‘Allowed to die’? Prison Hulks, Convict Corpses and the Inquiry of 1847

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ABSTRACT

The 1847 Inquiry into General Treatment of Convicts in Hulks at Woolwich publicly exposed the prison hulk system as one that used, mistreated, and trafficked convict corpses. By focusing on the treatment of deceased convicts on board British prison hulks, this article enhances our understanding of how both the hulk system and anatomy inspectorate were administered in the years that followed the passing of the Anatomy Act. Assessing conflicts between and weaknesses within these two systems provides a unique perspective on gradual changes in public and parliamentary attitudes towards convicts, medical men, dissection, and death in the nineteenth century.

KEYWORDS

Convicts; prison hulks; anatomy; death; dissection

Introduction

In late 1846, a convict on board the Warrior prison hulk at Woolwich, William Mawman Brown, sent a letter to Member of Parliament Thomas Slingsby Duncombe. Delivered with the help of a guard, the contents of Brown’s letter outlined instances of abuse committed by senior medical officers, portraying a constant battle between convicts in the hospital and the chief surgeon, Peter Bosse. One case in particular captured Duncombe’s attention: Henry Driver, a convict formerly based at Millbank Prison, was admitted to the hospital on board the hulks on 21 May 1846, and was dead within five days. Driver’s case was particularly shocking. It was claimed, ‘this unhappy wretch had no sooner departed this life than the body, still warm, was carried over to the dead-house, and the knife at work, opening and dissecting. Entrails taken from the body, and thrown into the river, where dozens had gone before’. Driver’s death was a spectacle. In the process of cleaning up after the dissection, his remains were exposed to an audience of convicts on board the hulks. One convict on the neighbouring ship, Justitia, described how ‘a lot of thick blood came over [the side of the ship] and the entrails hung where the ears of the bucket are put on, and [a medical officer] took and shook the bucket and shook them off, and it was enough to make anybody’s blood run cold to look at it’. Key to Driver’s case was the question of whether his dissection had been performed less than forty-eight hours after his death, in which case it would have been in contravention of the Anatomy Act. Not only were acts of cruelty coupled with seemingly unlawful dissection, but it was feared that the hulks’ mortality returns had been falsified, and that many more
convicts had died than had been disclosed to the anatomy inspectorate, which regulated the practice of anatomy.

Fifteen years after the passing of the 1832 Anatomy Act, medical officers on the hulks were allegedly performing publicly grotesque and illegal dissections. A lack of cohesion between both systems of administration also resulted in some convicts’ bodies being dissected at hulk stations, with others supplied to anatomy schools. MP Duncombe labelled Driver’s inquest a mockery, and called for a Select Committee to investigate medical treatment on board the convict hulks at Woolwich.4 Duncombe stated that it was ‘so brutal, both as regarded the treatment of prisoners while living and dead to be a disgrace to any country calling itself […] civilised and Christian’, suggesting that Britain had a moral imperative to treat all its subjects with decency.5 Across his political career, Duncombe spoke in favour of numerous reforms, trade unionism and the abolition of slavery. In 1846, he condemned the poor treatment of prisoners at Millbank Penitentiary, criticism which may have prompted convict Brown to contact him.6 His call for an inquiry was feared to be a costly move which might incite criticism in the press, and was initially denied.7 However, The Times reported that the public had a right to know the truth, and warned, ‘an impression most unfavourable to the authorities at the hulks will gain strength every day that an inquiry is withheld’.8 Bowing to this pressure, the government launched an investigation into the treatment of convicts in the hulks at Woolwich. Captain William John Williams of the Prison Inspectorate was appointed to work with Duncombe. Together they interviewed ninety-eight overseers, guards, inspectors, clerks and convicts. Published in 1847, the Inquiry revealed tensions between – and weaknesses within – the prison hulk system and the anatomy inspectorate. This article uses the Inquiry as a prism through which to view the use and abuse of convict corpses in relation to these two systems. It brings about greater understanding of the overall significance of the hulks in the larger supply chain, and provides a unique perspective on gradual changes in public and parliamentary attitudes towards convicts, medical men, dissection, and death.

