decision to grant relief than the circumstances which brought a person to seek the Society’s help. This was well exemplified in the case of a seriously ill, deserted, bedridden woman suffering from jaundice and possibly dying, and her four children, aged 14, 12, six, and nine months, who were living in a hovel, and only subsisting on what they could beg. The HBS refused aid to this woman and her children on the grounds ‘that the woman bore a bad character!’ In a poignant editorial, The Hobart Town Daily Mercury, asked:

even had this woman’s character been of the most abandoned description, for poverty and starving children must be a sore temptation, was that sufficient reason why relief should not be given?

The Mercury protested against what appeared to be the introduction of a very pernicious doctrine and argued that:

If benevolence is only to be extended to the virtuous there will be very few indeed requiring assistance . . . If a case of real distress is made out it ought to be relieved at once. It is no time to inquire into a man’s character when he is starving.

This, however, was exactly what the HBS did. Their aid was tied to the character and behaviour of the intended recipient, the intent being to control and modify social conduct. The Wapping History Group have argued that:

The Hobart Benevolent Society, being very much a product of nineteenth century attitudes to poverty and its relief, differentiated between the ‘deserving’ and ‘undeserving poor’. The character of applicants for relief was

---

103 TPP, 1, 1885, Paper 12, p. 3.
104 The Hobart Town Daily Mercury, 17.5.1860, p. 2 c. 1-3. (Emphasis in original.)
105 ibid.
106 ibid.
107 The tying of relief to behaviour appears to have been a universal phenomena in the distribution of private benevolence. For example, Cecily Forde-Jones has analysed the critical role in which the dispensation of poor relief to impoverished white women in colonial Barbados, particularly during the late seventeenth and early nineteenth centuries, was used to regulate white female sexuality and behaviour. C. Forde-Jones, ‘Mapping racial boundaries: gender, race, and poor relief in Barbadian plantation society’, Journal of Women’s History 10: 3 (Autumn, 1998).
frequently commented upon... and often had some bearing on the outcome of their applications.108

This was an organisation intimately concerned with the morality of those they set out to help; one swayed by an ideology that sought to dispense blame as opposed to relief. It uncompromisingly refused to help those who did not comply with the middle class virtues of diligence, prudence, sobriety, thrift, initiative and self-reliance, which it sought to instil in the lower orders of society.109 Failure to abide by conservative, middle class values guaranteed that private benevolence would be denied. Conservative organisations, like the HBS, saw poverty resulting not from social and economic factors, but from the vices of idleness, improvidence and intemperance. Amongst this faction of the middle class there existed a fear that pauperism could become self-perpetuating.

The benevolent societies perceived their role as not only one of rendering aid but they also saw themselves as an agency to discourage pauperism and imposition. For them 'Although poverty [was] not a crime, it [was] certainly not a virtue to be cultivated.'110 They were followers of the principles of self-help and thrift as propounded by the likes of William Cobbett and Samuel Smiles.111 Indeed, the HBS saw fit to quote from Smiles in their 1885 annual report. This quote is worth reproducing as it succinctly denotes the position taken by such organisations:

True benevolence does not consist in giving money, nor can charitable donations, given indiscriminately to the poor, have any other effect than to sap the foundation of self-respect, and break down the very outworks of virtue itself.112

109 This was manifestly demonstrated in an almost identical case to the above which occurred fourteen years later. See The Mercury, 26.5.1874, p. 2 c. 5.
110 TPP, 14, 1886, Paper 20, p. 3.
112 TPP, 14, 1886, Paper 20, p. 3.
The benevolent societies were about indoctrinating the poor with the middle class virtues of hard work and thrift as a means of securing comfort in times of hardship and in old age. They encouraged the development of self-help activities but also penalised all who indulged in behaviour which they perceived as promoting impoverishment, such as intemperance and gambling.\textsuperscript{113}

