CHAPTER 5

INTERLUDE - THE MALE AND FEMALE ORPHAN SCHOOLS IN THE POST-MACQUARIE PERIOD

At the close of Macquarie’s governorship the Orphan Schools were well-established institutions providing care, education and training for children who had been in necessitous circumstances. Governor Macquarie had taken an active interest in both Schools, and the minutes of committee meetings attest to frequent communication between the Governor and the Committees on a wide range of issues.

In the post-Macquarie period a number of changes took place in terms of: the Governor’s approach to administration, the introduction of a payment by results system in the Male Orphan School, the relocation of the Male Orphan School to Cabramatta, the Rev. Reddall’s association with the Schools, the positions of Matron and Master at the Schools, and the Governor’s dismissal of the committee members. These changes had an impact on the Schools and these will be examined.

The ‘voices’ of the children are heard for the first time in this chapter. The reasons leading to this occurrence and the outcomes will engage our attention, as well as the many deliberations made by the Committees.

Sir Thomas Brisbane, like his predecessor Lachlan Macquarie, was a Scotsman with a military background. Brisbane was born in Ayrshire on 23 July 1773 at Brisbane House. He was enrolled at the University of Edinburgh, and later at the English Academy. He developed a great interest in mathematics and astronomy, and later built the second observatory in Scotland at Brisbane House in 1808.1

In 1789 at the age of sixteen years, he attained the rank of ensign in the 38th Regiment. By 1792 he had gained the rank of lieutenant, and the following year he joined the 53rd Regiment with the rank of captain. Between the years 1795 to 1803 he served in the West Indies and attained the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel.2

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2 Historical Records of Australia, Series 1, Vol. XII, Introduction, p. viii.
Brisbane later saw service in the Peninsular War, and was knighted (KCB) in 1814. During the following three years he was part of the army of occupation in France, and was commander of a division. Following this service he married Anne Marie Makdougall in 1819. Anne was the eldest daughter and heiress of Sir Henry Hall Makdougall, and Brisbane added the name Makdougall to his own by letters patent in 1826 following his period of administration in New South Wales.3

Sir Thomas Brisbane has been described as a sensitive, reserved, pious, honourable, mild, pleasant and courteous gentleman. ‘His paternal aunt Lady D’Arcy Maxwell of Pollock, a strict and strongminded follower of the first Scottish Methodists’4 had an important effect on his life.

With his military background, his interest in mathematics and astronomy and his personality traits, Brisbane was faced with a complex society in the colony. The conflict between the exclusives and emancipists was rife; there were those who would question his decisions; there was agitation by prosperous settlers and merchants for political and social power, in addition to the economic power they already possessed.

Sir Thomas Brisbane received his commission in March 1821 when Earl Bathurst advised him of his appointment in these words:

Herewith I transmit to you His Majesty’s Commission under the Great Seal, appointing you Captain General and Governor in Chief in and over the Territory of New South Wales and its Dependencies, together with the Instructions under the Royal Sign Manual for your guidance in that Department.5

Governor Brisbane who commenced his period of service on 1 December 1821, had a very different approach to the administration of the colony than his predecessor. Sir Thomas Brisbane resided in Government House at Parramatta, and visited Sydney only once a week for ‘the despatch of business’. Brisbane did not have the ‘hands on’ approach which Lachlan Macquarie had displayed during his term as Governor. Brisbane left much of the administration in the hands of Major Frederick Goulburn who had been appointed to the position of Colonial Secretary early in 1821, and the administrative centre of the colony was at Sydney.6 The Governor’s attitude

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3 Heydon, p. 151.
5 Bathurst to Brisbane, 30 March 1821, in *HRA*, Vol. X, p. 496.
to the details of administration was to cause him difficulties in the future. This situation was compounded by the fact that in his early years he was without the assistance of a private secretary. 7 His aide-de-camp helped with correspondence, and his sister-in-law Miss Mako Douglas, who had accompanied the family to New South Wales, gave assistance by copying documents and letters. 8

By early April 1822 Governor Brisbane had made some observations about the Orphan Schools, and gave consideration to the possible future directions of them. He conveyed his thoughts to Earl Bathurst by writing to him at some length:

There are no institutions in this Colony of more gratifying promise than the two Orphan Schools; established of twenty years growth retarded only in their advance to maturity from the want of a competent Master and Matron. These appointments are borne in the Estimates, and from the Orphan Fund at present in a most flourishing condition ... those Salaries could be further increased so as to afford ample incitement to many a regular bred married clergyman to devote the remainder of his days to instilling into the minds of the youth of both Sexes, those principles of Religion and Virtue which, ensuring the future happiness of this young Colony, would render her at the same time one of the ornaments of the Parent State. Under the influence of these feelings I submit the entreaty that those appointments may be filled for the future by married Clergymen of your Lordship's selection. 9

This despatch makes interesting reading. Whilst speaking highly of the present state of the Orphan Schools, Governor Brisbane appeared to have some reservations about the people who occupied the posts of Master and Matron by use of his phrase 'from the want of a competent Master and Matron'. Brisbane also realised the importance of such positions in the institutions. There was no Master at the Female Orphan School, but Mrs Ward appeared to be coping satisfactorily as Matron. At the Male Orphan School Thomas Bowden continued to hold the position of Master. Mr Bowden was a practising Methodist and Mrs Ward's religious beliefs are unknown. The Governor's suggestion about the appointment of a married clergyman 'so that the Principles of Religion could be instilled into the minds of the boys and

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girls’, implied that he may have considered that sufficient or appropriate religious instruction was not being provided in the Schools. He thought that a clergyman would be well equipped to provide the necessary instruction. Furthermore, he recognised the desirability of a long term occupancy of the position of Master or Superintendent by a clergyman.

When giving evidence to Commissioner Bigge, the Rev. Samuel Marsden had indicated that he considered that members of the clergy should be in residence at the Orphan Schools, so as to provide supervision for these institutions. Marsden suggested that the Rev. Richard Hill should be appointed to the Female Institution, and that the Rev. Thomas Reddall would be a suitable person for the Male Institution.  

Perhaps Governor Brisbane was cognizant of Marden’s thoughts about the superintendence of the Orphan Institutions.

Meanwhile the Committees of the Orphan Schools continued with their management duties and oversight of these institutions. An interesting reward system was to be introduced into the Male Orphan School and decisions about this were made at the committee meeting held on 17 April 1822. It was considered appropriate ‘of allowing some stimulus for the Masters to bring forward the boys in their respective trades’. This system is perhaps better known by the term ‘payment by results’. Additional payments were to be offered initially to the shoemaker in an attempt to increase the efficiency of the boys in his trade classes. When a boy could ‘cut out and complete a pair of shoes in two days to the satisfaction of the Committee’, then the shoemaker was to receive an extra payment, a gratuity of £3. When a second boy reached the same degree of proficiency the gratuity of £2 was to be paid. When any subsequent boys could perfectly finish shoes in the given time, that is in two days, a payment of £1 was to be received by the shoemaker.  

Similar payments were extended to the tailor. In his case the boy had to cut out and make up a complete suit consisting of a jacket, waistcoat and a pair of trousers in a period of five days. The tailor was to receive the same scale of gratuity as the shoemaker. The Committee also considered that it ‘appears expedient and

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10 Marsden to Bigge, 18 March 1821, in Bonwick Transcripts, Box 27, p. 6365. Mitchell Library.
proper that the Carpenter and Baker should also be allowed some gratuity to encourage them in their respective trades’.\textsuperscript{12}

When the Committee held its next meeting at the Male Orphan School, a decision was made concerning the baker, and it resolved that: the baker should be encouraged to ‘accelerate the improvement of the Child in his trade’. If the School Master was satisfied that the apprentice ‘was capable of making good bread, fit for the use of the Institution’, and that he had performed that task for the preceding quarter, then the baker would be entitled to receive ‘twenty five shillings per quarter in addition to his wages’.\textsuperscript{13} It was also resolved that at the next meeting consideration be given to ways of encouraging the carpenter in his task with the apprentice in his charge.

After the decision was made ‘to encourage the Baker’, there appears to have been a ‘change of heart’ by the committee members. It would seem that information was given at the meeting to account for the ‘change’, and reference is made about an investigation into:

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the conduct of James Jarvis the Baker of the Institution and Elizabeth his wife who are assigned servants to the Establishment, that the behaviour of both them had been disgraceful in the highest degree, injurious to the Morals of the Children, and subversive to the order of discipline.\textsuperscript{14}
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As the appointment of the baker’s wife Elizabeth to the staff had only taken place in April, it can be assumed that the baker’s conduct had been considered satisfactory at that point in time. It is not known what the nature of their ‘disgraceful behaviour’ had been, but it was of a sufficiently grave nature to cause the Committee serious concern, and was apparently considered detrimental to the boys.

