Ballarat and its Benevolent Asylum:

A Nineteenth-Century Model of Christian Duty,

Civic Progress and Social Reform

Helen W. Kinloch

B.A. IML (Ballarat) B.A. Hons (Ballarat)

M.A. (Ballarat) GCTE (Ballarat)

This thesis is submitted in total fulfilment
of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

School of Behavioural and Social Sciences and Humanities

University of Ballarat

P.O. Box 663
University Drive, Mount Helen
Ballarat, Victoria, 3353
Australia

February 2004

SUMMARY

This study of Ballarat and its Asylum covers the period between the 1850s and the early 1900s when an old-age pension was introduced in Victoria. It is essentially a case study. It argues that Ballarat's Asylum progressively developed and expanded upon a model of organised poor relief practiced among the industrial classes in England, in consequence of the perceived need for rapid capital expansion in Australia, and knowledge of the dangers associated with mining, building construction, and other manual work. The introduction of a secular education system in Victoria, together with enthusiasm among producers for technological innovation and skill development, led to changes in the nature and conditions of paid work, as well as to a push among workers and their sympathizers for greater appreciation of past contributions by older workers and the needs of the ill and/or incapacitated. This push was only partially addressed by the Victorian government in 1901 when it introduced the old-age pension.

As a historical case study of the relationship between capitalist, sectarian Ballarat, and its altruistic, non-sectarian Benevolent Asylum, this thesis utilises Asylum records, historical studies and recorded information about early Ballarat and its socio-political development. It also draws on studies of English social policy development to link ideologies governing work, fraternal voluntarism, progress, Christian duty, and the passing of management control to bodies established by a centralized state authority, to a continuing shift in the direction of educated participation in decision making processes, which gained momentum among independent workers

in Australia. The idea for an asylum in Ballarat arose in 1857 as a result of the suicide of a skilled man for want of work. This event heightened concern among community leaders about the effects of widespread destitution on people whose skills were needed to build the kind of society they envisaged. The Asylum in Ballarat, therefore, constituted a social experiment in the minimization of distress and the fostering of civility in an emerging world perceived by its leading citizens to be more reliant for survival on science and industry, than on old world traditions of class distinction and religious division. The Asylum committee gained local support for its initiatives due to its personal approach which departed from the more rigorous discipline adopted by Melbourne's less fraternal charitable networks.

Ballarat, as a generally Christian, and predominantly Protestant, settlement, and its non-sectarian Asylum reflected the inconsistency between Ballarat's ostensibly egalitarian ethos and the spirit of competitive advantage that characterized members of the wider community of gold seekers. Most sections of the community saw the need for guaranteed funding of the Asylum as important, however, due to the lack of alternate support for the incapacitated, the old and/or the destitute, and the fluctuating levels of local donations. Efforts by Asylum committee members to secure a viable level of funding were directed particularly towards local and colonial governments and ordinary people. Neither local nor colonial governments were willing to accept financial responsibility for the health and welfare of constituents, preferring to rely on volunteer groups, but by

the end of the nineteenth century, the charitable network in Victoria generally, was widely perceived as inadequate and the 1890s depression obliged the Victorian government to intervene more directly in providing relief than it had during earlier decades.

This intervention established the state as primary guardian of the common weal, which made for more social dependence and inter-dependence and diminished the influence of local subscribers and committees in Ballarat over Asylum admissions. It also eroded the principle of voluntary contribution they had sought to encourage, but it did not resolve issues surrounding poverty, unemployment, incapacity and class distinction, which had given rise to this change.

STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP

Except where explicit reference is made in the text of the thesis, this thesis contains no material published elsewhere or extracted in whole or in part from a thesis by which I have qualified for or been awarded another degree or diploma. No other person's work has been relied upon or used without due acknowledgment in the main text and bibliography of the thesis.

Signed (Applicant) _____

Date _____

Signed   (Supervisor)

_____

Date _____

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter Seven

Chapter Eight

LIST OF TABLES

INTRODUCTION

This study of Ballarat and its Benevolent Asylum covers the period between the late 1850s, when the Asylum was first established, and the early 1900s when the introduction of the old-age pension in Victoria in January 1901 restructured both the role, and the degree of independence of the Asylum from governing authorities in Melbourne. The approach to organized charity adopted in Ballarat was more fraternal than that of other charitable societies operating in Victoria at the time, due to a camaraderie in Ballarat stemming from shared exposure to primitive and dangerous working conditions. As a result of the many injuries, fatalities and consequent distress, some of Ballarat's more successful producers, merchants and administrators sought to reconcile the unsettled nature of life on a crowded alluvial goldfield with what they saw as an inevitable and desirable transformation into a more orderly, better educated, and co-operative manner of local progress towards self reliance and general prosperity.

The general feeling among mining workers in nineteenth-century Ballarat was that mining companies ought to pay the greater cost of caring for workers made ill by mining work. This approach to remedial health care depended on levels of local profit, which were fluctuating, but ultimately the elected Victorian govern-ment was held to be at least partly responsible for ensuring that conditions of exploitative work did not endanger the health of Victorian citizens. In the interim, and in order to alleviate existing distress, cash and goods had to be donated to the Ballarat Benevolent Asylum by those in work, but this was recognized as an uncertain basis of operation, hence a key issue

in the delivery of organized charitable assistance by successive committees of Asylum manage-ment in nineteenth-century Ballarat was the effort to secure guaranteed funding for poor relief. Emphasis was placed on attracting regular and voluntary contributions from mining companies and local government. This was in contrast to welfare management by governing authorities in Melbourne, where reliance was placed on attracting financial support from church-based groups and centralized authorities. Throughout Victoria, the management of poverty and the reform of the poor was part of a drive towards a productive workforce, and, as in England, claims for poor relief were usually assessed in terms of how "deserving" of such relief a claimant was perceived to be. This approach was also common in Ballarat, but there was a greater awareness in Ballarat among its leading citizens, many of whom had been miners themselves, of the frequency, and often the fatality, of mining accidents, as well as of the injurious effects on a man's health of mining work, so the need to convince Asylum committee members of eligibility for assistance, at least among men, was diminished.

Guiding principles of goodness and morality, hence eligibility for poor relief in nineteenth-century Victoria generally, operated within an ideological context determined by Christian clergymen, and worthiness of charitable assistance was only conceded to those whose misfortune could not be attributed to any lapse of Christian moral discipline. Notwithstanding a common perception among colonial Christians that money was the root of all evil, recognition of the role and need of capital in the growth and civic development of Ballarat, often overrode evangelical exhortations against avarice, profiteering and

dishonest dealing. The exigencies of capital development and expansion were also influential in determining how early Asylum committees in Ballarat assessed the kind and levels of assistance rendered to the local population.

Wesleyan Methodism was the most active religious influence in Ballarat, and while it was not the only creed to extol the saving graces of philanthropy and voluntarism, it was a creed that was more inclusive of the industrial classes than most others, and it was distinguished in Ballarat by its zealous promotion of simplicity, industry, self-reliance and civic progress. It is argued that this ethic derived a great deal from the Biblical concept of the good Samaritan, that is from the point of view of the man who was able to help a stranger to his feet, and an interpretation of this ethic was promoted in a local newspaper.[1] Willingness to help the stranger regardless of his race, color or creed, was exemplified in the story of the good Samaritan, and in Ballarat this ethic tended to override sectarian definitions of "deserving".

Freemasonry was also strong in Ballarat, and the concept of brotherhood had much in common with principles of the good Samaritan. Together, these principles helped to submerge the city's sectarian tensions.[2] Both

---

[1] "The Benevolent Association" *Star* (Ballarat), 2 December 1857, 3. It was in reference to the Ballarat Benevolent Association that the *Star* used the term "good Samaritans" to describe local farmers who, according to the article, were always willing to help those experiencing hard times, provided the latter were willing to labour. The farmers were said to "always have sufficient to keep want from the door" and the agricultural districts were said to be "bountiful". This was the tone of many articles published in the *Star* during this period of rapid development, indicating that the Biblical story of the good Samaritan was broadly familiar to, and upheld by, the local population.

[2] Freemasonry in nineteenth-century Ballarat (and elsewhere) was an ordered hierarchy of knowledge and skill revolving around the enduring quality of inspirational stone buildings, together with the architect/designer and the skilled tradesmen needed to build them. Freemasonry emphasised fealty to kings, brotherhood among members of the Order, and an obligation to assist a brother's widow, her children and other dependents. It was a Humanist order which sought to inculcate principles of honesty, voluntarism, the acquisition of skill, and social obligation among its members. (See discussion of Freemasonry commencing on page 8, and drawing on the history and principles of Freemasonry as

encouraged a spirit of ordered independence and social obligation, along with a fraternal concern for the welfare of people in distress. In fact, it was this very spirit of social obligation and fraternal concern, triggered by a suicide that gave rise to the establishment of the Ballarat Benevolent Asylum. In November 1857 a young man named George Wright who was a mechanical engineer recently arrived from England with his wife and young child, had tramped to Golden Point, near the present day intersection of Humffray and Peel Streets, in a bid to find work. The job market was saturated though, and in a gesture of despair while a mining machine was unattended, he stepped onto a platform and placed his neck between a revolving spur wheel and a pinion wheel and thereby decapitated himself. This particularly horrific suicide gained a major response. The community rallied to Mrs. Wright's aid, and within a week, a public appeal had raised one hundred and ninety two pounds, sixteen shillings and sixpence to meet her immediate needs.[3]

As a result of this incident, a public meeting was held in Ballarat on 30 November 1857 to form a society for the relief of people in distress. It was at this meeting, which was chaired by auctioneer, municipal councillor and Wesleyan, James Oddie, that the Ballarat Benevolent and Visiting Society, later known as the Ballarat Benevolent Asylum, was inaugurated. It was a secular and pragmatic response to an increasingly vexing problem. The meeting was attended by a somewhat critical and regular correspondent to the *Star*, Mary Jane, who, in a letter praising the initiative, also pointed out

---

described and explained by Walton Hannah, *Darkness Visible: A Revelation and Interpretation of Freemasonry* (Devon: Britons Publishing, 1970); Michael Baigent and Richard Leigh, *The Temple and the Lodge* (London: Arrow Books, 1998); and Fred L. Pick and G. Norman Knight, *The Pocket History of Freemasonry*, 7th ed. rev. Frederick Smythe (London: Frederick Muller Ltd., 1983).

"there wasn't a single clergyman there, nor a clergyman's wife, nor many miners either".[4] Despite this absence, support for an asylum grew and a broad cross section of Ballarat's settled population became involved in its operations.

Chronicles about aspects of life on the goldfields of Ballarat have usually confined their scope to particular people, sites of successful activity and/or dramatic events. Christina Twomey[5] adopts a more analytical approach when she examines the frequency of wife-desertion on the goldfields, as does Robert Van Krieken,[6] who traces the increasing incidence of state intervention into family life in Australia. Similarly, Derek Fraser[7] describes the beginnings of welfare legislation in Britain, and David Goodman[8] compares gold rushes and their social effects in California and Victoria. These researchers all avoid the conventional representation of gold seeking in Ballarat as an all round success story by critically reviewing the ideological underpinnings relevant to their respective topics. Such analyses enable a clear assessment of major and minor influences on the social mores of given periods, and the circumstances under which they were formed.

---

[3] "Local and General News", *Star* (Ballarat), 7 December 1857, 3.

[4] "Benevolent Societies" (To the Editor of the *Star*), *Star* (Ballarat), 3 December 1857, 2.

[5] Christina Twomey, "Without Natural Protectors: Responses to Wife-Desertion in Gold Rush Victoria", *Australian Historical Studies*, 28 no. 108 (April 1997): 22-46. [database online]: EBSCOhost/Academic Search Elite [2001, February 17]. 1-20.

[6] Robert Van Krieken, *Children and the State: Social Control: The Charity Organisation Society and the Formation of Australian Child Welfare* (North Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1991).

[7] Derek Fraser, *The Evolution of the British Welfare State: A History of Social Policy Since the Industrial Revolution*, 2nd ed. (London: Macmillan Education Ltd., 1984).

[8] David Goodman, *Gold Seeking: Victoria and California in the 1850s* (St. Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 1994).

The overwhelming strength of the Capitalist ethos in relation to trade, growth and charitable assistance generally, was recognised by social historian Brian Dickey,[9] who stated that it was a determining factor on how nineteenth-century society was organized as a whole in Australia. A willingness to work, and a perceived lack of responsibility for one's own destitution were typical criteria of eligibility for assistance. These sentiments were echoed in an article by Richard Kennedy, but Kennedy made the point that notions of the deserving as defined by Christian clergymen had governed the delivery of charitable assistance in nineteenth-century Victoria, and were "still central to all capitalist welfare".[10] Parsimonious condescension towards the social outcast was not reflected in the pedagogic tone of speeches by Ballarat's Asylum committee members, however, and nor in articles about charitable assistance or the lack of it, as appeared in Ballarat newspapers such as the *Star*.[11] That is not to say that admission into the Asylum was indiscriminate. The admission register covering the period 21 February 1860 to 5 April 1862, suggests that early preference was given to old and/or incapacitated miners, labourers and tradesmen; that is, to working, or formerly working, men who were admitted on the recommendation of known and trusted subscribers. In the Asylum's first Annual Report,[12] the rules under which potential inmates were to be recommended were formalized. While preference was to be given

---

[9] Brian Dickey, *No Charity There: A Short History of Social Welfare in Australia* (Sydney, Wellington, London, Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1987), 38.

[10] Richard Kennedy, "Charity and Ideology in Colonial Victoria*", Bowyang*, no. 5 (April-May 1981): 16-23.

[11] The *Star* was first published in September 1855, its main competitor at the time being the *Ballarat Times*. For the ensuing ten years the Star gave emphasis to local intelligence, such as the location of a new lead, the doings of the various clubs, associations and institutions, trading information and British news. It reported the doings of the Benevolent Asylum in great detail, perhaps with the view of gaining inside information among influential men in Ballarat, many of whom sat on local government, business and/or charitable committees.

[12] Ballarat Benevolent Asylum, First Annual Report, December 1858, 10-11.

to industrious people of good character, the Asylum's Admission Register[13] suggests that industriousness itself was used as an indicator of character, and that in the case of men at least, little or no further evidence of goodness was sought.

Kennedy also suggested that apologists for Melbourne's religious and charitable institutions denied the existence of destitution in Victoria in order to present a prosperous image to potential investors and/or immigrants to the colony. This drive for capital investment and immigration was affirmed by zealous promoters such as J. D. Lang, a Presbyterian minister intent on populating the colony with capable, responsible, industrious Protestants.[14] Successive Benevolent Asylum committee members in Ballarat, however, who seem to have inspired the *Star*, were more intent on showing that capitalism could be a force for the improvement of general living conditions, and for the elevation of all they perceived to be ennobling about courage, steadfastness and English literary culture. They saw profit and capital growth as a means to this end, rather than as an end in itself, and the combination of Protestantism and Freemasonry was more generally compatible with capital development and expansion than the more parochial approach of Irish (Roman) Catholicism.

Freemasonry

---

[13] Ballarat Benevolent Asylum, *Register of Inmates* 21/2/60 to 31/12/72.

[14] Anne Beggs Sunter, "James Oddie (1824-1911) His Life and the Wesleyan Contribution to Ballarat", (Masters Diss., Deakin University, 1989), 7-9.

Few analyses of nineteenth-century Ballarat have noted differences between Christian dogmas and older traditions of faith, and little attention has been paid to the strong influence of Freemasons in Ballarat, or to Freemasonry's religious neutrality, which gave its principles a Humanist orientation. Various Humanist elements may be traced back to ancient principles of Freemasonry, and the latter's influence pervaded Ballarat's nineteenth-century traditions of fine quality stone building construction, fraternity and the relief of distress. Protestantism, though, did not identify with misfortune, and in Melbourne, the Puritanical Calvinist doctrine of pre-destined salvation or damnation, which was suggested very strongly in speeches by the President of Melbourne's Charity Organization Society, Professor E. E. Morris,[15] tended to predominate in the conduct of both charitable and business organizations.

Puritanism was challenged by scientific discoveries, technological advance, the quickening pace of development and the accrual of wealth, particularly in Melbourne during latter decades of the nineteenth century. These factors led to changed perceptions of the morality of entrepreneurial activity, and together with a common preference for less rigorous applications of moral discipline, whether articulated or not, were part of a continuing drift towards more generally secular interpretations of social value in resource-rich cities such as Ballarat. According to historian R. H. Tawney, "the growth, triumph and transformation of the Puritan spirit was the most fundamental movement of the Seventeenth Century",[16] and this transformation continued, along with the

---

[15] The First Annual Reports of the COS of Melbourne 1888-1890, quoted in Richard Kennedy, "Charity and Ideology in Colonial Victoria", *Bowyang*, no. 5 (April-May 1981): 18.

[16] R. H. Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism: A Historical Study* with a prefaratory note by Dr. Charles Gore (Middlesex, England: Pelican, 1938), 198.

expansion of capital and its need of a skilled labouring class. Many skilled labourers were also Freemasons. Tawney's observations in relation to the transformation of the Puritan spirit in England run parallel to the findings of social historians Michael Baigent and Richard Leigh in relation to the rise of Freemasonry in England. Baigent and Leigh state that

> In its present form, Freemasonry dates specifically from the seventeenth century [and it] was to act as a kind of adhesive, a binding agent which served to hold together, in a way that the Catholic Church no longer could, the diverse elements and components of a fragmenting world, a fragmenting world view.[17]

This combination of social forces encouraged young men into industry and trade guilds in Britain. Idleness was then held by many authorities to be a vice and the trade guilds and Masonic Lodges helped these men to find work. In addition to the acquisition of skill and paid work, however, Methodism promised eligibility for salvation to the industrial classes, something not promised by Calvinism, and not contemplated by Freemasonry.

This potential among the industrial classes of English society for elevated social status was a distinct departure from Calvin's doctrine of pre-destination, in that it permitted social mobility. Social mobility in reality, however, was still dependant on acceptance by the privileged class, and this, in turn, according to Tawney, depended on a combination of economic independence, education, and pride in one's status, together with a determination to live one's own life "without trucking to earthly superiors".[18] As Tawney saw it, the

---

[17] Michael Baigent and Richard Leigh, *The Temple and the Lodge* (London: Arrow Books, 1998), 207. First published in the United Kingdom by Jonathan Cape, 1989.
[18] Tawney, op.cit. 202.

Calvinist spirit of Puritanism promoted a "somewhat arrogant contempt for those who were less resolute, less vigorous than themselves".[19] This was quite at odds with the Freemason's approach to the misfortune of a brother, and with Wesleyan principles of Christian duty towards the outcast.

Protestantism generally, however, had quite a lot in common with Freemasonry, particularly in England, where both were aligned to the Crown. In fact, it was demanded of Freemasons "that you bee true men to the kinge without any treason or falsehood"[20] and this demand was a binding one, reaching back to the Order's traditional beginnings. Fealty to the King was binding on both Freemasons and Protestants in nineteenth-century Victoria, and this made for quite a marked division between these groups and the more radical elements of Irish (Roman) Catholicism in Ballarat.

Freemasonry had a longer history of resistance to the religious conformism demanded by Rome than the denominational churches, and this tradition was rooted in the building of Solomon's temple, specifically in the two hollow entry pillars, cast under the direction of master builder Hiram Abiff.[21] An explanation of this tradition can enable parallels to be drawn between the Masonic interpretation of social order and obligation, and the nineteenth-century Ballarat Benevolent Asylum's interpretation of Christian duty towards those in distress.

---

[19] Ibid.
[20] Baigent and Leigh, op.cit. 210.
[21] Walton Hannah, *Darkness Visible: A Revelation and Interpretation of Freemasonry,* 12th ed. (Devon: Britons Publishing Company, 1970), 125.

Abiff was said in the Old Testament I Kings VII: 13-15: to have been the son of a widow of the tribe of Napthali,[22] and Solomon, who was the son of the Jewish King David, gave Abiff paid work. Abiff, as an architect, would have had to be familiar with principles of geometry, and this was the kind of knowledge that positioned him among those known as speculative Freemasons. Stonemasons not possessed of this kind of knowledge were known as operative Freemasons. Both speculative and operative Freemasons were loyal to the tradition established by King Solomon, of patronizing and/or assisting the sons of widows who were then expected to support their mothers, but operative Freemasons in seventeenth-century England did not pursue the Order's earlier, speculative traditions which tended to discourage the pursuit of higher learning among operatives. There were three levels of initiation into operative Freemasonry: apprentices, fellows and masters. Beyond those levels of knowledge and skill, was the knowledge of geometry necessarily pursued and developed by architects, originally as a result of speculation about the forces of nature and knowledge of the possible effects of those forces on buildings. According to Baigent and Leigh, men possessed of this knowledge were originally held to be a "species of magus, conversant with the sum of human knowledge and privy to the creation's underlying laws".[23] The speculative tradition of Freemasonry remained strong in parts of Europe and Scotland throughout the Middle Ages, and it influenced the establishment of Freemasonry in England. English stonemasons, however, were mostly operatives and Christians, who joined the guilds for what they offered in terms of brotherhood, the acquisition of skill and work

---

[22] Napthali was a son of Jacob bestowed in Genesis 49: 21, with the blessing of bearing well.
[23] Baigent, Michael and Richard Leigh, op.cit. 187.

opportunities, and a degree of protection for wives and children should the mason meet with death or serious accident. These advantages were also enjoyed by miners and Freemasons in Ballarat where the acquisition of scientific knowledge and manual skill was actively fostered by the demands of mining and construction work.

There are many elements suggestive of Freemasonic influence on the pedagogy of the Ballarat Benevolent Asylum and it is noted on page 18 in footnote 40 that several members of the original committee were Freemasons as well as Christians. These men gave high priority to those seeking paid employment, and to the health of brothers, their widows, deserted wives and young children, as well as loyalty to the British monarch.

According to Freemason and Masonic historian Walton Hannah, a defining characteristic of all branches and levels of Freemasonry, Christian, pre-Christian or non-Christian, was fealty to the ideal of human brotherhood, the preservation of knowledge and adherence to truth.[24]

Masonic historians and Freemasons, Fred L. Pick and Norman Knight, state that the *Grand Lodge of All England* was founded at York in 1725 and that Ireland and Scotland quickly followed suit. The English Masonic Order has been viewed by other Masonic historians as an expression of English Liberalism and as a bulwark against the imposition of religious conformism:

> The Masonic ideals of religious toleration, and the basic equality of all people were in keeping with the growing spirit of Liberalism during the eighteenth

century. One of the basic tenets of the Masonic Order throughout the English-speaking world has been that religion is solely the concern of the individual.[25]

The establishment date of the Grand Lodge in 1725 was affirmed in partisan texts, but self-professed non-Masons, Baigent and Leigh,[26] state that the *Grand Lodge of All England* was "created on 24 June in 1717",[27] and that it was popularized through the agency of influential figures such as architect, Christopher Wren. Earlier speculative Masonic societies in Scotland also became influential in England, forming the *Royal Society* under the King's patronage in 1661, but where Scottish Freemasonry continued to operate under the jurisdiction of speculative Freemasonic bodies, such as the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite Supreme Council or the Grand Chapter of the Royal Arch, the "higher degrees" they offered "being almost exclusively a Jacobite preserve"[28], were not permitted by operative Freemasons in England to be offered through the *Grand Lodge of All England*. This effectively divided English Freemasonry from its speculative roots and made for a class of less sophisticated, predominantly Protestant, labourers. The operative Freemasons in England formed their own lodges and operated in accordance with tradition, but more or less independently of lodges elsewhere, and this was the tradition that took root in nineteenth-century Australia. In Ballarat, operative Freemasonry was very strong. Lodge meetings were held in various hotels, but pressure for more appropriate quarters led to the erection

---

[24] Hannah, op.cit., 115.
[25] Microsoft, *Encarta Encyclopaedia 2000*, s.v. Freemasonry.
[26] Baigent and Leigh, op.cit. 207.
[27] Ibid. 239.
[28] Ibid., 241.

of a temple-like building for ritualistic purposes and on 16 October 1872,[29] after a procession through the streets and due ceremony, the foundation stone was laid for an imposing Masonic hall in Camp Street which became the Order's central point in Ballarat.

Freemasonry began in Victoria on 23 December 1839.[30] By 1862 forty-two Lodges were operating in Victoria and by 1889 there were 176.[31] Prior to joining the United Grand Lodge of Ancient Free and Accepted Masons of Victoria, Masonic Lodges operated under constitutions drafted by English, Irish or Scottish Masonic Orders. According to an article on the growth of Freemasonry in Ballarat by resident historian Robert Bell,[32] membership of the United Grand Lodge of Ancient Free and Accepted Masons of Victoria increased from about 5,000 in the 1860s to reach a peak in the 1960s with about 130,000 members in Victoria. Freemasonry remained strong in Ballarat through most of the twentieth century. Bell states that in the 1960s the state percentage against head of population was around 0.75% but in Ballarat the figure was more like 1.35% of the community.[33]

---

[29] The existence of a "brick hall" owned by the Trustees of the Independent Order of Masons was first listed in Ballarat rate books in 1873, the foundation stone having been laid by Sir Henry Cuthbert, a prominent solicitor in Ballarat on 16 October 1872. Cuthbert was also a Freemason and a representative of the First Federal Council deliberations in Sydney in 1890. According to the *Courier* (Ballarat)(18/10/72) the stone laying ceremony was attended by a large crowd of several hundred persons. Flags flew from the town hall and other buildings and the first act upon arrival in Camp Street after a procession through the streets, was for the Grand Master to bless the plans. After a hymn was sung various items were placed inside the stone, which was subsequently laid. Corn, wine and oil were then scattered over the stone, these being symbols of flesh, blood and facilitation. Further information about this building appears in a booklet compiled by Anne Beggs Sunter with research assistance from Helen Kinloch (Dehn), Michael Poke, Jamie Greenwood, Joe Walker and Rebecca McDonald, entitled *Camp Street, Ballarat: From Eureka to Federation: a Guide to its History and Buildings* (Ballarat: Ballarat Fine Art Gallery Association, 2001), 39.

[30] Talbot Arts and Historical Museum, "Talbot Masonic Lodge", Masonic Showcase (Talbot: Talbot Arts and Historical Museum, 2003).

[31] Ibid.

[32] Robert Bell, "Freemasonry and Early Ballarat", *The Ballarat Historian*, 4, No. 10 (July 1991), 10.

[33] Ibid.

The spirit of Humanism incumbent on all members of the Masonic Order was more rooted in the Order's early speculative traditions, however, than in its later operatives. Nevertheless it was continued through the rules of the brotherhood and first among these, in Ballarat as elsewhere, was the preservation of the Order, closely followed by the obligation to alleviate distress among widows and orphans of members. In relation to paid work, pre-Christian Masonic ritual and tradition portrays at least some of Hiram's masons as free men, and, unlike slave labourers, Freemasons were paid for their work in accordance with their level of skill. Baigent and Leigh point out that when wages were distributed it was likely that different levels of skill would have been conveyed to the paymaster by the exchange of different words and signs.[34] Different signs continued to signify differences in rank between apprentice, fellow and master, but by the nineteenth century, due to the influx of non-labouring classes, they had become largely symbolic.

Baigent and Leigh suggested that a deeper level meaning lies behind the Hiram Abiff narrative, having something to do with mythology and the origin of religions.[35] Whether or not this view can be substantiated, elements of the narrative survived in the rituals and obligations of operative Freemasons in seventeenth-century England and in nineteenth-century Australia. One of these surviving elements was the fraternalism encouraged between working employers and their employees, and another the voluntary rendering of practical assistance towards working men and their dependents, in particular,

---

[34] Baigent and Leigh, op. cit.179.
[35] Ibid., 181.

widows and children. This was the ethos of the good Samaritan as promoted by the *Star* in nineteenth-century Ballarat, and also in the outdoor relief policies of Ballarat's Benevolent Asylum. This is not to say that the *Star* or the Asylum were managed in the interests of Freemasonry, but that paid work, brotherhood and fraternity, which were the bedrock of Freemasonry, were also the necessary foundation of a shared work and charitable ethos in Ballarat. Three influential men who exemplified these dual allegiances were Sir Henry Cuthbert, solicitor and Hospital committee member, Robert Malachi Sargeant, mine manager and donor to both the Hospital and the Asylum, and Colonel W. C. Smith, sharebroker, Asylum committee member and later the Victorian government's Minister for Education. A fourth was Nathan Spielvogel, pupil-teacher and, by 1924, the headmaster of Dana Street School, who was also a Freemason and well known for his active interest in Ballarat and its history.

In addition to the fraternity being involved in leading charitable initiatives in Ballarat, other elements of local social infrastructure attest to the importance of Freemasonry in Ballarat during the years 1857 to 1900. One surviving Freemasonic ritual was the preservation of knowledge in, under or behind foundation stones, stone being viewed in ancient times as more likely than most materials to withstand the forces of cataclysmic natural disaster. The survival of human knowledge under those circumstances was held to be a necessary foundation for the resurgence of human life and intelligence. Masonic ritual accompanied the laying of the first foundation stone to the

Ballarat Benevolent Asylum,[36] but subsequent foundation stones to different sections of the institution were laid by successive Presidents. Some of these presidents may have been Freemasons, but after the building was opened, no mention was made of Masonic ritual accompanying the laying of foundation stones for additional sections of it. This was probably in the interests of harmony among Masonic and non-Masonic subscribers. The foundation stone for the Victoria ward though, was laid jointly by President Phillips and Treasurer Shoppee,[37] the latter a known Freemason.

In political terms, various understandings of fraternity and equality were contested most strongly in nineteenth-century Ballarat between pastoralists and miners. In relation to Victoria's goldfields, Twomey has argued that it was the shared experience of industrialisation, urbanisation and their attendant social and economic upheavals, particularly the loss of control over working conditions that fostered the development of a politics of agrarianism and its associations of independence and control over production.[38] While nostalgia for pastoral vistas may have gripped many of Ballarat's urbanised industrial class, it is contended here that the politics of agrarianism and land reform quickly gave way to the politics of collective bargaining—labour versus capital—once the land reform issue had been partially resolved by the introduction on the goldfields of the Miner's Right.

---

[36] Ballarat Benevolent Asylum, Second Annual Report, January 1860, 3.
[37] Ballarat Benevolent Asylum, Thirtieth Annual Report, June 1887, 6.
[38] Twomey, op.cit., 3 of 20.

The growth of an organized labour movement found expression in Ballarat via the Amalgamated Miners' Association,[39] which, like Ballarat's Asylum, was open to all creeds and biased towards none. Both organizations relied on local subscriptions for financial survival, and some of the unions acted also as benefit societies for members, but only the Asylum considered the interests of the capitalists, who predominated among larger subscribers, as well as the interests of the workers, who predominated among the destitute. The capitalist was called upon by Asylum committee members to set a moral example to his employees and to give generously in support of those less fortunate than himself.

Such philanthropic sentiments accorded with Masonic, as well as English liberal-democratic traditions, and they were also in keeping with the Victorian-era Aesthetic (Purist as distinct from Puritan) movement in England. The spirit of voluntary giving was encouraged among local inhabitants by Ballarat's Asylum committee, some of whom were Freemasons,[40] not only for the continuing benefit of the Asylum, but in the (originally Masonic) belief that voluntarism had an ennobling effect on the giver. In the Asylum's Eighteenth Annual Report, it was said to be a matter for rejoicing that members of the public were "beginning to comprehend and appreciate the grand work done by

[39] Martin McGettigan, "The Ballarat Trade Unions and Federation", in *Towards the Centenary of Federation*, Proceedings of Conference in Ballarat, 30 November 1996, by the University of Ballarat, 10-11 (Ballarat: University of Ballarat, 1996).

[40] According to "A Fifty Year Retrospect" in the Ballarat Benevolent Asylum's Jubilee Report of June 1907 on page 23, the Asylum's original body of administrators included councillor and sarsparilla manufacturer, Robert Smith (President), the Revs. P. Madden, J. Bickford, **J. Potter**, J. Strongman, G. Mackie and Niquet; Messrs. **W. C. Smith**, R. Belford, W. Fraser, **R. Ocock**, J. H. Dunne, J. Oddie, M. J. Cummins, McIvor, **A. Dimant**, D. Morris, Martin, S. Donnelly, Tristram, A. Dewar, **W. Dimsey**, J. Dodds, Crane, **H. Wood**, I. Wheeldon, R. Davidson, R. Lewis, Brannon, A. Davies, Lockhart, Gripe and Talbot (Committeemen), A. S. Parke (Treasurer) and A. A. Tarte (Secretary). The men named in

the Institution".[41] The report went on to say that it would be gratifying to see the names of boys and girls on the list of donors also, not just of their parents, but the names of the children themselves. This suggests a program of social reform not suggested in material relevant to comparable institutions of the period, and also that social conditions in Ballarat were beginning to stabilise. In keeping with Masonic, as well as Classical traditions of designing inspirational buildings, the Asylum was described upon its completion by historian W. B. Withers as a grand Elizabethan palace.[42]

Protestantism and Freemasonry were linked in nineteenth-century Ballarat because each had a history of dissent from religious conformism imposed by Rome, together with an egalitarian style of brotherhood that arose between men who laboured in primitive and dangerous occupations, whether stonemasons or gold-miners. The dual influence of Protestantism and Freemasonry on the policies and operation of Ballarat's Asylum resulted in a slightly different set of priorities than was evident in Melbourne's Asylum, such as the provision of an extensive outdoor relief program and a more fraternal approach to the difficulties of managing incapacity among men and distress among their families. This difference will be discussed in more detail in following chapters.

Efforts to Ensure Financial Viability

---

bold type were listed by A. A. W. Steane, (comp) *Freemasonic Records Ballarat and District 1854-1957* (Ballarat: 1957), passim., in his compilation of Ballarat Freemasons.
[41] Ballarat Benevolent Asylum, Eighteenth Annual Report, January 1876, 10.

A central problem for the Asylum committee in Ballarat came to be how best to maintain financial viability while being compelled to rely on the uncertain foundation of voluntary donations from Ballarat's working community. While the Victorian government granted the bulk of ongoing financial support to the Asylum, the Asylum committee was obliged to concern itself with raising viable levels of local donation and encouraging local government authorities to con-tribute proportionately to the Asylum's revenue. The committee's emphasis on the need for predictable and realistic levels of local donation was a product of the recommendation by a Royal Commission into charities in 1862, which required Asylum funds to be raised from local sources before Victorian government grants (of £3 for every £1 raised) could be obtained. According to a later report in the *Star*,[43] the committee felt that the problem could only be remedied by largely increased donations from the shire and borough councils.

By the late 1870s, however, as a result of rapid population increase, the depletion of alluvial gold, injury, and economic factors, destitution in Ballarat had increased, along with illnesses and living expenses, while councils, the churches and charitable groups were not in receipt of enough money to do more than tinker at the edges of the problem. This left those they served very dependent on the generosity of those in relatively secure financial positions. A government tax on this small number of secure property owners, which included a local poor rate and the concomitant need to monitor the whereabouts of welfare recipients, was discussed, but it was felt to be

---

[42] W. B. Withers, *The History of Ballaarat From the First Pastoral Settlement to the Present Time*, 2nd. ed. (Ballarat: Niven & Co., 1887), 259-61.

inappropriate for Victoria's economy, which in some measure was reliant on a transient population of miners and labourers. Ultimately, the different interests and aspirations of the capitalist, the worker and the impoverished demanded legislative action. The preferred option of the Victorian government was an arrangement whereby the costs of welfare were divided equally between colonial (later state) and local governments and the voluntary sector. By the 1890s, however, the Victorian government was beset by inter-related problems of overcrowded charitable institutions, the collapse of many financial institutions, consequent widespread destitution, and the beginnings of a clamorous labour movement which had come to resent both liberal-democratic notions of progress, as well as intrusions into their lives by moral reformers.

Elizabeth Faue pointed out that by the beginning of the twentieth century, notions of class in Australia had devolved into accepted signs of social status, and

> working class men and women understood that the new relationship towards work—one defined by declining independence in labour, and deteriorating skill, and increasing dependence on daily or weekly wages or contract payments— gave rise to new social distinctions.[44]

The working population that eventually settled in Ballarat was accordingly stratified in many different ways. It was overwhelmingly of British origin, but those from Britain retained separate loyalties to English, Irish, Scottish, Welsh

---

[43] "Benevolent Asylum Annual Meeting", *Star* (Ballarat), 24 January 1877, 4.

and even Cornish, traditions. Different levels of independence from a boss more or less determined which side of the divide between labour and capital a man, hence his wife and family, was on. Paid work ranged from self-employment to white-collar work performed for a boss and often calling for formal education, to contract work performed by semi-skilled men, usually under the direction of a foreman. In broad terms, the self-employed and most white-collar workers were on one side, while blue-collar workers and manual labourers were on the other. Faue contended that

> a working class history sensitive to the gradations of class inherent in social distinctions would stress the divisions between blue-collar and white-collar workers, the political and social difference between ethnic groups and religions within working class communities, and the layers of control and management over their lives. It also would highlight how social elites and social workers intruded into workers' leisure and community lives and disrupted traditional social distinctions.[45]

Social divisions were not immediately apparent within Ballarat's mining community. For the first one or two years of alluvial mining, there was little control and even less management over the diggers' working or social lives, and social distinctions were not a feature of this largely male fraternity. As the alluvial gold ran out, however, the miners had to construct mine shafts to get to the gold, and cave-ins, flooding, injuries and fatal accidents became more common. Mining was not a safe operation during these early years, and when a man was obliged to rely on another for his safety, and sometimes his

---

[44] Elizabeth Faue, "Retooling the Class Factory: United States Labour History after Marx, Montgomery, and Postmodernism", *Australian Historical Studies Special Issue: Challenging Histories: Reflections on Australian History,* 33, no. 118 (2002): 116.
[45] Ibid.

life, a very strong bond was forged among diggers as a group, regardless of religious affiliation.

Masonic traditions can be discerned in this fraternity among men engaged in dangerous work. However, in Ballarat in the nineteenth century, more complex religious, social and political factors predominated.[46] Bonding, brotherhood and/or mateship as a phenomenon among men on the goldfields, was particularly strong during the years prior to the 1854 Eureka rebellion, when there was no organized welfare support and little recognition of the dangers faced by miners from the governing and white-collar classes in Melbourne. Also, the later intervention by colonial governments into the charitable sphere by way of formal inquiries, the employment of health inspectors, and legislation designed to rationalize government expenditure, tended to consolidate the English-style liberal-progressive framework of social influence and patronage, rather than encourage the inter-dependent brotherhood so cherished among miners, but it led to a growing perception among poorly paid workers that the central government was an exploitative public utility with a consequent duty to provide for those it exploited.

According to Robert Van Krieken, the liberal-progressive framework of social utilitarianism was meant to produce economic growth, propelled by, and benefiting, everyone willing to work.[47] Despite generally favorable trading conditions, however, paid work was not always available to every willing worker in Australia, and nor did wages always provide enough for a man to

---

[46] Beggs Sunter, op.cit. chap. 6.
[47] Van Krieken, op.cit., 81.

maintain a wife, much less a home and family.[48]   The initial focus on trade and large-scale production had skewed the distribution of land held by the crown to the benefit of those already possessed of influence and resources, and led to a situation where vast tracts of arable land were held by a minority, while the labourer was often unable to afford the price of a humble dwelling. The vanishing prospects among miners and labourers of economic independence, together with the physical hazards of mining and labouring work and nostalgia for familiar surroundings, all contributed to a sense of disillusionment among the nineteenth-century industrial classes in Victoria. Economic growth had not benefited everyone willing to work and many people had become impoverished, some of them obliged to rely on varying forms of parsimoniously delivered charity.

Unlike charitable institutions in bigger cities such as Melbourne, Ballarat's Benevolent Asylum was held in high esteem by its local community, partly because most of the inmates were known to be locals, and partly because the managing committees were perceived to be honest, and genuinely committed to the welfare of those they set out to assist. Some committee members were Freemasons, which would have affirmed the spirit of voluntarism and fraternalism among like-minded donors, and the charitable and educative features of Freemasonry were expressed in the Asylum's display of practical concern for dependent aged men and their widows, as well as in the provision of shelter and schooling for orphans and neglected children. This was not an Asylum for outcasts as in Melbourne; it was an Asylum for brothers and their

---

[48] Swain, op.cit., 101.

dependents. This difference in perception gave Ballarat's Asylum a style of management more consistent with Masonic than with Christian principles, but both approaches to distress eventually converged in an ethos similar to that portrayed in the parable of the good Samaritan.

The Ballarat Benevolent Society's meetings, and the Asylum itself, when built, were freely available for attendance and/or inspection by all members of the public. By the end of April 1860 there were twenty-six patients in the house. Inside the building was a boardroom, a medical consulting room, a storeroom cum dispensary cum library, a day room, a dining room, and a kitchen and pantry. The dormitories were upstairs and the lavatory was outside. Three external cisterns held 1400 gallons of water and the surrounding five acres of land were fenced with "neat paling".[49] The imposing style of the building and its subsequent careful maintenance attested to the good standing of successive Asylum committees, and the developing civic pride of local inhabitants.

In tracing the emergence of a good Samaritan ethos among Ballarat's working settlers, local perceptions and understandings were reconstructed from remaining documentary evidence beginning with the original Asylum records and reports. The intent was to reveal the social, religious and financial dynamics as they fuelled the growth of capitalism, civic development, organized charity, paid work, voluntarism, education, morality, class distinction, religious division and political imperatives in nineteenth-century

---

[49] "Benevolent Asylum", *Ballarat Times,* 28 April 1860, 2.

Ballarat, and this intent necessitated reference to relevant secondary source material. The study as a whole offers an overview of nineteenth-century Ballarat and its independent approach to the funding and management of the Ballarat Benevolent Asylum.

In reconstructing the Asylum's early experiences of fund raising and operation, the nexus between labour and capital became apparent to the writer, and the gradual adoption by different levels of government of the role of primary guardian of the common wealth, was accordingly viewed as socially, politically, and humanely inescapable. Even so, it was a role that the Asylum's committee and some of its more prominent subscribers only grudgingly conceded to government authorities in Melbourne. By the end of the nineteenth century the expectation of having to manage temporary need had become an acceptance of the existence of chronic need, which was viewed more as the responsibility of government to alleviate, than of the private voluntary sector.

This thesis, then, presents a history of Ballarat's Benevolent Asylum, which not only highlights persistent efforts by members of its managing committees to ensure continuing financial viability, but it also identifies the nature of the relationship between the Asylum and Ballarat's wider community. Further, it clarifies the issue of eligibility criteria as it influenced approaches to, and the management of, poverty and the poor in Victoria generally.

Primary Materials Concerning the Asylum

The body of primary source material concerning the Asylum, in the form of records, reports and newspaper clippings held at the Queen Elizabeth Centre in Ballarat, reflects successive Asylum policies and practices and was used as a measure against which secondary sources were examined for concurrence, argument or dissent. Not all the different records have survived, but the Queen Elizabeth Centre retained a complete set of Ballarat Benevolent Asylum Annual Reports and those reports were very detailed where other early records were incomplete. The Annual Reports contained the rules of the Asylum, and covered the years 1858 through to 1910. One function of these reports was to promote the Asylum to the community as an example of voluntary cooperation and prudent concern for those no longer capable of fending for themselves and for those who suffered misfortune, in particular, misfortune brought about by work in the mines.

The Register of Inmates from 1860 to 1872 is also very detailed. Being handwritten, the Admission Register is not always legible, and some of its pages are in poor condition, but it gives the names of inmates, their occupations, places of residence, birthplace, age, marital status, number of children, religious affiliations, admission date, discharge date and similarly rudimentary facts about admissions to the Asylum from the building's construction in 1860, through to the year 1872. A series of property assignment books and will and testament books are also kept, both series running into the twentieth century, but they are incomplete and the information contained therein was not of as much interest as the fact that all inmates were

required to sign their personal goods and property over to the Asylum upon admittance. The vast majority of inmates were possessed of neither.

A scrapbook of undated newspaper clippings, relating to press coverage of Ballarat Benevolent Asylum affairs, is also housed at the Queen Elizabeth Centre. These clippings were mostly taken from the *Star*, and the scrapbook cover dated them from 1882 through to 1927, although the items were not individually dated and they did not include all reports relevant to the Asylum published in the *Star* or other newspapers during these years. Being undated, the clippings in the scrapbook served merely as a pointer to the richness of material contained in newspapers of the period. All these newspaper reports are housed in the Mechanics' Institute and/or Ballarat's Central Highlands Regional Library. The *Star*, first published in 1855, took a keen interest in Asylum matters, beginning with the initial meetings held to discuss the need for an organized approach to distress on the goldfields. The *Star* reports of all subsequent meetings during the years 1858, 1859 and 1860 were examined. Other newspapers, including the *Ballarat Times*, the *Courier* (Ballarat), the *Evening Post* and the *Argus* (Melbourne), also carried public commentary and letters, but it was the *Star* which gave the Asylum the most regular and detailed coverage, particularly in the early years of the Asylum's operation. These newspaper items were particularly valuable in that they not only gave what appeared to be verbatim reports on who said what, but much local colour and a general bias in favor of an ordered and progressive society, was able to be gleaned from them. An emphasis on funding concerns and Asylum expenses was also apparent in items published at different times by different

newspapers, which indicated a high level of interest in the Asylum from Ballarat's general community.

To examine the role played by the Ballarat Benevolent Asylum in early Ballarat, it was necessary to review documentary evidence on the origins of Ballarat's early settlers. A broad body of primary and secondary material dealing with Ballarat was used to furnish details of population mix, the elegance of the city's buildings, its cultural diversity and technological inventiveness, all of which affirmed Ballarat as a city of unusually dynamic progress, prosperity and independence from Melbourne. This perspective was pronounced in the first history of Ballarat's Benevolent Asylum, which was written by Chas. King[50] and it is also discernible in most of the early local newspapers. The most valuable source of hard information on the strength of Freemasonry in nineteenth-century Ballarat is Steane's compilation of lodge members. In addition, Talbot Arts and Historical Museum has named photographs of local members in 1867, together with ancillary information, and there is some anecdotal information available from contemporary historians in Ballarat. Other than that, there is a great deal of accessible material on established Masonic ritual and tradition, some of which has been used in this study to discern parallels between Masonic principles and nineteenth-century Ballarat's social order and charitable practices as they developed.

---

[50] Chas. King, *Golden Wattle Jubilee 1857-1907: Fifty Years of Charitable Effort: An Historical Sketch* (Ballarat: 1907), Archival Collection, Queen Elizabeth Geriatric Centre, Ballarat.

The Distinctive Nature of Ballarat's Benevolent Asylum

Welfare historian Shurlee Swain noted that most applicants for shelter in Melbourne's Asylum were held by its nineteenth-century charitable network to be responsible for their own misfortune.[51]   The different attitude towards applicants for shelter in Ballarat's Asylum, which will be explored in more detail in ensuing chapters, rested on Ballarat's gold, and the perception on the part of some of its more visionary men, of gold's potential to transform what was then viewed as an uncivilized, and in some ways incorrigible, society into a generally industrious and progressive one. This potential was seized upon by a number of Ballarat's successful ex-miners, some of whom were included in the venture to establish its Benevolent Asylum.

Beggs Sunter argued that it was the unique experience of 1850s goldfields life that motivated the founding committee's concern for their fellows, but this study contends that the impulse towards organized voluntary action sprang from a mix of Masonic traditions, Protestantism and Chartism, as well as the goldfields camaraderie emphasized by Beggs Sunter. The instigator and the Chairman of the first public meeting called to discuss the organization of poor relief, James Oddie, had been a miner, but at that point he was an auctioneer, and also the Chairman of Ballarat's Municipal Council. Oddie had been a foundry man in England, and he had cut his political teeth on news of bloody revolution in France and observations of industrial unrest in Britain. He had embraced Wesleyan Methodist religious principles as a boy in England, and,

according to Beggs Sunter, English Methodism had become widely viewed as "a movement of compassion towards the poor and the dispossessed, challenging the social dominance of the Anglican Church establishment".[52] This view of English Methodism is supported by contemporary research into the beginnings of Methodism in England.[53] Geoff Russell and the Talbot Arts and Historical Museum, the latter housing its archives in a former Primitive Methodist Church in Talbot, states that Methodism was characterized by simplicity, fervor and acceptance of Biblical authority in matters of belief and practice, and that its founders, John and Charles Wesley, who were sons of an Anglican clergyman, endeavoured to "create a place within the Church of England" for this less autocratic approach to Protestant Christian belief and practice.

Oddie the Wesleyan Methodist was also a Chartist with strong bonds to the pioneering diggers on Ballarat's goldfields. It is contended here that Oddie's sympathies, which had been stirred by the avoidable massacre of diggers at the Eureka Stockade, lay in the depths of his grief at the loss of his own (first) wife and child upon arrival in Australia, and the memory of having himself been given shelter at the time by Wesleyans and fellow Chartists. There were many on the goldfields who could tell tales of grief and suffering and the shared sense of brotherhood established among the diggers in consequence, enabled the founding committee to attract broad support for the new charity.

---

[51] Shurlee Swain, "The Poor People of Melbourne" in *The Outcasts of Melbourne: Essays in Social History*, ed. Graeme Davison, David Dunstan and Chris McConville (Sydney, London, Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1985), ch. 4.

[52] Beggs Sunter, op.cit., 18.

[53] Geoff Russell and the Talbot Arts and Historical Museum, "The Primitive Methodist Church", *Information Sheet #1* (Talbot: Talbot Arts and Historical Museum, 2003), 2.

Ballarat's population during the 1850s was mostly of British stock, and loosely divided between conservatives, liberal-progressives, republicans and radicals. Religious differences became pronounced, particularly in the field of education, which, in 1872, was made free, compulsory and secular. This tended to counterbalance a papal decree published in 1866 in the form of a Syllabus of Errors, mostly on morals and marriage. Papal infallibility was asserted in 1870 and together, these edicts tended to exacerbate resistance on moral grounds among Ballarat's Roman Catholics, to secular education.

The insistence on obedience to Papal decree heightened long-standing differences between Ballarat's English Protestants and Irish Catholics, as well as between Conservatives, Liberals, Republicans and Radicals generally. All of these perspectives were strongly defended in Ballarat during the nineteenth century and differences were perpetuated through its schools.

Despite these differences, in tracing the development of welfare legislation in Britain and Victoria, some common threads were found, most notably, a general concern for the fate of distressed widows, orphans and disadvantaged children. This common thread contributed to the enactment of poor laws in Britain, and an accompanying *Act of Settlement* designed to confine a labourer to his home parish. Both were resisted in Victoria and possible reasons why are discussed in Chapter Four.

By 1910 the Asylum was an integral part of Ballarat's community, and many residents spent their declining years there, being cared for by locally trained personnel. In this first decade of the twentieth century, policies accompanying the establishment of the old-age pension in Victoria saw the imposition of State determined criteria on the admission of inmates. This thesis, however, looks most closely at the formative years of the Ballarat Benevolent Asylum and subsequent issues germane to the development of a state funded system of welfare delivery. It does not deal with later events leading up to the Asylum's consolidation as a geriatric center in 1956, or with the centre's amalgamation with local hospitals and its expansion into a body now known as Ballarat Health Services.

<p align="center">♣♣♣♣♣♣♣♣♣♣♣♣♣</p>

While some elements of this study, such as the effects of poverty on lone women, unemployed and destitute men, and poor families, were readily identifiable in source material, the ethos attached to the Ballarat Benevolent Asylum was not as easy to define. Nevertheless it was seen by the author as the "glue" that held Ballarat's developing society together and the promise held out by the Asylum for its future. The ethos was exemplified in reform measures implemented by Ballarat's Benevolent Asylum, such as the insistence on cleanliness and order, the arrangement for access to library books thrice weekly, the expectation that able bodied inmates perform light duties in house and/or garden, the concern about a healthy diet, fresh air and proper sanitation, the establishment of a school comparable to most schools

outside the Asylum, the very good relationships between committee men and the many merchants and businessmen who donated time, money, effort, produce and materials in support of the venture, and the respect accorded to inmates and staff. Chapter One posits this ethos as having been a combination of Humanism, Freemasonry and Protestantism, more specifically the emphasis on the prudent practice of good Samaritanism. It positions the ethos of the good Samaritan as the central principle in the early development and operation of Ballarat's Benevolent Asylum.

Having identified the ethos, the second chapter traces some of its socio-political applications. As in Britain, the emergence of this approach to poverty and poor relief in Ballarat was due to the disorienting effect of industrial development on previously farming and rural communities. The establishment of secular, state-funded schools, together with subsidised institutions for the disadvantaged, was designed to utilise human capital in non-traditional ways deemed beneficial by governing authorities, to the material development of Australian colonies. One of these subsidised institutions was the Ballarat Benevolent Asylum.