**Convict corpses and the Anatomy Act**

By examining the treatment of deceased convicts on board prison hulks, this article contributes to our understanding of the administration of both the Anatomy Act and the hulks. Prison hulks were partly dismantled warships used to detain convicted male offenders awaiting transportation. They were commissioned by the British government in 1776 as one way in which to deal with an extraordinary penal housing crisis brought about by the loss of the American colonies as a destination for transported offenders.9 Cheap and mobile, prison hulks could hold up to 800 men at any one time. Many of those incarcerated were driven to crime by poverty, but the majority of convicts on the hulks were petty offenders; ordinary, working people such as apprentices, servants and artisans.10 They were put to work in dockyards, and contributed to their efficient running by working in chain gangs along the foreshores, moving cables, dredging channels and building structures at yards including Woolwich, Chatham and Portsmouth. Prison hulks were homosocial – women were housed in prisons elsewhere – and until the 1820s, could house juvenile offenders, some as young as eight years old.11 Those who left the hulks could do so via four broad routes: transportation, pardon, escape or death.

Their punishment was meted out across life and death, as the bodies of deceased convicts were used by surgeons for training purposes, in experiments and dissections.
This article contends that the Inquiry serves as the most politically and publicly prominent discussion of the use and abuse of convict bodies on the hulks; it therefore uses it as a platform to investigate tensions between the hulks and the anatomy inspectorate, whilst positioning them against a backdrop of shifting public and parliamentary attitudes. A close reading of the Inquiry of 1847 reveals that the administration of the hulks and anatomy inspectorate contained flaws and lacked cohesion. These systems were answerable to the Home Office, yet both lacked direction and reliable management at various stages of their operation, leading to abuses of power. The first section examines this in relation to medical men, focusing on chief surgeon on the hulks, Peter Bossey, who was accused of allowing convicts to die in order to supply the anatomy schools. The belief that medical men were corrupt in securing bodies for dissection echoed across public institutions; Sean Burrell and Geoffrey Gill’s article on Liverpool riots in 1832 outlines how rioters believed cholera victims were removed to hospitals and killed by doctors who used them for anatomical dissection. Public outcry supporting convicts was minimal, as the treatment of a convict’s body after death had divided opinion for decades. The custom of giving executed criminals to surgeons was established by the late seventeenth century, while the passing of the Murder Act in 1752 made the dissection or gibbeting of murders’ corpses legal. Prior to this, physicians went to great lengths to rescue bodies from the gallows, bribing hangmen or giving money to the condemned in exchange for their bodies. Section one examines Bossey’s medical credentials and abuses of power on the hulks, showing that a mistrust in medical men was still present in public discourse.

The second and third sections of this article examine the relationship between the hulks, dissection and anatomy schools. Elizabeth Hurren’s work has provided a nuanced understanding of dissection and the criminal corpse, bridging the gap between criminal and medical histories. However, much of the recent literature written on dissection and the criminal corpse tends to focus on the bodies of executed criminals; little has been written on the bodies of men who were not sentenced to death but could still end up on the dissection table if they passed away during their confinement. Prison hulks offered easy access to convict bodies for dissection. Poor sanitary conditions at Woolwich meant that death rates on board the hulks were unusually, if not uniquely, high. Data on this early period is not specific, but as early as 1778, the sustained death rate was twenty-five to thirty percent. An unknown number of bodies were sent for dissection, something of a side-line amongst hulk surgeons which, according to one former prisoner, earned them £5-6 a corpse. The supply of corpses for dissection could not meet demand, but the passing of the Anatomy Act in 1832 allowed anatomists to take the unclaimed bodies of those dying in workhouses, prisons, asylums and other institutions that were mostly inhabited by the poor. Following this new legislation, the price of bodies decreased. Inspector of Anatomy reports revealed that corpses from the hulks at Woolwich now fetched a far lower sum of £2.10s. By 1847, the practice of obtaining bodies for the purposes of anatomy was no longer illicit. Anatomy inspectors were charged with sending quarterly returns of corpses removed to the anatomy schools to the Home Secretary; part of their role was to visit and inspect institutions that practiced anatomy. However, the creation of a government department did not necessarily mean that legislation ran smoothly; these sections reveal that the anatomy inspectorate lacked the power to ensure compliance and cooperation with hulk surgeons, reinforcing Helen MacDonald’s work, which has revealed that the inspectorate was under-resourced well into the 1850s, and
increasingly became embroiled in unlawful and unethical ways of obtaining and distributing corpses.\textsuperscript{23}

The article’s final section focuses on death and burial, reflecting upon Victorian ideals of grief, and how convictions fit into this. Unless claimed by relatives, the bodies of those who died in public institutions belonged to the state; as outlined by Ruth Richardson, poor families, particularly those who died in the workhouse, were natural targets in the supply chain of anatomists.\textsuperscript{24} Comparing the hulks to workhouses opens up interesting avenues of inquiry, as medical negligence was built into the latter’s system.\textsuperscript{25} The Andover Scandal of 1845–6 marks one high-profile example of abuse in workhouses that prompted a political shakedown.\textsuperscript{26} Parliamentary inquiries revealed a tyrannical regime under the master of Andover workhouse, Colin McDougall; it transpired that McDougall made disabled inmates work, embezzled funds, and inflicted violence on women and children.\textsuperscript{27} The Andover scandal prompted new criticisms concerning the conduct of institutions, and by association, the state. It was in this climate that one year later the treatment of convicts was brought into question.