Three members of the Committee, who were also magistrates namely the Rev. Samuel Marsden, Sir John Jamison and John Palmer Esq., ordered that James Jarvis be placed ‘in the custody of a Constable to be conveyed to the Gangs at work at Emu Plains’. His wife was to be delivered to the Female Factory, which was situated at Parramatta.\textsuperscript{15}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{12} ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{13} MOS Minutes, 10 July 1822, p. 42.
\item \textsuperscript{14} ibid., p. 43.
\item \textsuperscript{15} ibid.
\end{itemize}
We have noted that the Committee of the Male Orphan School at its July meeting decided to consider ways of encouraging the carpenter in his work by possibly making an allowance to him. It was decided at that meeting to apprentice James Chapman to him. James was one of the original boys admitted at the opening of the school, and he was twelve years old when apprenticed.\textsuperscript{16} Apparently the Committee was satisfied with the carpenter’s work and tuition, and in January 1823 it was resolved to pay the carpenter ‘a gratuity of £3 for his good behaviour’.\textsuperscript{17}

Resolutions were passed at the July meeting to ratify the decision made in April 1822 about gratuities for the shoemaker and tailor. It was resolved that the shoemaker was entitled to the apprenticeship prizes as well as the gratuities ‘for bringing an apprentice forward in his trade’. The boys named were James Flood the shoemaker medallist in January 1821, and George Freeman. The shoemaker received the sum of seven pounds. The tailor was considered eligible for the apprenticeship prize, and he received three pounds.\textsuperscript{18}

The carpentry apprentice James Lees, who had received the medal for ‘best writer’ at the Anniversary Service in January 1821, was also competent as far as woodwork was concerned. He had made a desk at the School in 1822, and this ‘was presented to the Secretary’.\textsuperscript{19} The tailor was found to be entitled ‘to his premium of two pounds’, because his second apprentice had reached a suitable degree of proficiency. The carpenter was to receive a ‘gratuity of two pounds for further good behaviour’.\textsuperscript{20}

The girls had transferred to a specially erected commodious residence in 1818, in which Macquarie had taken great pride, but alterations and additional work to the building were soon perceived to be necessary to rectify inadequacies in the buildings. Between November 1822 and August 1823 matters pertaining to building alterations were raised at committee meetings, because the Committee wanted the buildings to be satisfactory for the girls’ benefit. The original contractor Mr Watkins, had failed to

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\item\textsuperscript{16} MOS Minutes, 10 July 1822, p. 42.
\item\textsuperscript{17} MOS Minutes, 6 January 1823, p. 53.
\item\textsuperscript{18} MOS Minutes, 9 July 1823, p. 56.
\item\textsuperscript{19} MOS Minutes, 8 October 1823, p. 64.
\item\textsuperscript{20} ibid.
\end{itemize}
finish the necessary alterations under his contract, and was paid a third instalment of £384.  

Another contractor, Mr Smith, was engaged to finalise the work.  It must have been with a sense of relief that the Committee learnt that Smith had completed the outstanding work, including supplying a new kitchen with dressers.  In all Mr Smith’s work totalled £1233 16s 11d and the final balance payment was made to him in August.

The time devoted in meetings over a period of many months to have the buildings altered so that they would be satisfactory, is an indication of the Committee’s concern that the girls would be accommodated in adequately functioning buildings.

Meanwhile at the Male Orphan School problems were evident with the building, and Mr Greenway’s professional opinion had been sought.  A Special Meeting was to be held on 19 June, and was advertised in the *Sydney Gazette*.  The purpose of the meeting was to ‘take into consideration a report of Mr Greenway relative to the present state of the Building’.  Mr Greenway’s letter was tabled and it read:

Having according to your request surveyed the front wall of the Male Orphan School House, I find it in a very dangerous State and requiring immediate attention.  I recommend that it be shored up from the foundation to the Roof on the inside tabing the ends of the joists, so that all present danger may be avoided, and the Building secured with Pilasters and otherwise.

One imagines that there was much deliberation as the Committee digested this information.  The building occupied by the boys had probably been erected in 1800.  It was not built to be used as an institution, therefore the building had been enlarged and modified to accommodate the girls.  After the girls transferred to Arthur’s Hill, the house was subject to repairs and renovations in order to accommodate thirty boys.

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21 Female Orphan School Minutes, 13 November 1822, pp. 91-92.  SRNSW 4/403.
22 FOS Minutes, 12 November 1823, pp. 108.
23 FOS Minutes, 11 December 1822, pp. 93-94.
24 FOS Minutes, 12 February 1823, p. 97; FOS Minutes, Special Meeting, 15 April 1823, p. 100.
25 FOS Minutes, 12 November 1823, p. 108.
26 *Sydney Gazette*, June 7, 1822, p. 1.
27 MOS Minutes, Special Meeting, 19 June 1822, p. 41.
at its opening in January 1819. The members agreed that ‘the present building is unhealthy’ and seemingly, ‘it would be in every point of view, for the advantage of the Children, that the School be removed to the Female Orphan School Farm, as soon as buildings can be erected’.\textsuperscript{28} Having made this decision the Committee then discussed how their plans could be put into effect. A sub-committee consisting of the Rev. Samuel Marsden, Sir John Jamison and George T. Palmer was appointed to communicate with the Female Orphan School Committee. It was envisaged that the sub-committee would negotiate not only about the occupancy of the Farm, but also ‘to determine on a plan, to make arrangements for the erection of suitable buildings for the removal of the School, with the least possible delay’.\textsuperscript{29}

At a Special Meeting held on 22 August 1822 the Rev. Samuel Marsden gave a report about the future location of the Male School. The Female Orphan School Committee had agreed to the proposal that the Male School should be located on the estate at Cabramatta. It was considered:

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that a quadrangle of log buildings, which may afterwards be converted to outhouses could be erected most cheaply and expeditiously. It was resolved that it be referred to Rev. S. Marsden, Mr Justice Field, and Major Antill, to contract for and plan the erection of such buildings forthwith on such part of the Farm as they shall think fit.\textsuperscript{30}
\end{quote}

As the Female Orphan School Committee had agreed to the Male Orphan School being erected on the Farm estate at Cabramatta, it is appropriate to reflect on the development of this asset from the initial grant of the land, to the decision made in November 1822, to have the Male Orphan School transferred to this site. When Philip Gidley King in August 1803 endowed the Trustees of the Female Orphan School with an estate of 12,300 acres at Cabramatta he envisaged that this would be income producing ‘by being let out in portions’\textsuperscript{31}, so as to secure the financial position of the Orphan School.

No minutes of committee meetings in the King and Bligh periods of administration are extant, and those for the Female Orphan School date from October

\textsuperscript{28} ibid.
\textsuperscript{29} ibid., p. 42.
\textsuperscript{30} MOS Minutes, Special Meeting, 22 August 1822, p. 44.
\textsuperscript{31} HRA, Vol. II, p. 534.
1818. It is therefore difficult to present a detailed account of the use of this estate prior to the late Macquarie period. However, discussions must have occurred at earlier committee meetings, because in 1806 Robert Campbell the Treasurer, had an advertisement placed in the Sydney Gazette which read:

Contractors Wanted
Any person wishing to engage for building a House on the Farm near Prospect, that belongs to the Orphan Institution to consist of one Storey, thirty six feet in length by fifteen in breadth, weatherboard inside and out, shingled and floored, with a Piazza of several feet to both fronts, are requested to lodge their Proposals with the Subscriber betwixt and the first of January next, when the contract offer will be approved of by the Committee. A Plan of the Building may be had on application.\(^\text{32}\)

Early in 1807 a ‘cart and wheat mill were purchased for use at the Farm’, and several months later the overseer Thomas Rose began building a house and stockyard on the site. A grindstone together with a frame was purchased for the Farm in June, and further work had proceeded on the house and stockyard. Mr R. Hassal inspected the construction work which Mr Rose had undertaken and he placed a valuation of £9 8s 6d on the balance owing to Mr Rose for his labour. In total Thomas Rose received £29 8s 6d for his labour in building the house and stockyard. This was additional to his yearly salary of £65 which was paid in quarterly instalments.\(^\text{33}\) This area was known as the Old Farm and was located at what is now the intersection of Cowpasture and Edensor Roads, Edensor.

In 1823 the Colonial Secretary required ‘an account of the stock granted to the Institution by Governor King’.\(^\text{34}\) The Secretary, the Rev. Hill, was able to supply information about the initial stock in 1806, and the Rev. Marsden’s gifts of ‘nine cows and two ewes’.\(^\text{35}\) Although Governor King authorised the Rev. Marsden ‘to receive five percent for the costs of disbursement’ from the Orphan Fund ‘for his responsible position’. When giving evidence to Commissioner Bigge, Marsden stated that despite this authorisation, his services had been voluntary.\(^\text{36}\) The Rev. Marsden further

\(^{32}\) SG, December 28, 1806, p. 2.

\(^{33}\) Balance Sheet of The Orphan Fund, 1 July 1807, in HRA, Vol. VI, p. 172.

\(^{34}\) FOS Minutes, Special Meeting, 15 April 1823, p. 100.

\(^{35}\) ibid., p. 101.