The third chapter examines issues related to the paradox of poverty in the midst of plenty, land reform and the emergence of a propertied middle class as well as details of the Asylum's operation and the ambivalent nature of Ballarat's dealings with political authorities in Melbourne.

The focus in Chapter Four is narrowed to the Asylum itself: its practices, rules and regulations. The Asylum appears to have adhered closely to its own ethos. Comparisons are made to other local institutions, as well as to asylums in Bendigo and Melbourne in order to establish that assistance was delivered in a more fraternal way in Ballarat than elsewhere. Issues pertaining to women, children, and sexual, social and financial morality, are typified by examples drawn from primary material and the recorded reactions to them, by dominant and less dominant groups. The treatment of school-aged children, asylum inmates, outdoor relief recipients, pregnant women, and attitudes towards sanitation are also examined.

A central concern for the Asylum committee was the reconciliation of the Asylum's fraternal ethos with the exigencies of capital expansion and economic rationalisation. The fifth chapter details the sources of Asylum funding and efforts to secure it. The formula adopted by the Victorian government in relation to subsidies enabled the gradual implementation of a more centralized, and less personal system of welfare distribution. This was opposed by the Asylum in its endeavour to further the interests of its own district and to guard against the centralization of control. Emphasis is placed on the Asylum's prudent approach to its task, and its ability to maintain a diverse collection of subscribers through the economic, social and cultural vicissitudes of a developing city.

Chapter Six discusses the developing conflict between Melbourne-based authorities, pursuant to a report on charitable institutions in 1870, and the

Ballarat Benevolent Asylum over how poor relief should be funded and managed. The rapid growth of a speculative class in Melbourne and a general lack of prudence during the 1880s led to what was arguably Victoria's worst depression. The depression culminated with the closure of all banks for five days in May 1893, and hastened the introduction of an old age pension in Victoria in January 1901. This chapter uses evidence provided in Asylum annual reports, a Royal Commission into old-age pensions, newspapers and some secondary sources to portray efforts made by various authorities to shore up the system of welfare delivery in the face of economic collapse. It also examines the effects of this collapse on Ballarat's Asylum.

Chapter Seven argues that while the pressures of poverty were comparatively well managed in Ballarat, the introduction of the Victoria's old-age pension was necessitated by the plethora of competing charities managed by middle class reformers, their inability to counter the pressure of capital expansion, and their failure to appreciate the irrelevance of moral reform to the ordinary person's social, personal, and economic well being. Political pressures meant the pension had a rocky start, but once it became the responsibility of the Commonwealth government, the states were better able to subsidise other categories of need. Victoria's was still a system of laws and traditions designed by and for men, however, hence traditional perceptions of class, eligibility and authority, remained.

CHAPTER ONE

Schooling, Sectarianism, State Intervention

and Nineteenth-Century Social Reform

This chapter argues that English Freemasonry and Protestantism combined to inform the establishment of a non-sectarian, national school system in Victoria. It also argues that the Benevolent Asylum in Ballarat constituted an experiment with a Masonic style of cooperative insurance in exchange for regular annual subscriptions and thereby departed form other models of organized poor relief in Victoria. Social and political pressures as they influenced the development of organized poor relief are examined, and attitudes towards the poor exhibited by influential figures in Melbourne, are compared to those exhibited by their counterparts in Ballarat. Social conditions that gave rise to perceptions of immorality among the poor, in particular among poor women, are also discussed.

The "Fallen" Woman

In order to insulate young women in colonial Australia from perceived disgrace, their availability to men of unstated intention was heavily chaperoned and/or impeded by financial and social constraints. Such constraints were placed on the female, rather than the male.[1] In cases where they were ignored or flouted, and if pregnancy resulted, then the burden of responsibility for bringing "illegitimate" children into the world was borne by the "guilty" or "fallen" woman. The "fallen woman" was hence a focus of social

stigma, and she was also the subject of much debate in relation to ongoing campaigns of moral reform.

Such campaigns took little account of the realities of poverty for many women. Van Krieken pointed out that the primary form of employment available to unsupported mothers was live-in domestic service that did not necessarily provide lodging for children.[2] This often made it impossible for a mother to provide for her children, regardless of whether she was single, widowed or deserted. It was at this point that such children were often defined by state authorities as "neglected," and sometimes "abandoned", whereupon they were taken into state-managed care to be trained into useful employment. Under these circumstances, women often relinquished their children to the state, and sometimes even asked for them to be taken into care.[3] Tensions between families, the state and the churches in relation to the welfare of children are said by Van Krieken to have had their basis in the perceived need by all ruling classes to "save the rising generation" from its less desirable parents.[4]

The solution proposed by the despairing Colonial Chaplain and first Anglican clergyman appointed to New South Wales, the Rev. Richard Johnson, when faced with the same challenge in the 1790s, was state-funded schooling.[5] Johnson viewed education as the best means of transforming children from

---

[1] Margaret Barbarlet, *Far From a Low Gutter Girl: The Forgotten World of State Wards: South Australia 1887-1940* (Melbourne, Oxford, Auckland, New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 82-3.
[2] Robert Van Krieken, *Children and the State: Social Control: The Charity Organisation Society and the Formation of Australian Child Welfare* (North Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1991), 50.
[3] Ibid., 70-71.
[4] Ibid., 50-53.

the lower orders into morally respectable, that is, deserving, adults.[6]   Van Krieken concurs with historian John Cleverley, who attributes the establishment of state-supported schools and orphanages in New South Wales, to Johnson's pronouncement in 1794 that

> If any hopes are to be formed of any Reformation being effected in this colony, I
>
> believe it must begin amongst those of the rising generation.[7]

This idea was taken up by colonial authorities intent on constructing a society of sober, industrious workers and good Christian families. These authorities, who relied heavily on the churches in moral matters, saw it as essential that existing "vicious" family relationships be broken up, with children "to be entirely secluded from other people, and brought up in the habits of religion and industry".[8]

The primary aim of the state-funded orphan and industrial schools was therefore to make the young inmates into good and useful members of adult society. While this aim was entirely laudable, differences of opinion as to what constituted a good society were strongly contested. A reservation about the effects of concentrated industrial production on children was also expressed in the first report to Parliament of Factory Commissioners in England, wherein the effects of unremitting toil in a great number of cases were said to be

---

[5] Jean Woolmington (ed), *Problems in Australian History: Religion in Early Australia: The Problem of Church and State* (Stanmore, NSW: Cassell, 1976), 8-9.

[6] Van Krieken, op.cit., 52.

[7] J. F. Cleverley, *The First Generation: School and Society in Early Australia* (Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1971), 10, quoted in Robert Van Krieken, *Children and the State: Social Control and the Formation of Australian Child Welfare* (North Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1992), 52.

[8] Van Krieken, op.cit., 52-3.

Permanent deterioration of the physical condition. The production of disease often wholly irremediable; and the partial or entire exclusions (by reasons of excessive fatigue) from the means of obtaining adequate education and acquiring useful habits or of profiting from those means when afforded. [Also] that at an age when children suffer these injuries from the labor they undergo, they are not free agents, but are let out to hire, the wages they earn being received and appropriated by their parents and guardians.[9]

The idea that schooling was necessary to the development of productive adults in Victoria was accordingly only gradually absorbed by the colony's parents. In 1852 a Select Committee heard evidence from the Vicar General of the Catholic Church that the Colony of Victoria "displayed a very great deal of apathy about education"[10] and even by 1854, the population of school aged children was almost 38% illiterate.[11]

The development of a national (i.e. government funded) school system was a decisive move towards secularism in Victoria, and one that signaled increasingly centralised involvement in the teaching of children, in particular, those from poorer families. This involvement was resisted in Ballarat by different groups for different reasons, but the generalised desire to settle and the perceived advantages of education, technological innovation and material progress, gradually took hold, and by 1857, when Ballarat's Benevolent and Visiting Association was first established, the stage had been set for the rapid development in all spheres that characterized the growth of the city.

---

[9] *First Report of the Factory Commissioners*, xx (1833), quoted in Derek Fraser, *The Evolution of the British Welfare State: A History of Social Policy Since the Industrial Revolution*, 2nd ed. (London: Macmillan Education, 1984), 256-7.

While it appears to have been Protestant non-conformism that gave rise to some of the ideologies, conventions and social considerations that shaped colonial Victoria, the concept of organized, non-sectarian benevolence has some close associations with earlier traditions of Freemasonry. While Freemasonry cannot be said to have been the only tradition of non-sectarian assistance towards people in distress, it developed a particular style of cooperative action. One aspect of this style was the practice of anonymous contribution by wealthier members of the Order and another was a general allowance that levels of contribution were not required to the point of jeopardizing the welfare of a contributor's own family.[12]

These principles seem to have coalesced into the idea of pooling voluntary donations from working "brothers" for the relief of member families in distress. The idea was introduced among seventeenth-century Masons in England, but it had a much longer history than that. According to contemporary research into the beginnings of Freemasonry in England, operative lodges in England began to admit men who had no connection with the building trade in the early 1600s.[13] The same electronic source material mentions the establishment of box clubs in England known to have many characteristics of early Masonic Lodges where, at meetings of members, money was contributed to a communal box knowing that if they fell on hard times, they could apply for

[10] L. J. Blake, (General Edition) *Vision and Realisation: A Centenary History of State Education in Victoria,* Vol. 1 (Victoria: Education Department of Victoria, 1973), 22.

[11] Ibid., 30.

[12] Hannah, Walton, *Darkness Visible: A Revelation and Interpretation of Freemasonry* (Devon: Britons Publishing, 1970),

relief from the box.[14] Such relief, however, was only claimable by members.

Another view of Masonic style charity is given by author and Mason, Walton

Hannah who, while admiring the personal sincerity of the Christian

Freemason, wrote that Masonic benevolence is not to be identified with the

ideal of Christian charity. "It is not the spirit of the widow casting in her mite,

but of rich men…giving of their superfluity".[15] The former spirit came through

in a report in the *Courier* in 1923, when, in response to a public appeal from

the Asylum for funds, it was reported that a donation of one shilling had been

made by a mother who was also a widow "and a small boy handed it over the

counter. It was the widow's mite".[16]

This contrasts with the responsibilities of widows' sons towards their mothers,

implied in the Hiram Abiff narrative mentioned in the Introduction (p.11),

where the emphasis was on voluntary consideration towards widows through

their sons, by comparatively wealthy men (in that case, King Solomon). The

emphasis on voluntarism and voluntary consideration runs through every

Ballarat Benevolent Asylum report, and terms such as life governor, were

identical to those used by English Masonic Lodges, Masonic hospitals and

like institutions of the period. So while Hannah's comparison may be based

more on the theory than the practice, he made a valid distinction between

Masonic benevolence and Christian charity, the latter often perceived as

being reserved for the social outcast. This particular form of Christian charity

was evidently understood by those who formed the policies of Ballarat's

---

[13] Meridian Lodge No. 691, "How Freemasonry Started" [online]:
www.islipmasons.org/freemason_history.htm
[14] Ibid.
[15] Hannah, op.cit. 53.

Asylum, as pains were taken to include social outcasts, such as vagrants in gaol, pregnant single girls and/or the Chinese, among those classed as legitimately entitled to relief.

Theoretical distinctions between different forms of charity were blurred on the goldfields of Ballarat, however, by the special and overriding bond that existed between most goldminers. This was akin to the special bond that had existed between most pre- and/or non-Christian stonemasons. Both stone-masonry and mining were physically arduous and potentially dangerous occupations, and both masons and miners risked serious injuries and fatal accidents in the course of their everyday work. It seems to have been this factor more than any other that fostered a spirit of practical concern for a brother's safety regardless of his religion, together with voluntary assistance towards the family of brothers who sustained injury and/or death. A high level of practical concern for the health and safety of fellow miners (labourers and stone-masons) was very strong in nineteenth-century Ballarat, not least among Asylum committee members.

Freemasonry and Protestantism were very compatible in nineteenth-century Ballarat, and some of Ballarat's more prominent men, such as A. Dimant, Chas. and Henry Cuthbert, Chas. Dyte, Chas. Shoppee, Captain Armstrong, W. C. Smith, R. M. Serjeant, W. Rodier, Thos. Bath, J. Dimmock, A. Dewar,

---

[16] "Remember the Old Folk", *Courier* (Ballarat), 29 August 1923, 5.

George Howe, Messrs. Herring, Ruffle, Ditchburn, Muntz, Wright, Purdue and Wheeler were Freemasons[17] as well as, for the most part, Protestants.

Henry Cuthbert was a well known and respected solicitor who held a position on the local hospital board; Dimant was an Asylum committee-man and government agent; Shoppee was an Asylum committee-man who later became Lord Mayor; Captain Armstrong was a government official who became a publican; W.C. Smith was a sharebroker and real estate agent who later became Minister for Education in Victoria; Robert Malachi Sargeant was one of Ballarat's most successful mine managers and his company was a generous donor to the Asylum. Rodier was a councillor and an Asylum committee member, and Bath and Howe were well-known publicans and regular donors to charities including the Asylum. These and other early arrivals in Ballarat were active and influential in establishing the manner in which business, social, educational and charitable operations in the city were conducted.

In terms of religion, Freemasonry was decidedly neutral, which made the Roman Catholic Church's long history of opposition to it puzzling, particularly in light of the fact that many European Freemasons had also been affiliated to the Roman Catholic Church. The explanation offered by Baigent and Leigh was that "Freemasonry, as an international institution, stood a reasonable chance of offering a philosophical, theological and moral alternative to the

---

[17] A. A. W. Steane (comp) *Freemasonic Records Ballarat and District 1854-1957* (Ballarat: 1957), passim.

Church"[18]. This situation may have existed early in the Order's history, but pressure from the Church of Rome, which, by the thirteenth century was exerted through every level and function of society in Europe, made it (the Church) the only legitimized source of moral authority. It was observed by Baigent and Leigh in reference to church opposition to Freemasonry, that "Freemasonry contains a major skein of Judaic tradition filtered through Islam [and that] the corpus of legends central to Freemasonry…derives ultimately from Old Testament material, both canonical and apocryphal, as well as from Judaic and Islamic commentaries upon it."[19] The early Christian Church's opposition to Freemasonry is therefore under-standable. By the time Freemasonry became popular in England, however, and perhaps in opposition to its Judaic and Islamic roots, its operative, as distinct from its speculative, traditions had been subsumed under the banner of Christianity. Nonetheless it was viewed by the Church of Rome as a continuing threat to its (the Church's) authority. "In England, however, the Grand Lodge became progressively more divorced from both religion and politics. It fostered a spirit of moderation, tolerance and flexibility, and often worked hand in hand with the Anglican Church, many of whose clergy were themselves Freemasons, and found no conflict of allegiance".[20] In Ballarat, Freemasonry had a distinctly Christian membership, although the Order retained its traditional emphasis on brotherhood, the gaining and preservation of knowledge of natural forces, and the sacral quality of kingship. According to historian Weston Bate, Freemasons in nineteenth-century Ballarat emphasized

---

[18] Michael Baigent and Richard Leigh, *The Temple and the Lodge* (London: Arrow Books, 1998), 260. First published in the United Kingdom by Jonathan Cape, 1989.
[19] Ibid., 175-6.
[20] Ibid., 262.

benevolence and charity at the same time as they eschewed class distinction and atheism.[21]   Freemasonry's philosophical basis in Humanism seems therefore to have been overlaid in England and hence in Ballarat, with a more practical concern among operatives for acceptance into paying positions. This concern may have created a slightly different variety of fraternalism. The distinction within the Order itself, between speculative and operative masons, may also have been interpreted in England as a kind of class distinction in that speculative masons were, of necessity, possessed of greater knowledge and skill and therefore more valued by wealthy patrons. According to Bate, its antipathy to class distinction in Australia was a factor that made Freemasonry very popular among the gold-seekers of nineteenth-century Ballarat.[22] Together these traditions of brotherhood, concern for the disadvantaged, appreciation of fine craftsmanship, industriousness, and a practical appreciation of what made for acceptability and social mobility, underpinned nineteenth-century fraternalism on the goldfields and the style of benevolence adopted by Ballarat's Benevolent Asylum. This combination found expression in the good Samaritan principle as interpreted by most of its practitioners.

The centrality of the good Samaritan ethic to the charitable approach adopted by the Ballarat Benevolent Asylum lies in the overriding agreement among founding committee members that voluntary assistance to those in need, regardless of race, colour or creed, made for a stronger, more cohesive, and civilized society, than sectarian and/or class divisions were ever likely to. This overriding agreement was evident at the public meeting on 30 November

---

[21] Weston Bate, *Lucky City: The First Generation at Ballarat, 1851-1901* (Carlton South, Vic: Melbourne University Press, 1978), 260.

1857, called to form a benevolent and visiting association,[23] and in the original objectives adopted by the Asylum's founding committee. These objectives were "to afford relief to persons in want or sickness, irrespective of country creed or color, recognizing a twofold operation, namely 1) that of affording help in procuring employment; and 2) pecuniary aid".[24] There were three or four at the meeting who favored amalgamating the proposed benevolent association with the Female Strangers' Home, which had only recently commenced operations, but independence was preferred by most.

The decision to include all those in want, yet not to amalgamate with the Female Strangers' Home, absolved the Benevolent and Visiting Association from having to adopt a rigid stance on sectarian issues and/or sexual morality, and this seems to have been appreciated by local claimants as being less personally intrusive and stigmatizing, and even, perhaps, by the clergy themselves who were too divided along sectarian lines to collectively organize the same kind of assistance.

Despite its avowed non-sectarian approach, however, the Ballarat Benevolent Asylum's mission and purpose owed much to the Protestant ethic. The "Protestant ethic" is a term first coined by German jurist, professor, historian and sociologist, Max Weber (1864-1920) in his study entitled *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism.* Weber defined the Protestant ethic as a philosophy of avarice, which made a virtue of thrift and a duty of profitability—

---

[22] Ibid.

[23] "Benevolent Society", *Star* (Ballarat), 1 December 1857, 2.

[24] "Visiting and Benevolent Association", *Star* (Ballarat), 18 December 1857, 2.

the latter being treated as an end in itself.[25] This was not in accord with the aspirations of ordinary working Protestants in Ballarat, yet there was competition among workers, and between workers and employers, for what the workers saw as a fair share of a fruitful economic pie, and Protestant workers may have been less constrained than Catholic workers in their pursuit of economic independence.

Whether Weber's views and findings, which have some elements in common with Marxism, can be held to apply universally is not the issue here. Rather, in linking the most dominant strands and struggles for influence and authority between different classes and groups during and after the Reformation, Weber did manage to present a cogent rationale, not just for the development of western style capitalism, but for its management by those who had grasped its expansionary, yet monopolistic, principles. These principles suited governments of trading nations and states, such as Britain, which competed with Europe for influence over the discovery and utilization of resources. Land was a primary resource in the development of capitalism, hence it was progressively privatized and those of marginal utility to production from it were obliged to work, beg or steal to live.

Economic considerations such as this gave rise to England's Poor Laws. Legislation enacted in 1601 confined the poor to their place of origin and outlawed begging. Subsequent legislation obliged people without means to seek work and failure to find it drove many into state-owned workhouses.

---

[25] Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. Talcott Parsons with a foreword by R. H. Tawney (London: Unwin University Books, 1930), 50-51.

Conditions in these places were described in one Asylum report as little better than a life in gaol.[26] Objections to an English style poor law in Australia, however, seem to have been as much to the *Law of Settlement* incorporated within it, as to the idea of centrally controlled workhouses and/or Asylums. *The Poor Relief Act 1662*, known more widely as the *Act of Settlement*, was introduced in England to counter problems caused by large numbers of people coming into the city from rural areas in search of work. "It gave justices of the peace the power to remove any person from the parish if someone complained that they had arrived within the last forty days, and were determined to be needing relief or might be needing it in the future".[27] It was probably the restrictions on mobility and the punitive nature of enforced settlement, which the labourer was powerless to evade, that made it such a source of dread to those who managed to avoid its processes. England modified the law of settlement in 1697, making it slightly easier to relocate, but it further stigmatized those who accepted relief.[28]

Memories of England's Poor Laws and the dreaded *Act of Settlement* were still strong in nineteenth-century Australia, and this made the prospect of poor laws unpopular among all groups, including the poor. According to welfare historian Brian Dickey, "while the migrant laborers might expect aid in

---

[26] Ballarat Benevolent Asylum, Thirty-First Annual Report, June 1888, 8.
[27] William P. Quigley, "Five Hundred Years of English Poor Laws, 1349-1834: Regulating the Working and Nonworking Poor", *Akron Law Review*, (Ohio: University of Akron). [online database]: http://www.uakron.edu/lawrev/quigley.html [April 10, 2000]: 13 of 23.
[28] Ibid., 14 of 23.

moments of crisis, they had little liking for the coercive and stigmatizing power of the Poor Law of 1834, which they had left behind" [in England].[29]

The increasingly skilled and better-educated industrial classes in nineteenth-century Britain also challenged the status quo. They were not prepared to accept a continuance of hard working conditions and low pay with no prospects of home ownership or support if they met with accident in the course of that work, or in the case of illness. Cooperative societies actively sought to alleviate these concerns and many of the same societies took root in Australia. The practice among Freemasons whereby the wealthy were obliged to contribute a portion of their surplus to insure all members of the brotherhood against misfortune led to the adoption of similar policies involving pooled contributions among friendly societies and housing cooperatives. These societies and cooperatives were encouraged by colonial governments who wanted to foster an industrious and self-reliant workforce. The Asylum in Ballarat was one institution that devised a box-club style of insurance scheme, similar to that used by Masonic Lodges, among its regular contributors of £2 or more per annum, in the form of a bed in the Asylum if required, and the right to nominate a given number of people for assistance. Nothing comparable was offered by any of the churches, most employers, or colonial governments. Details of this scheme, and the Victorian government's reaction to it, are given in Chapter Four.

---

[29] Brian Dickey, "Why Were There no Poor Laws in Australia?" *Journal of Policy History*, 4, No. 2, 1992, 122.

The *Act of Settlement* as it operated in England, at least until the late eighteenth century, tended to cut across such independent initiatives, having been designed to keep the poor population from flocking to the cities in search of work. This created labor shortages in rural areas when seasonal work was offering and posed a practical problem in cities. If such a law had been passed in Australia, it would have assisted in the maintenance of control by landowners over production, but given Australia's dependence for development on a necessarily nomadic workforce of sheep-shearers, gold-miners, and farm laborers, a law of settlement would not have been in the developing nation's economic interest.

The central factor in Ballarat's history was the discovery of gold in large and accessible quantities. This precipitated a sudden and continuing increase in population where there was no infrastructure and little governance in place. Most gold seekers were men, but women and children were also present as dependents, entertainers, shopkeepers, domestic servants and/or prostitutes. Some seekers found gold and secured themselves; others found it and moved on, but many found little or nothing. Dependent women were particularly affected by these fluctuations in fortune, but opportunities of securing themselves by way of paid work were few, and this applied to an even greater extent to lone women with children.[30] The very nature of gold seeking left many dependent women alone with children for long periods while their husbands "rushed" to this or that new find, and many husbands failed to

---

[30] Kay Daniels and Mary Murnane, *Uphill all the Way: A Documentary History of Women in Australia* (St.Lucia, Qld: University of Queensland Press, 1980), 5.

return. This left their wives to find what support they could from within the settled community.

Christina Twomey argued convincingly that the poverty caused by wife-desertion in goldrush Victoria was often eclipsed by reform programs centred on the male breadwinner, and that, by and large, these programs effaced the needs of impoverished women, who lived apart from men.[31] The inconsistency between public rhetoric and private reality lay at the heart of difficulties experienced by lone women in goldrush Victoria. Most nineteenth-century institutions of social reform did not see the shelter of unsupported mothers as consistent with their primary function, and unmarried mothers in particular were thought to under-mine the social standards then being reinforced by state and church authorities. There was concern for the child, however, so while an unmarried mother's right to relief was frequently questioned, it was usually excused to the wider community on the grounds of Christian duty towards the "fallen" and in the interests of the child.[32] A perceived lack of sexual restraint among unsupported mothers was widely condemned by Victorian society, and in consequence, the procreative impulse was conceded to men, but denied outright in its construction of respectable womanhood.[33] Perceptions of respectable woman-hood were not markedly different in Ballarat than in Melbourne, but in Ballarat, the desire to build a

---

[31] Christina Twomey, "Without Natural Protectors: Responses to Wife-Desertion in Gold Rush Victoria", *Australian Historical Studies*, 28, no. 108 (April 1997): 22-46. [database online]: EBSCOhost/Academic Search Elite [2001, February 17]. 1-20.

[32] Daniels and Murnane, op.cit., 56.

[33] Susan Sheridan, "The Woman's Voice on Sexuality", in *Debutante Nation: Feminism Contests the 1890s,* ed. Susan Magarey, Sue Rowley, and Susan Sheridan (St. Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 1993), 114, 116, 120, 123.

cohesive and industrious working brotherhood on the goldfields tended to take precedence over matters widely viewed as domestic or family concerns.

In accordance with this priority, the Ballarat Benevolent and Visiting Association (precursor to the Ballarat Benevolent Asylum), which had been formed by December 1857,[34] assessed claims weekly and visited people in outlying districts before the Asylum was built. The Association saw its initial role as being a provider of alms in the form of cash and/or rations to all those in need, including deserted wives, unmarried mothers, and other marginalized, but potentially redeemable groups.[35]

By 1874, the weekly average of outdoor relief recipients was 380 adults and 519 children, an increase of 74 adults and 108 children on the previous year. Most of these adults are implied to have been women. The Asylum committee was mindful of the outcry that would arise in the community if a death should occur as a result of too meagre assistance, and its policy was that in cases of doubt, the committee should err on the side of humanity, "the value of a few rations being as nothing to the probability of a fellow-creature's life being endangered".[36] The *Star* supported this policy, and published a very detailed sketch of outdoor relief procedures, which was reproduced in the Asylum's Eleventh Annual Report, and it described the claimants in heart-warming terms. This seems to have been to convince the community that the claimants were indeed fellow humans, and that the Asylum was assisting the unfortunate rather than favoring the unthrifty. So while eligibility for relief in

---

[34] "The Benevolent Association", *Star* (Ballarat), 2 December 1857, 2.
[35] "Visiting and Benevolent Association", *Star* (Ballarat), 18 December 1857, 2.

Ballarat may have been granted to single mothers along with widows and deserted wives, the ideology that classified impoverished women as morally deserving or less deserving of assistance, remained in place.

The influence of ideology on the practices of nineteenth-century charity generally, is the focus of an article by social historian, Richard Kennedy, entitled "Charity and Ideology in Colonial Victoria".[37] This article relates many activities such as the operation of charitable networks in Melbourne, prevailing attitudes to poverty and the poor and even contemporary accounts of these things, to an ideological basis, but Kennedy situates the ideology within an economic rather than a religious framework. Nevertheless, his work reveals the continuing operation of what had come to be viewed as a largely Protestant ethic, and its influence over the development of state-controlled social welfare services in Victoria.

According to Kennedy's research, "visitors' eulogies for the 'working man's paradise' were exceeded in number and extravagance only by locals' self-praise"[38] and he quoted the words of one influential local, Sir Archibald Michie, who said that "a Melbourne street beggar would most easily be found riding in a cab on an excursion to Brighton".[39] Summing up the euphoric myth, and illustrating the prevailing view among respectable classes in

---

[36] Ballarat Benevolent Asylum, Sixteenth Annual Report, January 1874, 11.

[37] Richard Kennedy, "Charity and Ideology in Colonial Victoria", *Bowyang,* no. 5 (April-May 1981): 16-26.

[38] Ibid., 17.

[39] A. Michie, "Essay on the Resources and Prospects of Victoria for the Emigrant and Uneasy Classes", *Readings in Melbourne* (London: 1879): 34, quoted in Richard Kennedy, "Charity and Ideology in Colonial Victoria", *Bowyang*, no. 5 (April-May 1981): 17.

Melbourne, "the Anglican Bishop Moorehouse delivered the good news: 'Victoria has no paupers and no destitution'".[40]

Kennedy made the point that this myth served to justify dominant class privilege and that in the welfare sphere it operated as an ideological tool to help enforce centralised social control.

> A belief that the poor were most unlikely to be deserving justified harsh inquiry procedures…niggardly and irregular doles…humiliating and stigmatising terms on which relief was offered, and…the policy of forcing 'objects of charity' back into the labor market…often to do the worst jobs at the lowest rates of pay.[41]

Kennedy went on to question what the myth tried to obscure, and he noted the reluctance of the charitable and their class in Melbourne to recognise exploitation in the form of low wages and casual labor as causative agents in what was then defined as an individual failing (i.e. poverty)[42].

Kennedy placed no emphasis on women as a group, but he gave a very clear and concise description of what was essentially a Calvinist form of Protestant "self-discipline" as it operated among the main charity network in Melbourne. The principles of this approach to distress were embedded in an article written by the President of Melbourne's Charity Organisation Society, Professor E. E. Morris, in one of the Society's early annual reports.

---

[40] G. Serle, *The Rush to be Rich*, (Melbourne: 1971), 90, quoted in Richard Kennedy, "Charity and Ideology in Colonial Victoria", *Bowyang,* no. 5 (April-May 1981): 17.
[41] Kennedy, op.cit., 17.
[42] Ibid., 18.

> Morris exhorted subscribers never to give money at the door (for gifts of money rewarded idleness) strictly to discourage children who sought aid; always to enforce the rule that food given must be consumed immediately on the spot.[43]

While the Charity Organization Society was not formed until the late 1880s, when Melbourne's economic bubble was on the point of bursting and the rationalization of resources may have been viewed by Morris as an imperative, suspicion of the poor and a duty to reform the immoral appear to have motivated his exhortation much more than any fraternal concern for the children of an impoverished "brother".

According to COS Treasurer G.D. Carter, however, these rules were the result of Morris himself having been beguiled by the myth that there was no destitution in Victoria,[44] a myth suggested by Kennedy to have had its roots in a white Anglo-Saxon Protestant desire for British investment in the colony. In order to attract British investment, Kennedy states that the dominant class represented Victoria as both prosperous and enlightened, in the face of all human evidence to the contrary.[45]

Also in relation to Christian charity, social historian Brian Dickey in his study of charitable organisations posed a central question: "upon what values were socially dependent people identified and responded to?"[46] The underlying question could be restated as: "what was the ideological basis of eligibility

---

[43] The First Annual Reports of the COS of Melbourne 1888-90, quoted in Richard Kennedy, "Charity and Ideology in Colonial Victoria", *Bowyang*, no. 5 (April-May 1981): 18.
[44] Kennedy, op.cit., 18.
[45] Ibid., 19.

criteria?" Dickey identified the capitalist ethos as a determining factor on the way society (not just labour) is organized and he cited willingness to work and a lack of responsibility for one's own destitution as typical eligibility criteria[47] among nineteenth-century charities.

Where Kennedy and Dickey were focusing on attitudes displayed by church affiliated organisations, the state also played a significant role in the organisation of social welfare. The nature and expansion of the state's role, and its effect on family life, is the focus of Robert Van Krieken's study of welfare and legislative reforms in nineteenth century Australia entitled *Children and the State: Social Control and the Formation of Australian Child Welfare*. Van Krieken remarks that the state's assumption of this role is, historically, quite recent; and it seems to have reflected a changing perception of the family from that of a man's personal responsibility, support and/or domain, to that of a socio-economic unit, with primary obligations towards the state.

Van Krieken contended that the forces of state, capitalism, and middle class professionals will always impose on each other with greater or lesser success, but that "imposition cannot succeed at all unless there is some congruence between the imposed [economic] rules and view of life, and the necessary business of living a given mode of production".[48] This congruence was a

---

[46] Brian Dickey, *No Charity There: A Short History of Social Welfare in Australia* (Sydney, Wellington, London, Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1987), xii.
[47] Ibid., 38.
[48] Van Krieken, op.cit. 137.

feature of capital development, Protestantism, and economic growth in Ballarat.

Like Van Krieken, Derek Fraser in his study of British social policy since the Industrial Revolution, dealt with legislation as it influenced the evolution of welfare, but Fraser covered developments in Britain[49] from the late eighteenth century to the late twentieth century. British social policy was transferred to Australia along with governors, officials and convicts. It was adapted and modified, however, to suit local conditions, and as a propertied middle class came into existence.

According to Fraser, the Industrial Revolution admits of no simple explanation and, like Van Krieken and Weber, he cited a complex variety of forces as endemic to Western society and its dynamics. Fraser summarized the events, developments and characteristics which enabled the Industrial Revolution to dominate social and economic exchanges, and he tentatively ascribed the entrepreneurial spirit that underpinned them to Protestant non-conformity, since "a large number of the new industrialists were dissenters, possessed of sober, hard-working attitudes and a propensity to save…[and]…wealth was generated beyond belief".[50] This wealth was said by Fraser to have confirmed the faith in individualism and *laissez faire*. Fraser went on to point out that self-help and the greatest happiness of the greatest number were twin

---

[49] Derek Fraser, *The Evolution of the British Welfare State: A History of Social Policy Since the Industrial Revolution*, 2nd ed. (London: Macmillan Education, 1984).
[50] Ibid., 4-5.

principles of the new industrial age and a case was thereby established in the public mind for the state to become guardian of the common weal.[51]

Fraser saw the English poor laws not only as a central reflection and determinant of social policy, but also as the first attempt to guarantee a population against starvation. The starvation then being experienced, however, seems to have resulted from policies of capital development and expansion being pursued by English governments. The terms on which relief was offered by governments were said by Fraser to have been "socially unacceptable"[52] (to the general public) and subsequent legislation reflected the growing influence of English liberalism over social policy development. Such development was said by Fraser to have always been ideologically driven, and implemented by a professional (white-collar) class within a capitalist system.[53] This was also the case in colonial Victoria, particularly in Melbourne.

Concomitant with these developments in England, which were closely followed in Australia, was the growing perception among white-collar professionals and administrators that the (blue-collar) laboring classes needed to develop some useful, if rudimentary, skills. This view tended to dictate the kind of schooling offered by the state in both countries, and because schooling had earlier been a preserve of the different churches, there came to be widespread and sometimes acrimonious debate in Australia, over who should teach what to the colony's children. The growth of schooling

---

[51] Ibid., 7-8.
[52] Ibid., 241.

in Victoria was traced by Geoffrey Serle in his work entitled *The Golden Age: A History of the Colony of Victoria 1851-1861.* In chapter twelve of this work, Serle focused on the nexus between religion and education in colonial Victoria and he outlined the endeavours of the different churches to consolidate their "slim hold" over the population and to carry out missionary functions, despite the state's continuing encroachment on their educational preserve.[54]

Education in the form of literacy and numeracy had been marks of special status in some pre and non-Christian societies, but it appears to have been the Industrial Revolution and the demands of advancing technology that fostered the idea of elementary schooling for some of the lower orders of Christian society in Britain. In Australia, the idea of state-run schools was eagerly seized by most colonial administrators as a way of neutralising the emphasis on religion in church-managed schools and encouraging a focus on science and industrial technology. The Victorian government underwrote this change in emphasis by abolishing the practice of giving church-owned schools financial aid.[55] According to historian Denis Grundy, the secularization of Victorian schools through centralised government control caused more concern at the time than any other issue in the legislation.[56]

The issue of education was central to the new-world vision of many of Ballarat's closely associated leading citizens, and it came to be a central issue for the Ballarat Benevolent Asylum when the Asylum became a home for

---

[53] Ibid., 241-3.
[54] Geoffrey Serle, *The Golden Age: A History of the Colony of Victoria 1851-1861* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1963), 336.
[55] Denis Grundy, *Secular, Compulsory and Free* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1972), 5.

orphans and neglected children in 1860. Education was viewed as a way of equalizing opportunities for Asylum children as adults.

One of Ballarat's most prominent citizens, W. C. Smith, who was a share-broker, a real estate agent and a Freemason, later became the Minister for Education in Victoria, and he selected the site and chose the plan for the Urquhart Street elementary school, which he opened in 1878.[57] This school originated from one established in Errard Street by the Presbyterian Church as early as 1860. Another landmark school was the Dana Street National School, which opened on 12 January 1857.[58] In March 1859 James Oddie, Peter Lalor, Dr James Stewart, Robert Lewis, J. B. Gray and C. J. Jenner were elected to the Dana Street School committee. By then, both Oddie and Lewis were very influential members of successive Asylum committees. Future historian and local identity, Nathan Spielvogel, was a pupil-teacher at the Dana Street School to which he returned in 1924 to become its Headmaster.[59] Spielvogel was also a Freemason. Very close links existed between Protestants, Freemasons, educators, civic developers and the managers of charitable institutions. The issue of education is therefore germane to the history and the reconstruction of Ballarat's nineteenth-century culture.

Keith Moore's study of education in nineteenth-century Ballarat noted the influence of centralised management on schoolteachers in Ballarat and

---

[56] Ibid. 1.
[57] Ballarat Centenary Committee, *A History of State Education in Ballarat* (Ballarat: Ballarat Times Office, 1974), 55.
[58] Ibid. 19.

Buninyong, and examined both the liberating and the controlling aspects of elementary schooling. Moore considered that government schools placed greater emphasis than Ballarat's private schools on literacy, numeracy, linguistic competence and the acquisition of a broad knowledge base. "Educated adults were seen by many people to possess advantages that their less academically capable colleagues were denied in determining their destinies".[60]

According to Moore, the Ballarat Benevolent Asylum committee was informed (probably by Melbourne-based authorities) early in 1860, that the then current system of assigning orphans and uncared-for children to custodians often resulted in their physical and moral neglect. This situation, and the want of alternative accommodation, led to these children being placed in the Asylum with the government contributing £3 per month for the maintenance of each child.[61]

The Ballarat Asylum had no special policy on distress among non-working women and/or children, but as early as 1859, the Asylum Committee publicised its preparation to take "these classes"[62] of people in. In its second Annual Report, it was stated that

---

[59] Ibid. 21.
[60] Keith Moore, "The Influence of Local and Central Management on National and Denominational Board Schoolteachers in Ballarat and Buninyong 1848-1862", " PhD Diss., Monash University, 1995, 243.
[61] Ibid. 244.
[62] Ballarat Benevolent Asylum, Second Annual Report, January 1860, 5.

In the absence of other institutions, it is very much to be feared that the Asylum

will, to some extent, have to be converted into a refuge for orphans and lying-in

cases, for whom as yet, Ballarat has no separate asylum.[63]

This extension of the Asylum's role was in operation by mid 1860. By the end

of April 1860 the Victorian Government had prevailed on the Asylum

Committee to accommodate orphans in exchange for the previously

mentioned subsidy of £3 per month per orphan[64] to cover the costs of their

maintenance and education. An advertisement for a teacher at the Asylum

appeared in the *Ballarat Times* on 18 May 1860 and the *Ballarat Times* also

reported the process by which the successful applicant was chosen. The

salary offered was £50 per annum plus board and residence, which was in

accord with the salary first agreed upon among committee members, and a

motion of amendment by Mr. Lynn (seconded by Mr. Wood) that the teacher's

salary should be reduced to £40 per annum, failed.[65]

There were five applicants for the teaching position, and a Mrs. Kilpatrick was

recommended by a sub-committee. Mr. Lynn, however, moved (seconded by

Drury) that all applications and testimonials be read again before the

committee, then Rev. Strongman moved (seconded by Casselli) that a ballot

on the candidate proceed at once. In the first ballot, Miss Bearpark received

eight votes and Kilpatrick received six. A Miss Cordukes received three votes

and the other two were balloted out of consideration. The second ballot saw

Bearpark and Kilpatrick with seven votes each, and only two votes going to

---

[63] Ibid.

[64] "Benevolent Asylum" *Ballarat Times,* 28 April 1860, 2.

[65] "Benevolent Asylum", *Ballarat Times,* 17 February 1860, 4.

Cordukes. On the third ballot, however, Bearpark edged Kilpatrick out of the running, the result being eight votes to seven. Miss Bearpark was duly elected to the teaching position.[66]

This result, overturning the sub-committee's recommendation, may have been indicative of sectarian differences among committee members, as the dissenting committee members, Lynn and Drury, were both members of the Christ Church congregation, while the candidate chosen by the sub-committee, Mrs. Kilpatrick, could be assumed by her name, to have been Irish and therefore, most likely, a Roman Catholic. It could also have been just a call for a more openly contested vote.

There seems to have been a problem with Bearpark's appointment though, because as early as February 1861, committee members were distinguishing between the need for learning and the need for moral guardianship.[67] It was felt that the Asylum children needed a more experienced person than Bearpark as a general supervisor, but the non-resident Bearpark was to remain responsible for their learning. Kilpatrick was then engaged as the institution's "upper servant" in charge of the children, but when school inspector Venables visited the Asylum in mid October 1861, he found that Mary Ann Kilpatrick was the teacher.[68] He also discovered that "only two students were working at above class two level, and that those reading from the second book of lessons were unable to do so correctly".[69] The inspector

---

[66] "Benevolent Asylum Committee", *Ballarat Times,* 30 May 1860, 2.
[67] Moore, op.cit. 245.
[68] Ibid.
[69] Ibid.

complained that Kilpatrick "knew nothing of teaching" but that not even a good teacher could attend to the schooling of the children together with her other duties. Moore notes: "He suggested that the committee apply to the Board for a proper teacher and recommended former Red Hill assistant Matilda Dixie for the position".[70]

Mrs. Matilda Dixie had arrived in Ballarat as Matilda Broadbent in 1854. On 3 December 1855, being a girl of only 13 years, she commenced as the only work mistress in the Warrenheip Gully National School, which was then convened in a tent.[71] In October 1857 she was accepted as a trainee teacher by the Board of Education in Melbourne, and after five months formal training she was placed fourth in that year's examinations. She returned to Ballarat and took a post at the Red Hill School where her skill as a teacher came to the notice of the school's active patrons, James Oddie and the Rev. John Potter of Christ Church. Matilda was a member of the Christ Church congregation. At this point, according to her biographer, Marion Amies, Matilda

> realized that if she was to succeed in a society controlled by a male hierarchy she must learn their rituals and conventions, in particular how to capitalise on the system of patronage.[72]

After a brief marriage at age 17 to Joseph Dixie who was 34, which took her to South Australia, and saw the birth of a son there, Matilda's husband, Joseph, died. Matilda Dixie nee Broadbent returned to Ballarat as a widow

---

[70] Ibid. 246.

[71] Marion Amies, "The Career of a Colonial Schoolmistress", in *Melbourne Studies in Education 1984,* ed., Imelda Palmer (Melbourne University Press, 1984), 55.

and through the intervention of Inspectors Venables and Orlebar, and with the support of Rev. Potter and James Oddie, Matilda was appointed to the Benevolent Asylum's school where she commenced teaching on 2 December 1861.[73]

Matilda Dixie performed well as the Asylum's main teacher. Scores of orphaned and deserted children had been left destitute in the wake of shifting fortunes on the goldfields and the misfortunes of many parents saw their children being taken into the Ballarat Benevolent Asylum.

Amies suggested that the National Board of Education preferred to keep asylum children out of National schools "for fear of infection and moral contamination" and that by 1862 there were too few children at the Ballarat Asylum to warrant the expense of a fully trained teacher.[74] The first suggestion seems unlikely. It is more probable that Asylum committees took the role of legally appointed guardian too seriously to risk sending Asylum children to school in the normal way. This conscientious approach led to a situation where Dixie's salary came to be paid by the Asylum committee and reimbursed only as and when she received remuneration from the Board of Education. The former group was evidently intent on retaining the services of this fully trained and capable teacher regardless of irregular payment policies adopted in Melbourne.

---

[72] Ibid., 59.
[73] Ibid., 60.
[74] Ibid.

By June 1862, there were thirty-seven children resident in the asylum "who all slept in one dormitory where there were only seventeen beds. A partition separated the girls from the boys".[75] This situation improved as money for building extensions was made available, and by December 1863 there were 70 children resident in the Asylum. Dixie's attitude towards her charges was reflected in her reply to a questionnaire circulated in 1866 at the behest of the Royal Commission on Education. In relation to discipline, Dixie wrote

> I keep a conduct roll, which I call over daily–the child who breaks discipline loses his marks. I give a prize every half year for the greatest number of good conduct marks; finding the hope of reward more efficacious than the fear of punishment. When this negative kind of punishment is too mild for the case, I resort to positive–extra work after school-hours, or corporal chastisement.[76]

The Committee was pleased with the progress of the Asylum children, 38 of whom were boys and 32 were girls, the average age being seven years and seven months.[77] This progress was measured by "the creditable manner in which they passed their Christmas examinations and which continues to ensure the confidence always felt by the Committee in their teacher, Mrs Dixie."[78] This confidence was also reflected in the favorable report on the Asylum School given by the Board of Education's Inspector in 1864.[79]

While conditions in the Asylum were no doubt Spartan, particularly during its early years, there is little to support Moore's assessment that aspects of its

---

[75] Ibid., 61.

[76] Response to Questionnaire, Royal Commission on Education, Q.10. VPRS 1226, Box 21, quoted in Marion Amies, "The Career of a Colonial Schoolmistress", in *Melbourne Studies in Education 1984*, ed. Imelda Palmer (Melbourne University Press, 1984), 62.

[77] Ballarat Benevolent Asylum, Sixth Annual Report, January 1864, 11.

[78] Ibid.

school were "clearly repressive".[80]   Although, as Moore stated, conditions within the Asylum, being comparatively regimented, were inappropriate for children, continual efforts were made by a number of concerned parties to make their lives as cheerful and forward looking as possible.   Concerts and games were organized by a number of different groups on a regular basis and toys and clothing were also donated on occasion.[81]

The Benevolent Asylum School closed on 21 September 1868, its pupils being dispersed to the newly established orphanage in Ballarat and in the case of older children, to industrial and training schools recently established in the colony.   Upon removal of the children, the Asylum's teachers were given a bonus of one month's salary and a good testimonial.[82]   For two years Dixie was without a teaching post, but she finally prevailed upon the Board and a post in Melbourne was arranged.[83]

It can be inferred from this phase in the development of regular schooling on a turbulent goldfield, that the Asylum committee was firmly committed to ensuring that no child would be robbed of opportunity as an adult, on account of having been orphaned or neglected by its parents.   It can also be inferred that com-mittee members and Asylum staff took pains to fulfill the role of guardian to the best of their abilities and regardless of demands it might have made on available resources.

---

[79] Ballarat Benevolent Asylum, Eighth Annual Report, January 1866, 13.
[80] Moore, op.cit. 248.
[81] *Star* (Ballarat), 26 August 1868, 2.
[82] Ballarat Benevolent Asylum, Eleventh Annual Report, January 1869, 11.
[83] According to a report in the *Star* (Ballarat) (22/1/1877) Dixie was later appointed as a teacher at Alexandra College in Hamilton, a position she held for five years before returning to Ballarat and

According to historian Geoffrey Serle, the discovery of gold threw the traditional social and religious order, which placed religious dictates before those of the state, into confusion, but the longer-term problem for all churches in relation to education was the introduction of state aid for national schools as distinct from schools owned and operated by the churches. This over-shadowed continuing doctrinal differences.

The Catholic Church addressed the problem posed by threats to state aid by recruiting "squads of priests"[84] from Ireland, but their number was still too few and funds too limited to make much of an impact. By the late 1850s, according to historian and professor, Patrick O'Farrell, "fear of proselytism was central to the Irish Catholic character", and Irish Cardinal, Paul Cullen, at a national synod in Ireland, "had focused this on education in particular: only what was completely Catholic was free from taint or danger".[85] This synod influenced Catholic attitudes in Australia, having as one of its aims "to confront the menace of Protestantism". According to O'Farrell, the liberal-progressive view in Australia was that secular education was "a major means of creating the kind of harmonious progressive and united society it sought to build in Australia" and from this perspective religion was seen as a "hindrance, or an irrelevance" to the achievement of these aims.[86] The

---

establishing her own school, known as The Queen's College. This college was a two-storied building on the corner of Dana and Raglan Streets, which was equipped as a boarding school for young ladies.

[84] Serle, op.cit. 340.

[85] Patrick O'Farrell, *The Catholic Church and Community: An Australian History*, new rev. ed. (Kensington, NSW: New South Wales University Press, 1985), 142.

[86] Ibid. 144.

Victorian *Common Schools Act* was carried in 1862 and this encouraged the growth of state schools and the commensurate decline of church schools.

Historian J. S. Gregory, however, disputes that this was the intended aim of the legislation. In his study of the issue he remarked that one of the chief impressions he gained from studying the development of the whole controversy over the 1872 education bill, was of "an overwhelming desire on the part of the majority of its supporters to end sectarian divisions altogether".[87]

The national school system, whether intended to or not, seems to have acted to present a secular alternative to the colony's parents in order to overcome and/or bypass doctrinal differences between churches and to offer the same standard of schooling to all students. Serle stated that this aim found concurrence among the new generation of migrants attracted to the goldfields, who tended to come from less puritanical backgrounds than the British. Also according to Serle, they held to liberal and democratic principles, giving little support to the proposition that the state should subsidise either religion or religious education, and by the early 1860s legislation was passed which curtailed religious instruction in state funded schools.[88]

> The argument was essentially between those who thought of the school as
> primarily an adjunct to the church with the function of instilling the "right" doctrine

---

[87] J. S. Gregory, *Church and State*: *Changing Government Policies Towards Religion in Australia; With Particular Reference to Victoria Since Separation* (North Melbourne, Vic: Cassell, 1973), 140.
[88] Serle, op.cit. 349.

into the rising generation, and those who saw it as primarily a training ground for future citizens.[89]

Denis Grundy elaborates on the after effects of this legislation when he asserts that

> the clergy's inability or refusal to overcome their denominational dif-
> ferences…fostered an impatient anti-clericalism in the colony…in light of the
> development of free thought in the 1860s. The 1872 Act impatiently settled the
> question: it withdrew state aid from the church schools, expelling them from the
> National system of which they were the larger part, and it centralised control
> under a newly established Minister of Education in order to purge the schools of
> all sectarian religious influences.[90]

Ballarat also experienced sectarian tensions. On the goldfields, according to Serle, the most effective religious force was Methodism, and Serle cites organisation as well as the intensity of Wesleyan evangelical zeal as having made for that success, but it was not a trouble-free process. In fact, Serle goes on to remark that

> In an age when evangelicals were convinced that the wicked were damned and
> would be eternally punished, and when the notion of divine mercy had made little
> headway, sectarianism permeated the community.[91]

Sectarianism in Ballarat did not go unnoticed in the local press, and it was remarked in 1877 by a correspondent, John Palmer, that while there were still many bigots and religious tyrants in Ballarat, all of whom had opposed the *Education Act of 1872* before its introduction, "fully nineteen out of every

---

[89] Ibid., 348.
[90] Grundy, op.cit. 3.

twenty who then were opposed to the bill, now laud it to the skies".[92] Palmer
went on to suggest that clerical opposition to this bill had been rooted in the
fear that students would come to "surpass the [educational] standard of many
of the clergy" and that "young Victorians will be able to think and judge for
themselves without the dictatorship of the parsons". "Not until then", he went
on, "will the present intolerant sectarian spirit become as much a thing of the
past as the old exploded theory of the brimstone pot is at the present time".[93]

Sectarian differences were evident on social fronts too: according to church
historian Walter Phillips, Protestants focused on the evils of intemperance,
gambling, theatre, dancing and Sunday recreation, while the Catholic Church
was more strongly opposed to divorce and birth control.[94] All churches looked
to government for support of these Christianised values, however, because all
saw themselves "engaged in a great battle against secularism", and as
"defenders of Australia as a Christian country".[95]

Although sectarianism was also strong in Ballarat, by the 1860s, clergymen
on the goldfields were not openly divided when it came to assisting in the
operation of the Asylum. None, however, could be permitted by the Asylum's
founders to assert the superiority of any one doctrine over another without the
risk of giving offence to potential subscribers. Beneath the surface of

---

[91] Serle, op.cit. 337.
[92] "Education", *Star* (Ballarat), 10 May 1877, 3.
[93] Ibid.
[94] Walter Phillips, *Defending "A Christian Country": Churchmen and Society in New South Wales in the 1880s and After* (St. Lucia, Qld: Queensland University Press, 1981), 271.
[95] Ibid.

ostensible cooperation, therefore, the different churches remained divided on doctrinal and social issues.

It can be seen that secularism played a large part in the expansion of Western style industrial capitalism in Ballarat. Education was made compulsory in Victoria in 1872 in order to develop marketable skills and further national interests, which diminished the influence of all churches over the rising generation. Women remained subordinate to men in both professional and domestic spheres, however, and this led to the marginalization of those women who remained unmarried and/or childless. The "fallen" woman was viewed with particular suspicion. In overall terms, historical accounts present a consensus that poverty only became a problem to those who experienced it. However, in the later part of the nineteenth century, poverty grew and in colonial Victoria in the 1890s, the number of poor people became so great and charitable resources so limited, that the state was obliged to intervene more directly than it had during earlier economic downturns.

