



ST. GEORGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY BULLETIN

24 Duff Street,
ARNCLIFFE. 2205

May, 1976.

Dear Friend and Member ,

The regular meeting will be held as follows:

Date: Friday Evening, 21st May, 1976, at 8 p.m.

Place: Council Chamber, Town Hall, Princes Highway, Rockdale.

Business: General.

Syllabus Item: Mr. Bob Sturrock, President of Mosman Historical Society, will give an illustrated talk entitled - "This Largest Island, Australia". We will see quite a lot of our own Country, and should enjoy this evening very much.

Supper Roster: Mrs. Farrar, Captain, Mrs. Preddy, Mrs. Gow, Misses Russell and Row.

Ladies please bring a plate.

Mr. D. Sinclair,

President.

Phone 587 4555

Mrs. E. Wright,

Hon. Treas. & Soc. Sec.

Phone 599 4884

Mrs. B. Perkins

Publicity Officer.

Phone 587 9164

Mrs. E. Eardley

Secretary.

Phone 59 8078

Mr. A. Ellis,

Research Officer

Phone 587 1159

"In matters controversial,
My perception's rather fine;
I always see both points of view,
The one that's wrong and mine."
(Lionel Ruby)

NOTE TO MEMBERS.

Please advise Secretary
(Phone 59 8078) of any change
of address - this will save
disappointment when your
Bulletin is posted to you.

Social.

An Orchestra of some 15 - 20 Musicians and a Vocalist are giving a Concert of Chamber Music in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Princes Highway, Rockdale, on:

Sunday afternoon, May 30th, 1976, at 2.30 p.m.

Tickets are \$1.50 each.

Tea & Biscuits will be served at interval.

Seating accommodation is limited to 100 people. - Ring Mrs. Eardley,
Phone 59.8078 for bookings.

Book early to save disappointments. The proceeds of this Concert will go towards the "Restoration of Lydham Hall". You can be assured of a good afternoon's entertainment.

May 29th, 1976 (Saturday Afternoon) A MYSTERY TOUR (TO KEEP YOU GUESSING).

Meeting Place: Town Hall, Rockdale.
Time: 12.45 p.m. Sharp.
Cost: \$2.00 per person. Children \$1.00. Pay at May meeting.

If you are interested, and we hope you will be, contact Mrs. Wright, phone 599.4884 for details and bookings. You will enjoy this tour.

REMINDER FOR OCTOBER LONG WEEKEND TRIP. Date: 2nd - 3rd & 4th Oct.

A tour of Yass and the Western Districts is being arranged and bookings are being taken; (quite a number have already been taken) again, if you wish to go on this weekend, ring Mrs. Wright, phone 599.4884, and she will give you particulars. Details will also be in the Bulletin as they come to hand. This should be a most enjoyable weekend.

Deposit of \$10.00 please, at May meeting.

Date to Remember: A full day's outing is being arranged for your pleasure, this time down the South Coast, with its lovely views. Details as follows:

Date: Saturday, June, 26th, 1976.
Meeting Place: Town Hall, Rockdale.
Time: 9 a.m.
Cost: \$2.50 per person, Children \$1.25.

A Morning Tea stop will be made at "Bulli Lookout" then on to the "Shell House" at Bellambi, lunch at Austinmer, and Home via the South Coast Road. Bookings are now open, ring Mrs. Wright early to avoid disappointment. - Phone 599.4884

Bring your own eats and, most important, your "Cuppa" and enjoy a lovely day.

Miss Otton, Curator of "Lydham Hall", is in need of Ladiesand/or Gentlemen to assist with the weekend roster. Visitors come from far and wide to see this lovely old Home, and your presence would greatly facilitate inspections. Ring Miss Otton, Phone 59.4259 (after 8 p.m.). Your call will be appreciated.

PLEASE NOTE: Admission to Lydham Hall from 1st April, 1976 will be Adults 30¢. Children 10¢. Weekday Group Visits 25¢.