\(^{36}\) Marsden to Bigge, (incomplete record), in BT, Box 20, p. 3481.
advised Commissioner Bigge that rather than taking ‘money owing to him as Treasurer, he had bought cattle which he donated to the Female Orphan Institution, which have been the basis for their herd’.37

From the material provided by the Rev. Richard Hill, and the statements made to Commissioner Bigge, it is apparent that the Rev. Marsden had been very generous. He had ‘given’ his time in the interests of the ‘orphans’ and their school. He stated his position in these words:

The Institution being founded in Charity, I have no wish to appropriate any part of the money arising to the Fund to my own personal benefit, but shall at all times be happy to render any assistance to the Institution in my power without Fee or reward.38

In addition the Rev. Marsden had offered to purchase livestock for the Institution, and by July 1806 his generous offer was accepted and Governor King ordered Commissary Palmer to purchase nine cows and two sheep or ewes to add to the original draft.39 It was the Treasurer’s generosity which was cited in the Rev. Hill’s letter to the Colonial Secretary, and which enabled the purchase of stock to provide a basis for the Orphan School herd.

Soon after Governor Macquarie made appointments to the Committee of the Female Orphan School there appears to have been further discussions about the use of the Farm at Prospect, because the Rev. Marsden, in his capacity as Treasurer, placed an advertisement in the Sydney Gazette, and it read:

The Committee for managing the Female Orphan Institution being determined to build a House on the Estate belonging to the Female Orphans situated near Prospect Hill, are ready to enter into Contract with such Persons as are competent to furnish the Materials and complete the building.40

It would appear that the building on the Farm commenced by the overseer Thomas Rose in 1807, may have been of a temporary nature.

37 Marsden to Bigge, 30 January 1821, in BT, Box 26, p. 6036.
38 Marsden to King, 25 January 1805, in BT, Box 12, pp. 123-124.
39 King to Palmer, 7 July 1806, in ibid., p. 140.
40 SG, July 7, 1810, p. 2.
The Statement of Funds for the Female Orphan Institution for the quarter ending 30 June 1810, shows a figure of £73 16s 0d, and this is cited as expenses at the farm. It seems that the Farm belonging to the Female Institution had undergone little development, and the animal husbandry practised there may have left much to be desired. Mrs Macquarie expressed her sentiments about the lack of utilisation of the estate when she communicated with Colonel Erskine, who was the president of the Female Orphan Institution. She wrote:

The early habits of my life, and the attention I have bestowed on the management of landed property emboldened me to communicate my thoughts to you on these matters; which I flatter myself, if found worthy of consideration, may not be altogether invaluable to this Institution. I have no doubt that if the Estate be properly conducted, that in a few years it would be found amply sufficient to defray the entire expenses of the school.

Although Mrs Macquarie was critical about the way in which the Orphan School Farm had been managed, the Committee may have relied on the knowledge and oversight of the farm overseer and the stockman. The fact that sufficient revenue became available over time to enable the Orphan Schools to meet expenses, may also have been a factor contributing to the lack of development at the Orphan School Farm at Cabramatta. The Rev. Marsden had spent periods overseas in Britain and in New Zealand. Changes had taken place in the composition of the committee members since the departure of the King family, and this led to a lack of continuity of membership. Lastly, in 1814 a severe drought had been experienced in the colony, and this resulted in a loss of stock through lack of pasture.

When the residence at Arthur’s Hill was occupied a new Committee was appointed, and an examination of the minutes of Committee meetings indicates that decisions were made, and actions took place on a regular basis. The creation of a local committee had a beneficial effect on the supervision of the Farm. The appointment of a new overseer Edward Gray was made in late 1818, and he made

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42 Mrs Macquarie to Erskine, 13 June 1820, in BT, Box 22, p. 4396.
43 Marsden to Bigge, 5 February 1821, in BT, Box 26, p. 6178.
regular reports to the Committee about the stock. The purchase of good breeding cattle in 1821 was undertaken by Sir John Jamison.

The Committee decided to have a new homestead erected on the property, and numerous delays occurred during the construction, and the Committee resolved to request ‘a convict carpenter to be assigned to the institution’. Attention was paid to fencing and from May 1821 to August 1823 men were employed in this task. It was an expensive undertaking and at two committee meetings in 1823, a total of £719 17s 6½d was authorised to pay for additional fencing. By November 1823 there had been no recent reports of trespassers or stock loss by the overseer, and more extensive fencing had probably made his task easier.

The minutes of the Female Orphan School Committee, enable us to see that the members devoted quite an amount of time and effort in their attempts to improve the Orphan Farm. The local committee took an active role as far as the herd of cattle was concerned, and saw that greater control was exercised over the stock. Mr Gray, who was a free settler, was appointed to his position in November 1818, and appears to have been a conscientious overseer. The local committee was responsive and listened to his requests. The quality and quantity of stock had been improved through the purchase of additional animals. Although the Farm had not been let out to raise funds as initially envisaged by Governor King, and the property had not been fully utilised, improvements in terms of clearing, erection of a homestead, paddocks, fencing and stock had occurred. Mrs Macquarie’s concerns about the Estate may have been heeded by the committee members.

As we examine life within the Schools, we have noted that the payment by results scheme was introduced into the Male Orphan School and its outcomes. In both schools Dr Bell’s Madras System of Education had been introduced by the Rev. Thomas Reddall and on 8 May 1822 Reddall approached the Committee by letter and offered to continue with his services for a period of ‘twelve months to perfect the children in the National System of Education’. The committee members who had

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44 FOS Minutes, 30 November 1818, p. 21.
45 FOS Minutes, 9 May 1821, p. 69.
46 FOS Minutes, 12 February 1823, p. 97.
47 FOS Minutes, 14 May 1823, p. 104; FOS Minutes, 14 August 1823, p. 105.
48 FOS Minutes, 14 August 1823, p. 105.
previously indicated that they were favourably impressed with the Rev. Reddall’s instruction were now prepared to offer him ‘one guinea for every day’s attendance in either the Male or Female Schools’.  

Early in August the Rev. Richard Hill, as Secretary of the Female Orphan School Committee, arranged for an advertisement to be inserted in the Sydney Gazette relative to the Anniversary Service to be held on 16 August 1822 at St John’s Church Parramatta, at which the Rev. Robert Cartwright was to preach the sermon. The advertisement also stated that ‘after Divine Service … a public Examination of the Children will take place, and suitable Rewards will be distributed by His Excellency The Patron’.  

This advertisement with the reference to the ‘public examination of the Children’, was brought to the Rev. Thomas Reddall’s attention whilst he was attending to magisterial work which necessitated him passing through Parramatta. The Rev. Reddall was upset by this knowledge, because he had not been consulted about the public examination of the children, and he expressed his dismay to the Colonial Secretary by writing that he considered the Rev. Hill’s action had been:  

uncourteous, as it seems unkind - uncourteous in as much as I ought, if only in compliment to have been consulted - and unkind as it does not afford me time to prepare the school for a Public Examination, and in a way I could wish it to be past before His Excellency and family.  

The Rev. Reddall explained that even in London at the Central School, where Dr Bell’s System of Education had been used over a period of time, and ‘had been brought to a State of Perfection’, the preparation time for a public examination took at least a month or six weeks. The advertised public examination seemed to the Rev. Reddall to be both ‘presumptious and ridiculous’ considering the time factor of the introduction of Dr Bell’s System into the Female Orphan School. This introduction had occurred approximately twelve months earlier, but lessons had been discontinued for a time. Thomas Reddall considered that a public examination ‘would be at best a Parrot-like display of a something not understood - the mere shadow without the

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49  FOS Minutes, 8 May 1822, pp. 86-87.  
50  SG, August 2, 1822, p. 1.  
51  Rev. Reddall to Goulburn, 7 August 1822, in Colonial Secretary In Letters, Bundle 17, p. 38.  
SRNSW 4/1758.
substance’. Not only did the Rev. Reddall have these reservations, but he considered that a public examination at that time ‘would not be gratifying to him [the Governor], or to the Public, and which might be fatally discouraging to the Children themselves’.

In the same communication the Rev. Reddall stated that he had recently ‘recommenced his duties’ at the School. He wrote about the institution using these words: ‘I found it in a deplorable condition, much of what I had done amongst them aforetime was lost in the minds and morals of the Children’. He added the comment that the children were ‘rude, intractable and disobedient’. Thomas Reddall noted that he had to resort to ‘going back to the first principles even with the uppermost class’, but that progress was being made in the school. Taking all these matters into consideration the Rev. Reddall suggested that the public examination be deferred until Christmas time. Then with perseverance on the children’s part, they might be ‘fully prepared by that time’. He was ambitious enough ‘to think that the public examination could be held in a way which will be gratifying to all’.

Despite this letter and the Rev. Reddall’s concerns, the Anniversary Service was held in St John’s Church, Parramatta. The sermon was preached by the Rev. Robert Cartwright, and was based on Proverbs 22:6. After the service the girls ‘were examined in their respective branches of learning; as also were the specimens of their work’. It is significant that neither His Excellency the Patron of the School, nor Lady Brisbane who was the Patroness, appear to have been in attendance at the ceremony. The Vice-Patronesses ‘awarded presents of prayer and other books to 27 of the most deserving’. The Rev. Samuel Marsden deputised for His Excellency in presenting the rewards.