Conclusion

Recurrent themes that emerge from the works discussed are that eligibility for charitable assistance came to be widely viewed as having to be earned by way of self-denial. This is in contrast to the Masonic approach, more characteristic of Ballarat's Benevolent Asylum, which considered the performance of productive work to be a reliable indicator of merit, and that voluntary philanthropy in support of poor relief was automatically incumbent

on the wealthy. Nonetheless, eligibility criteria, as loosely defined by Christian churches, continued to govern the delivery of organized charitable assistance in Victoria generally. Education was widely viewed as the most beneficial avenue through which children could progress toward self-determination as adults, but the Victorian government's effort to standardise the curriculum in all schools it funded, aroused strong opposition among the churches.

Tensions existing in Ballarat between people from different environments translated into a general shift towards religious neutrality, which was viewed by many in Ballarat, and Australia generally, as the most promising way towards a cooperative national future. Continuing doctrinal differences translated into different attitudes towards the poor and the incapacitated in both England and Australia, however, and nineteenth-century charity workers in both countries were obliged to counter widespread fears of imposition by the destitute. The founding committee of Ballarat's Benevolent Asylum adopted and encouraged a widely understood good Samaritan approach in order to counter sectarianism and religious differences, which may have existed between Protestant and Catholic committee members themselves, were suspended in order for the enterprise to proceed on a cooperative and generally benevolent basis.

The problems and challenges in relation to destitute children were well managed during the Ballarat Benevolent Asylum's period of direct involvement in the provision of food, shelter and schooling for them (1860-1868), but by the end of 1868, the children had been removed to a newly established

orphanage which relieved the Asylum of responsibility for their welfare, and enabled them to devote their energies to alleviating distress among adults in the interests of continuing civic progress and social reform.

CHAPTER TWO

State Expansion into the Realm of Poverty Alleviation

In relation to the operation of charitable institutions in nineteenth-century Victoria generally, John Poynter[1], who wrote a foreword to Mary Kehoe's history of Melbourne's Benevolent Asylum, stated that Victoria developed a paradoxical system of organized poverty relief, consisting of a network of charities privately run by philanthropic amateurs who depended on government grants for their work and their continued existence. It was this combination of moral authority and financial vulnerability that was to shape the development of welfare delivery in both Melbourne and Ballarat, and open the way to ever more intrusive intervention by the state into the lives of destitute people, notably women and children. As Poynter remarked

> Relief subsidised by government, but not provided by it, or guaranteed by law, was the [mid nineteenth-century] Australian solution to the dilemma faced over the previous half-century in Britain.[2]

This pattern of slow change from a parochial kind of independence to a more centrally located system of financial dependence is evident in the operation of Ballarat's Benevolent Asylum, and it will be traced in later chapters, but social analyst Robert Van Krieken made the point that regulatory expansion by the state in matters of social and moral reform was a movement not confined to Australia. The purpose of this chapter, however, is to place such expansion into its early New South Wales and Victorian contexts.

---

[1] Professor John Poynter is the author of *Society and Pauperism: English Ideas on Poor Relief 1795-1834* (London: Routledge & Kegan, 1969), which is the standard exposition of debates about the meaning of the poor laws in early nineteenth-century England.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, Australia shared with western Europe, Britain and North America, a tendency towards greater State involvement in the regulation of childhood through the establishment of universal schooling, reformatories, industrial schools and boarding out systems…and…the effects of nineteenth-century economic and political developments added some new ingredients that would produce the potent mixture we now know as "State expansion".[3]

State expansion in Victoria included that which extended into the realm of the family, more specifically, the family that did not conform to standards of eligibility exemplified by its English, Protestant, governing class. The focus of middle-class reformers and evangelists came to be on poor children as proving grounds for doctrinal and social theories relating to poverty, self-improvement, eligibility and ways of encouraging progress towards prosperity in Australia. These theories were usually predicated by ruling male groups on notions of white Anglo-Saxon supremacy and they were in accord with views encapsulated at the commencement of the nineteenth century, by English clergyman and economist Reverend Thomas Malthus, in his essay on the cause of poverty. Malthus' essay reflected prevailing social distinctions between the eligible, the deserving and the rest, and offered justification to the secure for their lack of concern for the vulnerable.[4]

---

[2] John Poynter, foreword to *The Melbourne Benevolent Asylum: Hotham's Premiere Building,* by Mary Kehoe (North Melbourne: Hotham History Project, 1998), 2

[3] Robert Van Krieken, *Children and the State: Social Control and the Formation of Australian Child Welfare* (North Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1992), 60-1.

[4] T. R. Malthus, *An Essay on the Principle of Population and a Summary View of the Principle of Population (1798)*, edited and with an introduction by Anthony Flew (Hammondsworth, Middlesex, Ringwood, Vic: Penguin, 1970), chap. 5.

In the new world of Australia, however, it was recognized by all ruling groups that children were entirely necessary to the colony's future, and the problem posed by those in destitute circumstances, if taken into state care, became one of raising the funds with which to house, feed and train them into productive work and social service. Emphasis was placed on the moral climate in which such housing, feeding and training took place, and different priorities among different groups made for tensions between all churches and the state when the latter was obliged to act.

It was during the 1880s and 1890s that demand for child labor grew, but for middle class reformers this was no improvement on unsupervised larking about on the streets. Given that there was street work available to children, such as selling matches or newspapers–the proceeds from which might have kept families eating–there came to be quite wide divisions of opinion on how best to continue "saving the rising generation".[5] Van Krieken contends that at the centre of this political development was the liberal-democratic state, a state of the "general interest", which was meant to produce economic growth, propelled by and benefiting everyone willing to work. "Profits were supposed to mean prosperity for all, and the evidence that this was clearly not the case– poverty–was a political problem, the resolution of which, both the liberal bourgeoisie and the leadership of the working class were interested in, but for different reasons".[6] The general response to poverty in the past had been divided between the churches presenting it as part of the order of things, and the state explaining it in moral terms as individual, rather than structural,

---

[5] Van Krieken, op.cit., 80.
[6] Ibid., 81.

failure.[7]   This was not to change, and Van Krieken remarks that objections raised against child welfare institutions and agencies were rarely that they should not exist at all, or that state intervention into family life was, in principle, illegitimate.[8]   Instead they revolved around the justice of particular cases or procedures.

The ideological assumptions of the early governing classes in Australia, and later in Victoria, reflected Protestant and/or Humanist biases, and while these biases were held by the Roman Catholic Church to imply a lack of deference to its authority in relation to Christian churches, it is contended here that a genuine conviction existed among most administrators in colonial Australia to the effect that poverty and squalor did not reflect well on them as representatives of English religious and social traditions.   It could also be argued that Australia's ability to improve living conditions for the whole population did, in fact, rest on its ability to borrow money from abroad, and to attract investment.   Having begun as a convict settlement, these abilities would have been dependent on demonstrations of self-improvement to potential investors in Britain.

Perceptions of poverty and the poor among the administrative classes in Melbourne as noted by Cage, Kennedy and Swain, and exhibited by witnesses to successive Royal Commissions into charitable institutions in Victoria, were accordingly less fraternal than among leaders and administrators in Ballarat, who were closer to the difficulties posed by this

---

[7] Ibid.
[8] Ibid., 82.

demand.   The necessity of relieving the poor led to the establishment of organized charity in Melbourne, but the attitude displayed by charity workers towards those seeking relief was punitive.   This was noted by Shurlee Swain, a social analyst and historian who pains-takingly researched charitable organisations, poverty, and nineteenth century colonial conditions, particularly in relation to their effects on women.   In "The Poor People of Melbourne", a chapter in a compilation entitled *The Outcasts of Melbourne*, Swain put a case for the professionally trained and educated social worker against the untrained, moral reformist style of charity worker.   Swain's research into records of nineteenth-century charities in Melbourne led her to conclude that the public respect accorded to charity workers prior to the 1890s depression was largely dissipated because of "their failure to succour humanely the innocent victims of an economic disaster".[9]   Whether professionally trained and educated social workers would have been better able to restore hope and dignity to the destitute of nineteenth-century Melbourne, was not discussed.

In her paper, however, Swain highlighted organized charity's benign indifference to the fate of the poor in Melbourne during the economic downturn of the 1890s and the common perception among the middle classes that lack of thrift was the main determinant of this fate.   She argued that illness, old age, disability and unemployment were more the causes of poverty than lack of thrift, and she was critical of the stereotyped judgements often recorded by charity workers of those in their charge.   Swain contended that there were cases where adolescent girls were denied a normal life by zealous

---

[9] Shurlee Swain, "The Poor People of Melbourne", in *The Outcasts of Melbourne*, ed. Graeme Davison, David Dunstan & Chris McConville (Sydney, London, Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1985), 112.

moral reformers who cautioned the girls' employers against allowing them leisure hours in which to enjoy recreational pursuits, and that "the long hours, hard work, loneliness and low pay were enough in themselves to tempt them to a life on the streets".[10]

The attitudes criticised by Swain had their roots in a perceived correlation among the thrifty middle-classes in Melbourne, between discoveries of gold and increases in the number of fortune hunters, and/or their dependents, needing charitable assistance. In the eyes of Melbourne's middle class, most of which had not experienced the rigours of a goldfield, miners and laborers as a class were perceived as irresponsible loafers and/or rogues, who did not deserve assistance because they ought not to have gone off chasing gold in the first place if it meant leaving their families, risking destitution and/or having to impose on others for assistance.

The general attitude towards speculative activity in Melbourne, therefore, was that financial speculation should only be entered into by those who could afford to lose their money. This attitude was not evident among the mining fraternity in Ballarat, where the fluctuation of fortune was an everyday event, and the option of steady employment was unusual. The deserving man in Ballarat was not so much the man who never took a risk, but the man who had been incapacitated due to factors beyond his control, such as illness, work-related accident and/or old age.

---

[10] Ibid., 98.

These different attitudes towards the lure and the costs of gold seeking were discussed by David Goodman who noted that the independence sought by diggers evoked a gendered, as well as a public political response.[11] "This masculine independent freedom had its costs", he remarked; "men left their families behind…and were sometimes reluctant to rejoin them".[12] Goodman interpreted the many letters from deserted wives to gold seeking husbands as a domestic critique of the disruptions of gold. "Men were abandoning their economic and emotional responsibilities to their families, in order to pursue wealth".[13] The other side of the coin was the excitement of the goldfields, a phenomenon that aroused a great deal of social comment from authorities in Melbourne and which, according to Goodman, "involved extrapolation from a psychological state to a social one. The excited society was a more dangerous and terrible thing than the sum of the individual excited lives". It was further held that "in an excited society, no individual quietness was possible".[14] The underlying concern was that too much excitement gave rise to insanity, and in support of this point Goodman quoted the argument of Andrew T. Scull, "that the rise of the asylum is linked to the commercialization of social existence and the advent of a full-blown capitalist market economy".[15]

A fuller understanding of the lure of gold seeking, its potentially huge rewards and the common desire for independence, was more evident in the approach

---

[11] David Goodman, *Gold Seeking: Victoria and California in the 1850s* (St. Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 1994), 149.
[12] Ibid., 150.
[13] Ibid., 151.
[14] Ibid., 193.

to the alleviation of distress adopted by Asylum committee members in Ballarat, where the full-blown capitalist market economy boldly proclaimed itself in stamping batteries, music halls and share-trading on the streets. In Melbourne, by contrast, records of the period indicate that supporters of domesticity and a traditional master-servant order, who were at a distance from the hard edge of the capitalist market, were accordingly more reluctant to bear the human costs of developing such an economy.

The Melbourne Benevolent Asylum

Whereas the establishment of Ballarat's Asylum was prompted by the dramatic suicide of an unemployed engineer, the establishment of Melbourne's Asylum was prompted by a general increase in destitution, which exceeded the capacity of small groups to relieve, and the perceived necessity of providing shelter for an increasing number of homeless, old and infirm.[16] The establishment of a Benevolent Asylum in Melbourne was said in chronicles by Garryowen to have been proposed to the City Council on 1 June 1848 by Corporation member, John Thomas Smith.[17] Smith secured the co-operation of several ministers of religion and a committee was formed which, in 1849, recommended a site in North Melbourne, then known as Hotham.

[15] Andrew, T. Scull, "Madness and Segregative Control: The Rise of the Insane Asylum", *Social Problems* 24, no. 3, 1977: 349, quoted by David Goodman, *Gold Seeking: Victoria and California in the 1850s* (St. Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 1994), 198.

[16] Mary Kehoe, *The Melbourne Benevolent Asylum: Hotham's Premier Building* (Melbourne: The Hotham History Project, 1998), 14.

[17] Garryowen [Edmund Finn] *The Chronicles of Early Melbourne, vol. 1 1835-1852*, Centennial ed. (Melbourne: Ferguson and Mitchell, 1888) 242. Facsimile ed. (Melbourne: Heritage Publications), 302/500.

The Asylum Committee in Melbourne proceeded along much the same lines as its counterpart in Ballarat was to proceed eight years later. The same conditions of subsidy applied. Private contributions had to be raised before the Colonial government would contribute in agreed proportion. Melbourne's Asylum Contribution Committee "enlarged its personnel by declaring the general body of the Clergy of all denominations, ex officio members, and adding other influential names".[18] On 2 November 1849[19] a meeting of the enlarged Committee preparatory to a meeting of subscribers on 8 November 1849, was held at the Mechanics' Institute and attended by Bishops Perry (Anglican) and Goold (Catholic). The inclusion from the outset of influential, but opposed, church leaders made for differences in attitude and operation between the Asylum in Melbourne and the Asylum in Ballarat.

Melbourne's founding committee recommended that the Institution be called "the Victoria Benevolent Society" and the building "The Benevolent Asylum". The objects were to be "the relief of the aged, infirm, disabled, or destitute poor of all creeds and nations, and to minister to them the comforts of religion: (1) By receiving and maintaining in a suitable building such as will be most benefited by being inmates of the Asylum. (2) By giving outdoor relief in kind, and in money in special cases, to families in temporary distress. (3) By giving medical assistance, and medicine through the establishment of a dispensary or otherwise; and (4) By affording facilities for religious instruction and consolation to the inmates of the Asylum".[20]

---

[18] Garryowen, op.cit. 243.
[19] Kehoe, op.cit. 15.

There are substantive differences in the stated objects and intentions of Melbourne's Asylum committee when compared with the stated objects and intentions of Ballarat's. First, there was the stated objective of "ministering the comforts of religion" to Melbourne's Asylum inmates, whereas in Ballarat, "religious instruction" (rather than comfort) was only allowed to inmates at "such times as the Committee shall appoint",[21] and even then, it was up to the individual inmate to decide whether or not he or she wished to receive such instruction.

From the objective numbered (1), it can be inferred that those people accepted into Melbourne's Asylum were to be those least likely to complain about whatever routines were in place. The Asylum's success in this regard was later noted by a journalist for the *Illustrated Australian News* when he commented

> Valuing the benefits they receive from the charity, the inmates learn to manifest their gratitude by anticipating the desires of their benefactors. The visitor to the Asylum hears nothing but expressions in praise of the officers, and words of gratitude for the treatment received in the establishment.[22]

This success seems to have been hard won though, because in 1854 a sub-committee reported inedible food, milk gone sour, water often green and bad, food and drink served on rusty tin plates and in pannikins which were in a disgustingly dirty and greasy state.[23] This indicates that there were few if any

---

[20] Garryowen, op.cit. 243.
[21] Ballarat Benevolent Asylum, "Internal Government of the Asylum", Second Annual Report, 1859, 11.
[22] "The Melbourne Benevolent Asylum", *Illustrated Australian News*, 8 August 1868, 4-5.
[23] Kehoe, op.cit. 24.

bonds of prior shared experience between inmates of Melbourne's Asylum and the surrounding community, as there was between inmates of Ballarat's Asylum and its surrounding community. Hence the generally fraternal aspect of benevolence, so much a part of Ballarat's charitable effort, was not as evident in Melbourne.

Another difference between the Melbourne Benevolent Asylum and the Ballarat Benevolent Asylum was foreshadowed when, at the first meeting of the founding committee, and on the motion of a Mr. Ebden, "proposition (2), relating to Outdoor-relief, was omitted".[24] No reason for this omission was stated in the chronicle, but reasons could have included a desire to contain costs, a lack of time among committeemen to oversee an outdoor operation, and/or a stronger desire in Melbourne to maintain a master-servant social order between sub-scribers and aid recipients.

Whatever the reason, this omission made for a huge difference to both the ethos and the practical operation of Benevolent Asylums in Melbourne and Ballarat, notwithstanding similarities in aspects of management procedure. Subscribers of £1 or more per annum in cash or kind to Melbourne's Asylum were to be considered members of the society with power to vote at elections and recommend relief cases. Ballarat's Asylum departed from this approach in that the object of paying subscriptions was not so much the right to nominate relief cases, as the right to a bed in the Asylum for the subscriber if and when necessary. This form of cooperative insurance may well have

---

[24] Garryowen, op.cit. 243.

developed from Masonic, rather than Christian, charitable practices as Masonic echoes also survived in the terms used to describe members who could be relied upon for the payment of annual premiums. Terms such as life-governor, subscriber, and perhaps even benevolent asylum itself, can be traced back through Masonic literature on charitable institutions established by Freemasons,[25] but these terms do not appear in literature about the structure and governance of Christian charities.

Once its principles of operation had been agreed, however, Melbourne's Asylum committee actively campaigned for funds. Several plans for a building were submitted and that of "Brown and Ramsden was accepted for £2850, the building to be finished in the first half of 1851".[26] In keeping with the opening of Melbourne's hospital, and with many buildings in nineteenth-century cities, the laying of the foundation stone of Melbourne's Benevolent Asylum was intended to be a very big and well-attended event. Invitations were sent to Masons, Oddfellows, the St. Patrick's Society and groups such as the Total Abstainers and Rechabites, soliciting their attendance and cooperation.

All went well until at the beginning of June 1850, the Building Committee voted in favor of a Protestant clergyman delivering prayers at the laying of the foundation stone, scheduled for 24 June 1850, with the ceremonial support of the Masonic fraternity. Efforts were made to avoid a division between committee members, but with Bishop Goold firmly opposed to hearing prayers

---

[25] Cheshire Provincial Charities, "Provincial Grand Lodge of Cheshire Freemasons" (Constituted 1725) [online]: www.freemasonsofcheshire.org.uk/charity4.html and Grand Lodge, "Freemasonry and Benevolence: Caring in the Community" [online]: www.freemasonrysaust.org.au/care.html
[26] Garryowen, op.cit. 244.

delivered by a Protestant, and the Masons firmly committed to performing their usual stone laying rituals, a rift developed and after putting his case before a number of Catholic groups, Bishop Goold, together with the St. Patrick's Society and their supporters, withdrew from the planned procession.[27] Notwithstanding this, and according to Garryowen's chronicle, "the procession was more than a mile long,[28] and it was a most successful, spectacular exhibition".[29]

This well-documented and very definite division between Catholic and non-Catholic approaches to public ceremony reflects the level of directional authority vested in Catholic priests, which characterised nineteenth-century Catholicism, but which was resisted with equal conviction by Protestants. Most recent histories of poverty and its organized relief imply criticisms of both church and state, but few of them go beyond this to question the social agendas of either. One notable exception to the nineteenth-century dearth of critical material on attitudes governing the delivery of organized welfare, however, was the many papers written for *The Melbourne Argus* by the "Vagabond", an educated and sometime investigative journalist, whose given name was John Stanley James. James' papers were later published as a collection by George Robertson in 1877-8,[30] and they included accounts of periods spent under an assumed name in Melbourne Hospital, the St. Kilda Road Immigrants' Home and the Melbourne Benevolent Asylum.

---

[27] Ibid. 244.

[28] Kehoe interpreted Garryowen's statement to mean that the procession marched for a mile. Kehoe, op.cit. 20.

[29] Garrowen, op.cit. 246.

[30] The Vagabond [John Stanley James] *The Vagabond Papers,* abridged edition, edited and with an introduction by Michael Cannon (Carlton, Vic: Melbourne University Press, 1969).

Once accepted into the Melbourne Asylum, James found that the hours were very regulated, and the only leave of absence allowed was between 9 am and 4 pm on Saturdays and Sundays. The routine in the Asylum was described as attentive, but without stimulus, and it included a religious meeting every night: "a d-----d lot of church-going, but little religion" said the doctor.[31] Inmates in Melbourne's Asylum were also said to lack fresh vegetables and a place of shelter during bad weather.[32] This was in contrast to Ballarat where people were encouraged to remain active and to assist in the production of their own food requirements wherever possible and where a day room was provided. James saw the lack of such a room as the worst aspect of Melbourne's Asylum. According to the rules, an inmate had to leave his room at seven am and not return until seven at night. Work was performed under cover during the daytime, but at five o clock the shop and oakum shed were closed, and after tea time "there was absolutely nowhere for the inmates to go except for a small smoking shed, or the religious services in the dining hall".[33]

Another paper by James, relevant to the imposition of middle-class reforms on poor families, was on state-subsidised "baby farming" which was said to have created a lot of controversy among groups with "designs" on the rising generation. According to James, "it was an endeavour to rear orphaned children and deserted pauper children by giving them what they had either lost or never enjoyed–a kindly home and parental training. To train up a child in that condition of existence which is the foundation of all society–the

---

[31] Ibid., 155.
[32] Ibid., 164.
[33] Ibid., 166.

family".[34] Sectarian differences are evident in the various solutions proposed to the problem of how to best rear orphaned children.   There was no indication by James that religious affiliations were considered or disregarded in the placing of children with foster parents, but Catholics were not as trusting of the state's motives as James seems to have been. Donella Jaggs' study of early state efforts to provide for neglected children emphasized the difficulties faced by the clergy in the management of this problem, pursuant to a Royal Commission into the colony's industrial schools. This Commission's terms of reference were transferred to the Stawell Commission on Penal and Prison Discipline, which presented its report in August 1871.[35] Some witnesses to the Stawell Commission were in favour of boarding neglected children out, although difficulties in finding suitable foster parents were recognized.

> Finally, heads of religious denominations were asked for their views.   All favoured the idea of boarding out, provided that Catholics were always placed in Catholic homes and Protestants with Protestants.   They were sure that clergymen would be willing to help select and supervise foster parents.[36]

A Presbyterian put forward a typically judgmental view when he suggested that

> If immoral girls were sent away to the bush and trained in good households, the colony would have a continuing supply of excellent domestic servants and be able to save the money it spent on female immigration.[37]

---

[34] Ibid., 195.
[35] Donella Jaggs, *Neglected and Criminal: Foundations of Child Welfare Legislation in Victoria* (Melbourne: Centre for Youth and Community Studies Phillip Institute of Technology, 1986), 34.
[36] Ibid., 36.
[37] Ibid.

Whether or not this suggestion found support among Protestant clergy was not immediately apparent, but historian Lesley Hughes concluded that the Catholic Church resisted all efforts to include its children in state-sanctioned adoption schemes, preferring to retain its own provision of alternate care. It was argued by Hughes that relevant considerations included the social context of attempts to establish a secular public school system to replace church schools, Catholic opposition to the proselytism of Catholic children, the Catholic community's perception of the quality of care provided in Catholic orphanages, and the absence within the Catholic community of the resources necessary to establish and maintain a Catholic system of foster care.[38]

The absence of resources was in fact the fundamental problem for all authorities charged with the welfare of the colony's population, and the Commission was not alone when it finally concluded that boarding out was more beneficial than institutionalised care, not only to the children concerned, but also to the future of the towns they grew up in.[39]

Concerns about proselytism were not confined to the Catholic Church either, but were of equal importance to the Church of England. In 1847 a warning against Roman Catholic proselytism was circulated by the Anglican Bishop Broughton to all clergy of the United Church of England and Ireland within the diocese of Australia. The warning spoke of attempts still made by agents of the Church of Rome, which had convinced him of "the existence of an

---

[38] Lesley Hughes, "Catholics and the Care of Destitute Children in Late Nineteenth-Century New South Wales", *Australian Social Work,* 51 no. 1 (March 1998), 17.
[39] Jaggs, op.cit. 38.

organized design" against which clergy were to be "incessantly on guard".[40] Persons were said to be falsely describing the Roman communion as the Catholic Church and making efforts to lead persons away from the Church of England to the "ordinary sophistries of Romanism".[41]

Essentially, such tensions were all about who was going to exert social control in this newly prosperous society. It has been stated by Catholic church historian Patrick O'Farrell that Anglicans and other Protestants "constituted the backbone of colonial society [and] for the Protestant establishment, Catholicism was often synonymous with ignorance, superstition and idolatry in terms of religion; laziness, slovenliness and drunkenness in lifestyle, and treason and social unrest in politics. Catholic clergy were seen as keeping their flocks in ignorant sub-servience and/or fermenting social dissent".[42]

It can be said that almost all colonization is aimed at assuring and re-assuring the survival of given cultures, and that people have travelled far and wide in order to do this, having become progressively more confident of their abilities to tame and/or control unfamiliar environments. Society in nineteenth-century Australia, though, came to have a vested interest in tempering what was viewed as an essentially masculine drive to conquer all that lay between men and the consummation of their desire for physical and cultural supremacy. Historian David Goodman equated the drive to conquer and/or control to a desire peculiar to men for independence; and he consequently viewed the clergy's task as being "to describe a manhood that rested not on

---

[40] Jean Woolmington (ed), *Problems in Australian History: Religion in Early Australia: The Problem of Church and State* (Stanmore, NSW: Cassell, 1976), 74.

[41] Ibid., 75.

[42] Patrick O'Farrell, *The Irish in Australia,* (Kensington: University of New South Wales Press, 1988).

independence, but on dependence and inter-dependence, a manhood that took its very centre and definition from the family hearth".[43] This was an ethos that accorded with then prevailing concepts of Christian social order, but they seem to have been promulgated more specifically to poorer families who were only gradually being inducted into a new-world, but still English, culture of prosperity and progress. This gradual induction was ruptured in Victoria by discoveries of gold.

Gold was viewed by all churches and the Victorian governing authorities as having the potential to destroy accepted traditions of the master-servant social order. Melbourne Anglican Bishop Perry feared that gold would make the poor rich and that they would not have any legitimate use for their new-found wealth. The Bishop wrote, "the actual wants of the poor who have not been accustomed to the refinements of the educated classes, are exceedingly few, and satisfied at very small cost".[44] He also believed that the sudden acquisition of wealth by men who "knew no other enjoyment than the gratification of their appetites would destroy the sobriety of mind which is essential to both real happiness and to a consistent Christian course of conduct". Bishop Perry was all for the poor people enjoying their (human) rights, but his statement that in the eyes of the Church of England, the happiness of most people would be more securely promoted by the preservation of a stratified social system with graduations of rank being based on morality, education, natural abilities, refined tastes and gentle manners, suggests that such rights posed a threat to these conservative principles, and

---

[43] Goodman, op.cit., 167.

that Fraser's statement that "self-help and the greatest happiness of the greatest number were twin principles in the credo of the new industrial age"[45] was more descriptive of what had already become a changed basis of social ranking.

The comfortable association then existing between established English church and state was put under increasing strain in Victoria by the discovery of gold, and the graduated social system favored by both institutions was challenged by the rise of the speculative capitalist. In the words of Bishop Perry, gold made the acquisition of wealth "an arbitrary process, unrelated to work or worth, to integrity, good judgement and diligence" and it thus threatened to de-naturalise the order upon which Victorian society was instituted.[46] This raised the issue of discrimination on grounds of sex, money and social status, which was held by middle class reformers to be countered by access to education and training. It was this view that prevailed in nineteenth-century Ballarat, and it led to the establishment of a secular style benevolent asylum, primarily for the aged and incapacitated, but with educational facilities for children, which fostered the development of social cohesion, particularly among the local working com-munity.

Poynter noted the major dilemmas confronting those charged with the respon-sibility of organising charitable assistance, and these dilemmas seem to have

---

[44] "The Ballarat Goldfields", *Melbourne Church News,* 2 November 1851, 321-4, quoted in David Goodman, *Gold Seeking: Victoria and California in the 1850s* (St. Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 1994), 58.

[45] Fraser, op.cit., 7.

[46] "Our Social Evils", *Melbourne Church News,* 3 October 1852, 291, 325, quoted in David Goodman, *Gold Seeking: Victoria and California in the 1850s* (St. Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 1994), 58.

revolved around the possible introduction of a colonial poor law, something vigorously resisted in both Melbourne and Ballarat.

> How best to relieve the poor was a theme constantly debated by the country gentry and townsmen who comprised the magistracy, and were responsible for enforcing the Poor Law [of England]…The Poor Law, it was always complained, relieved those guilty of improvidence equally with the innocent unfortunate, and by giving them the apparent "right" to relief at public expense, undermined obligations to work and save, virtues especially valued as the ethos of "self help" gathered impetus in the nineteenth century.[47]

In Melbourne, the administration of poor relief became a role adopted by a reforming element of the middle class,[48] but some of those engaged in the practical aspect of poor relief were less than charitable towards their charges. This was highlighted in the Minutes of Evidence given to the 1870 Royal Commission into charitable institutions in Victoria. A member of the Melbourne Asylum committee described some of his old and infirm charges as "troublesome" and expressed the view that such people should be handed over to the police. When asked by a Commissioner "Why not put them on bread and water yourselves?" Marsden replied "We should have a fine lot of hornets about our ears then".[49] In other words, it was only the thought of public censure that kept Marsden's punitive preferences in check. The moral reform of troublesome inmates in the Melbourne Benevolent Asylum was usually reinforced by the withdrawal of "extra comforts" such as tobacco, but

---

[47] John Poynter, foreword to *The Melbourne Benevolent Asylum: Hotham's Premiere Building,* by Mary Kehoe (North Melbourne: Hotham History Project, 1998), 4.
[48] Shurlee Swain and Renate Howe*, Single Mothers and Their Children: Disposal, Punishment and Survival in Australia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 72-4.
[49] "Report on Charitable Institutions", Royal Commission (Melbourne: 1870), 15 *Victorian Parliamentary Papers* 1871.

Marsden was of the opinion that this punishment was not sufficient to effect the desired reformation.[50]

Also in Minutes of Evidence given to the 1870 Royal Commission in relation to Melbourne's Asylum, the President of the Melbourne Ladies Benevolent Society, which worked in conjunction with the Asylum, stated that relief was given to a great many deserted wives as well as families with husbands in gaol, but she agreed that the existing system of poor relief was "raising up a class (of children) that must be a pauper class". She saw employment as a solution, but if a woman with children refused to move into the Society's Industrial Home (read workhouse), "and often they decline to go there, then", she said, "we put her off the society".[51] All witnesses examined, in particular the honorary physician, James Neild, emphasised the parlous state of the Melbourne Asylum's financial affairs, and the haphazard system of book-keeping where any such records were kept. In fact it was Neild who first put forward the suggestion that the govern-ment implement some form of check and control over money voted to the institutions by the state.[52] There was no cash-book for the institution as a whole, which meant that no cash was posted into a ledger, and Neild viewed this as a "defect in the system of bookkeeping which made the institution liable to considerable losses of which he stated he could give instances".[53] Other voices suggested that a measure of concern for the destitute was there, but it was perhaps difficult to sustain under the low

---

[50] Ibid.
[51] Ibid., 22.
[52] Ibid., 9.
[53] Ibid., 11.

levels of financial support and equally low levels of accountability for funds received.

In light of the foregoing, it is argued that during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and as a result of ideological, industrial and political pressures, England's social order, from which Australia's derived, underwent a number of profound changes. In a purely political sense, this change presaged the adoption of liberalism among urbanised humanitarians, in contrast to the rather more defensive approach of social, political and religious conservatives. According to political philosopher Raymond Geuss,

> Liberalism is committed to some version of a principle of toleration that is to the view that absence of systematic persecution of non-violently deviant modes of living is one of the cardinal virtues of a human society, and especially of the political order of society.[54]

Liberalism was therefore more in keeping with Protestant than with Catholic priorities, and this definition also suggests that Liberalism was, and still is, more attuned to urban than to traditionally rural lifestyles and values. Geuss goes on to state that Liberalism is "characterised by a persistent suspicion of absolute, excessive, unlimited, or discretionary power".[55] In his view, "there was no question of providing actual encouragement for deviancy, only of mitigating or limiting the negative sanctions to be imposed on it".[56] Geuss himself relates Liberalism to Protestantism and he also traces the notion of tolerance back to "a certain kind of ancient humanism, which puts great

---

[54] Raymond Geuss, *History and Illusion in Politics* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 73.
[55] Ibid.

emphasis on moderation and the avoidance of excess or extremes".[57] Liberalism, therefore, is rightly viewed as a moderating influence rather than a repressive force.

The Liberal approach only gradually gained ground in the passage of laws relating to social welfare in England. In Australia, however, possibly because of its penal colony origins, the state to begin with, was both moral authority and material provider. Its programs of social reform, therefore, were liberal only for as long as they did not involve systematic persecution and if they acted to restrain the activities of religious bigots and moral tyrants. On the other hand, according to Geuss, Liberalism does not embrace the concept of political "rights". It sees rights-discourse as "a way of trying to immobilise society, to freeze it in an idealised version of its present form…an attempt to ensure that the ghostly hand of the present is able to throttle the future.[58]

It is contended then, that Liberalism is more likely to thrive in active, prosperous, progressive societies, than in conservative, insular societies, and that the principles of Liberalism, as outlined by Geuss, formed part of the Ballarat Benevolent Asylum's approach to self-improvement and social reform. Being a relatively urbane and moderate philosophy, however, Liberalism could not have survived against more extremist views in Ballarat without the underlying and widespread agreement among its diverse groups to cooperate in supporting the simpler concept of the good Samaritan.

---

[56] Ibid. 74.
[57] Ibid. 76.

Conclusion

The more punitive approach to poverty and the poor in Melbourne was less evident among supporters of organized charity in Ballarat. Differences of opinion relating to poverty, work and capital development in Ballarat were submerged in the general adoption in public of a stance of religious neutrality, which upheld individual efforts among working men to ensure that material prosperity was shared.

A prosperous future for all industrious men and their families was promulgated by political authorities in Melbourne as a reward due to rich and poor alike—provided it was earned—and this maintained the legitimacy of expansion by the state in the interests of profitable trade and investment.

Two main factors distinguished Ballarat's early approach to the alleviation of poverty from those of England as well as of Melbourne. The first was that the organized relief of poverty was administered by locally successful and fraternal working men, rather than autocratic "masters", and that their efforts were focused on adults in the belief that the rearing of children was properly the responsibility of their own parents, or failing that, of the state. Other differences were rooted in oppositions between church-based and endorsed approaches versus secular/ecumenical approaches to contentious issues, as well as varying perceptions of regional autonomy versus centralized control,

<hr>

[58] Ibid. 154.

and a liberal-progressive approach as distinct from a punitive reformatory approach to poverty and distress.

Ballarat's general emphasis on education and self-improvement, however, most notably by way of its libraries, theatres, galleries and gardens, were elements designed to consolidate the ordinary person's sense of "deserved" prosperity and personal worth, which favorably influenced community perceptions of the Asylum and its inmates. This is taken up in more detail in the following chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

Views of Ballarat and the Role of Its Asylum

The golden city of Ballarat was progressive. By the 1880s it saw itself as both an example and a product of a scientific age: a culturally, politically, and educationally pioneering society, destined for greatness. In the social tumult of earlier decades these factors jostled for prominence and unenfranchised miners and labourers exerted considerable muscle in their collective desire for a stake in the district's social, political and economic development. It was not until after the 1854 Eureka rebellion, however, that some of Ballarat's leading residents called for a more considered approach to the effects of this tumult on the district's less fortunate gold seekers and their families.

During the 1850s, Ballarat's mining population was both transient and culturally diverse which made it difficult to govern. In order to assist stability in a rapidly industrialising economy, a group of relatively successful business men took it upon themselves to establish the beginnings of a civilized social order based on their own, predominantly Protestant, (sober, industrious) ethic. The Benevolent Asylum was one vehicle by which they jointly and severally gave effect to this aim.

There have been many histories written about Ballarat's early social develop-ment and while most historians mention the less attractive aspects of it, such as drunkenness, prostitution, claim jumping, violence, mining accidents, racism, sectarianism, poverty and corruption, virtually all of them elaborate on the brighter aspects, such as Ballarat's abundant natural resources, the

development of a thriving city and the achievements of its self-improving and productive workforce. The transition from the rule of fortune to the rule of statutory law was surprisingly rapid. Yet the rapidity is not surprising when it is remembered that the district population was largely comprised of labourers who were quick to realise that they stood to gain more by the exercise of statutory law, than by the exercise against them of state-sanctioned force or conditions of labour unduly favourable to employers.

According to historian Weston Bate, who has conducted extensive research into Ballarat's history,

> Here was a renaissance or Elizabethan spirit associated with the social advancement of an artisan-entrepreneur lower middle class, whose energies were released through economic opportunity.[1]

In this paper, Bate warmly praises Ballarat's health, welfare and educational initiatives, in particular, the Benevolent Asylum, but his focus is first and foremost on the rapid development of industrial, cultural, scientific and political activities. He contends that

> Nowhere else in Australia, or even in the world, did one generation create so confident and self-sufficient a community as at Ballarat in the second half of the nineteenth century.[2]

Gold Seeking and Settlement

---

[1] Weston Bate, "Ballarat's Sense of Community, Ballarat and Environs", in *Building Community Sustaining Heritage*, Proceedings of Community Conference held in Ballarat, Victoria, December 1991, ed. Kate Darian-Smith, 1 (Ballarat: Ballarat University College, 1991).
[2] Ibid.

Mid nineteenth-century Ballarat was a canvas-covered district with an average annual population of 8,000 people,[3] mostly miners, which increased to some 25,000 by September 1854.[4]   They had few comforts, no deep-drain sanitation and were primarily intent on wresting gold from the ground as efficiently as mining techniques allowed. A number of newspapers, beginning with the *Ballarat Times,* first published in March 1854, acted as barometers and leaders of public opinion. The *Ballarat Star* followed in September 1855, and the *Chinese Advertiser* in 1856. Also by 1856 gas lighting was in use and numerous stores, theatres, schools, hotels and churches had been erected. The *Star* and later the *Courier* (first published in 1867) both presented a Eurocentric view of the world. The emphasis was on trade and employment, "the benefits of drinking at a particular hotel",[5] accommodation, mining intelligence and British news. This reflected the gradual emergence of conservative opinion and tended to marginalize the more radical political perspective often expressed in the *Ballarat Times.*

Until the 1860s, this climate of ad hoc development and consolidation was loosely administered from a government camp, the main law enforcement activity prior to 1856 being the collection of fines and fees. Court reports, listing names and details of crimes against property, drunkenness, the poor and the orphaned, served to maintain general adherence to law and order, as well as to Victorian codes of morality. According to former deputy director of

---

[3] Anthea Hyslop, *Sovereign Remedies: A History of Ballarat Base Hospital 1850s to 1980s* (Sydney, Wellington, London, Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1989), 4.

[4] Bate, op.cit., 41.

[5] Peter Mansfield, "Ballarat Newspapers: The Lifeblood of the Community", in *Building Community Sustaining Heritage*, Proceedings of Community Conference held in Ballarat, Victoria, 1990, ed. Kate Darian-Smith, 11 (Ballarat: Ballarat University College, 1991).

Ballarat's Sovereign Hill (Museum Services), Michael Evans, "the core of goldrush culture lay in the creation of a system of order and authority".[6] Ballarat was no exception to this rule. The uprising of a large number of the unenfranchised miners at the Eureka Stockade in December 1854, which was violently quashed by police troopers and soldiers, acted to divide the community between a dominant class of entrepreneurs anxious to develop and cultivate the city, and a less prominent class of diggers and labourers. It was a political rather than a religious division, but because the city's administrative class was predominantly English and Protestant and the working class included a large number of Irish Catholics, one of whom led the uprising, the uprising itself came to be viewed by many as an Irish affair with Republican overtones, and a number of loyal to empire residents and business people came to view it as a blot on the good name of Ballarat, and something best forgotten.[7]

Socio-political differences were gradually resolved by common interests in settlement, technological progress, financial advancement, cultural exchange and the development of locally administered institutions and charities, all of which were encouraged by sweeping political reforms enacted in 1855. Ballarat's Benevolent and Visiting Association, and forerunner of the later Ballarat Benevolent Asylum, established in November 1857 by a group of local businessmen, was a prime example of, and a vehicle for, this process of social and welfare reform.

---

[6] Michael Evans, "Interpreting Ballarat's Goldrush Heritage: Uniqueness or 'The Whole Digging World'", in *Building Community Sustaining Heritage*, Proceedings of Community Conference held in Ballarat, Victoria, 1990, ed. Kate Darian-Smith, 22 (Ballarat: Ballarat University College, 1991).

Ballarat, as a city rich in gold, and its Benevolent Asylum represent two extremes of the one growth dynamic. Many gold seekers became rich overnight, but many more spent what they had on equipment and provisions only to join, or to remain among, the ranks of the poor. In Ballarat, as distinct from England, however, wealth and poverty were both largely a matter of chance rather than predestination or social status. There was no entrenched social system of discrimination against the poor as many miners had known in England, and the man who was poor today in Ballarat, might well strike gold tomorrow. It was this very climate of uncertainty and excitement, though, that was held by governing officials in Melbourne to be the cause of much insanity in the colony, but particularly among men on the goldfields. According to Goodman, Governor La Trobe referred to it as a "mania".[8] It seems that La Trobe's concern was that many members of the governing classes were also involved in the pursuit of gold; but his greater worry was about the effects of this pursuit and the excitement it generated among the lower classes–that is, on those unused to wealth. Many of these men found the excitement too much for their health, and in consulting physicians, they were often sent to lunatic asylums. John Singleton MD was a physician who had a medical practice in the early 1850s. Singleton recollected that he saw

> great numbers of immigrant young men who, between the heat of the climate and strong drink, were deprived of reason and were sent to the lunatic asylum.[9]

---

[7] Nathan F. Spielvogel, *Spielvogel Papers,* Vol. 1. ed. Peter Mansfield (Ballarat: Ballarat Historical Society, 1974), 146.

[8] David Goodman, *Gold Seeking: Victoria and California in the 1850s* (St. Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 1994), 194.

It is evident therefore, that gold seeking had marked effects on colonial society, but that some of them were detrimental to the establishment of law abiding and economically viable communities. Fundamental questions were also raised in local newspapers such as the *Star* and the *Ballarat Times*, having to do with land, labor, wealth, government, authority and community, and when compared to questions asked by more radical voices such as miners themselves, a similar emphasis on the importance of settlement is highlighted. The twin imperatives of settlement and production seem to have underpinned all of these issues, but particularly, those pertaining to what was then crown land; for all other issues were contingent on the right to produce from, and build on it.

Eureka

The right to purchase small lots of crown land for farming purposes was a burning issue that flared particularly brightly on the volatile goldfields. In relation to Ballarat, Goodman cites Peter Lalor, leader of the Eureka uprising, as having said that his emergence into political life was prompted by "a sudden recognition of the injustice of the miners being denied the chance of a farming life".[10] The demand for land upon which to settle thus became linked to radicalism, and legislative delays tended to inflame the miners' grievances until the right to lawfully possess land became a "panacea for all social ills".[11]

---

[9] John Singleton, MD, *A Narrative of Incidents in the Eventful Life of a Physician* (Melbourne: Hutchinson, 1891), 117.
[10] Goodman, op.cit., 119.
[11] Ibid.

Another voice raised in protest at this denial of the right to settle was that of Chartist and Republican, Peter Papineau, who wrote that

> Representative rights—good Government—a just system of taxation—security—independence—prosperity—comfort--happiness, all these would be ours if we had our rightful share of the LAND.[12]

In pursuit of these same goals, therefore, the miners and merchants of Ballarat, as well as the authorities in Melbourne, were faced with two main considerations and two secondary considerations. Gold was crucial to the rapid development of mining and industrial technologies, and the employment it generated was widely held to be the best way towards prosperity and progress. Thus gold and employment were the two main considerations. Ways had to be found, however, of controlling the influx of men onto the goldfields, and of encouraging settlement and economic development. The first of the secondary considerations was resolved by a system of licence fees and the second was partially resolved by amending that system to allow for the building of dwellings close to a miner's claim. In the very process of finding gold, though, many injuries were sustained, diseases spread unchecked, robbery and violence were rife, and depression and destitution were commonplace. So a resultant consideration, which eventually claimed the attention of local leaders, was what could be done to assist those who were affected by these things in a way that did not impose very much on those who were not.

---

[12] Peter Papineau, *Homesteads for the People* (Melbourne: S. Goode, 1855), 8.

To make matters more complex, the miners harboured a deeply felt enmity towards the colonial government in Victoria and its representatives in Ballarat, because they viewed the initial licence system as grossly discriminatory, expensive and cumbersome, and those who policed it as corrupt. This enmity and the necessarily slow processes of legislation to address the miners' grievances made for political and social problems, which culminated in the bloody massacre of rebellious miners on the Eureka lead in December 1854.

This massacre, commonly known as the Eureka Stockade, was witnessed by James Oddie, later a founding committee-member of the Ballarat Benevolent Asylum,[13] himself an ex miner, who then owned a store close to the Eureka Lead. The massacre at the Eureka Stockade appears to have been a critical factor in Oddie's own rise to prominence in Ballarat as an active force and influence among local businessmen, philanthropists, and government officials.

James Oddie

Oddie was born in Clitheroe, Lancashire, to middle-class working parents on 31 March 1824.[14] The family moved to the industrial centre of Preston where James was schooled at the Lady Huntingdon Chapel. His father died when James was fifteen and he was subsequently apprenticed as a moulder to iron and brass founder, Thomas Clarke. It was during his years as an apprentice that James became politically active. He was inspired to come to Australia by the enthusiasm of the Rev. J.D. Lang, a Scottish Presbyterian minister who

---

[13] "Benevolent Society", *Star* (Ballarat), 1 December 1857, 2.
[14] Beggs Sunter, op.cit., 2.

was visiting Britain with the aim of attracting capable, responsible, Protestant immigrants to Australia. Lang was a Chartist sympathizer, and Oddie, as a unionist, also subscribed to the six points of the Charter, which were universal suffrage, equal electoral districts, payment of members of parliament, abolition of property qualifications for members of parliament, vote by ballot, and annual parliaments.[15]

These were also critical issues in the development of Ballarat, where Oddie had gone in 1851 in response to the discovery of gold. Within six months of the 1854 massacre at Eureka, legislation was passed to give miners many of the rights they had been seeking. The monthly Gold Licence was abolished and the Miner's Right permitted its holders to vote. The Miner's Right was initiated at a cost to miners of two pounds a year, which was soon reduced to one pound. While manhood suffrage and democracy may have been major concerns of men on the goldfields, the Goldfields Commission, which sat at Ballarat, Bendigo and McIvor (Heathcote), was required by Governor Hotham to concern itself equally with the attraction of capital by devising "a measure remunerative to the capitalist, beneficial to the commerce of the colony and free from injustice or hardships to the miners".[16] The term "Miner's Right" was coined in Castlemaine at the end of the hearings, when only the question of what to call the new fee remained unanswered. "[Commissioner] O'Shannessy, who was at the end of the table, replied promptly with a brilliant suggestion—Call it the Miner's Right".[17] The Miner's Right entitled the holder

---

[15] Ibid., 8.

[16] Hugh Anderson, "The Victorian Goldfields Commission 1855", *The Victorian Historical Journal,* 48, (August 1977), 228.

[17] Ibid., 232.

for one year "to mine for gold and to occupy for residential purposes so much of the crown lands as should be prescribed by the rules to be made under the Act".[18] These terms were so vague, however, that at Ballarat, in October 1857, a dispute erupted between the Local Court, the District Surveyor and the newly formed Municipal Council over which body had the authority to manage land in the field. It is probable that, as Council Chairman, Oddie had quite a lot to do with the Act's implementation and final interpretation, but its conception appears to have been solely that of the Goldfields Commissioners.

By 1859 the Mining Board at Ballarat was highlighting the depressed state of the district. It was suggested that the Miner's Right area of twenty perches was too small to permit substantial dwellings and cultivation of remaining land, and it was felt that permanent settlement was necessary to properly develop the resources of the district. The Board sought residence areas of a quarter acre in the town, half an acre in the suburbs and two acres elsewhere.[19] This was only eight years after gold was first discovered and it points very strongly to the priorities of the period. By 1863, Ballarat had become a borough, and by 1870, a city. The development of Ballarat's dominant community ethos was most strongly influenced by the events of those first very turbulent, twenty years. It was an ethos based on loyalty to Empire, technological innovation, the virtues of thrift, diligence and independence, and, most of all, pride in Ballarat's progress.[20]

---

[18] Graeme Reynolds, "We Lived on a Goldfield: Rights and Licences", *Tasmanian Ancestry,* 17 no. 3 (December 1996), 191.
[19] Ibid., 195.

Depression, Unemployment and Suicide

One of the major concerns during this early period, however, was the pre-
ponderance of unattached men on the goldfields.   The lack of civilizing
influences was said to make such men, as a class, very difficult to govern.
Goodman cites an item in the *Age* (Melbourne) in support of this view, and
goes on to remark that as an agent of social control,

> domestic associations were widely understood [by the governing class] to be one
>
> of those forces which quietened a population [and] made it governable.[21]

The Miner's Right, with the attached Residence Area, was undoubtedly one of
these quieting factors.   It not only gave men the much-desired right to vote,
but it encouraged the growth of a middle class, and attendant measures of
respect-ability.   Widespread depression and destitution persisted, however,
and the suicide of one of these respectable young men, which was mentioned
in the Introduction, was the catalyst that led to the establishment of the
Ballarat Benevolent and Visiting Society.

A provisional committee was formed at the end of November 1857, and at its
first meeting a week or two later, it was stated by its chairman, James Oddie,
that the population residing within the limits of the two municipalities (Ballarat
East and West) amounted to "fully 25,000" and that want and suffering had
lately much increased.   Oddie also pointed out that in England there were
institutions such as the one proposed, to alleviate this kind of distress, which

---

[20] Paul Fox, "A Colonial City of Ideas", *Victorian Historical Journal*, 58 no. 3 & 4 (Sept/Dec 1987),
14-32.

were not yet present in the Colony of Victoria, and it was proposed to "imitate this good example".[22] At the same time, another prominent speaker cautioned the Association against doing anything that could lead to the pauperisation of the community.[23]

Once formed, the Asylum Committee became very active. It sought and received support by way of free services and medicines from doctors and pharmacists, and quickly appointed sub committees to divide the district into manageable portions and to draft the Association's by-laws. It met every Monday night in the Council Chambers and received applications (and applicants) for relief at these meetings.

By 29 December 1857, the rules and regulations governing the Association had been drawn up, and after discussion, adopted by the Committee. These rules, which were published in the Asylum's first Annual Report at the end of 1858,[24] stressed the temporary nature of the relief to be offered, and said that priority would be given to families and/or individuals of good character and industrious habits. The Committee members were also to give information to strangers and others in their endeavours to obtain employment. Collectors were appointed to canvass for donations and subscriptions, and letters were written to the Treasury in Melbourne in relation to the acquisition of land and funds for a building. Successful calls for donations and subscriptions were made on every group in the district including miners, merchants, farmers,

---

[21] Goodman, op.cit., 167.
[22] "Visiting and Benevolent Association", *Ballarat Times*, 18 December 1857, 2.
[23] Ibid.
[24] Ballarat Benevolent Asylum, First Annual Report, January 1859, 10-11.

manufacturers, professional men and the churches, and on 20 February 1860 the first group of about twenty inmates[25] was welcomed into the completed portion of the new Asylum, which was capable of housing eighty inmates.[26]

It was during 1859 while money was being sought for the building, that the administration of funds emerged in discussions and reports as a central concern of the founding committee,[27] and the one upon which the future of the enterprise was felt to depend.

The objects of the Ballarat Visiting and Benevolent Association, as stated in its first Annual Report, were to "afford temporary relief to families or individuals of good character and industrious habits, who may be reduced, by adverse circumstances, to require it—to procure medical advice in cases of destitute sickness not recognized by the Hospital—and to render information to strangers and others in their endeavours to obtain employment".[28]

The Ballarat Benevolent and Visiting Association's building in Ascot Street was constructed over several stages, the first being opened on 20 February 1860, and a lying-in hospital, mainly for pregnant women—including unmarried women—was added and opened on 27 July 1869. The last addition, which was a chronic ward, was opened in the late 1880s. By

---

[25] Ballarat Benevolent Association, Second Annual Report, January 1860, 4.

[26] Ibid., 3.

