

## Miscellaneous and Metal Artefacts Conservatorium Site, Sydney

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### 1.0 Miscellaneous Artefacts

The artefacts defined as Miscellaneous encompass a variety of activities and fabrics, and despite this wide range of functions the deposits excavated generally yielded very small quantities of any of the types represented. Indigenous activity is not reflected among these artefacts, which begin with the use of the site from the early colonial occupation until the present day. There were nevertheless some interesting correlations among the artefacts. The catalogue numbers include numbers #6001-6285, and #7312-7322.

Artefacts generally appeared as very small groupings, or singly in most contexts, thus imparting very little useful information. Among these are the usual or expected bone buttons and button blanks of early date, small china and mother-of-pearl buttons, dressmaker pins, slate pencils and the occasional fragment of writing slate, as well as numerous fragments of marked and unmarked kaolin smoking pipe. Few of the artefacts indicated the presence of children or gaming activities. Apart from a few clay marbles of indeterminate date, there are the occasional doll's house doll limb, and toy tea, or dinner set piece.

The contexts from which artefacts of any quantity were recovered and thus from which some meaningful conclusions may be drawn are those related to the fill of the cistern [603-611], two rubbish dumps [719] and [850], test trenches opened to determine possible indigenous activity [898], the remains of the road surface deposit in Area B [662], and a number of garden beds on the west side of the building [901-952, 963-971]. The artefacts from the excavation of the Verbrugghen Hall contexts will be dealt with as a separate group.

#### **1.1 Prehistory Test Trenches**

The only artefact to be recovered in any quantity from the test trenches was lead type. A quantity of lead type from these trenches, and from contexts [642] and [644] which represent the A2 and B2 horizons dating to c.1820, as well as context [721]. A number of the pieces are spacers, while others bear letters in both upper and lower case, and they are perhaps derived from the first printing office which is believed to have been located in the south outbuilding of the First Government House, and lost during the washing process.<sup>1</sup> However the topography of the two sites would indicate that this was not as an occasional loss from the washing process, but perhaps as an introduced deposition, some of which may be derived from the area of the First Government House.

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<sup>1</sup> Proudfoot *et al.* 1991:75, 79.

There are surprisingly few other correlations with the First Government House Miscellaneous artefacts. Among the occasional buttons from those contexts yielding few artefacts of consequence, only one military button dates to the period of occupation at First Government House. This bears the insignia of the 12th (East Suffolk) Regiment of Foot (active 1854-61, 671#6138) and is backmarked by FIRMIN & SONS (1824-1875). Despite eight buttons bearing makers marks, or insignia there are only two regimental buttons. Both are two-piece domes with separate shanks made in Britain, with the other made by Smith, Kemp & Wright of Birmingham (from the 1840s, 720#6158). This belonged to an officer of the 77th (East Middlesex) Regiment of Foot (active 1857-1858) so dates to after the Governor's home moved to its present location. The regimental buttons recovered from the First Government House all came from the Young St./Raphael Place 1990/91 excavation and relate to regiments whose tours of duty pre-date the 12th and 77th regiments.<sup>2</sup>

## 1.2 The Cistern

Although the cistern was excavated as a sequence of deposits the distribution of some artefacts through these deposits seem to suggest that rather than a sequential deposition over an extended period of time, the backfill occurred as phases within a single event. This is supported by the mixing of dressmaker pins with upset heads, typical of the later nineteenth century, and the earlier spiral wound headed pins throughout the deposits. Perhaps more compelling is the distribution of the fragments of two blue-and-white transfer printed plates from a toy dinner set, of which pieces were recovered from three separate deposits (#604/6049, #607/6061, #609/6084). Although unmarked, the Empire style dresses of the mother and daughter(?), with a rabbit, inhabiting a fantasy rural scene with a temple may indicate a first half of the nineteenth century date.<sup>3</sup>

The cistern provides some of the best evidence for clothing from the site in the form of fragments of shoe leather, and buttons. Fragments of shoe leather include sole, heel and upper parts, as well as one apparently near complete shoe (#608/7322). The soles and the near complete shoe are very slender and appear to be quite well made indicating that they may have belonged to woman. The shoe has a chisel toe indicating that it should date before c.1870.<sup>4</sup> Generally, with few exceptions, the buttons are unremarkable sew-throughs of various fabrics. One interesting 'trouser' button is backmarked *SUSPENDER BUTTON* around the rim and may be quite early, as it is made either of copper, or has an unusually high copper content (#610/6094). Although inscriptions are believed to appear on these buttons around the middle of the nineteenth century this may be a rare and early example.<sup>5</sup> The only other button of interest is backmarked *McGOWAN. GARRARD S<sup>T</sup> LONDON* (button manufacturers from 1810) (#609/6082) and is a gilded jacket type so should also date to the first half of the nineteenth century.

