SECTION II - COLONIAL GAMBLING

CHAPTER THREE

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF COLONIAL GAMBLING PRACTICES, 1820-1850

Britain's urban industrial transformation continued with increasing rapidity into the second quarter of the nineteenth century, and with important consequences to the dominant culture's view of gambling. As will be seen in more detail later in this chapter, the weapons of gentry patronage and control, which had held out against the reform movement in the eighteenth century were less effective in early Victorian England because the gentry lost much of their cultural dominance, at least in the urban centres. A growth in urban industrial middle-class cultural hegemony was apparent in the success of the moral enlightenment campaign of this era. The middle-class concepts of self-improvement and rational recreation received sufficient enthusiastic support from the other classes, and notably from the vocal sections of labour, to demonstrate a growth of that hegemony.

In this context the gaming and betting practices of British gamblers faced a renewed attack, which centuries of tradition and the patronage of an entrenched gentry found difficult to counter. If the same forces were ranged against colonial gambling practices the protection afforded by one or two generations of tradition and a fragile and precocious gentry could expect little success.

This chapter analyses the period from approximately 1820 to about 1850; the period during which the colonies of eastern Australia developed from minor outposts of the British empire into rapidly expanding settlements on the verge of achieving responsible self-government. The focus initially is on the general economic and social context of these years, for it is essential to determine the

extent to which the conditions promoting reforms in Britain were paralleled in the colonies. The focus then shifts to the colonial gambling developments of the period and the attitudes of society towards gaming and betting practices. Attempts to reform these practices, the extent of the reformers' success, and comparison with the British reform movement and its context, are necessary in order to explain the colonial developments in this era.

The Colonial Context 1820-1850

The three decades which followed the departure of Lachlan Macquarie from the governorship of New South Wales witnessed a wholesale attempt to reconstruct traditional British rural society in the new colonies. The dominant feature of the period was the process of pastoral expansion, which continuously expanded the frontiers of British occupation and brought to the new lands the supposed benefits of a landed gentry. The nature of the country, the need to acquire what in British eyes were enormous tracts of land, and the emphasis on cattle and sheep, and wool growing prevented the growth of a rural society directly comparable with that of rural Britain, but these factors did not detract from the fact that colonial society prior to the 1850s was a re-creation of traditional, pre-industrial British society.

During this period the eastern Australian colonies expanded in number and in the area of land occupied. South Australia was colonised

in 1836; two years after the permanent settlement of what was to become Victoria, by squatters from Van Diemen's Land. The isolated northern penal station at Moreton Bay, established in 1825, gradually became less isolated by the 1840s as pastoralists pushed northwards to establish what was to become Queensland in 1859. The fundamental reason for the dispersion of settlement outwards from the original port settlements of Sydney, Hobart and Launceston was the desire to occupy new pastoral lands.

The details of Australian prosperity's dependence on pastoralism in this era have been told sufficiently,[1] but the analysis of the period by historical geographer Godfrey Linge provides evidence of the nature of the colonial society. He places considerable emphasis on the population growth rates and the nature of population dispersal throughout this period.

Population growth, depending largely on immigration, both bond and free, was subject to wild annual fluctuations, but Linge has calculated an average growth rate for New South Wales in this period of 7.8% per year.[2] Even allowing for the fact that much of this increase became subject to the convict assignment system, this figure suggests that significant opportunities were provided for New South Wales' economic development; through an expanding market, increasing

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1 For example see P.N. Jeans, An Historical Geography of New South Wales to 1901, Sydney 1972, p.99ff ; B. Fletcher, Colonial Australia Before 1850, Melbourne 1976, pp.108-124.

2 G.J.R. Linge, Industrial Awakening: A Geography of Australian Manufacturing 1788 to 1890, Canberra 1979, p.56.

labour supply and growing potential for economic diversifiction.[3] But it did not lead immediately to dramatic industrialisation.

The New South Wales population expanded rapidly, though the proportion of New South Welshmen remaining in Sydney in the 1830s and 1840s was relatively stable at about 28%. The remainder were gradually expanding the frontiers of European settlement. Prior to the 1820s very few New South Wales colonists lived outside the County of Cumberland, apart from the residents of the various penal stations. By 1828 more than 10,000 people, or 29% of the population, had moved outside the county. By 1851 this figure had reached 55%.[4]

Although the 1851 New South Wales census identified 74 towns and villages, the colonists living outside Sydney could hardly be described as urban dwellers. The census revealed that Sydney, with a population of 54,000 people, was thirteen times larger than its nearest rival Maitland, and that only eight settlements could claim a population in excess of 700 people.[5]

Apart from the agricultural settlements on the Hawkesbury and Hunter rivers, and a few garrison ports such as Newcastle and Port Macquarie, the rest of the towns and villages were little more than service centres for the surrounding pastoral regions; most having developed around punts or fords across the rivers, or from staging

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3 ibid.
4 ibid., pp.71, 88, 106.
5 ibid., p.62; Jeans, op.cit., p.127.

points, a day's walk apart, on the major roads. Such settlements were not centres of industrial development.

What industrial enterprise did exist was predominantly restricted to simple activities such as milling and tanning, though by the mid 1830s colonial built steam engines began to appear. By 1840 at least 46 steam engines, generating a total of 400 horse power, were in use in New South Wales, but during the following decade industrial development slackened due to an easing of the adult male population growth, and a general down-turn in the economy resulting partly from the drought of 1838-40.[6]

Whilst all the larger settlements might have been involved in various forms of manufacture, ranging from flour milling and blacksmithing, to clothing and footwear production and boat building, only Sydney, with its significantly larger population (including 39% of the colony's non-agrarian workforce in 1851), and its location in relation to the colony's transport networks, could be considered, in any real sense, an industrial town. Yet even then Sydney's role as a commercial centre and an entrepot for imported goods and the export of rural production outweighed its role as an industrial centre.[7]

In the other colonies the basic economic context of the period was similar. In Van Diemen's Land the settlement was not so dispersed; being restricted to the island's eastern half. Dominance was shared

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6 Linge, op.cit., pp.79, 90.
7 ibid., p.106.

between the two primary settlements, Hobart and Launceston, and pastoral expansion was severely limited by the colony's topography, forcing the squatters to cross Bass Strait in search of runs in the 1830s.[8] Although the two major centres combined claimed about half the island's population of 67,000 settlers in 1847, according to Linge only about 3,000 were "engaged in what can be described loosely as 'manufacturing' activities".[9]

The settlement at South Australia was still in its infancy at the end of this period, though Acelaide was by then established as a significant urban centre in colonial terms, containing 52% of the colony's 62,000 settlers. This proportion had decreased consistently from 80% in 1840, to 63% in 1844 and 58% in 1846, as the colonists dispersed in search of both agricultural and pastoral land. By 1850, according to Linge, only about 2,100 South Australians were engaged in manufacturing.[10]

The Port Phillip settlement, occupied in the mid-1830s as a pastoral region, developed rapidly in the 1840s when the total population of what was to become Victoria grew six-fold from about 11,000 to 77,000; of whom about 40% were resident in Melbourne. Geelong with a population of around 8,000 colonists in 1850, was the second largest town of the region; and other port settlements on the coast at Portland and Port Albert had developed by the end of the

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8 ibid., pp.120-122; L.L. Robson, A History of Tasmania, vol.I, p.208.
9 Linge, op.cit., p.157.
10 ibid., pp.135-137, 157.

period. However, the main function of these towns was that of subsidiary commercial and shipping centres. Most manufactured goods were imported, and what little manufacturing industry existed was concentrated in Melbourne. The region as a whole could claim fewer than 600 industrial workers.[11] Port Phillip's raison d'être continued to lie in pastoralism until the discovery of gold. To an even greater extent the Moreton Bay district, to the north of New South Wales, with a total population of fewer than 9,000 in 1850, was little more than a frontier pastoral region in the period under analysis here.[12]

Clearly then, despite the relatively high proportion of population concentrated in the major towns, the Australian colonies in the three decades up to the middle of the nineteenth century were not urban industrial societies. The extent of urbanisation was, if anything, decreasing as the population dispersed across vast tracts of land, and industrialisation was at best in its infancy. Few would disagree with Michael Roe's claim that "The most important fact in the economic history of the period [from 1830 to 1850] was the expansion of wool growing".[13] Pastoral expansion in this period was such that "by 1850 sheep grazed on a vast swathe of land, 200 miles and deeper, from Brisbane to Adelaide and beyond".[14]

The economic context of colonial development in this period was diametrically contrary to that of Britain; and much the same could be

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11 ibid., pp.147-150, 157.
12 ibid., p.154.
13 Michael Roe, "1830-1850" in Crowley, op.cit., p.100.
14 ibid., p.101.

said of the direction of the development of the colonies' social structures. A pastoral society consisting of land owners, squatters and labourers, the bulk of whom were convicts or ex-convicts, had little room for a middle class. The small colonial middle class, consisting largely of merchants, shop keepers and manufacturers concentrated in the major towns, lacked both the political and cultural influence held by the pastoralists.[15] Their subordinate economic role reinforced their lack of political authority, and the colonial emphasis on rural economic development undermined the force of the middle class time work ethic, more suited to an urban industrial based society. Economic primacy, political authority and general cultural hegemony throughout this period remained firmly in the hands of the colonial gentry, a predominantly though not exclusively, pastoral elite.[16]

Australia's rural based ethos, analysed by Russel Ward in The Australian Legend,[17] owes much of its existence to the continuance, to the mid-nineteenth century, of a pre-modern colonial Australia which can be likened to eighteenth century England in terms of economic and social structures; and it is these structures which enable us to interpret both the general context of colonial leisure and recreation pursuits to the mid-nineteenth century, and in particular, the history of colonial gaming and betting.

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15 See T.H. Irving, "1850-1870", in Crowley, op.cit., pp.124-5.

16 ibid.; Roe, op.cit., pp.116-17; For the most insightful discussion of the colonial gentry see David Denholm, The Colonial Australians, Ringwood 1979, pp.161-178; see also C.M.H. Clark, A History of Australia, vol.2, "New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land 1822-1838", Melbourne 1968, Ch.5, pp.81-109.

17 Russel Ward, The Australian Legend, Melbourne 1966, (1st end. 1958).

R.W. Malcolmson has written that the traditional forms of recreation existing in eighteenth century England were rooted in a social system which was predominantly agrarian and strongly parochial, and that these forms could not be absorbed in a nineteenth century society which was urban-centred, governed by contractual relations and biased towards an "industrial production" culture. Accordingly, he claims, the patterns and forms of that recreation had to be altered; reconstructed to fit the changing nature of English society.[18]

In the Australian colonies prior to the middle of the nineteenth century, however, no such change was necessary. Whilst society may have been in many respects urban-centred, it was not yet dominated by an urban-consciousness. It was not yet geared towards an "industrial production" culture. Rather, it remained heavily parochial in outlook, and its consciousness, at least until the late 1840s, was definitely rural based.

In colonial society between about 1820 and 1850, the nature of government, the nature of the society and the prevailing economic circumstances all contributed to the production of a culture within which gambling, as a form of social activity, was able to gain an acceptance or at least a solid existence. It was able to establish its position as a common and even normal activity.

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18 Malcolmson, op.cit., pp.170-1.

Colonial Gaming and Betting

The most obvious feature of colonial gambling in this period was the growth and expansion of horse racing; a growth which paralleled the pastoral expansion of the period. In the early 1820s race-goers looked forward to the annual spring race meeting in Sydney. Twenty-five years later the residents of New South Wales were able to choose between thirty-two race meetings, and at the close of the period in 1849 this figure had increased by another 25%.[19] This expansion was no more than the most obvious expression of the acceptance of gambling by colonial society, or at least of the acceptance of an activity which tended to promote gambling, and provide it with an air of respectability. A more detailed examination of the extent of gambling during the period is necessary if the claims made above are to be sustained fully.

During this period both gaming and betting experienced degrees of consolidation and acceptance by the society within which they were practised. This is not to suggest that their legitimacy was unchallenged. Such a claim would be misleading, but the challenges were neither successful nor strong. Gaming and betting survived and thrived during the period of British colonial consolidation and

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19 Figures calculated from lists of winning horses, Bell's Life in Sydney, 2 January 1847 and 19 January 1850. In 1846, 77 individual horses won one or more races each in New South Wales (excluding Port Phillip District). The most prolific winner was Jorrocks who won 9 races and between *450 and *500 in prizemoney.

expansion in Australia, though gaming remained the least prominent or acceptable form of gambling. At least it failed to reach the position of public prominence which it had achieved in Britain by the close of the previous century.

Sydney's gaming houses bore little resemblence to the "hells" of London's West-End, in either turnover or notoriety.[20] Nor did Sydney, with all its claims concerning its ability to produce wealthy emancipists of dubious morality, produce a gaming entrepreneur equal to London's William Crockford, the fishmonger's son who died in 1844 leaving an estate valued at more than £1m.[21] Nevertheless, gaming houses did exist in the main colonial towns and the activities of dice gaming, and especially card playing were common features of colonial society. They were common enough to attract the attention of the magistrates and legislators concerned with the control of convicts, and with public order.

At Liverpool in 1825, the magistrates were sufficiently concerned about the disorderly behaviour of the gamblers in the streets of the town to publish in the Sydney Gazette, extracts from the laws concerning idleness and riotous behaviour.[22] In Van Diemen's land gaming caught the attention of Lieutenant-Governor Arthur's administration, as part of his Act to consolidate and amend the laws

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20 Ashton, op.cit., pp.133-141; Taylor, op.cit., pp.440-481; Thomas Kelly, The Gambler's Scourge; a complete expose of the whole system of Gambling in the Metropolis, ..., London 1824, ch.2.

21 Ashton, op.cit., pp.118-132; Henry Blyth, Hell and Hazard: or William Crockford versus the Gentlemen of England, London 1969.

22 Sydney Gazette, 23 June 1825.

concerning the courts of quarter-sessions and the punishment and control of convicts. This Act contained a clause reminding the people of the island colony that it was an offence to allow convicts on premises where gaming was occurring.[23]

These instances remind us that gaming itself was not an offence. However it was viewed as an activity around which offences were likely to occur, and indeed colonial society, like its British parent, assumed that the gaming houses of the lower orders were dens of vice and corruption. Bell's Life in Sydney, a journal with few claims entitling it to the role of guardian of colonial morals, but considerable claims to that of a patron and promoter of gambling, had no difficulty making this assumption. In one attempt to expose the "Mysteries of Sydney", it focused attention on a gaming house in York Street, Sydney as a centre of considerable underworld activity.[24]

Similarly, Alexander Harris, in his description of "The Sheer Hulk" in Sydney's Rocks district, associated lower class gaming with cheating and larceny when he described the endeavours of some regular gamesters in "easing a couple of sailors of the proceeds of a sailing voyage".[25] Whether Harris' description is viewed as an accurate representation of colonial life, or as an attempt by the author to

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23 6 William IV, No.2; See House of Commons, Select Committee on Transportation, 1837, Report, Appendix No.16, p.320.

24 Bell's Life in Sydney, 12 January 1850.

25 Alexander Harris ('An emigrant mechanic'), Settlers and Convicts: Recollections of sixteen year's labour in the Australian Backwoods, Melbourne 1969 (1st ed. London, 1847) p.49.

provide his readers with what they wanted, there is no reason to doubt that the pubs of Sydney town and Van Diemen's Land, and especially those of the Rocks and Battery Point areas, catered for the growing demands of the lower classes. But gaming was by no means restricted to such places. Whilst the pubs perhaps provided the environment most conducive to the excitement of dice games, cards flourished in less exciting atmospheres.

The various reminiscences and descriptions of colonial Australia abound with references to the card playing activities of its occupants. The convicts of the Hyde Park barracks and elsewhere played cards regularly, and usually for money.[26] But they were not the only ones who played. Alexander Harris, whilst emphasizing his own preferences for "improving" himself by reading whenever possible, noted that for most of his fellow workers, bond and free, card playing was one of the few relaxing recreations afforded by bush life.[27] E.M. Curr's reminiscences of life in the Port Phillip district strike a remarkably similar note when he writes:

> ... as, however, one cannot always be reading, especially the same books, we used sometimes, in the evening, by the light of our tallow candle to pass an hour at cards, chess or draughts ...[28]

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26 ibid., p.28; see also the criticism by J. Mclean, Principal Superintendent of Convicts, of evidence before and the conclusions of the 1837 House of Commons Select Committee on Transportation, Enclosure No.6, Gipps to Stanley, Despatch No.248, 28 November 1844, H.R.A. Series I, vol.24, p.88.

27 Harris, op.cit., p.91.

28 E.M. Curr, Recollections of Squatting in Victoria, Melbourne 1853, p.163; Alfred Joyce, A Homestead History: being the Reminiscences and Letters of Alfred Joyce of Plaistow and Norwood, Port Phillip, 1843 to 1864, (ed. C.F. James) Melbourne 1969 (1st ed. 1942), p.96, presents the same picture of life at Port Phillip.