In order to influence the behaviour of recipients, benevolent societies recognised the benefits of systematised inquiry into the particulars of all applicants as well as the need for ongoing surveillance and complete cooperation.\textsuperscript{114} Such activities were also influenced by the circumstances of the benevolent societies. Throughout the 1870s, both the HBS and the LBS were faced with the recurring difficulty of decreasing subscriptions. A decline in their economic fortunes had commenced in the latter half of the 1860s which forced them to increasingly introduce more austere measures in implementing their relief programs. This saw the societies respond to destitution with the ‘strictest economy’.\textsuperscript{115} The reduction in income, combined with increasing demands for their services, necessitated that each and every application for assistance be ‘minutely inquired into’ and a significant level of surveillance of the poor.\textsuperscript{116} This, in turn, compelled the benevolent societies to develop improved record keeping and helped to foster the development of case management. Such measures enabled the HBS to build up dossiers on individual paupers which allowed them to better ‘investigate and test the merits of every application’. This they succeeded in to such an extent that the Society was able to boast in its annual report for 1870 that ‘successful


\textsuperscript{114} For example, the HBS, in addition to a careful investigation of every case, in 1893, 1894 and 1895, conducted 825, 1064 and 642 visits respectively to the abodes of those they were assisting as part of an ongoing surveillance strategy. (TPP, 31, 1894, Paper 44, p. 4; TPP, 33, 1895, Paper 14, p. 4; and TPP, 35, 1896, Paper 5, p. 4.)

\textsuperscript{115} TLCP, 14, 1868, Paper 7, p. 3.

\textsuperscript{116} TLCP, 23, 1876, Paper 15, p. 3.
imposture is now almost an impossibility." Six years later they revealed that through the maintenance of detailed records forming case histories of individuals and families, some going back over 17 years, they had developed an intimate knowledge of the poor.  The advocacy of this position demonstrated an awareness of the power of knowledge through centralised administration, improved bureaucratic processes and the maintenance of case records. The government took advantage of this and used the benevolent societies as control and surveillance agencies.

In maintaining surveillance over those they relieved the HBS was ably availed by the services of its Registrar, William Witt, who 'was indefatigable in the execution of the duties entrusted to him.' For example, in 1865, he personally 'paid 823 visits during the year, in ascertaining the circumstances of all fresh applicants for assistance, and in supervising all those receiving aid.' In addition to Witt's inspections, the members of the Executive Committee of the Society also took it upon themselves to visit the abodes of those receiving aid. The Society rationalised their intrusion into the lives of the poor as being a fundamental tool in their arsenal for combating imposition, for encouraging industry amongst the poor, for fostering self-reliance and for the superintending of pauper lives.  From at least 1867 onwards, Witt was also carrying out inspections for the government. This was part of an increasing level of cooperation between these two bodies.

The Dorcas Society of Hobart Town was a private charity formed 'to assist married women in their confinement', but by the mid 1850s this role had been extended to help all cases of genuine distress. They saw their function as

---

17 TLCP, 17, 1871, Paper 9, p. 3.
18 TLCP, 24, 1877, Paper 16, p. 3.
19 TLCP, 12, 1866-7, Paper 5, p. 5. William Witt was to retain the position of registrar for 33 years, until, in 1893, illness forced him to step down. Throughout the entire period of his employment with the HBS inspection of paupers remained central to his role. (TPP, 31, 1894, Paper 44, p. 3.)
20 TLCP, 12, 1866-7, Paper 5, p. 5.
21 TLCP, 14, 1868, Paper 7, pp. 3 and 4.
22 ibid., p. 4.
23 AOT: CSD 1/100 (Y101)/2905, Miller to Young, 11.7.1856.
one of assisting casual and temporary misfortune and believed that the
government was the body more appropriately responsible for relieving all
cases of a long term or permanent nature. In mid 1856 the Dorcas Society had
on their books nine free paupers and seven emancipist paupers who had been
in receipt of assistance for more than six months. The cost of these long term
cases was a great burden upon the resources of the society. For example,
Patience Oliver, an emancipist and former plain and pastry cook, who had
arrived as Patience Merchant on the Hector in 1835, had been afforded relief
_from January to July 1851 at a rate of 2s. per week, and from August 1851 to
July 1856 at 3s. per week._24 This represented a total outlay of £41.8.0. Long
term support of this nature was simply beyond the means of private
benevolent and charitable organisations. The government, recognised this
and, probably out of fear of the consequences of having to take responsibility
for the gambit of pauper relief, agreed to reimburse the Dorcas Society for
assuagement afforded to those destitute poor who had been on their books
for more than six months._25 In this the government established a precedent in
which charitable organisations would assist the needs of those suffering
temporarily from poverty, while it would accept the responsibility for long
term chronic cases of pauperism._26 The government knowingly placed the
allocation of relief in the hands of agencies, such as the Dorcas Society, better
equipped to scrutinise applicants and weed out imposition. Any case
remaining on their books after six months would have undergone minute
inspection, review and surveillance.

