SECTION I - FRAMEWORK AND TRADITIONS

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION: DEFINITIONS, CONCEPTS AND A FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSIS

Definitions

This study is a history of gambling in Australia, but the word "gambling" can encompass a range of activities far too vast for analysis here. Even if the "gambles" involved in such activities as driving to work, crossing the road, or signing a job or marriage contract are dismissed as irrelevant to the study, the range of gambling activities undertaken by Australians in the past remains enormous in scope. The "calculated gambles" undertaken by the settlers who left Britain to start a new life in early colonial Australia; the gambles of the pastoralists who hoped for rain to fall at the right time; the slightly more obvious gambles of the gold rush immigrants who hoped to win their fortunes through finding a nugget or the mother lode; or the "supreme gambles" undertaken by those who signed on in the armed forces during the two world wars; are merely some of the innumerable examples of forms which gambling could take. This study, however, is not concerned with such forms, even though their contribution to the national psyche could have some influence on the attitudes and values of society.

The gambling with which this study is concerned is restricted to those occasions where money changes hands as a consequence of the outcome of some previously agreed event. Even this definition is too broad, for it could be interpreted in a way which included many types of business speculation, ranging from stock-exchange transactions to the insurance industry. Yet, these forms of speculation are also outside the boundaries of the study, except for particular occasions

where discussion of such activity is relevant to the analysis of the major focus, namely gaming and betting.

"Gaming" is used to refer to games of chance where money changes hands according to the result of the games. These usually involve the use of tables and/or other instruments necessary for the purpose of the game. Dice, packs of cards, coins and revolving wheels are common examples of the instruments used.

"Betting" concerns the action of two or more "bettors" who disagree on the likely outcome of a particular event, or series of events, either to be determined or (sometimes) past. The act of betting occurs when the disputants support their respective opinions with money (or its equivalent), and agree that the correct forecaster wins. Often the event concerned is a race or some other sporting event, but this type of competition is not the sole object of "bets" or "wagers". Bettors could dispute the likely result of tossing a coin, or whether a certain task could be completed in a specified time, or even the likely result of a soon to be contested election. Although the objects of betting are limitless, we shall see that the most common wagers, in Australia at least, have concerned horse races and other sporting competition.

The study will trace the development of gaming and betting in Australia, and will analyse their changing natures in the widest possible historical context. Accordingly, it has been necessary to make some assumptions about that context in order to provide a

workable framework for the analysis. The validity of the assumptions will be demonstrated by the analysis itself, but in the interests of clarity they need to be specified here.

Assumptions and Concepts

Fundamental to the analysis is the assumption that Australia has not been an homogeneous society, but rather a society composed of varying attitude sets and value systems.[1] In terms of Clifford Geertz's explanation of culture, it is assumed that different sections of Australian society have followed different "...set[s] of control mechanisms - plans, recipes, rules, instructions (what computer engineers call 'programs') for the governing of behaviour".[2] The holders of the variant value systems, or different sets of control mechanisms, have been grouped in this study, into three broad categories or classes.

The concept of class used throughout this study is not based on Marxist interpretations. The classes used are not economic classes, and are not defined by their relationship to the means of production. Nor are they seen as necessarily in conflict with each other over economic and political power. They are descriptive categories arranged

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1 The concept of variant cultures co-existing within any society is developed by Robert F. Berkhofer, "Clio and the Culture Concept: Some Impressions of a Changing Relationship in American Historiography" in L. Schneider and C.M. Bonjean (eds.), op.cit.

2 Clifford Geertz, The Interpretation of Cultures, London 1975, p.44.

in an hierarchical structure, deriving more from Weberian theory than from Marx.[3] Although such an approach can use any number of classifications, provided the boundaries between them are clear, in this study a model employing three broad categories is used.[4]

The three groups, defined as upper classes, middle classes and lower classes, are not envisaged as fixed categories tied to particular occupations or degrees of political power. They are fluid groupings of people who hold similar sets of social and cultural values which can be identified as characteristic of that group. The hierarchical relationship implied by the class labels reflects the perceptions of the class membership rather than a judgement by the historian, and emphasizes that the categories are historically determined by the perceived reality of the participants, rather than determined exclusively by the historian.

Although the categories should be seen as fluid rather than rigid, in the interests of clarity it is perhaps necessary to define them further than by merely allocating labels. Throughout this analysis of gaming and betting in Australia's history, the 'upper-class' values are seen as those typically held by the colonial gentry,

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3 For clear but brief explanations of the two major traditions from which most class theory derives see R.J. Morris, Class and Class Consciousness in the Industrial Revolution, 1780-1850, Studies in Economic and Social History, London 1979. For a more detailed debate over the value and nature of class theory see R.S. Neale (ed.), History and Class: Essential Readings in Theory and Interpretation, Oxford 1983.

4 Debate over the "correct" number of classes is extensive. For a sample of it see Neale, op.cit.

who set themselves up as an upper class in imitation of Britain's aristocracy. 'Middle-class' refers to the value system characteristic of the mainly urban mercantile, industrial and professional group which emerged in Britain during the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century era of industrialisation, and which appeared in Australia in significant numbers in the late colonial period. This group was disproportionately protestant, and its spokesmen often linked protestantism with its other social values. 'Lower-class' values are those held typically by the 'workers' and the poorer sections of society. The term 'workers' is not exclusive to industrial employees but can apply also to rural employees in the pre-industrial era.[5] This group was disproportionately Catholic and often found its social champions in the hierarchy.

A major objection by Marxist historians to this type of classification is that it is essentially static, and as such it is inappropriate for analysis of change over time. That objection however, can be overcome; firstly by a recognition of the categories as fluid - allowing for movement between them, the gradual shifting of boundaries and the gradual modification of the value systems; and also by employing the concept of cultural reproduction as defined by French anthropologist Pierre Bourdieu.

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5 The use of this type of classification system is open to charges of the distortion of reality through simplification. But such criticism would be unfair because simplification is the purpose of analytical models. To reject them is to reject the use of theory. Yet it is theory which provides the historian with the framework for analysis and interpretation, and it will always appear, at least implicitly in any interpretative work. Peter Burke, Sociology and History, London 1980, pp.61-62.

According to Bourdieu, a society tends to reproduce itself by inculcating in its young the values and attitudes of the previous generation. The major agents of reproduction are the churches, the family and the education system. Bourdieu focuses less on society as a whole than on the individual, who has his own culture or 'habitus', created in early childhood through family socialisation and carried through life, modified by encounters with the world. The individual's response to any given situation is chosen from the limited range derived from the values and beliefs contained in that habitus. Each experience however, can modify the habitus. Groups of individuals who possess a similar habitus are likely to constitute classes, particularly if they are subject to identical reproduction agents.[6]

In this way, Bourdieu's concept permits combination of the idea of variant social and cultural value systems in a society, classification of these variarts into broad categories, and the idea of the various class value systems being transmitted from one generation to the next with consistent, though very gradual, modification. His concept adds a dynamic dimension to stratificationist models.[7]

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6 Useful explanations of Bourdieu's ideas can be found in Burke, op.cit., pp.56-57 and Ian McKay, "Historians, Anthropology, and the Concept of Culture", Labour/Le Travailleur, vols. 8 and 9, Autumn 1981 and Spring 1982, pp.230-237.

7 Bourdieu also extends his concept through the definition of other terms including "symbolic capital" and "symbolic violence" (similar to Gramsci's 'hegemony'), but these concepts are not employed in this study.

To examine the interaction between the chosen categories a further analytical tool is needed, and the one most appropriate for the study's purposes is the concept of "cultural hegemony". Hegemony is a concept which assumes the existence of a ruling class. Traditionally, the term's definition has applied to political rule or domination, especially in reference to relations between states. Marxism extended its meaning to apply to the rule or domination by a ruling class, but Italian Marxist theorist Antonio Gramsci subsequently drew a distinction between rule and hegemony; using "rule" to refer to direct political forms of control or coercion, and "hegemony" to refer to the social and cultural forces which helped provide the legitimacy of the political rule.[8]

Gramsci was concerned with the interaction between classes, and particularly with the ways in which the ruled appear to accept the ideas and values of the rulers, even though these might run counter to the apparent class interests of the ruled. He defined "cultural hegemony" as the means by which the ruling class imposes a cultural consensus. This is achieved through control of the media of indoctrination; the press, the churches and the education system.