Phone Calls to Lydham Hall after 8 p.m. - 59.4259.

LYDHAM HALL LOCAL COMMITTEE.

ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 29TH FEBRUARY, 1976.

The year just completed has been one of unprecedented activity and record breaking attendances which have in no small way provided a final justification for the foresight shown by Rockdale Council in purchasing this lovely old home for preservation, nearly six years ago.

During the year under review, the bedroom has been renovated and the furniture re-arranged; the drawing room has been refurnished; the dining room painted, papered and refurnished; the ante room restored and set out as an exhibition room for our unique collection of over 300 pieces of willow pattern china and the kitchen restored, painted and set out as one of the most interesting and attractive rooms in the house.

Few people will ever realise the sheer physical effort that has gone into achieving all this in a period of barely twelve months but the willing co-operation of so many people has made those responsible feel the effort was all worthwhile.

Particular thanks should be recorded to Mr. Jack Clarke, Principal of Hurstville Boys' High School who arranged for the restoration of the bedroom floor; to Mrs. Tait-Smith of Rockdale for presenting a musical afternoon to raise money for the restoration fund; to Mr. Lloyd Della of the Council Staff for his skilled help in the renovation of the anteroom and kitchen; to Mr. Philip Geeves for arranging publicity on this year's A.W.A. Calendar, and on the Audio Visual Tape on Australian Architecture recently circulated throughout N.S.W. secondary schools; to Alderman Ford who keeps the front of the building in immaculate condition and to Miss Bet Otton, Council's Curator, whose work at Lydham Hall is a source of unending praise and appreciation.

It would be quite impossible in this report to record the very long list of people who have donated countless items of great historical interest and material value during the year just ended but nothing has provided the Local Committee with more stimulus to press on with the work of restoration than the knowledge that so many people are prepared to entrust their family treasures to us for safe-keeping and exhibition.

A final source of gratification has been the recent inspection of Lydham Hall by the Secretary and restorations adviser of the National Trust who were fulsome in their praise of the efforts being made by the Local Committee to restore this building - an inspection which has resulted in the extension for a further three years of the loan of the furniture which came to us from the Estate of the late Miss Mabel Holbeach.

Most important of all, however, is the fact that attendances rose by more than 32% to a record of 2,595 - an increase of 625 over the previous year's total. Many of these visitors have come from interstate and overseas and they have been most lavish in their praise of the work that has been carried out.

To conclude, the Committee wishes to place on record its appreciation to Mr. C. Daly, Superintendent of Properties and Mr. J. Franklin, Superintendent of Parks, for their help and willing co-operation at all times.

Alderman R. W. Rathbone.
Hon. Secretary,
Lydham Hall Local Committee.
15th March, 1976.

NATIONAL TRUST CAMPAIGN FOR
LEGISLATION TO PROTECT
HISTORIC BUILDINGS AND SITES

The National Trust of Australia (N.S.W.) seeks your help in its campaign for new laws to protect historic buildings and sites in this State.

Such law has existed for many years in Western Europe, North America and other " developed " nations. In Australia, the Governments of Victoria and Western Australia have already legislated to protect our national heritage within their State boundaries.

As early as July 1973 The National Trust of Australia (N.S.W.) forwarded thoroughly researched proposals for legislation to the then Premier, Sir Robert Askin. In October 1973, one month before the last State elections, the Premier announced that his Government would establish a committee to advise the Government on the preservation of historic buildings and sites.

The Committee did not meet until early 1975, and the Government has not yet introduced any legislative measures.

Meanwhile, the demolition of historic buildings continues; the shameful neglect of historic buildings continues.

The National Trust is campaigning for the urgent introduction of legislation which provides for:

- (a) Compilation of an official list of historic buildings and sites in New South Wales;
- (b) Controls over the demolition of listed buildings;
- (c) Adequate fines for breaches of demolition regulations;
- (d) Financial assistance for owners of listed buildings.

You can help the National Trust in this campaign by writing to your local Member of the New South Wales Parliament, drawing his attention to the urgent need for legislation and the provisions which the legislation should include.