In taking on responsibility for chronic destitution, the government had to find
new means of managing the ever growing numbers of paupers. The aid being
dispersed by the philanthropically minded, through organisations such as the
Dorcas Society, the HBS and the LBS, was effectively incipient outdoor relief.
The late 1850s and 1860s were years marked by a surge in the demand for

---

24 _Ibid.; AOT: CSD 1/100 (Y101)/2905, Miller to Henty, 10.12.1856; and, AOT: CON 18/24._
25 _AOT: CSD 1/100 (Y101)/2905, 19.7.1856 and AOT: CSD 1/100 (Y101)/2905, Knox to
Miller, 9.8.1856._
26 _AOT: CSD 1/156/5061 (vol. 2), Draft of a report on hospitals._
assistance by paupers and by increasing pressure on the two main avenues of relief: government institutions and private benevolent societies. This period saw both agencies falter in their capacity to relieve increasing numbers of pauper invalids. The government’s response had been to increase and further specialise institutional space, as well as to increase flexibility in financial assistance to private charities. The economy remained depressed, new enterprise did not flourish and existing businesses continued to struggle (often unsuccessfully). The effects of a continued dearth in employment, especially amongst labourers and particularly those of inferior skills, and declining profit margins, meant that there were more people requiring the assistance of benevolent societies. From the late 1850s onwards more and more families found themselves economically marginalised. It is very likely that the severity of the depression and the ongoing crisis in accommodating pauper invalids played a significant role in influencing the government to establish a system of outdoor relief. It was a means of supporting and controlling those paupers for who it was simply unable to provide institutional accommodation.

In 1862 the colonial government commenced a scheme of relieving paupers through weekly cash payments. This system effectively maintained the poor in their own dwellings, outside of institutional space, and was referred to as outdoor relief. In many respects the scheme was an incipient pension program in which applicants were means tested in order to determine the amount of support to be granted. This assessment was usually conducted by the local inspector of police, but could in rural areas also involve municipal wardens and district police magistrates. In order to obtain outdoor relief paupers had to be recommended to the Colonial Secretary by a minister of religion, a warden of a municipality, a police magistrate or some other ranking person. The Colonial Secretary would then accept or deny the case based upon the assessment. While set rates were established, the

administrator of the scheme, known as the Administrator of Charitable Grants, was given a degree of discretion enabling him to relate payments to individual case circumstances, in other words rudimentary case management. Outdoor relief did, in some instances, assist the age and infirm but initially its target recipients were the children of the poor and thus it tended to be directed more towards families; especially those where the father was dead, had deserted his children, was imprisoned, or was unable to work due to a physical or mental disability.\footnote{128}

The aged and infirm rarely received outdoor relief in the urban centres and it was predominantly in rural areas that they were able to access this assistance. The reasons for this were that the sums granted were less than the cost of maintaining such individuals in a depot. Indeed, the government were ‘prepared to sanction the payment of an allowance equal to but not in excess of the cost of maintaining an invalid in the Invalid Depot’.\footnote{129} By mid 1867, outdoor relief represented a cost saving to the state of £3029, proving to be a program far more cost effective than institutionalisation.\footnote{130} It was a system which exposed the penurious nature of society. Richard Kennedy has maintained, in relation to these early welfare payments in colonial Victoria, that ‘[m]ean doles preserve Moral Fibre: the poor in the Victorian age lived on a welfare diet high in moral fibre.’\footnote{131} The same can be said for colonial Tasmania.