Having received Mr Reddall’s letter the August meeting minutes have recorded that the ‘Rev. Mr Reddall has been in attendance at the Female School twenty two days to teach the children according to the System established by Dr Bell’. It is not minuted when the Rev. Reddall re-commenced his teaching duties at the school, but it was probably in July and hence his consternation about the Anniversary Service which was held in August.

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52 ibid., p. 38a.
53 ibid., p. 38b.
54 SG, August 23, 1822, p. 3.
55 FOS Minutes, 10 August 1822, p. 89.
As we have noted at the August meeting, it was reported that Rev. Mr Reddall had attended the Female School for 22 days. However when the Rev. Reddall presented an account for £65 2s 0d at the November meeting which represented sixty two days attendance, the Committee decided to limit the number of lessons in both institutions. It was the Committee’s wish that on no more than two days per week should lessons be given to the children of both institutions. Needless to say the Rev. Reddall decided that attendance of that nature would not be convenient, and he ‘therefore declined his engagement with the Institution’.56 No reasons for the Committee’s decision were recorded, and one is at a loss to understand the factors which lead to this decision, particularly when the improvement in the pupils’ progress and general order had received favourable comment.

On 15 November the Rev. Reddall wrote to Sir Thomas Brisbane and advised him about the committee meeting. He stated that his decision to ‘decline his engagement with the Institution, was virtually “forced from him” by the Committee’s “arduous requirements”’. The ‘resolution required attendance of four days in each week to the two institutions, that is two days at the School at Parramatta and two at Sydney’.57 The Rev. Reddall explained that these arrangements would affect ‘in some degree his constitution’ because he had to engage in other ‘official duties’. He also considered that the arrangements would not make for effective teaching. The Rev. Reddall gained the impression from the members’ resolution that no compromise was possible, and he therefore advised the Committee of his inability to continue at the institutions.58

In his letter to Major Goulburn the Rev. Reddall had commented in a very negative manner about the girls’ behaviour, describing them as being ‘rude, intractable and disobedient’. At the August meeting some of the Committee’s time was devoted to dealing with the problems presented by Mary Ann McGrath. Mary had apparently given offence by her behaviour in the School, and also in front of the Committee. She had engaged in the activity of climbing a tree and other conduct deemed by the Rev. Marsden to be ‘wild’. Furthermore she had attempted to incriminate a school member

56 FOS Minutes, 13 November 1822, p. 92.
57 Reddall to Brisbane, 15 November 1822, in CSIL, Bundle 17, p. 42.
58 ibid., pp. 42-42a.
by telling a lie about that girl. The outcome of this behaviour was that the Committee decided to punish Mary by having ‘a log attached to her right leg’. The size of the log was not recorded, but it was to be seen ‘as a mark of disgrace’. It would certainly impede her tree-climbing activity as well as deterring the other girls from similar behaviour.\(^{59}\)

Although Mary McGrath had given offence to the Committee, it seems that Mrs Ward’s efforts were still appreciated. The local committee had recommended that the Matron receive her usual donation, which was a type of bonus or gratuity. The Committee approved of this, and ordered it to be paid accordingly.\(^{60}\) When Commissioner Bigge prepared his Report, he indicated that he was aware of the difficulties which confronted the Matron in coping with the inclinations of some of the girls. He wrote, ‘Much strictness is found required to enforce obedience amongst the children of the Female Orphan School, and their tempers and dispositions are not very easily controlled’.\(^{61}\) The members of the local committee were probably aware of the girls’ temperaments, and supported and encouraged Mrs Ward even when Mary McGrath’s behaviour was considered to be ‘unsatisfactory’.

Trouble it would seem was not confined to the Female Orphan School. In late August a Special Meeting had to be convened at the Male School, in order to enquire into allegations which some of the boys who were apprenticed to the School, had made to Major Antill about the Master’s ill-treatment of them. Their complaint of ill-treatment concerned both their food supplies, and work which they were ordered to perform. The boys who signed the letter, which was written on 23 July were J. Lees and J. Chapman carpenters; E. Gregory and G. Freeman shoemakers.

The boys, who wished their names to be kept secret for fear of further ill-treatment, complained about the nature and quantity of food which was served. The boys stated that for breakfast over a fourteen day period, they had only been given bread and tea on two occasions, and rice and flummery on the other morning, ‘in very small quantities’. The boys indicated that servants had provided them with food and thus prevented them from being ‘in a state of starvation’.\(^{62}\) The evening meal was considered to be adequate when pudding was served, but they remarked that if the

\(^{59}\) FOS Minutes, 10 August 1822, p. 90.  
\(^{60}\) ibid.  
\(^{62}\) MOS Minutes, Special Meeting, 22 August 1822, p. 44.
little boys could not eat all their food at dinner, it was ‘served out for bread’. Probably this referred to the use of pudding at the next morning’s breakfast.

A more serious charge was made by the boys which indicated that supper was withheld from ‘twelve to sixteen boys for trifling offences’. In other words food was withheld as a form of punishment. Furthermore, another grave accusation stated that ‘when Major Antill attended the School we had plenty to eat’. This accusation was repeated when the boys wrote ‘a good dinner is provided when any Gentleman is expected’.63 These statements implied that when the School was open to visitors, the boys received better treatment as far as their diet was concerned. Former Governor Macquarie had laid down regulations for the diet of the ‘orphans’, and the boys’ statement if proven, would indicate that action had taken place contrary to the regulations, and certainly indicated a breach in the duty of care which the Master should have exercised.

The second complaint from the boys concerned work which they had been ordered to do by the Master. This complaint involved twelve boys named J. Lees, G. Wall, R. Fry, R. Robinson, G. Freeman, I. Williams, G. Lane, G. Thomas, T. Warrington, I. Jones, J. Martin and J. Chapman. On 18 July the boys had been taken to the property of a Mr Newman at Cockle Bay to load dung onto two boats, and they had remained there for most of the day. They were then ‘ordered to pull the boats up to Kissing Point’. This area was approximately three miles away from Cockle Bay, and having completed that task, the boys returned to the School. It was alleged that six of the boys had ‘to get up at one o’clock in the morning to go with the Men to pull the boats up to one of our Master’s farms to unload them’.64 This work was duly completed by the boys and the men.

It would appear that the Master Mr Bowden had acted inappropriately when he used the boys to perform duties in no way associated with the Orphan School. The Committee did not dismiss the boys’ allegations, but decided to investigate the matter fully and to consider their findings at a later special meeting.

A Special Meeting was held on 9 September to consider the evidence which had been presented to the members, including a letter from the Master defending his actions, which he had written on 6 September.65 The members reached the

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63 ibid., pp. 44-45.
64 ibid.
65 MOS Minutes, Adjourned Special Meeting, 9 September 1822, p. 46.
conclusion that although the former servants of the school, namely the baker and his wife, may have ‘fomented’ the complaints which the boys had made against the Master, there was substance to their allegations. The Committee ‘believed that since the Local Committee have discontinued their constant inspection of the House and Table, the boys have been underfed’.66

There does not appear to be a resolution in earlier meetings for the discontinuance of inspecting the school by the local committee. This decision may have been made privately or the inspection process may have lapsed, but it was now decided to re-form a new local committee with the specified tasks of meeting weekly to ‘examine the Storeroom of the Institution, the provision and contingency account books’.67 The local committee was to consist of the ‘Rt.-Hon. Mr Justice Field, J.T. Campbell Esq., the Secretary [the Rev. R. Hill], together with Major Goulburn’. In addition to these inspections the local committee members agreed that on a weekly rotational system they would ‘look in at meal times unexpectedly to see that the children get their allowances’.68

The letter from the boys was to have far reaching effects at the School. It had alerted the Committee to malpractices within the institution, and had revealed weaknesses in the local committee’s supervisory roles. The Committee decided to ask Dr Stephenson, the School’s Medical Officer, to draw up a Table of Diet for the boys. This diet table was to be mandatory on the Master, and furthermore the boys who were apprenticed to the School were ‘to be allowed a larger ration than the children’.69

It was agreed that the Master had used ‘the stoppage of food’ as a means of punishing the boys. The Committee was adamant about the use of that method of punishment - it was entirely unacceptable. In future any ‘bad behaviour and idleness not punished by Rev. Mr Reddall, was to be reported in a black book to the local committee for them to punish’.70

As it had been suggested that the baker and his wife may have encouraged or incited the boys to make their complaint, the Committee made some decisions to distance the boys from the workmen in the institution. Also the workmen in the

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66 ibid.
67 ibid.
68 ibid.
69 ibid., pp. 46-47.
70 ibid., p. 47.
future were prohibited from working on their own projects at the school, and it was considered ‘that their whole time was the property of the Institution’. In addition these workmen were to be prevented ‘from employing the boys to assist them in their private work’. 71 Lastly a stern warning was given in the following terms:

That the Master do never in future take any of the boys on any excursion, either by Land or by Water (Walks for exercise, as in the General Rules, excepted) nor employ them out of the bounds of the Institution, on his own private business. 72

When the Committee met a week later, Dr Stephenson in response to the request made on 9 September, ‘laid before the Committee a Table of Senior, Junior and Hospital Diets’ as follows:

**Diet Table**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meals</th>
<th>Senior Diet</th>
<th>Junior Diet</th>
<th>Hospital Diet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Breakfast</td>
<td>1 Pt Oatmeal or Rice Gruel</td>
<td>1 Pt Oatmeal or Rice Gruel</td>
<td>Tea</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Dinner  | ½ lb meat  
¼ lb bread  
1 lb potatoes | ¼ lb meat  
½ lb bread  
½ lb potatoes | ½ lb bread made in Panada or Pudding or Sago |
| Supper  | 1 Pt Oatmeal or Rice Gruel | 1 Pt Oatmeal or Rice Gruel | Tea                               |

Source: MOS Minutes, 16 September 1822, p. 48.