Authorised by
John Morris
Director
The National Trust of Australia (N.S.W.)

THE COLONIAL MEDICAL SERVICE.

1. The General Hospital, Sydney. 1788-1848.

- C.J.Cummins, M.B., B.S., D.P.H.
Medical Adviser to the Government of N.S.W.

Reproduced with permission from - The Publishers
Modern Medicine of Australia
January 7, 1974.

*'Port Jackson I believe to be, without exception,
the finest and most extensive harbour in the
universe, and at the same time the most secure,
being safe from all winds that blow ... That
(the Cove) on which the town is to be built, is
called Sydney Cove.'*

One can sense a triumphant note in John White's reaction to the conclusion of the voyage of the First Fleet, intermingled no doubt with feelings of relief & satisfaction. It had been a trying voyage with outbreaks of ships' fever, dysentery, mumps & a host of minor ailments. Surprisingly, there had been little scurvy & the mortality had been low for a sea voyage of nine months. And this despite the motley & unhealthy mass of humanity which had been crowded into the holds of the convict transports.² The greater proportion of deaths occurred between embarkation and departure & in the first few weeks of the voyage, & again mainly in the transport *Alexander*, which Surgeon Bowes excused in his *Journal* ...

*'Had the convicts been all embarked in that perfect
healthy state wh Government meant they shd have been
& believed were, I firmly believe that few, if any wd
have died hitherto'.³*

White's equanimity was soon disrupted in the events which followed the foundation of the Colony. Overwhelmed by his burden, frustrated & despondent he was later to declare ... *'it would be wise by the first steps to withdraw the settlement, at least such as are living or remove them to some other place...'*⁴

John White was the first Head of the Colonial Medical Service, which was established after disembarkation from the First Fleet in January 1788. It was created as a branch of the civil administration of the Colony & White's personal & civil status was clearly defined in his Commission...

*'We(i.e.George III) do, by these presents, constitute
and appoint you to the Surgeon to the settlement within
our Territory called New South Wales'.⁵*

From the nine Naval surgeons allotted to the First Fleet, four had been commissioned for the medical service of the Colony, viz. John White, Denis Conisden, Thomas Arndell & William Balmain. These were

supplemented by Thomas Jamison, who had been Surgeon's Mate to Surgeon George Worgan of H.M.S. *Sirius*, & by John Irving, the first emancipist described by Phillip as a convict '*bred to surgery*'.⁶ He probably acted as an unpaid surgeon's mate during the voyage.

White's immediate task was to establish a hospital base from which he & his staff could operate a medical service. By 29th January a series of tents were erected on the west side of Sydney Cove in the vicinity of the present Maritime Services Board building. One tent was used as a laboratory for consultations, minor treatments and dispensing of medicines, & the remainder as sick tents for patient accommodation.

Within days the tented wards were filled with patients suffering from camp dysentery & scurvy, suggesting that sub-clinical scurvy had been present but unrecognised in the First Fleet. White's sympathy was aroused as also was his indignation ... '*More pitiable objects were perhaps never seen. Not a comfort or convenience could be got for them, besides the very few we had with us.*' His lament was unfortunately so true. Although medicines, drugs & surgeons' instruments to the value of pounds 1,429.0.0 were brought in the First Fleet, many of the drugs had perished during the voyage & others were of inferior quality. Neither were there blankets, sheets, other comforts nor '*adequate supply of necessaries (special foods) to aid the operation of medicines.*'⁸

Necessity stimulated research into the therapeutic value of native plants. Wild celery, spinach & parsley grew in abundance about the settlement & were used to supplement the ration of salt provisions, for sick & well persons. The red gum of a coastal tree (probably *Angophora Costata*) was found to be a powerful remedy for dysentery. Although credit is assumed by White it was undoubtedly Considen who discovered the value of native sarsaparilla as an antiscorbutic & infusion of wild myrtle as an astringent in dysentery.