Curr does not admit to playing for money, and is somewhat apologetic about thus occupying his time, but he did not hold the same strong views as the Quaker James Backhouse, who was genuinely saddened by the meeting he and his companion G.W. Walker had with a party of men engaged in the construction of a bridge on the Wollombi rivulet (N.S.W.) in July 1836.

> Men in such situations often take to card-playing, or other demoralizing occupations, to fill up vacant times ... [especially on Sundays] ... In some places in these colonies, they have been known to convert the leaves of their Bibles into cards, and to mark the figures upon them with blood and soot.[29]

Backhouse would probably have been even more upset to discover that gaming on the sabbath day was not restricted to the lower orders. It was indulged in even by the New South Wales magistrates, according to correspondence between E.S. Hall, editor of Sydney's Monitor and the Colonial Secretary, Macleay. Hall wrote to Macleay in defence of charges levelled against him by the Colonial Secretary, and took the opportunity to also make counter charges against Macleay and others, including some of the magistrates of Parramatta, whom he alleged, spent the sabbath playing dice games for heavy stakes.[30]

Allegations such as these, suggesting that the participants in gaming were in some way demoralising the community by their behaviour,

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29 James Backhouse, A Narrative of a Visit to the Australian Colonies, London 1843, p.395.

30 Enclosure, Darling to Murray, Despatch No.2, 2 January 1829, H.R.A., Series I, vol.14, p.588; Hall also accused the unnamed Parramatta magistrates of attending cock fights.

imply that gaming was normally the preserve of the lower orders and that participation by magistrates was unusual. If so, the picture is misleading, for all levels of colonial society were involved in gaming to some extent. Polite society was by no means exempted, though it might have viewed its own gaming as a harmless pastime, seeing only that of the lower orders as something to be condemned.[31]

The acceptance of card games as a harmless activity by the colonial gentry is demonstrated by the extent to which they played. Whilst it is not possible to offer detailed statements of the numbers of card packs imported by, or manufactured in, the colonies, it is possible to list some of the players, notably some who came to be accepted as on the top levels of colonial society.

That position might not have been ascribed to the young Edward Deas Thomson or all the fellow members of his "Beef Steak Club" of 1830: a club which dined and played cards each Wednesday evening,[32] but it could not be denied the occupants of vice-regal posts. Lady Mary FitzRoy saw no objection to playing cards with the Innes family at Port Macquarie in 1847,[33] and cards were not new to the government house occupied by Lady Mary and Sir Charles. More than a

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31 For example see James Macarthur, New South Wales, its present state and future prospects, London 1837, p.44.

32 S.G. Foster, Colonial Improver, Edward Deas Thomson 1780-1879, Melbourne 1978, p.188. Deas Thomson soon joined the colonial elite. He became Colonial-Secretary in 1837 and served as N.S.W.'s senior administrator until the granting of responsible government. He was then invited to form the colony's first responsible ministry in 1856.

33 Annabella Boswell, Journal, (Morton Herman ed.), Sydney 1964, p.129.

decade earlier Richard Bourke had been forced to suffer a lecture from James Backhouse who, after being entertained at dinner by the governor,

> ... stated the objections of the Society of Friends to the practice, on account of its dissipating effect upon the mind, and its tendency to draw into an immoral risking of property.[34]

The governor and the rest of polite society might suggest that their card games were "not really gaming" because they played for only nominal stakes, but they had no real reply to Backhouse's claim that:

> It gives sanction to the practice, and opens the door for the greatest excesses. Where money is risked in gaming, to take it one from another on such a ground, seems to me, not only objectionable for the reasons already stated, but as a breach of that consideration one for another, which is an essential ingredient in true politeness.[35]

Yet, such gaming for nominal stakes at cards was legitimised in polite society, not only by the practices at government house, but also by the institutionalisation of the practice through the establishment of gentlemen's clubs in the major centres in the late 1830s and early 1840s. The Australian Club (1838), the Melbourne Club (1838), the Adelaide Club (1838), the short-lived Port Phillip Club (1840) and later the Union Club (1857), all contributed to this legitimacy. These clubs were not formed expressly for the purposes of promoting gaming. Nevertheless, despite the existence of regulations

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34 Backhouse, op.cit., pp.238-9.
35 ibid.

which attempted to prevent excessive gaming, backgammon and card games joined billiards as the major activities of club members.[36]

Despite the doubtful claims of apologists such as John Hood,[37] that there was seldom much gambling in these clubs, their establishment, even more than the after-dinner activities at government house, enabled gaming, especially in the form of card playing, to become accepted and entrenched in colonial society. The clubs enabled those young gentlemen like William Bunn, who had previously associated all forms of gaming with the lower orders, to discover that it really was quite proper for gentlemen.[38] With the formation of the clubs in 1838-9 gaming achieved the cachet of legitimacy which had been won by horse racing and betting in 1810 through the patronage of Governor Macquarie.

Horse racing and betting capitalised on their legitimacy and further entrenched their position in the succeeding decades. Although Sydney horse racing suffered a setback when the Seventy-Third Regiment left for Ceylon in 1814, leaving the annual Hyde Park race meeting without its organisers and Sydney without its race carnival for the next four years, the setback was only temporary. Match races

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36 J.L. Williams, Australian Club Centenary, 1938, Sydney 1938, pp.2, 31-32; Margaret Kiddle, Men of Yesterday, Melbourne 1961, p.79; Curr, op.cit., p.8; 'Garryowen' (E. Finn) The Chronicles of Early Melbourne 1835 to 1852, vol.1, Melbourne 1976 (1st published 1888), pp.417-8, 662; Roy H. Goddard, The Union Club, 1857-1957, Sydney 1957, pp.2-5.

37 John Hood quoted by Cumes, op.cit., p.250.

38 Gwendoline Wilson, Murray of Yarralumla, Melbourne 1968, p.120, Bunn was a nephew of the brothers J.F. and T.A. Murray.

continued throughout the period and the annual Hyde Park meeting was revived by May 1819,[39] heralding the beginning of an explosive growth of the sport. From 1820, the expansion of horse racing, both in the number of meetings held and in terms of the geographical spread of the sport, was phenomenal. As the population of the new towns and districts reached a level where they could support race meetings, they were organised promptly, partly as an expression of the district's claim to be considered a centre of progress and civilisation.

In the early 1820s race meetings were still restricted to the major population centres - Sydney, Hobart, Parramatta and Launceston; but by the middle of the decade they had reached Penrith, Patrick's Plains and Jericho, on the frontiers of settlement. By the mid-1830s Liverpool, Maitland, Bathurst, Woolongong, and Yass had all held race meetings.[40] Melbourne and Adelaide both held their first organised meetings in 1838, as clear expressions that despite their recent origins, they were more than mere outposts or frontier towns.[41] By the end of the 1840s about 40 meetings were held annually in New South Wales alone.[42]

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39 O'Loghlan, op.cit., p.17; Cumes, op.cit., p.57.

40 Derived from the news reports and advertising columns of the Sydney Gazette, 1820-21; 1825-26; See also Barrie, op.cit., p.20; O'Loghlan, op.cit., pp.23-25; Peter Cunningham, Two Years in New South Wales, (3rd ed.) London 1828, vol.2, p.120. Jericho was situated about 40 miles from Hobart, on the road to Launceston.

41 'Garryowen' op.cit., vol.2, pp.711-12; Cumes, op.cit., p.261; Wray Vamplew, "From Sport to Business: The First Seventy-Five Years of Horse Racing in South Australia", Journal of the South Australian Historical Society, 1983, p.15; Samuel Griffiths, Turf and Heath: Australian Racing Reminiscences, Melbourne 1906, pp.13-15; Margaret Kiddle, op.cit., p.78 suggests that the race meeting was Melbourne's great social event of the year.

It was not only the frequency of meetings which entrenched horse racing's position. More important were the attitudes which surrounded it and its institutionalisation into clubs. The original organised race meeting at Hyde Park in 1810 had been financed by subscribers to the race fund, and although similar subscription meetings remained common until the 1850s, especially in rural areas, a number of permanent racing clubs emerged which placed horse racing on a more secure footing. Simultaneously entrepreneurs began to see commercial possibilities in owning their own racecourses.

New South Wales' first formal race club, the Sydney Turf Club, was formed in 1825, predating the Tasmanian Turf Club by one year. The importance of such clubs rested in their function of removing racing from dependence on an annual burst of spontaneous enthusiasm and public subscription. They provided a permanent organisation which enabled the evolution of rules and regulations and the created a lobby to protect the interests of horse racing. Additionally, the clubs ensured more frequent racing and an increase in prizemoney, by "adding" money to the sweepstakes provided by horse owners.[43] Whilst the personnel of the S.T.C. included many prominent members of Sydney society, with its first committee including such notables as Sir John

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42 Calculated from Bell's Life in Sydney, 1849 passim. and 19 January 1850.

43 Barrie, op.cit., p.20; Peter Cunningham, op.cit., p.119. In 1825 the S.T.C. held three meetings - two at Hyde Park and one at Parramatta. O'Loghlan, op.cit., pp.21-23. O'Loghlan suggests that the 1829 Brisbane Cup, with 20 guineas added to a 10 guinea sweepstakes was the first "added money" race in New South Wales (p.28).

Jamison (president),[44] Captain John Piper, Robert Wardell and W.C. Wentworth, more important for its success was the patronage of Governor Sir Thomas Brisbane.

Brisbane's patronage was active. He attended the race meetings, dinners and balls organised by the S.T.C., and he provided what was to be the major trophy of the Australian turf for some years - the Brisbane Cup.[45] The role of the Sydney Turf Club in promoting civilisation in the colony was applauded by observers such as Peter Cunningham, and the role of the governor as patron was appreciated and toasted by Wentworth, Wardell and their associates, but these men did not represent the views of all of their society.[46] One strenuous critic of Brisbane's sponsorship of the club was the prominent Presbyterian churchman John Dunmore Lang, who opposed all forms of "gambling, and drunkenness and dissipation".[47] In Lang's opinion:

> A judicious governor ... would, therefore, have hesitated ere he patronised and encouraged an association, the certain tendency of which was to deteriorate and debase the breed of men, notwithstanding its holding forth the chance of improving the breed of horses;...[48]

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44 Sir John Jamison's acceptance of the position as first president of the S.T.C. illustrates the club's respectability. He was a wealthy and highly respected council member and landowner, approved of by both commissioner J.T. Bigge and Governor Darling. Later he was to become a founder and president of the Australian Racing and Jockey Club (1828), patron of the Hawkesbury Racing Club (1829) and owner of a private racecourse at Penrith. G.P. Walsh, 'Jamison, Sir John", Australian Dictionary of Biography, vol.2, p.11.

45 Sydney Gazette, 28 April, 14 and 19 November 1825; Lang, op.cit., vol.1, p.194.

46 P. Cunningham, op.cit., pp.119-120.

47 Lang, op.cit., pp.194.

48 ibid.

Lang might have been disposed to describe Brisbane's successor Darling as more judicious, for Darling withdrew vice-regal patronage from the S.T.C. in 1827. He also went considerably further when he forbad all officers or employees of the government from membership of the club, and a number of such officers were punished for continuing their association with the S.T.C.. Renewal of J. Mackaness' appointment as sheriff was refused by Darling, and W.H. Moore, the assistant clerk in the Supreme Court was dismissed. Darling also notified the Secretary of State, Viscount Goderich, of his intention to remove Doctor H.G. Douglass from his position of Commissioner of the Court of Requests.[49]

These actions however, did not amount to a withdrawal of vice-regal patronage from horse racing. They were in fact, part of Darling's continuing dispute with the colonial press, and in particular his dispute with Robert Wardell, editor of the Australian, and W.C. Wentworth. The incident which sparked Darling's reaction against the S.T.C. was a Turf Club dinner held on 11 December 1827, at which the governor was ridiculed, largely at Wardell's prompting.[50]

As a result of Darling's reaction, the Sydney Turf Club gradually lost its position of importance, with those of its members who found

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49 Darling to Goderich, despatches No.122 and 123, 14 December 1827, despatch No. 125, 15 December 1827, H.R.A., Series 1, vol.13, pp.639-647.

50 ibid., J.M. Wicks, "An Assessment of The Colonial Career of Dr. Robert Wardell, LL.D. 1824-1834," B.A. (Hons.) thesis, University of New England, 1970. pp.105-106.

it necessary or profitable to court the governor's favour, deserting the S.T.C. for the rival bodies bidding to become its successor, namely the Parramatta Turf Club, the Agricultural Turf Club, and the ultimate victor in the struggle, the Australian Racing and Jockey Club, which became better known as "The Governor's Club", for it was to this body that Darling transferred his patronage.[51] The S.T.C. continued as a meeting place for Darling's political opponents, and for the next four years it refused to allow the "Governor's Club" to race on its course at Grose Farm, the successor to the Hyde Park course. The A.R.J.C. was forced to race at Parramatta until work began on a new racecourse at Randwick, under the supervision of Edward Deas Thomson in 1833.[52]

During the 1830s permanent race clubs were also established in the remaining major centres. The Melbourne Race Club was established in 1838 and a rival Port Phillip Turf Club was founded the following year. In Adelaide a Turf Club also emerged in 1838, but the smaller population centres had to remain content with the old practice of organising their race meetings through committees elected at public meetings, and financing them through public subscription.[53]

The race clubs, whilst institutionalising and regularising horse racing, saw no need to discourage betting on races, and so each race

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51 O'Loghlan, op.cit., pp.27-30; Cumes, op.cit., pp.126-132; Sydney Gazette, 11 June 1827, 29 September 1828, 1 October 1828.

52 O'Loghlan, op.cit., pp.23-24, 27; Foster, op.cit., p.152.

53 'Garryowen', op.cit., pp.711-714, 720; Longrigg, op.cit., p.254; Cumes, op.cit., p.261; Vamplew, "From Sport to Business...", op.cit., p.16; Margaret Kiddle dates Geelong's regular meetings from October 1843, M. Kiddle, op.cit., p.87.

meeting continued to be the scene of public and open wagering. The rules for the conduct of the racing and the betting were those promulgated by the Jockey Club of England. On occasions, protests were heard about the extent of the betting which occurred, such as the Sydney Monitor's objections to a race between Junius and Fearnought, which netted the connections of Junius £100 at odds of two to one on. The Monitor's objection was to

> ... the deal of money [which] we understand was won and lost. A race itself we view not only as harmless but a delightful exhibition. But it is the accompaniments we object to...[54]

Such attitudes were shared by others, including some holders of the highest authority; such as Governor George Arthur in Van Diemen's Land, who withheld his patronage from the turf because he saw betting and the crowds which assembled on the racecourse, as threats to law and order.[54a]

Nevertheless, the continued attendance of large crowds demonstrated that the views of the Monitor and Governor Arthur had little effect. The 1827 Sandy Bay races in Hobart boasted 1,200 spectators, whilst the Port Phillip Turf Club's autumn meeting of 1845 claimed an attendance of 5,000 people on its first day and a betting turnover of more than £1,000 on one unscheduled match race held during the afternoon.[55] Many of the racegoers suffered hardship or at least travelled long distances in order to attend the scenes of betting

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54 As quoted by Cumes, op. cit., p.121
54a ibid. p.80
55 ibid. p.133; 'Garryowen', vol.2, p.724.

activity. One such example is offered by Annie Baxter who wrote of her trip on horseback from Port Macquarie to a race meeting at Armidale in 1843. Though, of course, to Annie Baxter and many others the attraction of the race meeting was more the social events surrounding it than the prospect of winning or losing large sums of money.[56]

The increased frequency of organised race meetings did nothing to decrease the incidence of match races which increased as rapidly as the stakemoney.[57] By the mid-1840s Bell's Life in Sydney had become the notice board for match challenges, and seldom was an issue of that journal published without such a challenge or a detailed report of a recent match. Such a situation encouraged some individuals who possesed suitable land in areas where such events were common, to construct private racecourses which could be used to hold match races. Coulton's racecourse at Baulkham Hills[58] was only one of a number of these, but the most successful was that belonging to Thomas Shaw at Petersham. Shaw gained financially from races on his course through levying admission charges to all vehicles and saddle horses, and through his proprietorship of a nearby public house.[59]

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56 Annie Baxter, Memories of Tasmania and the Macleay River and New England districts of New South Wales and of Port Fairy in the Western District of Port Phillip, 1834-1848, Adelaide 1980, pp.63 ff; Cumes, op.cit., p.257 quotes T.A. Murray in the early 1840s advising an employee not to bet at the Braidwood races, except with the ladies, who "harmlessly" bet pairs of gloves.

57 For example, the match arranged in 1846 between two year-old colts Saltpetre and Whalebone for £200 a side. Bell's Life in Sydney, 24 October 1846.

