

## VI - Sex, Alcohol & Gambling

(Norma Buckingham - 528 4959, Michael & Joy Morgan)

### 6.1. Resume:

Difficult to separate 'sex, alcohol and gambling'. So treated as one subject at this stage of research. Again preliminary notes only.

#### *Australia's Foundation and Beginning:*

- \* Locality Sydney Cove, Farm Cove, Botanical Gdns, Norfolk Island

#### *Early Sexual History:*

- \* Sexual life of Australia had its beginnings in a spirit of lust, rape and alcohol. Debauchery of First Bush Party.....
- \* In a 'male crucible' that character of Australian community was born....crude, uncultured, vicious.....heritage from which later generations would find it difficult to escape....
- \* Prostitution....colony little better than an extensive brothel....
- \* Marriage rare, concubinage rampant and acceptable, illegitimacy caused by 'professional military' rather than convicts...

#### *Corruption, Power & Alcohol:*

- \* Colonial Sydney was a drunken society from top to bottom. Men and women drank with a desperate, addicted quarrelsome single-mindedness. Every drop of their tippie had to be imported.
- \* Real currency of early NSW was RUM used as a means of/caused:  
Corruption and manipulation  
Injustice and inequality
- \* Gentry became wealthy at expense of poor
- \* Rebellion and mutiny:  
Francis Grose (1758-1814) - NSW Corps  
Taking over Govt from Gov Bligh  
Governed NSW as a military junta for 2 years



*Homosexuality:*

- \* Epitomised at Norfolk Island:
  - Complete Hopelessness
  - Bad authority
  - Sodomy
  - Reprobate minds
  - Controlling spirits - oppression
  - Demon powers
  - Hypocrisy and Imposture
  - Usurping of God's Authority
  - Chastisement & Vengeance
  - Complete Injustice
  - Corrupt Religious System

*Gambling:*

- \* Addiction - transported from Georgian England

*Spirit of Deception:*

- \* False authority - Norfolk Island...authority....acting under the influence of hypocrisy and imposture....usurping a power never delegated or sanctioned by the Almighty.
- \* Blindness to good and evil - so corrupt was their every day language....evil was called good, and good, evil....
- \* Deceptive roots of Australian 'mateship' - homosexuality.

*Some General Conclusions:*

The so called Justice and Punishment in the form of constant floggings on the notorious Triangle where many convicts died or, if not, their backs left devoid of flesh and their shoes filled with blood.....leaves no doubt that Satan himself had set out to establish his kingdom here in Australia. His work is seen in every area of Government, Judicial System and Religion; this being the worst because of its hypocrisy and extreme legality. Many died unable to believe that God even existed.

The facts contained in this book "The Fata! Shore" are a challenge to the praying arm of the Church to see this kingdom defeated, to see the darkness and wickedness in high places brought low for His is the Kingdom, the Power and the Glory! Hallelujah! Dan 7:14. Heb 11:32-33: "And what more shall I say. I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel and the prophets, who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions, quenched the fury of the flames and escaped the edge of the sword, whose weakness was turned to strength: and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies."

*Bibliography:*

- " The Fatal Shore " by Robert Hughes
- " Their Chastity Was Not Too Rigid "
- " Convicts, Clergymen & Churches " by Allan Grocott
- " Sydney Revels of Bacchus, Cupid and Momus" by Charles Corbyn (1854)
- " History of Australia " by Manning Clark

## 6.2. Dominant Male Society:

### Male Crucible:

"It is important that the essentially male character of the Australian community in its early years be kept in mind. It was in a male crucible that the character of the Australian community was formed. This had an immediate effect on the contemporary society between 1788 and 1850 and it also provided a heritage from which later generations would have found it difficult to escape, even if the balance between the sexes had been closer at all subsequent times and in all parts of the Australian colonies. We may hypothesise that communities tend to form their character early and to absorb and transmute those who subsequently join them rather than be fundamentally changed by the late-comers." (from 'Their Chastity Was Not Too Rigid')

"...especially in its early years New South Wales was a male society - crude, uncultured, beset with most of the vices of the unbridled male and graced with few of the civilising influences of the settled and influential woman."