As a scale had also been prepared by Dr Stephenson showing the varying amounts of food which were to be given to the boys daily, according to their classification, the Committee resolved ‘that the Master be directed to victual them exactly according thereto, subject to the occasional commutations of the local Committee’.

71 ibid.  
72 ibid.
The scale prepared by Dr Stephenson follows:

### Articles Composing the different Diets for a Day- Avoirdupois Weight

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Senior Diet</th>
<th>Junior Diet</th>
<th>Hospital Diet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meat (or fish)</td>
<td>8 oz once a week</td>
<td>Meat (or fish)</td>
<td>Bread 8 oz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or Fish</td>
<td></td>
<td>4 oz once a week</td>
<td>or Sago 4 oz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bread</td>
<td>12 oz</td>
<td>Bread 8 oz</td>
<td>Tea 4 Dss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potatoes</td>
<td>16 oz or Pudding</td>
<td>Potatoes 8 oz</td>
<td>Sugar 1½ oz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or Pudding</td>
<td>Twice a week</td>
<td>or Pudding</td>
<td>Milk 4 oz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oatmeal</td>
<td>3 oz or Rice 2 oz</td>
<td>Oatmeal 1½ oz</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or Rice</td>
<td>2 oz</td>
<td>or Rice 2 oz</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barley</td>
<td>¾ oz or Rice 2 oz</td>
<td>Barley ½ oz</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugar</td>
<td>1 oz or Rice 2 oz</td>
<td>Sugar 1 oz</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salt</td>
<td>¼ oz</td>
<td>Salt 2 Dss</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: MOS Minutes, 16 September 1822, p. 48.

Dr S. G. Stephenson signed these tables in his capacity as Surgeon Male Orphan Institution, 12 September 1822. In the Miscellaneous Rules and Regulations formulated by Lachlan Macquarie, it has already been noted in chapter 4, that the children were frequently, ‘to be taken out to walk in the cool of the evening with a view to their health and wholesome exercise’. The Committee resolved that this exercise be undertaken at least three times a week, and one can only assume that this activity had fallen into abeyance, when the Master was directed to take the boys out regularly.

These incidents are very important in the history of the Male Orphan School. For the first time we have heard the ‘voices’ of the boys when they protested about their food and mis-use of labour. The boy’s complaints were not dismissed by the Committee, in fact the available evidence suggests that a very thorough investigation took place. The Schools’ founders, Governor Philip Gidley King and Lachlan Macquarie had both stressed the caring attitude they experienced towards the destitute ‘orphan’ children in the colony and the committee members showed the same caring intentions as they provided oversight for the management of the Orphan Schools. Many hours were voluntarily given to a wide variety of issues so that proper care, accommodation, education and training could be afforded to the girls and boys in the

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73 MOS Minutes, 16 September 1822, p. 48.
74 MOS Miscellaneous Rules and Regulations, 1 January 1819, p. 9.
75 MOS Minutes, 16 September 1822, p. 49.
Schools. However some laxity had occurred in aspects of the Committee’s supervisory tasks and the ‘incident’ exposed these.

At an adjourned meeting of the Male Orphan School held on 16 April, a report was given that one of the boys George Freeman had absconded from the school two months earlier. George who was apprenticed to the school as a shoemaker, was one of the signatories to the letter of complaint to Major Antill in August 1822. The local committee advised, that according to the Constable at Windsor, George appeared to be in a desperate state, because he ‘had taken to the bush with a gun’. The Committee was anxious to have George returned to the school, and resolved to offer a reward ‘for his apprehension’. The Committee wasted no time and the following advertisement appeared in the *Sydney Gazette*:

Male Orphan School April 16, 1823
Twenty dollars Reward - whereas George Freeman one of the boys of this Institution has absconded from School, Committee offer above reward …
Richard Hill Secretary.

When the Committee next met in July, it was informed that George Freeman had returned to the School of his own volition. He had arrived back on 18 April, and ‘had behaved in an exemplary manner ever since’. The records give no indication as to George’s reasons for absconding, or how he had survived whilst absent from the premises. Perhaps he wished to be apprenticed outside the School, because it was resolved that George ‘be apprenticed to Mr Lord as a Farmer at Botany Bay’. Mr Lord also had Christopher Ralph apprenticed to him as a currier. Christopher was admitted to the Male Orphan School at its opening, and his Indenture Form has been preserved in the State Records New South Wales. (See copy on the following page).

Several months after George Freeman returned to the Male Orphan School the Master reported that two boys, whose names were William London and Samuel Ogden had absconded from the School. The Committee resolved, that as William had ‘offended’ in this manner on two previous occasions he should be ‘flogged’. Like Sarah Patfield of the Female Orphan School, this punishment seems harsh, but may have been considered appropriate in an age where people had the belief that sparing

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76 MOS Minutes, Adjourned Meeting, 16 April 1823, pp. 53-54.
77 *SG*, April 17, 1823, p. 4.
78 MOS Minutes, 9 July 1823, p. 56.
79 MOS Minutes, 8 October 1823, p. 58.
THIS INDENTURE, made the Second Day of May, in the Year of Our Lord One thousand eight hundred and twenty four, between
Sarah Lord, Daughter and Heiress of John Charles Lord and John Davis, Esq., of the City of Sydney, being the Trustees of the Male Orphan Institution of New South Wales, of the one Part; and
Christopher Ralph of Sydney, in the County of New South Wales, of the other Part, WITNESSETH, that the said Trustees have put, placed, and bound, and by these Presents do put, place, and bind Christopher Ralph to be an Apprentice with him the said Simeon Lord, and as an Apprentice with him to dwell from the Date of these Presents, for and during and until he shall come to the Age of twenty-one Years—By and during all which Time and Term the said Christopher Ralph shall be put unto by the Command of his said Master, according to the Skill, Power, and Ability of him the said Christopher Ralph 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 forthwith 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 Alehouses; 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 Fidelity of his said Master, during the said Term. AND the said Simeon Lord 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 Christopher Ralph, that he the said Simeon Lord shall, with truth and faithfulness, cause to be instructed in the Discharge of a Carrier, which term 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 signed in writing to the said Simeon Lord, his Executors and Administrators, be determined immediately upon the Death of the said Simeon Lord 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

Christopher Ralph

Copy of Indenture form apprenticing Christopher Ralph as a carrier to Mr. Simeon Lord in 1823 (original in SRNSW 4/390)
the rod would lead to the spoiling of the child. There is no record of any inquiry
being held into the reason why William had absconded on three occasions.

These boys were not the only ones to abscond from the Male Orphan School. The Admission Book has notations that boys had absconded on a number of occasions
and some of these did not return to the School. We can only surmise about the
reasons which caused the children to abscond from the Schools. We know that life
within the Schools was regimented, and perhaps the harshness of their environment,
and the discipline imposed was too much for some of them to bear. The absence from
family members may have been difficult for some of the children. Also these boys
and girls may have had adults in the community to provide them with
accommodation, and the high demand for boys’ labour meant that they could be
absorbed into the workforce.

We have noted that the Committee of the Female Orphan School was quite happy to
have the boys accommodated on the Orphan School Estate at Cabramatta, and we
shall outline the procedures adopted to enable the transfer to take place.

The site chosen for the boys’ accommodation was known as Bull’s Hill. This
area with a thirty seven acre summit was considered to be a satisfactory site for the
new school. It was proposed that the Secretary contact the Colonial Secretary in order
to secure the services ‘of a clearing gang for 100 acres, and the hire of a pair of
sawyers upon the usual terms, towards building the new Male Orphan School at
Cabramatta’.80 When the Rev. Hill contacted the Colonial Secretary with the
Committee’s request, he added that because there was urgency in the request ‘the
members will be obliged by the sawyers in particular being immediately assigned.’81

A number of motions were considered at the February 1823 committee
meeting. A decision was made to purchase materials for the Male Orphan School
buildings at Cabramatta, and these included ‘a cask of three inch nails, one cask of
large sized shingle nails and one cask of batten nails’.82 A further resolution was
made about the payment of the sawyers who had been hired for work on the new

80 FOS Minutes, 13 November 1822, p. 91.
81 Rev. Hill to Goulburn, 15 November 1822, in CSIL, Bundle 17, p. 10.
82 FOS Minutes, 12 February 1823, p. 97.
buildings. Apparently these men had done some over-time work, and the overseer was directed that these men be paid ‘for their over-work in food or money’.