As the numbers receiving outdoor relief grew, so too did the scheme’s cost, as shown by Table 5.2. This greatly alarmed members of the conservative Legislative Council and, in August 1867, they appointed a select committee to inquire into the scheme.\footnote{132} The committee’s recommendations were to influence the operation of the system for many years.\footnote{133} In recognition that

\footnotesize
\begin{enumerate}
\item TLCP, 17, 1871, Paper 47, p. xviii; and, TLCP, 13, 1867, Paper 56, p. 3.
\item AOT: CSD 25/19/1697, 29.7.1867.
\item TLCP, 13, 1867, Paper 56, pp. 4 and 7.
\item R. Kennedy, ‘Charity and ideology’, p. 66.
\item TLCP, 13, Votes and Proceedings, 21.8.1867, p. 6.
\item For example, see TLCP, 13, 1867, Paper 56, p. 3.
\end{enumerate}
there was an element of duplication in the relief being dispersed by the Hobart Town and Launceston benevolent societies and that granted by the Administrator of Charitable Grants, they recommended that the two former organisations should be given the responsibility for administering the scheme on behalf of the government. It was suggested that monthly reports be submitted 'containing full details of each case' and the committee called for 'special legislation, with a view to the creation of proper local and central organisation for eleemosynary purposes, as also to provide means to defray the expenditure incident thereto.'\textsuperscript{134} The Assistant Colonial Secretary, in his evidence before the committee, called for the centralisation of control of all charitable institutions, especially in relation to the issuing of authority for admission into invalid depots and deciding the amount of charity to be granted in respect of outdoor relief.\textsuperscript{135}

TABLE 5.2: Amount of outdoor relief expended by the government and the numbers of cases and recipients relieved, 1862-1901.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>Expenditure Ls.d.</th>
<th>No. of Cases</th>
<th>No. of Children</th>
<th>No. of Adults</th>
<th>REFERENCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1868</td>
<td>4443.6.2</td>
<td>419</td>
<td>945</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>TLCP, 17, 1871, Paper 47, pp. xvii-xviii. TLCP, 15, 1869, Paper 71, p. 3. TLCP, 16, 1870, Paper 70, p. 3.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{134} ibid., p. 5.
\textsuperscript{135} ibid., p. 6.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>Expenditure £d.</th>
<th>No. of Cases</th>
<th>No. of Children</th>
<th>No. of Adults</th>
<th>REFERENCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1869 | 4955.3.9        | 573          | 1080            | 254          | TLCP, 17, 1871, Paper 47, pp. xvii-xviii.  
TLCP, 16, 1870, Paper 70, p. 3. |
| 1870 | 5679.5.6        |              |                 |              | TLCP, 17, 1871, Paper 47, pp. xvii-xviii. |
| 1871 | 7656.17.11      |              |                 |              | TLCP, 18, 1872, Paper 2, p. 120.          |
| 1872 | 9206.13.6       |              |                 |              | TLCP, 19, 1873, Paper 1, p. 123.          |
| 1873 | 8812.12.4       |              |                 |              | TLCP, 20, 1874, Paper 1, pp. xv & 123.   |
| 1874 | 8866.10.1       |              |                 |              | TLCP, 21, 1875, Paper 2, pp. xviii & 126.|
| 1875 | 9518.8.2        |              |                 |              | TLCP, 23, 1876, Paper 1, p. 140.          |
| 1876 | 10,346.8.3      |              |                 |              | TLCP, 25, 1875, Paper 8, p. 154.          |
| 1877 | 11,388.4.9      |              |                 |              | TLCP, 26, 1876-9, Paper 1, p. 154.        |
| 1878 | 11,743.15.5     |              |                 |              | TLCP, 28, 1879-80, Paper 1, p. 158.       |
| 1881 | 5130.18.7       |              |                 |              | TPP, 35, 1896, Paper 25, p. 5.            |
| 1882 | 4886.9.5        | 619          | 560             | 762          | TLCP, 34, 1880, Paper 2, p. 317.          |
| 1883 | 4619.11.10      | 636          | 576             | 722          | TPP, 2, 1884, Paper 2, p. 319.            |
| 1884 | 4478.10.7       | 539          | 520             | 633          | TPP, 5, 1885, Paper 1, p. 341.            |
| 1885 | 4136.16.8       | 505          | 538             | 633          | TPP, 8, 1886, Paper 1, p. 349.            |
| 1886 | 4191.3.1        | 533          | 599             | 638          | TPP, 11, 1887, Paper 2, p. 358.           |
| 1887 | 4271.3.4        | 545          | 623             | 663          | TPP, 14, 1888-9, Paper 2, p. 362.         |
| 1888 | 3903.4.11       | 450          | 578             | 565          | TPP, 18, 1889, Paper 103, p. 370.         |
| 1889 | 3483.7.9        | 469          | 563             | 578          | TPP, 21, 1890, Paper 151, p. 392.         |
| 1890 | 3147.6.5        | 470          | 543             | 596          | TPP, 24, 1891, Paper 150, p. 397.         |
| 1891 | 3061.10.1       | 444          | 479             | 560          | TPP, 26, 1892, Paper 124, p. 411.         |
| 1892 | 3180.5.7        | 449          | 546             | 571          | TPP, 29, 1893, Paper 107, p. 427.         |
| 1893 | 2890.6.4        | 447          | 532             | 558          | TPP, 31, 1894, Paper 89, p. 403.          |
| 1894 | 2769.12.8       | 441          | 470             | 584          | TPP, 33, 1895, Paper 48, p. 311.          |
| 1895 | 2835.17.6       |              |                 |              | TPP, 47, 1902, Paper 23, p. 3.            |
| 1896 | 2959.11.7*      |              |                 |              | TPP, 47, 1902, Paper 23, p. 3.            |
| 1897 | 2986.5.6        |              |                 |              | TPP, 47, 1902, Paper 23, p. 3.            |
| 1898 | 3012.3.4        |              |                 |              | TPP, 47, 1902, Paper 23, p. 3.            |
The committee felt that this would necessitate the appointment of salaried inspectors in Hobart Town and Launceston who would maintain a thorough system of surveillance, review every case applying for relief, conduct monthly inquiries and inspections of all applicants, and would have the power to suspend relief pending reference to the government. Other witnesses to the inquiry concurred. Central control was needed in order that the information obtained could be proficiently stored and efficiently utilised to minimise the risk of duplicating assistance due to poor communication between the differing branches of the charitable system. Unity of action was seen as the best security against imposition. In order to achieve this, it was proposed to establish a Charitable Grants Department answerable to the Colonial Secretary. The head of this new department would have charge of all the charitable institutions and the outdoor relief scheme. In country areas it was proposed that the wardens of each municipality and district police magistrates, assisted by 'other gentlemen nominated by the Governor', would form a relieving board with the responsibility of performing the role of the city inspectors. As a means to