### Crazy Sex-Ratio:

"...a principal element in the formation of the social character of early Australia was the disproportion between the sexes. Of the 736 convicts originally landed in Jan 1788, only 188 were women. Over the whole main period of transportation up to 1840, about 20,000 of the convicts were women - about one in ten....."

"...we need therefore to keep constantly before us the fact that we are dealing with a community in whose early years there were 3, 6 or 20 men to every woman....."

### Women - Not a Cross-Section of English Society:

"...For two obvious and pretty fundamental reasons, the women of early Sydney were unorthodox and unconventional. First, they were not a cross-section of English society - the good equally with the bad...Secondly, most of the women who came to Sydney in those days.....came because they had no choice. They came as convicts...."

"...Moreover, those relatively few women in the colonies were less often the tender, sensitive, shrinking-violet souls of a Jane Austen society...than a tough, robust, take-on-anything type that was more willing to pay the society in its own coin than mint for it a new and more civilised coinage. They - and the men - gave Australia its early character. And the character, once given, would not easily change."

### Brutal Relationships:

"...There are many examples of the grim brutality of the first forty years of settlement and of the brutal relationships between the sexes....."

### 6.3. Initial Debauchery:

This section describes Australia's first Bush Party...which can be seen as effectively birthing Australia's early sexual history. It has been described by Manning Clark as a bacchanalian orgy and was held only three days after Rev Richard Johnson preached the first sermon on Australian soil.

*" On 3 February 1788 the young, sensitive and humourless Richard Johnson conducted the first service in the colony under a huge gum tree. The significance of his text, Psalm 116:12: " What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards me ? " may have been lost on his convict congregation.....The celebrations of the following Wednesday were much more to their liking, for on that night the convict women were landed, extra rations of rum were issued and a bacchanalian orgy followed that ceased only when the revellers were drenched by a thunderstorm." (From "A Short History of Australia" by Manning Clark)*

*" On February 6th the disembarkation of first ship of female convicts began and all through the day the longboats plied between the transports and the cove carrying their freight of women. Those who had decent clothes had put on all their finery. 'Some few among them' noted Bowes Smyth heartily glad to have them off his ship 'might be said to be well dressed'. The last of them landed by 6 in the evening. It was a squally day and thunderheads were piled up in livid cliffs above the Pacific, as dusk fell the weather burst. Tents blew away; within minutes the whole encampment was a rain-lashed bog. The women floundered to and fro, draggled as muddy chickens under a pump, pursued by male convicts intent on raping them. One lightning bolt split a tree in the middle of the camp and killed several sheep and a pig beneath it. Meanwhile, most of the sailors on Lady Penryhyn applied to her master, Capt William Sever for an extra ration of rum "to make merry with upon the women quitting the ship". Out came the pannikins, down went the rum and before long the drunken tars went off to join the convicts in pursuit of the women so that, Bowes remarked, it is beyond my abilities to give a just description of debauchery and riot that ensued during the night. It was the first bush party in Australia, with "some swearing, others quarrelling, others singing - not in the least regarding the tempest, tho' so violent that the thunder shook the ship exceeding anything I ever before had a conception of. And as the couples rutted between the rocks, guts burning from the harsh Brazilian aguardiente, their clothes slimy with red clay, the sexual history of colonial Australia may fairly be said to have begun." (Exerpt from "The Fatal Shore", page 88-89, paragraph 3)*

This all happened in the area of Farm Cove and the Botanical Gardens.