By August 1823 the Male Orphan School building was progressing satisfactorily. It was resolved to make payments in this regard, and Mr Wheatley was to receive fifty pounds on account of his building activities. By October further work had taken place on the new school house at the Farm, and the acting Treasurer was authorised to pay £89 11s 2d for this work.

Mr Wheatley had submitted his account for further work on the buildings for the boys at the Orphan Farm, and it was resolved to settle his account for £96 11s 9d. Four log buildings were erected, and three of these had skeelings (outhouses) attached to the rear. The fourth building had a loft which the boys used as a dormitory. The Master’s cottage was situated opposite the four weatherboard buildings. The building programme at Cabramatta had reached a sufficient stage to accommodate the boys from Sydney’s Male Orphan School.

The boys in the company of Mr Bowden left the Sydney buildings on 16 March 1824, but the transfer to their new premises was not as auspicious as when the girls transferred to Arthur’s Hill Parramatta. The degree of solicitude which had been shown to the girls by Governor Macquarie, was not displayed to the boys. There was a delay in the arrival of the boat, which had been ordered for daylight, but was not ready until half past seven. The tides were at low ebb and there was a headwind which delayed progress on the Parramatta River. From Kissing Point Mr Bowden wrote to Major Goulburn describing further problems of this journey:

The boat laid to at the Salt Pans near the Brothers; I was then compelled to procure a Boat and take the Boys on to Kissing Point, in a very wet condition at about one o’clock where I procured them some refreshment and dried their clothes. It was after four o’clock when the Government Boat reached the Point, and knowing we could not reach the farm that night I concluded they had better remain and get themselves thoroughly dry and

83 ibid.
84 FOS Minutes, 14 August 1823, p. 106.
85 MOS Minutes, 8 October 1823, p. 58.
86 FOS Minutes, 15 January 1824, p. 114.
87 Inventory of Documents and Accounts Relative to the Male and Female Orphan Schools, 1800-1825, Item 485, Agreement 27 October 1824, Item 487, Tender 1825. SRNSW 4/4791.1.
take the morning to prosecute their journey. … I expect
to arrive at Bull’s Hill by Dinner time to-morrow.\textsuperscript{88}

(See location map of Male Orphan School on following page). In this correspondence
Bowden also requested that he be compensated for the expenses he had incurred in
this journey, and asked that an order for £100 be forwarded to Mrs Bowden.\textsuperscript{89} The
boys duly arrived at the Orphan Farm on 17 March 1824, and took up residence there.

The building containing the schoolroom at the Bull’s Hill complex was of
concern to Thomas Bowden. In late December he wrote to Major Goulburn
suggesting improvements which could be affected prior to the completion of that
building, ‘which will be before Saturday next’. The building measured fifty feet in
length and twenty-four feet in width, with a projected height of nine feet. Bowden
contended that whilst a nine foot high ceiling may have been adequate in a small
room, the ceiling height in the school room should be twelve feet, especially as the
room would be occupied by one hundred to perhaps an hundred and fifty children,
and would be used as a dining room as well as sleeping quarters.\textsuperscript{90}

In addition to his suggestion about increasing the ceiling height to twelve feet,
Bowden wrote:

\begin{quote}
I beg leave also to suggest the propriety of leaving three
apertures in the ceiling, for the better of carrying off the
heated and unwholesome affluence, arising from so
many persons continuing together so many hours. This
would be greatly aided by a ventilator fixed in one
square in the top sash of several windows.\textsuperscript{91}
\end{quote}

These improvements would have aided the flow of air, and Bowden added that he
hoped his suggestions would be worthy of notice. Although Bowden was soon to
leave his position, he continued to show concern for the physical conditions under
which the boys would be living.

Changes in relation to people in positions of authority at the Schools namely the
Matron of the Female Orphan School and the Master of the Male Orphan School were

\textsuperscript{88} Bowden to Goulburn, 16 March 1824, in CSIL, Bundle 24, pp. 236, 236a. SRNSW 4/1778.
\textsuperscript{89} ibid., p. 236a.
\textsuperscript{90} Bowden to Goulburn, 24 December 1824, in CSIL, Bundle 22, p. 196. SRNSW 4/1775.
\textsuperscript{91} ibid.
Plan showing location of the site of the old Orphan School Buildings near Liverpool.
(By courtesy of Mr. B. T. Dowd.)

to occur. These changes were to have significant effects on the quality of care provided by the institutions.

In March 1823 Earl Bathurst acknowledged Sir Thomas Brisbane’s despatch of April 1822. He advised Brisbane that a clergyman would not be appointed to the Orphan Schools as superintendent ‘at present’. Bathurst had been informed by Commissioner Bigge that ‘Mrs Ward has been desirous of giving up the Superintendence of the Female Orphan School at Parramatta’. Earl Bathurst had appointed Edward Sweetman and his wife Sarah to positions at the Female Orphan School. Mrs Sweetman was to occupy the position of Matron, and she was to receive £100 per annum in salary. It was anticipated that Mr Sweetman would be employed in a supervisory role in ‘the Household, Farm and Garden’. He was to receive ‘£50 per year from the Police Fund’, as well as a single ration.92

This despatch makes interesting reading because the appointment of staff for the institutions up to this period, had been the prerogative of the Committee. Bathurst’s action appears to stem from Commissioner Bigge’s recommendation. In the Appendix to his report we read:

Schoolmistress and Superintendent of Female Orphan School at Parramatta is now vacant, or is likely to be so … Sarah Sweetman may with the assistance of her husband be competent to undertake that duty. … that the duty of the schoolmistress of the Female Orphan School is if well discharged, of infinite importance to the moral interests of the colony, that it requires both strength of mind and constitution, as well as an acquaintance with those branches of education and employment that qualify young females for domestic service in the country.93

It would appear that advice had been received, which indicated that Mrs Ward’s position as Matron may become vacant. There is no record of Mrs Ward tendering her resignation to the Committee, but there is a rather vague reference in these terms ‘upon a communication with Mrs Ward’. As a result of this the Committee resolved that ‘the Rev. Mr Marsden be authorised to hold out to Mr and Mrs Hopkins now at

93 Bigge to Wilmot, 8 September 1822, Bigge’s Appendix, in BT, Box 28, pp. 6708-6709.
Van Dieman’s Land the prospect of a vacancy in the Master and Mistress of the Institution’. 94

It has been noted that Commissioner Bigge had informed Earl Bathurst that Mrs Ward had indicated her desire to leave her position at the Female Orphan School. However in a later letter to Governor Brisbane Mrs Ward indicated that she was very grateful for the Governor’s liberality after she was superseded in her duties at the Orphan School. In the same letter she expressed her point of view by writing: ‘but as my removal arose solely from an appointment made in England’. 95 Mrs Ward’s use of the words ‘superseded’ and ‘removal’ clearly indicate that she had not wished to vacate her position as Matron, but rather her position had been declared vacant.

Mr and Mrs Sweetman had arrived from England with their three daughters, and had reached the colony via the Transport Albion. 96 The details of their appointment were supplied by the Colonial Secretary Major Goulburn. The particulars were as follows:

Mrs Sweetman to take upon herself her duties of her superintendence as Matron of the Female Orphan School, and Mr Sweetman to act from the present date as Secretary to the Male and Female Orphan Schools and the Native Institution. 97

The Sweetman family took up residence in the Orphan School at Parramatta, and this arrangement does not appear to have been satisfactory. Mr Sweetman wrote a private letter to the Colonial Secretary Frederick Goulburn in December 1823 in which he complained about the behaviour of the servants and children of the Orphan School. Mr Sweetman claimed that these people were ‘encouraged to treat us with open insolence and contempt’. The girls, including the Ward children, were accused of eavesdropping the private conversations between Mrs Ward and Mr Sweetman. 98

Edward Sweetman further claimed that Mrs Ward did not reprimand or prohibit the children following his complaint to her. He made the observation that Mrs Ward gave him the impression that ‘she felt hurt at the certainty of being superseded in her situation’. Whilst Mr Sweetman had sympathy for Mrs Ward,

94 FOS Minutes, Special Meeting, 15 April 1823, p. 102.
95 Mrs Ward to Brisbane, 11 September 1824, in CSIL, Bundle 24, pp. 276-276a.
96 General Muster of New South Wales, 1825, p. 537. SRNSW
97 FOS Minutes, 12 November 1823, p. 112.
98 Sweetman to Goulburn, 16 December 1823, in CSIL, Bundle 21, p. 114. SRNSW 4/1773.
especially as she was an ‘unprotected Female, with a hapless Family’, he could not willingly stand by and see his ‘wife and daughters treated with insult and disrespect’. Mr Sweetman added that he felt ‘very reluctant to take up the gauntlet or enter into any altercation with such a woman as Mrs Ward’.99

As a solution to the accommodation problem Mr Sweetman submitted a proposition that he find other lodgings in Sydney or Parramatta, pending the future arrangements for the management of the School. He requested an interview with Major Goulburn so that matters could be resolved.100 The outcome of this letter is not known, but the Sweetmans commenced their respective duties in January 1824.