> ... It involves more than ideological propaganda. It involves the control of ideas and the means of communicating ideas and information to ensure that the ideas, information and values in mass circulation will support the legitimacy of the authority of the ruling

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8 Raymond Williams, Marxism and Literature, Oxford 1977, p.108; For details on Gramsci and the development of his theories see Antonio Gramsci, The Modern Prince and Other Writings, New York 1957 (introduction); and E.D. Genovese, "On Antonio Gramsci" in his, In Red and Black: Marxian Explorations in Southern and Afro-American History, New York 1968.

> classes, and that the information about social organisations and relationships which is available will make the acceptance of that dominant value system much easier.[9]

Hegemony exists by consent. Neither rulers nor ruled need be aware of the political consequences or functions of the consensus, but the extent of the hegemony and the success of the ruling class depends on its ability to convince the ruled that their interests are those of the whole society. For example, a hegemony of the bourgeoisie is achieved when the society as a whole identifies bourgeois ideas, values and interests with the general good of the society.[10] Hegemony though, is not a static force. It is a dynamic process, fluid and changeable. The concept can be applied to a situation where rival value systems, representing rival classes or cultural variants, compete for dominance in the society.[11] At least the concept of cultural hegemony admits the possibility of the hegemony of a ruling class being challenged and perhaps replaced. Typically, a ruling class cannot be overthrown until its cultural hegemony is challenged. When the old order collapses, the new, if it is to govern by consent, must proceed to establish its own cultural hegemony.

This concept can prove a valuable tool in analysis of Australian

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9 Morris, op.cit., p.60; see also G. Rudé, Ideology and Popular Protest, New York 1980, p.23 and Genovese, op.cit., pp.406-408. One of the best explanations of cultural hegemony is offered by Michael Fellman, "Approaching Popular Ideology in Nineteenth Century America", Historical Reflections, vol.6, Winter 1979, pp.322-325.

10 Genovese, E.D. op.cit., p.407; Burke, op.cit., p.78.

11 Fellman, op.cit., p.324.

society. If variant cultures existed within the society, we are able to measure the extent of the dominance of the particular ruling culture by analysis of the imposition of its cultural ideas and values.[12] Analysis of the dominant gaming and betting values in Australian society, and changes in that dominance over time, will enable assessment of the relative strengths of variant value systems in the society.

Comparison

Another tool used in this study is comparison. The work is not intended as an exercise in comparative history, but it does recognise the value, and even necessity, of widening the frames of reference to enable full interpretation. For this reason, considerable attention is devoted to examination of relevant aspects of British history - particularly the history of eighteenth and nineteenth century Britain. Reference to Britain, rather than to other colonial settlements which underwent experiences similar to the Australian colonies is justified by two major factors.

One is the close relationship between Britain and the colonies, and Australia's dependence on Britain throughout the nineteenth century for ideas and values, as well as the more obvious markets, capital and immigrants. The other factor is the sophisticated

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[12] Genovese, op.cit., p.408.

development of British leisure and recreation historiography which enables the borrowing and application of interpretations. The nature of this work is discussed in more detail below.[13] Reference to the British situation after the first world war is less prominent, because of a relative lack of relevant British studies of this later period, and because for the later period the interpretative frameworks borrowed from the British scholars require no further explanation.

A history of Australian gaming and betting also necessarily involves a degree of internal comparison - or comparison between the experiences of the different Australian colonies and states. Again it should be stressed that what follows is not structured according to frameworks appropriate for a truly comparative study. Rather, the work attempts to treat eastern Australia as an entity. Similarities and differences in the experiences and responses of the various administrative regions are identified and form the basis of much of the study, but the major task at hand is not the comparison of two or more state histories.

It will become clear to the reader that Western Australia is neglected almost completely in this history, and that New South Wales has received relatively greater emphasis than the other regions. The emphasis on New South Wales is justified by the longer historical experience of that state, its role as the mother colony to Tasmania, Victoria and Queensland, the fuller historical context made available

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13 See Chapter Two, pp.12-30.

by the relatively greater attention that state has received from other historians, and by the range of suitable available sources. The remaining eastern states are not neglected, though the New South Wales experience often provides the basis from which their experiences are assessed.

Western Australia poses a different problem for general historians of Australia. Its slower development in the nineteenth century provides a contradiction to any imposed periodisation, and the relative inaccessability of relevant source materials provides difficulties of a different nature. However, a cursory examination of gaming and betting developments in Western Australia, from the sources which are readily available, suggests that their history in that state has followed patterns essentially similar to those of the eastern states, with a significant time lag - at least until about the first world war. Since about 1920 the Western Australian story is quite similar to that described for the rest of Australia.

CHAPTER TWO

THE COLONIAL INHERITANCE OF GAMBLING PRACTICES AND TRADITIONS, 1788-1820

Analysis of the values and attitudes of European society in Australia must begin with analysis of those of eighteenth century Britain. The concept of "cultural baggage" or "invisible luggage" has become almost hackneyed, but is nonetheless valid; for the British immigrants to Australia in 1788 certainly were British, and they brought with them British values, attitudes and behaviour. The laws and traditions which determined the relationships between the people were British laws and traditions - even allowing for the peculiar circumstances of a prison settlement at the end of the earth, administered by a governor with virtually autocratic powers, and the different mix of colonial British population, both in terms of class and of regional and religious origins.

The primary purpose of this chapter is to examine the gaming and betting practices and attitudes inherited by the Australian colonies during their first three decades. To achieve this aim, it is necessary to examine the relevant practices of eighteenth century Britain and society's attitudes towards them, though we should not assume that both were transplanted intact.

The British Background

British society in the 1780s was beginning its dynamic transformation from a rural agricultural based society to one based on urbanised industrialisation. If we are to understand the nature of traditions inherited by Australia's colonisers, we need to examine the

relevant attitudes, beliefs and practices of pre-modern Britain, and the forces of change which were beginning to transform that society. The aspect of British society relevant to this analysis is the area of leisure and recreation, for it is within that context, except for the activities of a small minority of professional gamblers, that gaming and betting typically take place.

In recent years, R.W. Malcolmson, Peter Bailey and Hugh Cunningham[1] have demonstrated that in the late eighteenth century and throughout most of the nineteenth century, the transformation of Britain from an essentially rural, traditional society to an urban industrial society based on new notions of morality, industry and progress, had a dramatic, if gradual, effect on English popular leisure and recreation. Of these three, Malcolmson, who offers greatest focus on the eighteenth century, views the years 1700-1750 as a period of stability in which traditional pastimes and popular recreations were accepted by the dominant classes as useful, and even necessary, aspects of English society.[2]

His argument is that until about 1750 recreation was viewed by the dominant classes as a useful means of social control. It was

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1 R.W. Malcolmson, Popular Recreations in English Society, 1700-1850, Cambridge 1973; Peter Bailey, Leisure and Class in Victorian England: Rational Recreation and the Contest for Control, 1830-1885, London 1978; Hugh Cunningham, Leisure in the Industrial Revolution, c. 1780-1880, London 1980; see also James Walvin, Leisure and Society, 1830-1850, London 1978.

2 Malcolmson, op.cit., pp.68-71. He does emphasize however that popular recreations have always had some detractors amongst moralists and reformers, ibid., p.5.

capable of channelling hostilities into isolated, manageable conflicts. It gave the workers something to look forward to as well as something to reminisce about. It was a sustaining thought between events. Recreation itself was seen as a positive force because it promoted the happiness and well being of the workers. A century later the dominant culture's view had changed. Society was then concerned with progress, and progress could be achieved only by industry. In this new industrial society there was no time for the lower classes to waste in idleness. If recreation had to exist at all then it should be rational, and should be designed to prepare both the mind and the body for work.[3]

Malcolmson's main concern is with popular or folk recreation, and the way in which its traditional forms were undermined by the forces of modernisation. He writes less of "transformation" than of "decline" and "disintegration", leading to a recreational vacuum by the second quarter of the nineteenth century when traditional practices had disappeared, but the new popular pastimes of urban industrial society had not been established.[4] Subsequent works by Bailey and Cunningham dispute this suggested dark age for popular culture, with Bailey emphasizing the vitality and adaptability of the surviving traces of popular recreations in early Victorian towns,[5] and Cunningham stressing that some practices were forced underground rather than destroyed, whilst other new forms of recreation were invented and

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3 ibid., pp.75-88, 157-163, 168.
4 ibid., pp.274-275.
5 Bailey, op.cit., pp.9-11.

prospered during the supposed dark age.[6] However, whilst there has been debate over the resilience of the traditional folk culture, and the extent of a recreational vacuum in the 1830s and 1840s, there is consensus that many recreational forms and structures were transformed by the process of industrialisation, with its consequent labour discipline, and by the evangelical religious movement.[7]

The concept of the labour discipline and its development has been examined at length by E.P. Thompson who explores the notation of time in traditional English rural society (where it revolved around the performance of particular tasks), and its transformation during industrialisation through widespread application of the clock.[8]

According to Thompson:

> ... Three points may be proposed about task-orientation. First, there is a sense in which it is more humanly comprehensible than timed labour. The peasant or labourer appears to attend upon what is an observed necessity. Second, a community in which task-orientation is common appears to show least demarcation between work and 'life'. Social intercourse and labour are intermingled - the working-day lengthens or contracts according to the task - and there is no great sense of conflict between labour and 'passing the time of day'. Third, to men accustomed to labour timed by the clock, this attitude to labour appears to be wasteful and lacking in urgency.[9]

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6 Cunningham, op.cit., p.24 and 27-35. The "inventions" include popular drama and spectacles such as the circus and travelling menageries.