#### 6.4. Prostitution:

In 1809 T. W. Plummer wrote that the whole colony was "little better than an extensive brothel" The following quotations, from a number of sources, illustrate this:

\* *"The blotch of prostitution lies black upon the cities of the South (Sydney and Melbourne)" wrote Frank Fowler, "slurring the streets with thousands of*

*...wretched women in one smile  
Who only smile at night beneath the gas!"*

\* *"Brothels were distributed conveniently and generously in many parts of the city, particularly in Castlereagh, Drutt and College streets, and in Woolloomooloo and Alexandria. One entrepreneur, John Rushton, had twenty or more in Bourke, Riley and Victoria streets, Woolloomooloo, staffed by very young girls...."*

*"....in Woolloomooloo alone there are more than 40 brothels, chiefly occupied by juvenile prostitutes. The majority of these are owned by a Mr R....., who preaches extempore on the race course on Sabbath afternoons! This reverend wolf in sheep's clothing rents these houses at first at low rates, and subsequently, having scantily furnished them, re-lets them to persons of the prisoner's character at treble and quadruple rentals....."*

\* *"Brothels were.....'winked at and permitted to exist by the police in Elizabeth St facing the old race-course..... 15 to 20 houses in a row..."*

\* *In an editorial published in the early 1800's, Bell's Life in Sydney anatomised "The Great Social Evil", as prostitution was fastidiously labelled....." numbers of female immigrants....find every avenue of respectable feminine employment barricaded against them.....thus many a fine, virtuously disposed girl, who landed in this colony with an over-sanguine temperament, has found her hope changed into terrible despair.....Driven by sheer desperation - without one friendly soul to comfort and to guide, one kindly generous hand to succour - she has become numbered amongst the numerous victims who nightly immolate themselves to Moloch. We believe that we have clearly pointed out the causes of the frightful extension of the 'Great Social Evil'; let our preachers, philanthropists and moral lecturers point out the remedy."*

*(Moloch.....1. A semetic deity whose worship was marked by the sacrifice of children as burnt offerings by their parents. 2. Anything thought of as requiring frightful sacrifice.)*

\* *Prostitution as old as the colony. Most distinctive contribution of lower-class women to leisure time activities of colony.*

\* *Not confined to any particular area such as the Rocks. Widespread as indicated earlier.*

\* *Pitt Street:*

*established as row of convict huts  
reputation widespread for prostitution  
haunt of all the vile and atrocious characters in the settlement  
land at south end rejected by John Macarthur for this reason  
deplored by early administrators but no real effort to stop it  
almost a social necessity, probably reduced sexual crimes which  
were surprisingly infrequent.*

\* *'The chastity of the female part of the settlement had never been so rigid, as to  
drive men to so desperate an act.'*



## 6.5. Concubinage & Marriage:

Marriage was rare, concubinage was rampant and acceptable and it was the 'professional military' (not the convicts) who were responsible for the high rate of illegitimate children.

- \* "Both prostitution and irregular sexual unions were common.....The hopeless sexual imbalance in the colony was not only not conducive to marriage, it quite simply made marriage impossible for the greater part of the male population. Consequently, marriage remained relatively 'unpopular' for fifty or more years after the first settlement....." (From 'Their Chastity Was Not Too Rigid')
- \* "There is scarce a man without his mistress. The high class first exhibit it; and the low, to do them justice, faithfully copy it" (Thomas Watling, 'Letters from an Exile at Botany Bay' 1794)
- \* "Concubinage and illegitimacy continued to be the rule rather than the exception. A survey of 1806 showed that in NSW there were 395 wives and 1,035 de facto wives; 807 legitimate children and 1,025 illegitimate children. Yet, except for a handful of evangelical churchmen, no one attached any social stigma to concubinage, and the offspring were quaintly referred to in official documents as 'national children' (From 'Convicts, Clergymen & Churches')
- \* "....It is also interesting to note that it was the marines and sailors, soldiers and officers - rather than the male convicts - who were mainly responsible for the high rate of illegitimacy during those years. In 1788, 12 of the 28 babies baptised by Johnson were illegitimate - they were all fathered by marines or sailors. In 1789 no more than 5 convicts fathered illegitimate children out of a total of 21 who were baptised. Again the marines were the culprits. The next year it was 2 out of 22 and in 1791 it was 4, and possibly 6, out of 20. Soldiers of the 'Rum Corps' were then coming in for their share of the blame...." (From 'Sydney Cove 1789-1790' ed Cobley)
- \* "Debauchery, of course, was not confined to the lowly inhabitants of Durand's Alley or The Rocks. The Governor General of all Her Majesty's Australian possessions' from 1846 to 1855, His Excellency Sir Charles Augustus Fitzroy, second son of the third Duke of Grafton, who had been a staff officer at Waterloo, was a notorious lecher and drunkard...." (From "Sydney Revels" 1854)