## 1.3 Area B, Road Surface

Two jacket buttons, which retain some gilt on the surface should date to 1830-1850 which was the heyday of "Golden Age" buttons. Although the gilding is often absent, one of the jacket buttons bears the generic slogan EXTRA RICH QUALITY on the back which refers to the quality of the gold (#6128). The other (#6130) bears a rampant lion which may come from a livery, rather than military uniform, and is also made by McGowan of London. Despite the indications of an early

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<sup>2</sup> The regiments represented are the 46th (South Devonshire) Regiment of Foot (1814-1818), the 48th (Northamptonshire) Regiment of Foot (1817-1832), the 50th (The Queen's Own) Regiment of Foot (1833-1841), and the Corps of Royal Sappers and Miners (1835-1857).

<sup>3</sup> There are no known parallels for this scene so the Empire style dresses may provide the best evidence for a date of 1800-1830.

<sup>4</sup> Swann 1982:48.

<sup>5</sup> Lindbergh 1999. See also for discussion of "Golden Age" buttons.

date for deposit [662] a two-piece dome button with separate shank from a NSW Police uniform made in Sydney by C. K. Moore (#6128) can date no earlier than 1911 if this is, as seems probable, Claude Moore of 142 King Street Sydney. Among the occasional finds is a four-hole small china within a copper alloy frame is unusual and may be an early example with a pre-1825 date (#6126).<sup>6</sup>

There are two lead tokens of which one is embossed with a standing hound(?), while the other has confronting geese/pheasants (#6123, #6124). Although the lead tokens, usually decorated with geometric images of dots and crosses or star bursts, have been found on a number of sites very little is known about them. They were apparently made in Britain during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and although their function is uncertain they are believed to be pay tokens.<sup>7</sup> Their appearance on local sites may indicate use as gaming counters.

#### 1.4 Rubbish Dumps

Both dumps yielded a small scatter of Miscellaneous artefacts. From the [719] dump a glazed earthenware baby feeder shield bearing the name of S. Mawson & Thompson of London is interesting, while the dump [850] yielded very little of interest apart from a quantity of fragmentary kaolin smoking pipe. Generally the kaolin fragments were imported from Scotland, though there are two made by C. Crop of London (1856-1891), and one GAMBIER of Paris (1860-1890). One of those made by Crop (#6220) is nearly complete bearing what appears to be an American eagle, Irish harp and surmounted by a pattern of stars on the bowl. Although this pipe was made in London it was presumably made for the American market. Another item from America is a jacket button from context [721] which is interesting and as far as I know unique (#6163). It is embossed with an American eagle on an Irish harp with the letters *PJG* and backmarked by the American button makers *BE[N]EDICT & BU[R]NH[AM]*, (1834-1843) and may be a military or livery button.

#### 1.5 The Western Garden Beds

Stem fragments, and bowls from kaolin smoking pipes were quite numerous and reflect the general widespread popularity of smoking as a pastime. The majority of fragments were of unmarked stems, and some bowl fragments which should place them before the mid nineteenth century.<sup>8</sup> Of the stems bearing makers marks the majority are from Scotland, and generally date before 1891.<sup>9</sup> Two fragments embossed *LACHLANDER* are of interest. One bears the mark of the Sydney distributor Thomas Saywell (1866-1904) (#6235), and may have been manufactured for his firm by the London pipe maker C. Crop (1856-1891) who made the pipe stem also marked *LACHLANDER* from the dump (850#6218). More decorative pipe fragments were also recovered from the simple embossed basket-weave bowl (#6226) to the stem fragment bearing a delicately moulded horse sitting at the junction with the bowl (#6249). Two similarly embossed bowls bear Scottish thistles, one as the dominant image (#6250) with a rose, the other with queen's crown framed by thistle leaves. The lack of makers' marks is disappointing though it is probable that they were manufactured in Scotland during the reign of Victoria.

<sup>6</sup> See Jargstorf 1993:69. Bohemian glass, and presumably porcelain buttons, usually had metal/brass frames and shanks prior to 1825/1830.

<sup>7</sup> Bailey 1995:56.

<sup>8</sup> Ayto 1990:6, though the small size of some examples need not be indicative of an early date.

<sup>9</sup> In 1891 the U.S. McKinley Tariff Act required that the country of origin be indicated rather than the city address (Godden 1964:11).