7 See also Chris Waters, "'All Sorts and Any Quantity of Outlandish Recreations': History, Sociology, and the Study of Leisure in England, 1820 to 1870", Canadian Historical Association Historical Papers, 1981, p.11.

8 E.P. Thompson, "Time, Work-Discipline and Industrial Capitalism" Past and Present, vol.38 December 1967, pp.56-97.

9 ibid., p.59.

To factory employers and emerging mercantile capitalists concerned with efficiency in timed work, leisure time and recreation meant mis-spent idleness and damage to the national economy, but the dominance of their view was established only gradually.[10] It received support from the existing traces of England's puritan tradition and its attitudes towards work anc recreation, which were reinforced by the growth of the eighteenth century evangelical movement.

Malcolmson has observed that:

> Evangelical sentiment was almost always at odds with the traditions of popular diversion. It was forward-looking, normally 'reformist' profoundly concerned with sin and salvation and the need for social and self-discipline, interested more in the individual's private life than in the affairs of the community, ... suspicious of wordly pleasures, ... and contemptuous of much of the culture of earlier generations; ... Evangelicalism could not accommodate itself to the tradition of popular leisure without abandoning its basic presuppositions ...[11]

Bailey emphasizes that evangelicalism was not restricted to methodism, and that the influence of its teachings on the need to strengthen personal and social standards of morality, and its suspicion of all pleasures, affected the stance of all English churches. He suggests that where eighteenth century anglicanism was slowly distancing itself from its traditional role as patron of some recreations, evangelicalism converted distancing into active hostility.[12]

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10 Bailey, op.cit., p.21; Cunningham, op.cit., p.17 Malcomson, op.cit., pp.89-100.

11 Malcolmson, op.cit., pp.100-101.

The evangelical movement and the establishment of the industrial work discipline have been identified as the major forces in the transformation of traditional leisure and recreation, but they were assisted by related factors. Hugh Cunningham stresses that they were aided in this process by the police and the magistracy, who entered into an alliance against popular leisure, and by a gradual withdrawal of the patronage of the "better classes", who retreated into their own "exclusive" leisure pursuits, such as shooting and hunting, and the slightly less exclusive pursuit of horse racing.[13]

It is within this context of a transformation or decline of popular recreation, and a growing exclusiveness in the recreation of the ruling classes, that the Australian colonists' inherited attitudes towards gaming and betting must be placed. Analysis of gaming and betting practices in eighteenth century Britain and the efforts of reformers reveals a sometimes confusing picture, clouded by the tension between attempts to undermine popular forms of gaming and betting and the desire to leave intact the practices of the "leisured class".

Gaming and betting do not figure prominently in Malcomson's analysis of eighteenth century popular recreations, but it is possible

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12 Bailey, op.cit., p.17.

13 Cunningham, op.cit., pp.16-20; Cunningham p.45 and Malcolmson, op.cit., pp.107-14 also detail the effects of the enclosure movement and the general processes of industrialisation, urbanisation and economic change.

to demonstrate that they did occupy an important place in the leisure pursuits of both the upper and lower classes. Gaming appeared in various forms in popular recreation, as an integral part of rural fairs and as a form of recreation in its own right in the more populous areas. Betting was even more prominent as a central part of most recreational competitions.

Perhaps the most basic form of gaming, and one of the most popular, was the game of "throwing at cocks" in which competitors paid for the privilege of throwing a stick at a cock which was tied by a short cord to a stake about twenty yards away. If the thrower succeeded in knocking down the cock and running in to secure it before it regained its feet, he claimed the bird and the right to charge other competitors who might wish to try to emulate his feat. Such games, together with lotteries, with spoons and rings as prizes, were common at eighteenth century fairs and wakes. After the fair or holiday festivities the day might be concluded with card games.[14]

These, along with coin and dice games, were played also by the poorer classes in the quiet streets of the towns or in gaming houses behind taverns.[15] But for the wealthy, private gambling clubs provided the opportunity for members and their guests to wager tens of thousands of pounds at the tables. Clubs such as Brooke's and Arthur's were meeting places for the wealthy and fashionable of both sexes. Men

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14 Malcolmson, op.cit.. For 'throwing at cocks' see p.48; lotteries p.20; cards p.29.

15 John Ashton, The History of Gambling in England, Detroit 1968, (first published London, 1938), pp.62-63.

such as Charles James Fox and Lord Robert Spencer were notorious for their high stakes gaming at Brooke's.[16]

The most famous gaming club was White's in St. James Street, London, which as well as providing facilities for card and dice games, kept a book in which bets between members were recorded. This record provides a clear statement that English gentlemen were prepared to bet on anything, from questions of who would outlive whom to matters of political prediction,[17] but it is doubtful that their variety of betting events was any greater than those of the lower classes.

Traditional popular recreation provided plenty of betting opportunities. All types of sporting events on which predicted opinion differed were used for betting. Contests, whether between men, in football or cricket matches, foot races or pugilism; or between animals, as in cock fighting, dog fighting or the various forms of animal baiting, were all objects of betting.[18] Gaming and betting opportunities were available for all. These forms of gambling were not restricted to the "leisured classes", though the gentry may well have been in a position to indulge themselves more frequently, or at least

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16 ibid., Chapter VI, pp.90-102; Ashton provides anecdotes and descriptions of the major gaming houses. He makes a firm distinction between the "gambling clubs" for gentlemen and ladies, and the "gaming hells" which catered for the lower orders. The latter became more prominent early in the nineteenth century when more people moved to the towns.

17 A.H. Bourke, The History of White's, 2 vols., London 1892, passim.

18 For some examples see Malcolmson, op.cit., pp.43-50; J.H. Plumb, The First Four Georges, London 1966, p.17; Bailey, op.cit., p.22. The novels of Fielding and Smollett also provide numerous examples.

with higher stakes.

Two other aspects of gaming and betting concerned with class in pre-modern Britain are important for our understanding of later developments. One concerns the intimate relationship between the gentry and the lower orders in which the gentry provided patronage and the opportunity for betting. The other, which will be examined first, concerns a difference in the typical attitudes of the bettors from the two classes.

It appears that for the gentry, gambling, whether gaming or betting, was important as a show of wealth rather than as an attempt to increase that wealth or to add force to their opinions. Dostoyevsky, in The Gambler, suggested that for the wealthy leisured class gaming for high stakes was a statement of contempt for money. The anecdotes provided by John Ashton and S.D. Taylor, concerning the behaviour of gentlemen and ladies in the eighteenth century gaming clubs, support such a claim. For these gamblers, losing large stakes was just as important as winning. They were not concerned with trying to achieve "good odds": an even chance, or an even money bet had greater attraction than the possibility of winning a large amount of money for a small investment.[19]

For the poorer classes however, a win offered the opportunity to

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[19] F. Dostoyevsky, The Gambler; Bobek; A Nasty Story, (J. Coulson, Trans.), Middlesex 1966, pp.29-31; Ashton, op.cit., Chapters IV and V; pp.64-89; S.D. Taylor, The History of Playing Cards, (first published 1865) London 1973, reprint, Chapter VII, p.416 ff.

achieve things which would normally be beyond their means. The man who won at "throwing at cocks" could assume, for a while, the role of entrepreneur. One who won a prize in a lottery could present his sweetheart with a trinket. Ross McKibbin's claims, made in reference to the working class around the end of the nineteenth century, that their attitudes to gambling were in part formed by their irregular incomes and their lack of any ethos of saving (apart from providing for burial expenses), also have some applicability to pre-modern popular gaming and betting.[20] Britain's eighteenth century lower orders were attracted to those forms of gambling which offered the possibility of a large prize in return for a small outlay.