58 See an advertisement in Bell's Life in Sydney, 11 April 1846.

59 ibid., 13 September 1845, 28 February 1846. Longrigg, op.cit.,

(Footnote continued)

Thomas Shaw's success in promoting his course was such that by the mid-1840s, when Randwick racecourse had been replaced by one at Homebush for the major Sydney meetings, Petersham almost rivalled Homebush in both the quantity and the quality of its race meetings. Entrepreneurs such as Shaw guaranteed that the demands of the gamblers would be catered for. Whilst his attention was devoted to those demands as they concerned horse racing, many of his colleagues promoted betting on other contingencies, particularly other sporting contests.

Throughout the period under examination publicans played an important role as betting entrepreneurs and sporting entrepreneurs generally. They provided the venues for pigeon shooting matches, dancing matches, handball challenges, billiards, quoits and skittles, all of which involved either prize money or stake money and afforded spectators the opportunity of wagering. Such contests were promoted primarily in the interests of selling more alcoholic beverages, but even contests which could more legitimately claim consideration as "sports" continued to involve prizemoney or stakes. As long as there was doubt about an outcome, wagers were laid upon it.[60]

In the 1830s and 1840s cricket matches, whether single wicket

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59 (continued)
p.254 claims that at least ten courses within 100 km of Sydney were enclosed and charging for admission by 1837.

60 Cumes, op.cit., pp.264, 284-285, 291-294; 'Garryowen', op.cit., vol.2, pp.744-745; and see Bell's Life in Sydney, 25 January 1845, 20 September 1845, 21 March 1846.

contests or full scale matches - between rival regiments in Hyde Park, amongst soldiers at Norfolk Island or sponsored by the Australian Cricket Club - were played for stakes of £15 to £50, with players and spectators alike backing their opinions with either cash or kind.[61] The earliest football games, most pedestrian contests, whether at Parramatta, Adelaide or Melbourne, and the various regattas on Sydney Harbour, Port Phillip Bay, the Derwent, the Hunter, the Hawkesbury or the Tamar, similarly involved money and betting.[62]

Notably absent from the reports of such sporting events was the concept of the amateur, the gentleman who played merely for the sake of the game. All sport in the colonies was governed by the idea that the participants should be prepared to stake their money as well as their reputation on the outcome. No contemporary commentator on colonial society, except J.D. Lang, was moved to condemn such practices. Lang saw "perspiring at a cricket match and huzzaing at a regatta"[63] as contemptible employments, but the great bulk of his fellow colonists saw little to criticise. Other objects of betting which did provoke greater comment were the more brutal and less readily justifiable "sports" of prize fighting, cockfighting and animal baiting.

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61 Cumes, op.cit., pp.141-146, 302-303; Bell's Life in Sydney, 18 January 1845.

62 "Garryowen", op.cit., vol.2, pp.742-748; Cumes, op.cit., pp.158-159, 286-288; Sydney Gazette, 8 October 1828; Bell's Life in Sydney, 1 February 1845, 30 August 1845, 11 and 25 October 1845; Australian Etiquette, Knoxfield 1980, (first published 1886), pp.613-614.

63 Lang, op.cit., p.197.

Peter Corris has provided a detailed examination of prizefighting in which he documents the extent of the sport in this era, the levels of prizes and stakes involved and the extent of both official dissatisfaction and public support. Although the sport was strongest in the Hawkesbury area of New South Wales, it had its adherents throughout all the colonies. The most enthusiastic support came from the agricultural communities and the native born. The loudest condemnation came from the magistracy, whilst the press such as the Sydney Gazette adopted an ambivalent attitude, condemning the sport for its brutality and promotion of public disorder, yet providing information to its supporters about coming or recent contests. Evidence that prizefighting's supporters were not restricted to the poorer classes is provided by Corris' report of a match in 1827, which attracted a number of £200 bets and one of at least £500.[64]

The appearance of Bell's Life in 1845 is significant because it provided, for the first time, a public voice of approval, not only for prizefighting, but also for the large range of other brutal sports condemned by polite society because of their tendency to promote riotous behaviour.[65] The animal bloodsports which were outlawed in England by the 1835 Cruelty to Animals Act, and effectively suppressed by 1840,[66] continued to thrive in the colonies, where they were urged on by Bell's Life. Cockfighting was catered for by well appointed facilities, and as late as 1845 was able to attract crowds of up to

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64 Peter Corris, Lords of the Ring: A History of Prize Fighting in Australia, Sydney 1980, pp.8-23.

65 ibid., p.12.

66 Malcolmson, op.cit., pp.119-126, 130-133; Bailey, op.cit., p.18.

400 spectators, and purses of up to £100.[67] Bull baiting apparently became rare after 1832, but dog fighting remained common, with Bell's Life advertising challenges and reporting the results of matches.[68]

It was a very rare issue of the sporting journal which did not publicise the latest animal contest. These, along with prize fighting and especially horse racing, provided the bread and butter for Bell's existence. The journal also performed another significant function which further legitimised betting. Like its London namesake, Bell's Life appointed itself public umpire of disputed bets, and in subsequent years proceeded to offer public judgements on matters of contention, sometimes simple but often rather obscure.[69]

The facilities provided by Bell's Life, the tremendous increase in the extent of horse racing, and the development of regular sports sponsored by sporting clubs and entrepreneurial publicans, all increased the opportunities of the colonists to wager on the outcome of events, or to support their opinions with tangible proof of their convictions. As a result, betting became an obvious and entrenched feature of colonial society.

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67 Bell's Life in Sydney, 18 October 1845.

68 Sydney Gazette, 14 August 1832; Bell's Life In Sydney, 6 and 13 September 1845; See also the evidence of James Mudie to the House of Commons, Select Committee on Transportation, 1837, op.cit., p.107.

69 Bell's Life in Sydney, 4 January 1845; for example, an obscure dispute over whether the steamer Cornubia did or did not tow the ship General Heaven "out" on Thursday, 18 June 1846. (27 June 1846).

Pastoralism, Banking and Lotteries

The colonial society in which both gaming and betting became entrenched between 1820 and 1850 was one in which other forms of speculation also played a prominent part. The pastoral expansion discussed above[70] was perhaps the largest speculative enterprise of the age, but the period was also one in which the bases of colonial commerce, including the banking industry, were established. That the colonial banking story was closely connected with that of pastoral expansion is illustrated by E.M. Curr's description of the way in which easily attainable bank loans, coupled with the stimulus provided by Governor Gipps' land sale system, led to a spirit of speculation in the Port Phillip district in 1839.

> The consequences of this state of things pervaded all the relations of life, and a general mental inebriety seized on the people. I suppose we may say they were drunk with speculations and visions of wealth. That a man bought a horse for £100, or a town allotment for £1,000 one day, seemed almost to be accepted as a guarantee for their purchaser, realizing at auction £150 or £1,500 on the next;...[71]

Perhaps the town of Melbourne was somewhat peculiar given its exceptionally rapid growth from a pastoral village to a major commercial centre in only about a dozen years;[72] but the illustration offered by Curr can be applied to other parts of the colonies, if

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70 See above pp.54-55.
71 Curr, op.cit., p.7.
72 See above, pp.59-59.

perhaps to a somewhat lesser degree. Even in Van Diemen's Land, where the early alienation of most productive land helped to prevent a land boom similar to that experienced by the mainland colonies in the 1830s,[73] skilful speculators could achieve considerable wealth. R.M. Hartwell offers the examples of Edward Lord, W.M. Orr, W.J.T. Clarke and Charles Swanston as men who made enormous profits through land or pastoral speculation in the island colony.[74]

The role of the banks in the activities of such men was crucial, and some bankers adopted the view that the vast open spaces of the Australian colonies offered an unlimited future for investment in the land market. The story of the growth of the banking system has been told in detail by S.J. Butlin.[75] It is one of the progress and expansion, hand in hand with the pastoral industry - from the mid-1820s when the Bank of New South Wales was joined by rivals in Sydney, Hobart and Launceston, to the 1830s when a number of British based banks joined the rush to play a part in colonial commerce.[76] By the early 1840s, the Port Phillip Bank had been established at Melbourne and a range of land mortgage companies had increased competition in the colonial financial world.[77]

The land boom of the 1830s had attracted British capital

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73 R.M. Hartwell, The Economic Development of Van Diemen's Land, 1820-1850, Melbourne 1954, p.47.
74 ibid., pp.18-19.
75 S.J. Butlin, Foundations of the Australian Monetary System, 1788-1851, Sydney, 1968 (1st edn. 1953).
76 ibid., pp.193-196, 217-221; 227.
77 ibid., pp.279-282; 309-314.

investment at an ever increasing pace. By the mid-1830s pastoralists were using "the fashionable device of bank flotation as an instrument for financing pastoral expansion",[78] but by the end of the decade such practice had become reckless. By then a decline in wool prices, rising costs and a declining growth of labour supply, combined with a period of drought, ended the boom and ensured that the more reckless speculators were caught in the liquidity crisis of 1840.[79] This led to a chain reaction of insolvencies and a consequent restructuring of the colonial financial world. In New South Wales half the banks disappeared, and in Van Diemen's Land they fared only marginally better.[80]

That the pastoral expansion and the colonial financial system were based heavily on speculation, and that many of the speculators gambled beyond their means, are not the central points at issue here. We are not concerned with this type of financial specualtion as a form of gambling: our focus is on the analysis of gaming and betting. However, it should be emphasised that a society which was, at least in the 1830s, almost obsessed with such financial speculation must be considered unlikely to prove fertile ground for the nurturing of gambling reform movements. More directly relevant to analysis of gaming and betting practices and attitudes, however, is the fate of the collapsed banks, especially that of the Bank of Australia.

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78 ibid., p.252.
79 ibid., pp.316-320.
80 ibid., p.325.

This bank, which was seriously injured by the bankruptcy of the firm Hughes and Hosking, had considerable assets, including foreclosed mortgages; but its creditors saw little prospect of achieving realistic prices for these assets at the height of a depression.[81] A novel solution to their problem was found in the idea of a lottery of the bank's unencumbered assets. The New South Wales Legislative Council, in December 1844, gave its sanction to the scheme proposed by W.C. Wentworth and supported by "a barrage of petitions".[82]

The outcome of the debate in the Council was hardly in doubt, given the correlation between the Council's membership and the bank's board. Even Governor Gipps, who disapproved of lotteries, whilst reserving approval of the bill for crown opinion and doubtful of the Council's competence to legalise a lottery, hoped that the scheme might go ahead. In fact, the first of a proposed series of lotteries had already been held before Gipps received word from the colonial office that crown approval of the bill had been denied, not because it was repugnant to the laws of England, but because:

> lotteries are regarded with the highest disfavour by Parliament and by public opinion in this country; nor is it possible to deny that such disfavour is justly due to such a method of raising money, whether for any public service or for any private purposes. The temporary advantage is gained at the expense of morality and the permanent interests of society at large.[83]

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81 ibid., p.349.

82 ibid.; Gipps to Stanley, Despatch No.1, 1 January 1845, H.R.A., series 1, vol.24, pp.164-165; Lang, op.cit., p.364.

83 Stanley to Gipps, Despatch No.47, 17 May 1845, H.R.A., series 1, vol.24, p.350.

Although Colonial Secretary Stanley's ruling was not based on repugnance to the laws of England, lotteries had been outlawed in the mother country since the 1809 Lotteries Act, which resulted from a House of Commons enquiry into allegations of wholesale fraud surrounding the operations of popular public lotteries.[84] In 1845 however, it was the dubious morality of the device which was considered important rather than its illegality.

The difference of opinion between the New South Wales Legislative Council and the British Parliament reflected the differences in attitudes of the two societies they represented. In New South Wales a select committee of the Legislative Council had recommended the lottery despite doubts about its legality.[85] Its view was supported by petitions which, even if they were orchestrated by the bank's creditors, were in tune with the dominant colonial attitudes which saw little or no harm in such an exercise, particularly if it was properly supervised. After all, other forms of gaming and betting had been encouraged by the colonial gentry and had become an established feature of colonial life. Even the occasional private lottery designed to dispose of unwanted property, had been conducted without interference long after the passage of the British Act.[86]

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84 House of Commons, Select Committee on Lotteries, 1808 vol.2, pp.182 ff and pp. 323 ff; See also above Chapter 2, p.22.

85 Gipps to Stanley, op.cit., p.165.

86 For example see the advertisement for a lottery in the Sydney Gazette, 24 September 1828.

In Britain, however, as suggested by Stanley's words, the dominant attitudes towards such practices had changed. The 1809 Lotteries Act had been merely the beginning of a campaign to save the poorer classes from their dreams of enrichment through the fates of chance. Although for three decades this Act remained the only really serious attempt to outlaw a type of gambling, by the 1840s, when the Bank of Australia lottery was proposed, the British gambling reform movement was beginning to gain strength.

Early Victorian Reforms in Britain

In Chapter Two[87] it was argued that English gaming and betting practices survived the forces of evangelicalism and industrialisation due to the patronage of the gentry and their willingness to supervise, and increasingly make less public, the gaming and betting venues. However, this argument applies only to the late eighteenth century and the early years of the nineteenth, when the gentry still exercised a major degree of dominance over England's cultural values. That dominance was weakened by industrial growth and industrial urbanisation in the period discussed, and it was effectively displaced in the early Victorian era. During the second quarter of the nineteenth century gaming and betting practices had to face a renewed attack from the same forces. This time their defences were less adequate and the reformers achieved greater, though incomplete,

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87 See above pp.16-17, 27-28.

success.

Brian Harrison has examined the three major reform movements of nineteenth century England relevant to analysis of recreation and leisure pursuits: namely, the Lords Day Observance Society, the Temperance movements, and the Royal Sociey for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. He suggests that all of these were predominantly evangelical in origin.[88] Examination of the class basis of their support led Harrison to suggest that though all three received strong support from the middle classes, only the R.S.P.C.A. (as its title suggests) received significant support from the aristocracy. Conversely, this latter movement received least support from the lower classes, whose more radical membership opposed all three movements.[89]

Harrison's analysis is perhaps a little misleading largely because his emphasis on identifying the class origins of the movements' supporters and opponents, distracts him from the potentially more useful task of identifying the class basis of the values the movements promoted. He came close to achieving this when he quoted Karl Marx's disapproval of the reform movements as "redressing social grievances in order to secure the continued existence of bourgeois society".[90]

Marx's assessment is valid in that support for these movements

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88 Brian Harrison, "Religion and Recreation in Nineteenth Century England", Past and Present, vol.38, December 1967, pp.98-125.
89 ibid., pp.103-108.
90 ibid., p.120.

from some gentry, and even significant sections of the working class, does not suggest that the movements were free from class bias or division. Rather, the extent of support reveals the success of industrial middle-class evangelicalism's achievement of a cultural hegemony, at least in the cities of early Victorian England.

J.F.C. Harrison's study of early Victorian Britain recognises this achievement. After analysing the increasing importance of evangelicalism (and especially methodism) in the more industrial towns and cities, he concludes that evangelical values had become part of the ideology of the age, and "that Protestant evangelicalism was a basic ingredient in the dominant ideology".[91] He argues that the middle classes saw the problems caused by disintegration of the traditional culture as capable of solution if society was remade in the image of the middle class.[92] According to J.F.C. Harrison:

> One of the social effects of evangelicalism was to internalise the puritan values of hard work and self-reliance, and inculcate a strong sense of duty. To spread these values beyond the middle classes and skilled artisans to the labouring population at large was the object of most schemes for mental and moral improvement in the 1830s and 1840s. The overall aim was the strengthening of a common culture, based on middle class social norms, into which the working classes could be inetegrated. Respectability was the goal to be striven for, and self-improvement the way to attain it.[93]

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91 J.F.C. Harrison, Early Victorian Britain 1832-1851, London 1979, (1st edn. 1971), p.161.

92 ibid., p.162.

93 ibid., p.163.

This context provides us with an additional perspective from which we can view the evangelical based movements examined by Brian Harrison. The efforts of the R.S.P.C.A., the Temperance movement and the Lords Day Observance Society to educate or convert all to their aims through the media of indoctrination, the press and the pulpit, while simultaneously pursuing legislative enforcement of at least some of their views, can be seen as attempts to impose a hegemony of middle-class values.

In the field of leisure and recreation, this attempted imposition of hegemony is illustrated by the "rational recreation" movement of the 1830s and 1840s. This middle-class movement encouraged the provision of libraries, museums, reading rooms, public walks and gardens in the belief that the

> new amenities would divert the working man from the pub and provide the proper environment for his exposure to the superior example, whose values would ultimately be internalised.[94]

The rational recreation movement failed in the 1830s and 1840s, largely because of official disinterest and working class hostility. Legislators and councillors were loathe to legislate or spend money to promote rational recreation, and where the amenities were provided they often collapsed through lack of patronage or were converted into middle-class institutions.[95] Yet the movement remained a vocal

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94 Bailey, op.cit., p.41.
95 ibid., p.52.

expression of middle-class values and provided guidance for the members of the lower orders who sought the goal of respectability, through the means of self-improvement.[96] It also reinforced the gentry's trend towards a withdrawal of their patronage from popular recreations, and an increase in their participation in hunting and shooting.[97]

The natural corollary of promotion of rational recreation was the suppression of "irrational" recreation. The R.S.P.C.A., the Temperance Movement and the Lord's Day Observance Society were all part of such an attempt, as were efforts to suppress gaming and betting. After the suppression of lotteries in 1809[98] no further suppression legislation was passed by the British Parliament until 1853, when the Suppression of Betting Houses Act, designed to confine betting to racecourses, was passed. This legislative inaction though, should not suggest a lack of success for the reform movement.