## **2.0 Metal Artefacts**

The metal artefacts recovered from the Conservatorium of Music site are almost exclusively structural in function. The dominant artefacts are iron nails, with some iron sheeting, as well as some artefacts relating to services, machinery and domestic interiors. Much of the material recovered was in a poor condition due to erosion and/or encrustation, thus inhibiting absolute identification of much of the material. There were also no artefacts that could be absolutely dated other than some of the nails, and some modern material. The excavation areas were located to the southern side of the building, the western area, and only a small quantity from the eastern section. The source for all information on the nails is Robert Varman (see bibliography). The catalogue includes numbers #7066-#7311.

Nails comprise the largest component in the assemblage. Although it may be assumed that nails with a square section could date from the First Fleet, the particularly poor condition of the nails and nail heads (where present) hampers definition. Due to the poor state of preservation it is generally very difficult to determine the mode of manufacture of these nails, whether they are hand or machine wrought, and although cut nails tend to be more easily recognised this cannot always be determined with certainty. Wire nails had been imported for the first time in 1853, however it was not until the mid 1860s that they were widely accepted, and not until c.1870 that they superseded cut nails for most purposes. Although the pre-1870 wire nails tend to be thicker than the post-1870 examples, the degree of encrustation and erosion prohibits certainty in this area. The generally sparse nature of the finds also precludes certainty of function.

The contexts where there is a sufficient number of artefacts to give some indication of function are the fill of the cistern [604-611], the nearby post 1917 dump [719], the later 19th century dump to the east probably related to the Government House [850], the garden beds dating from c.1845 to the west [876, 901-952, 963-973], and the deposits [636] and [657].

As mentioned previously (see above 1.3) the cistern fill appeared as a sequence of deposits which the artefacts seem to indicate may have occurred as a single event. Although the nails are predominantly square in section indicating a potentially early date, this is denied by the occasional wire nail in the deposits [604, 607, 610]. The other artefacts reveal very little functionally, though a few brads, screws and sprigs, as well as some lead flashing, a fragment of service pipe, should relate to a demolition or structural refurbishment. There is a square shovel head (609#7110), and some fragments of metal containers of unknown function (paint, food?).

The rubbish dump in the region of the railway tunnels [850], perhaps derived from Government House was sampled only so cannot be considered as indicative of any specific function. Although the artefacts generally relate to building with wire nails, portions of service pipe, a window stay, and padlock, when considered in conjunction with a cast iron saucepan, and the other artefacts recovered, this dump may also reflect a refurbishment of the Government House.

Artefacts that can be attributed to the period of the use of the building as a stables are confined to the occasional horseshoe from various contexts, not all of which can be specifically associated with the stable building. A hopper funnel from a corn crusher (#7227) also seems to relate to the stables and indicates that feed was prepared on site. Of interest among the Miscellaneous artefacts is a crotal bell (#6187) which may be all that remains of horse trappings on the site.

### **3.0 Verbrugghen Hall**

The artefacts from the Verbrugghen Hall consisted almost exclusively of plain unmarked pipe stems and iron nails with square section. This indicates that the dating for these contexts should pre-date the mid-nineteenth century. Although cut or wrought nails continue after this period, their association with such a quantity of unmarked pipe stems should confirm this dating. Some marks were found on the spur of pipe fragments, all of which seem to be “T”, “C”, and two bowl fragments marked “T. D” were also recovered. Despite the so-called “T.D” pipes being quite common little is known about them, thus neither of these makers can be identified.<sup>10</sup> Three plain jacket buttons were also recovered, one of which bore an illegible makers mark. It is reasonable to assume that if this maker is revealed with treatment of the button it will confirm a pre mid-nineteenth-century date.

### **4.0 Bibliography**

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<sup>10</sup> See for example Humphrey 1969:25-30.

## 5.0 Abbreviations

List of abbreviations used in metals and miscellaneous catalogue:

2pce	two-piece
Aes	copper alloy
Ag	Silver
Al	Aluminium
Au	gold
bwtp	blue and white transfer print
cu	copper
d	diameter: inner seam to seam (pipe bowl)
D	diameter
e	early
emb	embossed
encr	encrusted
FD	fabric decay
Fe	Iron
few	fine earthenware
FR	fragment
h	height of bowl
Inc.	incurse
LHS	left hand side
m/pce	mouth piece
MoP	Mother of Pearl
MW	machine wrought
Ni	Nickle
Nr comp	near complete
o'cut	offcut
Pb	Lead
Porc	Porcelain
Rect	rectangular
Rev.	reverse
RH	rose head
RHS	right hand side
sect.	section
sep	separate
Sn	Tin
Sq	square
SW	spiral wound
Synth	synthetic
T'Brush	toothbrush
TC	terracotta
UH	upset head
v. fine	very fine
w:	width
WP	wedge point
Zn	Zinc