Direct comparisons were drawn between the two systems by The Times, who, when reporting Duncombe’s speech to the House of Commons stated, ‘the details he furnished are such as, but for our workhouse experience, we should at once pronounce incredible’.\textsuperscript{28} By reporting on the hulks scandal and making direct comparisons to treatment in workhouses, The Times showed that public perceptions were changing: convicts were slowly being viewed as objects of pity, rather than fear or disgust.

Before proceeding, it is important to reflect upon the anonymity of the bodies whose fate is discussed in this article. The language used here to describe the dead is taken from state sources which obscure the life, experiences, and dignity of marginalised individuals caught up in government processes. This article gives voice to private and state actors including penal surgeons, anatomy inspectors and anatomy professors, but convict testimonies are rarer. Some state sources, including the Inquiry of 1847, can help us locate the voices of those who did not leave written records of their experience, although, as Lucy Frost and Hamish Maxwell-Stewart have pointed out, convicts’ statements were essentially mediated by administrative processes.\textsuperscript{29} Equally, state records cannot provide us with insight into the lives and experiences of those who died in confinement; Henry Driver was one man amongst many whose life ended on board the hulks, and whose voice is markedly absent from this story. His body, like that of others, was powerless to resist maltreatment by those in positions of power and discussion in the public sphere. The criminal body was viewed both as an object for study as well as something to be punished; while anatomists dissected dead bodies, others studied their outward appearance while alive.\textsuperscript{30} Bodies like Driver’s acted as dual objects of public fascination and revulsion, factors which further obscured the individual and reduced their status to that of an anonymous criminal corpse.

**Attitudes towards medical men**

When conducting his investigation, Duncombe reported that the prisoners on the hulks believed that they were ‘allowed to die for the sake of their bodies to go to the school of anatomy’.\textsuperscript{31} They felt that medical treatment was purposefully deficient, so that their bodies could be sold for profit. Duncombe spoke out against chief surgeon Peter Bossey, stating that ‘nothing could be more cruel than [his] neglect of the prisoners, and when he was present, nothing could be more brutal than his conduct’.\textsuperscript{32} Aged 40, Bossey was a member of the
College of Surgeons, and drew a salary of £250 per annum. As a penal surgeon, he was not a sole agent of the state; in addition to his work on the hulks, he ran a large private practice in Woolwich with his brother Francis. The Inquiry found that Bossey used the hulks to support the development of apprentices from his Woolwich surgery. He used the hulks as pseudo-teaching hospitals, visiting patients with a group of apprentices to discuss symptoms. His brother accompanied him on some occasions. Though prison hulks presented themselves as an excellent training ground, full of multiple opportunities to study the human body in life and death, Bossey was clearly flouting regulations and using the hulks for his own private gain. The accusations against him indicated that hulk system needed to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the medical men it employed. Bossey’s neglect may well have stemmed from his being engaged elsewhere, but this did not explain alleged brutal conduct.

In an age of growing professionalisation, qualifications and accreditation became a means to legitimise authority. Captain Williams made inquiries into the credentials of the medical men who worked on board, asking assistant surgeon Alexander Blyth whether he was a member of the College of Surgeons. He was not, nor was he a qualified surgeon. Aged twenty-seven, Blyth did not possess a diploma, although he stated that he had been an assistant to a general practitioner in Bedfordshire for almost four years, and that he had studied in Edinburgh, London and Chatham. Blyth’s status was not unusual; until the passing of the Medical Act in 1858, which regulated qualifications in medicine and surgery, no centralised system of practitioners existed. Until then, no employer could access a medical register to see a record of previous training or qualifications. Asking whether the medical officers were accredited does indicate Williams’ expectation that they belonged to the medical fraternity, and were therefore trustworthy and upstanding figures. Age continued to be synonymous with experience, and Williams criticised the hulks by observing, ‘the youthful appearance of these young gentlemen is very little impressive of confidence’.