Throughout the early Victorian period, gambling reformers continued to express their concerns and to educate the society, as it became more receptive to the ideas of middle-class evangelicalism. By the mid-1840s, although significant legislation had not yet appeared, the reformers had the ear of at least some parliamentarians. In 1844 a House of Commons Select Committee on Gaming, chaired by Viscount

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96 Bailey, op.cit., Ch.5, pp.106-123, suggests that acceptance of "rational recreation" by the more ambitious, self-improvers amongst the lower orders is apparent in their acceptance of the Working Men's Club movement, begun in the late '40s, p.107.

97 Cunningham, op.cit., pp.16 and 51.

98 See above, pp.84-85.

Palmerston, was critical of existing laws and of their lack of enforcement by the police. It recommended the suppression of gaming houses and the extension of police powers to search premises and people.[99] It also recommended that wagers should not be recognised by the courts as legal contracts.[100] This committee was not prepared to suggest suppression of horse racing, but it did see gaming and betting as potential dangers to society's morals.

Moral Enlightenment and Colonial Conservatism

It appears then, that Stanley had some basis for his belief that the British public and the parliament agreed in viewing a lottery, even under government supervision, as a danger to the morality of society. His reply to Gipps revoking the Bank of Australia lottery, demonstrates the extent of the middle-class achievement by the mid-1840s as far as gaming and betting were concerned. Perhaps England's evangelical middle-class had not yet achieved a complete cultural hegemony, but its voice was being heard and its influence on society's values was significant. For the colonists, who had already participated in the bank's first lottery, Stanley's ruling must have been perplexing. In their society the forces of moral enlightenment were not so vocal. The infant societies in Australia had been struggling to produce not a carbon copy of the emergent industrial

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99 House of Commons, Select Committee on Gaming, 1844, Report, pp.vi-viii.

100 ibid., p.v.

urban Britain, nor a new type of society, but a copy of the society Britain had lost or was losing. The dominant cultural and social force in the Australian colonies between 1820 and 1850 was not the middle-class moral enlightenment, but the aristocratic conservatism of eighteenth century Britain, or at least a colonial version of it.

Nowhere is that colonial conservatism more apparent than in the person and the writings of James Macarthur[101] who, throughout the 1830s and 1840s, consistently advocated colonial constitutional structures based on a representation of 'interests', whereby the colonial gentry could exercise at least a supervisory control over legislative affairs.[102] Colonial conservatism is also apparent in the immigrants' striving for land, their bickering with the early governors in New South Wales, their attempts to establish connection networks through marriages,[103] and in their desire for the trappings of the landed gentry's existence - including their gentlemen's clubs and their race clubs.

Michael Roe has argued that the more vocal elements of colonial society generally accepted that if authority was to pass from the hands of the gaolers (the autocratic governors) and brute force, a

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101 For example see Macarthur, op.cit., passim.

102 This aspect of Macarthur's opinion remained consistent although the details of his proposals changed in response to colonial circumstances and proposals emanating from Britain. For a detailed assessment see J.M. Ward, James Macarthur: Colonial Conservative, 1798-1867, Sydney 1981, pp.72 ff and 118 ff.

103 Denholm, op.cit., p.175. For an extensive discussion of the nature of the colonial gentry and their conservatism see Chapter 9, pp.161-188.

solid body of mores needed to exist, and a cultural and social hegemony of ideas was necessary.[104] Colonists like Macarthur saw conservatism as the appropriate set of ideas and values. So indeed did the colonial governors, and their willingness to play the role of patron of bodies such as the Sydney Turf Club, the Van Diemen's Land Aquatic Club and the Australian Racing and Jockey Club, is tangible evidence of this view.

The dominance of the conservative viewpoint over that which Roe labelled moral enlightenment is apparent in the lack of vigorous attacks on gambling prior to 1850. At a time when the British press was beginning to campaign in earnest against the immorality of gambling and the evils it led to, their colonial counterparts were comparatively silent.

The Britain of the 1820s produced publications such as The Fatal Effects of Gambling, a 380 page account of the murder of a professional gambler, William Weare, and the subsequent trial of his killer John Thurtell, who sought revenge against Weare after being cheated out of a substantial sum. It also produced The Gambler's Scourge which offered a detailed description of London's gaming hells, examining what its author saw as some of their unfortunate effects, and offering arguments for their suppression.[105] In the colonies however such exposes and attacks were lacking. There were half-hearted

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104 Michael Roe, Quest for Authority in Eastern Australia, 1835-1851, Melbourne 1965, p.6.

105 Thomas Kelly, op.cit., passim.

criticisms such as that offered by the Sydney Gazette in 1829 when it argued that sport was acceptable only if it was the sport of gentlemen and if it contributed in some way to the promotion of worthwhile skills. It accepted hunting and fishing as legitimate but argued against the existence of sports which offered only amusement or the opportunity to gamble.[106] Although the Gazette criticised horse racing in this issue, the following edition included an advertisement for the Annual General Meeting of the A.R.J.C. and the newspaper continued to cater for the interests of its readers by providing advertisements for and full reports of race meetings.[107]

Perhaps it is not surprising that the press seldom attacked gaming or betting. Even Michael Roe admits that the secular press (particularly the Sydney Morning Herald) was conservative and desired a colonial environment patterned on the old world of pre-industrial Britain; a world of landed gentry or "a society of leisured gentlemen farmers".[108] It should also be remembered that much of the press was controlled by the same men who conducted horse racing. Robert Wardell and W.C. Wentworth could hardly encourage anti-gambling leaders in their Australian. More surprising is the relatively little opposition mounted by the colonial churches, especially given the evangelicalism of the colonial ministers and the role of evangelicals in Britain. The

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106 Sydney Gazette, 14 April 1829.

107 ibid., 16 April 1829; see also 18, 25 and 28 April 1829; Eight years later the Gazette implied that horse racing was not an appropriate sport for colonial officials to involve themselves in, when it urged newly appointed Colonial Secretary Edward Deas Thomson to give up his involvement in the sport. Sydney Gazette, 5 January 1837, Foster, op.cit., p.46.

108 Roe, op.cit., p.25.

Anglican and Catholic clergy had little to say on the subject, and whilst we might be tempted to explain their silence in terms of their energies being necessarily more concerned with the pressing problems involved in simply becoming established in the colonies, they were prepared to comment extensively on other political and social issues, and at least one clergyman, J.D. Lang who was heavily involved in the processes of organisation and establishment, did make considerable critical comment.

Whenever possible Lang made sarcastic and cynical asides on the Australian fondness for gambling and horse racing. In describing the features and facilities of the Melbourne of the 1840s he included in his list, "a Jockey Club, with a race-course, that never-failing accompaniment of Australian civilization, in the vicinity".[109] In the same publication he noted without satisfaction that Albury had no police establishment and no place of worship within a hundred miles, but it too had its racecourse.[110] But it is in his description of Geelong that he reaches the high point of his vitriol. Geelong had some good churches but

> ... the Geelong Races, with the Squatters' Cup, for horses of whatever pedigree, character, or previous occupation - like the Squatters themselves - attest that it is in no respect behind any other place of equal importance ...[111]

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109 J.D. Lang, Port Phillip: Or The Colony of Victoria, (3rd edn.), Glasgow 1853, p.77.

110 ibid., p.278.

111 ibid., p.116; The emphasis is Lang's.

The only other churchman to make significant comments critical of gambling was the Quaker James Backhouse, yet his description of his six years travelling in the colony contain only the two incidents already quoted, which led him to express his opposition to gambling.[112]

That Backhouse and Lang were critical, while the Anglicans and Catholics were not, or at least did not express their opposition, is significant. The Anglican silence can be seen as an expression of Anglican acceptance of the tenets of conservatism. Anglicanism sought the protection of "the old order", and its establishment in the colonies. Much has been written about the Anglican church in Australia from the 1820s to 1850, and most of that writing focuses quite correctly on three dominant and related issues: the questions of Establishment, education and sectarianism.[113] All three questions were concerned with the relationship between church and state, and on each issue anglicanism's conservatism and its alliance with the gentry is apparent.[114] Whatever evangelical enthusiasm existed in the colonial Church of England it was more than balanced by the need to concentrate on the struggle for Establishment.

The Catholic clergy, if less concerned with the maintenance of a

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112 See above, pp.66, 68.

113 For example see John Barrett, That Better Country: The Religious Aspect of Life in Eastern Australia, 1835-1850, Melbourne 1966; J.S. Gregory, Church and State: Changing Government Policies towards Religion in Australia; with particular reference to Victoria since Separation, Melbourne 1973; G.P. Shaw, Patriarch and Patriot: William Grant Broughton, 1788-1853: Colonial Statesman and Ecclesiastic, Melbourne 1978.

114 See Roe, Quest for Authority, op.cit., pp.55 and 175-177.

colonial aristocratic or conservative hegemony, were also disinterested in the moral enlightenment of conservatism's opponents. In the 1820s Father J.J. Therry, New South Wales' first "official" Catholic chaplain, was interested more in the spiritual well-being of his flock than in their temporal welfare, whatever his desires over retaining personal control of the St. Mary's building fund.[115] In Van Diemen's Land, Father Philip Conolly had sufficient difficulty attempting to cope with his personal and pastoral problems. More abstract questions such as struggles between conservatism and moral enlightenment were unlikely to attract his attention.[116] Under the supervision of its first bishop, J.B. Polding from 1835 Australian catholicism witnessed extension and spiritual growth. It also became more embroiled in the questions of Establishment, education and sectarianism; but most importantly the Catholic church was still struggling for recognition and acceptance in the colonies. As long as conservatism, in the form of the governors and the legislative council, held authority, Catholicism could not afford to contest the values and ideals of that conservatism.[117]

The criticism of gambling by Backhouse and Lang suggests that the non-Anglican protestant churches were more actively opposed to gaming and betting, and less concerned about the consequences of opposition to gentry practices. These men however, represented small minorities in

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115 Patrick O'Farrell, The Catholic Church and Community in Australia: A History, Melbourne 1977, pp.21-29; See also James Waldersee, Catholic Society in New South Wales, 1788-1860, Sydney 1974, pp.28-33.

116 O'Farrell, op.cit., p.32.

117 ibid., p.42.

colonial society, and few voices were raised in their support, even from among their colleagues. Even South Australia, which was established at least partly as a haven for dissenters, provided little support for these men.[118]

When it came to gaming and betting, colonial South Australians resembled closely their more eastern contemporaries during that colony's first two decades. Despite the urban middle-class and non-conformist background of some of the leading South Australian colonists, they were not attempting to recreate early Victorian England in the new colony. Even E.G. Wakefield, who provided much of the philosophy behind the colony, sought to promote a rural squirearchy, and in this respect his ideas were implemented.[119] As has been demonstrated above, South Australia by 1850 still lacked any significant industrialisation, and was perhaps even de-urbanising.[120]

Meanwhile, the leaders of South Australian society were busy reconstructing many of the forms of a conservative pre-modern rural society - including offering their patronage to horse racing.[121] The organisers of Adelaide's first race meeting included Colonial Commissioner J.H. Fisher, Surveyor Colonel William Light, and John

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118 Roe, "1830-1850", op.cit., pp.84-86; D.H. Pike, Paradise of Dissent: South Australia, 1829-1857, Melbourne 1957, p.52; John A. Daly, Elysian Fields: Sport, Class and Community in Colonial South Australia, 1836-1890, Adelaide 1981, pp.14-15.

119 Richard White, Inventing Australia: Images and Identity, 1688-1980, Sydney 1981, p.34.

120 See above, p.58.

121 For example in 1846 Governor Lieutenant-Colonel Frederick Holt Robe attended the Glen Osmond steeplechase meeting; Daly, op.cit., p.33.

Morphett after whom Adelaide's premier racecourse Morphettville was named, and who was described by John Daly as definitely in favour of the creation of a colonial aristocracy.[122] With such men in positions of authority, despite the religious affiliations of the colonists, the typically conservative gentry view of gaming and betting remained dominant in South Australia, and that colony's churches appear to have accepted that view and concentrated their attentions on the spiritual welfare of their flocks, leaving Lang and Backhouse to give voice to the moral issues involved.

Even if concern for temporal and moral welfare of the inhabitants of the colonies did exist, it existed essentially in the form of charity, a concept which aided and entrenched the position and values of conservatives by increasing their patronage rather than encouraging self-reliance and independence on the part of the poorer classes. As John Barrett has claimed:

> Charity rather than social reform, benevolent paternalism rather than democracy, were what most ministers believed and preached.[123]

Barrett's comment might apply to ministers of all religions. Elizabeth Windshuttle has gone even further to demonstrate the close relationship between philanthropy and an anglicanism which she equates with "a Tory ruling class"; a conclusion derived after examining elite Anglican women and their support for the "no less than 18

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122 ibid., p.31.
123 Barrett, op.cit., p.198.

philanthropic causes" operating in Sydney between 1800 and 1850.[124] Through analysis of the absence of Anglican women from the temperance movement in the 1830s and 1840s, she demonstrates anglicanism's support for conservative gentry values.[125]

The temperance movement was one aspect of Britian's moral enlightenment which did appear in the colonies. When revived later in the century it was to become inextricably linked with movements for gambling reform, but in its first manifestation in the 1830s and 1840s it was more a single purpose movement. It began with the foundation of the Hobart Temperance Society by James Backhouse and G.W. Walker in 1832. By the end of the decade its message was being shouted in all major and provincial towns, but by the late 1840s the movement had run out of steam, with its members becoming involved in internal bickering.[126]

It is significant that, like criticism of gambling, temperance had to rely on the Quakers Backhouse and Walker, and on Presbyterians like J.D. Lang. Equally significant was its failure to attract, or maintain for any considerable length of time, the support of the colonial ruling class. Temperance was a radical force: it challenged the dominance of conservatism. Intemperance could play a useful role

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124 Elizabth Windshuttle, "Women, Class and Temperance: Moral Reform in Eastern Australia, 1832-1857", The Push from the Bush, 3, May 1979, pp.5-11; For details on some of the charitable causes see Brian Dickey, No Charity There: A Short History of Social Welfare in Australia, Melbourne 1981, pp.1-30.

125 ibid., pp.9-11.

126 Roe, Quest for Authority, op.cit., pp.165-167.

in a conservative society by keeping the poorer classes poor and more importantly, by offering occasional release from pressures and frustrations. In performing a safety-valve role, intemperance was a form of social control in a society dominated by the hegemony of a conservative landed class.

Gambling performed similar functions as well as being an enjoyable and harmless pastime for those who could afford to lose. Captain John Piper, although a dissenter, saw no conflict between his involvement in horse racing and his work for the Presbyterian church because he accepted the need for colonial conservatism.[127] Indeed he saw himself as the leading force in cultural society, a magnanimous and ostentatious philanthropist. Piper was not concerned with social reform, nor were the bulk of colonial clergy or the colonial governments. The ruling classes at times might have been concerned about the morality of some of their members, but only because overt immorality could potentially undermine their image and authority.

While this situation existed and the colonies had a succession of governors like Brisbane, Darling, Bourke, and FitzRoy[128] who enjoyed

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127 Majorie Barnard, "Piper, John", Australian Dictionary of Biography, vol.2, p.335.

128 Current historical orthodoxy places Governor Richard Bourke in the vanguard of colonial liberalism. Nevertheless his patronage of gaming and betting suggests that this might apply more to his politics than to his personal behaviour and social attitudes. See Hazel King, Richard Bourke, Melbourne 1971 and Roe, "1830-1850", op.cit., pp.82-83. FitzRoy listed among his many honours and duties, those of patron of the Maitland Jockey Club, Bell's Life in Sydney, 29 August 1846; Governor Gipps was less enthusiastic about offering vice-regal support for sports clubs and associations, see Foster, op.cit., p.85.

sport, played cards and patronised horse racing; a flood of immigrants who speculated in land and sheep; and a majority of churchmen who found other problems far more pressing and important, colonial gambling had a favourable environment in which to reach maturity. The race clubs and their many race meetings became an established part of colonial society. The connection between gambling and sport became inextricable. The billiard rooms and the gentlemen's clubs with their preponderance of card tables, and even the dingy back-room gaming houses, became normal and acceptable features of the larger towns.