## 6.6. Corruption & Alcohol:

A driving force in early Sydney was alcohol - (the following quotes come from 'The Fatal Shore' and 'Sydney Revels':

- \* " Colonial Sydney was a drunken society from top to bottom. Men and women drank with a desperate, addicted quarrelsome single-mindedness. Every drop of their tipples had to be imported."
- \* " The city is full of gold-diggers: drunkenness, murders and suicides are rife; there is a strong current running in the direction of Hell " (quoted by Nathaniel Pidgeon in his Journal in 1852)
- \* " Sydney's drinking habits are ruining a large class of the population...."
- \* " When world traveller Mr F Gerstacker visited Sydney in 1853, the water police took him through the 'worst lurking places' of the town. What astonished him was the 'quantity of drunken women I observed on these evenings, not only in the tap-rooms, but in the streets. To one drunken man I could always count three drunken women."
- \* " The committee.....agreed that Sydney and its suburbs had far too many public-houses. There were 400 in the police district of Sydney alone, about one to every 112 inhabitants - men, women and children. Sussex street had 29, Pitt Street 30, George Street, from Church Hill to Haymarket, 90....."

Inevitably behind the alcohol (rum) was power and with this came corruption and manipulation. Again quotes from 'The Fatal Shore':

- \* Francis Grose (1758-1814) had fought against the American rebels in the War of Independence. Badly wounded and invalided home to England, he got back to full service pay by helping to raise and recruit the NSW Corps. As its Commandant, and as Lt Governor of NSW, Grose took over when Phillip sailed. He promptly set about putting most civil affairs in military hands. He replaced magistrates with corps officers and appointed a thrusting young Scottish Lieutenant, John Macarthur, as regimental paymaster and inspector of public works - posts that gave him leverage by controlling the supply of convict labour. Grose did not forget his own rank and file. He cancelled Phillip's policy of equal rations for all and gave the troops more food than the convicts. He also let it be known that any member of the NSW Corps could have 25 acres of free land for the asking. But his crucial decision for the future of Australian farming was to offer 100 acre land grants to corps officers - along with 10 convicts free of charge and maintained at government expense, to work each one . The corps officers, Grose reported to London, were the only description of settlers on whom reliance can be placed.

Under Grose, officers had the economic edge on civilians; they could raise capital by borrowing against their regimental pay, and as a junta they seized a monopoly on most consumer goods arriving in Sydney Harbour. The chief of these was rum, the social anesthetic and real currency of early NSW.

By 1799 NSW Corps Officers owned 32% of the cattle in Australia, 40% of the goats, 59% of the horses and 77% of the sheep. Grasping, haughty, jealous of their privileges and prerogatives, Macarthur and his friends were on top and meant to stay that way. They were so powerful, in fact, that on January 26th 1808 the 20th anniversary of white settlement, they staged a coup d'etat by rebelling against Gov Bligh deposing him and running NSW as a military junta for 2 years. For this remarkable mutiny NONE of the officers was hanged or even seriously punished. One of their assumptions was that convicts were there to be used, not reformed. Both caused a rapid hardening of attitudes against convicts. The NSW Corps stiffly resisted any effort to criticise or even inspect its treatment of the convicts. The emblematic form of this attitude would show itself on Norfolk Island. (Page 111)



left:  
The proletariat ruined by  
addiction to spirits, in Gin Lane,  
1750-51. (The Bettmann  
Archive).