By favouring convict testimonies, MP Duncombe openly challenged the medical profession and its bonds of trust. Articles published in The Times battled with Duncombe’s accusations versus Surgeon Bossey’s standing in society, stating: ‘we are reluctant to consider it possible that a surgeon should laugh at the suffering of this patients, resort to brutal expedients for testing the sincerity of their complaints, and torture them during fits or convulsions by spiteful acts of personal violence’. Following a public inquest of two further convicts at Woolwich, The Times then printed a notice in defence of Bossey: ‘we acquit Mr Bossey (sic.) on his own word, which we have no reason to doubt, of the cruelty with which he has been unjustly charged’. As a qualified professional, his statement was accepted on trust. The inquest gave Bossey a public platform to voice his innocence in the face of accusations; he argued that he could only be accused of being too lenient with respect to the convicts in his care, giving an example of his turning a blind eye to two convicts who had feigned paralysis and other disorders to avoid work. However, this admission of leniency led The Times to voice concerns of a cover-up. The newspaper requested further investigation into Bossey, and momentum began to grow. One week later, it concluded, ‘the charges against him are either too contemptible to need any examination at all, or they should be submitted to a full and impartial inquiry’. The Medical Times published an article in his defence, saying that the reputation of a medical man was ‘all that is valuable; for this once taken away, nothing remains for them but future neglect and ruin’. The Medical Times condemned Duncombe for his lack of discretion in bringing charges against Bossey without evidence, stating that the
Inquiry had inflicted ‘much mental suffering upon the gentleman’.\textsuperscript{45} In an age where status counted, Bossey was defended by the medical fraternity and his cruelty could not be proven. Nevertheless, he was guilty of using the hulks to advance his own reputation, a fact which reflected badly upon the hulk establishment and highlighted an inability to detect and deter abuses of power.

**Dissection and the hulks**

Key to Duncombe’s demands in the House of Commons was an investigation into the legality of surgeons dissecting convict Henry Driver’s body so soon after death.\textsuperscript{46} According to Clause IX of the Anatomy Act, no body should be removed for anatomical examination ‘until after forty-eight hours from the time of such person’s decease’.\textsuperscript{47} The matter brought hulk surgeons’ compliance with the law into question, but also raised questions concerning their relationship with the anatomy inspectorate. A dissection on the hulks could not take place until the body had been viewed by a coroner. Following this, inquests were generally held at the different public houses at Woolwich, or a cottage in the yard close by.\textsuperscript{48} Surgeon’s apprentices were then sent to open the body and prepare it for examination. The Inquiry concluded that Driver’s post-mortem was in fact legal, citing that direct evidence existed of ‘its having been performed in the morning of the day succeeding his decease’.\textsuperscript{49} Nevertheless, when investigating the public disposal of Driver’s internal organs, Captain Williams found that the gruesome allegations were in part true; an amount of bloody water containing ‘at least a portion of the interior of a human body’ had been left in a pail by a forgetful medical officer.\textsuperscript{50} While medical officers argued that the contents of the pail had been buried, convicts swore that they had seen its contents thrown overboard, with one calling the act ‘a scandalous thing’.\textsuperscript{51} Unlike the media and medical profession, Captain Williams sided with Duncombe and favoured the testimony of convicts. Together, they exposed a weakness in the Anatomy Act’s legislation: the law did not compel hulk surgeons to hand over corpses, who instead chose to ignore recommendations and perform dissections where they saw fit.\textsuperscript{52}

Hulk surgeons tampered with convict corpses, rendering them unfit for dissection in anatomy schools and risked their own professional credibility. The dissections which took place in the Woolwich dead house were only permitted to confirm causes of death. Bossey had the authority to carry out post-mortems prior to inquests, but was not sanctioned to dissect the corpse afterwards to any great degree. Instead, the bodies, unless claimed by family members, were transferred to the authority of the anatomy inspectorate, who arranged for their collection. Bossey objected to the custom of giving prisoners’ bodies to the inspectorate, arguing that this legislation stopped his men from properly establishing the cause of death.\textsuperscript{53} It was seen as a missed opportunity, and Bossey spoke of the importance ‘in establishing facts, that some day or other may have a bearing upon the treatment of prisoners’.\textsuperscript{54} A report by the Metropolitan Inspector of Anatomy in 1842 revealed that Bossey’s officers were flouting regulations, as dissections were the chief cause of ‘any loss or diminution’ of corpses being supplied to anatomy schools.\textsuperscript{55} That same year, the Inspector of Anatomy sent a letter to Superintendent Capper advising him that he had received ‘serious complaints’ from the anatomy schools about the state of the bodies they had received from the hulks at Portsmouth: ‘such has been the extent of the mutilation indeed that the teachers complain severely of the losses incurred on these bodies’.\textsuperscript{56} Organs that had been mashed or mangled or bones broken...
(all possible outcomes of execution, especially if prisoners resisted) disrupted the possibility of treating the corpse as useful.\textsuperscript{57} When a body came from the hulks, it was not expected to be damaged in the same way, by virtue of the fact that convicts generally died from disease or old age. Hulk surgeons’ apparent lack of concern in flouting regulations indicated that they did not recognise the anatomy inspectorate’s authority. The legislation of the Anatomy Act reflected this; inspectors’ roles focused more on notices, certificates and reports to the Secretary of State than enforcement.\textsuperscript{58}