CHAPTER FOUR

EXPANSION AND ENTRENCHMENT, 1850-1880

It has been demonstrated in the previous chapters that gaming and betting were established features of Australian colonial life by about 1850. Regardless of the personal commercial aims, and often humble backgrounds of the colonies' more prominent settlers, their desire to recreate a pre-industrial English social and authority structure in an essentially rural, non-industrial setting ensured the establishment of these practices. Opposition to gaming and betting was limited by the lack of a strong industrial middle class imbued with a work ethic, growing political influence, and a cultural dominance enabling it to impose a "rational recreation" ideal. During the period of continued colonial gentry hegemony to the mid-nineteenth century, opponents of gambling had little hope of changing the practices and morality of their fellow colonists.

However, in the three decades after 1850, the colonial context underwent a number of significant changes: most stimulated to some extent by the discovery of gold and the consequent influx of gold seeking immigrants. The gold discoveries provided the opportunity for commercial development and, consequently, the financial potential for increased industrialisation. The influx of immigrants, once they had moved from the diggings to the urban centres, provided a rapidly growing population of consumers and a potential industrial work force. Even more importantly, the new immigrants provided the colonies with an expanded middle class, enabling that group to compete more effectively with the colonial gentry for political authority and cultural dominance.

Analysis of Australian gaming and betting in the gold rush and immediate post-gold period then, must be preceded by examination of the colonial context. Identification of the extent to which these potential changes actually occurred is an obvious pre-requisite for interpretation of the history of gaming and betting in this period. Equally important however, is continued reference to the relevant issues in mid-Victorian Britain. The bulk of the gold rush and immediate post-gold immigrants brought with them the cultural baggage of urban industrial Britain; and in an era which witnessed increasingly rapid developments in communications, the colonial population was better informed than previously about developments and ideas which held sway in the mother country.

It is the purpose of this chapter to examine briefly the relevant developments of mid-Victorian Britain in order to illustrate a major reference point for the development of colonial ideas and attitudes. The local colonial context for the period will then be examined in a little more detail to determine the extent to which the colonies became more urbanised and industrialised, and the extent to which a new middle class achieved political authority and cultural dominance. It will then be possible to analyse in context the gaming and betting activities of the gold rush and post-gold rush era, and the reform attempts of this period.

Mid-Victorian Britain

Some British historians, such as Geoffrey Best, have argued that the "great 'middle class' movement - mainly urban, commercial and non-conformist -"[1] which had challenged gentry political authority and cultural hegemony in the second quarter of the nineteenth century, had lost much of its force by the 1850s, and assumed a more deferential attitude towards the nobility and gentry. This may well be valid insofar as it applies to the major political reform movements of mid-Victorian Britain, but in other respects the urban middle class remained vocal and determined to reform or improve British society.

One major thrust of reform energies was channelled by the churches into evangelistic revivalism and the establishment of 'city missions' in an attempt to reclaim the working classes (especially after the 1851 religious census).[2] A second, related movement, found expression in the continued temperance campaigns examined by Brian Harrison.[3] Evangelistic revivalism and temperance were both concerned with working class reformation. They were united in their aim of getting the working classes out of the pubs and gin palaces and into the churches.[4]

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1 Geoffrey Best, Mid-Victorian Britain 1851-1870, London 1979, p.261.

2 ibid., pp.210-213.

3 Brian Harrison, Drink and the Victorians: The Temperance Question in England, 1815-1872, London 1971, Chapters 8-12.

4 At least into the theatres and music halls which were being used as churches by the city mission

Similarly, the middle-class advocacy of rational recreation and self-improvement continued during the mid-Victorian era. Although these ideals had failed to inspire the working classes in the 1830s and 1840s, they became even more important to the middle classes in the two decades after about 1850. This was the period when, according to Peter Bailey, the middle classes discovered a new leisure world of their own. Britain's industrialisation had matured to a point where these groups had greater economic security, more leisure time, and a greater range of services and commodities to choose from.[5] Accordingly, they became leisure consumers to an unprecedented extent.

The mid-Victorian British middle classes adopted leisure pursuits which were both 'rational' and 'improving'. Their leisure tended to centre on the home and the family, but the theatre, public lectures, railway excursions, clubs and societies also figured prominently.[6] As these people, who had previously been suspicious of idleness in any form, came to terms with their own leisure, they developed a rationale which stressed that recreation should be more than simply rest or amusement, it should be 'improving in content'.[7] Such a rationale left no room for the drinking, gambling and violence traditionally associated with both popular and gentry leisure pursuits;[8] but the middle classes did gradually accept one important component of traditional popular leisure, its emphasis on physical skills.

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5 Bailey, op.cit., p.56.
6 ibid., pp.60-61.
7 ibid., p.65.
8 Hugh Cunningham, op.cit., p.111.

Whereas the rational recreation of the 1830s and 1840s was concerned almost exclusively with improving the mind, the rational recreation of the 1850s and 1860s accepted that "a healthy body and a healthy mind" were interdependent.[9] Hugh Cunningham has examined the development of this idea and the complementary ideas that physical recreation was necessary, both to prevent the effeminacy of British manhood and as a means of encouraging popular patriotism.[10] Once these ideas were supplemented by the belief that physical leisure, which attracted the masses out of the pubs and the music halls into the open air, could be conducive to the teachings of christian virtues, the concept of 'muscular christianity' was born.[11]

Just as the mid-Victorian middle classes accepted a physical component in their own leisure, they accepted its existence as part of working class leisure. Nevertheless they continued to frown upon its traditional companions: drinking, violence and gambling; and they were careful to discriminate betweer working class leisure and their own. One means of doing so was for the middle classes to emphasize amateurism in sport, thereby making their preferred games more exclusive.[12]

Much of the more obvious violence associated with popular

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9 ibid., pp.113-114.

10 ibid., pp.117-118. Cunningham refers to the charge of the Light Brigade as an effective illustration which gave force to fears of effeminacy. See also Bailey, op.cit., p.127.

11 The promotion of competitive sports in the public schools, notably Rugby, is an example of this concept in action. Cunningham, op.cit., p.114-117; Bailey, op.cit., p.127.

12 Bailey, op.cit., p.135.

recreation was removed by the 1835 Cruelty to Animals Act and its subsequent enforcement by an enthusiastic magistracy,[13] but gambling remained a prominent feature of both popular and gentry leisure. Vamplew has documented the growth of horse racing to the level of a national sport in this era, with the railway transporting both horses and gamblers to and from enclosed racecourses.[14] Despite the prominence of this sport, the middle-class view of betting as a distasteful practice and potentially disastrous for the lower classes continued to gain ground.[15] Nevertheless, so long as horse racing took place only on enclosed courses which charged admission, it was obscured from public view and discouraged attendance by the poorest sections of society, and was therefore considered a lesser evil than the off-course bookmakers who catered for the urban working class.[16]

The Suppression of Betting Houses Act of 1853 is evidence of an attempt to confine betting to the racecourses. This Act made it illegal for persons to keep an office or 'place' for the purpose of betting. In this way, the Act attempted to restrict the betting opportunities of those who could afford neither the time, nor the cost of admission to the courses. The Act posed few problems for the leisured gentry classes, although the definition of the word 'place', and its applicability to a spot or ring where bookmakers gathered on the racecourses, remained ambiguous for almost half a century.[17]

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13 Bailey, op.cit., p.18; Malcolmson, op.cit., p.124; also see above pp.87-89.
14 Vamplew, The Turf, op.cit., pp.29-48.
15 ibid., pp.203-208.
16 ibid., p.203.

Despite the growth of an anti-gambling sympathy,[18] the 1853 Act was the only significant legislative attempt to suppress betting in mid-Victorian Britain.[19] Anti-gambling reformers were not as active or as prominent as temperance activists or evangelistic missionaries, because continued gentry patronage of horse racing, and middle-class acceptance of the gentry's right to all forms of conspicuous consumption, limited their reform efforts to measures aimed at reducing the betting opportunities of the lower classes.[20]

Although mid-Victorian Britain did not witness extensive or numerous reforms to the gaming and betting laws, the general direction of development towards a cultural hegemony of urban middle-class values appears to have continued. Nevertheless, middle-class attitudes towards leisure in general mellowed to some degree as that group found it necessary to justify their own increased leisure time, resulting from the maturing of Britain's industrialisation.

Colonial Urbanisation and Industrialisation 1850-1880

A mature industrial society had not been achieved though there

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17 ibid., p.205-208; S.A., Royal Commission on Betting, 1933, op.cit., p.15.

18 See above pp.90-91.

19 The next significant Act was the Street Betting Act of 1906. See below Chapter Six, pp.256-257.

20 Of course the greater activity of temperance reformers and evangelistic missionaries reflects also the greater importance attached to these issues.

was a rapid increase in the process of transformation from a pre-modern form towards industrialisation. The fundamental element in this process was gold. If the most important fact in the economic history of the previous period was the expansion of the pastoral industry[21], in this era it was the discovery and exploitation of gold.

The exploitation of Australia's gold resources from 1851 had an impact far beyond the inherent worth of the precious metal, even though for two decades gold became the largest single component of Australia's exports.[22] The promise of instant wealth attracted two other crucial components of economic growth which led to what Butlin described as "the extraordinarily early orientation of economic activity towards commercial-industrial specialisation and the tertiary services of urban society".[23] These components were capital and people. The capital, from Britain, was encouraged throughout the period by sustained gold production. The people came in search of wealth. Together, they provided the potential for a rapid urbanisation and industrialisation of Australian society.

The impact was greatest in Victoria, which grew from a population of about 77,000 in early 1851 to about 783,000 in 1880. In that

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21 See above, p.54.

22 N.G. Butlin, Investment in Australian Economic Development 1861-1900, Cambridge 1964, p.30-33; see also Geoffrey Serle, The Golden Age: A history of the colony of Victoria 1851-1861, Melbourne 1963, pp.390-391. During the 1870s gold's contribution declined, relative to wool exports, but it remained the second most important export throughout the rest of this era (Butlin, op.cit., p.30).

23 ibid., p.6.

colony, which had boasted only four towns exceeding 500 people in 1851, urban development was rapid. By 1881 it had 95 towns with a population of more than 500, including seventeen holding more than 2,000 people and three others with more than 10,000.[24] Industrial employment and production also increased significantly in these towns, with Victoria's factory employment increasing from about 600 people to 34,000 in thirty years.[25] In the decade to 1861, the use of steam engines in Victoria also increased dramatically. According to Linge, at the time gold was discovered in Victoria only about twenty steam engines were in use in that colony. By 1861, he suggests, this number had grown to at least 275, of which about 100 engines developing a total of 1,000 horse power, were in use in Melbourne industrial premises.[26]

In New South Wales the population grew from 181,000 in 1851 to 731,000 in 1880, with Sydney growing from 61,000 persons to 225,000. The fifteen other towns with a population above 500 in 1851 were joined by an additional 86 towns, including five numbering in excess of 5,000 people and Newcastle, which boasted a population of more than 20,000.[27] In this colony, factory employment grew from about 4,700 in 1851 to more than 33,000 in 1881.[28]

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24 Linge, op.cit., pp.162-163, 165, 169. These figures and those used for the other colonies (below) are based on Linge's calculations. Other authors provide different estimates but there is agreement on the direction and general order of the changes involved.

25 ibid., p.184.

26 ibid., p.199.

27 ibid., pp.375-376, 383-388.

28 ibid., p.583.

Growth was also significant in the other colonies. South Australia's population increased four-fold from almost 64,000 in 1851 to more than 275,000 in 1881. Queensland grew from an estimated 30,000 to about 213,000, and Tasmania from about 70,000 to about 115,600 during the period under review.[29] South Australia's factory employment grew to almost 9,000 in 1879/80 whilst in Tasmania and Queensland factory employees in 1880 numbered almost 6,600 and 5,600 respectively.[30] In these colonies the population increase also stimulated urban growth. In South Australia between 1861, and 1881 Adelaide's share of the population grew from 28.2% to 33.3%, whilst the percentage population residing in areas other than towns of 500 or more people fell from 64.5 to 53.0.[31] Even in Tasmania, the colony to benefit least from the population influx, the number of towns containing more than 500 people reached eleven by 1881 although only two of these, Hobart and Launceston, exceeded 10,000 residents.[32]

These figures indicate an era of dramatic population growth and a growth in urbanisation, both of which were necessary preconditions to industrialisation[33] ,but it is going too far to claim that the Australian colonies were industrial societies by 1880. Throughout the three decades from 1850, wool and gold were the dominant colonial products. Development of processing and manufacturing industry was

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29 ibid., pp.664, 633, 642.
30 ibid., pp.750, 752, 754. Tasmania's industrial workforce around 1850 was estimated at about 3,000. For South Australia the estimate was 2,100. See above p.58.
31 ibid., p.587.
32 ibid., p.641.
33 Stearns, op.cit., pp.80-81.

significant, but it remained a relatively minor proportion of colonial production. The following table (4.1), illustrates the value of colonial processed and manufactured exports as a percentage of total export trade.

TABLE 4.1

COLONIAL EXTERNAL TRADE

Colony	Year	Total Exports (£,000)	Processed and Manufactured Goods	
			Value (£,000)	% of Total
Vic.	1859	11,282	27	0.24
Vic.	1880	11,220	1,563	13.93
N.S.W.	1857	2,951	141	4.77
N.S.W.	1880	12,680	1,481	11.67
S.A.	1851	541	274	50.64
S.A.	1881	3,643	1,105	30.33
Tas.	1857	1,193	154	12.90
Tas.	1880	1,481	451	30.45
Qld.	1861	709	-	-
Qld.	1871	2,733	266	9.73
Qld.	1880	3,381	236	6.98

Figures derived from Godfrey Linge, Industrial Awakening, pp.185, 208, 408, 604, 634, 664.

The exports listed in the table are not completely comparable because the relevant figures are not available for all years.

Nevertheless, the table does illustrate the major features of industrial growth in the period under analysis. In New South Wales and Victoria, where the growth in absolute values was most dramatic, the relative value of processed and manufactured exports, whilst also growing significantly, remained a minor component of total exports. In South Australia and Tasmania, where by 1881, processed and manufactured goods accounted for almost one third of total exports, the absolute value of those goods was less significant. In these colonies, wool and gold accounted for a much smaller percentage of total exports and, as Linge observes, in both South Australia and Tasmania processing was largely concerned with agricultural produce.[34]

Even in the more populous colonies, where industrial growth was more apparent, industrialisation remained limited in scope. In New South Wales, where the total value of manufactured and processed exports rose from £1.8m in the five year period 1866-70, to £8.3m in 1881-85, the major contribution to this growth was made by a single component, the refining of metal goods (copper and tin), which accounted for £213,000 (11.6%) in 1866-70 and £5.1m (61.7%) in 1884-85.[35] Large scale factory employment in New South Wales and Victoria was similarly restricted to a small range of industries with, by the late 1870s, two industrial categories clothing, and food, drink and tobacco, employing more than one third of the factory workforce between them.[36] The factory employment figures discussed above also

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34 Linge, op.cit., pp.631, 641.

35 ibid., pp.446-448.

36 In New South Wales in 1877-78 these two categories employed 40.9%. In Victoria they employed 33.1%. ibid., p.470.

indicate that whilst the industrial work force grew significantly in absolute terms, even by 1880 factories employed little more than four percent of the total colonial population.[37]

The figures examined here can provide no more than a brief glimpse of the economic development of the Australian colonies in this era. But they are sufficient to demonstrate that whilst the colonies, and especially their major urban centres, grew dramatically, and their economic bases were expanded, both the extent of industrial development and the degree of diversification of their economies were limited. At best, the Australian colonies can be described as undergoing the initial phase of industrialisation and urbanisation by about 1880.[38]

Colonial Political Authority

During the three decades from 1850 the colonies underwent significant political change, including the introduction of responsible self-government and bicameral legislatures - changes which provided the opportunity for alterations to the colonies' political authority structure. Current historical orthodoxy accepts that in this period the authority of the rural gentry, portrayed as a conservative

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37 The percentage of population employed in factories by 1880/81 were: Tasmania 5.70, New South Wales 4.51, Victoria 4.34, South Australia 3.27, Queensland 2.63. If the figures for these five colonies are combined the overall percentage is 4.16.

38 There is no doubt however that both Sydney and Melbourne had become important cities, both in terms of their population and their commercial importance. See Graeme Davison, The Rise and Fall of 'Marvellous Melbourne', Melbourne 1981, Chapter 10, passim.

oligarchy, was weakened and ultimately replaced, by that of a broader based urban oriented liberalism.[39]

Connell and Irving have claimed that these changes led to a "hegemony of the mercantile bourgeoisie".[40] They argue that the movement of urban businessmen into representative parliamentary institutions, and the growing autonomy of the state as a separate public sector of the economy, enabled the urban bourgeoisie to achieve a political leadership accompanied by economic dominance.[41] Their argument is documented by illustration of the way in which the pastoralists' plantation ideal was weakened, and ultimately replaced, by an ideology of developmert.[42] They claim that the liberal bourgeoisie used their superior organisation to commit the state "to a programme of economic development that further articulated the difference between their model of the social order and that of the squatters".[43] State support for urban economic aims and political leadership, are seen as evidence of the achievement of a liberal bourgeois hegemony which extended even further, into the realm of culture:

> Expensive schools, city clubs, the temples of commerce erected as offices by the leading banks and trading companies, the museums and art galleries endowed by wealthy philanthropists: these were symbols of bourgeois cultural dominance.[44]

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39 T.H. Irving, "1850-1870" in Crowley, op.cit., p.124-125, 131-136. Russel Ward, Australia Since the Coming of Man, Sydney 1982, pp.118-120, 125; Manning Clark, A Short History of Australia, Sydney 1963, pp.132-139.

