CHAPTER 4

THE ESTABLISHMENT AND OPERATION OF THE MALE ORPHAN SCHOOL

In this chapter we shall be considering an extension in the provisions for the care of neglected, poor, ‘orphan’ children, namely the establishment of the Male Orphan School. The needs of boys for support, education and training had long been recognised but the perceived needs of the girls were greater. Macquarie’s stated motivation for pursuing this objective will be studied as well as the Rules and Regulations formulated for the good governance of the School. Associated with this governance is the contribution of committee members.

The establishment and operation of the School and life within its walls will engage our attention, as well as the change of the monitorial system introduced into the School.

In chapter 3 attention was paid to Macquarie’s attitude to emancipists and the problems this was later to cause. This theme will be developed as we consider Commissioner Bigge’s inquiry into the colony. His recommendations as far as education is concerned will be studied, and we shall note the Committee’s reluctance to become involved in one of his important suggestions.

The provision of an orphan school for boys had been a long standing need in the colony. In chapter 2 Mrs Paterson’s vision in 1800 that ‘the young men will become useful members of society’, has been recorded, and she considered that this would take place within an institution. However, the provision of an orphan school for girls, took precedence over the establishment of an institution for boys, and funds were limited. The Rev. Samuel Marsden had considered that some of the boys were in as distressed a state as the girls, and he had expressed his concerns in correspondence to England.1 Furthermore, he had been involved with the planning of a second orphanage at Parramatta. Alan Barcan makes an observation about the delay in the establishment of the Male Orphan School. He considers that the demand for labour

1 Marsden to Cooke, 21 November 1807, in Historical Records of New South Wales, Vol. VI, p. 382.
was so great in the colony, that many boys could easily obtain employment ‘with little or no schooling, but the moral disorder of the colony posed an especial threat to lower class girls’. These girls could be afforded some protection as well as education and training within the Female Orphan School, hence the priority given to its establishment in 1801.

It was soon after the transfer of the girls to the new buildings at Arthur’s Hill, that Governor Macquarie made plans for the accommodation of ‘orphan’ boys. As the School in Sydney had been considered to be inadequate and unsuitable for the girls, one wonders why that building was chosen to house the boys. A number of roads and buildings had been constructed in Macquarie’s period of administration prior to 1819, and yet a residence had not been erected especially for the male ‘orphans’. Perhaps the Sydney site was chosen as a matter of expediency. It was after all a property belonging to the Orphan Institution, and the delays of erecting another building would not be encountered. (See engraving on following page).

In reviewing his motivation for the establishment of the Male Orphan School, Macquarie later advised Earl Bathurst of his concern for the destitute boys in these words:

> Having often viewed and considered with regret and compassion the wretched and neglected state of a great number of helpless illegitimate orphan children consigned to want and misery by their unnatural and unfeeling parents … . I was induced to form and establish an Asylum for their relief, maintenance and education, to be supported from the Colonial Revenue in the same manner as the Female Orphan Institution.  

On 13 July 1818 a circular letter was sent by the Governor to the clergy and magistrates advising them of the proposed Male Orphan Institution, and requesting them to ascertain ‘eligible objects’ and to furnish lists: ‘From which lists such boys will be selected as may appear best entitled to be maintained and educated at the public expense’. Members of the clergy and magistrates from districts around the

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4 Colonial Secretary In Letters, Bundle 12, p. 298. State Records New South Wales 4/1740.
The Male Orphan School is the two-storeyed building in the centre of the photograph. Original engraving in A. West's *Views of New South Wales*. (Copy in the Mitchell Library)
Hawkesbury River, Liverpool and Sydney responded to the Governor’s request and their replies were forwarded to the Colonial Secretary’s Office.

Repairs and additions were made to the old building in Sydney ready for the accommodation of male ‘orphans’. In late December 1818 the following Government and General Orders appeared in the *Sydney Gazette*:

> His Excellency, the Governor, in Pursuance of his desire to establish an Institution for the Protection of Male Orphans in a State of Poverty and Distress, having for that Purpose assigned the building lately occupied at Sydney by the Female Orphan Institution (now removed to Parramatta) and caused it to undergo various Repairs and Additions, whereby it is rendered fit for the commodious Reception of the Orphans destined to occupy it. … the Male Orphan Institution should be opened on Friday, the 1st Day of January 1819 for the Reception of Such Children as may be recommended and approved for receiving the Benefit of it, in deriving Support, Education and Instruction in some Mechanic Art.

In that same order attention was drawn to the fact that Mr Thomas Bowden had been appointed Master of the institution. He was in attendance at the school ready to receive boys who had been recommended for admission ‘by the Magistrates of the several Districts’.

On 1 January 1819 as advertised, the Male Orphan School was opened with forty boys enrolled. (See photo of Admission Book on following page). At its opening Macquarie recorded this description of the event:

> I came down from Parramatta … for the purpose of establishing the New Male Orphan Institution - which I accordingly did this forenoon. … The Lieutenant Governor, the Rev. Mr Cowper, Mr Secretary Campbell, Brigade Major Antill and Doctor Redfern accompanied me on this occasion, in inspecting the 32 boys this day committed into the Institution.

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5 *Sydney Gazette*, December 26, 1818, p. 1.
6 ibid.
Male Orphan School Admission Book, 1819-1833
SRNSW 4/352
Although Governor Macquarie cites inspecting thirty-two boys, the Admission Book lists the names of forty boys enrolled on 1 January 1819.\(^8\) On that day Governor Macquarie also signed the Rules and Regulations for the Management of the Male Orphan School.

The general object of this school was to provide ‘poor unprotected Male Orphan Children’ with accommodation, clothing and food as well as giving them a ‘plain education and instruction in some Mechanic Art’, and furthermore the boys were to be ‘protected’ and relieved from their obvious needs.\(^9\)

The management of the institution was placed in the hands of ‘a Patron, Patroness, and a Committee of 8 members’.\(^10\) The committee members were also the gentlemen who served on the Female Orphan Institution Committee.\(^11\) The duties of the Committee were laid down and covered matters such as the frequency of meetings; the quarterly attendance at the School to inspect and examine the boys; the auditing of quarterly accounts; and the consideration of applications for the admission of boys, which were to be forwarded to the Patron for his approval.\(^12\)

Provisions were made for the keeping of records such as the list of Rules and Regulations; the names and ages of boys enrolled in the school, as well as the names and addresses of the parents or guardians; the date of apprenticeship, discharge or death of any of the boys; the minutes of committee meetings and the quarterly accounts of the institution. All these matters were ‘to be entered in the Record Book’.\(^13\)

The number of boys to be admitted to the institution was to be limited to 50 ‘for the present’. The boys on admission, were to be older than seven years and younger than ten years of age. On reaching fifteen years the boys were to be apprenticed to be instructed in a trade, or to learn to be a servant. Those masters applying for boys as apprentices were to be of ‘good respectable character’. In addition to those requirements for admission or apprenticeship, the family situation was also to be scrutinised. No boy was to be admitted whose parents were in a position to support him. Where a parent or guardian could prove to be in necessitous circumstances the boy ‘should be considered eligible for admission’. A special

\(^9\) Rules and Regulations of the Male Orphan Institution, 1 January 1819, p. 1. SRNSW 4/400.
\(^10\) ibid., p. 2.
\(^11\) ibid.
\(^12\) ibid.
\(^13\) ibid., p. 3.
provision was made for orphans or children abandoned by their parents. A boy under seven years in such necessitous circumstances could be ‘put out to nurse’ and supported or maintained by Funds, ‘if he was too young to be taken into the Institution itself’.14