[27] According to "A fifty Year Retrospect" in the Ballarat Benevolent Asylum's Jubilee Report of June 1907 on page 23, the Asylum's original body of administrators included councillor and sarsparilla manufacturer, Robert Smith (President), the Revs. P. Madden, J. Bickford, J. Potter, J. Strongman, G. Mackie and Niquet; Messrs. W. C. Smith, R. Belford, W. Fraser, R. Ocock, J. H. Dunne, J. Oddie, M. J. Cummins, McIvor, A. Dimant, D. Morris, Martin, S. Donnelly, Tristram, A. Dewar, W. Dimsey, J. Dodds, Crane, H. Wood, I. Wheeldon, R. Davidson, R. Lewis, Brannon, A. Davies, Lockhart, Gripe and Talbot (Committeemen), A. S. Parke (Treasurer) and A. A. Tarte (Secretary).

January 1860, when the second Annual Report was published, the Ballarat Benevolent and Visiting Association's name had changed to the Ballarat Benevolent Asylum. According to historian W. B. Withers in his 1887 account of Ballarat's development,

> The [Benevolent] Asylum is a home for old age and chronic invalids, and provides rations also for out-door patients, the committee undertaking to visit out-door claimants for relief, and generally to supervise the administration of funds.[29]

This brief chronology implies that Ballarat was settled by a collection of concerned and sympathetic citizens, but in relation to the Asylum, it took the continuing efforts of a small group of public spirited men to convince the wider community firstly that there was destitution in Ballarat, and secondly that it was the duty of the working community to do something about it, if progress towards civilized living conditions was to be made.

Historians' Accounts of the Asylum

This impression of public-spirited progress in Ballarat is also apparent in the work of W.B. Withers who was the first recognized historian to trace Ballarat's development. His original work entitled *The History of Ballarat* was published in 1870, and a second edition entitled *The History of Ballarat from the First Pastoral Settlement to the Present Time* was published in 1887.[30] Both editions are very detailed works, and being the first chronicles of a uniquely well-endowed city's development, they contain a lot of anecdotal material.

---

[28] Ballarat Benevolent Asylum, First Annual Report, December 1858, 10.

[29] W. B. Withers, *The History of Ballaarat from the First Pastoral Settlement to the Present Time*, 2nd ed. (Ballarat: Niven & Co., 1887), 261.

Public and private records are also quoted throughout the chronicles, although Withers made little attempt to interpret the records he presented to the reader. Withers described the Asylum briefly, representing it as a permanent, rather than a temporary, home for invalids and, in contrast to Melbourne's Asylum, as a relief centre for outdoor claimants.[31] He extolled the inspirational appearance of the building, describing it as "a palace in the Elizabethan style, with well kept grounds, a magnificent home such as the English poor, we may suppose, have never dreamt of in their wildest flights of fancy".[32] It is evident from this remark that the Asylum was viewed as far superior to comparable institutions in England. The emphasis in Withers' accounts of the Asylum in Ballarat, however, was on statements of income and expenditure as listed in its annual reports.

In summarizing written histories of Ballarat's Asylum, it was found that the Asylum received uncritical and sympathetic publicity, but also that it did, in fact, deliver practical assistance to a class of people who had known little assistance previously, and for this reason, neither the committee nor the community, were willing to see its management pass from local to centralized control. This is made particularly clear by Chas. J. King whose summary of the Asylum's first fifty years was the first history to deal specifically with Ballarat's Benevolent Asylum.[33] King's booklet was titled *Golden Wattle Jubilee 1857-1907: Fifty Years of Charitable Effort: An Historical Sketch*, and

[30] Ibid.

[31] W. B. Withers, *The History of Ballarat*, (Ballarat: The Star, 1870). and W. B. Withers, *The History of Ballaarat from the First Pastoral Settlement to the Present Time*, 2nd ed. (Ballarat: Niven & Co., 1887).

[32] Ibid.

this title gives a good indication of the supportive tenor of the work. This work was not published, seeming to have been written for, and distributed among, the Asylum's supporters and benefactors.

King begins with an expression of pride in Ballarat and its achievements, calling it "the Queen city of inland Australia".[34] He further remarked, "hundreds of visitors from all over the world have testified that Ballarat's charities are among the finest in the world".[35] This was a sketch that did not stress any one individual's contribution to the Asylum before another's, its aim seeming to have been to portray all contributing individuals and groups as equally worthy and selfless.

King was more effusive than Withers when it came to the less glamorous work of catering to the needs of the ill, the old and the destitute. Where Withers devoted only a few pages to the Asylum and related charities, noting little more than names, dates and details of income and expenditure, King's sketch ran to thirteen typewritten pages with much anecdotal material included. Reference was made to the children who had been housed there, the kindly schoolmistress, the unintended use of the lying-in facility by unmarried girls, as well as the beginnings of the Clothing Society. Like Withers, King placed emphasis on the accounts and the good management of the committee, stressing the savings effected by using home-grown produce, and the reward for these efforts, given by government, in the form of seven acres (approx) of

---

[33] Chas. J. King, *Golden Wattle Jubilee 1857-1907: Fifty Years of Charitable Effort: An Historical Sketch* (Ballarat: 1907), Archival Collection, Queen Elizabeth Geriatric Centre, Ballarat.
[34] Ibid., 1.
[35] Ibid.

land at Brown Hill to be used as a farm.[36] This farm was acquired during the financial year ended 30 June 1897, "thanks to an Asylum inmate and courtesy of the Lands Department."[37] The land was described in the Asylum's Fortieth Annual Report as "fair" and utilized for growing potatoes and raising pigs.

King related some interesting, but otherwise unsupported, facts about wider economic conditions and attempts by the Victorian Government to introduce "Poor Laws" to the colony in the 1890s. These laws were said by him to have been "broken down" by Ballarat, and a "third attempt by Sir George Turner was crushed by Bendigo".[38]

King was not blind to the less attractive aspects of industrial expansion or to the influence of economic ebbs and flows. In fact, in a curious turnaround after seeming to support the rejection of poor laws, he states in the last paragraph of his sketch that because mining is the "national industry of the state", the government should be the almoner in all cases where a national industry has injured those engaged in it.[39] This would suggest that for King, notions of deserving still attached to working people, particularly miners and ex-miners, more than it did to the ill, the old and the more generally unemployed. It also suggests a dislike of the coercive stigma attached to poor relief delivered to former workers, under English-style poor laws. This may have reflected the emergence of industrial-class solidarity as a political

---

[36] Ibid., 11.
[37] Ballarat Benevolent Asylum, Fortieth Annual Report, 30 June 1897, 14.
[38] King, op.cit. 8.
[39] Ibid., 13.

phenomenon in Victoria, and the perception of a right among workers and former workers, to be included in the making of government policy.

There is no comparison in King's sketch to other charitable institutions in Ballarat or elsewhere, just a conviction that Ballarat's Asylum was the best.

Another sympathetic history specifically dealing with the Benevolent Asylum in Ballarat is that written by local resident, Freemason, former school headmaster and historian, Nathan Spielvogel, in 1943.[40] By 1943 the Asylum was known as the Ballarat Benevolent Home because the word Asylum no longer reflected the building's primary purpose. The opening sentence of Spielvogel's work refers to acorns and oak trees, immediately suggesting both its bias and its approach. Spielvogel's aim seems to have been to promote the Asylum in terms of its homeliness, growth and success as an enduring, rather than a temporary, shelter. He gives a brief account of the Asylum's establishment, his source material seeming to be the Asylum's annual reports, interspersed with some quotes from local newspapers. Spielvogel speaks sympathetically of the "unfortunate" recipients of relief, and he describes measures adopted to make the Asylum self-supporting, such as growing its own produce, and, probably drawing on King's account, he mentions the government grant towards a dairy farm.

Spielvogel views the Asylum as the "best in the commonwealth"[41] but he gives no indication of knowing anything about any other. Nor does he

---

[40] N. F. Spielvogel, *History of the Ballarat Benevolent Home* (Ballarat: Ballarat Historical Society, 1943).

mention Withers or King as having contributed to his own knowledge of the Asylum, although as a historian and life-long resident of Ballarat, Spielvogel would have certainly been familiar with the Asylum, probably some of its staff and possibly some of its inmates. Spielvogel finishes his account at the end of 1942, and in his second last paragraph, suggestive of principles of Freemasonry, he directed an appeal to the moneyed citizens of Ballarat to give freely to this most benevolent of benevolent asylums.

The next account to be published referring to the Asylum was A.W. Strange's brief history of Ballarat, released in 1971.[42] Strange gave a sympathetic sketch of some early events related to the Asylum, referring to unmarried mothers as "unfortunate girls" and pointing out that the Asylum was a haven of refuge for them from widespread social censure. Strange also mentioned the orphans who were housed there prior to the Orphanage having been built, and the Chinese lepers who were cared for in the face of public rejection. Like Spielvogel, he noted that in 1921, the word "asylum" was replaced with the word "home". Strange asserted that the passing of the *Old-Age Pension Act* in 1901 in Victoria diminished the expense of providing outdoor relief, but he did not acknowledge the impact of this legislation in describing the Asylum's role, nor that the legislation constituted an important extension of the role of government as primary guardian of the common weal.

Like Withers, King and Spielvogel, Strange drew on asylum reports, anecdotes and newspaper accounts. His history of the Asylum was little more

---

[41] Ibid., 6.
[42] A.W. Strange, *Ballarat: A Brief History* (Kilmore: Lowden Publishing, 1971), 33-5.

than a brief reference to its main duties. In his assessment of the Asylum's relevance to the community, however, Strange made the point that by 1865, much of the total of local contributions was being given by mining companies "because of the fact that many of the Asylum's inmates had dissipated their health and strength in the wet, dark drives underground doing the work which had produced great wealth for the shareholders".[43]

This seems to have been a common grievance among working men of the period in Ballarat, whether incapacitated or not, and it is echoed in Asylum reports calling on the assumed-to-be-wealthy pastoralists to give more to assist their "worn out"[44] ex-employees. The paucity of contributions from those perceived as wealthy was also an issue with the secretary of Geelong's Infirmary and Benevolent Asylum when, as a witness to the 1870 Royal Commission into Charitable Institutions, he remarked that "we have less difficulty in getting a guinea from a man who has £200 or £300 a year than a couple or three guineas from a man who has £3000 or £4000, therefore it falls heavily upon the middling class of the community".[45]

This general undercurrent of exasperation suggests that absentee owners of mining leases or other wealth producing property, rather than locally known and visible working men, were held to be wealthy, and that if there were Freemasons among the former group, the familiar tradition of brotherhood was not evident to local people.

---

[43] Ibid., 34.
[44] "Benevolent Asylum Annual Meeting", *Star* (Ballarat), 24 January 1877, 4.

Ballarat's best known contemporary historian, Weston Bate, whose major work, *Lucky City: The First Generation at Ballarat, 1851-1901*[46] is a detailed account of Ballarat's early development, gave only passing attention to the Asylum. He mentioned the problems associated with destitution, but victims were described in terms of distaste and moral reproof, particularly the Chinese, who, not having wives with them, were said to have constituted a "grave threat to the rest of society".[47] Non-Chinese who did not have wives with them were not singled out in this way.

Bate cited Protestantism as the main impetus towards moral reform in Ballarat, and he stated that

> Those who cared most about the improvement of morals and the saving of souls found the period one of great spiritual challenge and excitement…and it does not seem too much to claim that by their response to social dislocation in this period the Methodists, in particular…shaped Ballarat's attitudes as decisively as gold shaped its economy.[48]

Bate pursued the influence of non-conformists on Ballarat's social development and noted the similar emphasis placed by all denominations on aspects of moral behaviour. In his brief reference to the Asylum, he stated that this "democratic position was vital to the aim of self-improvement, as was state controlled education", and further, that "non-conformists embraced the

---

[45] John Middlemiss, Secretary of the Infirmary and Benevolent Asylum in Geelong, quoted in the Report of the Royal Commission on Charitable Institutions (Melbourne: 1870), 65, *Victorian Parliamentary Papers*, 1871.

[46] Weston Bate, *Lucky City: The First Generation at Ballarat, 1851-1901* (Carlton South, Vic: Melbourne University Press, 1978).

[47] Ibid., 176.

Christian duty of looking after their neighbours and were prominent on the committee of the Benevolent Asylum, the most important and effective of Ballarat's charities".[49]

A brief history dealing specifically with Ballarat's Benevolent Asylum, and written within a decade of Bate's more general history of Ballarat, is the account by Doreen Bauer, entitled *Institutions Without Walls: A Brief History of Geriatric Services 1856-1985.* Bauer's account was more a history of geriatric services as they evolved in Ballarat, but notwithstanding this, most of the 17-page account dealt with the Asylum before it became the Queen Elizabeth Geriatric Centre in 1956.[50]

Bauer, as a quality control manager of what used to be the Queen Elizabeth Geriatric Centre, had ready access to Asylum records, and her history was laudatory towards those who gave their time freely in the struggle to establish the Asylum and those who maintained its operations.

Bauer portrayed the Asylum committee and staff as dedicated, decent and well-disposed and she took account of external conditions such as mining disasters, the high incidence of wife desertion, floods, an epidemic of scarlet fever, and the severity of some winters to explain the fluctuations and the general increase in numbers of people needing relief. She also described internal conditions and emphasized the committee's resistance to intervention

---

[48] Ibid.

[49] Ibid.

[50] Doreen Bauer, *Institutions Without Walls: A Brief History of Geriatric Services 1856-1985* (Ballarat: Queen Elizabeth Geriatric Centre, 1986), 17.

in its affairs by welfare authorities in Melbourne. The tenor of Bauer's work was supportive of the non-commercial aspects of Asylum, but she did not ignore the importance of industry, capital and philanthropy to its success.

In writing her account of the Asylum, Bauer claimed that people of Ballarat were said to have been of the opinion that charity not volunteered was not charity in its highest sense,[51] possibly basing this claim on articles published in the *Ballarat Star* during the 1880s[52] which appeared in the Asylum's undated scrapbook, and were similar in tone to those included in footnote 51. This view encapsulated the good Samaritan ethic of voluntary assistance and Ballarat's growing sense of moral obligation towards its own definitions of "deserving" poor.

Bauer placed some emphasis on resistance to the introduction of poor laws, and on the dedication of Asylum staff, thereby repeating the sentiments expressed by King and Spielvogel, but with more substantiation. Bauer was obviously familiar with both earlier histories, and she quoted some of King's figures in support of her contention that central to the committee's dislike of financial dependence on government, was the desire for control of the local Asylum. "The committee and the [Ballarat] newspaper editors fought most energetically to keep government at a distance".[53] In Bauer's view, the whole ethos of community support for the Asylum depended on the retention of local control in the face of continual efforts from Melbourne to centralize the

---

[51] Ibid., 16.

[52] "Editorial", *Star* (Ballarat), 5 December 1879, 2, and "Comments on Inspector's Criticisms" *Star* (Ballarat), 28 January 1882, 2.

[53] Ibid.

delivery of welfare services and her portrayal of the Asylum's success in this endeavour during the nineteenth century was a central theme of her work.

Another Ballarat historian who has written about the Benevolent Asylum is Anne Beggs Sunter.[54]   While not specifically a history of the Ballarat Benevolent Asylum, Beggs Sunter's account marked some of the influences that governed the Asylum's establishment. She drew on a variety of sources, and noted that the English Poor Law had the effect of dividing the poor into categories of deserving and less deserving.[55]

Beggs Sunter proceeded to detail the role the Asylum played in relation to orphaned children as well as the utilitarian principles it followed in relation to educating them. She described Oddie's practical influence in helping "victims of the Victorian double standard, duped and abandoned by their lovers when they became pregnant",[56] and his concern for Chinese victims of leprosy.[57] Beggs Sunter contended that the bond of shared experience on the goldfields "gave the charitable concern of the city fathers a very human face".[58]

The most recent published study of poverty and charity to discuss Ballarat's Benevolent Asylum among charity organizations in nineteenth-century Victoria generally, is that by R.A. Cage, entitled *Poverty Abounding, Charity Aplenty:*

---

[54] Anne Beggs Sunter, "James Oddie (1824-1911) His Life and the Wesleyan Contribution to Ballarat" (Masters Diss., Deakin University, 1989).
[55] Ibid. 88.
[56] Ibid., 95.
[57] Ibid., 31.
[58] Ibid., 89.

The Charity Network in Colonial Victoria.[59] Cage stated that his work was intended as

> a monument to those concerned with poverty–those who design programmes to
>
> assist the poor, those who implement those programmes (whether in a voluntary
>
> or remunerated capacity), and the poor themselves.[60]

Cage's study was based largely on statistical records of charities' activities and expenses in accounts submitted to government institutions, and some of his inferences tended to contradict the findings of more qualitative studies. For instance, he reported that the government did recognize an obligation towards the unemployed, particularly during times of economic depression, and as early as 1857 a large demonstration in Melbourne encouraged the government to provide work at less than the prevailing rate of pay to a maximum of 2,000 men.[61] He discussed the poverty paradox, that is, how poverty developed in a well-endowed country, as well as prevailing attitudes towards poor relief and the establishment of benevolent asylums in Melbourne and regional centres. Cage devoted quite a lot of attention to the public debate on the desirability or otherwise of introducing poor laws to alleviate widespread poverty, quoting a proposal made by Ballarat's Asylum which was to the effect that local bodies could contribute yearly to local institutions an amount equal to one penny in the pound on their annual (property) valuations. The report went on to suggest that

> A local rate levied after the fashion suggested at Ballarat would be better than a
>
> general poor rate, because it need only be adopted where required, and could be

---

[59] R.A. Cage, *Poverty Abounding, Charity Aplenty: The Charity Network in Colonial Victoria* (Sydney: Hale & Iremonger, 1992).

[60] Ibid., 7.

[61] Ibid., 30.

kept up or discontinued, or altered, so far as the amount is concerned, as circumstances might demand.[62]

Although the idea was not adopted, it indicated that the Benevolent Asylum recognized the interests of local business people, allowing that a poor rate would only be levied if margins of local profit permitted. Cage also quoted the twenty-third Annual Report (January 1880) from the Ballarat Benevolent Asylum, which clearly explained the Asylum committee's position in relation to voluntary and "enforced" almsgiving. The Asylum committee felt that an enforced levy would

> weaken that sympathy for the poor which NOW results from the DIRECT and VOLUNTARY gift of the donor, and which naturally brings him into closer contact with those whom he is relieving, thereby increasing and keeping alive his pity for the poor and suffering.[63]

It is evident from this assertion that the Asylum committee was cognisant of factors that encouraged sympathy among Ballarat's working people, and the committee also feared that if this sympathy failed, then government grants would also diminish, or perhaps cease altogether.

Cage devoted several pages of his work specifically to Ballarat's Asylum, and he compared it favourably with other asylums in the colony, citing the long-term employment of its house-master and matron as an unusual and reliable indicator of a stable and mutually satisfying relationship between staff and

---

[62] Ibid., 31.

[63] Ballarat Benevolent Asylum, Twenty-Third Annual Report, January 1880, quoted in R. A. Cage, *Poverty Abounding, Charity Aplenty: The Charity Network in Colonial Victoria* (Sydney: Hale & Iremonger, 1992), 28-9.

inmates. In fact, Cage stated that such a level of stability was rarely found in charitable institutions anywhere in the world.[64] The sources Cage drew on were annual reports, and he quoted newspaper material held by the Asylum, but he also stated that the Ballarat Visiting and Benevolent Association distributed a flyer in 1856 appealing for funds and that it was not known when the Association was formed. In all newspapers of the period, the formation of the Association, as well as events leading up to it, is described in detail. These events took place in 1857, and the flyer would have been distributed then, rather than in 1856, as stated by Cage.

Notwithstanding this one inaccuracy, Cage's history was valuable for its wealth of raw data and its comparisons to like institutions; and it confirmed the Asylum as a most important element in Ballarat's social and progressive development. In relation to the period of thirty-three years of service to the Asylum given by its housemaster before he died in 1893, Cage said simply that, "conditions at the Ballarat Benevolent Asylum must have been exceptionally good".[65]

All these histories emphasized what was represented to Ballarat's population as a peculiarly Christian duty, to give in aid of the poor. There was no association of the concepts of benevolence or brotherhood with earlier traditions and no attempt to distinguish between religious doctrines. At the same time, there would have been little effort among men on the goldfields to distinguish between these concepts either, and the common belief that

---

[64] Cage, op.cit. 66.
[65] Ibid.

charitable giving advanced the giver's prospects of heavenly salvation was an incentive the original Asylum Committee emphasized in the interests of constructing a unified society. This approach translated to the churches as a shift towards secularism, but it seems merely to have been an attempt to encourage people to equip themselves for greater responsibilities than most of them had known in the "old country", and to encourage their neighbours to do the same, while assisting those who were not able (for whatever reason) to assist themselves.

The Primacy of the Asylum Amongst Ballarat Charities

Table 1 on page 135 is a comparison of the nature and extent of poor relief offered by Ballarat's longest running, publicly subscribed charitable institutions. It shows that while these attempts to encourage the assumption of greater responsibilities and concern for one's neighbour were generally well received, they were more consistently exemplified in the range of activities undertaken by the Asylum than those offered by any of the other institutions. This table, together with sketches of the role of various charities in Ballarat, is necessarily a broad-brush exercise. It includes the Female Refuge, which received no government subsidies, but collected money from the public when paid work for the inmates (sewing and washing) was not available. The boys' reformatory is not included because it was classified by the Victorian government as an educational, rather than a charitable institution. Nazareth House is included on the table, but as it only commenced operations in 1888, and its building was not completed until 1891, it has not been discussed as

part of Ballarat's network of organized charities during the region's formative years.

The four charities that were integral to Ballarat's charitable network from the mid 1850s to the end of the nineteenth century were the Female Refuge (1857), the Miner's Hospital (1856), the Benevolent Asylum (1857) and the Orphanage (1868). The Ladies Clothing Benevolent Society (1863), which was ancillary to the Benevolent Asylum, received small government subsidies for most years and collected money on occasion, but it only provided relief in the form of clothes, and sometimes blankets, which were supplied from a central point, and the operation was conducted on an entirely voluntary basis. The Old Colonists' Association was a late comer to Ballarat's charitable network—its hall not erected until 1887—and it operated in a different way; but because it was a Masonic charity associated with prominent men and Freemasons in Ballarat since 1883, and because it was included as a charity in the 1897 report to the Victorian Government on old-age pensions, it is also included here.

There were variations, however, in the way services were provided by the different institutions. In relation to medicines supplied, for example, both the Hospital and the Asylum far outdid the Refuge and the Orphanage in the provision of medical attention to inmates. Up to 1870, some 10% of hospital beds were occupied by chronic cases awaiting transfer to the Benevolent Asylum, which itself was intent on transferring chronic cases where it could. The Prince Alfred Hospital in Melbourne was proposed to the Victorian

Government by the 1870 Royal Commission as a hospital for chronic and convalescent cases.[66]   As James Oddie was Vice President of the Alfred Hospital in 1869,[67] it is likely that some of these cases, together perhaps with cases where death was predicted, were transferred there. Up to 1870, most charities charged the expenses of burying destitute inmates to the Police Department, which already paid such expenses for the burial of vagrants, but after 1870, hospitals and charities were obliged to deduct these costs from the government subsidies they received.[68]

In relation to finding employment for inmates, efforts were made by the Refuge, the Asylum and the Orphanage. The Asylum seems to have been the most encouraging in this regard on the basis of its own reports and on coverage in the *Star*, but not all comparative figures are on record. It was remarked by Inspector Neal in his 1881 report, that few children were adopted from the Orphanage, and while they were schooled in accordance with rules pertaining to state-funded schools, the only training given to boys was gardening and milking, and to girls, sewing and housework. The children were released from the Orphanage at age fourteen, and according to Neal, their mothers often claimed them upon release.[69]

The Female Refuge commenced operations as the Female Strangers' Home in March 1857. It was managed along the lines of a workhouse for pregnant

---

[66] Report of the Royal Commission on Charitable Institutions, (Melbourne 1870), xi, *Victorian Parliamentary Papers,* 1871.
[67] *Australian Dictionary of Biography 1851-1890*, s.v. "Oddie, James (1824-1911)", by G. A. Oddie.
[68] Report of the Royal Commission on Charitable Institutions (Melbourne: 1870), xix. *Victorian Parliamentary Papers,* 1871.

women, who were probably banished from parental homes or domestic service due to their pregnancy, and most seem to have been involuntary inmates. At that time, the property consisted of a poorly equipped house on half an acre of ground in Grant Street with one sleeping room capable of accommodating ten inmates. According to the 1870 report on charitable institutions the Female Refuge was managed by a committee of both sexes.[70] According to the *Ballarat Times*, however, the committee was comprised entirely of ladies, who were answerable to police superintendent Mr. Foster, police magistrates, the chairman of local government, clergymen of various denominations and the deputy sheriff, all of whom were empowered to receive public donations to the refuge. Public donations could also be left at the offices of local newspapers.[71] This way of receiving donations had an element of subterfuge about it, which was consistent with the involuntary nature of the work performed by inmates and the coercive nature of nineteenth-century moral reform generally.

Notwithstanding the impression that most Refuge inmates were social outcasts, a report in the *Ballarat Times* described the Refuge as a shelter for females of good repute who may be without a home. The Refuge was made self-supporting by occupying its inmates in needle-work and laundry-work, for which there was said to be a constant demand.[72] The report went on to say, "each inmate will have the satisfaction of knowing that she is paying for her

[69] Public Charities, Report of Inspector, 30 June 1881 (Melbourne: 1881), 67 *Victorian Parliamentary Papers,* 1882.
[70] Report of the Royal Commission on Charitable Institutions, (Melbourne 1870), 98, *Victorian Parliamentary Papers,* 1871.
[71] "Servants Home and Asylum for Homeless Females", *Ballarat Times*, 2 March 1857, 3.
[72] Ibid.

temporary accommodation".[73]   The Refuge based its rules on those of Benevolent and Strangers' Friend societies founded by Wesleyans[74] in Tasmania in 1829 and in London in 1785, and by March 1857 a Ladies Committee was in the process of being formed in Ballarat. Women were to be confined for six months, and if satisfactorily reformed by the end of that period, they would be recommended for a position in domestic service. If not satisfactorily reformed, they were to be confined for a further six months. This strengthens the impression that it was a refuge for social outcasts and also that standing over a wood fired copper and lifting wet washing from copper to mangle on hot days or cold while pregnant, was viewed as a necessary part of the reformation process. There seems to have been no allowance made by those who managed the Refuge for the girls' youth, sometimes as young as fifteen, or even for their (usually) pregnant condition. According to Shurlee Swain, who examined the workings of the Female Refuge in Geelong, all refuges

> worked along similar lines with the basic ingredients of reformation being the
> rigid control of time, lots of hard work and large doses of religious instruction.
> The laundry, that 'sanctimonious sweatshop' that the Evangelical reformers had
> introduced to the London Magdalen Hospital, became a central feature of most
> refuges because it was a reliable money earner which made up in part for the
> scarcity of donations from the general public.[75]

This summary of the relief efforts of the publicly subscribed charities in Ballarat, clearly indicates the extensive range of Ballarat Benevolent Asylum

---

[73] Ibid.
[74] K. R. Theakstone, "Poverty, Pauperism and Power: The History of the Adelaide Benevolent and Strangers' Friend Society, 1849-1914", Masters Diss., Flinders University, 1987. 5.

services in relation to services offered by the other institutions mentioned. It shows the Asylum was the sole provider of some services, including the provision of outdoor relief, the provision of the means of self-employment, the delivery of babies together with an unconditional period of convalescence (usually 30 days), the provision of assistance to Ballarat's lepers, and the provision of an outreach program aimed at locating and assisting people in severe distress. The Ballarat Benevolent Asylum distinguished itself as the most far-reaching and foremost charitable effort in Ballarat.

Table 1

The Nature and Extent of Poor Relief in Ballarat 1850-1891

Institution:	Hospital	Refuge	Asylum	Orphan-age	Old Colonists	Nazareth House
Date established:	**1856**	**1857**	**1857**	**1868**	**1887**	**1891**
Kinds of Relief Provided:						
Cash Given Initially			Δ		Δ	
Provision of Outdoor Relief			Δ			
Employment Found		Δ	Δ	Δ		
Means of Self-Employment Supplied			Δ			
Illnesses Treated	Δ		Δ	Δ		
Medicines Supplied	Δ		Δ	Δ		
Pregnant Women Confined		Δ	Δ			
Babies Delivered		?	Δ			
Convalescence Afforded		Δ	Δ			
Burials Organised and Paid For	Δ		Δ		Δ	
Orphans Housed			Δ	Δ		Δ
Orphans Schooled			Δ	Δ		Δ
Private Subscriptions Collected	Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ
Government Subsidies Received	Δ		Δ	Δ		
Meals Provided to Inmates	Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ		Δ
Produce Grown	Δ		Δ			
Surplus Produce Sold			Δ			
Lepers Provided For			Δ			
Outreach Program Established			Δ			
Chronic Cases Admitted	Δ		Δ			Δ
Surgery Performed	Δ		Δ			
Aged Poor Accommodated			Δ		Δ	Δ

Sources: Charitable Institutions Report 1870, Inspectors Report 1881,
Old-Age Pension Report 1897. *Victorian Parliamentary Papers* 1871, 1882 and 1898.

---

[75] Shurlee Swain, *A Refuge at Kildare: the History of the Geelong Female Refuge and Bethany Babies'*

It is apparent from this table that the Ballarat Benevolent Asylum played a leading role in what came to be a broad social movement among humanitarians in Ballarat which cut across most religious differences and social divides and which strongly influenced the development in Ballarat of an unusually charitable ethos.

The founding committee of Ballarat's Benevolent Asylum, therefore, set an example of regulated conduct, financial responsibility and civic progress before Ballarat's diverse population of gold seekers and their dependents, in order to foster qualities of prudence and self-reliance among them. The aim was to ensure that no industrious and able-bodied person in the local community would have to beg, borrow or steal to live, and that the Asylum itself would ultimately be self-supporting.

With these aims in view, successive Asylum committees were frequently obliged to explain to less altruistic subscribers in letters to local newspapers, that Ballarat's problems called for flexible management, that every applicant for relief was carefully assessed, and each recipient reviewed regularly. This form of evidence did not satisfy all critics, one of whom remarked some years later in a letter to the *Star* that welfare recipients as a group were "well versed in the art of chicanery"[76] and similar cries of "imposition" were frequent. While the concept of voluntary community support continued to be advocated strongly by the committee, its members were quick to press government in Melbourne for additional financial support. The committee *was* strongly

---

Home (North Geelong: Bethany Child and Family Support, 1985), 15.
[76] *Star* (Ballarat), (quote taken from an undated clipping in the Asylum's scrapbook)

opposed to the enactment of colonial poor laws, which, through taxation, would have provided for charitable institutions.[77] The committee seems to have seen such support as acting to relieve pressure on the wealthy to give of their surplus, as well as to diminish its own control of funds and its general thrust towards localised self-improvement and progressive social reform. This was made very clear in the Asylum's Annual Reports to June 1888 and 1893, wherein it was stated that the Asylum's system of affording relief "compared favourably with the Poor Law system obtaining in the Old Country under which the condition of the pauper…is little removed from that of the prisoner in gaol".[78] As remarked previously, the perception of England's poor laws among people in a position to compare conditions between the old country and the new was that they discouraged the development of a humane yet self-reliant society.

Local taxation had been proposed as an alternative to poor laws, but many property owners were also poor, and such a move would have left too many non-owners of property untaxed. The size of government grants was dependent on the size of local contributions, but it was quickly recognized by a newly appointed Inspector of Charities that local communities and district councils were not in receipt of enough income to properly discharge such responsibilities towards the poor and incapacitated.[79] Nonetheless, the Victorian Government moved to reduce its proportion of welfare costs during the 1870s and to rationalise the number of state-subsidised institutions. The inadequacies of the charity system as a whole became glaringly obvious

[77]Bauer, op.cit., 16.
[78] Ballarat Benevolent Asylum, Thirty-First Annual Report, June 1888, 8.

during the 1890s depression in Victoria, and they were keenly felt by humanitarian observers as well as by desperate applicants for ever-diminishing levels of charitable assistance.

Ballarat's Asylum committee members, however, favoured retaining the system they had inherited, and which had worked to local advantage. In the 1893 Annual Report, emphasis was placed on the perceived advantages of it, most specifically on the desirability of direct dealings between givers and receivers of charity, and a lengthy description of these dealings was given. The point of the item, however, was to remind the reader that "the Poor Law system in England is controlled, or rather is under the iron rule of, a highly centralized body, the Public Service Board, so that very little discretionary power in administering relief is left to the local guardians".[80] The fear of losing local control can thus be seen to have been uppermost in the collective mind of the Asylum's committee, and this fear was based on prior knowledge of how centralized bodies in England had lost (or never gained) sympathy for the miseries of poverty and were accordingly perceived by local authorities there, as impervious to pleas for relief.

In contrast, the colonial government in Victoria had made grants towards the Asylum's costs from the beginning, but when the suggestion was made to build local donations into rates on property and distribute funds so raised across the colony, there was strong opposition voiced in the *Star*. A report in 1882 stated that donations were not to be built into rates, "the idea being

---

[79] "Report on Charitable Institutions", op.cit. xv.
[80] Ballarat Benevolent Asylum, Thirty-Sixth Annual Report, June 1893, 12.

premature to this young community*".* It went on to say that "any proposition that might place the Asylum under the control of any metropolitan organisation should be opposed*",* and that "the present system of bookkeeping was fine*".*[81] It would seem from this that the newspaper led a body of opinion that viewed centralized bodies with distrust, charitable giving as a way of ensuring local control over expenditure on aid recipients, and that such expenditure was rightfully managed by locally accountable and trusted businessmen.

The preference for voluntary rather than compulsory giving has often been viewed in terms of an increased humanitarianism attributable to Christian societies in general, or to specific, hard-working Christians within them.[82] Anthony Platt, in his study *The Child Savers,* questioned this supposed increase in humanitarianism. Rather than being prompted by altruism or philanthropy, Platt saw many child-saving efforts and the notion of moral reform as deriving from different factors including a middle class desire to control the "dangerous" classes, a push from some professionals to improve their status and a desire among middle class women to widen their sphere of influence.[83] Platt went further, saying that the impetus towards child-saving came primarily from the middle classes and that it

> reflected massive change in the mode of production, from laissez faire to
> monopoly capitalism, and in the strategies of social control from inefficient
> repression, to welfare state benevolence[84]

---

[81] Editorial, *Star* (Ballarat), 1882, 2.
[82] Robert Van Krieken, *Children and the State: Social Control and the Formation of Australian Child Welfare* (North Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1991), 16.
[83] A.M. Platt. *The Child Savers.* 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977), xx.
[84] Ibid.

When Platt published his work in 1977, this transition would have been easier to observe than at any point in its duration. The Committee of the Ballarat Benevolent Asylum cannot be said to have espoused a *laissez-faire* approach to economic management, or to have represented itself as a group of monopoly capitalists, but it does seem to have been imbued with a vision of Ballarat as a city of future greatness and cultivated living, which needed experienced men, such as themselves, to guide its poorer people along preferred lines of social and economic development. No man held more devoutly to this vision than James Oddie, who himself hailed from a Methodist, working class, but self-improving English background, and this vision seems to have contributed to the Asylum's firm yet benevolent treatment of claimants for outdoor relief. A critical view of such relief could be that it may only have been available to those deemed deserving of it by wealthier subscribers and nominators who may have been biased against particular classes or groups. In practice, however, recom-mendations came to be assessed by the committee as a whole, and there were no complaints in any record consulted, of discriminatory selection procedures.[85]

Of the first fifty or so inmates of Ballarat's Asylum to be recommended by individual subscribers, twelve were recommended by the Asylum committee president, Robert Lewis. This twelve included miners, labourers, two servants (one a female) a tinsmith and a forest ranger. Other subscribers also recom-mended miners and labourers together with farmers, cooks and carpenters. By mid July 1860 though, most recommendations were listed in the Admission

---

[85] Two cases are on record, however, of people who left the Asylum disgruntled: Mr. Babington and Ms. O'Brien, the latter giving notice in 1868, saying it was better to work for payment than for nothing.

Register as having been made by the General Committee, and judging by the surviving document, a broader range of occupations gained admission to the Asylum from that point onwards. This broader range included a blanket-maker, a housewife, a paper-maker, an upholsterer, an engineer, a blacksmith, a bricklayer, a milkman and a cooper.[86] Recommendations also arose as a result of men deserting their wives and children, although these were mainly on behalf of those seeking outdoor relief. The Asylum's eleventh Annual Report stated that

> In connection with the administration of outdoor relief, your Committee have to refer with regret to a matter which has been, ever since the establishment of the Asylum, one of deep concern…viz., the crying evil of wife desertion. Year by year, numbers of women, together with their children, are thrown upon the Asylum for support in consequence of having been deserted by their husbands.[87]

By 1874, the weekly average of outdoor relief recipients was 380 adults and 519 children, an increase of 74 adults and 108 children on the previous year. Most of these adults are implied to have been women. The Asylum committee was mindful of the outcry that would arise in the community if a death should occur as a result of too meagre assistance, and its policy was that in cases of doubt, the committee should err on the side of humanity, "the value of a few rations being as nothing to the probability of a fellow-creature's life being endangered".[88] The *Star* supported this policy, and published a very detailed sketch of outdoor relief procedures as conducted through the housemaster Mr. Boughen, which was reproduced in the Asylum's Eleventh

[86] Ballarat Benevolent Asylum, *Register of Inmates 21/2/60 to 31/12/72*, 4-5.
[87] Ballarat Benevolent Asylum, Eleventh Annual Report, January 1869, 8.
[88] Ballarat Benevolent Asylum, Sixteenth Annual Report, January 1874, 11.

Annual Report. In another article, the *Star* described Boughen as "seasoned" and "an old soldier". This seems to have been to convince the community that Boughen was the right man for the job, that the claimants were indeed fellow humans, and that the Asylum was assisting the unfortunate rather than favouring the unthrifty.

The delivery of outdoor relief was not confined to rations, but it included firewood, and, if necessary, an honorary surgeon was sent to the bedside of an ill claimant, together with nourishment and "medical comforts".[89] Dilapidated dwellings were also repaired on occasion, and there were instances where the Asylum Committee actually purchased "cheap and suitable habitations, and removed the suffering family from their wretched hovels".[90] These places remained the property of the Asylum. The means of making a living, such as a sewing machine or a cow, were occasionally supplied, although the recipients were contracted to repay the outlay involved in small instalments. The workings of the outdoor relief department were thus quite flexible, and as far as the Asylum Committee was concerned, the Ballarat Benevolent Asylum was, "in the variety of its workings, the most comprehensive institution to be found anywhere".[91] The variety of the Asylum's workings also suggested a concern for people in need far in excess of obligatory support, and much greater than was evident in Melbourne.

Nineteenth-century Ballarat was thus a city of many facets and, as a dynamic and potentially wealthy community its social development became a subject of

---

[89] Ballarat Benevolent Asylum, Eighteenth Annual Report, January 1876, 8.
[90] Ibid., 9.

socio-political contention, not least among its own citizens. Some of these citizens were the producers of gold, goods and services and, like their earlier counterparts in industrial England, they "rationalised what their own judgement deemed commercially profitable by resort to the current ideology of the day".[92] Such "practical" men were usually hostile to state intervention in what was deemed to be the free exercise of capital. In Australia, supporters of free trade such as Western district pastoralist, Hugh Glass, and Bendigo mining magnate, George Lansell, also believed that it was not in the province of government to interfere between masters and men, and that all restraints on trade were unconducive to the national wealth and general welfare. In the view of these men, and they came to include Eureka rebel turned parliamentarian, Peter Lalor, free market forces must be allowed to determine the price of labour.

This view was much more prevalent in eighteenth-century England than in nineteenth-century Australia, but the initial force for humanitarian aid as described by Derek Fraser, and as underpinned the policies of Ballarat's Asylum, particularly in relation to its outdoor department, was still more a product of Protestant "masters" in England, than of rugged bushmen and/or gold mining "mates" in Australia.

The Chinese

---

[91] Ibid.

[92] Derek Fraser, *The Evolution of the British Welfare State: A History of Social Policy Since the Industrial Revolution,* 2nd. ed. (London: Macmillan Education, 1984), 17.

A glaring exclusion from reports about the community-building process in Ballarat was discussion of its resident Chinese. Large numbers of Chinese came to Ballarat during the goldrush era as indentured labor, but having fulfilled contractual obligations to their underwriters at home, they were free, as far as their own people were concerned, to stay in Australia or return to China. By the late 1850s, Chinese people constituted some 25% of Ballarat's population, numbers peaking in 1858 at approximately 10,000.[93] By and large the Chinese were alluvial miners, but many turned to mercantile activities and market gardening, the latter acting to keep scurvy at bay in Ballarat and further afield.[94] By 1870 the mining boom was over and many Chinese had left Ballarat, not a few of these leaving Australia altogether. During the period 1855-1865, there were a series of laws enacted in Victoria to restrict the movement of Chinese and these laws, together with racist attitudes towards the Chinese which were investigated and recorded by Rolls, encouraged the view in Australia that Chinese were undesirable settlers.

Many prejudiced attitudes towards the Chinese were exhibited in newspapers and journals and some of these appear to have been motivated by a desire among Australia's Christians to convert the Chinese to Christianity. It seems to have been thought that conversion would make the Chinese more acceptable as immigrants. It must have also been thought that conversion would proceed more easily if preached by the converted. Accordingly, a Chinese Mission was formed in Ballarat, seeming to be under the auspices of

---

[93] Kathryn Cronin, *Colonial Casualties: Chinese in Early Victoria* (Carlton, Vic: Melbourne University Press, 1982), 17.

[94] Eric Rolls, *Citizens: Continuing the Epic Story of China's Centuries Old Relationship with Australia…the Sequel to Sojourners* (St. Lucia, Qld: University of Queensland Press, 1996), viii.

St. Paul's College in Hong Kong. The Chinese Mission in Ballarat produced a newspaper, the *Chinese Advertiser*, which was promoted as the pioneer of Christian civilisation among the Chinese in Australia.[95] The *Chinese Advertiser* commenced publication in August 1856, being printed largely in the Chinese language and distributed free of charge to the Chinese in their villages.[96] In 1859, the Bishop of Victoria (in Hong Kong) visited Ballarat at the invitation of the local Chinese Mission. At a public meeting chaired by James Oddie who was treasurer of the Ballarat branch, and attended by the Chinese Protector, W. Foster, and an agent of the Hong Kong Mission, Lo Sam Yuen, the Bishop gave an address. According to the Bishop, the Chinese Mission in Ballarat was a means of "awakening increased interest on the part of the Christian in the conversion of the pagan Chinese by whom they are surrounded."[97] Christian missionaries also tried to convert the Chinese in China and by 1895 serious trouble arose in Fukien province. This caused John Plummer, an Australian journalist sending articles to the *Globe* (London) and the *Chinese Mail* (Hong Kong) to write, "no Chinaman makes it his business to go around seeking to make converts to Confucianism. There are no societies in China supported by pious and wealthy people having for their object the destruction of the religion of the people of Australia and New Zealand".[98] Both Catholic and Protestant missionaries were active in this regard and their activities precipitated reactions that culminated in the Boxer rebellion.

---

[95] The *Ballarat Times*, 12 September 1856, 1.

[96] Helen Vendy-Kinloch, "The Chinese Presence on the Ballarat Goldfields and Afterwards", Research Project, (Ballarat: University of Ballarat, 1995), 7.

[97] "The Chinese Mission", *Star* (Ballarat), 6 July 1859, 3.

Economic factors in nineteenth-century colonial Victoria made for the practice of excluding China's cheaper labour force from Ballarat's developing labour market, but the Asylum committee's stated concern was the threat posed by the incidence of leprosy among local Chinese. As early as 1865 it was remarked in the Asylum's Annual Report that "The Chinese out-door recipients of relief have become very numerous, and though the attention of the Government has been called to the wretched condition of the leprous cases…they still remain on the books of the Asylum".[99] Two years later, the Asylum's Annual Report drew attention to "recent agitation" by way of press reports and public meetings in Ballarat in relation to the state of the Chinese lepers. The Asylum committee suggested to the Government that funds be made available for the erection of a lazar-house but the Government opted to make funds available only for the provision of bare necessities to the lepers. Their huts were made more comfortable, and clothing, bedding and firewood were purchased for them by the Asylum committee, but little was received from the Chinese community by way of financial support for their countrymen. This problem was occasionally redressed by donations of money raised from Chinese theatrical entertainments, and there was at least one Chinese philanthropist in Ballarat who assisted many of his countrymen to return home; but the lepers were in a category of their own, and as their numbers dwindled, Ballarat's community called for the removal of those remaining.

The Asylum committee made repeated calls on government to arrange for the removal of remaining lepers, but the Government's delayed response

---

[98] Ibid., 20.
[99] Ballarat Benevolent Asylum, Eighth Annual Report, January 1866, 12.

prompted the Asylum to erect some huts for the lepers in Ballarat East where they were kept in quarantine. A special grant-in-aid of ten shillings per week per leper was made by Government for their needs, which supplemented the five shillings per week per leper afforded by the Asylum.[100] This money supported the provision of necessities, which were delivered to the small group of huts they occupied. According to Minutes of Evidence given to the 1870 Royal Commission, the Rev. Mr. Young, a Chinese missionary, attended to the distribution of the money, but this obligation seems then to have devolved upon a Sergeant Larner of the local police force who, coincidentally, was also a Freemason. The Asylum supplied the lepers with clothes twice a year, bedding, blankets and fire.[101] By January 1871, there were only four lepers left,[102] and as they died their huts were burnt.

By the turn of the century, the Chinese who remained in Australia were viewed by the Anglo-Saxon majority as a continuing threat to the market for Australian labour and to the general desire for a British, all-white Australia.[103] In Ballarat, according to the Asylum Annual Report to June 1900, there were 161 Chinese out-door relief recipients, who, as a group, were considered a financial liability. After re-assessment of individual cases, all were considered deserving of continued support, but the wider Chinese community was said to contribute little if anything towards the cost of providing such relief. The

---

[100] Ballarat Benevolent Asylum, Thirteenth Annual Report, January 1871, 9.
[101] "Report on Charitable Institutions", op.cit., 94.
[102] Ballarat Benevolent Asylum, Thirteenth Annual Report, January 1871, 9.
[103] Rolls, op.cit., chap. 1, "The Build-up to White Australia 1888-1900".

difficulty for the Asylum was compounded by "the fact that a great many of the white population actually refuse to subscribe to maintain so many Chinese".[104]

So while the Asylum was obviously reluctant to discriminate against the Chinese in relation to the provision of relief, its committee seems to have been obliged to consider the rising tide of British sentiment which held sway in Ballarat at the time, and which had paved the way to Federation. The Chinese formed a sizeable proportion of Ballarat's goldrush population in the 1850s and 1860s, but they were never viewed by British settlers, and probably not by themselves, as part of Christian social relationships or the spirit of British industrial capitalism, both of which underpinned Australia's nation-building efforts.

Conclusion

The political conditions and social reforms described in this chapter were not only beneficial to local development, but they also helped to foster the Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism in Ballarat. Moreover, the combination made for the beginnings of organized charity in Ballarat, arising as it did from the distress caused by unemployment and consequent destitution on what was thought to be the richest goldfield in the world.

The transition from the rule of fortune to the rule of law had its basis in demands for the right to settle on the land, and which, together with political

---

[104] Ballarat Benevolent Asylum, Forty-Third Report, June 1900, 16.

grievances, gave rise to the Eureka rebellion–also giving rise to the beginnings of progressive development in Ballarat. James Oddie was central to this development and almost every aspect of Ballarat's progress, from rough mining town to well-planned city, carried his stamp. It was a progress that saw the social advance of the lower middle class, which, while retaining distrust of authorities in Melbourne, took great pride in the betterment of its own. The establishment of the Asylum saw the beginnings of more cordial relations between leading citizens in Ballarat and authorities in Melbourne– notably those associated with matters of public health and finance. Wesleyan principles were employed to good effect by James Oddie and others in the orderly management of the Asylum and in its developing systems of welfare delivery, and as noted in the previous chapter, these principles were applied in a manner which avoided competing dogmas and proselytising to maintain a cooperative interdenominational collaboration. Resident Chinese, while numerous, were discouraged from participating in the efforts to stabilise Ballarat's economic and social dealings and nor were they viewed as desirable settlers; but they contributed a great deal to Ballarat's economic development. They also contributed to the Asylum on occasion, and many of them received charitable assistance. Ballarat's working people can therefore be seen to have held to a volatile mix of partisan, yet local loyalties, which, in relation to the Asylum, came to be submerged in the interests of the common (local) good.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Ballarat Benevolent Asylum: Practices, Rules and Regulations

This chapter argues that the Ballarat Benevolent Asylum acted as both a reflection and a determinant of nineteenth-century socio-religious influences on Ballarat's rapidly industrialising, capitalist economy. As already mentioned, Swain found that charity workers in Melbourne "gave help to most applicants but in a punitive way".[1] This study too, has presented evidence that Melbourne's Asylum was conducted along punitive lines. The Asylum in Ballarat, however, was a more integral part of the local community; its beneficiaries were not diminished by its procedures, and it was managed in such a way as to shape the community's dominant ethos. This style of management was complemented by the paternal, yet practical, usually supportive, yet also pedagogic news items published in the local newspapers. Apart from obvious cases of illness, accident, disability and old age, there were many able-bodied people who were destitute during that period in Ballarat and its surrounding region, and this chapter also describes the Asylum committee's attitude towards some in this group. While there were similarities between all asylums in relation to routines and procedures, Ballarat's Asylum sought to provide some means for advancement toward independence for those who were able-bodied yet destitute, whereas Melbourne's Asylum was not as active in this area of operation. In Ballarat, however, it was understood by successive Asylum committees that many problems were "due to the unsettled nature of the population, personal

---

[1] Shurlee Swain, "The Poor People of Melbourne", in *The Outcasts of Melbourne*, ed. Graeme Davison, David Dunstan & Chris McConville (Sydney, London, Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1985), 112.

vicissitudes, the general want of thrift prevailing and especially to the alternation between prosperity and adversity".[2]

In an apparent effort to alert people to the difficulties of encouraging concerted support for charitable initiatives if society was itself divided, or if it saw claimants only in terms of deserving or undeserving, it was remarked by barrister and solicitor, Mr. Dunne, at the very first meeting of the founding committee that the association would only succeed if "the sympathies of all classes were engaged".[3] In concurrence with sharebroker W.C. Smith, Dunne hoped the committee would "urge the matter with energy" upon the sympathies of the ladies, the clergy, and the working classes of the district. Mr. George Knox, who was to become the Association's first Secretary, supported the resolution, but he emphasised that he viewed the relief to be offered as being limited to cases of temporary need, and he also thought that people could help without giving money to the enterprise.[4] A provisional committee was then formed having power to add to its numbers, and it was reminded by Chairman, James Oddie, that a large number of the industrial classes would need to be added to the committee, "as the action of the society would necessarily be principally among that portion of the community, and would be therefore likely to elicit their active sympathy and support".[5] It is evident at this point that Oddie did not see himself as one of them. As already noted in the previous chapter (p.113 note 22) it was also pointed out by Oddie, that in England, there were institutions such as the one proposed, to

---

[2] Ballarat Benevolent Asylum, Fifteenth Annual Report, January 1873, 10.
[3] "Benevolent Society", *Star* (Ballarat) 1 December 1857, 2.
[4] Ibid.

meet this kind of need, which were not yet present in the Colony of Victoria, and it was proposed to "imitate this good example".[6]

The report did not suggest that Oddie was referring to any particular institutions. His own knowledge of welfare initiatives had probably been gained through his close association with Wesleyan mission practices, which may have included familiarity with Wesleyan Benevolent and Strangers' Friend Societies in England, together with political associations he had formed as an apprentice after his father died. According to James Haslam[7] in his history of Wesleyan Methodism in South Australia, published in 1887, the origins of the title of the society and the basis of its principles came from the biblical passage,

> For I was hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger and you took me in: naked and ye clothed me: I was sick and ye visited me: I was in prison and ye came unto me.
>
> (Matthew 25 : 35-36)

There was also an asylum in Preston, Lancashire, as early as 1834,[8] and four years earlier, when James was six years old the Oddie family had taken up residence in Preston.[9] So the young James is likely to have absorbed the idea of benevolence in relation to asylums and later, as a Chartist and an apprentice, he is likely to have become familiar with Masonic, as well as

[5] Ibid.

[6] "Visiting and Benevolent Association", *Ballarat Times*, 18 December 1857, 2.

[7] Theakstone, K. R. "Poverty, Pauperism and Power: The History of the Adelaide Benevolent and Strangers' Friend Society, 1849-1914", Masters Diss., Flinders University, 1987, 4.