This suggestion is given some force by the history of England's first national lottery, held by Elizabeth I as a fund raising exercise between 1567 and 1569. This lottery, which initially advertised a first prize of £5,000 value and total prizes of around £100,000 with tickets at ten shillings each, was beyond the means of all but the wealthy. The lottery failed to inspire that group and failed to attract more than one twelfth of the projected subscription, so the prizes had to be reduced accordingly.[21] It did, however, fire the imagination of the lower classes who, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, gave enthusiastic support to both less ambitious state-run national lotteries and the small scale lotteries held at provincial fairs, or as a means of selling goods. Support for the

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20 Ross McKibbin, "Working-class Gambling in Britain, 1880-1939" Past and Present, no.82, February 1979, pp.161-2.

21 Alan Haynes, "The First English National Lottery" History Today, vol.29, September 1979, pp.610-613.

lotteries was so great that two legislative attempts were made (in 1669 and 1710) to restrict their growth and to ensure that government received a share of profits.[22] The Acts had limited effect. They had no influence over the activities of the popular, small scale, private lotteries, known as "Little Goes", which the lower orders supported in ever increasing numbers;[23] anc by the end of the eighteenth century state-run lotteries, the small scale lotteries and insurance schemes disguised as lotteries became the subject of a parliamentary enquiry. The committee of enquiry, concerned with the extent to which lotteries attracted lower class speculators and "tempted [them] to their ruin", recommended the complete prohibition of lotteries.[24]

Although gaming and betting might have had different bases of appeal for the wealthy and the masses, the major betting outlets also provided a means of class co-operation. Horse racing, cockfighting and pugilism all relied upon the gentry's patronage.[25] Pugilism, though sometimes spontaneous, often required promotion by members of the gentry, many of whom sponsored their own champions. The gentry similarly owned most of the fighting cocks, though their role as entrepreneur was gradually being assumed by the tavern proprietor.[26] But it was horse racing which provided the clearest indication of gentry patronage of a sport used by both groups for betting.

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22 Bailey, op.cit., p.23; South Australia, Royal Commission on Betting, 1933, Report, p.14; Ashton, op.cit., pp.222-229.

23 Ashton, op.cit., p.236.

24 House of Commons, Select Committee on Lotteries, 1808, 2nd report, p.12.

25 Malcolmson, op.cit., pp.44, 49-51; Bailey, op.cit., pp.22-25; Cunningham, op.cit., p.25.

26 Cunningham, op.cit., p.24.

Without the gentry thoroughbred horse racing could not exist. The expense of maintaining a team of horses bred for speed was something only they could afford, but the enjoyment of watching the equine contests was not an exclusive pleasure. Horse racing had been literally a "sport of kings", at least from the restoration of Charles II. Even Queen Anne and the Hanoverian monarchs provided sponsorship in the form of Royal Plates, to be run for at the major courses.[27]

The most common type of race was a match race between two horses, ridden by their owners. The prizes for the winner included the "stake" provided by the losing owner, in addition to the honour and prestige attached to victory. However, the eighteenth century was an era of change for horse racing, illustrated by the increasing emphasis on races for a number of horses, with the owners subscribing a sweepstakes prize; and particularly by the institution of the Jockey Club and Tattersall's subscription room.

The Jockey Club, established at Newmarket in the 1750s published a set of rules for horse racing and gradually assumed control and authority over the sport. Its members were impressive gentlemen, led from the mid 1760s by Sir Charles Bunbury who established a reputation for scrupulous fair play.[28] From the 1780s the Jockey Club met at

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[27] Roger Longrigg, The History of Horse Racing, London 1972, pp.49-51, 69-70; Dorothy Laird, Royal Ascot: A History of Royal Ascot from its Founding by Queen Anne to the Present Time, London 1976, p.17; Michael Horacek, "The Four Stages of the History of Betting", part one, Racetrack, October, 1979, p.46; Ashton, op.cit., pp.178-184.

rooms provided by Richard Tattersall, who later also provided facilities in a "subscription room" for the laying and settling of bets. Subscribers to this room became known as the members of Tattersall's Club.[29] Through the Jockey Club and Tattersall's, horse racing became institutionalised and firmly under the control of the gentry, but it remained far from exclusive in its appeal.

Vamplew has noted that apart from the Newmarket course, from which the masses were actively discouraged, the "sport of kings" received, and was content to receive, mass support. It was not until the arrival of the railway and the enclosure of race courses towards the middle of the nineteenth century that the growth of "gate money" meetings was facilitated; but well before then the masses played an important part in race meetings. Sometimes farmers and other owners of working horses were able to participate directly in the race-day's proceedings, especially when the races were held as part of a local festival.[30] Spectators could also help defray the cost of holding a race meeting, or contribute to additional prize money for the successful competitors. As Vamplew stresses:

> Money was made out of the race crowd: the proprietors of the grandstand were paid by those who wished to segregate themselves from the masses; and most spectators wanted more than a view of the horses when they went racing, a fact well appreciated by the lessees of the gambling booths, beer tents, and food stalls.[31]

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28 Longrigg, op.cit., pp.89-91; Wray Vamplew, The Turf: A Social and Economic History of Horse Racing, London 1976, pp.78-80.

29 Longrigg, op.cit., p.95.

30 Vamplew, op.cit., pp.18-19.

31 ibid.

For the masses, the horse races were merely the centrepiece of a day's carnival which included a vast array of entertainment, ranging from cockfighting and boxing, to wrestling and gaming booths. For the gentry the horse race events were the raison d'être. Whilst the two classes co-operated in contributing to each other's needs, wherever there was a grandstand the mixing of the classes could be minimised. Though real segregation could not be achieved until the second half of the nineteenth century when the enclosed race courses were carefully divided into sections for the various strata of society - each section charging a different admission price and providing different forms of additional entertainment.[32]

Betting on eighteenth century horse races was usually a matter of agreement between individuals. Horse owners raced for stake money or sweepstakes. Spectators challenged their colleagues to bet either money or goods. Ladies typically wagered a pair of gloves. But for most of the century the bookmaker was absent from the course. He is a nineteenth and twentieth century phenomenon.

The date of the bookmaker's arrival is unclear. Admiral Rous, the acknowledged father of British horse racing, suggests 1804 as the year bookmaking became a prominent racecourse activity. Horacek suggests either 1790 or 1795, whilst Vamplew more warily accepts the end of the eighteenth century.[33] What is clear, however, is that whilst mass

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32 ibid., p.140.

betting on the outcome of horse races had not yet achieved the dominance as a form of gambling which awaited it in the twentieth century, its popularity was reaching the point where a demand existed for greater betting facilities. The bookmaker emerged around the end of the eighteenth century to satisfy this demand. His subsequent success demonstrated that the demand for his services existed across the class spectrum.

This development provided the growing reform movement with a new focus and added enthusiasm, for the bookmaker was seen as a parasite who contributed nothing to sport. He was seen by reformers as an evil being who enticed bets from those who could not afford to lose and who cheated his customers at every opportunity.[34] For believers in the new industrial work discipline, the bookmaker represented a conscious attempt to undermine the value of labour.

Malcolmson, Bailey and Cunningham have shown how the efforts of the English reformers achieved many of their aims, at least as far as popular recreation was concerned. The traditional animal blood sports were virtually eliminated, and the more violent athletic sports such as football were placed under greater control, minimising the disruption to public order. However, the major objects of gaming and betting survived the reform campaigns.[35]

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33 Longrigg, op.cit., p.117; Vamplew, op.cit., p.215; Horacek, op.cit., part 2, November 1979, p.36; The bookmaker provided the opportunity for supporters of all horses to place a bet; offering different odds on each horse, according to his assessment of their chances of winning and of the enthusiasm of their supporters.

34 Vamplew, op.cit., pp.215-217; Horacek, op.cit., part 2, p.36.

The fundamental reason for the survival of a form of recreational activity so obviously contrary to both the industrial work ethic and the major teachings of evangelicalism is not difficult to discover. It is found in the patronage of the gentry. Horse racing could be justified by the gentry in terms of the need to preserve the superior breed of horse, and once the Jockey Club had been established it was able to argue that it was pursuing those reforms needed to put its house in order. Furthermore, in an era of cavalry warfare, the promotion of equestrianism fourd justification in terms of patriotic duty.[36] As long as horse racing continued, betting would accompany it. However the course enclosure movement of the 1840s could be seen as an attempt at minimising the evil by making the sport and its associated activities less public and restricting entry to those who could afford the admission charges.