Mr and Mrs Sweetman, whose background is unknown, apparently had sought a position through political patronage. In his reply to R. J. Wilmot, who was the Under-Secretary of State, Commissioner Bigge wrote:

I should not however do justice to the views that you entertain, in referring this subject to my consideration if I did not take this opportunity of stating to you, that the Duty of the schoolmistress of the Female Orphan School is … of infinite importance.101

The Sweetmans took up their positions at the School at Parramatta on 1 January 1824, and unfortunately for all parties concerned, they both suffered ill-health. They were unable to provide the close supervision, or to give the leadership which was necessary in the institution, because both were ‘ languishing under the confinement of their rooms’.102 There are no records from the interim Committee, and no indication of the level of support which was given to the Sweetmans by these men. The ladies local committee would not have been in a position to offer practical assistance, because they were not members of Governor Brisbane’s appointed Committee. The unfortunate situation at the Female Orphan School portends a decline in the standards of care and subsequent neglect of the girls.

Governor Brisbane transferred the Sweetmans to the Male Orphan School at the end of 1824. Brisbane gave as his reason for this action, ‘the vain hope of re-establishing their health by a timely change of air’.103 It is difficult to understand

99 ibid., p. 114a.
100 ibid., pp. 114a-114b.
101 Bigge to Wilmot, 5 September 1821, Bigge’s Appendix, in BT, Box 28, p. 6708.
103 ibid.
Governor Brisbane’s reasoning, because the ‘air’ at Parramatta would not be very
different from that at Cabramatta. Also, as the Sweetmans were unable to take
responsibility for the supervision of the Female Institution, it was highly improbable
that they would have been effective at the Male Orphan School. Perhaps Brisbane
considered that supervision of the boys would be less rigorous than that required at
the girls’ School. As the appointment of Mr and Mrs Sweetman had been made in
England and approved by Earl Bathurst, Governor Brisbane may have been placed in
a position where he had no alternative but to secure situations for them.

The Sweetman’s health did not improve, and as the conditions at the Female
Orphan School deteriorated it became evident that the Matron’s position would
become vacant. The Rev. Thomas Reddall who was a member of the Committee
approached Mrs Charity Nott (née Evans) during the course of 1824 suggesting that
she make an application for that position. Mrs Nott had been an inmate of the Orphan
School, and had later become a teacher in that institution. In Mrs Nott’s memorial
of November 1824 it was stated that she had ‘principally conducted the domestic
Concerns of the Institution during the superintendency of Mrs Ward and also Taught
Dr Bell’s System of Education without the aid of the Matron’. In Mrs Nott’s memorial
of November 1824 it was stated that she had ‘principally conducted the domestic
Concerns of the Institution during the superintendency of Mrs Ward and also Taught
Dr Bell’s System of Education without the aid of the Matron’. 105

This was not the first memorial which Mrs Nott had submitted. A previous
memorial had been sent months earlier through the ‘Secretary’s office’. This
memorial had been ‘Ordered to be Amended, but never Returned for that Purpose,
tho’ twice applied for’. The latter application was forwarded through Major Ovens,
who was attending to Governor Brisbane’s correspondence, with the request that he
‘present the Petition to His Excellency the Governor’. Both Dr Macleod and the Rev.
Reddall had signed the first memorial. Mrs Hannibal Macarthur and the Mesdames
Palmer of Parramatta, who had taken a close interest in the affairs of the Female
Orphan School, as members of the ladies committee, had given their approval to be
contacted as referees. Mrs Nott’s petition concluded with a Latin phrase: ‘Fiat
justitia ruat coalum’ being translated, ‘Let Justice be done though the heavens should
fall’. It has been noted that Mrs Charity Nott’s memorial was the subject of
administrative delays and unacceptable procedures. These ‘mishaps’ may have arisen

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104 Rev. Hill’s evidence to Bigge, 7 February 1821, in BT, Box 24, p. 4915.
105 Petition of Mrs Nott, November 1824, in CSIL, Bundle, 22, pp. 184-184a.
106 ibid. p. 184(a).
because there was an underlying problem with communication between the Governor and the Colonial Secretary Frederick Goulburn.

It is not known whether Governor Brisbane replied to Mrs Nott’s petitions. It has been noted that at least two petitions were sent to the Governor via the Colonial Secretary’s Office. The memorial which has been cited, was forwarded to Major Ovens. Despite the encouragement given to Charity Nott by one of the Governor’s appointees to the interim Committee, the Rev. Thomas Reddall, Mrs Nott’s application for Matron of the Female Orphan School, apparently was not acceptable to Sir Thomas Brisbane.

As far as Charity Nott is concerned, ‘justice’ may not have been done. She appears to have been a capable young woman of whom the Rev. Reddall stated ‘he could not speak too highly’. Her husband Thomas was a writing master at the Academy in George Street, Parramatta, and may well have been able to assist her in the role of Matron. As their infant had only lived a short while, Mrs Nott ‘had no incumberance to divert her attention from the duties of the school’.107 Notwithstanding these very positive factors in Mrs Nott’s favour, the Governor chose to appoint the Rev. William Walker, a Wesleyan missionary and his wife Eliza to superintend the Female Orphan School as from 1 January 1825.108

The Rev. William Walker who was a Methodist minister, had been appointed at the age of twenty years ‘to the black natives of New South Wales’.109 He married Elizabeth Cordelia Hassall, daughter of the missionary Rowland Hassall, in May 1823.110 He was appointed by Governor Brisbane to be Master of the Native Institution at Blacktown. William Horton, who was a Wesleyan missionary, visited the Institution in August 1824 and he reported: ‘There are two boys and five girls, of whom two are mulattos [half-castes]. They read tolerably well and repeated portions of the Scriptures and hymns which they have committed to memory. Their needlework was executed very neatly’.111 Governor Brisbane appointed the Walkers to the Female Orphan School and they moved with a few Aboriginal girls in their care

107 ibid.
110 Nathaniel Turner to Secretary Wesleyan Missionary Society, 23 June 1823, in BT, Box 52, p. 1283.
111 William Horton’s Journal, 30 August 1824, in BT, Box 52, p. 1361.
to that institution in January 1825. The Rev. Walker commented on his situation: ‘In the Orphan Institution with the black children we have 104 souls’. 112

It has been noted that Thomas Bowden was a Wesleyan, and the consumption of intoxicating drink was not a practice associated with members of that branch of the Christian faith. Bowden however sought escape from his troubles in intoxicating drink and this problem which Thomas Bowden experienced was known to others. 113 A correspondent in writing to the Rev. Marsden about aspects of the colony, referred to it when he wrote: ‘I fear poor Bowden had not sufficient steadiness - I have heard he is addicted to drinking’. 114

Thomas Bowden experienced various problems as Master of the Male Orphan School. Having introduced the monitory system based on Lancaster’s model into that institution at its opening, he was required to adapt to Dr Bell’s System of Education, which was closely linked with the doctrines of the Church of England. As a non-conformist he probably found aspects of this system at variance with his own religious convictions.

He had experienced the humiliation associated with the reprimand and lack of trust which the Committee expressed, after the senior boys’ complaint about features of his treatment of them in August 1822. He may have expected support from the Committee, which was not forthcoming. Also Bowden had to leave the School in Sydney, of which he was the founding Master. We have noted the problems he encountered when transferring the boys from Sydney to the Female Orphan Institution Farm, in what should have been a fairly straightforward removal.

After the transfer to Cabramatta he appears to have lost ‘interest in his work’, and ‘a weakness he had exhibited previously’ re-emerged. 115 The committee members appointed by Governor Brisbane decided to take action, and informed Bowden that it was their intention to recommend to the Governor, that he should be removed from his post. The letter to Bowden ‘cited irregularities at the Male Orphan School having been frequently occurring of late’, as the reason for his dismissal. 116

The Governor was then in Moreton Bay and probably in an attempt to ‘save face’, on the same day Thomas Bowden wrote to Sir Thomas Brisbane seeking his

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112 Walker to Rev. R. Watson, 7 February 1825, in BT, Box 53, p. 1470.
113 V.W.E. Goodin, Bowden, Thomas, ADB, Vol. 1., p. 135.
115 V.W.E. Goodin, Bowden, Thomas, p. 135.
permission to resign from his position ‘at the close of the present quarter’. He also expressed his ‘best and grateful thanks for the Governor’s countenance and support’, which he had ‘received during His Excellency’s mild and benign administration’.117

At the close of this letter Thomas Bowden wrote a poignant message expressing his ‘extreme sorrow at the recent recurrences which had led to the necessity of relinquishing a situation’. He then wrote a telling comment about his position and his circumstances in these words:

I have had the honour of filling for so many years, and which might have been still conducted with credit to myself, satisfaction to the committee and the benefit of the children, had I been favoured with the assistance, without which none of these results could have been accomplished.118

After occupying the position of Master of the Male Orphan School, since its opening in January 1819, Thomas Bowden was soon to be replaced.