[8] Pigot's Directory, quoted in Anne Beggs Sunter, "James Oddie (1824-1911) His Life and the Wesleyan Contribution to Ballarat", (Masters Diss., Deakin University 1989), 92.

[9] Ibid., 2-3.

Wesleyan charitable principles, but he had no first-hand experience of poor houses in England generally, nor of the grinding poverty that drove people into them. In common with most of Ballarat's population, however, Oddie was nostalgic for the best of the "mother country" and he seems to have drawn on this common feeling of nostalgia to present the enterprise in visionary and uplifting terms, as something that would help to motivate people and focus their attention on their new surroundings. At the same time, the Association was cautioned by the local press to avoid doing anything that could lead to the pauperization of the community.[10]

At the Association's second meeting, Oddie's resolution to meet potential needs through an institution had been agreed upon before Mr. McDowall spoke up in support of uniting the Association with the Female Strangers' Home Society, which already functioned under much the same charter, although he "feared they had not done much yet".[11] It transpired that McDowall had reservations about the establishment of yet another charitably disposed organization when there were others in existence. McDowall's interjection was ruled out of order and his speech in support of uniting with the Female Strangers' Home was denounced as "gas" by Mr. O'Donnell before the original resolution was carried.[12] This denunciation of McDowall may have been due to a desire among others at the meeting to establish an institution with a broader focus than that of the Female Strangers' Home. It could also indicate that some members of the new committee did not want to

---

[10] "Visiting and Benevolent Association", *Ballarat Times*, 18 December 1857, 2.

[11] "Benevolent Society", *Star* (Ballarat), 1 December 1857, 2.

[12] Ibid.

be associated with the Female Strangers' Home because they did not want to come under the umbrella of those in charge of its management. In evident support of the Asylum committee's decision to proceed as a stand-alone body, and to highlight problems at the Female Refuge, a letter appeared in the *Star* two days later, apparently from a subscriber to the Refuge, alleging poor management of its funds and errors in its balance sheet.[13]   Whether or not these allegations were correct, the letter highlighted the importance to the community of financial probity and accurate accounting.

Unlike the Benevolent Asylum, the Female Strangers' Home, later known as the Female Refuge, was nominally a Protestant institution in that only Protestant clergy attended the inmates.[14] Also unlike the Asylum, the Female Refuge's stated purpose was to assist only those women who desired to reform their lives—referred to in the 1871 Royal Commission Minutes of Evidence as "penitents"—and it rejected those who "fell" more than twice.[15]

By 1877, this laudable aim seems to have been compromised by the application of more stringent eligibility criteria, which was criticised in a letter to the *Star.* A correspondent signing herself as "A Mother", who had been induced to attend a meeting of the Domestic Mission, which was presumably a group of respectable wives and mothers, perhaps being addressed by a member of the committee at the Female Refuge, was grieved to find that the

---

[13] "Female Strangers' Home" *Star* (Ballarat) 3 December 1857, 3.

[14] "Report on Charitable Institutions", op.cit. At the time of giving this evidence, the witness for the Female Refuge stated that the Government had not given the Refuge anything towards the erection of a better building, but she believed the Refuge should be encouraged to continue its practice of reclaiming lost characters.

Refuge knew of sixty-three "unfortunates" who could not be admitted into the Refuge and she inquired as to reasons why.[16] Receiving a reply from a gentleman who "spoke" on behalf of the ladies who controlled the institution, and who said that "there is no difficulty in the way of admission for suitable women", "A Mother" wrote a second, highly indignant letter, asking exactly "when is a female most suitable for such an institution?"[17] She went on to say "Who, I would ask, are the 'eligible' for such a place, if not the homeless, friendless, and degraded?" and, she argued, if the Refuge had given up on these women as a hopeless task, then the institution should be closed and the government grant it received should be handed over to the Benevolent Asylum which was "the place for hungry, naked people".[18] Clearly, this correspondent felt that "fallen" women, whether or not they were prostitutes, should not be denied assistance, particularly by professed Christians, and more particularly if they were pregnant, but in the absence of letters in support of this view, this newspaper exchange can only illustrate the perennial struggle between doctrinaire assessments of character versus more sympathetic assessments of human vulnerability and need, as the basis for the delivery of assistance.

The Ballarat Benevolent Asylum was established with a different mission in view than that of the Female Refuge, and in order to gain the financial support of more prosperous local people, it instituted a rudimentary insurance scheme whereby regular subscribers of £2 or more per annum were not only entitled

---

[15] Ibid.

[16] "The Female Refuge", *Star* (Ballarat), 19 April 1877, 4.

[17] "The Female Refuge", *Star* (Ballarat), 1 June 1877, 3.

to nominate people for relief, but were also guaranteed a bed in the Asylum if and when the need arose. Details of these entitlements were given before the 1862 Royal Commission into the Municipalities and the Charitable Institutions in Victoria. It was reported by the Commissioners that regular subscribers to Ballarat's Benevolent Asylum who contributed at least £2 per annum, were guaranteed of a place in the Asylum themselves if required, and they could also have one inmate and one outdoor relief recipient "always on the books".[19] A regular subscription of £1 per annum entitled the contributor to recommend six outdoor relief recipients every year, but it did not entitle him to a bed if the need arose.[20] It is not clear how long this arrangement lasted, but by 1870, the Royal Com-mission into Charitable Institutions was expressing reservations about it. A witness giving evidence about the operation of Geelong's Hospital and Asylum was asked, "does not it seem to be rather giving an advantage to a man, because he can subscribe two guineas, he can recommend any two friends or members of his own family to become recipients of the charity?" The witness replied, "The tickets merely entitle a subscriber to recommend, he cannot demand admission: his claim is subject to the investigation of the committee".[21] In relation to the establishment of Ballarat's Asylum some twelve years earlier, it may have been thought that an inducement of this kind would help to attract subscriptions from wealthier members of the community who were probably not expected to take

---

[18] Ibid.
[19] Report of the Royal Commission Appointed to Enquire into the Municipalities and the Charitable Institutions in Victoria, 52 (Melbourne: September 1862), *Victorian Parliamentary Papers*, 1862-3.
[20] Ibid.
[21] Ibid., 69.

advantage of the entitlement, and it is likely that attention would have been drawn by local newspapers to anyone who did.

Once formed, the Benevolent and Visiting Association's committee became very active. It sought and received support by way of free services and medicines from doctors and pharmacists, and quickly appointed sub-committees to divide the district into manageable portions and to draft the Association's by-laws. It met every Monday night in the Council Chambers and received applications (and applicants) for relief at these meetings. The first of these, which was tabled on 21 December 1857, was from Henry Wright who had fractured his arm and skull while descending a mine-shaft.[22] His application was deferred for consideration, but allowed the following week in the amount of two guineas.[23] A second applicant was Mrs. Price who had received a gunshot wound at Hiscock's Gully. Her application was also deferred for a week, but withdrawn before it was heard.

It seems that Mrs. Price must have later prevailed on the Association for outdoor relief, as special mention of her appears in the *Ballarat Times* of May 1860. Several visitors had inspected her home and observed that she was extremely poor and her children were badly clothed. They had never noticed anything about her to make them think she was other than an honest but unfortunate woman. Yet at a court case in the Eastern Police Court, which was reported by the *Ballarat Times,* evidence to the contrary had been

---

[22] "Benevolent and Visiting Association", *Ballarat Times,* 22 December 1857, 3.
[23] "Miscellaneous", *Ballarat Times,* 29 December 1857, 3.

presented, and so the committee resolved to "strike her off the books as a person unfit to receive the aid of the Institution".[24]

It transpired that Mrs. Price kept a house of accommodation in Esmond Street for known prostitutes, and that one of them was said to have robbed a man of his purse while Price was out purchasing liquor to be consumed back at the house. The man, John Morgan, was manhandling one of the women in the hallway when Price returned, but he then left the house and went to the police. At the ensuing court case, a female witness and neighbour said she saw the women prisoners in Price's house frequently and had heard of "so many" being robbed there, but she had been too afraid to become involved. There was no evidence that a jury could convict on, but the "prisoners", including Price, were com-mitted to trial at the Circuit Court anyway, and bail was set at £25 each.[25] So while prostitution was not a crime, and while Morgan's allegations could not be proved beyond reasonable doubt, the women were deprived of their liberty, and it is likely that Price's children were taken into care. Price was not necessarily a prostitute herself, and her one proven crime seems to be that she did not declare an existing source of income to the Visitor. Had that source not been associated with prostitution, the court, hence the Asylum, may have adhered to accepted rules of evidence. It is also possible however, that had the women not been held in custody for what constituted a cooling off period, Morgan may have exacted immediate and more violent retribution.

---

[24] "Benevolent Asylum", *Ballarat Times*, 2 May 1860, 4.

Many cases of misrepresentation of circumstances were identified by Visitors during the Association's first year of operation. At a meeting in January 1859, for example, the reporting Visitors recommended that several cases under consideration should not be entertained. Instead they should be treated as unworthy of sympathy or support. Special mention was made of a Mrs. Cheel "who had greatly abused the benevolence of the Committee"[26] although the reasons for that view were not recorded. Other (male) applicants for relief were dismissed with recommendations to proceed into surrounding districts where labour was said to be in demand.[27]

While this is reminiscent of an earlier practice of local officials in Britain when dealing with unemployed beggars, in Victoria these recommendations were probably adopted with a view to stretching available resources as far as possible, and also to establish a principle that those who could work, should first seek it out before requesting support from the Ballarat Benevolent Asylum. The common conviction among the white-collar classes in nineteenth-century Australia generally, was that the agricultural districts were "bountiful" to those willing to labour, that farmers were "good Samaritans" to those experiencing hard times, and that they always had "sufficient to keep want from the door".[28] So, in a sense, the Association committee was not only requiring poor people to make efforts on their own behalf, but it was also calling on small farmers to nourish them in return. This was not a contract between master and workman such as operated in Britain; it was more like a

[25] "Eastern Court", *Ballarat Times,* 27 April 1860, 2.
[26] "Visiting and Benevolent Association", *Ballarat Times,* 19 January 1859, 3.
[27] Ibid.

social contract between poor settlers and poor labourers which was tacitly encouraged by a local group of financially successful men with the view of easing the transition from an earlier tenant-farming economy to one fuelled by capital and industry.

By 29 December 1857, the rules and regulations governing the Association had been drawn up, and after discussion, adopted by the Committee. Apart from giving priority to families and/or individuals of good character and industrious habits, committee members were also to give information to strangers and others in their endeavours to obtain employment. There is a direct link here back to the traditions of operative Freemasonry in England, where such information was passed to brothers through the Lodges. Operating funds for the Association in Ballarat, however, were to be raised and maintained by grants from public authorities, by Church collections, voluntary contributions and by other such means as the Board of Managers thought fit. The Board of Managers was to meet weekly to promote the objects and direct the business of the Association, and to authorise the granting of relief.[29] Collectors were appointed to canvass for donations and subscriptions, and letters were written to the Treasury in Melbourne in relation to the acquisition of land and funds for a building.

During the year 1858, the total number of recipients of relief was 911 (inclusive of children) while the cost of relief was cited in the December

---

[28] "The Benevolent Association", *Star* (Ballarat), 2 December 1857, 3.
[29] First Annual Report of the Ballarat Benevolent and Visiting Association with the Rules and Financial Statement During the Year 1858 (Ballarat East: 1859), 10-11.

Balance Sheet as £523/13/10d. This was the main item in an overall budget of £559/10/-. There was only £8 left in the bank at the end of the first year's operation.[30]

The obvious need was for a building. Not only would a building enable econo-mies of scale and efficiency of service delivery, but it would also give an air of permanence to the organization, and enhance its ability to attract funds from Government. To this end, a memorial was presented to the Hon John O'Shan-nassy, a leader of the Irish Roman Catholic community, when he visited the district, which set forth the position of the Association and the wants of the district.[31] With O'Shannassy's support in Melbourne, the Legislative Assembly allowed the sum of £2,000 for building an Asylum in Ballarat, and a further £500 for its maintenance, provided that £1,000 was raised by subscription in the district.

Upon receipt of these allowances, the Committee called for building designs that enabled the Asylum to be erected in sections upon land in Ascot Street, which had already been granted by the Victorian Government. The Municipal Council also made direct grants of money to the building fund, as well as giving assistance in the form of fines collected by the police force, which were donated to the Committee on a monthly basis. By the time the Asylum had been erected, and due to the pressure of other work, Knox had resigned as Secretary, his position going in quick succession to A. Dimant and then to

---

[30] Robert Lewis and J.M. Strongman (auditors) Ballarat Benevolent and Visiting Association Balance Sheet for the Half-Year Ending December 31st, 1858 (included in the First Annual Report).
[31] Ballarat Benevolent and Visiting Association, First Annual Report, January 1859, 5.

A.A. Tarte. The number of doctors on call had increased to eight and there were three serving pharmacists. The doctors were required to be duly qualified medical practitioners, prepared to attend as required, rotating such attendances between themselves, and recording any surgical operations performed in a book kept for the purpose.[32] These men were listed in the Association's first Annual Report as Drs. Richardson, Holthouse, Allison, Glendinning, Robson, Bunce, Dimock and Kenworthy; and the Pharmacists were Messrs. Rand, Shanklin and Robinson.

The initial requirement had been for cash donations with which the applicants for relief could buy food for themselves, but it was soon realised by the Committee that food rations rather than cash grants could be provided more economically. The provision of rations, however, had to wait until the building had been erected and the land surrounding it had been cultivated. The provision of rations rather than cash also made economic sense to donors and subscribers, some of whom held that recipients of outdoor relief often spent cash grants on what they saw as non-essential items such as alcohol and tobacco. The Committee made reference to this change in its third Annual Report, saying that it had been

> impressed with the necessity of lessening the cost of maintaining the outdoor
> department as well as placing a further obstacle in the way of imposition on the
> funds of the Institution, took advantage of the facilities offered by the opening of
> the Asylum for dispensing relief in provisions instead of money, which has not

---

[32] Ibid., 22.

only induced a great many of the recipients to withdraw, but has effected a greater saving than was anticipated…[33]

The withdrawal of many of the cash-grant recipients once relief was delivered in the form of provisions was also hailed by the Committee as an effective way of separating those most in need of relief from the general mass of claimants. One claimant was a man named Babington who was admitted into the Asylum in April 1860, but within a month he went out and got drunk.[34] Upon being checked for this offence, Babington used insulting language before leaving the Asylum of his own accord. He was later seen begging about the streets of Ballarat and according to the reporting committee-member, Babington was trying to "elicit the sympathy of the public by showing them a bone which was taken from his leg at the Hospital and which he carried with him for that purpose".[35] Another instance of inability to adjust to institutionalized living was an old man who was said to have left the Benevolent Asylum in Melbourne to beg in Ballarat. He held only his left hand out which was "all distorted with rheumatics", and he was further accused of treating himself to not infrequent glasses of brandy.[36]

The reporting committee-member was concerned to put the public on guard against supporting people who did not take advantage of the institution provided, and who "misbehaved themselves" if and when they did. This was the second of a two-pronged approach adopted by the Asylum to counter the

[33] Ballarat Benevolent Asylum, Second Annual Report, January 1860, 9.
[34] "Benevolent Asylum Committee", *Ballarat Times*, 13 June 1860, 2.
[35] Ibid.
[36] Ibid.

incidence of local begging and community perceptions of imposition. It also advanced the principles of temperance. The first prong in this approach was the arrangement adopted at the meeting whereby asylums in Melbourne and Geelong were to be enjoined by Ballarat's Asylum, "to communicate from time to time the names of all persons who may leave those institutions of their own accord; or otherwise suffering from infirmities which prevent them following any employment at the time of their leaving those institutions".[37]

It can be inferred from this report that the Asylum did not permit disorderly conduct from its inmates, and that its committee members were vigilant in suppressing the incidence of begging, not just in Ballarat, but as an acceptable practice. Moreover, it is implied by the two strategies mentioned, that the charitable sector as a whole was in service to a governing class, the latter intent on segregating those it viewed as incapable of work, but both groups acted to enshrine work, along with chastity, sobriety and compliance, as marks of good character and eligibility for assistance.

Some applicants for relief in Ballarat had become chronically, as distinct from temporarily, ill. They were therefore not accepted into the Miners' Hospital (later the Ballarat and District Hospital), so they began to request assistance from Benevolent Asylum Committee members. In January 1859, one such applicant, a man in the last stages of tuberculosis, was received by the Melbourne Benevolent Asylum as a result of intercession by the Ballarat

---

[37] Ibid.

Asylum Com-mittee.[38]   In March the same year, however, a request from Ballarat on behalf of two orphan boys was rejected by the Melbourne Asylum on grounds of it being too crowded to take them.[39]   Also in January 1859, the Committee received a request from the Secretary of the Bendigo Benevolent Asylum asking for copies of Ballarat's rules "and any other information that would assist them in establishing their institution".[40]

The Bendigo Benevolent Asylum

Bendigo's Asylum developed along slightly different lines to Ballarat's, although the same kind of loyalty to "its own" poor is mentioned by Cage.[41] Where Ballarat's Asylum came to concern itself with cases needing medium to long-term assistance, the Asylum committee in Bendigo seems to have avoided all but the most severe cases of hardship, preferring to focus on assisting the able bodied to find employment.   In 1893 the Bendigo Asylum committee agreed to establish a night shelter for the unemployed, provided the police would police it.   By 1896, however, the building had lent itself to use as a hiding place for stolen goods, which Cage implied had been confiscated by members of the Benevolent Asylum committee for their own use and enjoyment.[42]   Although not all staff members at Ballarat Asylum were above reproach, there was never any such display of self-interest among Asylum committee members.

---

[38] "Visiting and Benevolent Association", *Ballarat Times*, 19 January 1859, 3.
[39] "Ballarat Visiting and Benevolent Association", *Ballarat Times,* 17 March 1859, 3.
[40] "Visiting and Benevolent Association", *Ballarat Times,* 6 January 1859, 2.
[41] R. A. Cage, *Poverty Abounding, Charity Aplenty: The Charity Network in Colonial Victoria* (Sydney: Hale & Iremonger, 1992), 58.

Another difference was that the Bendigo Asylum acted in conjunction with a Ladies Benevolent Society, the latter attending to emergencies that arose between the weekly committee meetings. There was also an Industrial School, managed by the Bendigo Asylum committee, which may have paid its teaching staff because its teachers were not subsidised by the Board of Education.[43] Cash was given to unemployed people to assist their relocation to Melbourne and other districts, which would have relieved financial pressure on Bendigo's Asylum, and in 1870, on the day the Asylum's witness gave evidence before the Royal Commission, there were only one hundred adults housed in there[44] as opposed to Ballarat Asylum's average daily total of inmates during the same year of 216.[45] These differences suggest that Bendigo's Asylum was much smaller than Ballarat's, or else that its program of poor relief was confined to the very feeble. The associated Bendigo Ladies Benevolent Society seems to have focussed on relieving distress among women and children, but as the Society's committee, like most of its subscribers, were members of the same denomination, the Church of England,[46] it may have had narrower selection criteria than those set in place by the more pragmatic Ballarat Benevolent Asylum.

---

[42] Ibid.
[43] "Report on Charitable Institutions", op.cit., 53.
[44] Ibid.
[45] Ballarat Benevolent Asylum, Thirteenth Annual Report, January 1871, 9.
[46] "Report on Charitable Institutions", op.cit., 56.

There were a number of smaller asylums and relief organizations operating in central Victoria and Ballarat in the late 1850s, including one at Creswick[47] and one at Smythe's Creek;[48] but they were no match for the resource management and organizational skills of the Ballarat Benevolent Asylum's Committee, and in the case of Creswick's hospital, to the withdrawal of all government subsidies on the grounds of health service rationalisation.[49]

The decision to withdraw government subsidies to some hospitals, and to require others to also perform the function of a benevolent asylum, was made on the recommendation of the 1870 Royal Commission into Charitable Institutions.[50] The committee argued on the basis of a study of hospitals by London medical doctor, F. Oppert, who had given it as his opinion that "one hospital containing 400 beds is sufficient for a population of 100,000" [51] which was distributed over a large area. On those grounds, the Commission held that eight hospitals, plus nearby or incorporated benevolent asylums, ought to suffice for the whole of Victoria. Accordingly, government subsidies were discontinued to smaller hospitals, such as those in Clunes, Daylesford and Creswick, because they were deemed to be situated too close to each other to warrant separate funding arrangements.

Public Health Concerns of the Ballarat Benevolent Asylum

---

[47] "Benevolent Asylum Committee", *Ballarat Times*, 5 July 1860, 2.
[48] "Benevolent Asylum Committee", *Ballarat Times*, 28 June 1860, 3.
[49] "Report on Charitable Institutions", op.cit., xv.
[50] Ibid., xv-xvi.
[51] Ibid.

The Ballarat Asylum's original body of administrators included local councillors and active businessmen, many of them known and respected further afield. The very fact that they involved themselves in a type of enterprise usually managed by well intentioned, but not commercially motivated, people could be interpreted as signifying their impatience with the existing ad hoc approach to social problems and fluctuations of fortune on the goldfield, which had culminated in the loss of a valued type of skilled man. That loss appears to have acted to spur these men into fashioning the Asylum as a vehicle of social reform in the interests of Ballarat's (and their own) continuing development and progress towards prosperity.

In line with the general transparency of the Asylum's operations, committee meetings and the building itself were freely available for attendance and/or inspection by the public. Facts, figures, arguments, decisions and objectives were all tabled and fully reported. There seem to have been two underlying fears in Ballarat that called for this level of transparency, accountability, and diligence from the Committee in the administrative practices of the Asylum. One was the fear of falling victim to contagious disease, while the other was of imposition and consequent pauperization of the community as a whole.

The first fear was reassured by the Committee in its enforcement of strict sanitation rules. These rules required inmates to have their hair immediately cut and washed, their clothes fumigated, and to bathe upon admission and at weekly intervals thereafter. No one was allowed to use the bedrooms as

sitting rooms, and all windows were to be kept continually open–this practice accorded with the belief, and probably the experience, that contamination was less likely to occur in clean, well-aired spaces.

The general rules and regulations were reviewed once the building was erected, and the duties of office bearers and attending doctors were extended and clarified. Forms of recommendation, account books, registers, and other stationery were designed and printed and a house-master and house-matron were employed to administer the internal rules. Mr. and Mrs Boughen were appointed to these positions, and the conditions governing their duties were detailed, strict and demanding of responsibility. Neither was allowed to receive any gift or remuneration for anything done by virtue of their position upon pain of peremptory dismissal, and they could not both be absent from the Asylum at the same time.[52] They were to treat the inmates kindly and well, supervise the activities of those capable of work, and report any problems to the Committee. Those inmates judged by the medical officers to be capable of work, were to give their services under the direction of the house-master and/or matron in the work of the house or the garden. They could receive religious instruction from their own choice of priest or minister, but only at times allowed by the Committee.[53]

An analysis of the first two hundred inmates admitted to the Asylum covering the period from 21 February 1860 to 15 April 1862[54] shows a predominance of

---

[52] Ballarat Benevolent Asylum, Second Annual Report, January 1860, 9.
[53] Ballarat Benevolent Asylum, "Rules", Second Annual Report, January 1860, 11.
[54] Ballarat Benevolent Asylum, *Admission Register, 21 Feb 1860 to 5 April 1862*.

people affiliated to the Church of England. Their numbers made up 41.5% of the total, with Catholics also numerous at 26.5%. Presbyterians formed 15% of this first two hundred inmates, Lutherans made up 3.5%, Wesleyans 5.5%, Congregationalists 1%, and a group simply identifying themselves as Protestant, formed 5%. The remaining 2% was made up of one Quaker, two inmates whose religion was not known, and one of no religion.

A comparison of these percentages to those of Victoria as a whole can be made using a table of religious affiliations derived from the 1861 Victorian Census.[55] For Victoria as a whole the number of Anglicans exceeded the number of Catholics by 87.7%, whereas in the Asylum, the number of Anglicans exceeded the number of Catholics by 56.6%. Wesleyans were listed as such by the Ballarat Benevolent Asylum, but the figures for all of Victoria included other Methodists. Brethren were not listed as such in the 1861 Census although figures for the 1857 Census suggest that the Asylum's one in 200 Quaker was statistically greater than for Victoria as a whole. Those of no religion were in a statistically miniscule minority in both populations.

By the end of 1860, that is, of the first year of operation with a building in situ, the number of Benevolent Asylum inmates and statistical information about them, such as numbers admitted, ailments suffered, results of treatment, gender, and number of children born in the Asylum, were beginning to appear in the annual reports. This was in accordance with Victorian Government

policy, which for several years had been promulgated from a Central Board of Public Health in Melbourne, to Local Boards of Public Health in all Victorian municipalities. Again, the emphasis was on sanitation. In June 1860, a questionnaire had been circulated to local Boards of Public Health by the Central Board, asking for particulars of sickness, disease, and noxious trades, as well as details of water supply, drainage, burial practices etc. which stressed both the need for sanitation, and for detailed information on how the problems were being addressed. The Central Board had been directed to compile statistics upon which the Victorian Government intended to base future legislation. According to pencilled notes in the margin of one of these questionnaires,[56] the district of Ballarat had been healthy during the half year to 30 June 1860. In answer to question two, which asked "have any particular diseases been prevalent?" and if so, "have they spread epidemically? have the causes been investigated and traced? [and] have they been attended with unusual mortality?", it was stated that diphtheria and a form of enteritis had been prevalent in epidemic proportions during the summer months among children. The cause of diphtheria was said to be "atmospheric", while the cause of enteritis was put down to "misery from dentition and heat". Neither epidemic was attended by unusual mortality. The last three questions related fairly directly to buildings of public benefit and/or convenience, and as the Asylum was one of these, it is not surprising that the Asylum Committee insisted on a strict routine of freshness and cleanliness, which also applied to the preparation and cooking of food.

---

[55] Phillips, W. W. Chapter 25 "Religion", in *Australians Historical Statistics,* ed. Wray Vamplew (Broadway, NSW: Fairfax, Syme & Weldon, 1987) 422.

The table of diseases attached to the 1861 Annual Report which was compiled by the house-master W. Boughen, for the year ending 31 December 1860, indicates that most afflicted inmates suffered either dysentery or phthisis (tuberculosis). The first disease accounted for 27.42% of a total of 62 illnesses, and the second formed 22.58% of the same total. One case of dysentery was transferred to an unnamed institution, while the rest were cured or relieved. The success rate with tuberculosis was not as good, with only five being cured or relieved, seven dying and two being transferred. The destination/s of transferees were not recorded, but there are letters in the Asylum's archives, which suggest that funeral costs were sometimes defrayed by the Asylum in this way. There were two aneurisms for the year 1861 (one cured and one transferred), two cases of bronchitis, two of rheumatism, five of ophthalmia, two ulcerated legs and two cases of weak intellect.

The dysentery may have been caused by faecal contamination of water or food utensils, while tuberculosis, known as "miners' disease", was often caused by poorly ventilated mines and dust from within them coating the lungs. One case of weak intellect was transferred, while the other remained in the Asylum. There was a range of other complaints including fever, fractures, burns and an amputated finger.[57]

---

[56] "Sanitary Questions to Local Boards of Health"*,* (Melbourne: Government Printer 1860), PROV (Ballarat) Health Department, VPRS 2500 Box 1, Health Reports 1856-1867, Questionnaire.
[57] W. Boughen, Housemaster, Ballarat Benevolent Asylum, Tabular statement of diseases treated in the Benevolent Asylum during the year 1860, Annual Report, January 1861.

By 1867, additions to the building had brought the total number of beds to 274,[58] while the total number of inmates needing medical attention during the year had increased from the previous year's total of 62, to 374.[59] The cases were categorised in more detail, with the highest number (36) suffering from ileus—a disease of the digestive organs. Cases of dysentery had dropped to two, but diarrhoea was suffered by 31 patients, suggesting that the sanitation outside the Asylum had improved, but the food, and perhaps the water, had not. Tuberculosis was still high on the list of complaints (27), with diphtheria cases numbering 15. Rheumatism was high at 11 cases and paralysis also numbered 11 cases, this being associated with prolonged exposure to wet conditions, particularly in the mines. There were many other categories of disease listed, but by 1867, no inmate was reported to suffer from weak intellect.

Given that many of these diseases would have rendered the sufferer unfit for continuing work, and that the majority of them were caused by existing conditions of work, it is not surprising that the Asylum committee looked firstly to the mining companies for financial support. In subsequent years, the diseases dealt with were not noted in as much detail, and in later decades they were not mentioned in annual reports at all. This suggests that cases were initially categorised as required for the compilation of statistics by health authorities in Melbourne, and that once this had ceased to be obligatory, the information was not collected. It may also indicate that justification of support

---

[58] Ballarat Benevolent Asylum, Tenth Annual Report, January 1868, 8.

was required in the early years, but that having established the necessity for support, evidence ceased to be required.

The Lying-In Hospital

The second widespread fear of imposition and pauperization was evidenced in numerous letters to the newspapers, where only the "worthy" were viewed as having a legitimate claim to support. The fear of pauperization was most commonly evinced, however, in attitudes towards "fallen" women, many of whom sought assistance from the Asylum when their babies were due. At first, such cases were received only on an incidental basis, but as the years passed, the number of applicants for help and their obvious and sometimes extreme need, prompted the Asylum committee to set aside a portion of the Asylum for their sole use.[60] Even this measure was found to be insufficient, so in 1868, tenders were called for the erection of a special Lying-In facility, one part to be used as a labour ward and the other as a convalescent ward. The latter measured 64 feet by 30 feet when completed in 1869, and there were ten rooms for separate treatment. The committee endeavoured to check this class of inmate as far as possible, but it was found impracticable to refuse admission to many persons who, "if not admitted, would have been left in a state revolting to every feeling of humanity".[61] So while the preferred class of pregnant woman was the respectable poor or deserted wife, the Asylum

---

[59] W. McFarlane, MD, non-resident surgeon, Ballarat Benevolent Asylum, Return of the number of cases of disease and of the deaths from each cause in the Ballarat Benevolent Asylum for the year 1867, Tenth Annual Report, January 1868.

[60] Ballarat Benevolent Asylum, Eleventh Annual Report, January 1869, 10.

[61] Ibid., 11.

committee felt compelled to admit the unmarried pregnant woman along with them, and right from the beginning, the latter group predominated. There was not quite the same element of punishment for moral transgression at the Asylum as was evident at the Refuge, and maybe the girls had not been banished from home during the course of their pregnancy.

Of the first 100 admissions to the Benevolent Asylum's new Lying-In Hospital, ninety of the women were unmarried, seven were married, and three were listed as widows.[62] Of this total, 37% of the women were Catholic, 36% were affiliated to the Church of England, 13% were Presbyterian, 10% Wesleyan, and 4% were listed as other varieties of Methodist. This suggests simply that there was a broad cross section of young women who availed themselves of the Asylum's services, most of them probably having no alternative. A twenty year old unmarried servant girl named Matilda Kerr, who was born in the colony, had her baby in a cab on the way to the Asylum at 5.15 am on 13 April 1893.[63] This woman's admission was an extreme instance of the kind of emergency the Asylum found it could not ignore or turn away at the same time as maintain an image of charitable benevolence. The babies born to single mothers in the Asylum were not named in the Asylum Register, however, simply being listed as male or female child born in the Asylum. The fathers' names never appeared in the register, and often the names of the pregnant woman's parents were also omitted.[64] The practice of not identifying these babies or their fathers by name reinforced the very prevalent double standard

---

[62] Ballarat Benevolent Asylum, *Register of Admissions to the Lying-In Hospital Ballarat District Benevolent Asylum, 1 July 1892 to 19 April 1893.*
[63] Ibid.

in relation to sexual activity endorsed by colonial society generally. Prior to
the construction of the Lying-In Hospital, there may have been more emphasis
placed on the health than on the morals of single mothers, as a random check
of entries in the earlier Admission Register shows that a woman named
Elizabeth, who entered the Asylum on 6 November 1866, gave birth to a
female child who left the Asylum on 23 November 1866 "in good health with
its brother".[65] It was not made clear that Elizabeth left with both children, but it
seemed that someone had brought an older child in to visit and that all had left
together. Similarly, a servant girl named Jane was said to have left the
Asylum on 23 November 1866 after her confinement and in good health.

Efforts were made by Asylum committee members to reunite these young
mothers with their families wherever possible, and where it was not, to find
work for them after their confinement,[66] but often nothing was stated in either
the Asylum's admission register or its annual reports as to the fate of their
children. By the early 1880s, discussions were held between the Asylum
committee and the Female Refuge regarding the advisability of the Refuge
taking over the Lying-In cases from the Asylum.[67] It is not clear from the
records which institution initiated these discussions, but it is possible that the
Asylum was seeking to remove itself from responsibility for this class of
emergency in order to devote all its resources to what were perceived by the
community as more deserving cases. The losses arising from a mining
disaster at Creswick had impacted on the Asylum's finances during 1882, and

---

[64] Ibid.
[65] Ballarat Benevolent Asylum *Register of Inmates 21/12/60 – 31/12/72*, 4-5.
[66] Ballarat Benevolent Asylum, Eleventh Annual Report, January 1869, 11.

the Female Refuge may have been looking to put a case to government for subsidies. In the event, the Lying-In cases remained at the Asylum.

Outdoor Relief

The distribution of outdoor relief was organized by the founding committee members who divided the Ballarat region into twelve districts and appointed a member of the committee as a "Visitor" to the people in receipt of cash or rations. Cash was almost exclusively reserved for those Visitors who served at more distant townships such as Creswick or Scarsdale.[68] There, a Visitor would receive the cash and purchase provisions for the recipients. The relief given to any one family varied between 2/6d and 7/6d per week. Relief by rations was provided on the recommendation of a Visitor, but the recipients had to come in to the Asylum each week to collect them. In most cases rations were given for the week and the committee made it a proviso when a family was relieved, "that the children who are of age to do so, shall attend school, and if any are old enough, that they shall follow some light employment, such as runners for newspapers, selling fruit etc."[69]

By the mid 1870s, due to growth of the general perception that the Asylum was able to assist, the Outdoor Relief Department had become very important to the poor of Ballarat. Recipients of outdoor relief for 1874 averaged 405

---

[67] Ballarat Benevolent Asylum, Twenty-Sixth Annual Report, January 1883, 9.
[68] Ballarat Benevolent Asylum, Eleventh Annual Report, January 1869, Supplementary Report, 17.
[69] Ibid., 18.

adults per week, per year, and 564 children,[70] which was a significant increase on the previous year. The two chief causes of outdoor relief were assessed by the committee as being a depression in mining which threw hundreds of men out of work, and intemperance and wife desertion, one viewed as encouraging the other. The Asylum committee saw itself as generally unable to "compel the drunken scoundrel to work"[71] so relief was given to the wife and children in order that they were not left to starve.

This problem was not new to colonial governments, but as Twomey points out, "differential access to maintenance legislation, problems with the execution of warrants and the enforcement of maintenance orders, and the possibility of ideological resistance to measures that provided women with the means to live apart from men"[72], all conspired to the disadvantage of the financially dependent woman, and when remedies were suggested by middle-class reformers they commonly focused on providing work opportunities and encouragement to men.[73] This resistance does not appear to have been as entrenched among Ballarat Benevolent Asylum committee members, given their vigorous lobbying for effective maintenance legislation, the employment of female teachers, and the provision of sewing machines and cows to lone women on occasion.

Conclusion

---

[70] Ballarat Benevolent Asylum, Seventeenth Annual Report, January 1875, 9.

[71] Ibid.

[72] Christina Twomey, "Without Natural Protectors: Responses to Wife Desertion in Goldrush Victoria", *Australian Historical Studies*, 28 no. 108 (April 1997): 22-25. [database online]: EBSCOhost/Academic Search Elite [2001, February 17] 2 of 20.

It is evident from the records still accessible that the committee members were very active and confident of their ability to meet goals in what was promulgated not only as a humane and worthy endeavour, but as an example of cooperative assistance to the less fortunate. In closing the January 1871 Annual Report, it was remarked that

> space in the report was too limited to do justice to the claims of the Asylum upon the public for sympathy and support, but [the Aylum's] trust that under the influence of divine Providence, the hearts of all may be moved to compassion, who are able in any way to contribute to the necessities of the Institution, and so lessen in some degree, the great extent of human misery and destitution that exist all around.[74]

While this extract is somewhat elaborate in tone, it does indicate a belief on the part of the committee that its appeal would arouse the sympathies of all sections of the community despite the community's sectarian differences. This, and other initiatives designed to alleviate the misery created by poverty can be seen to have been a unique combination of practical benevolence, methodical systems, cleanliness, productive work in the garden, regular conduct encouraging of stability, and a concomitant disapproval of sloth. Thrift, sobriety and industriousness were promoted among subscribers and recipients of relief alike, which fostered the development of middle class values in Ballarat generally, as well as the capitalist spirit of collective progress towards material well being.

---

[73] Ibid., 12 of 20.

Conditions within nineteenth-century Victorian asylums varied considerably, but in Cage's view, "the greatest variations in conditions were more attributable to management style than physical hardship … [and] … inmates' quality of life was largely a reflection of the superintendent's attitudes".[75] While this may have been the case among Victoria's asylums, it is also evident that some of these differences lay in how diligently or otherwise the Asylum in question raised and managed its funds. The inmates' quality of life was as dependent on that diligence as it was on the management style exhibited by the superintendent. Mr. Boughen's thirty-three years of continuing and conscientious service as superintendent of Ballarat's Benevolent Asylum, which ended only when he died in 1892, suggests that conditions in the Asylum were unusually stable and cooperative, but they may not have been quite as harmonious if he had interpreted his own role, or if the committee's fund-raising efforts had not been equally diligent.

---

[74] Ballarat Benevolent Asylum, Thirteenth Annual Report, January 1871, 13.
[75] Cage, op.cit., 135.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Business of Charity

In colonial Australia, the British government was, from the outset, responsible for the settlement of its charges, but this responsibility fell short of providing welfare services or income support. As separate colonies were formed, so separate bodies were vested with authority over different areas of administration, and people were more or less expected to provide materially for themselves. The incidence of poverty in mid nineteenth-century Victoria was therefore not seen as a province of government. This chapter traces the ongoing determination among Ballarat's Benevolent Asylum committee members to make it a province of government to reconcile local difficulties caused by destitution on the goldfields with the exigencies of capital expansion and their perceived obligation to assist those in distress. These difficulties were compounded by the Victorian government's stated intention of reducing the ratio of government grants in relation to locally raised contributions. The Asylum committee's main concern consequently became one of convincing local councils and working people that the responsibility for raising funds, administering finances and managing the Asylum could not fairly be left to a voluntary and unincorporated committee.

The nexus between property ownership and local taxation, a proportion of which was allocated to poor relief, was explored, but application by the Asylum of a principle whereby a local employer contributed to the welfare of local people, led to the exclusion of non-working people from neighboring districts who sought to avail themselves of paid work or charitable relief in

Ballarat. These issues shaped the organization and distribution of charitable relief in Ballarat, but the ability among Ballarat's employers to retain control over the admission policies to the Asylum was diminished by the Victorian Government's determination to rationalise the delivery of welfare services across the state.

Having been initially reliant on the contributory capacity of wealthier individuals, and not having succeeded in efforts to have the Victorian government legislate against deserting husbands and/or families that may have been in a position to support destitute relatives, Ballarat's Asylum committee looked initially to the mining companies for guarantees of financial support. In the likely realisation that such support would be fluctuating at best, and could not be relied upon in the long term, and suspecting that, if community support evaporated, the state would not assist at all, the committee looked then to municipal and shire councils. These councils were empowered to collect taxes on local property in order to continue the services to Ballarat's needy, and by the 1870s and 1880s, these services had become extensive, highly organised, and necessary to the wellbeing of the community.

There was also a belief among progressive working men in Ballarat, such as comprised the Asylum's committee, that charitable giving imbued a population with a sense of community and civility not experienced in big cities such as Melbourne, and that this spirit could and should be encouraged among the young for their own personal benefit and in promulgation of Christian duty, civic progress and social reform. It was felt by the Committee that

a genuine feeling of sympathy for the poor, the widow and orphan, will grow with their growth, and liberal as their parents have been in their day, their sons and daughters will surpass them in love to their fellow creatures, and in noble deeds of charity.[1]

This ethos in relation to widows and orphans was prevalent among working people in Ballarat quite early in its history, and increasing levels of community support for the new Benevolent Asylum can be inferred from the subscription list included with each of its annual reports. The number of subscribers enlisted by the Committee for the year ending December 1858, which was the first year of operation, was only 128, and between them, they contributed a total of £454. Ten years later, by December 1868, the number of subscribers had increased to 944, and between them, according to the balance sheet for that year, they contributed a total of £2810 (see Table 3 for details). This total may have included incidentals such as surplus produce from the Asylum garden and money from paying inmates, but at that stage, and excluding government funds, money received by the Asylum committee was almost solely by way of individual and group subscription. Subscriptions differed from donations in that they were made on a regular basis for a specified (or mutually agreed) period of time. For as little as sixpence paid for three consecutive months, a donor was given full voting rights, became entitled to recommend people for relief, and was eligible for election as a manager,[2] but there was no guarantee of a bed in the Asylum, as was guaranteed to subscribers of £2 or more per annum.

---

[1] Ballarat Benevolent Asylum, Eighteenth Annual Report, January 1876, 11.

It is notable that from 1862, both the mining companies and the churches far outdid the banks in their respective levels of annual contribution. During the first four years, repeated appeals were made to the mining companies for the same level of monetary support they were known to give to "other institutions".[3] This was probably a reference to the Miners' Hospital, because in the report to December 1859, the appeal was urged by emphasising that once the building was complete the Association would have to take in cases not admissible to the Miners' Hospital.[4] It was also stated in the 1859 Asylum report that "some of the most distressing and expensive cases on the books of the Institution are widows and orphans of miners, and miners suffering from chronic diseases caused by mining operations". This suggests that the Asylum viewed those it assisted as entitled to a larger share of mining company profits. It also affirms that miners who died or sustained injury in the course of their work, together with their widows and children, were viewed as more deserving of assistance than workers in less dangerous occupations, and that being prepared to take a risk in the seeking of improved conditions in a new world, did not detract from assessments among Asylum managers and subscribers in Ballarat, of desert. This distinction was implied rather than stated, but it is one that was not implied by their counterparts in Melbourne.

This particular appeal, however, was only heeded by five mining companies out of the scores, perhaps hundreds, operating in the region at the time. The five companies were the Great Extended, the Koh-i-noor, the British, the Allied Armies and the Independent. These companies were praised in the

---

[2] Ballarat Benevolent Asylum, "Rules and Regulations", First Annual Report, January 1859, 10.
[3] Ibid., 7.

Annual Report to December 1860 but this praise was followed by the remark that the rest of the mining fraternity had "totally disregarded" the Asylum's appeal for funds.

This challenge to the mining fraternity, in what was a widely circulated report, together with evidence of real progress in the form of additional buildings and extensions, cultivated vegetable gardens, furniture, the increasing number of inmates and the professional attention paid to their ailments, seemed to jolt the mining companies into recognition that the Asylum was a creditable institution and that it was gaining influence in the city, because from December 1861 onwards the mining companies were the most generous contributors of all local groups.

The group least generous in this regard was the banking group, so it seems that banks viewed themselves as managers rather than producers of wealth. There were six banks operating in Ballarat in 1861: the Bank of Australasia, the Union Bank of Australia, the Colonial Bank of Australia, the London Chartered Bank, the Bank of New South Wales and the National Bank of Australasia. With the exception of the Bank of Australasia, which gave £10, these banks each gave ten guineas for the year. The same level of contributions from the banks continued throughout the decade. In contrast, by 1864-65, different mining companies were contributing as much as £50 and £60 annually, and in 1868 the mining companies contributed 9% of the total collected. (see table below).

---

[4] Ballarat Benevolent Association, Second Annual Report, 1860, 5.

Table 2: Donations (in £) received by the Ballarat Benevolent Asylum (1858-1868).
(Sources: Ballarat Benevolent Asylum Annual Reports)

Year	No. Subscribers	Donations Banks	Donations Churches	Donations Mining Co's	Donations Community	Total of Local Donations
1858	128	nil	17	nil	437	454
1859	405	20	14	17	2759	2810
1860	278	nil	95	60	691	846
1861	295	60	112	75	1011	1258
1862	341	36	141	191	1437	1805
1863	235	45	64	203	1129	1441
1864	355	75	112	230	1176	1593
1865	399	45	225	414	1204	1888
1866	395	55	100	134	371	660
1867	641	61	190	232	1699	2182
1868	944	70	214	435	1653	2372
		447	**1284**	**1991**	**13567**	**17309**

Note: This table was compiled from lists included in Annual Reports of individual, church and company donations received. The lists were comprehensive, but there may have been some overlap between groups and individuals, as the former were not always categorised separately on the Asylum's balance sheets. This table is designed to show the different levels of contribution made by major employer organizations in Ballarat and the poorer church and voluntary groups, in order to highlight the difference between amounts contributed by comparatively wealthy groups and those donated by not so wealthy individuals.

Financial Vulnerability and Efforts to Secure Viable Levels of Funding

The Asylum Committee also appealed to the Victorian Government for funds, but the provision of a state subsidy had been fixed at £3 for £1 by a Royal Commission held in 1862, and this was conditional upon the £1 being first raised from within the local community. The Asylum initially took advantage of this provision by representing all sources of local funds, including council subscriptions and surplus produce from the Asylum, as voluntary donations from the community, and then claiming three times this total from the state government. This practice was condemned by the 1870 Royal Commission into Charitable Institutions on the grounds that it made for a lack of uniformity across the state, and that it enabled receipt by the institutions of what the

Com-missioners termed "cumulative endowments". In the words of their report,

> all municipal grants and all grants from other charities have been reckoned as voluntary contributions, entitling the charity to receive State aid in the proportion of £3 to £1. This in some cases has led to what we may call cumulative endowments; for if a hospital or local benevolent society in receipt of State aid contributes to a benevolent asylum, the contribution necessitates a second payment by the State.[5]

The Commissioners went on to recommend (among other things) that the funding ratio be reduced to £2 for £1 for a period of two years from July 1872, and that from 1874 the government subsidy should be further reduced to £1 for each £1 raised from within the community.[6] The 1870 ruling, which took effect from 30 June 1872, required council and shire subscriptions to be shown as separate amounts on balance sheets and treated as public, rather than private, subscriptions. This decreased the subsidy claimable from the Victorian government. Even so, for virtually all of the first fifty years the government underwrote the Ballarat Benevolent Asylum at the rate of at least 70%, and for most of those years, closer to 80%, notwithstanding the flattering impression of local generosity and self-reliance which was created by the Asylum Committee in its reports, and by the newspapers in theirs.

The 1870 Commissioners also viewed monies raised from surpluses produced by the labour of inmates as involuntary, rather than voluntary contributions, but they did not exclude them from the community total of funds

---

[5] "Report of the Royal Commission on Charitable Institutions" (Melbourne: 1870), xviii-xix, *Victorian Parliamentary Papers*, 1871.

raised, as they did with the municipal contributions. At a ratio of £3 to £1, the government subsidy not only made for the erection and maintenance of many substantial buildings associated with the Asylum and the Hospital in Ballarat, which were viewed by the Commissioners as "ornaments to the town",[7] but they also made for associated employment. Both the subsidies and the building projects encouraged the growth of a diverse economy in Ballarat, and helped to mitigate the effects of recurrent depressions, floods and other local disasters. In 1870 there were two disastrous floods, the second "unprecedented in its destruction of property",[8] and both necessitated large-scale financial aid, which was collected from the community to the detriment of financial support for the Asylum. In 1882 a similar reduction of direct community support for the Asylum was experienced as a result of a mining calamity in Creswick,[9] in which the New Australasian Mine collapsed and caused the death of twenty-two miners. These fluctuations are indicative of the responsiveness of the local Ballarat community to local accident and unexpected need, but nonetheless, they posed some financial difficulties for the Asylum in meeting obligations to cases of ongoing need.

At the Asylum's annual meeting in January 1877, the committee was firmly of the view that shire and borough councils in and around Ballarat could, and should, have assumed a greater burden of financial responsibility for the poor of their districts than they did. It is also evident, however, that the Asylum com-mittee wished to retain control over welfare management and social

---

[6] Ibid., xviii.
[7] Ibid., xiv.
[8] Ballarat Benevolent Asylum, Thirteenth Annual Report, January 1871, 10.
[9] Ballarat Benevolent Asylum, Twenty-Fifth Annual Report, January 1883, 7.

policy in relation to Asylum inmates and claimants. These twin determinations were thought by the wider community to be preferable to the introduction of a poor law with a concomitant increase in taxation, something that seemed particularly odious to James Oddie. In fact, Oddie moved that the subscribers signal approval of the action taken by the departing committee in recommending that local shires and councils donate to the Asylum a sum equal to one penny in the pound on their respective valuations,[10] pointing out that unless increased donations came in from outside Ballarat, "things could not be carried on much longer as hitherto, and a poor law must inevitably follow".[11]

The objection to a poor law as had existed in England seems to have been more a dread of what was seen as its necessary corollary, a law of settlement, than solely of an increase in taxation on the propertied class. According to Dickey, men such as Ballarat's miners, seasonal shearers and itinerant labourers, had always been one of the targets of poor laws in England, "on the assumption that when they became so poor that they could not support themselves legally they would need the discipline of the workhouse to prevent them from resorting to theft or violence as 'sturdy beggars'"[12]. Confining the poor to workhouses, however, meant that taxes had to be levied on the propertied class in order to support them, something strongly resisted in Victoria.

---

[10] "Benevolent Asylum Annual Meeting", *Star* (Ballarat), 24 January 1877, 4.
[11] Ibid.
[12] Dickey, op.cit. 119.

This widespread objection was addressed by the Commissioners, who in their 1870 report in relation to establishing hospital districts throughout the state, said

> In the first place, the patients will be better provided for by a place of refuge near at hand than by tramping to a distance. In the second place each district will support its own poor, instead of sending them on to Ballarat, Sandhurst or Melbourne. In the third place, we hope by the aid of the extensive areas, which we have chosen, to avoid all the injury to a people, which a law of parish settlement entails. We consider that under a well-balanced system, no man ought to be confined to his own parish by the dread of losing his settlement [rights] and no employer ought to be deterred from engaging labour by the fear of conferring a settlement [right to relief] and thus increasing the rates. Labour should…have perfect liberty to find its own market, assured that proper cases of destitution and sickness will be cared for in whichever district they are located.[13]

It can be seen that a law of settlement was viewed by the Commissioners as inappropriate to Australian working conditions, to the spirit of independence then being nurtured, as well as to the development of inland towns. Oddie's objection hence appeared baseless, but his rationale became clear in 1882. This related to the expectation by governments that Asylum committees, rather than local councils, would continue to be held responsible for raising the voluntary share of contributions.

As far as the state was concerned, the system of grants had helped to multiply charitable institutions in Ballarat to the detriment of poorer districts, and the state was not prepared to continue bearing approximately three-

---

[13] "Report on Charitable Institutions", op.cit., xv-xvi.

quarters of the Asylum's financial support.[14] The Commissioners were intent on placing at least half the burden of financial support onto local, district and/or regional communities, and eventually dividing such support three ways between the colony's government, the various municipalities[15] together with the shire corporations, and the voluntary sector. With this aim in view, the Com-missioners concentrated on reducing the proportion paid by the Victorian government from three-quarters to one-half, and spreading available resources more evenly throughout the colony. The following table shows that notwith-standing these reductions in the ratio of subsidies from the Victorian govern-ment, the Ballarat Benevolent Asylum continued to expand and to receive some three-quarters of its overall funding from Melbourne.   This percentage only diminished to approximately two-thirds in 1900, which was the year the old-age pension was introduced.

Table 3, overleaf, shows Asylum receipts from 1858 through to 1905 and indicates that the cost of charitable relief was largely met by way of Victorian government subsidy, notwithstanding the strenuous efforts of the Asylum committee to encourage a sense of obligation toward widows, orphans, the old and the unfortunate, among Ballarat's working people.

Table 3: Grants, Subscriptions & Donations Received by Ballarat Benevolent Asylum 1858-1905.

---

[14] "Report on Charitable Institutions", op.cit. xiv.
[15] By 1870, the municipalities recognised as such had been surveyed, and their boundaries had been mapped, but this was not the case with the shires, most of which were administered by small groups of local inhabitants as corporations, and which were accordingly subject to laws not applicable to municipal councils.