Plans were set in train immediately to build a more permanent hospital on the site of what is now the George Street North Police Station adjoining Argyle Cut. Twelve convict carpenters were allotted to this task assisted by sixteen artificers hired from the ships. The hospital was not completed until April, by which time there were upwards of 200 patients under treatment. It was quite a substantial lumber building some 84' x 23', designed to accommodate 60 to 80 patients, & divided into a dispensary, a ward for the troops & another for convicts. Its floor was probably pack clay with the uprights of the walls sunk into the ground, supporting a gable roof of thatch. The first wharf in the Colony was built to service the hospital, & was locally known as the Hospital Wharf until the hospital was later moved to Macquarie St., when it was re-named the King's Wharf. Governor Phillip, unaware of the propensity of white ants for native timbers, was over-optimistic in his forecast ... '*The hospita- is a building that will stand for some years. It is clear of the town & the situation is healthy.*'⁹

So the General Hospital was established. Its nursing staff was drawn from such convicts as could be spared, & almost certainly the more elderly & infirm who were less useful for the arduous tasks of

clearing, preparing gardens, logging, sawing, building & public works. During the early months of 1788 White was frequently absent on local exploration journeys, either alone or accompanying Governor Phillip. It was from these journeys that he made his observations of native flora & fauna, the descriptions of which enhance his celebrated *Journal*. He had no formal training in natural history, which was compensated by the enthusiasm with which he collected specimens during his wanderings. It would seem that he devoted almost every daylight hour he could be spared from his professional duties to his self-imposed task. Disappointingly, his *Journal* contains but passing references to the medical service, & its problems, in the first months following Foundation.

Statistical Returns of the Sick, Hurt, etc. were soon introduced. Although these provided only crude statistics of sickness & death by social class & sex, their significance is more from what is unsaid than from what is stated. The first such return is that of 30th June, 1788. It indicates that there were six marines & twenty-four convicts in hospital; twelve & forty-two of each group respectively sick in camp; five marines or family members & thirty-six convicts had died since landing, & fifty-two convicts were permanently unfit for labour from old age & infirmity.¹⁰ Unstated, but reasonably deduced from these figures, is a tribute to the efforts & ingenuity of the Surgeons in overcoming so quickly the grave medical crisis which faced the Colony after disembarkation. The hospital was adequate to cope with patient demand upon int.

Miserable indeed was the plight & bleak the future of the inhabitants of the Colony during the next two years. To despondency & hopelessness from their isolation was added hunger as the first attempts at husbandry failed. Nor were forays for food beyond the settlement successful. White records his disappointment when the *Supply* returned from Lord Howe Island *'without a single turtle, the object for which she was sent: a dreadful disappointment for those languishing under the scurvy, many of whom are since dead, & there is great reason to fear that several others will soon share the same fate. This disorder has now risen to an alarming degree until some vegetables can be raised, which, from the season of the year, cannot take place for many months.'*¹¹

The whole population, inclusive of sick, was reduced to half rations & suffered greatly from lack of vegetables.¹² Punishment was harsh & particularly so for offences of theft against the meagre resources of food. Thomas Barrett was tried & hung on the same day for stealing store beef & pease, the property of the Crown. 300 lashes was not an uncommon sentence for such crimes & the Surgeons from the General Hospital had the unpopular task of supervising public floggings.

The expectations of the Colony were centred on supplies from England to arrive in the Second Fleet - supplies not only of good, stock & seed, but also hardware for buildings & agricultural implements.

Expectation turned to bleak disappointment with the arrival of the Second Fleet in June 1790, & the news that the store ship *Guardian* had struck an iceberg on the journey, jettisoned her stores & returned to the Cape of Good Hope. The *Lady Juliana* arrived safely with a consignment of convicts & a prefabricated wooden hospital to supplement the General Hospital. It was designed by Geoffrey Wyattville, a nephew & assistant of the famous English architect, James Wyatt.¹³ It was erected on wooden blocks adjacent to the existing hospital by 7th July.