The Female Orphan School meeting on 12 November 1823 was to be a momentous occasion for the Committee. A communication dated in November, was received from the Governor. The letter advised that the Committee of the Native Institution, and the Male and Female Orphan Schools was relieved ‘of their duties’. This action by the Governor took the members by surprise. The Committee was not expecting such treatment, because apparently there had been no indication from Governor Brisbane about his intentions of removing the management of the Orphan Schools from the members of the Committee. The Committee expressed its reaction to the Governor’s actions. The Committee resolved to ‘obey the above sudden and unexpected order without reluctance and sorrow for they never found any irksomeness in the task of benefiting the rising generation of the colony’. The members intimated that if the Governor had consulted with the Committee about his proposed new principles for the institutions, ‘they would have been happy to have

117 Bowden to Brisbane, 17 November 1824, in CSIL, Bundle 22, p. 187.
118 ibid., p. 196(a).
carried into execution any new principles the Governor should have deemed expedient.\textsuperscript{119}

The dismissal of the Committee for the three institutions was proclaimed in a Government and General Order of 1 January 1824 which stated:

In consequence of the arrival from England of Mr and Mrs Sweetman with new Appointments relating to those Institutions, His Excellency deeming it incumbent upon him to model each of them upon new principles is enabled to relieve that late Committee from the irksomeness of their past duties.\textsuperscript{120}

This order was conveyed to five of the committee members of both Orphan Schools who had met in Mr Justice Field’s home. The order contained details about the settling of the institutions’ accounts. Any balances left in the account were to be paid to the Colonial Treasurer.\textsuperscript{121}

The Governor had appointed a new Committee ‘for the time being’ which consisted of the Colonial Secretary Major F. Goulburn, Henry Grattan Douglass who held a Doctorate of Medicine from Trinity College, Dublin,\textsuperscript{122} and the Rev. Thomas Reddall.\textsuperscript{123} By taking this course of action, the Governor had broken the established tradition of a large Committee and local sub-committees being appointed to supervise the management of the Orphan Schools.

The committee members took the opportunity of seeking Mr Justice Field’s considered legal opinion about the Title Deeds which the Trustees held for the Orphan Lands, and which had been entrusted to them and to their survivors by Governor King. Three of the surviving trustees were the Rev. Samuel Marsden, surgeon John Harris and the former Commissary John Palmer. They were some of the committee members whom Governor Brisbane had ‘relieved of their duties’. It was Mr Justice Field’s opinion that ‘the Trustees would not be justified in parting with the Deeds, nor in assigning their kind to other Trustees … ’. Justice Barron Field also expressed the opinion that Governor King, when making the land grants to the Female Orphan

\textsuperscript{119} FOS Minutes, 12 November 1823, p. 112.
\textsuperscript{120} FOS Minutes, 15 January 1824, p. 114. (This was a combined meeting of the Male and Female Orphan Schools’ Committees).
\textsuperscript{121} ibid.
\textsuperscript{123} Despatches From Governors, New South Wales Enclosures, 1827-29, p. 506.
Institution, had not contemplated that a time would arise ‘when the Trustees would not be part of the Committee’.\textsuperscript{124}

The management of the Orphan Schools had, from the opening of the Female Orphan School in 1801, rested in the hands of a Committee. In late 1823 Governor Brisbane, without any prior warning, dismissed the members who served on the Committees of the Male and Female Orphan Schools, and the Native Institution. When the Governor’s actions were criticised in an anonymous letter published in the \textit{Morning Chronicle} of 21 August 1824, not only with regard to the dismissal of the Orphan Schools’ Committees, but also to other areas of his administration, the Governor replied in his defence that:

\begin{quote}
The Changes alluded to in this Article were made because the Committee was nearly about to die a natural death by the removal of two judges, which required the Committee in consequence, to be new modelled, but there was not the shadow of personality in the measure.\textsuperscript{125}
\end{quote}

Decisions had been made in England regarding the colony’s legal systems. An Act had been passed in the English Parliament ‘for instituting a Supreme Court of Jurisdiction in New South Wales’. Earl Bathurst advised Sir Thomas Brisbane of this action, and informed him that a Chief Justice had been appointed to the new Court namely Francis Forbes.\textsuperscript{126} The effect of this decision was that two members of the Orphan School Committee, Mr Judge-Advocate Wylde and Mr Justice Field would no longer have official positions in the colony. The advice from England was that the ‘office of Judge Advocate and Judge of the Supreme Court have been abolished’.\textsuperscript{127}

Governor Brisbane had dismissed some Magistrates of the Bench, who were members of the Committee when they refused to serve with Dr H. G. Douglass as a Magistrate,\textsuperscript{128} and George Palmer a former Magistrate had resigned from the Female Orphan School Committee as a consequence of the Governor’s action.\textsuperscript{129} The two judges, Judge-Advocate Wylde, and Mr Justice Field, had disagreed with the

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{124} ibid., p. 113.
\textsuperscript{125} Brisbane to Bathurst, 23 May 1825, in \textit{HRA}, Vol. XI, pp. 606, 614.
\textsuperscript{126} Bathurst to Brisbane, 4 August 1823, ibid., p. 102.
\textsuperscript{127} Bathurst to Brisbane, 29 March 1823, ibid., p. 64.
\textsuperscript{128} Note 241, in \textit{HRA}, Vol. XI, p. 962.
\textsuperscript{129} George Palmer to Governor Brisbane, 31 August 1822, in CSIL, Bundle 18, p. 143. SRNSW 4/1762.
\end{footnotesize}
Governor’s proposal to appoint John Macarthur to the Bench.\textsuperscript{130} These two men had been appointed to the Orphan School Committee by Governor Macquarie, however there had been no members of the legal profession in Governor King’s appointed Committee, and it appeared to function in a satisfactory manner. The Committee had disagreed with the Rev. Reddall’s suggestion about the time he should spend at the Orphan Schools.\textsuperscript{131}

Although Governor Brisbane wrote ‘there was not the shadow of personality in the measure’, there certainly had been disagreements between some of the Committee members and the Governor in the past. Despite the Governor’s manifest reasons for the Committees’ dismissal, one wonders if there were latent influences behind the Governor’s decision. Dr Liston has made the observation that ‘the summary dismissal of leading clerics and settlers who had worked for years in a voluntary capacity was an unnecessary tactless gesture’.\textsuperscript{132}

In conclusion, the ‘hands on’ approach which Macquarie had displayed not only to the administration of the colony but also to the Orphan Schools, does not appear to be evident during Governor Brisbane’s administration. This may have affected the relationship between the Governor and the Schools’ Committees.

From existing records only passing mention is made of Lady Brisbane’s practical involvement in the Female Orphan School. She had given birth to their first child Isabella in 1821, whilst her husband was stationed in Ireland. Her second daughter Eleanor Australia Makdougall was born on 7th April 1823 at Government House Parramatta. The first son, named Thomas Australius Makdougall, was born in Parramatta on 23 August 1824.\textsuperscript{133} The Brisbane family together with Miss Makdougall, who had accompanied them to New South Wales, resided at Parramatta. They ‘mixed little in society and gave none of the large entertainments such as Mrs Macquarie had given’. With her desire for a ‘quiet life’, and small children to engage her time, it has been written that for Lady Brisbane the ‘nursery was her occupation

\textsuperscript{130} Wylde and Field to Brisbane, 19 January 1822, in \textit{HRA}, Vol. X, p. 626.
\textsuperscript{131} Reddall to Brisbane, 15 November 1822, in CSIL, Bundle 17, p. 42.
\textsuperscript{133} Teale, \textit{Thomas Brisbane}, p. 27.
and her delight’.\textsuperscript{134} As Patroness of the Female Orphan School Lady Brisbane does not appear to have shown the same interest, or exercised the feminine leadership role which Mrs Macquarie had displayed. Lady Brisbane’s attitude possibly did not encourage the Ladies’ committee, which had previously exercised a positive influence on the Female Orphan School. In fact the absence of the involvement, drive and enthusiasm displayed by the Macquaries had a negative effect on the Committees. The recorded minutes of both Male and Female Orphan Schools indicate that meetings were held less frequently and attendance had declined.

Within the Male Orphan School the adoption of the ‘payment by results’ system for the trades’ teachers had led to an improvement in teaching methods, and the boys became more efficient in their ‘trades’ subjects.

The relocation of the Male Orphan School to Cabramatta was a significant change in the history of the Orphan Schools. The transfer to the Orphan School Estate put a closure to the Sydney site of the Orphan Schools.

The Rev. Thomas Reddall had introduced Dr Bell’s System of Education in both Schools, and the Committee had commented favourably on the improvements in the children’s education. However the relationship became strained between the Committee and the Rev. Reddall, and he withdrew his services from the Schools.

The selection of Mr and Mrs Sweetman to the superintendence of the Female Orphan School was not a satisfactory appointment. They both suffered ill-health and were unable to provide the supervision necessary in an institution. The standard of care fell far short of that envisaged by the earlier governors, and unfortunately the girls were neglected. In the latter part of Mr Bowden’s Mastership his loss of interest in his work, also had a negative effect on the Male Orphan School.

In this period an important dimension is added to our study of the Orphan Schools. We ‘hear’ the ‘voices’ of the boys raised in protest about food deprivation, and work which the Master ordered them to perform. The Committee paid attention to the boys’ protests and procedures were put in place to ensure that the level of care which Governor Macquarie had considered necessary was again provided for the boys.

\textsuperscript{134} King, \textit{Elizabeth Macarthur and Her World}, pp. 101-102.