Year To Dec	Gov't £	Children £	Councils £	Produce £	Community £	Total £	Gov't %
1858	0	0	276	0	183	459	0
1859	2500	0	882	0	1923	5305	63.75
1860	2500	225	432	0	414	3571	88.41
1861	3000	858	*	0	1258	5116	75.41
1862	4700	1208	*	0	1805	7713	76.59
1863	3000	1132	*	0	1449	5581	74.04
1864	3880	1994	*	27	1593	7494	78.38
1865	3150	2225	*530*	91	1358	7354	80.29
1866	4800	1254	*540*	109	1617	8320	79.25
1867	2000	718	*540*	150	1642	5050	64.51
1868	5000	974	*550*	260	2089	8873	73.53
1869	4400	1085	*560*	194	2168	8407	71.90
1870	6375	0	*986*	250	1978	9589	76.76
1871	3625	0	515	260	1588	5988	69.14
1872	7050	0	730	255	1502	9537	81.58
1873	6085	0	763	150	1634	8632	79.33
1874	5915	0	563	52	1894	8424	76.89
1875	6750	0	320	72	2093	9235	76.56
1876	6625	0	659	68	1708	9060	80.39
1877	4300	0	598	121	1509	6528	75.03
1878	6950	0	575	78	1562	9165	82.09
1879	6750	0	614	92	1511	8967	82.12
1880	6300	0	491	108	1600	8499	79.89
1881	5500	0	565	63	1580	7708	78.68
1882	5700	0	563	38	1501	7802	80.27
1883	5200	0	546	54	1475	7275	78.98
1884	5400	0	507	46	1611	7564	78.09
1885	5400	0	479	69	1583	7531	78.06
1886	4050	0	272	20	634	4976	86.86
1887	4700	0	443	114	1993	7250	70.94
1888	7200	0	504	164	1507	9375	82.17
1889	4850	0	492	122	1715	7179	74.41
1890	7250	0	450	114	1915	9729	79.14
1891	7250	0	450	114	1834	9648	79.81
1892	5800	0	555	141	1868	8364	75.98
1893	5300	0	568	101	1498	7467	78.58
1894	4400	0	561	98	2730	7789	63.69
1895	4250	0	511	141	1829	6731	70.73
1896	4250	0	493	113	2091	6947	68.27
1897	4250	0	525	81	1864	6720	71.05
1898	4250	0	572	9	1839	6670	72.29
1899	4850	0	534	18	1744	7146	75.34
1900	4250	0	545	369	1791	6955	68.94
1901	4250	0	613	389	1742	6994	69.53
1902	3185	0	488	501	1853	6027	60.94
1903	4835	0	466	331	2505	8137	65.15
1904	3600	0	442	139	1613	5794	69.76
1905	3500	0	475	205	1873	6053	65.67
Totals	**229125**	**11673**	**23743**	**5891**	**80266**	**350698**	**75.43%**

Sources: Ballarat Benevolent Asylum Balance Sheets included in Annual Reports.

The figures on Table 3 should be viewed as approximate, however, because even though they were taken from the Asylum's balance sheets, the information was simplified by their compilers. The amounts in the "gov't" column include building, maintenance and special grants, the final amount being an average, while the "children" column refers to subsidies granted by the Victorian govern-ment for the shelter and education of orphans until they were removed to the newly established orphanage. The "community" column includes bequests, endowments and interest received from the Colonial Bank. The Asylum Committee separated council contributions from those made by the community for the years 1858, 1859 and 1860, but once it was realised that a government subsidy of £3 was available for every £1 raised by voluntary contributions, the amounts donated by the councils were included with those contributed by the public, in order to claim a larger subsidy from the Victorian government. These "hidden" contributions from council covered the years 1861 to 1864, and they are indicated on the table with an asterisk. The italicised amounts in the "councils" column were shown as donations from councils listed on subscriber lists in the Asylum's annual reports. In this table, these amounts were deducted from the total of community donations shown on the balance sheet for the relevant year in order to show that the councils continued to make regular donations.

The claims of the Asylum were urged by the committee as soon as a legislative amendment permitted shire councils to subscribe to charitable institutions. Some donations had then been received. The issue of responsibility for the ongoing support of charitable institutions had been

addressed by the 1862 Royal Commission, which recommended that municipal corporations (as they then were) be allowed to levy licence fees, fines and other local revenues. The 1870 Commission interpreted this to mean that the 1862 Commissioners "intended that the municipal corporations should accept also the duty of maintaining the charities at a later date".[16] The problem came to be that some Acts of Incorporation, notably Melbourne's and Geelong's, but also the Bungaree Road Board's, were unable, by the provisions of the Act, to vote money for charitable purposes.[17] The 1870 Commission overcame this problem by recommending that all councils in the colony allocate one tenth of one shilling in the pound out of ordinary rates to the colony's charities, and that municipal corporations precluded from giving be enabled to give by consent of the colonial governor. As the number of cases and associated costs increased, however, there was no increase in the level of shire donations, and several councils actually came to decrease their subscriptions. The *Star's* report on the issue, which was included in its coverage of the Asylum's annual meeting in January 1877, asserted that prior to 1871 the shire councils could not legally subscribe to charitable institutions, but then a clause had been passed which enabled them to do so (by way of the Colonial Governor's consent), and that during 1871 the sum of £826 was received. This was considered reasonable as a beginning, but the sum had not increased proportionate to the increase in the number of applicants for relief from the districts.[18] In 1874, Ballarat Council reduced its own grant in

---

[16] "Report on Charitable Institutions", op.cit., xvi.
[17] Ballarat Benevolent Asylum, Thirteenth Annual Report, January 1871, 8.
[18] "Benevolent Asylum Annual Meeting", *Star* (Ballarat) 24 January 1877, 4.

aid, while the shires of Wimmera, Stawell, St Arnaud, Talbot, Lexton and Ararat, continued to contribute very little.[19]

The issue of how to ensure an adequate and predictable level of funding, came to the fore during many Asylum committee meetings, with committee members, government inspectors and local subscribers all putting forward different points of view. One major problem was the number of applicants for relief who were coming in from outlying districts and surrounding shires, which contributed little if anything to the costs of providing relief. In 1868, out of a total of 134 cases admitted to the Ballarat Benevolent Asylum, 113 came from shires outside Ballarat such as Bungaree (23) Buninyongshire (26) Creswickshire (16) Ballanshire (13) and Grenvilleshire (25).[20] In 1869 the problem was much the same, with Ballarat and neighboring Sebastopol supplying only 120 cases out of a total of 266 admitted. One case came from as far away as Adelaide, but they came also from Avoca (1), Daylesford (2), Ballan (4), Dunnolly (1), Geelong (3), Hamilton (3), Miners' Rest (2), Rokewood (2) and St. Arnaud (3).[21]

In 1877, the Maryborough Hospital asked the Ballarat Benevolent Asylum committee on what terms eight or nine incurable patients could be admitted to the Asylum, and the answer was "not on any terms". At the next meeting, however, an old man named Henry Mitchell applied for admission, and he turned out to be one of the "incurables". He had been sent to Ballarat on the assumption that the Asylum would not refuse him on economic grounds, but

---

[19] Ballarat Benevolent Asylum, Seventeenth Annual Report, January 1875, 11.
[20] "Report on Charitable Institutions", op.cit., 92.

the Asylum did refuse him, and sent him back to Maryborough by train the next day.[22]

Fund Raising Concerns and Difficulties in Ballarat

The problem of how to deal with applicants from outside the Ballarat area was highlighted in the Annual Report of 1876-7, which began by reporting a high degree of satisfaction with the Asylum's general position, but also emphasised the committee's financial vulnerability in having undertaken to be responsible for defraying "a very heavy expenditure by means of an income at all times uncertain".[23] The committee was at pains to explain the issue of civic responsibility as they saw it to the general public of Ballarat, and to put a favoured remedy forward. Essentially, this was to shift responsibility for guaranteeing the necessary level of local contributions from the Asylum committee to the municipal council. In other words, they sought to shift the burden of responsibility from the uncertainties of voluntary contribution, to the more reliable source of funds: the local public sector. At the Annual General Meeting of governors and subscribers held on 23 January 1877, and reported in the *Star* the next day, the committee elaborated on its successes in relation to keeping expenses down, at the same time as attending to all the needs of Asylum inmates in accordance with its charter. Inmates were said to be under daily inspection of the resident surgeon and constantly under the eye of the "experienced and vigilant master, and the public may rest thoroughly satisfied

---

[21] Ibid.
[22] News and Notes, *Star* (Ballarat), 10 January 1877, 2.
[23] Ballarat Benevolent Asylum, Eighteenth Annual Report, January 1877, 10.

that as far as the inmates at least are concerned, imposition is scarcely possible".[24]

It was important to the Asylum committee and perhaps also to the circulation of the *Star* during the fifty years reviewed in this study, that Ballarat's general public was kept well informed of decisions, and events leading up to them, taken by those who managed the city's financial, developmental and social affairs for, and on, its behalf. In the Asylum's Annual Report to June 1891 the *Star* was praised for its cheerful and voluntary publication of proceedings pertaining to the Asylum, and for its role in encouraging the self-reliant, yet charitable, ethos, which was coming to characterise the committee's and the *Star's* perceptions of the local population.[25] Such praise became a regular feature of the Asylum's annual reports.

The preamble to the Annual General Meeting held in January 1877 which was faithfully reported in the *Star*, was probably designed to convince those who would read the newspaper report, and all those present at the meeting, that the committee was both responsible and capable, as well as concerned to reinforce the standards of economic and social discipline then seen as necessary to the financial wellbeing of the community, the colony, and later, the nation. It was couched in the following terms:

> The nature of the cases forbids publicity but it should be known that every effort is made to reclaim the fallen and to render them respectable and useful members of society…[the Asylum's duties are not confined to the mere dry details of business, but…to encourage the industrious, to reclaim the fallen, to

---

[24] "Benevolent Asylum Annual Meeting", *Star* (Ballarat), 24 January 1877, 4.

sympathise with and advise the weak and unfortunate, and in an endless variety

of ways to effect moral advancement as well as physical good in those who in

their troubles and difficulties apply to the Institute for assistance.[26]

This was not the first occasion of the Asylum's or the *Star's* efforts at public

persuasion, but the recommendation of the Royal Commission in relation to

reduced subsidy ratios made it one of the more urgently pressed. A long

description was given of the work involved in providing for those who could

not provide for themselves, before arriving at the "most important topic" in

connection with the report. This was said to be "the unsatisfactory financial

position in which the shire and municipal councils in the district stand in

relation to the Benevolent Asylum, which confers such obligations upon

them".[27]

Ballarat's Asylum committee asked the question: "why should a number of

Ballarat citizens be expected to give so much time and labour in the

management of the largest and most important institution outside Melbourne,

without knowing where the means are to come from to meet the necessarily

heavy expenditure they are bound to incur?"[28] Existing records[29] indicate that

the committee was correct in claiming that Ballarat's Asylum was the largest

and most important institution outside Melbourne, but according to the *Star's*

report, the committee felt "acutely" the "hand to mouth" way in which the

institution was supported, "with the probability ever staring them in the face

---

[25] Ballarat Benevolent Asylum, Thirty-Fourth Annual Report, June 1891, 11.
[26] "Benevolent Asylum Annual Meeting", *Star* (Ballarat), 24 January 1877, 4.
[27] Ibid.
[28] Ibid.
[29] "Report on Charitable Institutions" op.cit. 92; Cage, op.cit. 59-67.

that at any time the finances may collapse on account of there being no sure foundation for an income on which they might with certainty rely",[30] and that this situation could only be remedied by largely increased donations from the shire and borough councils. Moreover, it was felt that such donations ought not to be given as a favour to the institutions, but as a responsibility to the poor of the council's districts and "in gratitude to the institution for receiving them".[31]

The process of encouraging general acceptance of the principle that primary responsibility for financial support of Ballarat's Asylum lay with local inhabitants and local institutions was an ongoing one. In holding this view, Ballarat's Asylum committee was closer to the Colonial government's policy direction than were Ballarat's municipal councils and some of its larger land-holders. Neither of the latter two groups wanted to assume financial responsibility for destitute people, much less express gratitude to those who assumed it for them. In response to the paltry contributions from shire councils, the committee seized on the argument that would be likely to be generally acceptable, contending that "these sums, though far from bearing any proportion to the claims of the Asylum upon the shire councils, must be considered as important, as establishing the principle that those bodies should support the institutions".[32]

At the Asylum's 1877 Annual Meeting, Oddie continued his campaign to place responsibility for local welfare onto local councils, by stating that in relation to

---

[30] "Benevolent Asylum Annual Meeting, *Star* (Ballarat), 24 January 1877, 4.
[31] Ibid.

"up-country shires", the "lords of the land" and the big squatters (a term used by the reporting journalist) "palmed off their worn out servants in large numbers onto the institution without subscribing a penny towards their maintenance".[33] This was a situation that committee members were "determined to alter, and a poor law they would not have".[34] In Oddie's view, this dichotomy could only be obviated by taking steps to "make country local bodies support the institution in their due proportion".[35]

Oddie had held these views for some time, and Asylum annual reports of 1870, 1871 and 1875 carried similar comments made by him.[36] His evident feeling of having been exploited by people wealthy enough to contribute to the operations of the Asylum was reflected in the opinion columns of Ballarat's newspapers. The *Star,* however, took the position that exploitation was not unique to local squatters, and that committee members could well look to the "suggestively large" proportion of salaries and wages deducted from voluntary subscriptions, some of them implied by the *Star*, to have come from the squatter class.[37] The Editor's conclusion, however, was that the committee was well within its rights to expect regular and viable levels of financial support from local bodies. The *Star* was of the opinion that "in all communities the care of the poor is the first consideration".[38] So much was this held to be evident that "in England and other countries their cost is

---

[32] Ballarat Benevolent Asylum, Thirteenth Annual Report, January 1871, 8.

[33] "Benevolent Asylum Annual Meeting", *Star* (Ballarat), 24 January 1877, 4.

[34] Ibid.

[35] Ibid.

[36] Ballarat Benevolent Asylum, Thirteenth Annual Report, January 1871, 8; Ballarat Benevolent Asylum, Fourteenth Annual Report, December 1871, 9; Ballarat Benevolent Asylum, Seventeenth Annual Report, January 1875, 10-11.

[37] News and Notes, *Star* (Ballarat), 24 January 1877, 2.

[38] "Benevolent Asylum Annual Meeting", *Star* (Ballarat), 24 January 1877, 4.

defrayed by the State". The *Star* did not favor dependence on the state, however, seeming not to realise how dependent the charities actually were on the state. The reporter felt that if councils became "more alive to their responsibilities" then intervention by the state would not be necessary.[39]

In the absence of general agreement as to where the responsibility for poor relief might best be placed, the Asylum committee pressed ahead in its determination not to admit people from shires not supportive of the Asylum, and applicants for relief from the shires of Lexton and Talbot were accordingly rejected on those grounds.[40] In the same spirit of user pays, a vagrant suffering from stomach cancer was transferred from the gaol to the Asylum on condition that he made over to the institution his bank balance of £70.[41] It was not made clear whether this was a local vagrant or an outsider, but with £70 in the bank, it is probable he was a local.

The Cazaly Bonus

It was also early in 1877 that questions arose in relation to what was perceived by the community as productive, and non-productive, work and what was viewed as deserved and/or undeserved remuneration. One issue, which gave rise to a drawn out discussion by way of letters to the newspapers, was the matter of the payment of a £50 bonus to the Asylum's Secretary, Peter Cazaly.

---

[39] Ibid.

[40] "Benevolent Asylum Committee", *Star* (Ballarat) 13 February 1877, 3.

The bonus was proposed to the Asylum committee, seemingly by James Oddie, for consideration and report. At the meeting held on 26 March 1877, the Committee recommended that the bonus be paid to Cazaly and the recom-mendation was proposed for adoption by Oddie and seconded by Mr. Duncan.[42] This was the beginning of a long and sometimes acrimonious argument amongst committee members and between committee members and members of the public. It was generally thought to be acceptable for a man to find gold, set up in business and dress in style, provided he did not view himself as superior to his work-mates, or use his new-found wealth to exploit them. The committee's decision in relation to the payment of a bonus to Cazaly was not altogether in line with this ethic and some committee members did not agree with the payment. The first objection was made by committee member Mr. Russell who acknowledged that Cazaly was a good secretary and did a great deal for the Asylum, but he also pointed out that Cazaly received a salary of £350 per annum and incurred no out of pocket expenses.[43] Mr. Shoppee seconded Russell's amendment, and ultimately Shoppee proved to be the most strongly opposed to the payment of bonuses. To illustrate the point he was trying to make, Shoppee rhetorically proposed paying an additional bonus of £50 to the house-master, but withdrew the motion when Oddie rose to address it.

Shoppee seems to have supported, perhaps more than Oddie did, the Christian concept of giving without expectation of material reward, and a bonus paid to only one employee who was already in receipt of wages, may

[41] "Benevolent Asylum Committee", *Star* (Ballarat) 13 March 1877, 2.

[42] "Benevolent Asylum Committee", *Star* (Ballarat) 27 March 1877, 4.

have been seen by Shoppee as acting to undermine this ethos, and to discount the equally valuable contributions of others.

During the ensuing few weeks many letters were published by the newspapers in relation to the payment of bonuses, most of them opposing it in principle. Some correspondents offered to do Cazaly's job, including the unpaid hours, for less than he received in salary, while others viewed the bonus as a misappropriation of subscriber donations to the poor. One correspondent, who signed himself "A Tradesman", viewed the payment of bonuses to officials as an inducement to young men "to take to non-producing avocations, such as collectors, clerks and petty commission agents, instead of mechanical and other wealth-producing pursuits". He finished his letter by remarking, "unfortunately for the peace of mind of many of our over-worked struggling tradesmen there are too many of the genius (sic) let off the chain every morning in this poor Ballarat of our day".[44]

"A Tradesman" was, by definition, a manual worker, but in terms of his training and skill, he was more highly valued by employers in an industrialising society than was a simple labourer. Having come from the labouring class, however, tradesmen commonly felt themselves to be part of a wider brotherhood of manual workers, rather than part of what was becoming a white-collar administrative class, typified by Cazaly.

---

[43] Ibid.
[44] "The Bonus Nuisance Again", *Star* (Ballarat), 29 March 1877, 3.

James Oddie was also part of this white-collar administrative class, but he had progressed from tradesman/manual worker and miner, through storekeeper, then auctioneer, to emerge as financier/banker. This progression from blue-collar manual worker to white-collar office worker typified the Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism as described by Weber, and it also insulated Oddie from the open criticisms levelled at Cazaly. It was as if Oddie had earned his financial rewards, in ways that Cazaly had not.

Cazaly had his supporters, some of them stating that he was the most conscientious, hard-working and successful fund raiser the Asylum had experienced, and that he put in hours of unpaid time, on one occasion affecting his health. Cazaly stated in a letter to the *Star* that he had undertaken to refund the bonus, if he was asked to do so, by those who had voted for it, but because none of these committee members had asked him to do so, he had kept it.[45] This incensed Shoppee, who insisted that Cazaly's offer to refund the bonus had been unconditional.[46]

Another reaction to the bonus which may have been indicative of wider community opinion as to what kind of work (and worker) was held to be superior, was from "Anti-Loafer" who stated that "the sooner Mr. Cazaly, or any other paid official attached to an institution similar to the Ballarat Benevolent Asylum, is brought to a sense of what his conduct should be to

[45] "Mr. Cazaly's Bonus", *Star* (Ballarat), 14 April 1877, 2.
[46] "Benevolent Asylum Committee", *Star* (Ballarat), 24 April 1877, 4.

those whom he is supposed to respect as his superiors or coadjutors, the better will it be for all parties".[47]

The attitudes conveyed by some of these letters to the press suggest that many people in Ballarat viewed manual labour and/or a value adding trade as productive work worthy of remuneration, and those who performed it as more useful members of society than white collar workers, and that blue-collar workers were equally able to manage an asylum and/or to raise funds from the public. The implication was that clerical or administrative work demanding presence of mind rather than physical exertion was viewed as non-productive, and moreover, that such work should not be remunerated at a greater rate than work viewed as productive, and perhaps not even at the same rate; much less should it attract a bonus.

The argument in relation to Cazaly's bonus was diplomatically resolved between the parties by excising portions, said to be untruthful, from letters between them,[48] and ruffled feathers were smoothed down, but it reflected divisions within a population only just beginning to consolidate gains from an industrial and mercantile basis of production and to exhibit a post-Eureka sense of righteous respectability. The expansion of the economy demanded ever-greater margins of profit from primary and secondary producers, and correspondingly tighter constraints on service providers, as skilled and unskilled men struggled to secure a place for themselves within these two groups. Asylum employees seem to have been viewed as enjoying insularity

---

[47] "The Cazaly Bonus Business", *Star* (Ballarat), 17 April 1877, 3.
[48] "Benevolent Asylum Committee", *Star* (Ballarat), 24 April 1877, 4.

from such stresses at the expense of those who bore the brunt of them. No letters to editors attacked Asylum inmates on such grounds, however, and inmates did not seem to be viewed by the wider community as unworthy of support provided they were kept busy and were not seen to be advantaged over struggling workers outside. The Asylum's paid secretary, though, was very evidently viewed as having trespassed on that spirit of charitable support, and his request for, and acceptance of, a bonus may well have diminished the trust placed in the committee by some working subscribers.

Unfortunately for all concerned, Cazaly took advantage of his position and was dismissed by the Asylum Committee in 1886 when "irregularities" were discovered in accounts he kept. A special audit was made of the affairs of the institution over the years 1880 to 1886 inclusive, and it was found that notwithstanding some concessions to clerical error, not all amounts listed in annual reports were shown in the cashbook.[49] This forced upon the committee "the painful duty of dismissing the secretary from his office after he had paid over the sums deficient, so far as they were capable of proof, to the honorary Treasurer".[50]

It emerges from these incidents and events that increasing social, political and financial pressures were beginning to be felt by those in favoured positions and Cazaly was not the only one in Ballarat, or even the only white-collar worker, to fiddle company books. Breaches of public trust by company account-keepers could not be tolerated, however, by any manager, blue or

---

[49] "The Case of Mr. Peter Cazaly", *Star* (Ballarat) 30 June 1886, 3.
[50] Ballarat Benevolent Asylum, Twenty-Ninth Annual Report, June 1886, 6.

white collar, whose own livelihood depended on the maintenance of such trust. Actions of the Asylum's committee in particular had to reflect this principle, if the institution was to retain community acceptance and respect.

The Benevolent Asylum pressed on with its own program of encouraging shire councils to assume responsibility for the poor of their districts, when, upon receiving a donation from the Wimmera Shire Council in 1877, together with an undertaking to vote £20 per annum to the funds of the institution if the committee would receive the cases recommended by the Wimmera Council, it was immediately moved by Oddie "that the money be taken to support the cases from the shire already in the house, and that no new ones be taken unless a further donation was made by the council".[51] The motion was carried without further comment.

The Appointment of a Government Inspector of Charities

An additional problem encountered by the Ballarat Benevolent Asylum committee was the appointment by the Colonial Government, pursuant to the recommendation in the 1870 report to the Royal Commission on charitable institutions, of an inspector of all charitable institutions in the colony. The appointment was made with the stated intent of reducing grants to those who were found to be too benevolent towards the inmates, and also, perhaps, to those who were perceived to be serving wealthier than average communities.

---

[51] "Benevolent Asylum Committee", *Star* (Ballarat), 19 June 1877, 3.

The need for an inspector had been explained by the Commissioners in their report to the Victorian Government in 1870. The relevant section stated that

> What is wanted is the prevention of extravagant expenditure, and not the passing of extravagant expenditure which has been duly authorised…the whole management of each charity should be periodically investigated…on behalf not of the subscribers, but of the State and of the municipal and local corporations, who, having under the proposed scheme two thirds of the charge, are entitled to have full knowledge of all matters pertaining to the charities. This could be done by the appointment of an inspector of charities.[52]

The inspector, Mr. H. F. Neal, made his first inspection of the Benevolent Asylum in Ballarat early in 1881 and his report to the Victorian Parliament was discussed in the *Argus* (Melbourne) on 13 February 1882, without prior contact with Asylum Committee members in Ballarat.

The most damaging interpretation of Neal's report as published in the *Argus*, was that Ballarat's Asylum had received proportionately more than any other in the colony, and that it had spent a large proportion of these funds on the delivery of outdoor relief, which was viewed, by both Neal and the *Argus*, as more properly the province of smaller voluntary groups. In addition, because such groups existed in Ballarat's surrounding districts, the *Argus* took the view that Ballarat's Asylum had no need to extend its services beyond Ballarat's municipal borders. The most serious implication in the eyes of the committee as far as the future funding of the Asylum was concerned, however, was contained in the *Star's* report of the issue, and its repetition of Neal's remark in his report to parliament, "that the desire to be generous has overshadowed

the necessity of endeavouring to check the growth of pauperism".[53]   This remark was also repeated by the *Argus*, and the committee viewed it as highly damaging to its reputation in the eyes of both its major source of funds, the Victorian government, and local subscribers.   This was made evident in a letter of response to the *Argus,* which was written by the Asylum's Secretary, Peter Cazaly, on 11 February 1882.   Cazaly took pains to correct erroneous calculations and assertions and most courteously he did what he could to repair damage to the Asylum's well-earned reputation for prudent management.

During this exchange, which was taken up by the *Star*, the Asylum Committee insisted that Neal pay a second visit to the Asylum in order to substantiate the assertions in his report; should he fail to substantiate his criticisms, then the committee wanted an apology.   Neal made the second visit and the committee gave an analysis of his findings to the *Star* for publication.[54]   The report stated that Neal had completely failed to substantiate his allegations that no record of medical comforts was kept, that stocks were not taken periodically, that the officers' table was in excess of requirements, and that the Asylum sought to deal with outdoor relief cases situated beyond the municipal boundaries and to give relief to people in places where there were local relief societies.   These places are implied to have been Creswick and Talbot.   The committee pointed out in the letter written by Cazaly, that it would gladly be relieved of outdoor relief beyond municipal boundaries, and that such relief had only been given "when local societies from impecuniosity have been

---

[52] "Report on Charitable Institutions", op.cit., xix.
[53] "Public Charities", Report of the Inspector, 30 June 1881, 61, *Victorian Parliamentary Papers*, 1881.

unable to deal with them".   At this point, it was emphasised "that there is a humane side to the question, as well as a financial one". It was this insistence on retaining the humane side towards the delivery of welfare assistance despite the exigencies of capital expansion that so characterised Ballarat's Asylum committee members.   As a consequence of Neal's report, and in concert with Ballarat's municipal council, together with committees drawn from most of the local charities including the hospital, a meeting was held at the Town Hall to discuss the whole issue of future financial support for charitable institutions and to "properly discuss the proposed bid to amend the law relating to charities".[55]

The proposed law was the recommendation adopted by the 1870 Royal Commission to reduce the ratio of grant subsidies from £3 to £2, and ultimately to £1 net, for every £1 raised from local communities. By 1882, the adoption of these recommendations by the Victorian parliament was beginning to worry the Asylum committee, which was still responsible for raising the voluntary share of contributions. Rather than "properly discussing" them, however, the Asylum committee acted to gain support from other local charities and the council, in order to mount a challenge to the necessity of an inspector, or to re-define his role in relation to recognised institutions in Ballarat. By the time of the March 1882 meeting, and probably since the 1870 Royal Commission, the Ballarat Benevolent Asylum was recognised as the leading charitable institution outside Melbourne, and its committee felt that its

[54] "The Ballarat Benevolent Asylum and Mr. Neal", *Star* (Ballarat), 2 March 1882, 2.
[55] "The Future Support of Charitable Institutions", *Star* (Ballarat), 15 March 1882, 2.

members were possessed of greater administrative expertise than any government official could lay claim to.

The idea of a local rate on property valuations was discussed at the meeting as an alternative to dependence on reduced state subsidies, but it was felt that voluntary contributions were likely to cease if this measure was adopted, in which case it was thought that Victorian government subsidies would also cease. This concern was addressed in Neal's report to Parliament of 1881, wherein he said "It is believed that the effect of an enforced municipal contribution will be to lessen private donations, and I think this will be the case to some extent at first. But I do not anticipate that they will be materially affected in the centres of population, especially as the Government grant will still depend on them".[56] Neal seems to have been relying on the continuance of voluntary work and financial sacrifice among working people in larger centres such as Ballarat to lessen the impact on the incapacitated and/or destitute of the changes he proposed. He was certainly of the belief that "That noble bulwark of manliness, a true independence, has in many cases been manifestly broken down"[57] and he was intent on restoring it, as he perceived it.

Three sources of revenue had been identified by the 1870 Royal Commission, and these were voluntary contributions, municipal grants and colonial govern-ment grants. Neal did not favour throwing the maintenance of the charities entirely on local rates. His view was that this would involve a poor law, and

---

[56] Ibid.
[57] Ibid., 4.

probably a law of settlement, and he knew that few people in the colony, whether or not they held land, favoured either. In addition, he did not think it would be wise to "stop the flow of those streams of private benevolence which enrich the moral qualities of the givers as well as supply the physical wants of those they reach".[58] His proposal had thus been to make the municipal bodies pay a fixed sum in proportion to the rateable value of property, rather than leave it as an option, and to make it a "first charge" on the ordinary revenue of the local bodies. He took the view that if the state retained the power to increase this rate of contribution, then a direct incentive to private charity would be created. In other words, if private contributions decreased, as was feared by Ballarat's Asylum committee members, then the Government grant would also decrease, which, Neal believed, would act to proportionately increase local rates and re-activate voluntary contributions.

This last point was not debated by those at the meeting called in March 1882 to discuss the future of charities in Ballarat. The prime question in their minds was whether it was advisable to have a special rate made, which, in the Mayor's (J. Noble Wilson) view "would simply amount to a poor rate",[59] or continue the support of the institutions by government subsidy and voluntary and other contributions. Oddie put his view, which was that the maintenance of the poor must ultimately fall upon the municipalities.[60] He would not have favoured Neal's three-pronged approach to charitable funding, because, in his opinion, the Government wanted to either withdraw the grant or take charge of

---

[58] Ibid., 6.

[59] "The Future Support of Charitable Institutions", *Star* (Ballarat), 15 March 1882, 2.

[60] Ibid.

the charities.[61] He felt that the question was "not yet ripe for settlement and it would be better left alone until municipalities were fully prepared to take control of the charities".[62] Oddie probably understood that if responsibility for welfare was apportioned in the ratio of one third each, payable by the Colonial government and all municipalities and shires, and if voluntary contributions from local districts made up the remaining third, with hospital districts existing throughout the colony, then there would be no need for any law of settlement. His real concern was the evident reluctance of Neal and/or the Government to reduce the burden on charitable committees of raising the voluntary share. It seems to have been this burden that Oddie and fellow committee members had come to feel acutely and wanted to be relieved of. The funding division between colony, municipality and community, while probably acceptable, did not relieve Committee members of the responsibility for raising the funds upon which the size of government subsidies depended, and it also put pressure on the committee to dispense with guarantees of beds in the Asylum for wealthier subscribers and/or their nominees. This issue was never openly debated.

Other speakers opposed even the principle of local taxation, because it fell only on the householder and left a large proportion of the populace untaxed. Further, it was generally agreed that adoption of the Inspector's recommendations would come to involve a poor law, which would lead to a law of settlement and a concomitant increase in local taxes, and that this would "destroy the prestige of Victoria [read Ballarat] with all intending immigrants, and strike a death blow at the present system of voluntary

---

[61] Ibid.
[62] Ibid.

contributions".[63]   Because of these uncertainties, and the concomitant desire to retain Ballarat's favoured status in the eyes of intending immigrants from Britain, the meeting's recommendation was that the existing system remain unaltered.

By the mid 1880s, despite the Ballarat Benevolent Asylum's status, and not-withstanding the fact the community vested in it a great deal of pride and proprietary interest, its cost effective policies were evidently not attractive to potential employees. In 1886, an advertisement for a nurse had received no response and it was felt by some committee members that the salary of £39 per annum, was "altogether inadequate".[64]   Another member of the committee, Mr. Scott, was concerned to engage someone as soon as possible, saying that "the women there were not clean, and their habits were not clean, and a new broom was required to make things presentable to the public".[65]   He proposed paying a salary of £50 per annum. Mr. Phillips chipped in, saying that "the women were always perfectly clean; clean enough for the Queen to look at", and after further discussion a salary of £45 was proposed.

Economic and attendant social problems had not been expected by immigrant workers, farmers and labourers to accompany growth in a sparsely populated resource rich land, and the clergy together with affiliated charity administrators in both Ballarat and Melbourne, who were expected to assist the disadvantaged, were coming to be criticised for not effecting solutions to such

---

[63] "The Future Support of Charitable Institutions", *Star* (Ballarat), 15 March 1882, 2.
[64] "Notes", *Star* (Ballarat), 29 June 1886, 2.

problems. By 1892 the "labour question" had even engaged the attention of Pope Leo who publicised an encyclical on it, some details of which were published in the *Star*. Referring to the question of agreement on wages, the encyclical held that even if such agreements were legal, there was "the dictate of nature, more imperious and more ancient than any bargain between man and man, and that the remuneration must be enough to support the wage-earner in reasonable frugal comfort".[66]

This directive assumed infallible authority over the temporal authority of all monarchs and state powers, and it also assumed papal direction of capital expansion around the world. It was this very assumption of absolute power over developing nation-states that had been rejected by Freemasons, Protestant monarchs and their representatives. The underlying issue was the decisive (English) separation of church and state power.

The Roman Republic initially combined the powers of church and state in Caesar Augustus (63BC-AD14). Caesar Augustus first had himself appointed dictator for life with the right to bequeath his powers in 44BC.[67] He already held the position of supreme pontiff in the Roman priesthood.[68] This combined power of church and state was carried on through the Roman pontificate with successive emperors also carrying the title Pontifex Maximus. While these powers had been separated in Italy before the end of the

---

[65] Ibid.
[66] "An Ecclesiastical View of the Labor Question", *Star* (Ballarat), 1 March 1892, 1.
[67] *Larousse Encyclopaedia of Ancient and Medieval History*, ed. Marcel Dunan, English advisory ed. John Bowle, with a foreword by Arnold Toynbee (London, New York, Sydney, Toronto: Hamlyn, 1974), 193.
[68] Ibid.

nineteenth century, they were still the subject of much constitutional debate in Australia during the 1850s and in the lead up to Federation. A subsequent division of temporal (political) power between reigning monarch and Houses of Parliament with the power of moral suasion still being ceded to clergymen had been the system adopted in Britain. A like system of constitutional government was put to a succession of referenda in Australia, and ultimately enshrined in Australia's constitution. The Pope's intrusion into the non-religious affairs of developing nations, such as Australia, was therefore quite significant to colonial governments in their efforts to build an Australian nation loyal to the British crown. Many citizens in Ballarat, particularly after Eureka and in the lead up to federation, held themselves to be particularly shining examples of loyalty to that crown.

Conclusion

The tension between Ballarat and Melbourne in relation to the diminishing ratio of government subsidies, together with the ongoing expectation from all concerned that Asylum committee members would continue to ensure a viable level of voluntary subscriptions and concomitant guarantees, was heightened by the appointment of an Inspector of Charities pursuant to a recommendation to a Royal Commission on Charitable Institutions held in 1870. This was the begin-ning of a gradual process, which saw the state assume ultimate control over all institutions in receipt of government subsidies. This development was contrary to the spirit of collective independence and self-help, so carefully nurtured by Asylum committees, who

were also intent on retaining the prestige that had come to accompany local control over financial, operational and social policies.

This spirit of collective independence and self-help, however, included the burden of raising the voluntary contributions and of guaranteeing beds in the Asylum to some subscribers and/or their nominees. This was a burden that Asylum committees came to find onerous and attempts were made to transfer it to local shires and municipal councils.

The primary concern of the Victorian government, however, was to distribute existing resources more evenly throughout the colony, and to this end, it discontinued subsidies to smaller hospitals and consolidated services in the more populous regions. The Victorian government also acted to standardise the level of assistance provided by charitable institutions. The problem of unemployment, however, was not addressed by government inquiries into charitable institutions.

The Ballarat Benevolent Asylum's ability to attract and maintain a diverse collection of local subscribers despite such financial and social pressures was perhaps the Asylum's primary attribute which rested almost entirely on its committee of management and its paid staff. James Oddie was certainly an active leading influence, but there were others on the committee who were also dedicated to improving the lot of the ill and the incapacitated without diminishing the prosperity of the healthy and productive.

This spirit of fellowship seems to have developed as a result of common difficulties experienced on Ballarat's goldfields. Very early in the history of Ballarat's growth, according to King, there was general recognition among struggling miners and labourers that provision had to be made for them in times of illness or accident. This provision was not forthcoming from authorities in Melbourne so, as the miners saw it, future provision for these problems had to be made by collectives comprising locally based authorities such as founded the Benevolent Asylum. Ballarat's Asylum committees were assisted in this objective by local newspapers, which reported the Asylum's affairs in detail. Such reports helped to promote both the newspaper and the Asylum to the wider community, as transparently honest organizations, both ethical and trustworthy.

CHAPTER SIX

Construction, De-construction and Re-construction

This chapter argues that speculative financial activity which preceded the economic depression in Victoria, and which was particularly frenzied in Melbourne, obliged the Victorian government to review its own role, and that of charitable organizations generally, in relation to the welfare of destitute but otherwise industrious people. During the 1880s the economy in Melbourne was buoyant and Ballarat also prospered. Charitable institutions in both cities had become crowded, however, and the perennial need for additional beds had encouraged the Ballarat Benevolent Asylum to consider building cottages for inmates who had become old, feeble, and/or widowed, but were still able to cook and clean for themselves. It was felt by the Asylum's committee, and by some authorities in Melbourne, that married couples should not become separated in old age, which was then a condition of institutionalised care, simply because they were no longer able to provide for themselves. This issue was addressed by Ballarat's Asylum, and also by the Old Colonists' Association, which established itself in Ballarat during these prosperous years.

By the end of 1885, it had been decided to hold the Ballarat Benevolent Asylum's annual meetings in July rather than January, in order to bring the Asylum's financial year in accord with that of the government's,[1] and on 29 April 1887, a foundation stone was laid by the Ballarat Benevolent Asylum's then President, Joseph Phillips, together with Treasurer, C. C. Shoppee, to

yet another extension of the Asylum. The new ward was to be named the Victoria ward. The President was optimistic enough about the future of the Asylum at that point, to voice the hope that individual cottages would one day be constructed for old married couples so as to allow them to spend their declining years together. This reflected a growing perception that institutions were not the answer for every case of old age or destitution. As Garton has noted, not only were institutions a costly burden on the state, "but a series of inquiries into the operation of…asylums in the late nineteenth century also revealed wide-spread ill-treatment of inmates. Married couples were separated on admission, patients beaten or locked in rooms for long periods, forced to stand in the sun during the day, denied food and generally treated as prisoners".[2] Cottages had thus come to be preferred by many observers of charitable efforts in Victoria, including some in Ballarat, for the class of able-bodied poor who were seen as having contributed to the development of the colony during their working lives.

One of these observers was the Reverend R. Johnson Mercer who was present at the ceremony to open Ballarat Asylum's Victoria ward. Mercer was so impressed by the President's remarks that he sent a donation of £5 to start a fund for the purpose of building some cottages, and this was supplemented by another £5 donated by Edward Morey, a miner and share-broker. Further assistance totalling some £240 was then received by the Asylum's committee and the intention was signalled in the Annual Report to June 1887 to

[1] Ballarat Benevolent Asylum, Twenty-Eighth Annual Report, January 1886, 10.
[2] Stephen Garton, *Out of Luck: Poor Australians and Social Welfare 1788-1988* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1990), 95-9.

approach the Victorian government for £500 in order to commence the building of the cottages.[3]

The Old Colonists' Association

The 1880s were growth years, characterised in Ballarat by a coming together of its seasoned pioneers, all of whom were of retiring age and intent on preserving what they saw as a fine civic legacy forged by themselves. This coming together culminated in the establishment of yet another charitable institution in Ballarat, the Old Colonists' Association, which absorbed an earlier association founded by James Oddie. In 1867, Oddie had established an Old Pioneers Association, comprised of early arrivals at Golden Point,[4] which met for group sight-seeing tours, cricket matches and the like, and sometimes to honour its members and contrast the prosperity then enjoyed with the hardships of the 1850s.[5] In 1883, at a banquet given to mining manager and Freemason, R. M. Serjeant, the Golden Point Pioneers Association was reformed to become the Old Identities Association[6] and among its first undertakings was "the erection of a memorial on the spot where gold was first found in Ballarat—and to gather records for the

[3] Ballarat Benevolent Asylum, Thirtieth Annual Report, 30 June 1887, 6-7.
[4] Beggs Sunter, "James Oddie (1824-1911) His Life and the Wesleyan Contribution to Ballarat", (Masters Diss., Deakin University 1989), 51.
[5] Peter Butters, *History of the Ballarat Old Colonists' Association and Club*, (Ballarat: Old Colonists' Association, 1999), 8-9.
[6] Enrolled members included Mayor Claxton, A. T. Morrison, George Smith, **Thos. Bath**, D. Brophy, H. R. Casselli, J. N. Wilson, D. Ham, E. Morey, **R. M. Serjeant**, F. W. Niven, James Oddie, R. Lewis, J. A. Chalk, W. Bailey, W. B. Withers, and James Coghlan. The names of known Freemasons are shown in bold type.

preservation of Ballarat's early history".[7] The only other known Freemason in this initial group was Thos Bath.[8]

By deed of association the name was further amended on 23 August 1883, to "The Victorian Gold Discoverers of the Years 1851 & 52" and the primary object of the association was then stated as being to "help one and other, to relieve and attend to the sick, to assist those in distress, and, in case of death to see that they are respectably buried, the Association bearing the expense (providing there are no funds left by our departed member) and to follow said members to their last resting place".[9] This was a Masonic ritual and indicates that the Old Colonists' Association followed the lines of a Masonic charity. The more explicitly charitable objective of the reformed association, however, was praised by the *Star* in an editorial that asserted

> the 'old identity' movement has done no good, beyond bringing a few of the goldfields pioneers together, to tell each other what fine fellows they have been, and still are, and to drown the sentiment in champagne and other liquors. All this is very nice, we assume, to the well-to-do pioneers of 1851-2, but nothing substantial has resulted from it to those pioneers whom Victoria has not been so kindly to since they came to seek their fortunes…it seems to us that a society having this charitable and praiseworthy design ought to go ahead and flourish.[10]

The reformed association members, however, continued to be known as "Old Identities" and at the October meeting "it was carried that the Association should include those who were here in '53 and '54, or up to the time that the

[7] Butters, op.cit., 9.

[8] A. A. W. Steane (comp), *Freemasonic Records Ballarat and District 1854-1957* (Ballarat: 1957).

[9] Butters, op.cit., 9.

[10] Editorial, *Star* (Ballarat), 7 September 1883, 2.

Eureka Stockade took place".[11] This seems to have been where Oddie's interest waned, because in March 1884, the *Star* carried an advertisement for members of the original association to call at Oddie's office, so photographs of them could be taken.[12] This suggests that Oddie wanted a record of the original association, and also, perhaps, that he felt a conflict of interest between Wesleyan and Masonic social obligations. The association founded by Oddie had been designed to include Ballarat's most successful pioneers: men who had worked to establish the city of Ballarat along traditional yet progressive lines. According to Beggs Sunter, Oddie's "sympathies were firmly with the stockaders, but he did not like people to act in an uncivil manner".[13] Oddie had also supported the aims of the Ballarat Reform League, but again, he was "not at all happy about the idea of a resort to violence".[14] The newly constituted association would not, therefore, have been as reflective of Oddie's political, religious and/or charitable principles, as had the earlier Old Pioneers Association. The reformed association met regularly, however, functions usually being of the "tea and concert" variety, and they were interspersed with annual charity Sundays at the Eureka Stockade, which included divine worship and a procession through the streets. On 6 December 1885 the second annual service attracted an estimated 5-6,000 people and raised almost £60.[15]

In 1886 the Old Colonists' Association in Melbourne came to Ballarat for a bowling tournament in which some of the "old identities" took part. The Old

---

[11] Butters, op.cit., 10.
[12] Ibid.
[13] Beggs Sunter, op.cit., 49.
[14] Ibid.

Colonists' Association in Melbourne provided for member Freemasons past the age of 60 years. Provision was in the form of cottages, varying amounts of financial assistance for members living in their own homes, and the Association also collected money for other charities. After the bowling tournament in Ballarat, it was resolved that the "old identities" be nominated as yearly honorary members of the Old Colonists' Association in Melbourne. Meetings of honorary Old Colonists took place on a monthly basis from that point on, but the resolution was not officially ratified until April 1887.[16] At a meeting reported in the *Star* at the end of June 1886, the Ballarat Old Colonists voted to include the Melbourne Old Colonists as honorary members of the new Association.[17] It seems to have been this connection that facilitated the grant of a building on a site in Camp Street. A nominal payment of £10 was made to the Commissioner of Public Works.[18] At the June 1886 meeting, a report from the Committee of Management regretted the passing of Vice-President, Brother John Foote (who lost his life in the wreck of the *Ly-ee-Moon*), and the death of Brother E. J. Harding "whose remains were followed to the grave by a number of the brethren on the 13th inst."[19] It was "unanimously decided to instruct the officers to render Mrs. Foote all the assistance in their power in prosecuting her claim for relief or compensation for the severe loss she has sustained".[20] It was also resolved to enroll Mrs. Foote's name on the list of life members.

[15] Butters, op.cit., 12.
[16] Ibid., 13.
[17] "Ballarat Old Colonists' Association", *Star* (Ballarat), 30 June 1886, 3.
[18] Ibid.
[19] Ibid.
[20] Ibid.

A new Old Colonists' Hall was erected in Ballarat soon afterwards, its foundation stone being laid on 21 June 1887. By this time, Oddie had left Ballarat on a visit to England. He was not as active in Ballarat's business life as he had been, and although he supported the Old Colonists' Association he was not a Freemason and he did not become one of its active members.

Nevertheless, the Old Colonists' Association was where Ballarat's social and religious divisions as well as its historical grievances were most congenially laid aside. Catholic and Protestant, manual worker and professional, squatter, miner, shopkeeper, government official and rebel, found a common interest in Ballarat's history and continuing development. Women were welcome as members of the (charitable) Association, but not as independent members of the (social) Club.

The aims of the Old Identities Association were preserved by the Old Colonists, one of them being to "provide the shelter of a home for those pioneers of the goldfields whom the reverse of fortune had deprived of the means of procuring the comforts of life in their declining years".[21] This gave Ballarat a second institution looking to provide cottages for aged people, but where the Asylum's cottages were intended for destitute married couples, the Old Colonists' Association cottages in Ballarat were intended for ex-working pioneers and/or their widows, who were also members of the Association, and

---

[21] Butters, op.cit. 15.

who had lived in the colony for twenty-one years. For similar accommodation for Old Colonists in Melbourne, the residency period was twenty-five years.[22]

To become eligible for a cottage provided by the Old Colonists, a long-term resident had to be incapable of work, but in Ballarat there was no age specification.[23] In Melbourne the unwritten law was that 60 was the minimum age for a cottage.[24] The Old Colonists in Melbourne also provided money to some pioneers who lived at home, the highest amount being 10/- per week and the lowest 5/-. Recipients who lived in cottages owned by the Association were not expected to contribute to their own upkeep, although they were asked to subscribe 3d per week to be members of the Association. The Old Colonists did not receive government funding which kept the numbers of recipients low, said to be approximately 58 in Melbourne.[25] A description of accommodation provided by the Old Colonists in Melbourne during the 1870s appeared in a chronicle by a resident of Melbourne, which was written in 1876. According to the author, the Old Colonists' Association, which had then been only recently established, endeavoured to provide homes for aged and infirm from the "higher classes".[26] Each occupant was provided with "a separate bedroom and shares with another, an apartment which may be used as a kitchen or parlour, receiving a sum of ten shillings weekly for

---

[22] Old-Age Pensions Report to the Royal Commission on Old-Age Pensions (Victoria 1897), 8 *Victorian Parliamentary Papers*, 1898.
[23] Ibid., 59.
[24] Ibid., 9.
[25] Ibid., 8.
[26] A Resident, *Glimpses of Life in Victoria*, 2nd ed. with an Introduction by Marguerite Hancock (Carlton South, Vic: Melbourne University Press, 1996), 287. First published by the Miegunyah Press in 1876.

maintenance, an allowance which the cheap-ness of provisions renders amply sufficient for their wants".[27]

The Old Colonists' Hall in Ballarat was opened on 30 August 1888 with due fanfare and a banquet, and the Old Colonists' (social) Club was formed in November 1888.[28] By November 1891, 28 acres of land at Mount Clear had been gazetted by the Victorian Government for the Old Colonists' homes, and architect W. H. Piper was commissioned to prepare plans for a block of cottages.[29] This was a far grander vision than entertained by the Asylum in Ballarat, but it was to be quite some time before any cottages were erected by the Old Colonists, whereas the construction of five cottages on the Asylum's site in Ascot Street had been completed by June 1890, perhaps assisted by the "noble and munificent bequest of £5,000 made to the institution by the late Hon. Francis Ormond".[30]

By January 1892, land in Channel Street Ballarat belonging to the Old Colonists' Association had been sold for £167/10/- and tenders for fencing the land at Mount Clear had been called for. A month or so later, a small piece of land adjoining the Association Reserve at Mount Clear was also purchased. This was let out as grazing land.[31] It seems that the Old Colonists in Ballarat were active in preparing for the erection of cottages, but probably due to the prevailing depression in Melbourne, neither the Asylum in Ballarat, nor the Old Colonists' Association proceeded very far in the provision of individual homes

[27] Old-Age Pensions Report, op.cit. 288.
[28] Butters, op.cit., 18.
[29] Ibid., 31.
[30] Ballarat Benevolent Asylum, Thirty-Second Annual Report, June 1889, 8.

for the aged. The unprecedented extent of economic collapse in Melbourne had a snow-balling effect on all commercial activity, but because the Old Colonists' Association provided only for ex-working pioneers and/or their widows who had been twenty-one or twenty-five years in the colony,[32] the need for cottages among this group may not have been as acute as it was among destitute couples housed in the Asylum.

The Old Colonists raised substantial sums, however, which were distributed among Ballarat's existing charities, and the Secretary of Ballarat's Association, in evidence given before the Royal Commission on Old-Age Pensions in 1897,[33] referred to an unspecified number of cottages then occupied by widows. It is perhaps to the Benevolent Asylum committee's credit that even as few as five cottages were completed within three years of having been suggested, notwithstanding the probability that they were less well appointed than those envisaged by the Old Colonists' Association.

The essential difference between these two Ballarat organizations was that the Asylum provided assistance to all classes of old and/or destitute people, while the Old Colonists confined their assistance to members of the brotherhood who were early settlers known to have worked for a living, and were therefore perceived to have been of service to the colony, but had since become old and incapacitated. No assistance was given to members who were able to work, regardless of how old they were. The cottages eventually provided by the Old Colonists' Association in Ballarat, which were not erected

[31] Butters, op.cit., 33.
[32] Royal Commission on Old-Age Pensions, op.cit., 59.

until the 1920s, seem to have been aimed at maintaining higher standards of accommodation for Association members than that provided by the Asylum. This difference suggests that the two organizations had different criteria and that there were two classes of welfare recipient commonly perceived as "deserving". The Benevolent Asylum provided for those who were unable to find or perform paid work, while the Old Colonists provided specifically for those members who were known to have worked in ways that served the colony, but who had not been able to secure themselves due to factors beyond their control such as decrepitude and widowhood. In accordance with these somewhat rigorous conditions, the Old Colonists' Association did not provide for any man who was known to spend money on drink.[34]

Economic Depression in Melbourne

According to the Benevolent Asylum's Annual Report of June 1890, the five brick cottages planned for old married couples had been finished and furnished, and some of them were occupied. A chronic ward had also been erected, leading the Committee to remark in the Annual Report that "the citizens of Ballarat now have the most complete establishment for the housing of the poor in the Southern Hemisphere".[35] The Asylum was indeed extensive and it served most categories of incapacity and destitution. It may have been insularity on the part of the committee, or perhaps it was simply that they were too busy to concern themselves with events outside Ballarat, but whatever the reason, there was no mention in the Asylum's Report of the economic

---

[33] Ibid.
[34] Royal Commission on Old-Age Pensions, op.cit., 60.

downturn which, by 1890, was already having an adverse effect[36] in Melbourne. Nor was there any criticism of the speculative fever, which had fuelled widespread enthusiasm in Melbourne for projects such as the construction of a meandering train track, and for the acquisition and profitable turnover of properties adjacent to it, by those who planned its construction.[37] By 1890 the property boom was over. Many people could not on-sell over-valued property in time to meet demands by creditors, and one after another, major banks and building societies collapsed–among them, the Mercantile Bank, then the owner of what had formerly been Oddie's Freehold Bank.