It was sorely needed as the medical burden was increased immediately by 486 patients transferred to the hospital from transports. To cope with this emergency 100 tents had to be pitched around the hospital, each to contain 4 patients.

Conditions in the General Hospital were pitiable. The convicts had been largely confined below decks for the voyage & those who were permitted on deck for exercise were few & most were in irons. Of the 1,017 convicts who embarked, 11 had died before sailing & 256 during the voyage. Phillip protested vigorously .. *"I will not, sir, dwell on the scene of misery which the hospitals & sick tents exhibited when these people were landed.."*¹⁴

The convict nurses were brutal & callous, but no more so than the patients each to the other. The majority were covered in filth & vermin & suffering from *'scurvy, fevers, violent purging & flux: when any convict was dying & had bread or lillipie (flour & water boiled together) given him; those nearest him would seize them, saying with an oath that they were useless to him as he was going to die; no sooner was the unfortunate dead than his body was stripped by those around him who were always in waiting to do so.'*¹⁵

Little wonder the mortality was appalling being somewhat less than 10% of the population. White had but Balmain, Irving, Arndell & Considen to staff the General Hospital, Jamison having been transferred to Norfolk Island, & Thompson to the new settlement at Parramatta. Fortunately for White & his colleagues some medical stores arrived with the prefabricated hospital, but the supply was totally inadequate to cope with emergencies of this magnitude.

No were relationships between White & Balmain harmonious following their duel on the 12th August, 1788, in which both were slightly wounded. The atmosphere at the General Hospital was not one to foster professional co-operation & loyalty. And yet again the Surgeons succeeded. In August, Phillip was able to report ... *"The number of sick have decreased considerably, the returns of this day being only 220. Deaths since the 27th June 89."*¹⁶ In the 7 months from December 1790 to June 1791 mortality had dropped to 19 deaths for the period.

A similar crisis recurred with the arrival of the Third Fleet in July 1791. Resulting from their long confinement & want of food the convicts were so weakened that they succumbed to severe dysentery soon after landing. The number of sick mounted rapidly causing

Phillip to complain angrily to Lord Grenville that there were 626 people under medical treatment all but 50 of whom had been landed from the Third Fleet.¹⁷ Following a bad season shortly after famine again threatened the Colony. The effect on a sick & half-starved population was catastrophic. The hospital was now constantly overcrowded. In less than 7 months, 288 persons died. The number of sick continued unabated in almost epidemic proportions & as late as March 1792 some 430 were listed on the sick return.¹⁸ The hospital, almost bereft of medical supplies, was inadequate to cope with the problem. As the year 1791 closed Balmain was transferred to Norfolk Is. as a peace gesture to ease the friction between him & White, who then had but Arndell, ageing and anxious to retire,¹⁹ & Irving, recalled from Norfolk Is., to staff the General Hospital.

White's occupancy of the post of Principal Surgeon was soon to end. In making his overtures to his patron, Sir Andrew Hammond, White was no doubt influenced by Phillip's request for recall because of ill-health. There is no evidence that White's health had been adversely affected, although he, too, used this excuse, adding to it the need to return to England to arrange his affairs. He was granted leave in 1793 & returned to England, where he showed little inclination to return. He was challenged on his intention by the Duke of Portland, who demanded his immediate return or loss of appointment.²⁰ His hand was forced & he was retired in 1795, his service being recognised by a civil pension on half pay.

William Balmain was recalled from Norfolk Is. in 1793 as Acting Principal Surgeon, Jamison being posted as relief. By the time of White's retirement (1795) Considen has returned to England because of ill-health. Arndell had retired & Irving had died. The staff of the General Hospital was now reduced to Balmain with assistance from Surgeon John Harris & Surgeon's Mate Edward Laing of the N.S.W. Corps. Despite pleas to have Laing appointed as Assistant Surgeon (he being on the spot), Samuel Leeds was selected in England in 1793, but did not arrive until 1795. His stay was short & within a year he was replaced by D'Arcy Wentworth, who since 1790 had been Supt. of Convicts, & later Assistant to the hospital at Norfolk Is.