The concept of removing gambling from public view was also important in the survival of gaming. The gentry's gaming clubs were private establishments, and as such they also remained relatively free from the reformer's barbs. Malcolmson reminds us that evangelicalism's objections were strongest against open displays.

> 'Open sin' was the principal concern; private vices were not as socially dangerous. The degree of a diversion's publicness significantly conditioned the extent to which there might be a concern for its regulation.[37]

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35 Malcolmson, op.cit., pp.119-126, 143-145; Bailey, op.cit., pp.18-22; Cunningham, op.cit., pp.24-25.

36 Bailey, op.cit., pp.22-23.

Equally, the arguments concerning labour discipline were less appropriate as objections to the gentry's pursuits. For them labour discipline had no meaning. A life of leisure was an acknowledged perquisite of the gentry, just as it was their right to redistribute large sums of money amongst themselves as they saw fit.[38] The gentry also had a further saving grace in the eyes of the new urban middle-class reformers. Unlike the plebeian footballers of the rural villages or the Stamford bull-runners, the gentry had a respect for property.[39]

These attitudes are all apparent in the legislation of the reform period relevant to gaming and betting. The British laws to the mid-nineteenth century are confused and confusing, but according to G.E. Seaton's summary, the effect of the reform legislation was to leave the acts of gaming and betting in themselves legal, but to make acts which created a public nuisance, or the practice of particular games which had been declared unlawful, offences subject to prosecution.[40] Throughout the second half of the eighteenth century and for the early decades of the nineteenth, gaming and betting remained legal activities and some bets were enforceable by legal

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37 Malcolmson, op.cit., p.156.

38 ibid., pp.156-157.

39 These arguments could possibly apply to other "vices" which survived the reform era. Prostitution, for example was patronised by the gentry, was reasonably private, and was not considered an offence against private property.

40 G.E. Seaton, The Law Relating to Gaming, Betting and Lotteries, Sydney, 1948, p.1; See also, House of Commons, Select Committee Report on Gaming, 1844, pp.iii-v.

action. However any gambling activities which were deemed "deceitful, disorderly and excessive" were expressly forbidden. Legislation of 1710 contained clauses forbidding cheating and professional gaming. It also restricted to £10 the amount which could legally be won or lost at a single sitting, but this clause was seldom implemented (and Queen Anne, along with guests in her palaces was expressly exempted from its provisions).[41]

In the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries gaming and betting were prominent aspects of British leisure time activity. In various forms they were practiced by all sections of society and by both sexes. Whilst the motivation of the gambling gentry might have differed from that of the masses, their participation in similar pursuits protected even lower-class gaming and betting from the reformers. Evangelicalism and the new urban middle-class concepts of an industrial labour discipline and the importance of private property might have achieved a general transformation of popular recreation, but they were inadequate weapons against activities which received the gentry's patronage. All that the reformers could reasonably hope to achieve was the removal of gaming and betting from public view and a lessening of the dangers to private property (which were inherent in large gatherings of gamblers assembled in a public place).

It might be expected that the earliest Australian settlers would have taken to New South Wales the same mixture of tradition, change

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41 Vamplew, op.cit., pp.200-202; South Australia, Royal Commission on Betting, 1933, op.cit., p.14.

and reforming attempts just described, but to determine whether or not the same changes resulted we must shift the focus of the analysis to New South Wales.

New South Wales 1788-1810

The first Australian colony was settled at the beginning of Britain's industrial and urban transformation, and the earliest arrivals brought with them a pre-modern culture which was beginning to be challenged. The new environment, however, slowed down that challenge. The new settlers were greeted, not by an industrialising urban environment, but by an apparently virgin continent. The forces of virtue and industry which were attempting to shape their morality at home were less relevant to the immediate problems of founding a viable settlement in a new land. Although the need for work and progress might have been apparent to those who hoped for a tolerably comfortable existence in the colony, such habits were unlikely to be considered important by three quarters of the new population - most of whom had been sentenced to exile for actions associated with a life in which idleness was an option more attractive than work.

In the earliest years of the New South Wales settlement, gaming and betting were not issues of great importance. In fact they elicited little comment either from the early governors in their despatches or from the contemporary commentators and copyists who quickly found a market for descriptions of the flora, fauna and way of life in this

new society on the edges of the world. Their concern was more for the original or the exotic, and there was nothing original or new about the gambling practices in New South Wales. Occasionally however, a commentator wishing to emphasize the depravity of a new society based so heavily upon convicted criminals, offered scenes which might strike a note of moral indignation and evangelical fervour in the newly work-conscious society in Britain. George Barrington, the ex-pickpocket Principal Superintendant of Convicts at Parramatta (who was later declared insane), offered the following description of events about six years after the initial landing.

> The pernicious vice of gaming which had rapidly obtained in the settlement, and which was carried on to such excess among the convicts that many had been known, after losing their provisions, money, and spare cloathing [sic] to bet, and lose the very clothes from their backs, exhibiting themselves as naked, and as indifferent about it, as the natives of the country ... They have frequently been seen playing at their favourite games of Cribbage and All-Fours for ten dollars a game, and those who were ignorant of these games would be content to toss up for dollars instead of halfpence. Their meetings were scenes of quarrelling swearing, and every wickedness that might be expected by a description of people, totally destitute of the least particle of shame; but glorying in their depravity. To this dreadful vice in a great measure may be attributed most of the crimes that existed in the colony.[42]

In Barrington's account the convicts were not the sole offenders. He alleges that the settlers were equally dissolute. They brewed and distilled their crops or used them to pay off gambling debts rather than sending them to the government store, staked (and lost) their

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42 George Barrington, A Sequel to Barrington's Voyage to New South Wales, ... London, 1800, p.34.

whole farms at Hazard, and fabricated stories of attacks by natives to conceal the fact that they had lost their provisions and clothing whilst gaming.[43]

Such accusations could have some basis in fact. But if Barrington's descriptions, and other allegations, such as one made by David Collins describing a convict overseer's win of a £25stake, are accurate representations of early colonial life, they failed to attract the attention of the highly moral, though realistic, Governor Arthur Phillip; and they were of little interest to the reforming administrator John Hunter, though his attention was drawn to the existence of gamesters sufficiently for him to include them specifically in his general orders concerning evening patrols by constables. He frowned upon gamblers and drunkards after curfew, but there is no evidence to suggest that he was concerned about anything more than preventing creation of a public nuisance in the evenings and on the sabbath.[44]

The accounts by Barrington and Collins are both made less credible by the size of the stakes they quote, particularly when it is noted that currency of any kind was rare in the colony. Their claims were not supported by the other main contemporary observers, and were perhaps an example of the observers' tendency to exaggerate to attract

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43 ibid., p.35-36; Hazard is a dice game, normally involving the use of three dice, in which the players attempt to forecast how the dice will fall. It was the forerunner of the popular American game of craps. Alan Wykes, Gambling, London 1964, pp.137-139.

44 Hunter, General Orders, 9 November 1796, enclosure to Duke of Portland, 12 November 1796, H.R.A., series I, vol. 1, p.701.

the interest of their readers. However, it cannot be denied that gaming and betting existed in the new colony from the beginning, and that they were practised by settlers and convicts alike. If there is anything surprising about the fact of their transplantation, it is that they should survive in a society which, initially at least, lacked significant quantities of disposable income. Their survival is evidence of the strength of the gaming and betting traditions inherited from Britain.