All applications for admission were to be made ‘by petition to the Committee through the Secretary’, or in such a way that the reason for admission was clearly stated. These applications were to be considered at the quarterly committee meetings. The parents or guardians also forfeited control over a boy once he was admitted, and such parents were denied the right to remove the boy from the Institution or from his apprenticeship, until he was twenty-one years of age.15 A special provision concerning the entering into of a bond by the parent or guardian of a boy, who was considered eligible for admission formed part of the Rules and Regulations. The bond of £100 was to ensure that the parent or guardian did not exercise the right to remove the child from the institution.16

The rules concerning the apprenticeship of the boys were quite specific. The age of entering into an apprenticeship was set at fifteen years, unless the boy’s strength and build suggested that a younger boy could do the required task. The boys were to be apprenticed for a period of ‘five, six or seven years’. The terms were to depend on the nature of the trade or work performed, or until a marriage (approved by the Committee) took place. In the event of the death of a master or mistress, then a provision existed for the boy to serve a new master or mistress for the remaining term of the apprenticeship.17

The child was to be presented with a Bible and a Prayer Book when leaving the institution18, and the gift of a cow as a marriage portion was available to any boy who had displayed ‘exemplary good conduct during the apprenticeship’.19 The prescribed diet was to be ‘plentiful but only plain wholesome food’, and was in the same quantities as those prescribed for the Female Orphan Institution.20

Like the female ‘orphans’ the boys were to wear a distinctive uniform: ‘A Blue Cloth Jacket with buttons, a pair of long Blue Cloth Trousers; was to be worn in

14 ibid., pp. 3-4.
15 ibid., pp. 4-5.
16 ibid., p. 5.
17 ibid., pp. 5-6.
18 ibid., p. 6.
19 ibid.
20 ibid.
the winter’. The summer uniform consisted of ‘Blue Jacket and Trousers made of light Cotton Stuff’ plus ‘a cotton shirt, stockings, shoes and a straw hat’.²¹

The education to be provided for the boys was to equip them not only for ‘their present condition in life, but for their future destination’. The boys’ potential future was seen to be as ‘Mechanics, Farmers, Servants and Labourers’. The subjects to be taught were ‘Reading, Writing and Arithmetic’. The boys were to be taught to keep accounts pertinent to their occupation, and were also ‘to read and understand the Holy Scriptures’.²²

In addition to their ‘school’ subjects, the boys were to receive instruction so that they could make ‘up their own Clothes, Shoes and Hats’. This practical instruction was to be given by skilled workers in these trades who were to be employed at the School. Also, the boys were to be taught ‘Baking, Cooking and all aspects of household work belonging to their sex’. They were also to work ‘occasionally in the garden’, and this was seen to be ‘a useful and wholesome exercise’.²³

The religious training of the boys was not to be confined to Sundays. Each morning and evening the boys were to assemble for Scripture reading and prayer. They were also to be taught ‘the principles of Christianity’, especially those ‘Doctrines of the Church of England’. On Sunday the boys were to attend church to participate in public worship.²⁴

The physical well-being of the boys was not overlooked. In addition to the prescribed diet, the boys were to be taken regularly on walks ‘in the cool of the evening’. This was seen as a means of promoting their health and providing them with ‘wholesome exercise’. An interesting aspect of their recreational time is to be seen in the provision for ‘bathing in the sea’. This activity which may have been ‘swimming’, was to occur on a regular basis, ‘at least twice a week throughout the year’, and Wednesdays and Saturdays were designated for this purpose.²⁵ Whilst engaged in walking and sea bathing activities, the boys were always to be under the supervision of the Master or Usher. This provision was probably included to provide

²¹ ibid., pp. 6-7.
²² ibid., p. 7.
²³ ibid., pp. 7-8.
²⁴ ibid., p. 8.
²⁵ ibid.
proper supervision for the boys when they were away from the school premises, not only for their safety but also to oversee their conduct.

The committee members were entrusted with the responsibility of visiting the School each month on a rotational basis. They had to examine the boys in respect of their ‘Health, Comfort and Instruction’. These visits were therefore not to be performed in a perfunctory manner, but with the well-being of the boys their main concern. If any neglect or defect in the boys’ care was observed, this had to be reported to the Master.26

The anniversary day of the opening of the School was to be celebrated each year. After a service at St Philip’s Church of England the boys’ knowledge of the Catechism and New Testament was publicly examined by the preacher. The most meritorious students in reading, writing and arithmetic were then to be presented with silver medals by the ‘Patron or Patroness’. Furthermore these medals, which indicated the status of the particular students were ‘to be worn during the succeeding year’.27 From these details one obtains glimpses into the ceremonial life of the school on anniversary days. The boys were encouraged to present good work and even to strive for excellence. Their efforts were recognised and rewarded publicly.

The prescribed Rules and Regulations varied little from those of the Female Orphan School, and the boys were to be excluded from the world in a ‘closed’ institution where their lives were to be regimented. However, an enlightened attitude was displayed towards promoting and maintaining the boys’ physical well-being, and one of the duties of the Committee was a regular examination of the health, comfort and instruction of the boys.

From the establishment of the Female Orphan School the physical well-being and health of the ‘orphan’ children was important to the Patron and the Committee, and this is evidenced by the attendance of doctors at the Orphan Schools. The first Committee appointed by Governor King in 1800 certainly had two surgeons as members, namely John Harris and William Balmain. Minutes of that Committee are not extant, and we have no record of their actual appointment as surgeons to the Female Orphan School. We know that all members of that original Committee acted in a voluntary capacity, although the Treasurer, the Rev. Samuel Marsden was authorised to collect five per cent of the Orphan Fund disbursements.

26 ibid.
27 ibid., pp. 8-9.
However, in August 1802 when additional members had been appointed to the Committee ‘Thomas Jamison Principal Surgeon of the Territory’, was one of those men appointed. He was appointed ex-officio, because of his position as surgeon.\(^\text{28}\)

When Dr Jamison resigned following the Rum Rebellion, an appointment was made to replace him. The gentleman chosen for the position was William Bohan. The reasons given for his appointment were that he was ‘the only married man of the profession and, consequently the most proper person to attend such an Institution’, as the Female Orphan School.\(^\text{29}\)

When Macquarie arrived in late 1809 Surgeon Bohan was doctor to the institution. However as he was an assistant surgeon in the New South Wales Corps it is very likely that he returned to England with that regiment in April 1810.\(^\text{30}\)

When the Female Orphan School transferred to Parramatta, Dr Redfern considered that the distance from Sydney would not permit him to continue to provide medical services at that institution. Major West who resided at Parramatta was ‘appointed the medical attendant upon the Institution at a Salary of £35 per annum’. It was decided that this payment should date from 1 July, when the transfer from Sydney to Parramatta had occurred.\(^\text{31}\)

Mr Bowden, when giving evidence to Commissioner Bigge, advised that the usual practice for obtaining medical treatment for the boys, was to send them to Dr Redfern at the hospital. This practice was continued when later surgeons were appointed. On an occasion when a boy was too ill to attend the hospital, ‘Mr Luttrel the Assistant Colonial Surgeon came down to attend him’. Mr Bowden also testified that Mr Bowman had visited the school ‘on another occasion’.\(^\text{32}\) As Sydney Hospital (the Rum Hospital) had been constructed we can presume that the boys would have walked up the road to Macquarie Street to visit the doctor when medical attention was required.