40 Connell, and Irving, op.cit., p.105.

41 ibid., pp.108 and 116.

42 ibid., p.112.

43 ibid., p.116.

44 ibid., pp.127-128.

This account of political change after 1850 is however, too simplistic. It depends upon the acceptance of a political dichotomy between urban and rural interests; a struggle between pastoral property interests and urban capital interests. However, for New South Wales at least, C.N. Connolly has demonstrated that such a dichotomy did not exist.[45] He accepts that New South Wales politics in the late 1850s and early 1860s did involve competition between conservative and liberal ideologies, but he denies the existence of a rural/urban dichotomy and the subsequent defeat of the pastoralist ideology.

Connolly has demonstrated convincingly the importance of the urban element within New South Wales conservatism, and the comparative lack of status, prominence or position of the urban liberals.[46] Even more importantly, he has shown that the undoubted political successes achieved by liberalism did not destroy the old order. His explanation accepts that the liberals implemented almost their entire programme by the early 1860s, but that this was allowed by the conservatives in a way which resulted in the taming of liberalism, and which: ... "left the structure of society, the distribution of wealth and the patterns of opportunity substantially unchanged".[47]

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45 C.N. Connolly, "The Middling-Class Victory in New South Wales, 1853-62: A Critique of the Bourgeois-Pastoralist Dichotomy", Historical Studies, vol. 19, no. 76, April 1981, pp.369-387.

46 ibid., pp.377-381 (and passim).

47 ibid., p.382.

Connolly goes even further to claim that by the 1880s, the survivors amongst those liberals of the early '60s "had joined their former opponents as representatives of an old order".[48] Despite liberalism's political success, he maintains that the conservatives remained socially and economically dominant.[49]

Clearly then, the achievement by the liberal urban bourgeoisie of a wide based hegemony between 1850 and 1880 is debated, even though the general direction of political reform and economic development were in accord with liberal interests. However the question of hegemony is not beyond resolution. Even Connell and Irving admit that what they identify as bourgeois cultural dominance "was a hegemony in the making, and it was not very entrenched";[50] and elsewhere Irving confesses that the New South Wales conservatives "were never decisively defeated, and ... they remained a political force".[51]

The continued importance of that political force is significant. In all colonies, the conservatives held at least the power of political veto through their dominance of the upper houses.[52] In Tasmania the rural gentry remained the largest group in the lower house, whilst in New South Wales and South Australia, the ministries

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48 ibid., p.387.
49 ibid., p.385.
50 Connell and Irving, op.cit., p.128.
51 Irving, op.cit., p. 143.
52 See ibid., p.148. Although this power was tested in the 1860s, by struggles between the two houses, in both New South Wales and Victoria the upper houses continued to reject at least some lower house legislative proposals throughout the period under analysis, ibid., pp.157-161.

of the 1850s, '60s and '70s continued to be dominated by men whose values were formed in pre-gold rush Australia.[53] With a structural climate such as this, it is going too far to argue that an extension of liberal political reforms, and a growth of state concern for urban economic development marks the existence of a complete liberal bourgeois hegemony.

Even if Connell and Irving's claims concerning a change in the dominant political and economic consciousness or ideology are accepted, it does not necessarily follow that liberal bourgeois cultural values were also dominant, particularly if those values derive from urban and industrial experiences which, as we have seen above,[54] were only at an early stage during this era. Cultural values change much more slowly than political arrangements, which are considerably more likely to be influenced by negotiations or strategies.

Undoubtedly, urban liberalism was important politically by 1880. It had also achieved significant changes in the direction of colonial economic development, but the cultural values of the urban middle class had not yet had sufficient time or experiences to parallel those of urban industrial England; unless those values were dominant among the immigrant population which swamped the colonies in the 1850s and 1860s. Some indication of whether this was so can be gained by

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53 ibid., pp.148, 152. Queensland, for most of this period, was quite obviously still at a pre-modern stage, dominated politically and economically by the large landowners and squatters.

54 See above pp.109-115.

analysis of their attitudes towards gaming and betting.

Colonial Gaming and Betting, 1850-1880

During the 1850s, gold-seekers flocked to the diggings of New South Wales and Victoria. By the end of the decade these newcomers outnumbered earlier settlers, and through weight of numbers were in a position to impose new attitudes and morés on the colonies.[55] It might have seemed that such an influx of fortune-seekers risking capital, careers, and possibly lives, in pursuit of immediate riches would further legitimise gambling in Australia. It might also be thought that the new immigrants, who had put themselves in the hands of fate, would not only increase the extent and variety of methods of gambling, but also defend the activity against attacks, thereby ensuring the failure of further attempts to challenge the legitimacy of Australian gambling by moral enlightenment.

Such impressions are at best superficial. Russel Ward has demonstrated that one prominent feature of gold-rush immigrants was their steady absorption of existing colonial attitudes, habits and morés.[56] Although they, too, had their "cultural baggage" they did not bring it to a culturally barren land as their predecessors had done in 1788. Accordingly, much of that "baggage" lay unpacked whilst the diggers used only those items appropriate to their new surroundings.

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55 Serle, op.cit., p.382; also see above pp.110-111.
56 Ward, The Australian Legend, op.cit., p.115.

In the longer term however, the rush of new immigrants did hasten the demise of the colonial gentry's conservative cultural hegemony. It was not their behaviour on the gold fields which destroyed this hegemony, but the corollaries of their influx discussed above:[57] the impetus they provided for urbanisation, the rise of commercial capitalism, the gradual fading of conservative political and economic dominance, and its replacement by those of an urban middle class.

This transfer of dominance was a gradual process which had little impact for gaming and betting prior to the 1880s. The gamblers had achieved their legitimacy as a result of gentry backing. Gaming and betting had become ensconced as aspects of colonial life. They had survived half-hearted attacks, and had little reason to fear for their future. Indeed, the story of Australian gambling in the three decades from 1850 is a story of continuec growth and development; a story of a continued entrenchment which was later to prove invaluable in the face of attack once urban middle-class political dominance had been achieved. Nevertheless, the story also contains the beginnings of elements which ultimately provided the growing urban middle class with bases from which they could challenge the conservative hegemony. Such elements included mass betting, the association of gaming with Chinese vice, and the rise of entrepreneurs who openly promoted gambling for profit.

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[57] See above pp.109-115.

Goldfields Gaming

Analysis of the relationship between gambling and the Australian gold rush of the 1850s is clouded by apparent contradictions. Immigrants and local diggers alike risked much in the pursuit of riches. Undoubtedly they were gamblers. Yet, many accounts of life on the diggings imply that this one major and constant gamble was sufficient to satisfy any gambling urges felt by the men on the goldfield. Comparison with accounts of the rush to the Californian goldfields is striking in that the latter have much to say of the glittering gambling saloons which followed the diggers. Johnson Dean, an emigrant from Hobart, was but one writer fascinated by the openness and general acceptance of these saloons. Another was the San Francisco "correspondent" of Hobart's Colonial Times, who found them most exciting.[58]

It seems unlikely that those who rushed to New South Wales and Victoria from California would not have taken along the love of excitement provided by the games of chance practised in North America. Yet many observers of the Australian gold fields would suggest that such was the case. Robert Caldwell saw the "total absence of gambling-houses" on the Victorian fields as "a most favourable

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58 Johnson Dean, On Sea and land: A trip to California in 1850-53 with chapters on South-Sea islands, "Port Phillip", and Beautiful Tasmania, Hobart c. 1905, p.19; Jay Monaghan, Australians and the Gold Rush: California and Down Under 1849-54, Berkeley and Los Angeles 1966, p.73; see also W.J. Berry, Up and Down; or fifty years colonial experience in Australia, London 1879.

characteristic of the place, [which] contrasts remarkably with San Francisco";[59] a situation which James Bonwick explained resulted from the fact that "Amusements are not in harmony with the diggings. Men come there usually to work in earnest, and have no time for play".[60]

Other accounts, by William à Beckett, R.S. Anderson and James Armour, all support suggestiors that the Australian goldfields were devoid of gamblers and gaming houses.[61] Although Armour's account includes description of a scene in which a game of cards led to a fight, he does not suggest that card playing was a major pastime on the diggings.[62] Yet these accounts contrast markedly with those of other observers who do claim that gaming was a popular pastime. One of them writing under the pseudonym of 'Alpha' provides ample detailed evidence to prove his point.

'Alpha' offers descriptions of Cooper's Hotel near the Buckland River diggings, McCarrick's Hotel near the Ovens goldfield and the Bella Union restaurant near the Nine Mile diggings (Beechworth), all of which, he claims, became gambling saloons. In these, and other "hotels" and "restaurants", card playing was an almost constant

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59 Robert Caldwell, The Gold Era of Victoria, London 1855, p.82.

60 James Bonwick, Notes of a Gold Digger and Gold Diggers' Guide, Melbourne 1852, p.21.

61 Sir William à Beckett ('Colunus'), Does the Discovery of Gold in Victoria, viewed in relation to its Moral and Social effects, as hitherto developed, Deserve to be considered a National Blessing, or a National Curse? Melbourne 1852; R.S. Anderson, Australian Gold Fields: Their Discovery, Progress and Prospects, Glasgow 1853; James Armour, The Diggings, the Bush, and Melbourne; or Reminiscence of three year's wandering in Victoria, Glasgow 1864.

62 Armour, op.cit., p.30.

activity with monte, faro, poker, cribbage, rouge-et-noir, hazards and euchre offering variety to the digger's gambling instincts.[63]

In order to reconcile "Alpha's" picture of the goldfields with those of Bonwick, Caldwell and others, two points need to be stressed. One is the relative orderliness of the Australian fields when compared with their North American counterparts; a feature resulting in part from the speedy action of La Trobe in Victoria in legislating for good order on the diggings and thereby forcing the gamblers and the drinkers to pursue their pastimes away from the public gaze.[64] The other factor to be stressed concerns the purpose of the observers who have left us the apparently conflicting reports.

Most of the early recorders of life on the Australian fields were little more than publicists. Most wrote under their own names, telling of their own experiences, or advocating emigration to the fields. Their works invariably contained much advice to intending British emigrants, who provided the bulk of their market. In contrast with these authors, 'Alpha', writing under a pseudonym many years after the events, was not concerned with protecting his own reputation, and so did not feel compelled to dissociate himself from the more unseemly aspects of life on the diggirgs. He was free to emphasize the more

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63 "Alpha", Reminiscences of the Gold-fields of Victoria, New Zealand and New South Wales in the fifties and sixties, Part I, Victoria, North Melbourne c. 1900, pp.50, 64-66, 71-73.

64 Geoffrey Serle criticises the Victorian government for "lamentable indecision" in the weeks after the gold was discovered, op.cit., p.19; but see below p.134 for an account of government action less than six months after the rush began.

racy side of the story and did so with zest. Of course 'Alpha' could be accused of distorting his reminiscences in order to add colour and excitement to his tale, but his version is supported by some other authors[65] and, most importantly, by the actions of the Victorian administration.

In January 1852, the Victorian Legislative Council passed "An Act to Restrain the Practice of Gambling and the Use of Obscene Language".[66] This Act, along with its twin, which amended the licensing laws, was an attempt to meet the perceived threat "to the peace and good order of the country".[67] The Acts were recognized by Victoria's Lieutenant-Governor La Trobe as unusual measures intended to meet an unusual situation; that of a sudden influx of population far too numerous for his small police force to control in the event of riots or major public disturbances. It is important to note however, that the 1852 Act was not a clear statement of the legislators' opposition to the existence of gambling. As was the case for their predecessors in the colonial administrations prior to the gold rushes, their concern was essentially with the maintenance of "good order". This was emphasized by the minor revisions eleven months later when it was incorporated in, and replaced by, a Vagrancy Act, which prohibited gambling on "unlawful games" and gambling in public places; but it did

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65 For example William Kelly, Life in Victoria or Victoria in 1853, and Victoria in 1858, Kilmore 1977 (first published 1859), vol. 2, pp.16-17.

66 15 Victoria No. 12.

67 La Trobe to Earl Grey, 16 January 1852, Despatch No. 11 in "Further Papers Relative to the Recent Discovery of Gold in Australia", British Parliamentary Papers, 1852, p.86.

not prohibit gambling in private or in the "hotels" and "restaurants" referred to by Alpha.[68]

La Trobe's claim that the legislation helped to moderate behaviour on the gold fields[69] was endorsed by the lack of California type saloons, and by the observations of gold fields publicists. But it did not remove the gamblers from the goldfields. They continued to patronise McCarrick's, the Bella Union, the Star Hotel at Beechworth and the card tables at the sly grog dens on or near most fields, where sums of £50 to £100 could change hands in a night.[70]

La Trobe and the Victorian legislators were more concerned with public order than with any question of morality, but writers such as Bonwick and Caldwell assume that a degree of morality was involved. Perhaps this is because they were writing for a British audience which had largely accepted the urban middle-class evangelical morality discussed previously. Perhaps it was a sign that the conservative sponsorship or acceptance of gambling in the colonies was not entirely unchallenged, and that the morality of middle-class Britain was beginning to reach the colonies. The latter suggestion receives some support from the comments of the commissioners who enquired into life on the Victorian goldfields in 1855. Although they confined their gambling-related comments to Chinese gamblers, the commissioners did

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68 15 Victoria, No. 22; La Trobe to Packington, 2 March 1853, Despatch no. 43; "Further Papers Relative to ... Gold in Australia" op.cit., 1853, pp.122 and 213.

69 ibid.

70 'Alpha', op.cit., pp.68-69, 73.

betray a hint of changing morality in their comment that the presence of the Chinese on the goldfields,

> "must certainly tend to demoralize colonial society, by the low scale of domestic comfort, by an incurable habit of gaming and other vicious tendencies...?"[71]

The Commissioners clearly identified gaming, or at least "an incurable habit of gaming", as immoral and a vicious tendency, but their comments were almost certainly aimed at the Chinese rather than at "gamblers". Accordingly, a precedent was set which was to be seized upon by subsequent opponents of gaming and betting who attempted to emphasize the evils of the activities by associating them with the Chinese. Those attempts are discussed in Chapters Five and Six of this work.[72]

Although some writers tried to ignore it, gaming did exist on the Australian goldfields, albeit in a less prominent and less boisterous way than in California.[73] The rather limited controls imposed by the legislators should be seen as a further acknowledgement of gaming as

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71 Report from the Commission appointed to inquire into the condition of the Goldfields, (1855), Reprint 1978, (Hugh Anderson ed.) p.104. The Commissioners were J.P. Fawkner, William Westgarth, J.F. Strachan, J. Hodgson, John O'Shanassy, and the Chief Goldfields Commissioner representing the government officials W.H. Wright. As a group these men should be seen as pre-gold rush Melbourne residents whose chief interests were in the business/commercial world.

72 See below pp.198-200, 241-242.

73 Of course there are undoubtedly further factors contributing to the comparatively more sober behaviour on the Australian goldfields. For example, the higher cost of fares to Australia, encouraging only immigrant diggers with some means, meant that the social composition of the Australian fields was different from that of California.

an acceptable social activity; and whilst the diggers played cards to while away their evenings and the days when rain kept them away from their shafts, gaming continued to entrench itself, to develop new variations, and to seek official sponsorship in other areas and in other sections of colonial society.

Betting

In the betting arena, horse racing remained the most obvious and acceptable object of gambling. In the three decades from 1850, the expansion of horse racing noted in the previous chapter continued as new parts of the colonies were settled, and new communities felt the need for festivities.[74] In the older settlements, horse racing became more formalised and institutionalised. It also became less a pastime, and more an industry, for the few who began to make an income from the fortunes of the turf.