The jail complex at Kingston on Norfolk Island, falling into decay by the '870s, seen from the flank of Telegraph Hill. The remains of the Pentagonal Prison can be seen within the security walls of the compound. (*National Library of Australia, Canberra*).



## 6.7. Homosexuality:

*(All quotes from 'The Fatal Shore')*

Norfolk Island - from Sodom to final hopelessness

*(Page 483)*

Norfolk Island resembled Sodom sexually but the likeness went deeper. It seemed to have become the epitome of all inversions, to breed that final hopelessness held by theologians to be the worst torment of Hell: a place where - in those words of Milton used by Edmund Burke in an early Commons debate on transportation - "all life dies and all death lives". It completed the myth of antipodean inversion of nature by projecting it onto human society. Within its unspeakable microcosm language itself was reversed.

So corrupt was their most ordinary language....that in their dialect evil was literally called good, and good, evil - the well disposed man was branded wicked, whilst the leader in monstrous vice was styled virtuous. The human heart seemed inverted, and the very conscience reversed.

Their faces were like those of demons.

Norfolk Island, wrecked the social contract. Authority was supposed by sinner and saint alike to draw its value from its mirroring power - its role as a reflected sign of God's mercy as well as His justice. Bad authority strips all men of hope by showing them a cracked glass, a different truth about hierarchies.

They at once throw off all restraint and regard for either God or man and consider everyone over them as acting under the influence of Hypocrisy and Imposture, usurping a power never delegated or sanctioned by the Almighty. They say you make man the slave of man. They resist and cavel at every trifle and multiply every little departure from rectitude as a premeditated scheme to bilk and gull them into submission because they are under the operation of the LAW and cannot seek or obtain redress.

Missionaries on Norfolk Island were struck by the state of mind that oppression bred in the convicts. They thought of the beauty of the Island where man wanders the demoniac of the scene. The prisoners doubted the being of a Deity but wished if there was a God in Heaven that he would deprive him of life. Their faces were like those of demons.

Hyde Park Barracks:

Homosexuality was the norm in the Hyde Park Barracks in Sydney where new arrivals were decarted from the ships, old lags thrown with young boys.

Country Areas - Bestiality:

*Sodomy was believed to be frequent among the shepherds, who tended to live alone, then among stockmen who practised a great deal of that crime and even taught it to the formerly innocent Aborigines. And if the "Man from Snowy Rivers" convict forbears were not content with Jacky-Jacky, there were always sheep.*

Norfolk Island - Homosexuality:

*John Stephen, a former judge in NSW, related how in the first trial he had attended in Australia 4 or 5 Norfolk Island prisoners were sentenced to death. "They thanked the Judge for having ordered them to die; stating that they lived in such a state of horrid misery, witnessing the most horrid crime known to human nature committed in numberless cases from morning to night, that they preferred death".*

Mt Victoria Gangs:

*At the Stockades convicts could sometimes bribe their way out of a flogging with money or tobacco but the only other way was to "come out" as a homosexual and so mollify the overseers. Like chose like; an overseer's sexual favourites could be rewarded with a ration of power on the iron gangs enforcing "starvation, flogging and insupportable labour upon any resistant 'straights'". Cook declared that in his time on the road gangs, he had only known 2 overseers who were NOT homosexual. Cook stated (Thomas Cook, *The Exiles Lamentations*, page 268) that it (homosexuality) represented an abusive control of the will of others often involving rape. If this carceral society of the 1830's was anything like prisons today, we must recognise that many of the sexual episodes Cook witnessed were not lovemaking but acts of sadistic humiliation in which sexuality was merely the instrument of a deeper violence - the strong breaking the weak down into a punk, a molly, a gobbling queen. He described in language that can scarcely bear to encompass its subject, how sexual contact in prison tends to be metabolised into relationships of power. Cook thought that the System nurtured sodomy - that it flourished in Australia as nowhere else.*