The Master chosen to superintend the Male Orphan School was Thomas Bowden. He had arrived in the colony in January 1812, with his wife Jane and his family on board.

\(^{28}\) *HRA*, Vol. IV, pp. 95-96.

\(^{29}\) Bohan to J.T. Campbell, 10 January 1810, in CSIL, Bundle 4, p. 73. SRNSW 4/1723.


\(^{31}\) Female Orphan School Minutes, 30 October 1818, p. 19. SRNSW 4/403.

\(^{32}\) Bowden’s evidence to Bigge, 22 January 1821, in Bonwick Transcripts, Box 8, pp. 3339-3340. Mitchell Library
the General Graham. He was a Methodist who took an active role in religious, educational and philanthropic endeavours. He was active in the formation of the ‘Philanthropic Society (later the Benevolent Society), the Sunday School Institute, and the Bible Society’. The Rev. Samuel Marsden had ‘recruited’ Bowden to go to the colony as a school teacher, when he (Marsden) was visiting England. Marsden was impressed with Mr Bowden’s ‘efficiency and piety’, and when the Rev. Marsden was able to offer Thomas Bowden an increased salary of £100 per annum, Bowden accepted the offer.

Mr Bowden was initially appointed to the position of teacher in charge of Sydney’s First Public School, and remained there until he took up the position of Master of the Male Orphan School. Governor Macquarie referred to this appointment in these terms: ‘Mr Bowden, who came out from England as a Schoolmaster, was considered a fit person to take charge of this Institution, and he was accordingly appointed Master of it’. Bowden’s annual salary of £100 was paid from the Police Fund.

Thomas Bowden was a graduate of the Lancasterian Model School in Borough Road, London, which had been designed to train teachers in the Lancasterian Monitorial System. This system of education had been devised by Joseph Lancaster and described in his pamphlet *Improvements in Education* published in 1803. Mr Bowden organised the School on Lancaster’s System of Education. This system of education differed markedly from later and current classroom practices.

The master or head teacher instructed the more proficient students, known as monitors, in the lesson material as a group, and they in turn passed on the information. The school room was divided into teaching ‘posts’, and at these posts a monitor instructed younger pupils. (See photograph on following page). A group of posts or classes was then supervised by a head monitor. The monitorial school operated almost with military precision, as the pupils waited for the commands or instructions of the monitors.

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34 ibid.
38 Bowden’s evidence to Bigge, 22 January 1821, in BT, Box 8, p. 3329.
Figure 9. Monitors and Scholars. From the British and Foreign School Society Manual of 1817.

Source: Carl F. Kaestle, Joseph Lancaster and the Monitorial School Movement, 1973
The teaching methods used depended on students learning by rote. Drill was provided by the monitors, and repetitious exercises were undertaken by the pupils. Spelling was taught by the monitors pointing to words which had been pasted on boards. Each word was repeated until the pupils recognised it, and were able to spell the word. Here again drill and repeated exercises were employed.40

To encourage reading skills ‘passages from the Bible’ were selected. These passages were placed on large sheets of paper. The pointing and word recognition method was used, and the ‘reading’ lessons were also used as ‘scripture’ lessons. Lancaster ‘tried to develop a curriculum of moral education based solely on the Scriptures, one that would be acceptable to all Christians. This nondenominational approach to religious education became solidly identified with the Lancasterian movement’.41

The Lancasterian method of education provided for an orderly system of instruction in which discipline was taught and order maintained. It was based on a ‘reward’ and ‘punishment’ system. To encourage good behaviour and good work, ‘rank, badges and orders of merit’ were awarded.42 ‘The promptness, obedience, and other character traits that the system would inculcate were deemed beneficial to the child as well as the society’.43 The children were taught how to behave generally within the School, and this educational system would have complemented the routine and regimentation within the Male Orphan School.

When the Committee met in April 1819 it was reported that the children had been examined, and the members were satisfied with their appearance. Thomas Bowden was complimented in these words: ‘it bespeaks good care and attention on the part of the Master, whose general skills and superintendence is much appreciated’.44

Evidence later provided by Mr Bowden in January 1821 provides us with details about the boys’ daily routine within the School. The boys’ first task

43 Kaestle, p. 17.
44 Male Orphan School Minutes, 15 April 1819, p. 12. SRNSW 4/400.
(presumably after Scripture reading and prayer) was to work in the garden until eight o’clock. Breakfast was then served and they were provided with ‘½ lb bread and a pint of tea with sugar and milk’ for four days each week. On the remaining three mornings plain boiled rice was served ‘with sugar and some milk’. The boiled rice and milk had been introduced at the Committee’s recommendation.

At the meeting on 1 April 1819 it was considered that the substitution ‘of Milk and Rice or Meal for breakfast instead of tea’, should be made in the interests of economy. One would imagine that more nourishment would also be obtained by this substitution. To achieve this outcome, it was recommended that the Governor be approached for the supply of six cows either from the Orphan Institution’s herds, or from the ‘herds belonging to the government’.45

The school day was divided into two sections. From nine to noon the boys received their elementary education in reading, writing and arithmetic. There was a break between noon and two o’clock, and this was a period for their dinner and play. Dinner was quite a substantial meal and on four days of the week the boys each had ‘½ lb of fresh meat, 1 lb potatoes but no bread’.46 On two days of the week the diet consisted of ‘plain suet puddings, allowing ¾ lb flour to each boy’. The choice of ‘fish or ox head soup with pease in it’ was available on the remaining days.47 From two to five the boys were to spend time learning their ‘trade’ subjects.48 At this stage the trades of tailoring and shoemaking were taught, and some of the boys worked in the garden.

Supper was probably served about six o’clock and each boy had half a pound of bread and a pint of tea with milk and sugar. Fresh vegetables were plentiful and were grown by the boys, but potatoes were bought in the market.49

The introduction of shoemaking into the curriculum of the Male Orphan School was bound up with a decision made by the Committee of the Female Orphan School in 1819, when the members decided that the ‘children were to be provided with shoes on the most economical terms’, and the local committee was asked to further investigate this matter.50 There must have been some deliberations about the cheapest way of providing the footwear. In April 1820 the Committee resolved that

45  ibid.
46  Bowden’s evidence to Bigge, 22 January 1821, in BT, Box 8, pp. 3337-3338.
47  ibid., p. 3338.
48  ibid.
49  ibid.
50  Female Orphan School Minutes, 1 September 1819, pp. 37-38.
‘leather be sent to the Male Orphan School to be made up into shoes for both institutions’. 51

When the Committee met in April they received advice from the local committee reporting that the boys’ general health was good. However, it was stated that some of the boys had ‘sore heads’. No further information is available as to the nature of this problem. The Committee expressed its gratitude that a new skills course had been introduced into the curriculum, namely the boys were ‘being taught to plait straw’. This skill was to be associated with the creation or manufacture of ‘straw hats’ which formed part of their summer uniform.