Available information is inadequate to permit proper analysis of the incomes of the trainers and jockeys of this era, but it is clear that by the 1860s a number of men earned their incomes, or at least substantial proportions of them, from horse racing. Among the first

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74 The 1857 edition of Charles Hamilton Nichols', The Australian Sportsman's Calendar and Guide to the Turf, Sydney 1857, which claimed to be the first such publication in the colonies, listed a total of 75 race meetings held on 160 race days in New South Wales and Victoria in 1856, including 8 match race meetings. Henry Cornish, Under the Southern Cross, Ringwood 1975, (first published 1880), p.128, claims that the colonies held more than 151 race meetings in 1876-77.

were New South Wales trainer/jockey Johnny Higgerson and Victorian trainer Anthony Green, who were prominent in the sport in the 1850s.[75] By the early 1860s Etienne De Mestre, based at Shoalhaven where he developed a complete racing complex of stud farm, stables and training track, had emerged to win the first two of his five Melbourne Cups.[76] However, the dominant force in colonial horse racing in this era was Sydney based owner-trainer-publican John Tait, who is credited with a tally of 139 race wins between 1865 and 1874 (including four Melbourne Cups), and a reputation for backing his winners for large sums.[77]

Few jockeys were able to make their fortunes from the industry. Nat Gould observed that by the end of this era a top rider might hope to ride about 30 winners per year, receiving a fee of about £5 per winner.[78] Tom Hales, one of Melbourne's most successful riders, earnt sufficient money to purchase a house at Moonee Ponds and a thoroughbred stud near Albury, but his financial success was exceptional. One of his more famous contemporaries, Tommy Corrigan, who was killed in a race fall in 1894, is reported to have "died

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75 Jack Pollard, op.cit., p.88; Samuel Griffiths Turf and Heath: Australian Racing Reminiscences, Melbourne 1906, pp.28-29.

76 Pollard, op.cit., pp.62-65; Maurice Cavanough and Meurig Davies, The Melbourne Cup, Sydney 1971, pp.6-8.

77 Pollard, op.cit., p.72; Cavanough and Davies, op.cit., pp.17, 22-24.

78 Nat Gould, On and Off the Turf in Australia, Canberra 1973, (1st edn. London 1895), p.123. Although Gould wrote in 1895 his observations cover a period of eleven years and appear equally valid for around 1880.

penniless", despite riding 239 winners in a 27 year career.[79]

By the time of Corrigan's death the industry had become more institutionalised, with the horse racing clubs in the most popular centres consolidating their positions during the three decades under examination here. The Australian Jockey Club in Sydney, and the Victoria Racing Club in Melbourne, had established firm control over horse racing in their respective colonies. The Australian Jockey Club, founded in 1842 to race on the Homebush racecourse, quickly assumed leadership of Sydney horse racing. By the 1850s it had prospered under the patronage of both Governor FitzRoy and the new legislative Assembly which voted an annual sum of 100 guineas to sponsor the running of the Queen's Plate.[80] By 1860 it had moved to the old "Sandy Racecourse" at Randwick and spent at least £2,450 on a new 10 furlong track and an impressive grandstand. The first meeting on the new course in May 1860 attracted up to 10,000 spectators per day.[81]

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79 ibid., pp.119-121; Pollard op.cit., pp.90-92. Corrigan's full record is reported as 239 winners, 135 seconds and 95 thirds from 788 mounts. If the riding fees detailed by Gould (p.123) were constant throughout Corrigan's career, his average income from this source could be stated as little more than £100 per annum. Of course this calculation takes no account of additional 'gifts' from winning owners, winning bets or of the certain peaks and troughs in earnings from year to year. However, it is sufficient to suggest that if Corrigan was one of the most successful jockeys of the era the majority did not earn large rewards from the sport.

80 Roger Therry, Reminiscences of Thirty Years Residence in New South Wales and Victoria..., London 1863, p.61.

81 Barrie, op.cit., pp.53-54; Barrie claims that for this meeting gentlemen paid one guinea for admission. This of course refers to the grandstand. Normal fees for admission to Randwick and other major courses was one shilling. See advertisements Sydney Morning Herald, 1 January 1870, 21 April 1870.

Although supported by the public in large numbers, the A.J.C.'s success was due more to the quality of its membership. In 1851 the twenty members included many of the colony's most respected names, among them J.H. Plunkett, W.C. Wentworth and E.Deas. Thomson. It was in no way a radical or innovative force in New South Wales society. Rather, it was a bastion of respectability and conservatism which, by conducting its racing in a gentlemanly fashion, emphasizing regulation and good conduct, was able to set a standard for other clubs to emulate. The publication in 1851 of the A.J.C.'s rules for horse racing, based heavily on those of Newmarket's Jockey Club, provided other clubs with a standard to follow, and the A.J.C. with leadership status.[82] Conscious of its position throughout this period, the A.J.C. continued to secure the services of the colony's vice-regal representative as patron. Sir John Young (1861-67), the Earl of Belmore (1868-72), and Sir Hercules Robinson (1872-79) all followed FitzRoy in that position, and the A.J.C. consolidated its place as part of New South Wales' conservative establishment.[83]

In Melbourne from the mid-1860s, a similar position was occupied

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82 Australian Jockey Club, Rules and Regulations of the Australian Jockey Club, Sydney 1851 passim. By 1883 at least 192 other race clubs in New South Wales raced under A.J.C. rules, D.M. Barrie, op.cit., p.127. Although the A.J.C. dominated Sydney racing, it was not the only club - even at Randwick. Tattersall's Club held an annual two-day "New Year" meeting on the Randwick course from 1865. Trevor Wilson, The Luck of the Draw: A Centenary of Tattersalls Sweeps, 1881-1981, Melbourne 1980, p.26; Sydney Morning Herald, 1 January 1870.

83 Neil Graham, "The Role of Certain Colonial Governors in the Sporting Life of Nineteenth Century Australia", unpublished paper to The Making of Sporting Traditions III, Conference, La Trobe University 1981, pp.8-11.

by the Victoria Racing Club,, after two decades of rivalry which saw the Port Phillip Turf Club, the Port Phillip Racing Club, the Victoria Turf Club and the Victoria Jockey Club come and go. The 25 founding members of the V.R.C. in 1864 were all men of substance; a quality required by the £1,800 liability they took over from their predecessors. Despite this handicap, the V.R.C. was not restricted in its vision and it quickly began the task of transforming its Flemington racecourse into the colony's horse racing showpiece.[84]

In Melbourne, during the boom which followed the rush to the Victorian gold fields, the brash young city was infected with a desire to show the world that it was as important a city as any in the Empire, and certainly need not bow to Sydney as the pre-eminent city in the colonies. If it was to be taken seriously, Melbourne had to demonstrate that it possessed all the trappings of society. Melbourne University, the Public Library, and the Art Gallery were part of these trappings. So was the V.R.C.. It was this same urge for recognition which was responsible for the establishment of the event which eventually was to become the chief single focus and symbol of Australian betting, the Melbourne Cup.[85]

The first Melbourne Cup, run in 1861 by the Victoria Turf Club, was a relatively insignificant event; a handicap sweepstakes race of

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84 Pollard, op.cit., pp.40-42; Cavanough and Davies, op.cit., pp.2-3, 10-11.

85 John Ryan, "Racing in Two Cities: A Sydney View" in Richard Cashman and Michael McKernan (eds.), Sport: Money, Morality and the Media, Sydney 1981, pp.12-13.

twenty sovereigns per entrant which attracted a crowd of 4,000 to Flemington racecourse. In its second year the club added a further 200 sovereigns to the prize, and in 1865 it also provided a silver cup worth 100 sovereigns. From that date, both the prize-money and the significance of this event inflated rapidly.[86]

The secret to the Melbourne Cup's appeal was twofold. From 1866 most Melbourne residents enjoyed a public half-holiday on Cup day, a factor which in that year enabled the crowd to swell to about 18,000.[87] The other important feature which attracted the Melbourne holiday crowd was the relative unpredictability of the race. Although handicap racing was a prominent aspect of horse racing in all colonies, the feature events of Sydney racing, the A.J.C. Derby and the Champion Stakes, were set weight races in which horses of various abilities competed on equal terms. Whilst such races do appeal to the sport's devotees who like to see the best horse win, they can also be very predictable. The Melbourne Cup however, provided, through handicapping, an opportunity for horses of lesser ability (and accordingly longer odds), to defeat the champions. It was not so much an expression of any democratic sentiment which attracted mass support, but an opportunity for spirited betting on a feature event.[88]

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86 Cavanough and Davies, op.cit., pp.5 and 13; Gordon Inglis, Sport and Pastime in Australia, London 1912.

87 Cavanough and Davies, op.cit., p.16; Cornish, op.cit., p.112, was astounded by the interest the Cup provoked in the 1870s.

88 Of the first eleven Melbourne Cups only two were won by favourites, Archer, 1862 and Tim Whiffler, 1867. Seven were won by horses starting at 10/1 or better, including The Pearl at 100/1 in 1871 and Tory Boy at 20/1 in 1865. Sydney's major spring handicap races, the Epsom and the Metropolitan, and its autumn Sydney Cup

(Footnote continued)

Despite its attraction of the masses, the Melbourne Cup's success cemented the V.R.C.'s place as part of the Victorian establishment. Cup day became one of the great occasions on the Melbourne social calendar. However, the efforts of the race clubs in the remaining colonies did not meet with the same degree of success. In Queensland, despite the establishment of the Queensland Turf Club in 1863 and the occupation of Eagle Farm racecourse, horse racing was still in its infancy. In Tasmania no single body emerged to control the sport. In horse racing, as in many other aspects of Tasmanian life, control was split between regional bodies based in Hobart and Launceston. The island colony's horse racing development was also handicapped by its inability to attract mainland horses to its major race meetings.[89] However it was South Australia which experienced the greatest difficulties in establishing a permanent controlling body to supervise horse racing.

During the three decades from 1850 at least six attempts were made to establish permanent racing clubs in Adelaide, and three different courses were established in attempts to provide Adelaide with a racing headquarters.[90] Failure to achieve these aims, at least until the mid 1870s, has been attributed largely to the financial

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all began in the 1860s, but they remained in the shadow of the set weight races.

89 Pollard, op.cit., pp.44-50.

90 Vamplew, "From Sport to Business...." op.cit., pp.16-22; Vamplew lists four distinct South Australian Jockey Clubs, an Adelaide Turf Club and an Adelaide Racing Club.

difficulties of the various Jockey Clubs, and their inability to gain security of tenure for their occupation of the most suitable racecourse on Adelaide's East Parklands (later Victoria Park).[91]

Despite the difficulties in the other colonies, the success of the premier clubs in New South Wales and Victoria contributed to the entrenchment of horse racing throughout Australia. Their membership included the elite of colonial society. Their patrons held vice-regal rank, and their carnivals were among the premier events of the social calendar. The club members in all colonies promoted horse racing for their own benefit. They owned most of the horses competing for prizemoney and future stud fees. The exclusive 'members only' areas in the grandstands and elsewhere commanded the best views of the races, were the most comfortable and had the best facilities. In return for the privileges the members provided the race meeting and its affairs, including betting.

Successful race meetings, were however, occasions involving more than club members. The members needed public support to maintain them in their elegant or ostentatious surroundings; on their 'picturesque' race courses with 'first rate amenities. The V.R.C. was able to inflate the Melbourne Cup prizemoney only through the patronage of large crowds paying entrance fees. In Adelaide the first three South Australian Jockey Clubs' financial problems were in large part due to their inability to charge entrance fees to the Parklands course, and

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91 ibid. The other grounds were Thebarton and Morphettville.

their failure to attract crowds to other courses when rival bodies operated at the Parklands.[92] Elsewhere, the race clubs and the betting public contributed to each other's welfare. The race clubs, through their position, continued to lend betting an air of respectability. In return, the bettor gave the race clubs financial security. But as in earlier decades, betting was not restricted to the racecourse.

In the 1860s and '70s coursing, a sport which would ultimately develop into greyhound racing, and become a major object of betting, was introduced in the Australian colonies. The first coursing club, which conducted events in which greyhounds chased wallabies, was formed at Naracoorte in South Australia in 1868. Once the importation of hares was permitted in 1873 the sport boomed and spread to Victoria, Tasmania and New South Wales. Like their colleagues in the race clubs, the organisers of coursing attempted to add an air of legitimacy and social acceptability to their sport by enlisting the various colonial governors as patrons. Similarly, they vied for a position on the social calendar, with the holding of annual balls. By the early 1880s coursing was conducted on enclosed grounds and the public paid admission charges to watch and to bet on the events. But coursing failed to develop into a major spectator sport for another half century.[93]

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92 ibid.

93 Naracoorte Coursing Club, The Oldest Coursing Club in Australia, being a History of the Narracoorte Club from 1867 to 1889, Naracoorte 1890, pp.1-11; Thomas Haydon, Sporting Reminiscences, London 1898, pp.173-182; E.S. Marks, Early Coursing in Australia 1868-1887, unpublished typescript M.L. pp.1-4; See below, Chapter Seven, pp.311-314.

The continued existence of cockfighting as a popular medium of betting was emphasized in the late 1850s by descriptions provided by the Australian Sportsman's Calendar of major tournaments, and the publication in 1859 of a booklet which doubled as a training manual and rule book.[94] Betting on other sporting contingencies continued as before, with boxing, pedestrianism, sculling, yachting and cricket all providing plenty of opportunities for differences of opinion which could be suppported with cash.[95] Bell's Life continued its role as an arbiter of wagers, and other sporting papers, taking a lead from Bell's, devoted considerable attention to discussion of the possible outcomes of future contests, and the publication of results and betting odds. One of Bell's rivals, the Australasian, published by the proprietors of the Argus in Melbourne, incorporated The Sportsman, which Richard Twopeny was to describe as "the best sporting paper in the world".[96]

Although sporting contests continued to provide the majority of betting contingencies, the men, women and children of the Australian colonies, whilst perhaps not yet reduced to betting on flies crawling

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94 Australian Sportsman's Calendar 1857; The Game Cock...., Sydney 1859.

95 Corris op.cit., pp.36-48; For examples of such events where betting details are provided see Australian Sportman's Calendar 1857 p.119; Sydney Morning Herald, 7 February and 23 May 1870. Examples of match races in these sports can be found regularly in the newspaper advertisements columns. See for example Sydney Morning Herald, 4 January, 14, 25 and 30 March, 2 May, 6 July 1870.

96 Richard Twopeny, Town Life in Australia, Ringwood 1976 (first published 1883), p.236.

up walls, did find alternative contests. One goldfields observer has recorded a description of a duel fought at Ballarat; an event which prompted miners and townsmen to place bets on whether the principals would be killed, wounded or missed. Interest in the event was such that one miner was reported to have wagered "a lump of virgin gold as large as a hen's egg".[97]

Such an event was remarkable because of the comparative rarity of a bet of such magnitude, but an incident recorded by Henry Cornish, an Anglo-Indian visitor two decades later, suggests that betting on "almost anything" had become an established aspect of colonial life, to the extent that challenges to bet had become a means of emphasis in debate:

> ... and the other day, in a railway carriage, I heard a small boy of about six summers supporting an argument with a youth of equally tender years with the challenge of I'll bet you!" ....[98]

Gaming

Whilst betting or wagering was continuing to establish itself as an acceptable as well as endemic aspect of colonial behaviour, gaming also continued the trends identified in the previous chapter. The use of playing cards on the goldfields[99] was remarkable, not perhaps for

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97 William H. Thomes, The Gold Hunters' Adventures or, Life in Australia, Chicago 1882 (1st edn. 1864), p.240.

98 Henry Cornish, op.cit., p.112. Cornish was fascinated by the extent of betting in the Australian colonies and his observations were echoed by most visiting observers, e.g. Twopeny, op.cit., p.213.

its existence, but for the fact that it did not compare with the card playing in California's saloons or London's gaming hells. Colonial card players remained far less "public" than their English or American counterparts, but they did continue to play.

Away from the goldfields, some card games such as rouge-et-noir were played in hotels,[100] but it appears that the activity took place more frequently either in private residences, or at the various gentlemen's clubs. The continued sponsorship of card playing by these clubs meant continued recognition of the activity as legitimate, even though in the opinion of the players it might have been legitimate for 'members only'. The rules and regulations of the Union Club, formed as a breakaway from the Sydney Australian Club in 1857, offer some insight into the views of the gentlemen.

Card playing was catered for, and games such as whist and bridge which required some skill were encouraged, but the club did frown upon games such as rouge-et-noir, in which luck was the sole determinant. Excessive gambling was outlawed specifically by the rule setting an upward limit of five shillings per point, under pain of suspension, but it is doubtful that such regulations were policed carefully. Despite the club's emphasis on games of skill, use of dice was not discouraged; and the limits were apparently ignored. Perhaps part of

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99 See above pp.121-127.