Oddie had sold both his banking business and the bank premises located on the corner of Armstrong and Dana Streets, which had doubled as his home, to the Mercantile Bank in Melbourne in 1885, in exchange for £10,000,[38] a parcel of shares in the Mercantile Bank and a seat on the Mercantile Bank's Board.[39] The economy in both cities was then buoyant, and the Mercantile prospered. During 1886 it opened a branch in London "with agencies throughout Scotland and Ireland to accept long term deposits, which, by 1891 totalled nearly £2 million".[40] Oddie left on a three-year trip to England early in 1887.

By April 1890, Oddie had returned from England, and on the 18th of that month a "hearty reception"[41] was given to him at the Ballarat Benevolent Asylum. According to the Annual Report of that financial year, the inmates

---

[35] Ballarat Benevolent Asylum, Thirty-Third Annual Report, 30 June 1890, 7.

[36] Michael Cannon, *The Land Boomers* (Carlton, Vic: Melbourne University Press, 1966), 57.

[37] Ibid. chap. 6.

[38] *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Vol. 5: 1851-1890, s.v. "Oddie James, (1824-1911)", by G. A. Oddie.

[39] Cannon, op.cit. 165.

had been lined up to receive him and seats had been provided for the old folk,
but when Oddie entered the grounds all but the most infirm rose to their feet
and cheered. Oddie gave an address, which was well received. Its main
points were quoted in the report and were as follows:

> It was one of the happiest thoughts of his life that he was connected with such an
> institution. There was not a more meritorious one on the face of the earth, so far
> as he knew. The battle of life was a difficult one; it was associated with much
> work, much trial, and frequently with much trouble and suffering. Difficulties
> were met with in old age…not known in youth. It was a hard thing to come to die
> in want. The Ballarat Benevolent Asylum was one of the jewels in the crown of
> Australia. The Committee were always anxious to minister to the comfort of the
> inmates, and he hoped that every year their ministrations would be more gentle
> and soft. Since he left Ballarat, two wards and five cottages had been added to
> the buildings for the mitigation of the suffering poor. He prayed that God might
> bless and keep them.[42]

The year 1891 found the Asylum in a sound financial position. In fact in the
1891 Report, several letters left by visitors testified to its appearance of good
management, cheerful aspect and general merit. One of these letters was
from the Royal Commission on Charitable Institutions which was due to
submit yet another report on charities later in the decade. By the following
year, however, Victoria was said to be in the grip of an "unprecedented
depression" which was mentioned without discursive comment in the
Asylum's annual report to June 1892. The depression may only have been
remarked upon in the report because Oddie, who was known for his sobriety

---

[40] Ibid., 166.
[41] Ballarat Benevolent Asylum, Thirty-Third Annual Report, June 1890, 9.
[42] Ibid., 10.

and prudence, was also known to be a director of the Mercantile Bank. Fortunately, the Asylum banked with the Colonial Bank of Australia, which was not subject to inquiry.

By 1892 the Mercantile was in deep trouble. At a shareholders' meeting in February, two of its directors had made rallying speeches, but a private document before them, which was later produced in court, showed losses to that date of £830,000.[43] Much of this money was made up of advances to companies and speculators associated with the Mercantile Bank's managing director, Mathew Davies. The Mercantile was obliged to close its doors for lack of funds in March. When liquidators were finally appointed, their report stated that

> the last balance sheet was false, and all back to 1890 were faulty and false also…Suspending payment legally meant the stoppage of every payment…[but] your committee find that four of your directors have set this moral and legal aspect at defiance, by taking from the coffers of the bank on March 7 last the sum of £300 in payment of their hard earned fees.[44]

After much obfuscation, claims and counter-claims, all colourfully reported in Melbourne's newspapers and journals, the Crown Law Department privately advised the Attorney General, William Shiels, that in its opinion, "it was justifiable to institute criminal proceedings against the directors of the Mercantile Bank for issuing a false and fraudulent balance sheet the previous February".[45] James Oddie, along with Sir Graham Berry, was not included in

---

[43] Cannon, op.cit., 166.
[44] Ibid., 168-9.
[45] Ibid., 170.

the indictment on the grounds that neither man was implicated in the publication of the balance sheet.[46]

It was only after the shareholders' meeting in February, that anything appeared in Ballarat's newspapers about the Mercantile Bank. In fact, the calamitous financial scene in Melbourne might have escaped notice altogether in Ballarat, if it had not involved James Oddie whose many clients were to be variously disadvantaged by the bank's unexpected collapse. As the case dragged on, however, some of the Mercantile's subsidiary companies in Sydney were also charged with issuing false balance sheets, and three offending parties were sent to gaol.[47] Ballarat's newspapers picked up on this, but their main concern seems to have been to allay panic among their readers. There may even have been a very genuine sense of disbelief that such a calamity could occur in this, the land of honest labourers, prudent colonial administrators, church-going company directors and mountains of gold.

By January 1893, however, there was no doubt in anyone's mind that a financial collapse of unprecedented proportions was taking place in Melbourne. According to the *Star,* proceedings in relation to the Mercantile Bank's collapse were to be taken under the 159th section of the *Crimes Act,* "the charge being that the balance sheet for the half-year ending 1 February 1892, was false and misleading".[48] A few days later, the *Star* reported that opinion in London was divided on whether or not Sir Graham Berry, who filled

---

[46] Ibid.

[47] "The Australian Mercantile Loan Frauds", *Star* (Ballarat), 29 February 1892, 1.

the post of Agent General in London during his years on the Board of the Mercantile, ought properly to be excluded from prosecution, but it was unanimously agreed that James Oddie was properly excluded, as "although he was a member of the [Mercantile's] board, his duties were practically restricted to the supervision of the Ballarat branch of the bank".[49]

The effect of the collapse of so many of Melbourne's financial institutions only came to be widely reported in Ballarat when the National Bank of Australia suspended its operations early in May 1893. All banks closed their doors for five days with the aim of restructuring their internal systems and of stopping what had become widespread panic among depositors. These closures included the Colonial Bank, which temporarily suspended all payments: an action that had the effect of precluding the Asylum from withdrawing its funds. The Asylum had made an earlier decision to put its funds to government debentures and the Colonial Bank's suspension of payments made difficulties for the Asylum at the time.[50] Stock exchanges in Melbourne and Bendigo were also closed. The effect in Ballarat of these closures was reported by the *Star,* but the focus of the reports was very definitely on businessmen and farmers. In relation to the Mercantile, after much legal wrangling, a change of government, and a revised charge more difficult to sustain than the original charge, all the directors, including Mathew Davies, were acquitted. This episode was a sorry example of collective avarice as was described by Weber, and also of profitability being treated as an end in itself.

---

[48] "The Mercantile Bank", *Star* (Ballarat), 6 January 1893, 3.
[49] "The Mercantile Bank Prosecutions", *Star* (Ballarat), 9 January 1893, 3.

After Effects of Depression on Ballarat's Benevolent Asylum

The Annual Report issued by Ballarat's Asylum in June 1893 remarked that "notwithstanding the demands made on the Institution during the past year, owing to the unprecedented depression which has prevailed through want of employment…all the urgent and legitimate wants of the poor have been duly satisfied".[51] It was made clear however, that credit for this effort was largely due to an Unemployed Relief Committee which had been established in Ballarat to "cope with the large amount of destitution existing in Ballarat this winter [which relieved the Asylum] of the strain that would otherwise be put upon their resources".[52] The "unemployed question" was finally addressed at a large meeting in the Alfred Hall on 25 May 1893.[53] Much was said, but little was resolved. There were efforts to alleviate the plight of the unemployed among a great number of small organizations, however, and letters suggesting ways of relief began to appear in the newspapers, but it was not until the end of May that mention was made of a relief committee being established at the Trades Hall.[54] This committee then called a public meeting in the City Hall where the Mayor took the chair. At this meeting, a larger committee was established which met again on 8 June as the Unemployment Relief Committee.[55] Apart from organising district wide collections and free public services, this committee prevailed on parliament and local councils to provide subsidised work on a proposed rail line from the cattle yards to

---

[50] "The Benevolent Asylum Account", *Star* (Ballarat), 8 May 1893, 3.

[51] Ballarat Benevolent Asylum, Thirty-Sixth Annual Report, June 1893, 10.

[52] Ibid.

[53] "The Unemployed Question: Crowded Meeting in the Alfred Hall", *Star* (Ballarat), 26 May 1893, 3.

[54] "Winter and Want: Assistance for the Needy: Extensive Preparations", *Star* (Ballarat), 5 June 1893, 3.

Bonshaw, as well as excavation work along the Buninyong line, and work on tailings heaps in local parks and vacant land. Care was taken to ensure that "overlapping" was avoided and that existing arrangements among charities were not compromised.

The Asylum, therefore, survived relatively well, also due to special contributions made by long-standing benefactors and efforts by the Chinese, the churches and other groups. All these efforts mitigated the worst effects of the disaster on the old and the helpless, and they continued through 1894. A "shilling coupon movement" styled as a "special winter relief fund"[56] raised in excess of £691 for a daily average number of inmates of 310. Altogether, "the number of persons actually receiving relief, both inmates and outdoor recipients on the 30th June 1894, [was] 1611, or 156 more persons that at the close of the [previous financial] year".[57] Asylum expenditure during these depression years was cut back by a "judicious system of revision of the dietary scale", while "medical comforts" in the form of wines, spirits and beer, were dispensed with altogether.[58] Maintenance work was carried out by inmates wherever possible.

Additional pressure on the Asylum committee came in the form of reduced subscriptions, a decrease which was viewed as "doubtless owing to the collapse suspension and reconstruction of many financial institutions" and a

---

[55] "General Meeting of Ballarat District Relief Committee", *Star* (Ballarat), 8 June 1893, 2.
[56] Ballarat Benevolent Asylum, Thirty-Seventh Annual Report, June 1894, 7.
[57] Ibid., 8.
[58] Ibid., 9.

reduction of £900 in the government's grant-in-aid.[59] "Being unable to withstand the continued pressure of the numerous applicants for admission", the Asylum committee increased its accommodation "to the utmost capacity of the building (compatible with the sanitary laws prescribed by the Board of Health), by adding some 30 beds to the former number".[60]

These measures make it clear that the Asylum committee gave all it could to relieve and assist, and tried to increase its capacity to provide for destitute people during this period. Given the increased demand as a result of the economic downturn, it is probable that the usual criteria of thrift and merit were less rigorously applied, at least where applicants for relief were known to be local residents.

According to the Asylum's 1896 Annual Report, the committee had taken steps to incorporate the Asylum during the previous financial year because incorporation was required under Part 1 of the *Hospitals and Charities Act 1890*.[61] Prior to incorporation, the committee had been responsible under a joint and several bond for all liabilities,[62] and members of it had been inclined to maintain faith in the continuing support of Ballarat's working people. By 1896, it must have occurred to committee-member, David McNaught, that such support could not continue to be taken for granted in the then climate of uncertainty, and accordingly, he urged incorporation.[63] In light of the extent of

---

[59] Ibid.
[60] Ibid.
[61] Ballarat Benevolent Asylum, Thirty-Ninth Annual Report, June 1896, 14.
[62] Chas. J. King, *Golden Wattle Jubilee 1857-1907: Fifty Years of Charitable Effort: An Historical Sketch* (Ballarat: 1907), 8. Archival Collection, Queen Elizabeth Geriatric Centre, Ballarat.
[63] Ibid.

poverty then being experienced by many once-prosperous people in Melbourne and Ballarat, such a step was not only in accord with what appears to have been cautionary legislation, but it served also to shield the helpless from disasters not of their making, by protecting those they depended on, from financial liability for debts incurred on behalf of claimants.

A direct result of the 1890s depression was a renewed interest in Ballarat, in the subject of poor laws and the desirability or otherwise, of introducing them in Victoria. This was remarked on in the Asylum's Annual Report as early as June 1893, but committee members continued to caution subscribers against the idea.[64]

The continued resistance to the idea of financing charitable efforts through poor laws, or some variant of them, by Ballarat's Benevolent Asylum committee is difficult to explain in light of the extent of the financial collapse. The conse-quences of corporate fraud were plainly evident, not only to the jobless in Ballarat and Melbourne, but to those who had invested money on trusted advice, and lost it. In other words, why did the Asylum committee continue to press for voluntary assistance before state intervention in the provision of poor relief?

This general question is addressed by social historian, Stephen Garton, who argues that the 1890s depression was a broader-scale financial crisis, which provided an acceptable reason for the state to intervene and to remedy long-

---

[64] Ballarat Benevolent Asylum, Thirty-Sixth Annual Report, June 1893, 10-11.

standing deficiencies in the delivery of charitable assistance. In Garton's view, it also justified the rapid adoption by the state of alternative systems of control, which were not viewed as desirable by all charity workers.[65] This lack of con-currence by charity workers was said by Garton to be due to their view of themselves as superior examples of moral virtue.

In viewing themselves as superior examples of moral virtue, Garton contends that many charity workers believed that "only they had the ethical capacity to be able to identify the imposters…only they could administer institutions and thus subject the morally weak to their own moral strength, bringing about improve-ment."[66]

Garton's contention is given substance in many of the replies to questions asked of charity workers by the Royal Commission on Old-Age Pensions in 1897. According to Garton,

> The depth of the 1890s depression, probably Australia's worst, the consequent unemployment, possibly as high as a third of the workforce, the collapse of financial institutions, especially in Victoria, and the bitter struggles between capital and labour…have all marked the decade as a watershed in Australian history. Its significance for charity lay in the ample evidence of its incapacity to deal with large-scale destitution. The earlier fear that poverty was increasing and that charity was failing to arrest its increase was replaced by the stark realisation that charity, even with increased government subsidy, was hopelessly inadequate.[67]

---

[65] Stephen Garton, "Rights and Duties: Arguing Charity and Welfare 1880-1920", in *Welfare and Social Policy in Australia: The Distribution of Advantage*, ed. Michael Wearing and Rosemary Berreen (Harcourt Brace), 29.
[66] Ibid., 27.
[67] Ibid., 31.

Garton goes on to say, "charity did not collapse as a practice but the pre-depression discontent with poor relief crystallised in the 1890s into an earnest search [by politicians] for alternatives".[68] This search culminated in the report to the Royal Commission submitted to the Commissioners in 1897, together with minutes of evidence supplied by a wide variety of individuals, organizations and representatives of Victoria's charitable institutions.

The main object of the commission seems to have been to establish the potential costs of a non-discriminatory pension, and to do this, it had to assess not only the extent of poverty, but its varying severity and most common causes. According to many charity workers, the most common cause of poverty was intemperance, which may reflect the influence of the Women's Christian Temperance Union. According to Garton, the Woman's Christian Temperance Movement was the largest social reform movement of the nineteenth century[69] and an effort by its members to combat poverty more effectively than charitable institutions and their supporters had been able to do.

> These women saw the solution in legislation to protect women and children from
> 'the animal in man' and measures to increase the ability of women to live
> independently of men. To facilitate these aims they sought womanhood suffrage
> as a means of forcing parliamentarians to legislate in the interests of women.[70]

---

[68] Ibid.
[69] Ibid., 30.
[70] Ibid.

The introduction of the old-age pension might therefore be viewed as legislation not only designed to deliver more sustained relief to the old, but also to further the cause of hitherto dependent women in their efforts to distance themselves from the impoverishing effects of the demon drink. This factor might help to explain the resistance to the introduction of the pension among male-controlled institutions of failed moral reforms–these "reforms" having long been aimed at keeping women financially (and therefore socially) dependent upon male "benevolence" and/or approval.

A more pragmatic view of the resistance to poor laws in Australia was put by Brian Dickey who suggested that poor laws in England had been largely designed to control the vagrant poor, but that in Australia, the question was partly one of labor discipline, of having to control "saucy labourers" in a climate of plentiful work. According to Dickey, there was little point in putting people into a workhouse or jail because "there was too much work to be done"[71] and that no colonial government wanted to assume legal liability for the able-bodied poor. Dickey argued that legislation as it was progressively enacted in New South Wales, dealt only with specific categories of poor, such as orphaned and neglected children, the old, the ill and the incapacitated, and that this approach acted to avoid creating any rights, imposing any direct charges or demanding any local participation in support of those able to work. In Dickey's view, no law of settlement was ever envisaged because "while the

---

[71] Brian Dickey, "Why Were There No Poor Laws in Australia?", *Journal of Policy History*, 4, No. 2 (1992), 119.

Benevolent Society operated a multifaceted welfare service to the satisfaction of the community and government, a poor law was never thought necessary.[72]

According to historian Michael Cannon, however, "The collective efforts of land boomers, politicians and bankers had driven Victoria into the vale of despair",[73] although he pointed out that some more sensitive individuals from different sectors had attempted to "drain the social cesspool". These efforts were said by Cannon to have been unwittingly pitted against "a sinister aftermath of Victorian *laissez-faire* economics–the idea that governments should not intervene to relieve the sufferings of the unemployed, but should leave the economy alone to adapt itself to its own new level".[74] As Cannon went on to point out, "that policy meant death and disaster to thousands of people".

Notwithstanding this, it was a policy fully supported by many charity workers more intent on moral reform rather than financial and/or social reform. An analysis of responses to common questions about poverty and its causes, which were asked of many different witnesses by the 1897 Royal Commission on Old-Age Pensions, indicates that the witnesses surveyed (22),[75] viewed

---

[72] Ibid., 120.

[73] Cannon, op.cit., 191.

[74] Ibid.

[75] The twenty-two witnesses surveyed included Alfred Laver, Melbourne Benevolent Asylum; David Fraser, Charity Organization Society; William Wright, Old Colonists' Association (Melb); Augustus Bond, Acting Inspector of Charities; Alexander Sutherland, Journalist; Herbert Booth, Salvation Army; Evan Owen, Government Actuary for Friendly Societies; Edmund Kirby, Solicitor, Bendigo; Archdeacon John MacCullagh, Resident, Bendigo; George Hawke, Vice-President, Miners' Association, Bendigo; Rev Alfred Rofe, Ladies Benevolent Society, Bendigo; Jonathon McIlroy, Superintendent, Benevolent Asylum, Bendigo; Benjamin Lewis, Engine-driver, Bendigo; William Bell, District Secretary, Independent Order of Oddfellows; James Pullar, Actuary, Colonial Mutual Life Assurance Co; William Gale, President, Ballarat Benevolent Asylum; Thomas Coates, Secretary, Ballarat Benevolent Asylum; Theodore Saunders, Gardener, Ballarat Benevolent Asylum; Alexander

drunkenness as the primary cause of poverty (36%), with lack of thrift, often related to drunkenness, coming a close second (32%). Unemployment was only cited by 18% of witnesses surveyed as the main cause of poverty, as was "incapacity" and the "conditions of industry"; the latter response coming from people associated with miners and the mining industry. In answer to the question "should the state provide an old age pension?" only 27% of witnesses surveyed gave an unqualified "yes", 4% answered "no" and 59% thought that pensions should only be provided to those who had made some provision for themselves during their working lives through a building society or an insurance scheme of some kind. These were thought of as the deserving pioneers. Those who had not been able to sustain such contributions, whether thrifty or not, and those who, upon receipt of a pension were seen to spend it unwisely, were thought to need continuing guidance in an asylum, while the incorrigibly wasteful were con-signed, by one witness anyway, to an old age spent in gaol.

William Gale, President of the Ballarat Benevolent Asylum, was one of only two or three surveyed who mentioned the financial collapse in Melbourne as a cause of poverty, saying "I know many in our institution had means, and lost them through putting them in rotten investments, and they were left under 'bare poles', people who would never dream of getting into an institution;"[76] while another witness from the Ballarat Asylum, Christopher Coates, the secretary, spoke of "the collapse of the country".[77]

Hunter, Amalgamated Miners' Association; James Graham, Secretary, Old Colonists' Association Ballarat; John Lau, Town Missionary, Ballarat; and Robert Bell, Resident, Ballarat.

[76] Royal Commission on Old-Age Pensions, op.cit., 44.

[77] Ibid., 48.

A solicitor from Bendigo, Major Edmund Kirby, favoured people putting a little aside for their old age, perhaps into some kind of insurance scheme, but Kirby was one who did not seem to view the collapse of such institutions as a cause of destitution, and he did not favour the provision of a pension by the state for the aged poor anyway. The superintendent of Bendigo's Benevolent Asylum, Jonathon McIlroy, took a similar view, saying that the Asylum had a policy of refusing assistance to the increasing number of "tramps" passing through the district if they could not give an account of themselves. He said "they seek work, but they do not find it because they do not want it".[78] McIlroy went on to say that there had been ten spare beds in a ward for two years. Upon being informed that there were hundreds of people who had been sent to gaol for want of shelter, he said "I am satisfied that if they are in gaol the Government have found they are only fit for that".[79]

Similar attitudes were discernible in many of the replies given by charity workers surveyed, to questions put by the Commissioners. Two major exceptions to these general attitudes were displayed by Alexander Sutherland, a respected historian and journalist for the *Argus* in Melbourne, who had gathered all the statistics and information on poverty then available, and James William Graham, the secretary of the Old Colonists' Association in Ballarat. Both these men were very well informed, and unhesitating in their espousal of an old-age pension for all Victorians, funded out of taxes paid to the state during working life. Sutherland mentioned drink as being the primary

---

[78] Ibid., 108.
[79] Ibid.

cause of poverty in only 25% of cases, while Graham saw the main causes of poverty in old age as a combination of poor working conditions and poor pay. Graham's statement was supported by George Hawke, of the Bendigo Miners' Association, who stated that miners were then receiving an average of 25/- per week and that many were suffering from "miners' disease" brought on by "bad ventilation and want of air".[80]

Given the magnitude of the depression then gripping the state, and the continuing focus by charity workers on drink and improvidence as the major, if not the only causes of poverty, it is not surprising to find that the more pragmatic commissioners were to take greater notice of considered and well-supported responses, such as those of Sutherland and Graham, than of the disdainful attitudes towards the "less eligible" which were exhibited by so many "charitable" witnesses. In fact, according to Cannon, "the idea that the state should care for the unemployed and their families was so contrary to accepted beliefs that when the Melbourne Ladies' Benevolent Society spent £7,000 in 1893 on the relief of distress, many members complained that assistance to unemployed people was "foreign to the design of society".[81] These sentiments were echoed by Professor E. E. Morris, founding president of the Melbourne Charity Organization Society, at the Society's 1896 annual meeting, when he said "the severe depression through which the colony has just passed, can be seen as an advantage…if it has taught the poor to be more thrifty".[82]

---

[80] Ibid., 105.
[81] Cannon, op.cit., 191.
[82] Shurlee Swain, "The Poor People of Melbourne", in *The Outcasts of Melbourne*, ed. Graeme Davison, David Dunstan & Chris McConville (Sydney, London, Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1985), 91.

It can be inferred from such responses that Swain's finding about nineteenth-century charity workers that they "gave help to most applicants but in a punitive way" was broadly accurate; but as Swain proceeded to point out, poverty cannot be viewed simply in terms of "presenting problems",[83] or by focusing on immediate crises of illness, accident and/or death. In her view, the underlying structural aspects of poverty must also be recognised and addressed; and rather than the goal being simply to relieve poverty, measures aimed at eliminating it should also be considered.[84] Such measures were, in fact, considered by George Turner's new colonial government. Turner's government was elected "with an overwhelming popular mandate"[85] to pass laws against blatant abuses of the finance and investment system—a mandate not recognised by King, or by the income earners in Bendigo, referred to in his historical sketch of Ballarat's Asylum. According to Cannon's more considered assessment, however, the Turner government's reforms were baulked by a "sullen and vindictive Upper House" and by the time they had been "mauled by the Legislative Council, a chamber consisting largely of company directors and landowners, the bills contained little of their visionary aspects" and when it came to tightening up the *Companies Act,* the Bill presented to a select committee was "emasculated".[86]

Conclusion

---

[83] Ibid., 97.
[84] Ibid., 107.
[85] Cannon, op.cit., 198.
[86] Ibid., 203.

The issues and events outlined in this chapter bring the analyst to the same impasse faced by the Commissioners in 1898 when taking evidence in relation to the introduction of an old age pension. The poverty paradox mentioned by Cage, that is, how could such wealth and destitution co-exist?[87] was not, how-ever, viewed by him as a feature of excessive speculation and falsified accounting for it, but as a feature of Victoria's "newness". In other words, according to Cage, the paradox arose because Victoria's social structure was largely devoid of family networks.[88]

Cage pursued this argument by pointing to the 1850s disparity between males and females in Victoria. By the 1890s, however, this disparity had greatly diminished and family networks had expanded.[89] It would seem, therefore, that the key to the paradox lies closer to King's assertion that Turner's attempt to introduce what were widely viewed as poor laws was resisted by Ballarat and ultimately "crushed by Bendigo". This raises the question: why? and it returns attention to the ideological basis upon which a measure of poor relief was finally granted by the state in the form of an old age pension for the deserving person of senior years.

The resistance to poor laws by Ballarat's Asylum committee members seems to have been stiffened by their success in the management of local distress and a concomitant reluctance, the latter shared by parliamentarians and

---

[87] R. A. Cage, *Poverty Abounding, Charity Aplenty: The Charity Network in Colonial Victoria* (Sydney: Hale & Iremonger, 1992), 9.

[88] Ibid.

[89] "Within the colonies there were regional differences [in population] because immigrants gathered near families and friends and settled in areas where they could use the skills they had brought with them…children of the 1880s would be the first generation of Australians blessed with grandparents

company directors in Bendigo and Melbourne, to accept legal liability for the welfare of the able-bodied poor. Ballarat's Asylum, therefore, is very closely tied to Ballarat's history of greater tolerance towards the vulnerable, whether able-bodied or incapacitated, more active support for those seeking employment, and encouragement of local industry, collective self-reliance and civic pride.

---

who lived close by". (*Australians 1888*, ed. Graeme Davison, J. W. McCarty and Ailsa McLeary (Sydney, NSW: Fairfax, Symes and Weldon Assoc., 1987), 36-38.)

CHAPTER SEVEN

Privacy and Dignity in Old Age

In the 1890s, the Asylum committee viewed the prospect of an old-age pension provided by the state with some trepidation, despite its obvious benefits to people aged over sixty-five who were still in good health. Committee members suspected that if such a pension was introduced, the knowledge among regular subscribers that the Asylum, and some of its inmates, were in receipt of government subsidies which were likely to increase taxes on those who owned property and/or worked for a living, would diminish the level of donations to the Asylum so assiduously built up over earlier decades. Committee members did not begrudge the paying of pensions in principle, but their primary concern had come to centre on the ill and the frail, people who could not be expected to live without the practical assistance then provided only by the Asylum. A number of inmates would have been younger than sixty-five, and some of these would not have presented the most attractive or deserving cases for what was viewed by working communities as the prospect of having to provide *additional* financial support for the maintenance of non-working people.

The perception of state-sanctioned imposition by the poor (as distinct from the ill) on those commonly viewed as the deserving and responsible members of Ballarat's community is emphasized in Bauer's account of the general resistance in Ballarat to the introduction of a poor law in the form of a pension funded by the state. While projected increases in tax seem to have been the main concern of property owners in Ballarat and Bendigo, the tenor of Bauer's

account suggests that there was also concern among Asylum supporters in Ballarat, at the passing unsung of a system viewed by charitable administrators as a noble one, and one that involved the working community and the institution in a valuable and uplifting exchange.[1] The dedication of Asylum staff and their willingness to serve the community in what was extolled as the "highest sense",[2] was some thing that characterised many in Ballarat, but it was not as widespread as Bauer's account suggests. There were also many in Ballarat who preferred the tumult of earlier days.

James McKain Meek (1815-1899)

James McKain Meek entered Ballarat's Benevolent Asylum in September 1892 and stayed there until shortly before he died in 1899. Meek had been a publican in Ballarat as early as 1852 and he was also a digger on the Eureka lead. In a diary he kept while at the Asylum, he referred to a son, John, in New Zealand, and a daughter who lived at Lake Gillear.[3] Meek seems to have lived in New Zealand himself for some years, but poor health saw him return to live with his daughter at Lake Gillear. Meek's health deteriorated further, and perhaps missing old friends and associates and being in need of medical attention, he admitted himself to the Benevolent Asylum in Ballarat.

An extract from his diary details a surprisingly active social and intellectual life. By then in his seventies, Meek habitually arose at dawn. He made a few

---

[1] Doreen Bauer, *Institutions Without Walls; A Brief History of Geriatric Services 1856-1985*, (Ballarat: Queen Elizabeth Geriatric Centre, 1986), 11.
[2] Ibid., 16.
[3] The writer has not been able to locate Lake Gillear.

shillings doing bookbinding in a workshop at the Asylum, and when he was
not doing that, he was writing a book of reminiscences about his life in
Ballarat, as well as letters and articles, some of which were published in the
Star. Tuesdays were "fumigating day" at the Asylum, so he scheduled
outside activities for that day, visiting people he had known over the years,
including Tom Bury (Tommy Touchstone) with his manuscripts. On other
days he received visitors, one of whom was Mr. Shoppee, ex mayor of the
city; another was a Catholic priest who gave Meek information on the recently
erected Nazareth House. Meek suffered bouts of coughing (possibly
tuberculosis), occasional headaches and sleep-lessness, but these problems
did not stop him from attending the unveiling of Peter Lalor's statue in 1893.
Bitterly disappointed at the tameness of the ceremony and its lack of
reference to political topics of the day, or even reference to the statue itself
and the cause of its erection, Meek returned to the Asylum in disgust. In 1894
he gave an address to the Ballarat East branch of the Australian Natives
Association (ANA) on the subject of "Nationalisation of the Lands" and he also
wrote a tribute to Queen Victoria on her jubilee in 1887. Meek was collected,
probably by his daughter, and taken back to Lake Gillear in 1899, where he
died shortly afterwards aged eighty-four.

Meek does not mention any member of the Asylum's staff in the diary extract
examined, and the only mention of the Asylum's committee is in reference to
his attempts to persuade its members to publish his reminiscences. His diary
suggests that his interests remained firmly focused on Ballarat's history and
on socio-political issues of the day. He wrote an essay on the pension while

he was an inmate of the Asylum, which was mentioned in his diary, but not published.[4]   He was also happy to introduce his visitors to fellow inmates. There is no impression of servility in his writings, no sense of inferior status, or of a debt owed to charity workers. In his evident view, the Ballarat Benevolent Asylum was there to cater to people such as he, and there was certainly no hint of ill treatment as seems to have been the case in other asylums. Meek appears to have been something of a radical, but his attitude towards the proposal of a pension could not be discerned from the diary extract, and he died before it was introduced.[5]

The Old-Age Pension

Supporters of an old-age pension in Victoria argued that it would enable considerable savings by government because there would be no need of costly charitable institutions for the aged, and a pension would permit the old and infirm to live in greater dignity than was possible in the crowded conditions common to most institutions.[6]   This argument did not recognise that many people like Meek, who had worked when younger, and who were still mobile, were also obliged, by failing health to live where care was available.

---

[4] Meek's essay is mentioned in the *Star* but its current whereabouts are unknown and it could not be consulted for this thesis.

[5] Meek, James McKain, *Diary of James McKain A. J. Meek*, No. 1 Book, Page 20, supplied by John T. Dallimore of Grovedale, together with a letter and comments, to Peter Butters of Ballarat in 1988 and kindly supplied by Mr. Butters with permission to quote from the diary. Further notes supplied by historian Anne Beggs Sunter.

[6] Stephen Garton, "Rights and Duties: Arguing Charity and Welfare 1880-1920", in *Welfare and Social Policy in Australia: The Distribution of Advantage*, ed. Michael Wearing and Rosemary Berreen (Harcourt Brace, 1994), 33.

Politicians sympathetic to the working classes took it further than this, arguing that pensions were a "right" gained by people who had "contributed to the general well-being throughout their working lives".[7] The counter argument put by most charity workers was that the vast majority of old and infirm people were not capable of looking after themselves, and that many of them would simply spend their pension on drink which was known to have impoverishing effects, not only on the drinkers, but on their wives and families. This suggests that the fear of pauperisation was still very strong in Victoria, and also that charity workers still saw drunkenness as the major, if not the only, obstacle to social welfare reform.

Ironically, wives and families had been condemned by charity workers in Melbourne during the 1890s depression, if they were found to be working outside the home. According to Bruce Scates, "women were required [by middle-class charity workers] to conform to a stereotype of femininity fashioned in the late nineteenth-century"[8] and Scates cites cases where deserted and unemployed women were reprimanded if their female children worked in factories rather than "proper" domestic-service jobs. When the depression was at its deepest Melbourne's Charity Organization Society was said by Scates to have "repudiated all responsibility for the unemployed".[9] According to Scates, it was only when men were starving, women had been deserted and children abandoned that poverty could compel assistance from such charity workers. While there would have been exceptions to this rule,

---

[7] Ibid.

[8] Bruce Scates, "Knocking Out a Living: Survival Strategies and Popular Protest in the 1890s Depression", in *Debutante Nation: Feminism Contests the 1890s*, ed. Susan Magarey, Sue Rowley and Susan Sheridan (St. Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 1991), 45.

evidence presented by contemporary social analysts, such as Van Krieken, Swain and Cannon, support the view that charity workers generally, were neither equipped nor inclined to provide more than token assistance to destitute people.

In the final report presented to the Victorian Government in 1897 by the Royal Commission on Old-Age Pensions, arguments by charity workers, to the effect that people in receipt of charity were not capable of looking after themselves, were taken into account, but the main point made in the report was that the existing system was widely viewed as inadequate. The most "glaring injustice" cited by the commissioners was that many aged and destitute people "against whom there is no allegation of crime" were charged as vagrants and sent to gaol.[10] This had been a common occurrence during the depression years in Victoria, and an injustice neglected by most charity workers. In addressing the need for a re-vamped system, it was held by the commissioners that "in the relief granted, the pauperising and degrading element should as far as possible, be eliminated and the self-respect of the recipient preserved; also that the inhuman separation of man and wife in old age should be prevented".[11]

The Report proceeded to detail the difficulties to be dealt with, conditions in the colony, and the probable number of people to be assisted. This number was based on fairly arbitrary statistics, which implied a total of 83,424 people

---

[9] Ibid.

[10] Old Age Pensions Report to Royal Commission on Old Age Pensions (Victoria 1897), v. *Victorian Parliamentary Papers*, 1898.

[11] Ibid., vi.

over the age of 60 in Victoria and 49,912 people over the age of 65. Of these numbers it was estimated that 10,000 people over the age of 60 were in poor circumstances with many of them in need of relief, but only a total of some 3,719 actually receiving relief from charitable institutions and their ancillary services. The three main causes of the "evil" of poverty were stated as being "(1) Industrial conditions such as intermittent employment, insufficient remuneration, sweating etc. (2) Moral infirmity, such as intemperance and improvidence, (3) Physical infirmity, such as sickness and premature and senile decay". These were said by the commissioners to be "undoubtedly the chief causes of the evil".[12]

While there was never doubt in the minds of most that these factors caused a great deal of individual poverty and commensurate misery, there was little, if any, recognition by the commissioners that the recent financial calamity in Victoria, which was still affecting the lives of thousands, and which had plunged the whole state into a trough of poverty and despair, was not brought about by any of these causes.

Given that the catastrophe had already occurred, however, the Commission was obliged to prioritize the expenditure of public money according to prevailing circumstances and their own perceptions of deserving and less deserving groups. The Commission defended their distinctions by saying that "in order to obtain a proper and equitable solution of this problem it is

---

[12] Ibid.

necessary to differentiate between the various grades of poor".[13]   The "deserving poor" were defined as follows:

(1) Those who have given satisfactory evidence that they have exercised care and prudence in the management of their affairs, and whose conduct has been good.

(2) Those who have exhibited a spirit of self-help by becoming members of Friendly Societies.

(3) Those who have attempted to provide an annuity, however small, for themselves. Those who have been depositors in a savings or other bank for a number of years. Those who have reared families in a respectable manner, and thereby contributed largely to the future wealth of the country and cost of government.[14]

The "less deserving" poor were stated to be those who had been "intemperate, extravagant, indolent, improvident, lawless, and generally those who have made no reasonable effort to provide for the future".[15]

In light of these definitions, it is easy to see the link between nineteenth-century perceptions of reliable self-sufficiency as discussed in earlier chapters and early twentieth-century defences of it, which were built into the provision of old-age pensions. Levels of worthiness were hence related to work histories of service to, and support for, the machinery of state.

The commissioners also addressed the benefits of the cottage system against those of institutionalised care. It was reported that the cottage system

---

[13] Ibid., vii.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Ibid., viii.

"affords an excellent method of dealing with the better class of cases of distress".[16] The chief merit of the cottage system was held to be that the inmate was in independent possession of a home, and that this encouraged responsibility in recipients for their own respectable behaviour and cleanliness. The disadvantage was that it housed comparatively few and the initial costs were great.

All of these considerations, however, were based on the conviction among com-missioners that "better provision is required for those of the aged poor who are able to take care of themselves, and to whom a benevolent asylum is altogether an unsuitable home".[17] It can, therefore, be seen that by 1897 home ownership had been established as a societal aspiration, and one that had gradually altered public perceptions of asylums. Even in Ballarat, the Benevolent Asylum came to be viewed by the public as a home for the ill and the frail, rather than as a shelter for the destitute and temporarily incapacitated. The various suggestions given to the commissioners by those involved in the delivery of relief were summarised as follows:

(1) That the time has arrived when some distinctive provision should be made for the aged poor, and those who are no longer able to earn a livelihood.

(2) That the most effective way of doing this is by means of pensions and homes.

(3) That a distinction should be made between the deserving and the less deserving.

(4) That special consideration should be extended to miners and others engaged in unhealthy occupations.

---

[16] Ibid., ix.
[17] Ibid., ix..

(5) That nothing should be done to check private benevolence or interfere with existing institutions designed to encourage thrift.

(6) That any tax to supply the revenue should be fair and equitable in its incidence.[18]

In accordance with the commissioners' recommendations, the old-age pension was introduced in Victoria in January 1901 in two different categories: Class A for the "deserving" and Class B for the "less deserving". Class A recipients were to receive a pension while Class B recipients were to be provided for in an institution under State supervision. Class A people had to have been at least ten years in the colony and to have made "reasonable efforts to provide for themselves", or to have "brought up families in decency and comfort".[19] The amount provided by the State was to be 10/- per week, or 15/- for a married couple. The pension was to be "inalienable, and incapable of attachment, or liable to any other legal process".[20] Class B people did not have to have been in the colony for any particular number of years. They were simply classed as those physically or mentally unfit to care for themselves, those who made no effort to provide for themselves and/or those who were deemed unfit to be trusted with the expenditure of monetary assistance.

---

[18] Ibid., xii.
[19] Ibid., xiii.
[20] Ibid.

Those whose occupations led to "premature decay" [21] (such as mining) were recommended as cases deserving of special consideration. Funds to maintain the pension payments were to come from four sources:

a)   a state monopoly on the manufacture of tobacco;

b)   a tax upon earnings;

c)   a tax on the unimproved value of land; and

d)   a tax upon house rents.

Victoria was to be divided into districts with administrative committees in each, whose job it would be to oversee the distribution of the pension, and to investigate cases where it was seen or suspected to be spent unwisely by recipients.[22] The committees were to be empowered to "raise" worthy class B recipients to class A status, and to "demote" free-spending class A recipients to class B status. It was further recommended that inexpensive buildings be erected to house worn out miners and "vigorous old people" who could employ themselves by producing a portion of their own food. The primary "aid to thrift" was the recommended establishment of a state-run life assurance company. Its unique attractiveness to the working classes was felt to be the "security" the state affords,[23] the need of which was conceded as having arisen out of fraud and mismanagement of privately administered funds.

There were several objections to these recommendations, which were recorded by dissenting commissioners. One objection concerned the tax on unimproved land, and various arguments relating to alternative ways of raising

---

[21] Ibid., xii.
[22] Ibid., xiv.

funds were advanced. Ultimately, however, the pension was introduced in very much the form initially recommended. According to Garton, the emphasis on inalienable rights was reinforced by the type of pension scheme ultimately adopted in Australia as a whole.

> Australian pensions were distinguished from overseas pensions because they were funded from consolidated revenue and were thus non-contributory…Advocates of the non-contributory system argued that it was a fairer system, providing for the large number of workers unable to make regular contributions to insurance funds and more particularly women who contributed greatly to the national good but did not always earn wages for their efforts.[24]

In New South Wales, there had been a degree of support for a state-funded old age pension since 1895 when it was first pressed by J. C. Neild.[25] Neild was a free-trade politician and an insurance company officer who was looking to "empty the barracks" of the aged poor. Early in 1896, the fledgling Labor party added its voice in support of the idea,[26] but it took the decisive oratory of opposition front-bencher and Protectionist, E. W. O'Sullivan, to convince a Parliamentary Select Committee of the need to consider a state-funded scheme.[27]

Brian Dickey has reconstructed debates surrounding the introduction of the old-age pension. Political differences between Free Traders and Protectionists continued to frustrate agreement, but finally, with Labor party

---

[23] Ibid., xv.
[24] Garton, op.cit., 33.
[25] Brian Dickey, *No Charity There: A Short History of Social Welfare in Australia* (Sydney, Wellington, London, Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1987), 85.
[26] Ibid.
[27] Dickey, op.cit. 85.

support, Premier Reid's Free-traders were ousted and an Old-Age Pension Bill was introduced to the New South Wales parliament in November 1900,[28] having similar criteria as put to the Victorian Royal Commission in 1897. The pension was not paid in New South Wales, however, until August 1901, some eight months after its commencement in Victoria.

It seems, in hindsight, that the earlier commencement of pension payments in Victoria was an effort on the part of Premier Turner to beat New South Wales to the punch. The payment of a state-funded pension in Victoria had been the subject of fierce debate in the amount to be allowed. The first Bill introduced to the Victorian parliament in 1899 by Premier Turner had specified a pension of 7s. per week together with a means test and good character requirements. This amount was only amended to 10s. per week after much angry criticism by politically vulnerable parliamentarians.[29] The *Old-Age Pension Act 1900* was enshrined in Victoria on 29 December 1900, but it contained a proviso that the Government in Council could alter, amend, and/or cancel any of its terms and conditions. Victoria's pension scheme, therefore, rested on parliamentary acceptance of responsibility for primary guardianship of its resident population in cases where no alternative existed. Once Turner transferred to federal parliament, his successor, Premier Peacock, proposed to reduce the weekly amount from the 10s. then being paid, to the 7s. initially proposed in Turner's Old-Age Pension Bill. This was because the predicted costs of administering the scheme had doubled.[30] Peacock then moved to

---

[28] Ibid., 86.
[29] Ibid., 88.
[30] Ibid.

have all pension decisions reheard.[31] In 1902, Peacock was replaced as premier by Irvine, whose attitude towards the pension was even more stringent. In 1903, according to Dickey, "Irvine set an absolute financial limit of two-thirds the existing cost of £215,000 and sought to alter the *Act* to ensure the administrators assessed moral worth before dispensing what he regarded as state charity".[32] In the year 1907, the least number of pensioners in Victoria was recorded and the most stringent criteria for payment were being applied. In 1907 the number of pensioners in Victoria had decreased from a high of 16,000 to a low of 10,800. This low point represented 16% of the Victorian aged population compared to markedly more generous provisions in New South Wales, where 38% of the population was in receipt of a higher weekly amount.[33]

According to Dickey, the reason for Victoria's more stringent arrangements lay in the traditions of charitable action already established in Victoria, and had a great deal to do with Melbourne's general respect for the Charity Organization Society.[34] It was not until 1908 that disparate state schemes were replaced by Commonwealth legislation, and only then, after a Royal Commission on the subject, whose report was tabled in 1906.[35] The Commonwealth pension took effect on 1 July 1909.

In Victoria, the old-age pension commenced to be paid on 18 January 1901. According to the *Star*, there had been a delay in Ballarat in the issue of forms,

---

[31] Ibid.
[32] Ibid., 89.
[33] Ibid., 90.
[34] Ibid.

which had to be delivered to all Victorian post offices. Courts of Inquiry were to sit in seventy centres and all claims were to be considered as soon as possible.[36] Forms had been delivered to Ballarat on 7 January 1901, but in a number insufficient to meet the demand for them.[37]

At this point, the pension was represented as a benevolent gift from the Victorian government, which would enable a measure of privacy and dignity to the deserving aged. Accordingly, in Ballarat, there were many applicants for it. There were also widespread fears, that those locally perceived as undeserving might be advantaged, and that institutions such as the Benevolent Asylum, which were thought to exercise control over their less deserving inmates,[38] would come to be starved of the voluntary donations upon which adequate levels of government funding depended.

On 8 January 1901, the *Star* reported that there were about 200 applicants for pension forms in Ballarat, and that the supply of forms had been exhausted by 10.00 am. There was also a "lot of talk" about inmates leaving the Asylum to make claims, but at the time of reporting "only six have taken this foolish move". Other than these six, men and women of all ages, colours and conditions had come forward, "including old fossickers who lived in the ranges" and it seemed to the reporter that many claimants saw the pension as pocket money in addition to living in the Asylum or receiving outdoor relief.[39] Over 100 applications had been made in Ballarat East on the first day forms

---

[35] Ibid.
[36] "Old Age Pension" *Star* (Ballarat), 5 January 1901, 1.
[37] "Old Age Pension Applications in Ballarat", *Star* (Ballarat), 8 January 1901, 2.
[38] "Old Age Pension", *Star* (Ballarat), 16 January 1901, 1.

were received, and a total of 2,000 applications were anticipated by the reporter, which was said to be far in excess of government expectations.

A discussion by members of the Asylum committee was also reported by the *Star*, which revealed different attitudes toward the pension were held by the various committee members. Phillips was prepared to help eligible inmates fill out their claim forms while the Reverend Cairns predicted that many inmates would expect to get the pension as well as care from the Asylum. Oddie assessed that there would be no more than 100 relief recipients inside and outside the Asylum who would be entitled to the pension and Shoppee voiced the opinion that "this is a much bigger thing than many of its promoters had anticipated and it was going to affect the institution largely".[40] Others thought it was best to leave things alone and find out how it affected them afterwards. This suggestion was the one that was most favoured by the committee after Smith pointed out that the pension issue was bigger than the institution and that it touched the whole colony. Smith was concerned, however, that if the government was going to pay all those entitled to a pension then who would support the Asylum?[41] This was the issue of most concern to the committee members who could see themselves being left out on a limb when it came to the raising of voluntary contributions from the community for those not in receipt of a pension, and who, for that very reason, were automatically categorised as undeserving.

---

[39] Ibid.
[40] Ibid., 2.
[41] Ibid.

Appeals to philanthropy by charity workers had been successful in earlier decades, but there were always areas of poor relief that found few philanthropists willing to assist, and one of these was in giving to those viewed as undeserving. It was this kind of unwillingness that characterised the Victorian government's handling of the pension issue once Turner's departure made it possible for Peacock to reassert a conservative and protectionist, political and economic agenda. Government subsidies continued to be necessary in areas such as care of the insane, and, increasingly, in the care of the frail aged. Also, according to Garton, "there were some areas of relief considered to be too important to be left to private efforts, most notably the care of neglected and delinquent children".[42] Considerations such as these persuaded the Victorian government of the necessity to continue with a state-funded pension, but not so much to replace charitable assistance and/or philanthropy, as to fill existing and projected gaps in its delivery.

Details of administrative arrangements appeared in Ballarat newspapers where it was stated that the Victorian pension was only going to be payable to people who had attained the age of 65, or those rendered permanently incapable of work by mining or similarly hazardous occupations. Moreover, "Chinese and other Asiatics are excluded from participation in the benefits of the scheme."[43] This point was possibly made with the idea of allaying fears that the pension scheme would cater to people whose stay in Australia was assumed to be temporary. The pension amount was initially paid at the rate of 10s. per week, but this was to be "diminished by sixpence from every

---

[42] Garton, op.cit., 28.
[43] "Old-Age Pensions", *Courier* (Ballarat), 29 December 1900, 3.

complete £10 of the net capital value of all accumulated property owned by the applicant—excluding furniture and personal effects".[44]   As noted above, both the rate and the conditions were to be varied by the Victorian government over ensuing years.

The *Buninyong Telegraph,* in the lead up to the first payment of Victoria's old-age pension, claimed that Premier George Turner only threw his weight behind the push for a 10s. pension in Victoria when he "recognised that his translation to Federal politics would relieve him from the responsibility of making provision for the cost."[45]   This seems to reflect Turner's vacillation in relation to the amount payable, rather than to the principle of a state-funded pension.   No one, it seems, had any idea what the overall cost of providing a pension would be, and the *Buninyong Telegraph* was convinced that pensions could not be provided without "in some way increasing the inflow into the Treasury".   This article did point out, however, that "the State has now accepted a principle, which it will be impossible to disavow" and this proved to be the case.   In that context, the pension effectively lifted the burden of raising funds for the able-bodied poor who had attained the age of 65 from the shoulders of charitable committees, and this constituted partial success for the Ballarat Asylum in its continuing efforts to relieve its committee members of responsibility for raising voluntary donations from the local community for this class of aged poor.

---

[44] Ibid.

[45] "Old-Age Pensions", *Buninyong Telegraph*, 4 January 1901, 3.

The form to be filled in by Victorian claimants for the pension asked for details including name, date of birth, place of birth, address, marital status, number of children, name/s of parents, and date of arrival in the colony. Once filled in, the claimant was required to sign and date the form, and the amount and the commencing date of the pension was filled in by the granting centre.[46] According to the *Star*, most people over 65 had made a claim by 16 January 1901, and discussion was beginning to centre on the proportion of pension payable to Asylum inmates. The government was of the view that any of the state's inmates in receipt of a pension ought to remit 6/- of it back to their Asylum, and that this 6/- should be treated by each Asylum as part of the continuing government subsidy. The *Star* reported that the Asylum committee in Ballarat "felt strongly that anyone getting 10/- a week should be able to support himself without Asylum assistance" and that keeping them in the Asylum would only "exclude more needy people"[47], including many who had not yet attained the age of 65. The *Star* took the view that "many—perhaps the majority of inmates—have been reduced to want through lack of force of character sufficient to withstand temptations to drink" and that "to leave them with 4/- in their pocket would simply be to tempt them to periodical outbursts of intemperance, and subvert all discipline within the institution".[48]

In the event, the Ballarat Benevolent Asylum's revenues were reasonably well maintained, but charity collection days were less successful in 1901 than in previous years and this was attributed to the introduction of the old-age pension system. According to the Asylum's 44th Annual Report, "many who

---

[46] "Old-Age Pension", *Star* (Ballarat), 16 January 1901, 1.
[47] Ibid.

have hitherto subscribed to our funds now hesitate to do so, and this matter must very shortly occupy the earnest attention of the Committee to retain our resources abreast of the expenditure".[49]

By 1902, the Asylum was finding that the old-age pension made little if any difference to its need for government subsidies and pressures on the institution remained as before. Swagmen were being given meals on their way through the district looking for work, at the same time as Shire and Borough councils chose to reduce their annual donations. By this time, it was being recognised that the pension was giving committee members little, if any, relief from the pressures of raising funds for the ill, the old, and the poor. In the Asylum's Annual Report to June 1902, it was said that

> The mistaken idea held by some of our friends that the Old-Age Pension System
> would largely relieve the pressure on the Institution, unfortunately is proved to be
> erroneous.[50]

By June 1903 a number of Chinese relief recipients were "shipped off to China"[51] and this relieved the Asylum of an annual expenditure of approximately £100. Only one male inmate had left during the year as a result of having successfully claimed the pension,[52] but the problem of indiscriminate admittance of people from all parts of the state "at the mandate of the Under Treasurer"[53] was beginning to be resented. The Asylum committee was coming to realise that management control was effectively

---

[48] Ibid.
[49] Ballarat Benevolent Asylum, Forty-Fourth Annual Report, June 1901, 18.
[50] Ballarat Benevolent Asylum, Forty-Fifth Annual Report, June 1902, 17.
[51] Ballarat Benevolent Asylum, Forty-Sixth Annual Report, June 1903, 17.
[52] Ibid.

being transferred to the state. Committee members considered that this apparent decrease in the level of local management and control was the cause of reductions in annual donations by several district shires and boroughs.[54] This decrease could also have been a consequence of the district shires losing by default the entitlement to nominate deserving locals for a place in the Asylum.