In October 1821 the Committee also discussed the possibility and desirability of having a carpenter on site. Such a tradesman would be able to attend to various maintenance and repair jobs in the school. Furthermore the presence of such a tradesman would be helpful to widen the ‘trades’ or vocational training for some of the boys. They could learn the skills of carpentry, and it was resolved, ‘to approach His Excellency to allow a sober and industrious carpenter to be appointed for that (double) purpose’. 52

 Apparently the Committee had promised the straw hat maker that he would be provided with a suit of slops as soon as the boys had reached ‘a certain degree of proficiency in that trade’. At the 1822 Anniversary Service the boys wore the clothing which they had made, including their straw hats. The Committee honoured its promise at the January meeting and resolved that ‘a shirt, a jacket, pair of trousers and a pair of shoes be made for him’. 53

The boys apparently became very proficient in their ‘trades’ training courses, because when the Male Orphan School had been operating for three years the Master recommended that five of the boys be apprenticed to the school. At the January 1822 meeting the Committee: ‘resolved that Edward Gregory and George Freeman be apprenticed to the Institution as shoemakers, William Gammage as a tailor, James Lees as a carpenter and William Davis as a baker’. 54 Four of these boys had received either medals or an award at the January 1821 Anniversary Ceremony. William Davis was admitted to the Male Orphan School on its opening day in 1819, and was then

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51 FOS Minutes; 19 April 1820, p. 41.
52 Male Orphan School Minutes, 10 October 1821, p. 35.
53 ibid., p. 37.
54 MOS Minutes, 9 January 1822, p. 36.
aged ten. His indenture paper has been preserved in the State Records New South Wales. (See copy on following page).

Thomas Bowden later supplied Commissioner Bigge with details about the staff employed at the Male Orphan School. This information included the sources of their food and their annual salaries.

A list of persons employed at Male Orphan Institution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situations</th>
<th>How Victualled</th>
<th>Salaries (yearly)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Master</td>
<td>From the King’s store</td>
<td>£100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Assistant</td>
<td>From the King’s store</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Shoemaker</td>
<td>From the institution</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Tailor</td>
<td>From the institution</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Cook</td>
<td>From the institution</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Gardener</td>
<td>From the institution</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Washerwoman</td>
<td>From the institution</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Thomas Bowden’s evidence, 29 January 1821, Bigge Report Appendix, in BT, Box 24, pp. 4916-4917.

The Master’s salary was provided from the Colonial Police Fund, and all other salaries were paid by the Orphan Institution. It is interesting to see the wage differential for the female employee.

Mr Bowden obviously continued to carry out his work in a satisfactory manner as Master of the school, because the Committee to show its appreciation granted him a special honorarium for his ‘assiduity, care and attention’. The amount of the honorarium was £15. As Mr Bowden experienced some financial difficulties, he may have been grateful for this practical expression of appreciation.

The Rules and Regulations laid down the number of members of the Committee who were to be appointed and these members also had responsibility for the Female Orphan School. The members appeared to have taken their responsibilities seriously and many matters were considered and recommendations made.

In September 1819, the children’s personal appearance was found to be satisfactory, and the Committee recorded the ‘healthful appearance’ of the boys. This record was made obviously after a visit had been paid to the School. At that meeting

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55 Bigge Report Appendix, in BT, Box 24, pp. 4916-4917.
56 SG Supplement, February 17, 1821, p. 1.
THIS INDENTURE, made the Twenty-fifth Day of September, in the Year of Our Lord One thousand eight hundred and twenty two, between Thomas Borden, of the one Part, and William Davis, of the said School for the time being, being the Trustees of the Male Orphan Institution of New South Wales, of the one Part; and Thomas Borden, Master of the said School for the time being, of the other Part, WITNESSETH, that the said Trustees have put, placed, and bound, and by these Presents do put, place, and bind William Davis to be an Apprentice with him the said Thomas Borden, and as an Apprentice with him the said Thomas Borden, to dwell from the date of these Presents, for and during and until he shall come to the Age of twenty-one Years:—And during all which time and Term the said William Davis shall have the said Thomas Borden, his said Master, well and faithfully serve in all such lawful Business as the said William Davis shall be put unto by the Command of his said Master, according to the Skill, Power, and Ability of him the said William Davis, and shall honestly and obediently in all Things behave himself towards his said Master: he shall do no Damage to his said Master, nor see it done by others; but to his power shall prevent or forbear with give Notice to his said Master of the same: the Goods of his said Master he shall not waste, nor give or lend them unlawfully to any: he shall neither buy nor sell without his Master’s Leave: he shall not haunt Inns, Taverns, or Ale-houses: he shall not play at Cards, Dice, Tables, or any other unlawful Games: he shall not contract Matrimony; nor from the Service of his said Master Day or Night absent himself; and he shall behave himself honestly and orderly towards the Family of his said Master, during the said Term. AND the said Thomas Borden, for his Part, for himself, his Executors and Administrators, doth hereby promise and covenant to and with the said Trustees and every of them, their and every of their Executors and Administrators, and to and with the said William Davis, that he the said Thomas Borden, shall find and allow unto the said Apprentice sufficient Meat, Drink, Apparel, Washing, Lodging, and all other Things needful or meet for an Apprentice, during the Time aforesaid:—And shall allow him to attend Public Protestant Divine Service, once at least on every Sunday. PROVIDED Always, that the said Term or Time shall, at the Pleasure of the aforesaid Trustees, by a Minute to be entered in their Book, and signified in writing to the said Thomas Borden, his Executors and Administrators, be determined immediately upon the Death of the said Thomas Borden, or at any Time before its Expiration, as aforesaid.

IN WITNESS whereof, the said Parties have hereunto set their Hands and Seals, the Day and Year above written.

Sealed and delivered, in the Presence of

[Signature]

[Signature]

[Signature]

[Signature]

Copy of Indenture form apprenticing William Davis to the Male Orphan School in 1822 (original in SRNSW 4/390)
a number of applications requesting the admission of boys were considered, but not all applications were recommended for the Governor’s approval.\footnote{57 MOS Minutes, 1 September 1819, p. 13.}

At a committee meeting in the following year it was suggested that a ‘subordinate local committee’ be established, so that greater attention could be paid to the ‘general superintendence and direction of the Male Orphan Institution’. This action was similar to that taken by the Committee of the Female Orphan Institution after the girls transferred to Arthur’s Hill, where a local committee was appointed. The Rev. William Cowper moved this motion, and Major Antill was willing to second it.\footnote{58 MOS Minutes, 30 March 1820, p. 14.}

The Committee seemingly moved with alacrity, and in April the following gentlemen were requested to act as a special Committee. Three of the men suggested were already members of the Committee appointed by the Governor on 1 January 1819, namely - Mr Judge Advocate Wylde, the Rev. William Cowper and Mr John Palmer. To this group was added the Rev. Richard Hill, Mr William Minchin, Major Antill and Sir John Jamison.\footnote{59 MOS Minutes, 12 April 1820, p. 16.}

In May the Committee received a letter from Dr Redfern indicating that he had tendered ‘his resignation of the Surgeancy of the Male Orphan Institution to the Governor some months previously’. Dr Redfern had ceased his services on 30 November 1819, and had made no claim for salary. Apparently this was the first indication the Committee had received concerning Dr Redfern’s resignation. On 5 May, a communication from Governor Macquarie stated that he had overlooked advising the Committee about the doctor’s resignation, ‘through pressure of work’. Macquarie recommended that ‘Mr George Stephenson Surgeon of 48th Regiment be appointed to the post’. The Committee resolved to accept the Governor’s recommendation,\footnote{60 MOS Minutes, 8 May 1820, pp. 17-19.} and as this appointment had apparently been made in December 1819 without the Committee’s knowledge, the members had little option but to accede to the recommendation.\footnote{61 ibid., p. 19.}

To facilitate a supply of milk for the boys we have noted that a request for cows had been made in April 1819. It was not until May 1820 when the Committee learned that the herd at the Female Orphan Institution was insufficient to meet this
It was then suggested that an approach be made for six cows to be provided from the Government herds. Two months later the Governor advised that one bull and six cows would be available for the use of the Male Orphan Institution, provided that the Committee executed the usual bond.