100 Johnson Dean, op.cit., provides one such description of gaming in a public house in Castlereagh St. Sydney in 1853. Rouge-et-noir is a game in which a pack of cards is "cut" and gamesters bet on whether the pack will be cut at a red or black card.

the club's difficulty lay in the identity of the transgressors. H.C. Dangar, F.C. Griffiths, and S.A. Stephen were but a few of the Union Club's members who were known to play till as late as three a.m.[101] Although such activities might provoke debate amongst the club membership, they were not likely to receive public attention because they were pursued within a club and by gentlemen. Only on those rare instances when a fabulous sum was won or lost, such as the occasion when one individual lost £40,000 in an evening at a Melbourne Club, did gaming of this kind reach the public's attention.[102]

Such card playing was not restricted to the clubs. It was pursued just as vigorously in the outlying settlements such as Victoria's Western Districts and Gippsland regions; which were the focus of the descriptions offered by George Dunderdale in his account of colonial life. Writing of his experiences as a government official in the late 1850s, Dunderdale claimed that

> ... the majority of the officials condemned to live in the dreary townships tried to alleviate their misery by drinking and gambling. The Police Magistrate, the Surveyor, the Solicitor, the Receiver of Revenue, the Police Inspector, and the Clerk of Courts, together with one or two settlers, formed a little society for the promotion of poker, euchre and other little games, interspersed with whiskies ....[103]

Dunderdale's account suggests that no particular importance was attached to such gambling. It was merely a relatively harmless

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101 R.H. Goddard, op.cit., pp.21-22. See also, Adrian Akhurst, History of The Australian Club, (Melbourne) Melbourne 1943, J.L. Williams, Australian Club Centenary, Sydney 1938.

102 According to Twopeny, op.cit., p.93.

103 George Dunderdale, The Book of the Bush, Ringwood 1973, (first published 1870), p.301.

activity which helped to pass the time. Twopeny did not hold quite the same opinion when he examined colonial life of the late 1870s. Whilst agreeing that the "squatter", when in town, had little else to do to pass the time as he had no taste for literature or art, Twopeny felt that "the passion [for gaming with cards] extends sufficiently widely to do a good deal of harm."[104]

Twopeny's comments imply that gaming was perhaps harmless enough for those who could afford to lose, but if it was followed by people who could not afford to lose it was a less acceptable form of social activity. Yet the very fact that gambling, both in the form of betting and gaming, was adopted by gentlemen, gave it a degree of legitimacy and made it more difficult for opponents to attack it; as long as the gentlemen's values dominated those of the society. The institutionalisation of betting and gaming in the race clubs and the gentlemen's clubs made the gamblers' position even stronger. But in the three decades following the initial gold rush, three new features of colonial gambling arose to counteract the image of respectability and legitimacy provided by the institutions, and to weaken the gentry's dominance of colonial cultural values.

These features were the appearance of new forms of speculation leading to a prominent public display of mass gambling, the beginnings of the emergence of gambling entrepreneurs, and the appearance of Chinese gamblers and Chinese gambling houses.

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104 Twopeny, op.cit., pp.92 and 220.

John C. Paterson's description of life on the goldfields contains a rare, detached description of Chinese gaming with dominoes and coins, emphasizing the passion with which they played.[105] But the importance of Chinese gaming, as it concerned the attitudes of colonial society, lay not in the particular games played, but in its usefulness as a means of equating gaming with vice and immorality. Although by the 1870s Chinese gaming houses had not flourished to a point where they had aroused great public concern, the Chinese began to move to the cities, and at least in their Sydney and Melbourne communities, their gaming houses were thriving. The typical house was also a place of relaxation where opium was smoked freely,[106] and this, when combined with the tendency of the European settlers to dismiss the Chinese as a lower class of being, with disgusting habits and unacceptable values, provided the potential for a challenge to the acceptance of gambling by society. Whilst the race clubs and the gentlemen's clubs provided a degree of legitimacy for the gambler's activity, the Chinese weakened that legitimacy by permitting gaming's equation with vice.

This process was only beginning to have a public impact by the end of the period under examination. Similarly, other new forms of gambling speculation, which were to become focuses of attention in the

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105 The "coin game" described is fan-tan in which the coins are more usually replaced by beads or peas. John C. Paterson, The Gold Fields of Victoria in 1862, Melbourne 1862, pp.141-143.

106 Nat Gould, Town and Bush, Ringwood 1974 (first published 1896), pp.107-110.

1880s, were establishing themselves in the 1870s. These included sweepstake consultations and land lotteries. Lotteries of land such as the one held at Naracoorte in South Australia in the mid-1870s were as much a means of commercial speculation as a form of gaming, but they did attract the condemnation of the legislature, both in South Australia and New South Wales.[107]

Whilst the land lotteries undoubtedly created excitement in the community, the concept of sweepstakes or consultations attracted the imagination of the colonial public, especially of the poorer classes, to a far greater degree. These were speculations, usually on horse races, which involved the sale of a large number of tickets, some of which were then allocated, by lot, the horses entered to contest a particular event. The holder of the ticket which drew the winning horse received a large cash prize, whilst the holders of the other tickets successful in drawing horses received consolation prizes. Originally these sweepstakes were small-scale amusements generally run by clubs or amongst the regular clientele of hotels, but gradually some of the better patronised sweeps began to expand by advertising publicly. Two men in particular, were responsible for the growth of sweepstakes. In Sydney, from 1878, George Adams, who was to become Australia's leading gambling entrepreneur, was building the reputation of his Tattersall's Sporting Club sweeps at O'Brien's Hotel in preparation for his first public sweep in 1881; but the leading light

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107 Anthony A. Rendell, "The Punter in Paradise: A History of Relations between the Punter and the State in South Australia", B.A. (Hons.) thesis, University of Adelaide, 1961, p.6; N.S.W.P.D. Legislative Council, 23 April 1884, vol. XII, p.2898.

in this field in the 1870s was Melbourne's J.J. Miller[108]

The attraction of the sweepstake lay in the possibility of winning a large amount of money for a comparitively small outlay. By 1877 sweeps with prizes of £2,000 were held on the Melbourne Cup, and as the popularity of sweepstakes grew, so did the value of the prizes. Before long some lucky individuals were winning as much as £10,000 for a five shilling investment. Sweepstakes captured the imagination of the public by offering untold riches, or at least the prospect of financial security for life, at the risk of a meagre outlay[109]

Miller, Adams, and their legion of imitators in the world of sweepstakes or consultations, were not the only gambling entrepreneurs in the Australian colonies.[110] We have already noted the role played by publicans in promoting sporting contests in close proximity to their establishments, virtually from the beginnings of settlement. We have also seen that a few men gained further rewards by promoting the establishment and use of racecourses near their hotels. In the 1870s this process began to move a step further with the development of privately owned racecourses on which meetings designed to generate profits for the course owner were held. G. Ireland's course at

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108 Trevor Wilson, op.cit., pp.23, 28; Max Agnew, Australia's Trotting Heritage, Mitcham 1977 p.32; John Wren from the 1890s rivalled Adams as the leading gambling entrepreneur. Twopeny, op.cit., p.213; See below, Chapter Five, pp.176-183.

109 Australasian Sketcher, August 1877 p.1; [Trevor Wilson] Tattersall (Pamphlet) [Melbourne 1976], p.4.

110 Another Sydney example is Cohen's Tobacconist of George Street who advertised a sweep on the Sydney Cup, Sydney Morning Herald, 1 March, 1870.

Blacktown (Sydney), and W.S. Cox's course at Kensington Park (Melbourne), were among the first such courses. They offered a mixture of thoroughbred, hack, pony and trotting races, appealing more to the tradesman than to the gentry, anc were outside the supervision of the V.R.C. and the A.J.C.[111] Successful meetings on these courses were to lead, in the 1880s, to the development of proprietary racing companies.[112]

In the 1870s, proprietary racing companies, sweepstake consultations and Chinese gaming houses were all in their infancy. The gambling entrepreneurs were only beginning to establish the businesses which were to flourish in the succeeding decades. The importance of these developments lies not so much in the size of their operations in the 1870s, but in that they were a clear indication of a developing trend towards mass gambling; or betting and gaming by the masses, on a scale which could no longer be controlled or supervised by the colonial gentry.

Colonial governors could, and did continue, to patronise the major race clubs. Sir Hercules Robinson in New South Wales was perhaps one of the most active of all colonial "racing" governors. Between 1873 and 1879 he was a prominent participant in Sydney horse racing, building up a stable of 23 horses which won more than 20 major races. One of his horses, Fitzyattencon, had the dubious distinction of

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111 Sydney Morning Herald, 4 February 1870; Agnew, op.cit., p.42; Australian Horseracing Annual, Sydney 1969, p.20.

112 See below Chapter Five, pp.183-187.

running last in the 1873 Melbourne Cup, after starting as one of the favourites for the event.[113]

Whilst the governors remained patrons of the race clubs, and the gentlemen on the race club committees varied rules and regulations for the conduct of their meetings, the proprietary racing companies were, at least potentially, outside the realms of the old conservative social control. Similarly, whilst the officials and committees of the gentlemen's clubs could exercise some supervision and control over gaming on their premises to ensure that it did not get out of hand, no such control or careful supervision could be provided over sweepstake operations, or over the Chinese gaming houses.

In these ways, the conservative classes were beginning to lose their control or influence over the nature and extent of colonial gaming and betting, and this loss of influence coincided with a continued undermining of conservative political control between 1850 and 1880.[114] Furthermore, the very nature of Australian society had been changing over the period in some significant ways. The rapid growth of the major urban centres, particularly Melbourne; the comparative weakening of the landed classes' financial positions, and the consequent growth of commercial capitalism, all contributed to a weakening of the social and cultural dominance of the conservative landed classes.[115]

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113 Graham, op.cit., pp.12-13; Cavanough and Davies, op.cit., p.401.
114 See above, pp.115-119.
115 See above, pp.109-119.

The Australian colonies in the third quarter of the 19th century were undergoing the processes which Malcomlson and Bailey identified for Britain in the late 18th century.[116] The traditional views of recreation (including gambling) were no longer appropriate. Progress and industry, as typified by Melbourne, were becoming the new catchphrases of the society. Idleness, though not previously encouraged, was becoming less tolerated. Twopeny was moved to remark, despite his observations about the colonists' high wages, greater leisure time and passion for sport, that in Australia, "idleness" was a reproach; "..'to get on' is the watchword of young Australia, and getting-on means hard work ..."[117]

What was lacking from the colonial scene in this period however, was the element Malcolmson notes as essential to the imposition of urban middle class mores, namely an evangelical revival. It was this element which, in Britain, provided the new means of social control with its emphasis on the work/progress ethic.[118] But in the colonies, the churches, despite their early efforts, had failed to impose this ethic.

Until the mid 1860s, the Catholic church was too concerned with internal fighting amongst the laity, the clergy and the hierarchy, and with its financial problems culminating in the withdrawal of state

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116 See above, Chapter Two, pp.13-17.
117 Twopeny, op.cit., p.202.
118 See above, Chapter Two, pp.16-17.

assistance, to concern itself with questions arising from gaming and betting. Bishop Polding, believed that "vice and irreligion were to be conquered by the vital example of virtue and dedicated religion publicly established and lived out" rather than by any form of legislative prohibition.[119] Even had the Catholic church been particularly concerned about gaming and betting, under Polding there would have been no anti-gambling crusade. From the mid-1860s until the end of this period the education debate and its associated sectarianism consumed much of the church's energy.[120]

The protestant churches had been occupied by the same problems. In addition to the problems of denominational friction amongst the protestant groups, and the growing sectarian bitterness against catholicism, these churches were also still plagued by organisational and 'establishment' problems. The Anglican church still hoped for some forms of state recognition. The other sects continued to give much of their attention to the development of organisational structures and church extension.[121]

Clearly the churches were preoccupied with other problems. Only infrequently were they moved to comment on the idleness and non-productive attitudes of their congregations. Those who attacked gambling from the evangelical standpoint were few in number, and their voices were reminiscent of J.D. Lang's lone voice in the previous

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119 Patrick O'Farrell, op.cit., 1977, p.45.

120 ibid. For the period of Polding's Bishopric see Chapter Two, for the education debate see Chapter Three.

121 Walter Phillips, op.cit., pp.4-12.

period, but such voices were heard occasionally. As early as 1852, Richard Birnie provided an anti-gambling lecture in Melbourne in which he equated gambling with fraud because it was a means of gaining money without earning it by an equivalent. He remarked, perhaps prophetically, that with the "over encouragement in mining ... We are in danger of becoming a nation of gamblers", but in 1852 colonial society did not view such prophecy as necessarily a forecast of doom.[122] Birnie was very much a lone voice. By the 1870s similar fears were being expressed a little more frequently, particularly (and not surprisingly given its nonconformist and dissenting strength) in Adelaide, notably by Dean Russell in his sermon "Ascentiontide and the Race Week". But Russell realised the probable fruitlessness of his attack against the gambling which he saw as an essential element of horse racing, because: "... It is a fashionable amusement. It has the favour and approval of the higher classes".[123]

This comment assumed the reality of a social and cultural hegemony of the "higher classes", a reality which had existed, but which was beginning to be challenged. Other events of the late 1870s suggest that the "missing element" of an evangelical revival or crusade espousing the values of a progress/work ethic was beginning to emerge, and that gaming and betting would be among its prime targets.

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122 Richard Birnie, Gambling; or the Evil Effects of the Thirst for Gold, Melbourne [1852] p.2.

123 Alexander Russell, Ascentiontide and the Race Week: A Discourse: delivered on Sunday after the Ascension by A. Russell, Dean of Adelaide, Adelaide, 1876, p.7.

In New South Wales from the mid-1870s, protestantism was becoming more vocal and adopting a more evangelistic approach through journals such as The Protestant Standard, The Australian Witness, and The Watchman. The Protestant Standard's objectives were largely sectarian, so it rejoiced when opportunity permitted it to accuse the Catholic church of promoting lotteries for its own profit.[124] It also objected to betting, whether on cricket or horse racing, and was far from impressed by the horse racing activities of Governor Sir Hercules Robinson.[125] The other protestant journals were more concerned with the temperance and education questions, but both the Presbyterian Witness and the Anglican Watchman printed occasional articles which attempted to educate their readers about the evils they saw in gaming and betting.[126]

These journals had not yet made gaming and betting the focus of a major crusade, but their occasional comments were an expression of urban middle-class evangelicalism as discussed in Chapter Two. They were also a further indication of the weakening of the gentry's conservative cultural hegemony. In the final years of this period, a new colonial invention, the totalisator, was to provide a focus around which protestantism could base a crusade against the dominant value system.[127] Its appearance coincided with the beginnings of a

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124 The Protestand Standard, 15 April 1876, 6 December 1879.

125 ibid., 25 April 1874, 22 January 1876, 29 November 1879.

126 The Watchman, 1 March, 1 October, 2 September and 2 December 1878; 1 March 1879; The Witness, 15 April - 13 May 1876. Meanwhile the Catholic Freeman's Journal continued to publish detailed results of horse and pedestrian races, complete with betting details. For examples see 2 October 1875, 2 April 1876, 20 December 1879, 3 and 10 April 1880.

protestant concern over the churches' failure to attract working class congregations, and their search for both causes of and remedies for that problem. After 1880 the totalisator was to become one means through which an urban, industrial, middle-class protestantism was able to challenge the weakened gentry cultural hegemony.

We can see then, that in the three decades following the initial gold rushes to the Australian colonies there was little qualitative change to the nature of gambling, or to the attitudes of colonial society concerning the activity. The gold rush immigrants had little direct impact on the activity. Their presence led neither to a significant and immediate explosion of gambling, as might have been expected by any who observed the California rushes, nor to a significant and immediate shift in the dominant mores of the society, as might have been expected by any who noted that the immigrants came largely from areas where an urban/industrial middle-class value system prevailed.[128]

Rather, the miners accepted the existing cultural and social values of the colonies. They attended race meetings whenever possible. They played cards. They wagered on various contingencies and speculated within the confines of what was "accepted". Meanwhile, the earlier trends continued, with horse racing remaining the most public display of betting. It spread throughout the colonies as quickly as

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127 This crusade is discussed in the following section, especially Chapter Six. See below pp.229-232.

128 Geoffrey Serle, "The Gold Generation", Victorian Historical Magazine, vol.42, no.1 February 1970, pp.265-267.

the settlements themselves, whilst continuing to be a means of social control. Meanwhile, general colonial development continued to take place within an overall climate which encouraged speculation - in stock, land, business and commerce.

However, we have seen also that the gradual urbanisation, and even industrialisation, of the colonies throughout the period, began to set the scene for significant change. The weakening of the conservative element, financially, politically and ultimately culturally, coincided with the beginnings of gambling entrepreneurship, and the beginnings of forms of gaming which could be attacked from a racist standpoint. Whilst the preconditions for the imposition of a new value system were developing, gaming and betting were gradually freeing themselves from conservative control. In doing so, they were laying themselves open to attack. Although the practices were further entrenched during this period, by the 1870s they could no longer seek complete protection under the wing of the colonial gentry.

By 1880 the colonial urban middle class had not yet achieved full political control. Nor had its cultural values become dominant. But in the following decades the addition of a strident evangelism would strengthen the urban middle classes' bid for cultural hegemony. In that context, gaming and betting's fight for survival against the industrial work progress ethic and the newer urban middle-class values of the 1890s, would depend on the century long tradition of their acceptance by colonial society, and upon the protection of what remained of colonial conservative influence.