* The parliamentary papers from which the data related to outdoor relief was extracted evidence marked variation, contradictions, and confusion in the expenditure figures. All expenditure figures, including and following, 1879 are based upon net figures for the outdoor relief grant. The figures expressed prior to 1879 are possibly gross figures and also possibly include sums expended by the Administrator of Charitable Grants in other facets of relief, such as transportation of paupers and pauper funeral expenses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>Expenditure £s.d.</th>
<th>No. of Cases</th>
<th>No. of Children</th>
<th>No. of Adults</th>
<th>REFERENCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>TPP, 47, 1902, Paper 23, p. 3.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>2960.5.0</td>
<td>396</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>449</td>
<td>TPP, 45, 1901, Paper 38, p. 408.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>TPP, 47, 1902, Paper 23, p. 3.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>3114.1.2</td>
<td>150</td>
<td></td>
<td>348</td>
<td>TPP, 47, 1902, Paper 67, p. 468.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>TPP, 47, 1902, Paper 23, p. 3.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The figures include expenditure for medical attendance on paupers in country districts and temporary provision for tramps, which in previous years was included in a separate vote on the Estimates.

---

136 ibid., p. 4.
137 ibid., p. 6.
138 ibid.
139 ibid., p. 3.
prevent the movement of paupers from country districts to the cities, and also
to cut transport costs, the committee suggested that 'relief be afforded at the
place where their poverty originated.' They further advised, in a move that
exposed their paternalism and lack of faith in the honesty of paupers, that
relief should only be granted as cash in exceptional circumstances.