At the October meeting Sir John Jamison and George T. Palmer advised the Secretary, that they ‘had executed a Bond for six cows and one bull in the name of the Committee’. A letter had been forwarded to the Superintendent of Government Stock but there had been no response. It was not until January 1821 that His Excellency advised that the cows were to be sent to the Female Orphan Farm. The time taken to have this provision made namely twenty-one months seems inordinantly long, and is perhaps a reminder that bureaucratic delays have been part of administrative procedures for many years.

The number of boys to be admitted to the School was limited to fifty under Rule 6 governing the admission of boys devised by Governor Macquarie. This figure had the stipulation ‘for the present’. By October 1820 the Committee, when considering applications for admission, found that boys who were in necessitous circumstances could not be admitted because the School was full. At one meeting six orphans were admitted when special permission was sought from the Patron, but two other applications had to be referred to the chaplain at Parramatta.

This situation continued in 1821, and cases for admission were ‘stood over’ or deferred for later consideration. The Committee was conscious that needy boys were forced to live in unprotected circumstances, and were being denied the provisions which the Male Orphan School could offer them. The feeling of the meeting was expressed in these words:

The present limitation on the whole number of children to be admitted to the Institution is inadequate to local necessities which in conformity with the objects of the foundation might justly be allowed to participate in its benefits ... as several children exceeding the number so limited on the foundation have already with the particular sanction of His Excellency the Patron, been

62 MOS Minutes, 8 May 1820, p. 19.
63 MOS Minutes, 12 July 1820, p. 20.
64 MOS Minutes, 11 October 1820, pp. 21-22.
65 MOS Minutes, 10 January 1821, p. 24.
66 MOS Rules and Regulations, 1819, p. 3.
67 MOS Minutes, 10 January 1821, p. 26.
under the peculiar circumstances of their respective cases admitted into the Institution.\textsuperscript{68}

The Committee resolved to approach the Governor to request that the number of boys to be admitted be increased to eighty children, ‘to which number the present accommodations of the Orphan House are found to be fully equal and sufficient’.\textsuperscript{69} The consent of the Patron appears to have been forthcoming, because applications were approved for more boys’ admissions.\textsuperscript{70}

Whilst life was proceeding at the Orphan Schools, and the Committee was satisfied with the children’s progress, 12,000 miles away Earl Bathurst was making plans for the introduction of Dr Bell’s System of Education into the colony of New South Wales. Earl Bathurst was responding to previous requests for qualified teachers to be sent to the colony, particularly for meeting the educational needs ‘of the Children of Convicts and the Poorer Classes of Free Settlers’. Bathurst was convinced that the System of Education:

\begin{center}

as at present established by Dr Bell in the National Schools in this country, is the best adapted, not only for securing to the rising Generation in New South Wales the Advantages of all necessary Instruction, but also in bringing them up in Habits of Industry and Regularity, and for implanting in their Minds the Principles of the Established Church.\textsuperscript{71}

\end{center}

Earl Bathurst may have chosen Dr Bell’s System for the colony for a variety of reasons. It was obvious that there were insufficient trained teachers to provide elementary education for the children. It was a ‘cheap’ system of education, because monitors were used to instruct younger children. A school so established needed only one master or teacher to instruct the monitors, who then ‘taught’ the lessons to groups of children in different ‘classes’. By appointing a graduate from the National Training College namely the Rev. Thomas Reddall, Earl Bathurst may have envisaged the establishment of a teacher training college in the colony. As the non-conformist

\textsuperscript{68} MOS Minutes, 10 October 1821, pp. 34-35.  
\textsuperscript{69} ibid., p. 35.  
\textsuperscript{70} ibid.  
Lancasterian monitorial system of education was already used by Thomas Bowden at the Male Orphan School, it would appear that Bathurst wanted to ensure that the Church of England, whilst not the Established Church in the English manner, maintained its monopoly in the field of religion, and its extension into education. In 1818 Governor Macquarie had expressed his desire that ‘all persons, sent hither for the purpose of disseminating the Principles of Education should belong to ‘the Established Church’. Apart from Bathurst’s own attitude to this matter, he may also have been responding in a very positive manner to Macquarie’s request.

In the same month that Earl Bathurst informed Governor Macquarie about his intention to introduce Dr Bell’s System of Education to New South Wales, a student of the Central National School in London completed his course of training. Thomas Reddall, who had trained at ‘Alban Hall Oxford in preparation for colonial chaplaincy’, was ordained to the ministry of the Church of England, and his ordination took place in December 1819. He was subsequently appointed as an assistant chaplain to New South Wales and undertook a course of study ‘to become proficient in the Madras system of instruction’. The Rev. Thomas Reddall had been appointed to the joint position of assistant chaplain and schoolmaster. Soon after his arrival in September 1820 ‘with his wife Isabella and seven children’, he introduced the National or Dr Bell’s Monitorial System of Education at the Male Orphan School. It has already been noted in chapter 3 that he also instructed the girls at the Female Orphan School in the same system, for a short period of time. Dr Bell’s System was based on the principle of using monitors, and was similar in methods to the Lancasterian system, which had been introduced by the Master, Thomas Bowden at the opening of the Male Orphan School in January 1819.

The essential difference between Dr Bell’s system and the system devised by Joseph Lancaster, was the close connection by the former with the Established Church, namely the Church of England. The ‘National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Established Church throughout England and Wales’, was formed in 1811, and ‘in 1817 was incorporated by Royal Charter’. In Bell’s System part of each day was spent in learning about the Catechism of the Church of England.

74 ibid.
The religious instruction was therefore closely allied with the doctrines of the Established Church.\textsuperscript{76}

When Earl Bathurst advised Governor Macquarie about Thomas Reddall’s joint appointment as assistant chaplain and schoolmaster, he qualified the second appointment by adding that it was to be ‘for a limited period’. When the system had been established, then the Rev. Reddall would be able to ‘resign in favour of any Individual who may be considered eligible for the Situation’.\textsuperscript{77}

Soon after Mr Reddall’s arrival and appointment to the Male Orphan School, Mr Bowden must have experienced some financial difficulties. He approached the Committee for a loan of £60 which he offered to repay in quarterly instalments of £15. The Committee resolved to grant his request and offered to remit the first quarter’s repayment ‘in consequence of his present peculiar circumstances, and as an acknowledgement of his great attitude to the prosperity of the school’.\textsuperscript{78} This statement and action implies that the Committee was well-pleased with Mr Bowden’s work.