The traditions were continued in all their various forms. One early instance of betting with tragic consequences was revealed in 1797, when two settlers agreed to a test of their drinking skills with raw spirits. The contest resulted in the death of one man and the serious illness of the other.[45] Cockfighting, another object of betting, less injurious to the bettors, but often fatal to the contestants, reappeared after the settlement's initial period of starvation had been survived and livestock as a source of food became less precious. Contests at the Brickfields attracted large, enthusiastic crowds and detailed coverage from the Sydney Gazette. They also attracted the attention of the military, but the representatives of the law obligingly chose not to intervene until the matches ended.[46]

Card, dice and coin games all appeared in the colony and met the same ambiguous response they received in Britain. The habits of a

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45 ibid., vol.2, p.71.
46 Sydney Gazette, 18 August 1805.

gentleman who advertised for sale a backgammon table and two card tables aroused no comment,[47] but the gaming practised by the lower orders around Sydney Town's wharf region prompted spirited condemnation. In the eyes of at least one settler, who was in tune with the British reform movement:

> among the lower orders, gambling forms a leading incentive to enormity, and should by all means be discouraged by every effort of the legislature.[48]

In similar terms the town's children, who played a version of marbles, were urged to turn away from the road to vice and destruction.[49]

The colonial administration, in keeping with the laws of Britain, objected not to the acts of gaming and betting, but to the disorder which often accompanied them. Like his predecessor Hunter, Governor King considered gaming and betting likely to cause public nuisance, and accordingly his regulations for the licensing of public houses expressly forbad their practice on licensed premises.[50] Early administrators and clergy were particularly concerned about the extent to which gaming was carried on in competition with religious services, sometimes within one hundred yards of the place of worship, but apart from compelling convicts to attend church services, there was little that could be done to prevent such "desecration of the sabbath".[51]

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47 ibid., 20 July 1806.
48 ibid., 15 April 1804.
49 ibid., 6 July 1806; see also ibid., 21 August 1808.
50 King to Portland, Enclosure No.10, General orders, H.R.A., Series I, vol.3, p.35; Sydney Gazette, 27 october 1805.
51 Marsden to Hunter, 11 August 1798, H.R.A., Series I, vol.2, pp.185-186; J.W.C. Cumes, Their Chastity was not too Rigid, Melbourne 1979, pp.12-13.

Colonial magistrates sometimes punished gamblers, not for gaming and betting, but for associated offences. The courts heard cases of alleged theft and disorderly conduct arising out of gaming.[52] They also punished offenders for cheating, or for winning sums of money in excess of the £10 prescribed limit.[53] Perhaps one of the more revealing judgements emerged from a case involving a bet between two men on the question of which vessel a mutual acquaintance had sailed in. One suggested the ship Buffalo. The other contradicted and challenged him to a bet of three dollars. When the challenge was accepted its proposer revealed that he had sailed with the acquaintance on another ship. The loser brought a civil action against his opponent in an effort to recover his three dollars, and the court subsequently ruled in his favour. The significance of this ruling lies in the magistrate's justification of his finding in terms which described the defendant's actions as "against all the rules of honourable gambling".[54] The attribute of "honour" is one which was usually restricted to gentlemen, but it was rare to find gentlemen before the colonial courts on matters associated with gaming and betting. Like their British counterparts they usually pursued their gaming activities in the privacy of their homes or the relative privacy of "clubs" such as the military officers' billiards room.[55]

There was, however, nothing very private about the colonial

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52 Sydney Gazette, 1 January 1804, 8 April 1804.
53 ibid., 10 November 1805, 5 April 1807.
54 ibid., 3 February 1805.
55 Cumes, op.cit., p.40.

gentry's interest in horse racing. For the first few years of the settlement a scarcity of horses prevented any rapid growth of the sport. By 1793 only three horses remained of the stock which had arrived in 1788. Five years later one hundred and seventeen horses were imported from the Cape of Good Hope, and over the next few years stocks multiplied dramatically.[56] J.D. Lang claims that demand for horses was so great during Hunter's administration that they sold for around £90.[57] If so, the stables of Captain John Macarthur and paymaster William Cox, the largest stables of the civil and military officers, were very valuable by 1802, when those gentlmen owned about twenty horses each.[58]

By that time the gentry had begun to test their horses and their own skills against one another in match races, held usually along the Parramatta Road for stakes as high as £50; and a racecourse existed in the Hawkesbury district, though we have been left no record of the activities on that course.[59] No doubt the match races and any events held at Hawkesbury attracted crowds of spectators and promoted some degree of public nuisance, but the principals in these events did not appear before the magistrates. By 1810 horse racing and other sports had even achieved a degree of official sanction.

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56 D.M. Barrie, _Turf Cavalcade_, Sydney, 1960, p.2.

57 J.D. Lang, _An Historical and Statistical Account of New South Wales ..._, (2nd ed.), 1836, vol.1, p.77.

58 Civil and Military Officers Lists, _H.R.A._, series I, vol.3, pp.613-61.

59 Barrie, _op.cit._, pp.3-4; The Hawkesbury racecourse is referred to in news reports of the 1806 floods and in official Government stock returns, _Sydney Gazette_, 23 and 30 March 1806; Return of Government Stock, 25 August 1808, _H.R.A._, series I, vol.6, p.640.

Governor Macquarie and the Hyde Park Races

In April 1810 a sports day was held at Parramatta, with two horse match races, followed by cockfighting, wheelbarrow races and sack races.[60] Barrie claims that the horse races attracted considerable betting, but there is no suggestion of any official dissatisfaction with the day's events.[61] In fact, from 1810 the colonial administration actively promoted such recreational activities.

Governor Lachlan Macquarie's administration is noted for the governor's determination to transform the ramshackle and haphazard settlement into an orderly town, with all the appearances of an outpost of British civilisation. Macquarie launched himself into the business of creating order, civilisation and proper "British" morality. His earliest proclamations included his famous campaign against cohabitation, his establishment of the charity school, his naming of streets and his town planning of both occupied and unoccupied areas.[62] Part of his town plan for Sydney included the reservation and definition of Hyde Park as a recreation and amusement ground. No longer was it to be used as common grazing land, though its other previous uses as a cricket ground and an exercise area for the

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60 Sydney Gazette, 5 May 1810.

61 Barrie, op.cit., p.11.

62 These aspects of Macquarie's administration are discussed by most studies of the period. J.J. Auchmuty, "1810-1830" in F.K. Crowley (ed.) A New History of Australia, Melbourne 1974, pp.44-78; Hewison, A. (ed.), The Macquarie Decade, Melbourne 1972 passim; C.M.H. Clark, A History of Australia, vol.1, Melbourne 1962, pp.267-271. See also Sydney Gazette, 24 April 1810.

troops were to be continued. Hyde Park was also accorded an additional function - part of it was marked out as a racecourse.[63]

The building of a racecourse close to the town was a deliberate part of Macquarie's recreation policy. Race meetings at Hyde Park were to become part of a programme of annual recreations which included an Easter Fair and Whitsuntide celebrations.[64] In promoting such leisure activities, Macquarie was simultaneously bringing some order to colonial recreation by confining it to specified periods, and he was defining the role of the colonial governor as something akin to the rural landlord of early eighteenth century Britain. On 19 May 1810, the Sydney Gazette ran a notice advising subscribers to the new Sydney racecourse "under the patronage of Governor Macquarie" of a meeting to be held at the mess room of the officers of the Seventy-Third Regiment to appoint stewards for the coming race meeting.[65]

The stewards were appointed; the new course was prepared, and gentlemen were warned that if they were found galloping over the course before its completion, their horses would not be permitted to race. The dogs of Sydney Town were reminded of their inferiority to the nobler beast and gentlemen riders by the notices announcing that any dogs found on the course would be shot.[66] Meanwhile, other notices prepared the residents of Sydney for the big event by announcing a celebration dinner for subscribers and a Bachelor's Ball, to remind the

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63 Sydney Gazette, 6 October 1810.
64 Sydney Gazette, 28 April 1810, 16 June 1810.
65 ibid., 19 May 1810.
66 ibid., 2 June 1810, 7 and 14 July 1810, 18 August 1810.

inhabitants of the British outpost that this was to be the social event of the year. The dinner, held on the Prince of Wales' birthday, and the ball were both attended by the governor and his wife, along with Lieutenant Governor O'Connell and Mrs O'Connell, and most of the colony's more prominent civil and military officers.[67]

The colonial elite also attended the race meeting in force. The races, in keeping with the current practice in Britain, were held on three days, beginning on Monday 15 October and continuing on the Wednesday and Friday. The programme for each day was similar, consisting of one major race over two miles, to be decided by the average performances of the horses over three heats, with match races and races for ponies and hacks run between heats. The trophies for each of the major races were valued at around 50 guineas. The respectability of the events is attested to by those who provided the trophies. On the first day the horses raced for a plate provided by the subscribers to the course. On the Wednesday they ran for a cup provided by the ladies of the colony and presented by Mrs Macquarie. On the Friday the race was for the Magistrate's Plate, which suggests that the guardians of the law, the men who enforced strictures against gambling in public houses and who, from the bench, reprimanded others for engaging in petty gambling, were quite happy to assist in providing the occasion for gambling of a less petty nature.[68]