In the discharge of his duties, William Tarleton, the Police Magistrate of
Hobart Town and administrator of the outdoor relief scheme, was assisted by
a Sergeant of Police, R. T. Edwards, acting as an inspection officer (and
referred to as an 'examining officer'). It was Edwards who conducted the
investigations into the circumstances of those applying for relief in the city.
Outside of the city this function was performed by District Constables Jones
and Carsons. The supervision conducted by these men was constant. At the
end of 1870 there were 580 adults receiving outdoor relief. Of these 400, were
located in the greater Hobart Town area of which 300 were in within the city
limits. Edwards visited new cases in their homes and also existing cases
once or twice each month, independent of their weekly personal appearance
to receive their money. In addition to this, all cases were inspected at the time
their grant came up for renewal. Relief was usually only granted for a
month at a time. Supervision of those in receipt of outdoor relief was
unrelenting. In one six month period the examining officer 'made upwards of
fourteen hundred visits during day and night.' These inspections went
beyond a mere cursory examination. They could involve probing searches
such as was undertaken upon one aged woman recommended by a
clergyman as being destitute and unable to support herself. Upon 'searching
her house' the examining officer found concealed a 200 lbs bag of fine flour

10 ibid.
12 TLCP, 17, 1871, Paper 47, p. xviii.
13 TLCP, 17, 1871, Paper 47, p. 64.
14 TLCP, 17, 1871, Paper 47, p. 67.
15 TLCP, 17, 1871, Paper 47, p. 67.
which had not been opened as well as half a ton of cut firewood. Relief was refused.

The detection of any abuse of the grant in the form of intemperance was likely to result in the loss of the relief, except where there were children involved. Non-conformity to middle class values was almost certain to exclude an applicant from receiving this form of relief, leaving the depot as the only option available in times of distress. Outdoor relief was reserved for more ‘respectable people’. For the poor aged and infirm colonist, incapable of earning a living, outdoor relief was the government’s preferred method of support as it was ‘more economical to give them a trifle than to put them into a public charitable institution.’ It also enabled authorities to exercise a means of social classification based upon class status in order to maintain a division between emancipist paupers and ‘free’ paupers.

In the late 1870s there occurred a systematic integration between public and private charitable aid. This is well exemplified by the formalisation of a new relationship between the government and the HBS. On 24 February 1880, after a period of negotiation, an agreement was struck in which the HBS agreed to undertake, on behalf of the government, from 1 March 1880, certain responsibilities in the administration of outdoor relief. Specifically, the government determined to utilise the Society’s surveillance and investigation capabilities. It was agreed that the government would pay the Society a sum

146 TLCP, 17, 1871, Paper 47, p. 67.
147 TLCP, 17, 1871, Paper 47, p. 56, paragraph 189. Evidence of intemperate behaviour, or other actions at odds with middle class virtues, such as begging, were likely to negate the granting of outdoor relief in the first place. For example, in late 1865, such relief was refused Margaret Murphy, on the basis of her propensity for alcohol and begging, and her failure to avail herself of Benevolent Society bread and soup. Instead she was offered the option of admission into the Cascades Female Invalid Depot, an offer she flatly refused. (AOT: CSD 25/12/595, 18.12.1864; 19. 12.1864; and, 22.12.1864.)
148 Michael Ignatieff has argued that ‘Philanthropy is not simply a vocation, a moral choice; it is also an act of authority that creates a linkage of dependency and obligation between rich and poor.’ (M. Ignatieff, A Just Measure of Pain: The Penitentiary in the Industrial Revolution, 1750-1850 (London, 1978), p. 153.
149 TLCP, 17, 1871, Paper 47, p. 56, paragraph 188.
150 ibid., paragraph 185.
of £200 in monthly or quarterly payments. In return, the Society agreed to undertake the investigation into all new cases applying for outdoor relief in Hobart Town and the suburbs of New Town, Sandy Bay and Wellington Hamlets. The Society also took on the responsibility for ongoing surveillance of cases receiving outdoor relief and the administration of the various funds allocated by the government for that purpose. In addition to the above, the HBS was also charged with investigating all applications for admission into both the HGH and the southern invalid depots. They were also empowered to issue certificates to paupers recommending their admission into the NTCI. Once a person was admitted to the depot they were subject to a three month period of detention and were not able to leave before the expiration of this period without the joint approval of both the Administrator and the Chairman of the HBS.