In January 1821 a description of the second anniversary ceremony of the Male Orphan School was provided in the \textit{Sydney Gazette}, and the following words were used: ‘The appearance of the children, sixty in number, exacted a pleasing sensation among the congregation, and they sung, with great sweetness and simplicity two hymns appropriate to the occasion’.\textsuperscript{79} The ceremony was held at St Philip’s Church. The Rev. Mr Reddall displayed items which the boys had made in their tailoring and shoemaking classes. ‘His Excellency, as well as the company present, were pleased to express themselves highly gratified’. The public examination of the boys took place and it was recorded: ‘that the examination was made according to the National System of education, which had recently been introduced by Rev. T. Reddall, in which, for the shortness of time, they had evidently made very good progress’.\textsuperscript{80}

The ceremony provided Governor Macquarie with the opportunity of presenting a number of silver medals to boys who had displayed excellent work. The

\textsuperscript{77} \textit{HRA}, Vol. X, p. 304.
\textsuperscript{78} MOS Minutes, 11 October 1820, p. 23.
\textsuperscript{79} \textit{SG}, January 6, 1821, p. 3.
\textsuperscript{80} MOS Minutes, 10 January 1821, p. 25.
names of the medal recipients have been recorded and they were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Medal</th>
<th>Best Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>James Lees</td>
<td>Medal</td>
<td>best writer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edward Gregory</td>
<td>Medal</td>
<td>best reader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Horner</td>
<td>Medal</td>
<td>best arithmetician</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles Gregory</td>
<td>Medal</td>
<td>best tailor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Davis</td>
<td>Medal</td>
<td>best gardener and good conduct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Flood</td>
<td>Medal</td>
<td>best shoemaker.(^{81})</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The medal presented to James Flood has been preserved, and is at present in a collection of memorabilia housed in the Power House Museum at Ultimo. (See photograph on the following page). James’ achievement seems quite remarkable, because when he received the medal as the best shoemaker he was only eleven years old. In the Admission Book of the Male Orphan School James Flood was enrolled at the opening of the school, and his age at admission was given as nine years.\(^{82}\)

The work done by twelve other boys was recognised at the second anniversary service, and they were presented with ‘awards of Books on Religion and Moral Subjects’. The names of these recipients were: John Jones, William Gammage, George Stubbs, James Chapman, Richard Gardner, George Wall, John Thomas, Francis Stewart, Richard Fury, Simon Watling, Thomas Dawsey and George Garland.\(^{83}\)

The Committee was so impressed with the boys’ progress, particularly in view of the short time that the National System had been in operation, that the members resolved to put workshops for tailoring and shoemaking into the School. The committee members were able to view a plan ‘which had been certified by the chief engineer’, and the estimated cost of those workshops was seventy eight pounds fifteen shillings. The Committee decided that those workshops should be installed without delay.\(^{84}\)

In the Annual Report of the Male Orphan School prepared by the Master Thomas Bowden, and presented on 1 January 1821, details were provided concerning educational improvements which had been shown by the boys. The School was organised into four classes with nineteen, twenty-four, seven and seven pupils respectively. It was recorded that on admission to the School, only eleven pupils had

\(^{81}\) ibid.
\(^{82}\) MOS Admission Book (1819-1833), 1 January 1819, p. 1.
\(^{83}\) MOS Minutes, 10 January 1821, p. 25.
\(^{84}\) ibid., p. 26.
Silver medal presented to James Flood for the best shoemaker, 1st January 1821. (Collection: Powerhouse Museum, Sydney N12477)
a knowledge of writing and arithmetic. However by 1 January 1821, thirty-nine boys had gained reasonable knowledge in these two subjects.

It was also reported that improvements had taken place in the pupils’ ability to read the Bible. On admission only fourteen boys were capable of reading the Scriptures, but at the time of the Report forty boys were able to read the Bible. This document was signed by Thomas Bowden Master, and T. Bowden Jnr. as assistant. By looking at the co-signatories to the report we find that Thomas junior was following in his father’s professional footsteps. This was an exciting and progressive time at the Male Orphan School. The boys were making satisfactory if not good progress in their school subjects as well as their chosen ‘trade’ or vocational subjects.

It was intended as we have read from Earl Bathurst’s communiqué to Governor Macquarie in May 1820, to establish Dr Bell’s National Schools in the colony. Furthermore it was probably envisaged that a sufficient number of teachers would be trained in Dr Bell’s Monitorial System, and they in turn would instruct the youth of the colony, the ‘rising generation’. The Rev. Thomas Reddall had acquired a residence at Macquarie Fields known as ‘Meehan’s Castle’, which he opened as a school. The Governor’s son Lachlan, who was born in March 1814 attended this school, together with Lieutenant-Governor Sorrell’s son from Hobart.

In his report on the state of the colony of New South Wales, Commissioner Bigge wrote in a positive vein about the progress of the boys at the Male Orphan School. He considered that the boys had made creditable progress under Mr Bowden’s superintendency, and added that: ‘Mr Bowden the Master has been much assisted by the later instruction of Rev. Mr Reddall, especially appointed to introduce the system (i.e. Dr Bell’s National System) into the schools of New South Wales’. Commissioner Bigge made a recommendation that boys who had made greater progress, one presumes as monitors in the Male Orphan School, be trained ‘to become teachers in other schools’. This proposal was supported by Governor Macquarie, who was concerned about the dearth of qualified teachers.

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85 State of the Male Orphan School, 1821, in BT, Box 25, p. 5521.
88 J.T. Bigge, Report on the State of Agriculture and Trade in the Colony of New South Wales, (Printed 7th July, 1823), p. 71. (ML)
Macquarie expressed his ideas to the Committee of the Male Orphan School, and in January 1821 the Governor’s letter was considered at a special meeting convened to examine the proposal, which was in effect for the ‘Rev. Mr Reddall to remove to his residence in the country, twelve of the boys from the Male Orphan School at Sydney for the purpose of being instructed by Rev. Mr Reddall in Dr Bell’s system’. Governor Macquarie had requested that the Committee give the matter its deliberation, and report its findings to him.\(^{89}\)

The Committee considered the ‘pros and cons’ of the proposal, and it appears that the members may have misunderstood the purpose of the boys’ teacher training. The original recommendation was for them ‘to become teachers in other schools’. However the Committee formed the opinion that the boys would return to the Male Orphan School at the conclusion of their period of training. This is stated in the deliberation in these words:

> Boys would be in danger of acquiring Habits of liberty which at present they are, unaccustomed to, and which on their return might seriously affect the future good order of the School; the master would be quite unacquainted with the system, and consequently must be taught by the boys themselves.\(^{90}\)

The Committee also expressed another concern with which schools and teachers even in this age can sympathise, namely the loss of the best students. The Committee gave voice to this attitude: ‘if twelve of the boys were removed, they being the best as assistants in the School, and in the different trades, the School would be disorganised’.\(^{91}\)

The Committee’s concern that the ‘master would be quite unacquainted with the system’ does not seem to be justified. Commissioner Bigge had stated that the Master Mr Bowden had received instruction by the Rev. Reddall in Dr Bell’s Monitorial System. One would think that the committee members would have been well aware that Mr Bowden had received this instruction.

The Committee considered that if the boys remained in the School, they could under Mr Reddall’s instruction, become ‘sufficiently instructed in the system of Dr

\(^{89}\) MOS Minutes, Special Meeting, 25 January 1821, p. 27.

\(^{90}\) ibid., p. 29.

\(^{91}\) ibid.
Bell in about six weeks’. This seems a remarkably short period of time for the boys’ ‘teacher training’ course, and the Committee appears to have underestimated the time requirements. It would appear that the Rev. Reddall possibly spent five months at the Central National School in London in his period of teacher-training and he was a mature-age student.

The resolution of the Committee was that the boys remain in the School, and that ‘some compensation be made to Rev. Reddall for his detention in Sydney’. This resolution of course defeated the purpose of the original proposal, and through a misunderstanding the Male Orphan School boys were unable to be included in the colony’s projected first teacher training establishment, which would have been of a residential nature. The ‘total institution’ concept which the Committee embraced for the Male Orphan School meant that it did not want the boys to mix with the outside community.