That the races were the medium of heavy betting was acknowledged

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67 ibid., 18 August 1810, 22 September 1810.
68 ibid., 8 September 1810, 20 October 1810.

without criticism by the Sydney Gazette, which had to double the size of its edition on the following Saturday to include its coverage of the event. Perhaps the largest winner of the carnival was Darcy Wentworth who collected 120 guineas from match race victories alone, although Captain Ritchie, with wins in two of the three major races and 100 guineas worth of trophies, must have been a contender for that title. Yet it was not only the elite or wealthy horse-owners who had a pecuniary interest in the outcome of the events. When "Scratch", the champion of the Hawkesbury district, was successful in the Magistrate's Plate, his victory was applauded with abandon by the large crowd of supporters who had followed him down to Sydney.[69]

During Sydney's first race week, the gambling was not restricted to betting on the horse races. Despite a government order prohibiting gaming and cockfighting on or in the vicinity of the course, the cocks featured as the main event on the horses' rest days. As the Sydney Gazette reported, cockfights were held on the Tuesday and the Thursday

> ... at a house in the vicinity of the Park. A number of good battles were fought, and the pit was crowded each day. On Thursday a main of seven was fought by two Gentlemen for a sum said to be considerable; bye bets very high, four survivors upon one side.[70]

It is perhaps significant that the Gazette was unable to be as critical of cock fighting on this occasion as it had been previously,

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69 ibid., 20 October 1810.

70 ibid. The "main of seven" was a series of seven contests between birds representing the two gentlemen. The winning side was that which won at least four of the seven fights.

despite the official prohibitior of the sport; after all the week was given over to celebration. However, it does seem that Macquarie's other stricture against gaming on the course was more successful. The British practice of renting out booth or stall space to sharps or grog sellers was not adopted, and so from the beginning, a difference between the attractions on Australian and British race courses was established.[71]

Macquarie's decision in this instance was compatible with his overall intentions of promoting order and civilisation; things which should be as attainable in recreation as in town planning. The very fact of holding a race carnival was part of the promotion of order. In the value system of Britain's pre-modern elite it was better to have such events carefully controlled, patronised and concentrated into celebrations under the control of the government and the elite, than to permit the continuance of haphazard spontaneous race meetings which might not be so controlled. Indeed, when the success of the inaugural meeting prompted some of the colonists to hold another race day less than four month later,

> ... The day's sports were only sanctioned by His Excellency the Governor in compliment to the Gentlemen riders and were kept as secret as possible until the time of starting.[72]

So Macquarie was not attempting to promote horse racing and

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71 ibid., 6 October 1810, 20 October 1810.

72 ibid., 2 February 1811.

betting for their own sake. He did not envisage weekly or monthly races in the colony. Rather, he saw the role of the race meeting as an annual event which, apart from adding to the aura of civilisation in the colony, and perhaps providing some encouragement towards improving the quality of the breed of colonial horses, would also play a part in the social control of the lower orders. The annual race meeting would play a role similar to that of the pre-modern rural wakes and fairs. It would give the colonists an event to look forward to, and once past it would provide them with pleasant memories of a few days "fun" to help sustain them in their labours, until they were sufficiently close to the next major event on the recreational calendar to begin looking forward again. Such an attitude might have been responsible for Macquarie's decision in 1811 that all mechanics and labourers in government service should enjoy holidays on all three days of the annual race carnival.[73]

Nevertheless, if Macquarie's aims in his patronage and promotion of the Sydney race meetings were well intended, in terms of his views on colonial manners and morality, his actions were not applauded universally. Just as the patronage of the eighteenth century rural landowner was challenged by British evangelicals, the holding of the Sydney races under vice-regal patronage was viewed with disapproval by colonial evangelicals. The Reverend Rowland Hassell certainly did not share Macquarie's views, though his opinions on the week's events were much more optimistic than they might have been. According to Hassell,

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[73] _ibid._, 10 August 1811; see above p.14.

Macquarie and his officers had acted as agents of the devil himself in organising horse races, cock fights, bull baits, "and almost every kind of sinful amusement". But rather than view the week as evidence of the devil's supremacy, Hassell preferred to see it as a furious rear guard action fought by the devil who "sees his Kingdom Tottering".[74]

Perhaps Hassell wrote a little too soon after the event. Had he waited a little longer his view might well have been different; for the success of the race week appeared to encourage a greater frequency of match racing, or at least a more regular reporting of such events by the press. In either case, match racing became a more publicly prominent part of colonial life. Match races of 50 and 60 guineas held along Parramatta Road and races to Parramatta against time became commonplace, and the stakes even for boat races soon reached 50 guineas.[75]

Yet even an increase in the number of match races and a proliferation of "unauthorised" meetings in addition to annual racing carnivals did not result in any major public outcry, or in any significant attempt to suppress or even restrict horse racing.[76] After all, such events were essentially the province of "gentlemen riders"

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74 A.T. Yarwood, Samuel Marsden, the Great Survivor, Melbourne, 1977, p.141.

75 Sydney Gazette, 29 September 1810, 30 March 1811, 27 July 1811, 17 August 1811.

76 Barrie, op.cit., p.16; Lieutenant John Maclaine, "Notes re horse racing ... 1812-1813", M.L., Document No. 1961; Frank O'Loghlan, "Notes on horse racing in New South Wales", M.L., Mss 1162 [1944], p.17.

as the Gazette pointedly reminded its readers, and gentlemen were considered capable of knowing what was in their best interests. If anyone was unsure of the social respectability of horse racing they need only look to the lead provided by the Lieutenant Governor and his wife: the O'Connells could be found amongst the spectators of the important match races.[77]

The Seventy-Third Regiment, which had built the Hyde Park race course was no stranger to horse racing. Although we are told that Macquarie was a poor horseman, he and his regiment had actively supported horse racing in India, and had brought their love of the spectacle with them to New South Wales.[78] Cumes suggests that Macquarie's poor horsemanship was perhaps the reason why "he admired such talent in others and why he gave such enthusiastic support to horse racing in the colony".[79] This suggestion probably has validity, but at least as important is the respectability of horse racing. It was, despite its ability to excite the interest of masses, a sport for gentlemen. For Macquarie no doubt, it was in large part a symbol of British civilisation and a necessary part of genteel society.

The other Australian colony, Van Diemen's Land, perhaps had even fewer claims than Sydney to be accepted as part of the civilised world, but like its mother colony it did attempt to keep up some appearances. Organised horse racing began at New Town in 1814 and was

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77 Sydney Gazette, 30 March 1811.
78 O'Loghlan, op.cit., p.10; Cumes, op.cit., p.51.
79 ibid.

greeted enthusiastically by the colonial gentry, including the clergy.[80] The Reverend Robert Knopwood, Van Diemen's Land's first clergyman, who was noted more for his pursuit of the life of the country squire than for evangelical enthusiasm, was a devotee of the sport; adding a further dimension to its respectability.[81]

It is clear that horse racing rapidly became a respectable pastime for the colonial gentry. Under gentry patronage and control it was viewed as acceptable by all but the most critical evangelicals; and even then voices such as Rowland Hassell's complained less about the racing than about its accompanying diversions. But horse racing was not the only form of gambling to increase its public presence and its respectable image in the age of Macquarie.

Cumes had documented the governor's love of card playing and suggests that "... as a favourite pastime of Macquarie ... it acquired undoubted respectability."[82] Playing cards were freely available for around four shillings per packet, and other implements which could be used for gaming, such as backgammon tables and billiards equipment could also be purchased in Sydney during Macquarie's governorship.[83] We are not told whether the governor's card playing involved the staking of money. Certainly it was possible to play cards for tokens

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80 Cumes, op.cit., p.59; Jack Pollard, The Pictorial History of Australian Horse Racing, Sydney 1971, p.48.

81 M.M. Fogarty, "Visions of Civilization: The Attempts of Sir John Franklin to Develop Cultural Awareness in Van Diemen's Land", Litt. B. thesis, University of New England, 1981.