Balmain was a conscientious public servant. His returns of the General State of the Sick, Hurt, etc. were provided regularly & subsequently consolidated into annual returns. He was vigorous & forceful in his protests on the inadequacy of medical staff in the Colony, & its effect on the administration of the General Hospital. Equally he was diligent in demanding supplies for the medical service & the General Hospital (the latter being now the medical store for peripheral hospitals & medical stations). Drugs & surgical instruments were ordered from the Apothecaries Hall in London, & other supplies from Govt. Store. One such list is interesting as indicative of the difficulty in establishing priority for the General Hospital's needs & the state of neglect into which the public building had been allowed to fall at the commencement of Hunter's term of governorship.²¹

List of Wants for the General Hospital & other detached Settlements in N.S.W:-

Flannel. None left.

Hospital Bedding. Nearly expended: what remains Bad.

Tape, Thread, Needles, Pins, etc. None.

Mess & other Utensils for the Hospital

Candles)

Lanthorns)

Tin Lamps)

Pewter Chamber Pots) None of either

Do Spoons)

Window Glass)

Paint & Paint Oil for the Wooden Hospital sent from England, which is perishing for the want of it.

Tin Quart & Pint Pots.

Pewter Basons

Tin or Copper Saucepans

A Box of Stationery

Journal Books

Wrapping Paper

Filtering Do.

Apparatus for Injecting Dead Bodies.

Three Setts of Midwifery Instruments.

One Do. Capital Do.

Several Do. of Pocket Do.

Do. Lancets Graduated.

Old Sheets.

Bandage Linen & Lint.

Sieves Fine & Coarse.

Glyster Syringes

Ivory Do.

Close Stool Pans.

Pewter Straining Basons

Do. Measures

Scales & weights from two to half a pound.

Vials & Corks Large & Small.

Straining Cloth a few Yards.

Two or Three Small Stills with their appendages.

<i>Wine</i>	<i>Sago</i>	<i>Acet Distill</i>
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<i>Sugar</i>	<i>Oatmeal</i>	<i>.... Common</i>
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<i>Barley</i>	<i>Spices</i>	<i>Sal. Glauber</i>
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<i>Rice</i>	<i>Spt. Vin: Rect.: Aq: Aluet Spt.</i>
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Sydney, 26th August, 1797. (Sgd.) Wm. Balmain. Principal Surgeon.

It was during Hunter's regime in October 1797 that the General Hospital was re-erected on stone foundations at Dawes Point. At the same time a new hospital store & dispensary were built in brick. Separate dwellings were provided for the Principal Surgeon & senior Assistant Surgeon.

The crises of earlier years were now of the past, & more stable conditions prevailed in the Colony. At last patient accommodation at the General Hospital was reasonably adequate, although there were occasions when it was taxed in providing also for members of the N.S.W. Corps (pending the

construction of a military hospital) & invalid sailors from the warships in port.

Under Lt. Governor King's administration the medical & nursing establishments of the General Hospital were defined & formulae for charging assigned convicts & visiting merchant & naval seamen were developed. King was successful in obtaining substantial increases in the salaries of the Colonial Surgeons, so rectifying an injustice which threatened the very existence of the medical service.

The establishment for the General Hospital was fixed (more by expediency than logic) as '*the Principal Surgeon & one Assistant Surgeon residing in Sydney*'.²³ Other demands, civil & professional, were intruded on the Principal Surgeon, with the result that routine medical service at the General Hospital was left more & more to the Assistant Surgeon, the Principal Surgeon oversighting its administration as its superintendent. This role enabled Balmain to cope with his civil commitments. He was an active Magistrate (at one stage the only sitting magistrate) & for a short period (1800 to 1801) Naval Officer to the Port. These extraneous duties imposed an additional burden on the medical efficiency of the General Hospital & caused Balmain to request temporary assistance from the surgeons of the warships visiting the Port.²⁴