On 16 March 1821, the Rev. Reddall advised the Governor that:

As the Male Orphan School is now regularly organized in Dr Bell’s System of Education, and the happy effects always produced in a well ordered school, as the plan being daily experienced in the comfort, order and general improvement of the Children he requested a supply of materials in order to extend the National System in the colony. The list of materials which formed a sub-enclosure makes interesting reading:

100 Bibles; 100 Testaments; 1000 small slates; 2000 slate pencils; 50 dozen black lead pencils; 1000 complete set of books, including the cards used in the system; 1000 stereotyped cards of monosyllables; 1000 cards of written characters; 1000 cards of figures; 48 Bell’s Instructions to be given to Masters and Mistresses, 200 Prayer Books, Books for Rewards and Encouragement, a supply of paper and quills.

From this long list of requirements one can gain an insight into the possible operation and methods of instruction used in the ‘class’ rooms. Religious instruction

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92 ibid.
94 MOS Minutes, Special Meeting, 28 January 1821, p. 29.
was to be provided by using Bibles, Testaments and Prayer Books. The younger children were provided with slates and slate pencils to do their work. Pencils, quills and paper were probably used by the more advanced older students, and also by the Master or Mistress for keeping students’ records. It would appear that sets of cards for the spelling, writing and arithmetic classes were accompanied by instruction books, and these may have guided the monitors as they taught the younger children. Manuals were available for the teachers. These may have contained details about the operation of schools and particularly the training of the monitors, who were involved in the face-to-face instruction and the order to be maintained in the ‘classes’.

Also at this meeting the Committee agreed on the amount of compensation to be paid to the Rev. Reddall, following its decision in January to request him to remain in Sydney. The sum of thirty pounds was to be paid to the Rev. Reddall as ‘compensation for his increased domestic expenses during his continued residence in Sydney’. 96

When Governor Macquarie had overlooked advising the Committee about Dr Redfern’s resignation, reference was made to ‘pressure of work’. This pressure may have been associated with the presence of Commissioner Bigge in the colony. In chapter 3 we have noted that Macquarie’s attitude to emancipists was not acceptable to the Rev. Marsden and other members of the colonial establishment. They were not prepared to accept the emancipists on an equal social footing. Also officials in London had received letters from colonists about aspects of Macquarie’s administration.

Earl Bathurst, whilst approving of Macquarie’s actions as far as emancipists were concerned in principle, sounded a note of caution if not warning, when he considered some of Macquarie’s actions. He wrote:

His Majesty’s Government entirely concur with you in propriety of the general principle. … but this principle may be carried too far, and I confess that I am not yet prepared to say that it would be judicious, unless under very peculiar circumstances, to select Convicts for the office of Magistrates. 97

96 MOS Minutes, 11 April, 1821, p. 32.
It has already been indicated that Governor Macquarie not only appointed a number of ex-convicts to various positions of authority, but he and his wife invited some of the emancipists to social functions at Government House. Some of the emancipists to whom the Macquaries gave public recognition were: Dr William Redfern, Simeon Lord, Andrew Thompson, James Meehan, Richard Fitzgerald, Francis Greenway and Michael Massey Robinson. This recognition offended many of the free settlers, and those who had served in the military. Earl Bathurst realised that Macquarie was engendering hostility with the free settlers and ‘exclusives’, and he tried to indicate to the Governor the problems which were being brought about by his actions. Bathurst wrote to Macquarie that ‘It would be but useless, if indeed it were a practical task to compel persons to associate with those whom they may dislike or despise’.98

In addition to these actions which were perceived by some colonists as showing undue favour to emancipists, Macquarie also made decisions with which some colonists strongly disagreed. Those who found his behaviour autocratic, and resented his decisions on other issues such as the dismissal of officials, his policy of land grants and his expenditure on public buildings, made their objections known to public figures in England. In response to these letters, in 1817 Earl Bathurst wrote four despatches to Macquarie which severely criticised his administration. Macquarie took umbrage to these despatches and wrote a letter of resignation towards the end of 1817.99

Macquarie also expressed regret at what appeared to be a change in Bathurst’s attitude towards him. He wrote:

and certainly the most gratifying reward I could possibly receive or look for, was the approbation of my Sovereign and his Minsters on the termination of my Government of this colony. Having lost this, I lose all that I have been so long in labouring for with so much anxiety, fatigue of body, and distress of mind, for I have certainly not added to either my rank or fortune by my eight years of hard service in New South Wales; consequently all that is now left to console me is an approving conscience.100

98 ibid., p. 135.
99 ibid., Introduction, p. xviii.
100 Macquarie to Bathurst, 4 December 1817, in HRA, Vol. IX, , p. 500.
There appears to be have been some disquiet in England about aspects of Macquarie’s administration, and this was brought to the fore when a Member of Parliament, the Hon. H. Grey Bennet, member for Westminster, wrote a general letter which was later published in a pamphlet form. Bennet attacked ‘the Governor’s arbitrary exercise of power. One of his informants was the senior chaplain of New South Wales the Rev. Samuel Marsden. Bennet demanded a committee of inquiry’.  

Earl Bathurst was also exercised about the deterrent effects of transportation and feared that:

New South Wales was not serving its purpose as a ‘receptacle for offenders, in which crimes may be expiated, at a distance from home, by punishments sufficiently severe to deter others from the commission of crimes, and so regulated as to operate the reform of the persons by whom they had been committed’.

These fears expressed by Bathurst, together with the concerns about Governor Macquarie’s administration, led to the decision to have an extensive inquiry undertaken into a wide range of matters in the colony.

The man chosen to conduct the inquiry was John Thomas Bigge. He had been called to the Bar in 1806, and had been ‘nominated as chief justice of Trinidad in 1814 for four years’. His salary as Commissioner was fixed at £3000 a year, this was greater by £1000 than the Governor’s salary. He was given extensive powers to undertake his inquiry into the affairs of New South Wales. Furthermore, Bigge had the power to overrule the Governor in all matters, and ‘every soul was enjoined to assist him in the execution of his investigation’.

Bigge’s brief or commission was to:

examine into all the laws, regulations and usages of the settlement … and its dependencies, and into every other matter or thing in any way connected with the administration of the Civil Government, the superintendence and reform of the convicts, the state of

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104 Ritchie, Lachlan Macquarie, p. 167.
judicial, civil and ecclesiastical establishments, revenues, trade and internal resources thereof.  

Commissioner Bigge chose as his ‘secretary’ Thomas Hobbes Scott, whose sister Charlotte had married Thomas Hanway Bigge, a brother of the Commissioner. Scott’s salary was set at £500 a year. He was later to become involved in New South Wales church, educational and Orphan Schools’ affairs. It has been said that Mr Bigge was a relative of Mr Grey Bennet, and that his appointment was made because Mr Bennet had exercised his influence. If the selection of the two men to conduct the inquiry were not examples of nepotism, then there were certainly family ties between some of the principal players.

Commissioner Bigge arrived in Sydney via the John Barry on 26 September 1819. He undertook his inquiry about all aspects of the colony by interviewing many witnesses. This evidence was often taken on an informal manner, and witnesses were not cross-examined. ‘No rules, let alone rules of evidence, were observed’. The methods employed by Bigge in gaining evidence appear to be at variance with established legal procedures, and as he was an experienced barrister it is hard to understand why he adopted these practices.

It has been stated of Bigge that he

had an acute mind, as well as a sardonic wit which was occasionally spiced with malice; ... was given to neatness, precision, moderation and elegant understatement. ... Opposed to radicalism, he defended property as an attribute of character; ... Kind and civil, calm and sensible, competent and capable, ... but was so tenacious of his convictions that he would brook no opposition. ... In so many ways he was the antithesis of Macquarie.