In delegating the responsibility for outdoor relief in Hobart Town and its environs to the HBS the government had effectively ceded an invidious task to an organisation made up of individuals committed to vanquishing pauperism and imposition. The HBS took their ‘means-testing’ responsibilities seriously, with 123 cases investigated in March 1880, and a further 127 the following month. All persons receiving the grant had to personally appear before a committee of the Society. This appearance was used to determine the validity of the applicants’ claim for help and the degree to which, if any, assistance should be granted. Failure to appear meant the loss of aid. Where it was found that parties receiving relief had relatives who had the means of offering them support they were also ‘struck off’ and measures initiated to recoup the support already expended. The government had chosen well, for the HBS was an organisation that, as a result of the exceedingly tight fiscal reins under which it had been required to

---

151 AOT: CSD 10/16/237, Moore to Colonial Treasurer, 25.2.1880; TLCP, 30, 1881, Paper 14, p. 3; and, TLCP, 29, 1880, Paper 55, p. 3.
152 AOT: CSD 10/16/237, Moore to Colonial Treasurer, 25.2.1880.
154 AOT: CSD 10/16/238, Mather to Colonial Secretary, 1.7.1880.
155 ibid.
operate, was well endowed with both the skills and ideology to enable it to minimise 'all unnecessary outlay'.

The HBS relished the opportunity to control outdoor relief in the southern metropolis. It gave them an opportunity to reverse a number of trends in pauper management that they opposed. For example, the HBS was against the issuing of relief in cash, except in extreme circumstances; a method that had often been adopted by government relieving officers. The HBS accused the government of too liberally bestowing money on paupers. John O'Boyle, the Administrator of Charitable Grants, had commented to the 1888 Royal Commission when asked if he thought the benevolent societies improvident in dispensing relief that, 'I do not think anyone could accuse them of being lavish.' This was the reason that the government had involved the HBS in its system of charitable relief. It effectively used the Society as a filter to determine eligibility for state relief. The benevolent societies prided themselves on their intimate knowledge of the poor and on their capacity to rigorously investigate the validity of all claimants. This was the proficiency that the government wanted to exploit. To be approved for government assistance in Hobart a pauper had to have first obtained relief from the HBS, usually for a period of three months, before they could even be recommended for government relief. The HBS's position in the system effectively limited the numbers able to access government funds.

William Moore, the Colonial Secretary, and the government should have been more than pleased with the HBS's ability to root out imposition and minimise expenditure. The HBS was certainly far more penurious in its treatment of paupers than the government. For example, in 1882, the amount of relief apportioned by the benevolent societies was equivalent to £2.18s.2 3/4d. per

---

156 ibid.
158 ibid., p. 2.
159 ibid., p. 5. The 1883 annual report of the HBS states that cases were never transferred from relief by the Society to that of the government 'until after the expiration of three months.' (TPP, 1, 1884, Paper 12, p. 3.)
case. That distributed by the Administrator of Charitable Grants was equivalent to £3.15s.2d., a full 16s.11 1/4d. more per case. Also, in 1882, the HBS expended £1579.18s.9d. on behalf of the government via charitable grants in Hobart and its suburbs. This was £53.11s.2d. less than the amount expended the previous year. Indeed, an 1885 Select Committee inquiry into the administration of charitable grants in Tasmania concluded that:

In the distribution of charitable aid to the poor of the city, the Committee of the Hobart Benevolent Society have done good work since they took over the charge of the out-door relief. Through the careful enquiries made by the Society and its Enquiring Officer, a very large reduction in annual outlay has been effected.

However, the relationship between the HBS and the Charitable Grants Department was marred by discord. The basis of this appears to have been that the duties of the different agencies were ill-defined and that, as a consequence, private bodies came to perceive the department as interfering, exerting unwanted control and being unappreciative of their operations. There was a general lack of cooperation and misunderstanding of one another’s responsibilities. The HBS believed it had the authority to act according to its own judgement but the Administrator of Charitable Grants believed that the Society was subordinate to his control. The HBS resented this and felt that it was not trusted by the government.