The Effects of the Old-Age Pension on Ballarat's Benevolent Asylum

The admittance of people from all parts of the state, and even from other states, was welcomed by some, notably by the *Evening Echo*, which published a fulsome article in praise of the Asylum on account of its policy of impartial admittance to people from all states of the commonwealth.[55] Such praise did not, however, restore the level of private contributions, which seemed to have been its aim, and by 1905, these had decreased to an "alarming extent".[56] Problems were compounded for the Asylum committee with the return of "a very large percentage of the inmates who left to avail themselves of the old-age pension".[57] These were probably people who had had their pensions reduced in the process of re-hearing claims, and some of them may have had their pensions discontinued altogether. The returnees were obliged to relinquish their pension, if still in receipt of one, upon being received back into the Asylum, and this was viewed by the committee as having relieved the Treasury at the same time as it imposed an increased

---

[53] Ibid.
[54] Ibid.
[55] "The Benevolent Asylum: Open Gates to All", *Evening Echo* (Ballarat), 29 July 1903, 2.
[56] Ballarat Benevolent Asylum, Forty-Eighth Annual Report, 1905, 15.

obligation on the Asylum—an obligation not immediately recompensed by the Victorian government.

The Australian Constitution gave the Commonwealth parliament the power to legislate on invalid and old-age pensions, but difficulties in working out how the Commonwealth could meet the cost delayed the exercise of this power. In June 1908, however, the Deakin government introduced legislation, which provided an old-age pension of £26 per annum from 1 July 1909 "subject to a means test on income and property" (the average workman at this time earned £110 per annum).[58] The cost of this measure "was to be met from the surplus of the revenue received by the Commonwealth from its quarter-share of the customs income, which it was no longer prepared to hand to the states, and, if necessary, also from current revenue".[59]

The Commonwealth-funded pension was introduced under much the same criteria and conditions as had been determined in New South Wales, largely because of the political impossibility of reducing the benefits then available in New South Wales to the lower levels afforded by other states.[60] Two notable differences from the Victorian criteria were that women could claim the old-age pension at sixty years rather than sixty-five, and that husbands and wives who had deserted their spouses during the preceding five years were

---

[57] Ballarat Benevolent Asylum, Forty-Ninth Annual Report, 1906, 16.
[58] F. K. Crowley, ed., "Invalid and Old-Age Pensions Introduced", in *Modern Australia in Documents 1901-1939*, Vol. 1. (Melbourne: Wren, 1973), 123.
[59] Ibid.
[60] Dickey, op.cit., 90.

disqualified from receiving it at all.[61] This left Victorian charitable institutions as dependent on state and local governments for funding in the area of health care as they had ever been, but by 1909, the means of discharging these responsibilities towards all Victorians had been acquired.

The Ballarat Asylum's gradual narrowing of focus to long term care of the frail and the ill, which was noted earlier, seems therefore to have served as a means of maintaining the Asylum's links with Ballarat's community, perhaps through people such as Meek, and indeed, its own history of community involvement would have encouraged the continuing support of local volunteers. The Asylum's methods of welfare delivery would also have kept its operations within government approved criteria of deservingness in relation to its essentially unblemished record of financial administration and charitable dealings.

Faith in the work ethic, the capitalist spirit and traditions of liberal progressive reform, however, were dealt staggering blows by the depression of the 1890s and its crippling effects on "deserving" and "less deserving" alike. The depression and the ever-more stringent criteria governing the payment of Victorian pensions acted to dispel the magic of "Marvellous Melbourne" in the minds of many aged Victorians, but not, it seems, of "Benevolent Ballarat" in the minds of some of its local inhabitants. The expansion of industrial capitalism proceeded unchallenged, however, and this was, perhaps, the main point of later public criticism in relation to the liberal-progressive ethos.

---

[61] *Understanding the Australian Welfare State: Key Documents and Themes*, ed. Anthony McMahon, Jane Thomson, and Christopher Williams (Croydon, Vic: Macmillan, 1996), 172.

This was to the effect that it had failed to prevent transgression of accepted codes of honour in relation to Melbourne's financial dealings and this gave impetus to the political aspirations of the Labor party.

Another long-term effect of the 1890s depression was the erosion of public trust in the speculative class and its lack of accountability, which persists to this day.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Conclusion

This thesis examined the management style of Ballarat's Benevolent Asylum and the nature of the Asylum's influence on, and relationship with, Ballarat's wider community. Distinctive characteristics such as its ecumenical approach to the organization of poor relief, its extensive outdoor relief program, its care for Ballarat's lepers and its unconditional provision of confinement facilities for single pregnant women were identified, as well as a range of features including efforts to counter imposition and to regulate inmates. These latter two features were common to charitable organizations in Victoria generally. Primary and secondary material demonstrated that successive Asylum committees in Ballarat maintained control over the management of government subsidies and local subscriptions as well as the Asylum's admission policies until the close of the nineteenth century, and made strenuous efforts to resist intervention by centralized authorities, as well as to maintain its distance from the tensions caused by local sectarianism. This kind of independent, yet considered, approach was critical to the Asylum's success. A related purpose of the study was to examine the relationship between the Asylum and the wider community of gold seekers and merchants in Ballarat. Remaining records revealed that the Asylum was a central influence in the development of Ballarat's charitable ethos, which reflected the community's sense of political independence. Asylum committee members actively encouraged the growth of industry, local infrastructure, libraries, gardens, galleries and education, and in fostering the growth of these interests and

concerns, the Asylum itself came to enjoy widespread support in the community and to figure among points of the local population's civic pride.

Ballarat's Asylum was born of a collective social initiative in the development of an operationally self-reliant charitable organization. It was ordered along broadly Masonic lines of fraternity and religious neutrality, overlaid with English Protestant interpretations of order, industriousness and a spirit of the good Samaritan. Considering its continuing support from subscribers, the letters of commendation and the laudatory chronicles of its activities, Ballarat's Benevolent Asylum was viewed by many local citizens as exceptional among organized charities. Its authority rested on the congruence of its aims with those of local working and professional men, who, after the Eureka uprising in 1854, had hastened to submerge grievances expressed on the goldfields of Ballarat, in order to encourage material progress towards general prosperity by way of capital development, science and industry—all symbols of the new age.

Despite this congruence, a number of suspicions remained active between successive Asylum committees and governing authorities in Melbourne, and also between English and non-English, Protestant and Catholic, capital and labour in Ballarat. Discontent among miners had given rise to the rebellion against governing authorities in 1854, but remedial legislation had not fully resolved their grievances, and perhaps not even recognised their multi-faceted

bases. In the words of a journalist for the *Star*, who was taking issue with an "Old Digger's" recollections of the affray, the Victorian government "had tried to govern the digging population like grandchildren", marching men off to the logs[1] at a moment's notice "for their supposed good".[2] Social analyses, including those by Swain, Dickey and Garton, have shown that the same kind of arbitrary and often unnecessary discipline characterized many of Victoria's charitable organisations which also treated their charges like children, and often punished them for infringements of Victorian-era social and moral codes of behaviour—also for their supposed good. This study has argued that Ballarat's Asylum was managed along less punitive lines than Melbourne's and that this was due in large part to the stronger influence of Masonic-style fraternalism in Ballarat, a fraternalism that grew out of the similarities between dangers inherent in both stonemasonry, an important element of Ballarat's civic development, and goldmining. Both the dangers and the growth of techniques designed to minimize them were part of daily routines in each field and this progressive approach helped to reduce the potential for acrimony between sectarian divisions in nineteenth-century Ballarat.

The many deserted wives and unmarried mothers present on the goldfields created problems for local authorities when families became impoverished and children neglected. The Asylum committee did not take up early

---

[1] The "logs" was a reference to a large tree which stood adjacent to the Commissioner's tent. Offending parties were simply handcuffed together around the tree as an inexpensive way of securing prisoners.

[2] "Eureka Stockade", *Star* (Ballarat), 9 January 1893, 2.

opportunities to work in conjunction with the Female Strangers' Home, probably because of its desire to appeal to a broader cross-section of Ballarat's developing middle class. By 1868, however, the Asylum had attracted such a large number of unmarried and/or unsupported women in need of assistance in the delivery of their babies, that a special facility was commissioned and built to provide for them.

The concept of voluntary assistance to people in distress was commonly vested with Christian religious connotations, but in nineteenth-century Ballarat, these Christian connotations were subtly infused with principles of Freemasonry. These principles included a strong sense of social obligation towards male members of the brotherhood and to widows and orphans, together with fealty to the rightful king, the acquisition of knowledge and skill, and the preservation of knowledge sealed in stone. In religious terms, Freemasonry was neutral, having more in common with ancient practice and ritual than with Christian religious beliefs. Nevertheless, there were similar approaches to capital development and expansion between Freemasonry and Protestantism, with each having a history of dissent from priestly control as imposed by Rome. These similarities coalesced into an autonomous, yet organizational approach to distress and poor relief in Ballarat, defined in this study as having been based on the ethos of the Biblical parable of the good Samaritan. Differences between Christian churches came to be submerged in the common drive among lay people to establish a more egalitarian order in Australia than had been known among English, Irish and Scottish peoples in Britain. In a nineteenth-century,

mostly Christian society, these ideals and considerations informed common expectations of clergy from all churches, and of government officials who, during the nineteenth century, acted on behalf of Christian monarchs, and in defence of church-based charitable organizations. Varying degrees of self-interest on the part of administrators among government, church and charitable bodies acted to consolidate the earlier British criteria of "deserving" of and eligibility for charitable assistance among aspiring middle classes in Melbourne and regional Victoria, as well as among many of the poor.

The Ballarat Benevolent Asylum distinguished itself among these groups as a charitable institution that treated recipients of relief in terms of need rather than in terms of whether or not they were deemed deserving, although it also acted to discourage imposition on community resources, and it sought to avoid the pauperisation of local producers and property owners.

Leading figures in Ballarat's colonial society largely accepted the vision of local financier and philanthropist, James Oddie, in seeking the civilization of its under-educated and unsettled labour force and the ongoing support of science and industry, both of which were necessary to implement political programs of trade and capital expansion. The Asylum provided a means by which these leading figures sought to consolidate Ballarat's economic prosperity and social cohesion. Remarkably, the Asylum committee's shared vision held town leaders of varied backgrounds together at a time of

heated debate between churches over the value of religious education. Schooling the rising generation was an integral part of the civilising process, and tensions flared between Catholic, Protestant and government, particularly in the lead up to the *Common Schools Act 1862,* which curtailed religious instruction in state funded schools and which would have outlawed it altogether if the Catholic protest had not been so strong. Legislation making education in schools funded by the Victorian government free, compulsory and secular was finally passed through parliament in 1872.

During the early years of operation, Asylum committees in Ballarat established a system of support designed to bypass doctrinal differences between churches and to accommodate people of all religious persuasions. Its broad support-base and its religious neutrality helped to attract a very broad subscriber base, and the committee's humanism and good Samaritan principles acted to nullify social divisions between fortunate and less fortunate gold seekers. Neglect of practical assistance for destitute miners had been noted early in Ballarat's history, and accordingly, Ballarat's new Asylum saw its role as that of providing for the incapacitated, caring for the unfortunate, and impartially dealing with distress among its multi-cultural population. In order to facilitate this, it encouraged the idea of collective self-reliance among local people by offering a rudimentary scheme of insurance similar in concept to early Masonic box-clubs. These clubs, which were active in England during the 1600s, placed an obligation on members in work to contribute anonymously to a box in support of

members who were experiencing hard times. A variant of this scheme was implemented by Ballarat's Asylum through its subscription structure whereby early subscribers who volunteered £2 or more per annum were entitled to recommend others for relief, and guaranteed a bed in the Asylum themselves if the need for it arose.

This initiative was particularly suited to Ballarat's working environment. Those able to subscribe at the rate of £2 per annum or more, were usually employed in less hazardous occupations than mining, and therefore were less likely to lose their livelihoods or be unexpectedly incapacitated. Few subscribers were of advanced years at the time of the Asylum's commencement, which diminished their own need of a bed in the Asylum on account of illness or old age. As a result, each larger subscriber's additional entitlement to recommend at least one inmate to the Asylum and several people for outdoor relief in any one year was almost automatically directed towards the support of the less secure and/or the incapacitated. Miners and labourers, cooks and carpenters, destitute families, widows and orphans formed the bulk of those assisted by the Asylum during its early years. The insurance scheme succeeded in encouraging the establishment of a reliable support base for two or three decades, but it offered too much for too little and the need for relief was too overwhelming for the Asylum to function without large government subsidies. Moreover, had the larger subscribers actually availed themselves of beds in the Asylum the whole initiative may have been seen merely as recourse for the rich. It is thus contended that the Asylum succeeded as a charity only for

as long as it could collect a viable total of contributions from the community, veto the admission of chronic and/or incurable cases, enlist free goods and services from doctors and the public, and for as long as it was engaged in remedial rather than preventative health and welfare delivery.

While not defined in Weber's terms, and without any referent to Marxism or Socialism, it was observed and accepted by successive Asylum committees that Western capitalism derived from the organization of labour along lines of commercial expansion sand financial speculation. It was also observed, however, that capitalism as a system, did not provide for those who were incapable of work, those who could not find work, or those whose work consisted of looking after children at home. In relation to men, it was suggested by King that the Victorian government should be almoner to injured miners because mining was the national industry of the state,[3] and Strange pointed out that miners' health was often impaired while producing great wealth for share-holders.[4] This feeling of being exploited by people in secure positions promoted widespread awareness among nineteenth-century male workers in Ballarat that provision for illness, accident and/or unemployment was non-existent, and that if they wanted such provision then it would have to be organized by and between themselves, or by local people who understood the problems they faced. Even so, for committee members of the Asylum initial hopes of undertaking such a responsibility

---

[3] Chas. J. King, *Golden Wattle Jubilee 1857-1907: Fifty Years of Charitable Effort: An Historical Sketch,* (Ballarat: Archival Collection, Queen Elizabeth Geriatric Centre, 1907), 13.
[4] A. W. Strange, *Ballarat: A Brief History*, Kilmore, Lowden Publishing, 1971, 34.

without subsidies from the Victorian government were soon proved economically impossible to sustain.

Features of English poor relief had included locally based assistance and local responsibility for the funding of poor relief and these principles were also embedded in the approach of Ballarat's Asylum. However, once the entitle-ments of larger subscribers came to the notice of the 1862 commissioners who were reporting on Victoria's charities and municipalities, the Asylum's scheme of guaranteed entitlement for such subscribers was progressively put under pressure by governing authorities in Melbourne. It was viewed by the commissioners reporting on Victoria's charitable institutions in 1870, as a system open to abuse. The commissioners were also at pains to rationalize the colony's resources and to preclude local dispensation of liberal treatment towards people viewed by the Victorian government as non-productive. The Victorian government also sought to avoid the assumption of any legal liability towards those in distress, but it was prepared to assist community organizations to establish buildings and develop relief programs, provided the communities also demonstrated willingness to contribute one third of the costs of ongoing support and maintenance. The high level of Victorian government subsidies, together with the inability of the benevolent institutions, including the Ballarat Asylum, to gain viable levels of funding from alternate sources, gave the government the lever it needed to progressively rationalize the delivery of health and welfare services across the colony.

Although in Ballarat misfortune was recognized as a possibility attending any industrious gold seeker, charitable administrators in Melbourne demanded more predictable and sustained productivity in exchange for poor relief, and as early as 1870 these authorities wanted Ballarat's Asylum to be inspected on behalf of the Victorian government rather than on behalf of local subscribers. The appointment of an inspector who wanted to contain the Asylum's perceived generosity to its inmates by (among other things) recommending transfer of the outdoor relief operation to small voluntary groups, also threatened the Asylum's system of collective self-reliance. Neither threat to the system of local management was articulated in these terms by committee members of the period, possibly because they did not want the Asylum to lose the support of Ballarat's poorer subscribers who were not entitled to the same guarantees as were offered to regular contributors of £2 per annum or more. In accordance with a perceived need to rationalize the delivery of welfare services, government subsidies to hospitals in Creswick, Daylesford, and Maldon were withdrawn by the end of 1874. The Inspector advocated local voluntarism rather than centrally funded support to assist those in less developed areas of the Central Highlands region.

The Ballarat Benevolent Asylum committee also advocated voluntary community support for disadvantaged people living in the locality, primarily in its appeals to Ballarat's citizens, but at the same time, it sought to better secure its position by transferring the burden of raising local donations from the shoulders of its own committee to those of the district's municipal

councils. The importance of Victorian government subsidies was always evident, however, and in order to maintain them, the Asylum was sometimes obliged to strenuously defend its management policies and practices in the face of criticisms from Melbourne.

By the end of the nineteenth century, a Protestant ethic, influenced by principles of fraternity drawn from Freemasonry, was firmly embedded in Victoria's political and educational spheres, and in the general approach to claims for poor relief including the report to the Royal Commission on old-age pensions. Ballarat's Benevolent Asylum and its supporters continued to resist the centralization of financial and policy control in Melbourne, but given the Asylum's non-sectarian ethos and the congruence of this ethos with political objectives of Victoria's state parliament, together with a shared enthusiasm for capital development and expansion, Asylum committees together with most of Ballarat's population, accommodated or ignored religious and cultural differences in the broader push for national unity—a show of solidarity which helped to pave the way for a later show of common aspirations celebrated under the banner of Federation.

Ideologically based edicts in relation to sex and marriage as discussed in Chapter One, put enormous pressure on poor populations, and, on the goldfields of Ballarat, these pressures often manifested themselves in wife desertion, alcoholism, child neglect, and fatigue and ill health among the destitute. Such problems increased during the 1890s depression in Victoria and they were not fully addressed by the introduction of an old-age

pension for the deserving older citizen, nor by earlier political reforms aimed at securing land, housing and/or employment for men.

It has been noted that the male-headed family was promoted as the cornerstone of Australian society and that feminist calls were made during the 1880s and 1890s for greater sexual autonomy, financial independence and/or professional opportunities for women. Such calls were generally ignored by conservative groups, being characterised as the minority views of emasculating radicals, or irresponsible threats to the "moral fibre" of the nation. In Ballarat, these calls were appropriated by land reform groups in their agitation for free or low-priced land on which male labourers could settle and raise working families.

Because of this focus on work suited to men, the emphasis on physical fitness, competition, conservative systems of patronage, and a related desire to protect advantages gained, Victoria's nineteenth-century governing authorities bound themselves to social policies that fast became divorced from the needs of increasing numbers of people, in particular, of women. The 1890s depression was a glaring example of the failure, not only of charity as a reliable means of poor relief, but also of ungoverned speculation as a means of capital expansion, and the processes of law as a means of apprehending and/or dealing with, dishonest authorities, directors and traders.

It has been argued in this thesis, however, that for as long as it operated independently of Melbourne's more Puritanical attitudes towards those claiming relief, the paternal approach adopted by the Ballarat Benevolent Asylum succeeded. Both ungoverned and authoritarian approaches to the granting of poor relief had led to chaos, misery and grief within other asylums, and among Victoria's general population. Organized poor relief in Ballarat, however, had, from the outset, been managed by the Ballarat Benevolent Asylum through the agency of philanthropic yet practical and generally trustworthy men. These men had focused on assisting adults rather than children because adults, rather than children, were held to be more capable of constructing the industrious, protective, yet stimulating environment they wanted all children to enjoy, take pride in, and eventually benefit from. In the case of Ballarat's Asylum the approach of the housemaster, Mr Boughen, who was ably assisted by his wife, was critical to the Asylum's good management and to the successful implementation of its relief policies.

It is implicit, and sometimes explicit in this study, that soon after Eureka, people in Ballarat moved to address existing problems by devising systems of locally administered rules and customs in relation to mining operations, the acquisition of land, and the delivery of public services. The issue of collective responsibility, however, particularly in relation to the support of charitable institutions, remained problematic. Not only did a general fear of pauperisation and disease pervade the community, but Ballarat's rapid

increase in population far outstripped the capacity of its developing infrastructure and resources to provide wanted services to all groups.

By the end of the nineteenth century, ordered patterns of paid work had emerged in Victoria, but they had not provided sufficient work opportunities, in particular, for single women with or without children. Insurance schemes of one kind or another were widely held among witnesses called to the 1897 Royal Commission on Old-Age Pensions, to be the surest way of providing for one's own illness and/or old age. In 1897, Asylum committee members in Ballarat were still responsible for the raising of voluntary contributions, but civic development had seen many of the mine-shafts filled in and built over, and the sense of collective endeavour generated by collective excitement and collective success, was in decline. Society then stratified in different ways.

Victoria's old-age pension did afford relief to some of the state's older people, but it was viewed by many in relatively secure positions as a state charity directed towards the non-productive. This gave impetus to the Labor movement, which saw the pension as a right. Generally speaking though, the exigencies of capital expansion had eroded faith in paternal systems of progressive reform, without holding out, or enlisting, support for any other.

During this period Ballarat's Asylum distinguished itself by upholding the dignity of working people and successive committees addressed the

problems of personal vicissitude without seeking to find fault, although they continually criticized deserting husbands for adding to local difficulties. In addressing the twin fears of disease and pauperisation, the Asylum can be seen to have tackled the fear of disease by demonstrating the advantages of a scientific approach to it, which included an insistence on improved levels of sanitation and the provision of fresh food. The fear of pauperisation was also addressed and eased, but widespread poverty came to be an issue beyond the Asylum's ability to counter, particularly in the aftermath of the 1890s depression in Victoria.

The ravages of depression obliged the Victorian government to determine new strategies. It continued support for the aged poor, by then a sizeable portion of the Ballarat Asylum's in-house population, but it also continued to rely on private production and capital expansion to absorb the able-bodied poor. The pension was considered in terms of providing income-support to the "deserving", but also in terms of penalizing those viewed by charitable authorities as profligate. The latter group was relegated to institutional care, which may have been preferred by some of them to a life on the streets, but which, nevertheless, denied legitimate freedoms to a non-criminal class of older people. This not only extinguished any pretence of good Samaritanism, but it also served to recast institutions as places for the irresponsible, the immoral, the helpless, and the physically and mentally unfit. Institutions generally, came to symbolize society's dismissive approach to those categorized by the State as Class B citizens.

The practice of being a good Samaritan depended on growth conditions that were of limited duration. The good Samaritan approach was thus accompanied by the expectation that those assisted would not continue to need assistance indefinitely; that they would rejoin the workforce, learn new skills if necessary, and become good Samaritans in turn. These expectations did not take old age or permanent incapacity into account, and nor was the concept itself entirely compatible with rapid capital and technological development. In the new-world of science and industry, traditional skills became redundant at an accelerating pace and families, hence societies, fragmented as a result. Under those circumstances, old-world traditions of class distinction and religious division acted to assuage the fears of the disadvantaged and to restore a sense of continued identity to the dispossessed. Prosperity was still dependent on investment and regular employment, however, and poverty was still viewed, if not as self-induced, at least as a reversible condition which only affected a small proportion of Australia's population.

Future histories of Ballarat should therefore take into account not only that there was initially a good Samaritan approach to distress and social reform in Ballarat which countered religious, class, and country-city divisions among its inhabitants, but that the need for it was commonly expected to be temporary. The reward to local contributors was accordingly represented in the Asylum's annual reports as the good feeling of having assisted in the recovery of disease and disaster victims.

Chronic problems required a different approach, however, and this study suggests that while rudimentary insurance schemes were helpful to those on regular income, the managers of them viewed financial support of the chronically ill and/or permanently incapacitated as properly the responsibility of government. The mix of cases catered for by the Asylum, therefore, required an increasing, rather than decreasing level of government subsidy as chronic cases came to predominate, especially when the mines closed down and as the population aged.

The government's reluctance to assume liability for the maintenance of the chronically ill and permanently incapacitated fuelled long-standing resistance in Ballarat to the rationalization of charitable resources by governing authorities in Melbourne. Local subscriptions and donations, while treated as general revenue, were continually associated by the Asylum in its reports, with cases of temporary need. As cases of continuing need associated with chronic illness and unemployment became too numerous for realistic provision by private or public bodies, the pauper was left to sink or swim, and in a fiercely competitive environment, mostly to sink.

This study of nineteenth-century Ballarat's Asylum has established that a cooperative cross section of Ballarat society shred a desire to compensate for insufficient resources in the delivery of (assumed to be temporary) assistance, which overrode sectarian divisions and promoted the virtue of industry while upholding the dignity of those who were down on their luck.

While the Protestant ethic predominated, the organization of the Asylum allowed for religious difference, and for such material support as to enable active inmates a measure of independence.   The Asylum exemplified Ballarat's pride in its own civic and social development, its charitable ethos, and its visions of a unified society; and successive committees enjoyed considerable rapport despite their varied composition. The success of the Asylum in consolidating these different socio-economic considerations should ensure it a prominent place in historical accounts of Ballarat's social and political development.

The ongoing issue though, seems to revolve around the perceived congruence of aims between different sectors and groups. This perception, which may have been shared between the speculative classes more often than among the operative classes, has nevertheless been assumed to discourage all classes of people from engaging in avaricious and unethical practices, but the assumption has proved fallacious. Education was viewed as the best way of encouraging the growth of science and the systematic speculation about natural forces that necessarily precedes artistic and technological innovation, but education has not always insulated the knowledgeable and/or the skilled from exploitation.

Having noted the general respect in nineteenth-century Ballarat for the Asylum's interpretation of its role as both community leader and supporter, its incorporation of Masonic principles into its dealings with men, and its more protective approach towards women, further research might

determine the perceived value of these principles and differentiated approaches to current policies and procedures in relation to the treatment of inmates at Victoria's public hospitals, special accommodation houses and like institutions.

Bibliography

Archival Sources—Official

Ballarat Benevolent Asylum, now known as the Queen Elizabeth Centre, Ascot Street Ballarat, and consolidated under Ballarat Health Services.

Admission Books from 1860 to 1900 (series incomplete)
Annual Reports 1858-1900 with Rules and Regulations
Assignment Books 1860s to 1905 relating to personal property (series incomplete)
Photograph collection
Register of Inmates 21 February 1860 to 31 December 1872, also 21 December 1860 to 31 December 1872.
Register of Admissions to the Lying-In Hospital, Ballarat District Benevolent Asylum 1 July 1892 to 19 April 1893.
Staff salary books (series incomplete)
Will books from 1860 to 1938 (series incomplete)
Scrapbook of undated newspaper cuttings, mostly taken from the *Star* during the years 1882-1927

Public Record Office

Correspondence between Ballarat Benevolent Asylum and the Treasury in Melbourne held by the Public Records Office in Melbourne (1858, 1859 and 1860).

Health Reports 1856-1867 held by the Public Records Office in Ballarat. VPRS 2500 Box 1.

Mechanics Institute Library, Ballarat

Parliamentary Reports: Commission appointed to inquire into the Municipalities and the Charitable Institutions of Victoria, Report and Appendices and Synopsis of Evidence, *Victorian Parliamentary Papers,* 1862-3, Vol. 4, No. 52.

Royal Commission appointed to inquire into the Conditions and Management of the Charitable Institutions of the Colony. Report, together with Minutes of Evidence and Appendices, *Victorian Parliamentary Papers,* 1871, Vol. 2.

Parliamentary Reports: Public Charities Report of Inspector for the Half Year to June 1881: Rough Draft of Proposed Amending Bill, *Victorian Parliamentary Papers*, 1881.

Parliamentary Reports: Report of Inspector for the Year Ended 30 June 1897 to Legislative Assembly, *Victorian Parliamentary Papers*, 1898, Vol. 2.

Parliamentary Reports: Old-Age Pensions: Report of the Royal Commission on Old-Age Pensions, including Minutes of Evidence, *Victorian Parliamentary Papers*, 1898.

Diary Entry

Meek, James McKain. *Diary of James McKain A. J. Meek, No. 1 Book*, Page 20. Supplied by John T. Dallimore of Grovedale together with a letter and comments to Peter Butters of Ballarat in 1988. This material was kindly supplied by Mr. Butters with permission to quote from the diary. Further notes were supplied by historian, Anne Beggs Sunter.

Newspapers and Periodicals

All newspaper items were published between the years 1857 and 1923; individual dates are given in footnotes.

Illustrated Australian News 1868
Ballarat Courier 1872, 1900, 1923
Ballarat Star 1857, 1859, 1868, 1869, 1877, 1879, 1882, 1883, 1886, 1892, 1893, 1901
Ballarat Times 1856, 1857, 1859, 1860,
Buninyong Telegraph 1901
Evening Echo (Ballarat) 1903
Argus (Melbourne) 1882

Addresses, Speeches and Conference Proceedings

Bate, Weston. "Ballarat's Sense of Community". In *Building Community, Sustaining Heritage:* Proceedings of Community Conference held in Ballarat, Victoria, 1991, ed. Kate Darian-Smith. 1-4. Ballarat: Ballarat University College, 1991.

Bramall, Margaret. "Illegitimacy and the Community Today". Published Address, May 1966. London: National Council for the One Parent Family Archives.

Bessant, Bob. "British Imperial Propaganda in Victorian Schools 1900-1930". In *Proceedings of Annual Conference, Australia New Zealand History of Education Society*, Perth, September 1994, by Australia New Zealand History of Education Society, 49-70. Perth: The Society, 1994.

Croggon, Janice. "The Celtic Contribution to Federation in Ballarat". In *Towards the Centenary of Federation*. Proceedings of Conference in Ballarat, November 1996, by the University of Ballarat, 17. Ballarat: University of Ballarat, 1996.

Evans, Michael. "Interpreting Ballarat's Goldrush Heritage: Uniqueness or the 'Whole Digging World", In *Building Community, Sustaining Heritage:* Proceedings of Community Conference held in Ballarat, Victoria, 1991, ed. Kate Darian-Smith. 20-22. Ballarat: Ballarat University College, 1991.

Kemsley, D.S. "A Historical Study of the Legal Basis ("Head of Power") of the Right, Past and Present, Accorded to the Holders of the "Miner's Right" in Victoria". *Proceedings of the International Mining History Conference* held in Melbourne, Victoria, 1985. 1-21. Melbourne: University of Melbourne, 1985.

Maas, Frank. "Family and the Community". Address to the Annual General Meeting Mission of St. James and St. John. 27 October 1983, 1-12. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies, 1983.

Mansfield, Peter. "Ballarat Newspapers: The Lifeblood of the Community". In *Building Community, Sustaining Heritage:* Proceedings of Community Conference held in

Ballarat, Victoria, 1991, ed. Kate Darian-Smith. 10-12. Ballarat: Ballarat University College, 1991.

_____. "Ballarat Library and Information Services". In *Towards the Centenary of Federation*. Proceedings of Conference in Ballarat, November 1996, by the University of Ballarat, 28-31. Ballarat: University of Ballarat, 1996.

McGettigan, Martin. "The Ballarat Trade Unions and Federation". In *Towards the Centenary of Federation*. Proceedings of Conference in Ballarat, November 1996, by the University of Ballarat, 10-11. Ballarat: University of Ballarat, 1996.

Oddie, James. "Reminiscences". A lecture delivered to the Australian Historical Record Society c.1896. (Manuscript in Australiana Collection, Ballarat Public Library).

Reynolds, Graeme. "We Lived on a Goldfield: Rights and Licences". In Tasmanian Ancestry, Annual Conference 1996, by the Genealogical Society Tasmania Inc., 191-199. Burnie: 1996.

Sloan, Judith, "Employment Policies Don't Work". In The Bert Kelly Lectures, held in Brisbane, 1993, by the Centre for Independent Studies, 1-20. Adelaide: Flinders University, 1993.

Wheelwright, Ted. "The Public-Private Sector Debate" In *H. V. Evatt Memorial Foundation Address,* held in Sydney, 1986, by the H. V. Evatt Memorial Foundation, 1-8. Sydney: 1986, Photocopied.

Books

Alford, Katrina. *Production or Reproduction? An Economic History of Women in Australia 1788-1850.* Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1984.

Baigent, Michael and Richard Leigh. *The Temple and the Lodge,* London: Arrow Books, 1998. First published in the United Kingdom by Jonathan Cape, 1989.

Ballarat Cemetery Committee. *A History of State Education in Ballarat* Ballarat: Ballarat Times Office, 1974.

Barbalet, Margaret. *Far From a Low Gutter Girl: The Forgotten World of State Wards: South Australia 1887-1940.* Melbourne, Oxford, Auckland, New York: Oxford University Press, 1983.

Bate, Weston. *Lucky City: The First Generation at Ballarat, 1851-1901.* Carlton South, Vic: Melbourne University Press, 1978.

_____. *Life After Gold: Twentieth Century Ballarat.* Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1993.

Bartlett, Norman. *The Gold Seekers: The Story of the Australian Goldrush*. London: Readers Book Club by arrangement with Jarrolds, 1965.

Bauer, Doreen. *Institutions Without Walls: A Brief History of Geriatric Services 1856-1985.* Ballarat: Queen Elizabeth Geriatric Centre, 1986. (Ballarat Health Services).

Blainey, Geoffrey. *A Land Half Won.* South Melbourne, Vic. Artarmon, NSW: Macmillan, 1980.

Blake, L.J. (General Edition) *Vision and Realisation: A Centenary History of State Education in Victoria.* Vol.1. Victoria: Education Department of Victoria, 1973.

Blee, Jill. *The Liberator's Birthday*. Briar Hill, Vic: Indra, 2002.

Butters, Peter. *History of the Ballarat Old Colonists' Association and Club*. Ballarat: Old Colonists' Association, (unpublished manuscript), 1999.

Cage, R.A. *Poverty Abounding, Charity Aplenty: The Charity Network in Colonial Victoria.* Sydney: Hale & Iremonger, 1992.

Cannon, Michael. *The Land Boomers.* Carlton, Vic: Melbourne University Press, 1966.

Carney, Terry and Peter Hanks. *Social Security in Australia.* Melbourne, Oxford, Auckland, New York: Oxford University Press, 1994.

Centenary Committee, *'Ruffians Attempted to Carry off the School Tent': A History of State Education in Ballarat* (Ballarat: Ballarat Times Office, 1974).

Clancy, Francis. *They Built a Nation*. Sydney: New Century Press, 1939.

Cowan, Edward J. and Richard Finlay. *Scotland Since 1688: Struggle for a Nation.* London: Cima Books, 2000.

Cronin, Kathryn. *Colonial Casualties: Chinese in Early Victoria*. Carlton, Vic: Melbourne University Press, 1982.

Crowley, F. K. (ed) "Invalid and Old Age Pensions Introduced" in *Modern Australia in Documents 1901-1939,* Vol. 1. Melbourne: Wren, 1973.

Curry, C.H. *The Irish at Eureka*. Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1954.

Damousi, Joy and Katherine Ellinghaus, ed. *Citizenship, Women and Social Justice: International Historical Perspectives.* Melbourne: History Department, University of Melbourne, 1999.

Daniels, Kay and Mary Murnane, ed. *Uphill all the Way: A Documentary History of Women in Australia.* St.Lucia, Qld: University of Queensland Press, 1980.

Darwin, Charles. *The Origin of Species By Means of Natural Selection, or The Preservation of Favoured Races in The Struggle For Life.* Edited with an Introduction by J.W. Burrow. London: Penguin, 1968.

Dickey, Brian. Rations, *Residence, Resources: A History of Social Welfare in South Australia Since 1836* (Netley, SA: Wakefield Press, 1986).

-------- *No Charity there: A Short History of Social Welfare in Australia.* Sydney, Wellington, London, Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1987.

Dimont, Max I. *Jews, God and History.* New York: Signet, New American Library, 1962.

Dixon, Robert. *The Course of Empire: Neo-Classical Culture in New South Wales 1788-1860.* Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1986.

Englander, David. *Poverty and Poor Law Reform in Britain: From Chadwick to Booth, 1834-1914.* London, New York: Longman, 1998.

Fraser, Derek. *The Evolution of the British Welfare State: A History of Social Policy Since the Industrial Revolution.* 2nd ed. London: Macmillan Education Ltd., 1984.

Garryowen [Edmund Finn] *The Chronicles of Early Melbourne Vol. 1 1835-1852,* Centennial Ed. Melbourne: Ferguson and Mitchell, 1888. Facsimile edition Melbourne: Heritage Publications, 302/500.

Garton, Stephen. *Out of Luck: Poor Australians and Social Welfare 1788-1988.* Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1990.

Geuss, Raymond. *History and Illusion in Politics.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

Goodman, David. *Gold Seeking: Victoria and California in the 1850's.* St. Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 1994.

Green, Robert W. ed. *Protestantism, Capitalism, and Social Science: The Weber Controversy.* 2nd ed. (Lexington, Massachusetts, Toronto, London: Heath & Co. 1973). 1st ed. 1959.

Gregory, J. S. *Church and State: Changing Government Policies Towards Religion in Australia; With Particular Reference to Victoria Since Separation.* North Melbourne, Vic: Cassell, 1973.

Grimshaw, Patricia, Marilyn Lake, Ann McGrath and Marion Quartly. *Creating a Nation.* Ringwood, Vic: Penguin, 1994.

Grundy, Denis. *Secular, Compulsory and Free: The Education Act of 1872* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1972).

Hannah, Walton. *Darkness Visible: A Revelation and Interpretation of Freemasonry* 12th ed. (Devon: Britons Publishing Co. 1970).

Harrison, R. K. *The Dead Sea Scrolls*. London: The English Universities Press, 1961.

Howe, Renate and Shurlee Swain. "Saving the Child and Punishing the Mother: Single Mothers and the State 1912-1942". *Women and the State.* ed. Renate Howe. Bundoora: La Trobe University Press, 1993.

Hyslop, Anthea. *Sovereign Remedies: A History of Ballarat Base Hospital 1850s to 1980s.* Sydney, Wellington, London, Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1989.

Jaggs, Donella. *Neglected and Criminal: Foundations of Child Welfare Legislation in Victoria.* Melbourne: Centre for Youth and Community Studies, Phillip Institute of Technology, 1986.

James, John Stanley. *The Vagabond Papers.* Edited and with an Introduction by Michael Cannon. Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1969.

Jones, Michael. *The Australian Welfare State: Evaluating Social Policy.* 4th ed. St. Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 1996.

Kehoe, Mary. *The Melbourne Benevolent Asylum: Hotham's Premier Building* with an Introduction by John Poyner. North Melbourne: Hotham History Project, 1998.

Kennedy, Richard. *Charity Warfare: The Charity Organisation Society in Colonial Melbourne.* South Yarra, Vic: Hyland House Publishing, 1985.

_____. ed. *Australian Welfare: Historical Sociology.* South Melbourne: Macmillan, 1989.

King, Chas. J. *Golden Wattle Jubilee 1857-1907: Fifty Years of Charitable Effort: An Historical Sketch.* Ballarat: 1907. (Archival Collection, Queen Elizabeth Geriatric Centre, Ballarat).

Lewis, Jane. ed. *Labour and Love: Women's Experience of Home and Family 1850-1940.* Oxford, UK: Basil Blackwell, 1986.

Loney, Martin. *The Politics of Greed: The New Right and the Welfare State.* London: Pluto Press, 1986.

Magarey, Susan, Sue Rowley, and Susan Sheridan. ed. *Debutante Nation: Feminism Contests the 1890s.* St. Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 1991.

Malthus, T.R. *An Essay on the Principle of Population: and a Summary View of the Principle of Population.* Edited and with an Introduction by Antony Flew. Harmondsworth, Middlesex, Ringwood, Vic: Penguin, 1970. Chap. 5.

McMahon, Anthony, Jane Thomson and Christopher Williams. (eds) *Understanding the Australian Welfare State: Key Documents and Themes,* Croydon, Vic: Macmillan, 1996.

Meaney, Neville. ed. *Under New Heavens: The Cultural Transmission and the Making of Australia.* Port Melbourne, Vic: Heinemann Educational, 1989.

Moore, Ronald Keith. "The Influence of Local and Central Management on National and Denominational Board Schoolteachers in Ballarat and Buninyong, 1848-1862", PhD Diss., Monash University, 1996.

O'Brien, Bob. *Massacre at Eureka: The Untold Story.* Kew, Vic: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 1992.

O'Farrell, Patrick. *The Catholic Church and Community: An Australian History.* Kensington, NSW: New South Wales University Press, 1985. Previously published as *The Catholic Church and Community in Australia: A History.* West Melbourne: Nelson, 1977.

_____. *The Irish in Australia.* Kensington: University of New South Wales Press, 1988.

Oldfield, Audrey. *The Great Republic of the Southern Seas: Republicans in Nineteenth-Century Australia.* Alexandria, NSW: Hale & Iremonger, 1999.

Papineau, Peter. *Homesteads for the People.* Melbourne: S. Goode, 1855.

Pearn, John and Catherine O'Carrigan. *Australia's Quest for Colonial Health: Some Influences on Early Health and Medicine in Australia.* Brisbane: Department of Child Health, Royal Children's Hospital, 1983.

Phillips, Walter. *Defending "A Christian Country": Churchmen and Society in New South Wales in the 1880s and After.* St. Lucia, Qld: Queensland University Press, 1981.

Pick, Fred L. and G. Norman Knight. *The Pocket History of Freemasonry*, 7th ed. rev. Frederick Smyth (London: Frederick Muller, 1953).

Platt, A.M. *The Child Savers.* 2nd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977.

Resident, A. *Glimpses of Life in Victoria,* 2nd ed. with an Introduction by Marguerite Hancock. Carlton South, Vic: Melbourne University Press, 1996. First published by the Miegunyah Press in 1876.

Rolls, Eric. *Citizens: Continuing the Epic Story of China's Centuries-Old Relationship with Australia…the Sequel to Sojourners.* St. Lucia, Qld: University of Queensland Press, 1996.

Serle, Geoffrey. *The Golden Age: A History of the Colony of Victoria 1851-1861.* Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1963.

Singleton, John. MD. *A Narrative of Incidents in the Eventful Life of a Physician.* Melbourne: Hutchinson, 1891.

Spielvogel, N.F. *History of the Ballarat Benevolent Home.* Ballarat: Ballarat Historical Society, 1943.

Spielvogel, Nathan F. *Spielvogel Papers*, Vol. 1. ed. Peter Mansfield. Ballarat: Ballarat Historical Society, 1974.

Steane, A. A. W. (comp) *Freemasonic Records Ballarat and District 1854-1957* (Ballarat: 1957).

Strange, A.W. *Ballarat: A Brief History.* Kilmore: Lowden Publishing Co. 1971.

Sunter, Anne Beggs. (comp) *Camp Street, Ballarat: From Eureka to Federation! A Guide to its History and Buildings.* Ballarat: Ballarat Fine Art Gallery Association, 2001.

Swain, Shurlee. *A Refuge at Kildare: The History of the Geelong Female Refuge and Bethany Babies' Home* (North Geelong: Bethany Child and Family Support, 1985).

Swain, Shurlee and Renate Howe. *Single Mothers and Their Children: Disposal, Punishment and Survival in Australia.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

Tawney, R. H. *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism: An Historical Study.* 2nd ed. with a prefaratory note by Dr. Charles Gore. Ringwood, Vic. Middlesex, England: Pelican, 1938. Reprinted London: Pelican, 1940, 1942, 1948, 1961, 1964, 1966.

Trumble, Angus. *Love and Death in the Age of Queen Victoria.* Adelaide: Gallery of South Australia, 1998.

Van Krieken, Robert. *Children and the State: Social Control and the Formation of Australian Child Welfare.* North Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1991.

Vermes, G. *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English.* 3rd. ed. London: Penguin, 1987.

Wearing, Michael and Rosemary Berreen. ed. *Welfare and Social Policy in Australia: The Distribution of Advantage.* Sydney, London: Harcourt Brace, 1994.

Weber, Max W. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism.* Translated by Talcott Parsons with a Foreword by R.H. Tawney. London: Unwin University Books, 1930.

Withers, W. B. *The History of Ballarat.* Ballarat: The Star, 1870.

_____**.** *The History of Ballaarat From the First Pastoral Settlement to the Present Time.* 2nd ed. Ballarat: Niven & Co., 1887.

Woodroofe, Kathleen. *From Charity to Social Work in England and the United States.* London: Routledge and Kegan, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982.

Woolmington, Jean. ed. *Problems in Australian History: Religion in Early Australia: The Problem of Church and State.* Stanmore, NSW: Cassell, 1976.

Chapters, Articles and Essays

Amies, Marion. "The Career of a Colonial Schoolmistress". In *Melbourne Studies in Education,* ed. Imelda Palmer. Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1984. 55-79.

Anderson, Hugh. "The Victorian Goldfields Commission 1855". *The Victorian Historical Journal.* Vol 48. (August 1977): 227-234.

Barnes, E. W. "The Story of the Bible". In *The Outline of Literature.* Vol 1, ed. John Drinkwater. London: Newnes Ltd. (undated): 44-75.

Bell, Robert. "Freemasonry and Early Ballarat", *The Ballarat Historian*, Vol. 4 (10) (July 1991): 10.

Cappo, David, Toby O'Connor and Marise Sacco. "Citizenship, Welfare and the Australian Constitution". *Interlogue* (4) (June 1994): 27-34.

Conley, Margaret. "The "Undeserving" Poor: Welfare and Labour Policy". In *Australian Welfare History.* ed. Richard Kennedy. Melbourne: Macmillan, 1982. 281-303.

Council of Social Services of New South Wales. "A Proposal for the Establishment of a Social Dividend". *NCOSS News.* Vol. 26. (6) 11.

Craven, Greg. "The High Court of Australia: A Study in the Abuse of Power". *The University of New South Wales Law Journal.* Vol. 22. (1) (1999): 216-242.

Dickey, Brian. "Why Were There No Poor Laws in Australia?" *Journal of Policy History*, 4, no. 2 (1992): 111-133.

Encel, Sol. "Colder Than Charity: Welfare and the Politics of Economic Rationalism". *SWRC Reports and Procedures.* (79) (1989):19-31.

Faue, Elizabeth. "Retooling the Class Factory: United States Labour History After Marx, Montgomery and Postmodernism", *Australian Historical Studies Special Issue: Challenging Histories: Reflections on Australian History,* 33, no. 118 (2002): 116.

Field, Chris and Sam Biondo. "Legal Aid in the 1990's: The Slide Back to Charity*". Just Policy.* (8) (November 1996): 39-42.

Fletcher, Laaden. "Schooling an Empire: A Study of the Founders of School Systems in Five British Colonies". *Education Research and Perspectives.* 21 no. 1 (1994): 1-112.

Fox, Paul. "A Colonial City of Ideas". *Victorian Historical Journal.* Vol 58. (3 & 4) (December 1987): 14-32.

Garton, Stephen. "Rights and Duties: Arguing Charity and Welfare 1880-1920". In *Welfare and Social Policy in Australia: The Distribution of Advantage*. ed. Michael Wearing and Rosemary Berreen. Harcourt Brace. 23-37.

Hazlitt, Henry. "The Poor Laws of England". In *Conquest of Poverty.* Henry Hazlett Foundation (10 April 2000): chap. 7.
http://www.hazlitt.org/e-texts/poverty/ch7.html

Howe, Renate. "A Reappraisal of the Relationship Between the Churches and the Working Classes, 1880-1910". *Uniting Church Historical Society Lecture* Synod of Victoria, October 1989, Melbourne: Uniting Church Historical Society (Victoria), (1989): 8 p.

Hughes, Lesley. "Catholics and the Care of Destitute Children in Late Nineteenth Century New South Wales". *Australian Social Work* .Vol. 51 (1) (March 1998): 17-25.

Keen, Susan. "The Burnside Homes for Children: An Overview of Their Social History 1911-1980". *Australian Social Work*. Vol 48. (1) (March 1995): 30-36.

Kennedy, Richard. "Charity and Ideology in Colonial Victoria". *Bowyang.* (5) (April-May 1981): 16-26.

Lake, Marilyn. "The Hour of Womanhood? Feminism and Republicanism in the New Nation". *The New Federalist: The Journal of Australian Federation History.* ed. Helen Irving. (7) (June 2001): 44-46.

Lee, Jennifer. "Birth of a Commonwealth". In *This Australia*. Collingwood, Vic: Greenhouse Publications, 1982. 67-76.

Lineham, Peter J. "Justice or Charity?" *Interchange.* (36) (1985): 24-40.

Lyneham, Paul. "Stuffing Knocked Out of Australia's Middle 70%". Interview conducted on Channel Nine's *Nightline Programme* on 27 November 1996 and reproduced in *News Weekly.* (11 January 1997): 7.

Mackinnon, Alison. "The State as an Agent of Demographic Change? The Higher Education of Women and Fertility Decline 1880-1930". In *Women and the State.* ed. Renate Howe. Bundoora, Vic: La Trobe University Press, 1993. 114-123.

Meridian Lodge No. 691. "How Freemasonry Started" [online]: www.islipmasons.org/freemason_history.htm

Phillips, W. W. "Religion". In *Australians, Historical Statistics*, Ch. 5. ed. Wray Vamplew (Broadway, NSW: Fairfax, Syme & Weldon, 1987), 422.

Quigley, William P. "Five Hundred Years of English Poor Laws, 1349-1834: Regulating the Working and Nonworking Poor. *Akron Law Review.* Ohio: University of Akron. [online database]: http://www.uakron.edu/lawrev/quigleyl.html [April 10, 2000]:1-23.

Raper, Michael. "Globalisation and Social Justice". *Evatt Papers* . Vol. 5. (1-4) (1998): 49-52.

Reynolds, Graeme. "We Lived on a Goldfield: Rights and Licences". In *Tasmanian Ancestry,* Proceedings Annual Conference 1996, by the Genealogical Society Tasmania Inc., 191-199. Burnie: 1996.

Robinson, Kathryn and Margaret Winn. "Population Control". *On The Level.* Vol 4. (1) (1996): 40-46.

Ryan, William. "The Art of Savage Discovery: How to Blame the Victim". In *Conceptual Foundation: Broadening the Knowledge Base.* ed. Ira Colby. New York: Pantheon, 1989. 16-23.

Saunders, Peter. "Poverty and Deprivation in Australia". *Year Book Australia.* (ABS Catalogue No. 1301.0). 1996.

Scates, Bruce. "Knocking Out a Living: Survival Strategies and Popular Protest in the 1890s Depression". In *Debutante Nation: Feminism Contests the 1890s.* ed. Susan Magarey, Sue Rowland and Susan Sheridan. St. Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 1991. 38-49.

Sheridan, Susan. "The Woman's Voice on Sexuality". In *Debutante Nation: Feminism Contests the 1890s.* ed. Susan Magarey, Sue Rowland and Susan Sheridan. St. Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin. 1991. 114-24.

Solomon, Cate. "Welfare Workers' Response to Homeless Welfare Applicants". In *Qualitative Studies in Social Work Research.* ed. Catherine Kohler Riessman. Thousand Oaks, Ca: Sage, 1994. 153-168.

Spenceley, G.F.R. "Social Control, The Charity Organisation Society and the Evolution of Unemployment Relief Policy in Melbourne During the Depression of the 1930s". *Historical Studies.* Vol. 22. (87) (October 1986): 232-251.

Swain, Shurlee. "Saving the Nation: Women and Child Rescue Work in Australia 1880-1925". In *Citizenship, Women and Social Justice: International Historical Perspectives.* ed. Joy Damousi and Katherine Ellinghaus. Melbourne: History Department, University of Melbourne, 1999. 302-14.

_____. "The Poor People of Melbourne". In *The Outcasts of Melbourne,* ed. Graeme Davison, David Dunstan & Chris McConville. Sydney, London, Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1985. 91-112.

Travers, Peter. "Welfare Dependence, Welfare Poverty and Welfare Labels". *Social Security Journal.* Vol. 2. (1998): 117-128.

Twomey, Christina. "Without Natural Protectors: Responses to Wife-Desertion in Gold Rush Victoria". *Australian Historical Studies.* Vol. 28. (108) (April 1997): 22-46. [online database]: EBSCOhost/Academic Search Elite [2001, February 17].

Vendy-Kinloch, Helen. "The Chinese Presence on the Ballarat Goldfields and Afterwards", Research Project, University of Ballarat, 1995.

Theses

Croggon, Janice. "Strangers in a Strange Land: Converging and Accommodating Celtic Identities in Ballarat 1851-1901", PhD Diss., University of Ballarat, 2002.

Dickey, Brian. "Charity in New South Wales 1850-1914: A Study in Public, Private and State Provisions for the Poor", PhD Diss., Australian National University, 1966.

Howe, Renate. "The Wesleyan Church in Victoria 1855-1901: Its Ministry and Membership", Masters Diss., University of Melbourne, 1964.

Kinloch, Helen W. "Adam Lindsay Gordon: Steps in the Making of an Australian Icon". Masters Diss., University of Ballarat, 1999.

Moore, Keith. "The Influence of Local and Central Management on National and Denominational Board Schoolteachers in Ballarat and Buninyong 1848-1862", PhD Diss., Monash University, 1995.

Porter, Susan. "The Benevolent Asylum--Image and Reality: The Care and Training of Female Orphans in Boston, 1800-1840". PhD Diss., Boston University, 1984. [online database]: FirstSearch/Detailed Record [2001, February 17].

Sunter, Anne Beggs. "James Oddie (1824-1911) His Life and the Wesleyan Contribution to Ballarat". Masters Diss., Deakin University, 1989.

Theakstone, K. R. "Poverty, Pauperism and Power: The History of the Adelaide Benevolent and Strangers' Friend Society, 1849—1914", Masters Diss., Flinders University, 1987.