Commissioner Bigge had completed his work to examine and report on all matters within the colony, and after delays caused by contrary winds and a sandbank, he and his secretary Thomas Hobbes Scott sailed away from Port Jackson in February

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106 Ellis, Lachlan Macquarie, p. 483.
107 Bennett, Bigge, John Thomas, ADB, p. 99.
Governor Macquarie advised Earl Bathurst of their departure in these words: ‘Commissioner Bigge and his secretary sailed from hence in His Majesty’s Storeship *Dromedary* on the 14th of last month both in perfectly good health’.110

Bigge was opposed to many of Governor Macquarie’s actions. The Report which Commissioner Bigge presented on the state of affairs as he found them in New South Wales was negative in many respects, and he made a number of recommendations. However his report was generally positive as far as the Orphan Institutions were concerned.

Bigge considered that there was ‘much to commend in the conduct of the Male Orphan School at Sydney’. However, he expressed concern about the situation of the institution, in terms of its capacity to accommodate more boys, and its nearness ‘to the swampy bank of the rivulet that discharges itself into Sydney Cove’. The ‘rivulet’ was the Tank Stream which formed the eastern boundary of the premises. Commissioner Bigge suggested that it would be of benefit if the boys were moved to the area which he called ‘the farm near Parramatta’.111

Bigge’s thoughts about the future of the youth of the colony extended beyond the boys in the Male Orphan School. He recommended that a central school ‘large enough to contain 300 boys under fifteen years of age’, should be established on the ‘estate belonging to the Female Orphan School near Parramatta’. Although he had referred to the twelve thousand three hundred acre grant at Cabramatta, which had been made by Governor King, in his report on page 39, he did not name that district in his later recommendation. The farm estate was three miles to the west of Liverpool and approximately ten miles from Parramatta.

Commissioner Bigge proposed that in addition to a school a farm should be established for boys, ‘from the age of fifteen to twenty, in which they could be taught the cultivation and fencing of land and more especially the management of sheep and cattle’.112 He thought that some of the farming practices of the ex-convict settlers were poor and unproductive, and these methods were being passed on to their sons.

Bigge stated that 1500 acres of land ‘were in a good situation’ on the Female Orphan School estate. Furthermore, Bigge concluded that by ‘removing the Male Orphan School to the neighbourhood of Parramatta much advantage will be gained by

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109 ibid., p. 178.
112 ibid., pp. 74-75.
its central position’. He perceived that the advantage would be easier access to the Female and Male Orphan Schools, so that more frequent inspections of the Schools and the children would be possible. The Schools at Sydney and Parramatta were then approximately twenty to twenty-five miles apart. If the Male Orphan School was relocated to Cabramatta the Schools would be closer to one another.

Commissioner Bigge must have had second thoughts about the school for 300 boys in terms of the desirability of a school of that size in the first instance, and the construction of a building which would be required to ‘accommodate that number’. He wrote: ‘in the first instance it may not be desirable to augment the numbers of the school to three hundred’. He also considered the type of material for such an establishment and concluded that, ‘it does not appear to be necessary to construct the buildings of stone or brick, except in laying the foundations, and raising them very slightly above the surface’.

Although Macquarie had written to Earl Bathurst in December 1817 offering his resignation, he had not received any acknowledgement. It would appear that the despatch including the reply from Bathurst was ‘lost’. Bathurst had replied in October 1818, but ‘chance led this letter astray’. Feeling frustrated Governor Macquarie again wrote to Earl Bathurst and stated: ‘I must confess, my Lord, I am now heartily tired of my situation here, and anxiously wish to retire from public life as soon as possible’. In a despatch dated 14 July 1821 Bathurst advised Macquarie that he had ‘thought it incumbent upon him to submit your request to the King, and have the honour to acquaint you that His Majesty has been graciously pleased to accept your resignation’.

Major-General Sir Thomas Brisbane requested to be appointed to the position of Governor of New South Wales in August 1820, when he became aware of Macquarie’s resignation. By November a decision had been reached to appoint Brisbane as the sixth Governor of the colony and its territories. Brisbane left England

113 ibid., p. 72.
114 ibid., p. 75.
115 Ritchie, Lachlan Macquarie, p. 166.
117 Bathurst to Macquarie, 14 July 1821, in ibid., p. 315.
in May 1821 on board the ship *Royal George*, and arrived at Port Jackson on 7 November 1821.\(^{118}\)

In January 1822 one of Macquarie’s final duties was to attend the Anniversary Service of the Male Orphan School. The service was advertised in a Supplement of the *Sydney Gazette* in these words:

> After the sermon, the Boys will be examined in their respective branches of Learning according to Dr Bell’s System of Education; and specimens will be exhibited of their proficiency in the trades now taught, when Silver Medals, suitably inscribed, and other Rewards, will be presented by His Excellency to the most Deserving.\(^ {119}\)

An eye witness at the Anniversary Service reported that he saw the whole of the school attired in clothing which the boys had made. He considered that four boys in particular had made their clothing, jackets, trousers, shirts and straw hats, very well. Apart from the four boys mentioned, the rest of the boys wore shirts which had been made in the Female Orphan School. Samples of the work from the boys’ School was taken by Lachlan Macquarie on his return to England.\(^ {120}\)

Lachlan Macquarie left the colony with his wife Elizabeth and son Lachlan on 15 February 1822 on board the *Surrey*.\(^ {121}\) Some of the work from the Male Orphan School was later presented to Earl Bathurst, and Major-General Macquarie made these comments:

> They … are also instructed in some of the most simple and useful Trades suitable to their years, such as Tailoring and Shoe-making; and as specimens of their proficiency in those two Trades, I take the liberty of sending for your Lordship’s inspection a Box containing some articles of Dress and shoes made by the Boys belonging to the Institution, none of whom exceed thirteen years of age.\(^ {122}\)

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\(^{118}\) Ritchie, *Lachlan Macquarie*, p. 185.  
\(^{119}\) *SG* Supplement, December 29, 1821, p. 2.  
\(^{120}\) Rev. Hill to the Bishop of London, March 1822, in BT, Box 52, p. 1095.  
Macquarie took with him not only samples of the boys’ work, but a deep sense of satisfaction from some of the outcomes of the Male Orphan School. In his administration Macquarie had expressed the emotions he experienced when he had seen the neglected state of many of the boys in the colony, as those of ‘regret and compassion’. During his period in the colony he had been responsible for the establishment of the long-awaited Male Orphan School, and a number of boys in necessitous circumstances had been enrolled in this institution. Macquarie had displayed genuine philanthropy in establishing the second School to cater for ‘orphan’ and neglected children.

The School had met some of its objectives by providing poor, neglected boys with food, clothing, shelter and elementary education. Vocational training was also provided for the boys in some trades, and the number of these had been increased. This training could have provided them with skills to obtain further training in these trades, or to obtain skilled or semi-skilled employment. The boys were able to be apprenticed both internally and externally and were able to proceed to later employment.

The Committee was composed of men who appear to have taken a genuine interest in the boys’ well-being. In accordance with Governor Macquarie’s Rules and Regulations, an overriding consideration appears to have been the boys’ health - with regard to adequate diet, exercise and recreational pursuits and medical care, and the Committee accepted these as its responsibilities. The Committee gave its attention to a variety of issues in the school and their administration appears to have been efficient.

Committee members had Macquarie’s Rules and Regulations to assist them in the governance of the institution, but perhaps more importantly they were motivated by patriarchal values to benefit the ‘rising generation’. Despite these motives however, the committee members’ decision to keep the boys from the rest of society in a ‘closed’ institution, and their unwillingness to allow the boys to train as teachers with the Rev. Reddall, was an impediment to the supply of trained teachers.