82 Cumes, op.cit., pp.85-86.

83 ibid., pp.85 and 290.

or simply for "points". However, the added respectability of card playing and the increased availability of cards and other gaming implements provided greater opportunity for those who did wish to play for money or goods. It must be considered improbable that gentlemen such as Captain John Piper, who was prepared to accept a boat race challenge from the whale boat of a visiting American brig, and who would happily stake 60 guineas on a horse match race, would play cards for tokens.[84]

The colonial gentry were acting in accordance with their inherited traditions. They had some leisure. They did not need to spend all their time in productive pursuits. They could also be considered capable of judging what they could afford to do, or stake. But they also had a duty to display the forms of British civilisation and, if in doing so they were able to exercise a degree of social control over the lower strata of society, they would serve the colony's interests as well as their own. The gaming and betting practices of the gentry went virtually unchallenged, but the same cannot be said of the practices of the convicts and the poorer sections of colonial society.

In 1822, Commissioner J.T. Bigge in his highly influential report on the "State of the Colony in New South Wales", noted that the convicts were attracted towards gaming. On the transports they gambled with the sailors and among themselves over their issues of lime-juice.

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84 Sydney Gazette, 27 July 1811; Cumes, op.cit., p.157.

At the Hunter River settlement they gambled with their food rations, and at Sydney they spent their free time at the Rocks practising "every debauchery and villainy", including gambling. Disregarding the finer points of British law, Bigge, former Chief Justice of Trinidad, was able to describe such behaviour as "crimes" and "offences".[85]

Though such charges might not have stood up aginst competent legal defence, no-one considered it necessary to contradict the commissioner: at least none of the colony's vocal or literate community saw any such necessity. For them it would have been clear that Bigge was not expressing a legal opinion. He was however, expressing the view of Sydney's dominant culture, that habits and practices which were acceptable for one level of society should not be encouraged at lower levels.

The real "crimes" and "offences" of the convicts and the poorer of their emancipated colleagues was not that they, like their superiors, indulged in gaming and betting, but rather that they could not afford their losses, and that they wasted their time in unproductive pursuits. Commissioner Bigge, an educated product of the rural gentry, but imbued with evangelicalism and the concepts of Britain's growing industrial middle class, saw a need for the cultivation of the "virtues" of industry and progress. He considered gaming and betting offences equal to "... absence from work, insolence

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85 House of Commons, <u>Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the State of the Colony of New South Wales</u>, 19 June 1822, pp.2, 8, 30, 47, 116. [Bigge Report].

to overseers, neglect of work and stealing";[86] and his criticism of Macquarie for enabling convicts to spend Saturday afternoons and part of Sundays gaming at the Rocks, stemmed from his belief that they might have been employed more productively, rather than from concern for their morality or for their souls. Such sentiments were endorsed even by the evangelical chaplain Samuel Marsden.

The Reverend Marsden, although viewing gaming and betting as partly a question of morality, stressed that their evil stemmed from their ability to corrupt the "industrious, labouring classes" and distract them from their work.[87] Like most of his evangelical colleagues, Marsden accepted the new industrial labour discipline and the protestant work ethic in general.[88] It is clear that his main complaint against gaming and betting was their promotion of a spirit of idleness.

Men who were diametrically opposed on other issues could agree with Marsden on this point. Ex-governor William Bligh told the 1812 Select Committee of Inquiry into Transportation that the "idleness" of the convicts, who supposedly had spare time in order to work on their own account, was a major problem, and his opinions were echoed by John Macarthur in evidence to Bigge at the end of the decade.[89] For these

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86 ibid., p.99.

87 John Ritchie (ed.), The Evidence to the Bigge Reports: New South Wales under Governor Macquarie, vol.2, Melbourne 1971, p.92.

88 For discussion of the evangelicalism and the protestant work ethic of the early New South Wales clergy, see J.C. Woolmington, "Early Christian Missions to the Australian Aborigines - A Study in Failure", Ph.D. thesis, University of New England 1979, pp.126-127 and 182-186.

men, idleness was a sign of rejection of the labour discipline, a viewpoint endorsed more recently by Connell and Irving, who suggest that the "go-slow tactics" or "idleness" of convicts and their sympathizers should be seen as an early form of working class mobilisation against the existing holders of authority.[90]

Whether such idleness should be seen as a conscious attempt to undermine authority or merely a sign of convict and the poorer emancipists' failure to subscribe to the new ideals of nineteenth century British society, it was viewed seriously by colonial authority. In the eyes of Bigge, Macarthur, Bligh and Marsden, New South Wales could no more than Britain afford to have the minds of the lower classes misled from

> ... those habits of continued industry which ensure the acquisition of comfort and independence, to delusive dreams of sudden and enormous wealth.[91]

Nor did Macquarie disagree with this view. His encouragement of horse racing was not designed to cultivate a spirit of adventure and gambling. Rather it was intended to channel the existing gambling inclinations into an activity which would perform an annual safety-valve function. The release of the gambling energies on an annual event, to take place under his watchful eye and control during

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89 House of Commons, Select Committee of Inquiry into Transportation, 1812, Evidence p.30; Ritchie, op.cit., p.75.

90 R.W. Connell and T.H. Irving, Class Structure in Australian History, Melbourne 1980, p.47.

91 House of Commons, Second Report from the Select Committee on the Laws relating to Lotteries, 1808, vol.II, p.13.

a week of celebration and public holidays, might perhaps have enabled the convicts and the labouring classes to go about their work for the rest of the year industriously, and free from the urge to game or bet in search of the unearned wealth.

If such was Macquarie's intention, there is little evidence of success for this policy. The horse racing of the gentlemen was pursued with vigour, and the gambling instincts of the lower orders continued to find outlets for their expression in both gaming and betting. The expression of urban industrial middle-class values by the holders of colonial authority could be little more than empty rhetoric when those same holders of the authority sponsored the imposition of a pre-modern society, and provided patronage for an ever increasing range of gaming and betting practices. Those practices in the early Australian colonies, if not capable of real quantification, were numerous and diverse. They were not concentrated in time and place, as Macquarie might have wished, but were practised in all settlements and outposts, by officers, gentry, convicts and emancipists.

Cricket and boxing had both become popular spectator sports upon which differences of prediction made them susceptible to betting. Whereas the latter was frowned upon by the magistracy for its likely promotion of public disorder, the former was applauded as a sign of gentility, the unstated assumptions again being that the gentry could afford to lose modest sums in honourable sporting competition, and that their spectators would be reserved rather than riotous.[92] These attitudes were not simply an application of the existing British laws

which permitted gaming and betting but forbad some of the behaviour likely to accompany these practices. They were also a re-statement of the dominant British culture's dual morality, that practices and behaviour which were acceptable for the upper classes were not acceptable for those lower on the social hierarchy.

In the Australian colonies of the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century, gaming and betting survived even more clearly than they did in Britain. In New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land the forces transforming British society were less powerful. In these pre-modern colonies, labour discipline derived more from the task than from industrial time, and evangelicalism, even if subscribed to by the majority of the Anglican clergy,[93] did not receive support from a strong vocal urban middle class. So, opponents of gaming and betting had even less chance of success in the colonies than they had in Britain.

Harold Perkin has suggested that the new horizontal relationship based class structures of early industrial Britain replaced the old vertical connections of dependency or patronage as a result of the social disruption of the industrialisation period. But in early New South Wales we can witness an attempt to re-institute the vertical connection patterns of pre-modern Britain.[94] The governors and the

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92 For an example of official disapproval of boxing see Sydney Gazette, 4 August 1810; Cricket matches were reported on as early as 8 January 1804; see also D.D. Mann, The Present Picture of New South Wales, London 1811, pp.54-55.

93 Woolmington, op.cit., pp.121-126; Knopwood appears to have been an exception.

wealthier settlers attempted to achieve this by establishing themselves as colonial versions of Britain's pre-modern gentry. In adopting the behaviour patterns and attitudes of this group rather than those of the new industrial middle class, they ensured the continuance of gaming and betting in the colonies.[95]

In this context, the voices raised against gaming and betting had little chance of success. Although they sometimes receive a hearing in the Sydney Gazette, which at times reflected the new morality of the mother country, they lacked the context necessary to demonstrate the desirability of the virtues they proclaimed. The establishment of the new colonies as copies of pre-modern Britain rather than as small scale versions of the new urbar industrial society, ensured that the gaming and betting practices anc attitudes of the old world were part of the colonies' inherited traditions. It was not until the evangelical morality of Britair came to Australia en masse with free immigration from the 1840s, that this early hegemony faced its first challenge.

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[94] Harold Perkin, The Origins of Modern English Society, 1780-1880, London 1969, p.176-177.

[95] Though as was illustrated above, p.50 they could happily use the language of the industrial middle class.