(Pages 266-272 - "The Fatal Shore")

## 6.8. Gambling & Racing:

Australia's early addiction to gambling was transplanted from Georgian England:

*" Like many of the children who gambled, Sydney was the child of a dissolute parent. Addiction to drink and gambling was not a devil's flower that suddenly and wantonly blossomed in the vicious new colony. It was a strong characteristic of Georgian England.....*

*" In Georgian England, gambling obsessed men and women, rich and poor....everything were grounds for a bet.....this reckless addiction to gambling, transported to Australia....reflected in comments by D D Mann in 1811 who said that.....' the convicts carried gaming too frequently, to the most deplorable excesses.....next to drinking, to constitute the chief pleasure and amusement of the lowest classes of the prisoners.' "*

*" Significantly for Australia, horseracing and cricket grew steadily in popularity, but the 'excitement, natural to both sports, was intensified by furious betting for high stakes'...."*

*Many were gamblers before convicts and some became convicts because they were gamblers....*

*Natural fires of gambling became a blazing mania....*

*1794 'daily practise of gaming' - like rum one of the major dynamics of the society....*

*Children gambled - 'chuck farthing' resembles 'gaming'....*

*First outdoor sport....one of them was horse-racing and certainly the best organised. First organised races in colony held at Parrammatta on 30th April 1810:*

*' These races, at which a horse appropriately named Parrammatta beat a rival called Belfast, conformed with well-established English traditions in being part of a more comprehensive sports meeting, enlivened especially by cockfighting.....'*

*Despite the races at Parrammatta.....Hyde Park was destined to be the earliest identifiable, continuing headquarters of racing in Australia....*

SYDNEY REVELS

OF

BACCHUS, CUPID, AND MOMUS;

BEING CHOICE AND HUMOUROUS SELECTIONS FROM SCENES AT  
THE SYDNEY POLICE OFFICE, AND OTHER PUBLIC PLACES,  
DURING THE LAST THREE YEARS.

BY

CHARLES ADAM CORBYN,  
NEWSPAPER REPORTER.

DEDICATED, BY PERMISSION, TO

G. R. NICHOLS, ESQ., M. L. C.,

BY HIS OBLIGED AND FAITHFUL SERVANT,

THE AUTHOR.

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## 6.9. Sydney's Society Life

John Piper and wife:

- \* Lavish dances, could be called 'balls' re size and dignity etc
- \* One of Sydney's great party givers
- \* Had to resign as Chairman of Bank of NSW because of enquiries instituted by Darling
- \* April 1827 - suspended from duties as naval officer - deficiency of 12,000 pounds - mismanagement
- \* Tried to drown himself
- \* Son of a doctor
- \* Came to Sydney Feb 1792
- \* Ensign in NSW Corps
- \* Immediate social success
- \* Close friend of John Macarthur, acted as second in duel for him. Court Martial 1802 but acquitted after apologising.
- \* Acting Commandant - Norfolk Island 1804-1810
- \* Generous, gay and well-loved man
- \* 1822 built Henrietta Villa - Point Piper
- \* 'no expense spared to ornament this fairy palace'. Kept a band of music.
- \* Excess of zeal to monopolise social entertainment in colony. Entertained everyone, so noone flattered by his invitations.

Bacchus: Roman & Greek god of Wine and Indulgence

Cupid: Roman god of Love, son of Mercury and Venus, identified with the Greek god, Eros.

'Cupidity' - eager desire, especially to possess, passion for gain, greed. Latin word 'cupere' - desire.

Momus: Greek mythology - god of Ridicule, a carping critic, a god of mocking and censure, a faultfinder.