The basis of the Administrator of Charitable Grants criticism of the HBS was not its capacity to economically manage outdoor relief, but issues related to power and authority. He believed that control of outdoor relief should have been centralised with one officer — himself. He had come to realise that knowledge was power and that centralised case notes were an effective tool in determining the state’s response to individual applicants and checking for imposition. As the benevolent societies did not have the same extensive information gathering capability, nor surveillance resources, particularly of

---

160 TLCP, 34, 1883, Paper 2, p. lix.
161 TLCP, 34, 1883, Paper 11, p. 3.
162 TPP, 6, 1885, Paper 154, p. 5.
country cases, administration of the system should have been invested solely with his department.\textsuperscript{164}

The 1888 Royal Commission suggested that the government take back from the benevolent societies the responsibility of dispersing the government outdoor relief. This recommendation was based upon a decision that government bureaucrats should exercise total control over public monies. It was not based on an economic argument, as the evidence given before the Commission was that the system had delivered a cost saving to the government. In keeping with a move to imbue all state power related to charitable institutions to government officers, the Commission further recommended that 'the sole power of admission to the Institution should be in the hands of the Administrator of Charitable Grants, and the system of dual control abolished.'\textsuperscript{165} The Commissioners believed 'that direct Government grants for charitable purposes should be distributed, and admission to Government Institutions granted, under Government control, and by a Government official only.'\textsuperscript{166} The Commissioners maintained that under the dual system the government had lost control over who was being admitted to its charitable institutions, and that this power had been invested in an organisation over which it had little control and who were not responsible to the government.\textsuperscript{167} Thus in June 1889, the HBS was informed that it would forfeit its capacity to issue orders for admitting paupers into the NTCI and that these would be transferred to the Administrator of Charitable Grants.\textsuperscript{168} Further, as of 1 January 1890 it would also be relieved of the duty of administering government outdoor relief in Hobart.\textsuperscript{169} This duty was also ceded to the Administrator of Charitable Grants.\textsuperscript{170} However, the story behind the loss of administration of the government outdoor charitable grant for

\textsuperscript{163} ibid., pp. 9-10.
\textsuperscript{164} ibid., pp. 17 and 22.
\textsuperscript{165} TPP, 15, 1888, Paper 50, p. xxvii.
\textsuperscript{166} ibid., p. x.
\textsuperscript{167} ibid., p. xxii.
\textsuperscript{168} AOT: CSD 16/24/262, Fysh to Chairman Executive Committee HBS, 27.6.1889.
\textsuperscript{169} AOT: CSD 16/24/262, Fysh to Administrator of Charitable Grants, 24.12.1889.
\textsuperscript{170} AOT: CSD 16/24/262, Fysh to Treasurer, 1.2.1890.
Hobart and its suburbs by the HBS was a little more complex than portrayed here. A central component was the refusal of the Society to bend to a government demand that it register itself under the *Charitable Institution Act* (1888).\(^{171}\) Unlike the HBS, the LBS readily agreed to register under the Act and thus they continued to play a role in the administration of government relief in the north of the colony.\(^{172}\)

Conservative values defended by benevolent societies, along with the impression by the elite that invalids were an economic burden and a widespread middle class conviction that pauper emancipists represented a moral contagion, prejudiced the treatment of the aged poor and the institutional environment they experienced. Likewise, 'criminalisation' of the aged and infirm, as evidenced in the institutional management of female invalids, strongly influenced the character of institutionalisation. The repercussions of the psychological impact of community sentiment in terms of the experience of life inside an institution is the subject of the following chapter.

\(^{171}\) See *TPP*, 20, 1890, Paper 75, p. 10 for a record of the acrimonious correspondence of this dispute. The *Charitable Institution Act* (1888) was one of the outcomes of the 1888 Royal Commission. It sought to better regulate the administration of charitable institutions.

\(^{172}\) *TPP*, 20, 1890, Paper 14, p. 4 and *TPP*, 21, 1890, Paper 83, p. 4.