Balmain was a person of strong & truculent personality, easily aroused & quick to give & take offence. He once issued a challenge to the whole of the officers of the N.S.W. Corps to a duel on a one-after-another basis. He was involved in rum trading with D'Arcy Wentworth which he did not regard as ethically or morally incompatible with his position. Despite his personal disadvantages & attitudes, & ill-health, he enjoyed the confidence of Governor Hunter for his dedication to duty as Principal Surgeon & as Magistrate. He introduced management into the General Hospital & the medical service, & he had the degree of tenacity & obstinacy necessary to achieve his objectives. He returned to England in 1802 on sick leave & died in London on 17th November, 1803. His name is still perpetuated in the suburb of Balmain.

Superintendence of the General Hospital passed to Thomas Jamison when he was appointed to succeed Balmain in 1804 as Principal Surgeon. Jamison was probably the best qualified of the early Colonial Surgeons, having graduated from Trinity College in Dublin in 1780. He was a dedicated public servant, quiet & industrious, & uncomplaining even when, by an oversight, his commission was long delayed & he was superseded temporarily by Thompson. This was corrected in 1802 when he was nominated as the senior of the Assistant Surgeons with the right of succession to William Balmain for the post of Principal Surgeon.²⁵

In the first half of the tenure of his office there were no significant changes in the administration of the General Hospital. Mainly the convicts were treated on an ambulant basis, attending the hospital for medicines & dressings. If their condition were acute or incapacitating or of an infectious nature, admission was arranged. Drunkenness was commonplace in the Colony & extended to the hospital, to the detriment of the proper nutrition of the sick, who were prone to trade their salt beef ration for spirits. Inpatients were individually provided with the same rations as were the well convicts, & were expected to make provision among themselves

for the preparation of meals. Lt. Governor King, the better to overcome the propensity of the patients for an alcoholic diet ... *'ordered the surgeon to put them on a proper diet, for which purpose they are provided with a proportion of mutton from Government wethers in lieu of the salt beef'*.²⁶

The influx of free settlers was also imposing difficulties, & the Surgeons were confused as to their obligations to treat this group without fee even when admitted to the General Hospital. James Mileham, Asst. Surgeon at the General Hospital, precipitated a crisis & forced a decision on this issue, when, at the instigation of Jamison, he was tried by court-martial & reprimanded for refusing to attend a woman in labour at the hospital. His action was reinforced by Asst. Surgeon Savage, who likewise was court-martialled for neglecting to attend the wife of a settler in labour, the woman subsequently dying. He was cashiered, but the sentence was not confirmed by the Home Govt. Two important decisions were determined from these events, viz. the Colonial Surgeons as civil servants were not liable to military law, & the medical staff in future was allowed a limited right of private practice.

In August 1806, King was superseded by Governor William Bligh, whose turbulent administration was terminated by the insurrection & deposition of January 1808. Bligh & Jamison were frequently in conflict & their differences irreconcilable. The Governor's repeated interference in the medical administration of the General Hospital is difficult to understand, except as an extension of his general attitude of autocratic control over all the affairs & institutions of the Colony.

Despite Jamison's protests Bligh ordered experienced male convict nurses to be returned to public labour; he brushed aside Jamison's pleas for replacement of medical staff by the curt observation ... *'with respect to his (Jamison's) other papers I have not been able to satisfy myself of the propriety of them, very few sick having been in the hospital'*.²⁷ He suspended Wentworth for misuse of public labour (during which suspension only Jamison & Mileham were in commission in the Colony) & he dismissed Jamison from his office of Magistrate & would have dismissed him as Principal Surgeon only he could not fill the post. No wonder Jamison threatened to resign unless Bligh were replaced, & that his name was one of the 6 attached to the historic letter to Major Johnston, requesting the depose of Governor Bligh. Jamison was recalled to England in 1808 as a witness in the court-martial of Johnston & died there in 1811.

This detailed and interesting account of early hospital life in the Colony will be continued in a further Bulletin.