During the nineteenth century, the criminal body continued to be viewed as an object of fascination, as well as study. Bodies and body parts – particularly those belonging to convicts – were seen as increasingly valuable commodities, and Captain Williams and Duncombe found an astonishing lack of respect offered to convict corpses. When questioned about his visits to the hulks at Woolwich, Joseph Darlington, an officer at the Westminster Bridewell, stated that he had seen body parts in the surgeon’s cabin, and that Mr Philips had remarked to him ‘that he had the head of a man of the name of Martin, and that he had made it a present to some surgeon living in Maidstone’.\textsuperscript{59} The Inquiry concluded that presenting the head of a convict as a gift or tipping a bucket of blood overboard was out of the ordinary. Interestingly, investigator Captain Williams accused the hulk medical officers of apathy, carelessness and a ‘want of decent propriety’.\textsuperscript{60} His empathy, or respect for the dead, as well as his esteem for convict testimonies, transcended the fact that these were convict bodies under scrutiny. It was evident that medical officers were not concerned with psychological damage; not only did convicts witness the procession of coffins from the hulks in the Arsenal yard where they worked, but some were also forced to assist in the dissection of men they might have called friends. When Driver’s chest cavity was sewn up, the person who performed this task was Stephen Blake, a convict assistant.\textsuperscript{61} After post-mortems, convicts were made to clean the dead house. Being present in the dissection room and clearing away the mess afterwards was a form of punishment that was not regarded as morally wrong by medical officers, but one that caught Williams’ attention and disapproval.

**Hulks and anatomy schools**

While some bodies were dissected at the hulk station, others were supplied to anatomy schools. The Anatomy Act legitimised the practice of obtaining bodies from institutions, but inspectors were not actually authorised to find the corpses for schools, or to distribute them to teachers.\textsuperscript{62} However, inspectors soon found themselves working outside the parameters of their role and sought bodies on behalf of schools.\textsuperscript{63} The lack of uniformity in supply can be explained by various factors; hulk surgeons may not have disclosed accurate returns due to their carrying out illicit dissections; delays in reporting – and, indeed, collection – may have also resulted in the degeneration of the body, rendering it unfit for purpose; communication between the hulks, anatomy inspectorate, and anatomy schools may also have been slower due to ships’ locations and their physical separation from land. It is also worth considering that not all surgeons wanted to dissect the bodies of criminal corpses; some refused to dissect corpses which had died from disease.\textsuperscript{64} As a mediator between the anatomy schools, the hulks, and the state, the anatomy inspectorate faced failings in regulation and compliance, as well as petty squabbles. When we place the hulks in the larger context of institutional supply of
bodies, however, we see that that the number of bodies sent from the hulks to anatomists in London was relatively low. Convicts may have believed that they were being allowed to die in order to supply the anatomy schools, but Chart 1 reveals that over time, bodies taken from workhouses and hospitals far outnumbered those sourced from prisons and the hulks. They were supplied by six institutions; workhouses, hospitals, prisons, hulks, dwelling houses, and asylums. It must be acknowledged that more bodies were dissected than were reported to the anatomy inspectorate, and as such the figures should be viewed as official estimates only.

What Chart 1 shows is that the number of bodies supplied from the hulks between 1832 and 1856–7 is minimal when compared to workhouses and hospitals. Although numbers from these institutions were proportionally far higher, the state’s use of them served as proof that legislation in this area was tighter, and that the most vulnerable members of society were penalised in death. The hulks that were featured in the Inspector of Anatomy’s reports included those at Portsmouth, Deptford, Chatham and Woolwich. In the years after the passing of the New Poor Law, public objections to the use of pauper bodies in anatomical dissections grew. By 1858, figures such as Charles Dickens were speaking out against the punitive practice of using pauper’s bodies. In ‘Use and Abuse of the Dead’, printed in Household Words, Dickens acknowledged that the study of anatomy was ‘an imperative necessity’, and suggested instead a system akin to organ donation: if a pauper were to declare that he objected to his body being used by anatomists, then this wish should be respected. At fault, he believed, were the masters of workhouses and petty undertakers, who were ‘subjecting the bodies of the poor to outrage’. For Dickens, it was not the medical men who were the objects of mistrust, it was agents of the state.

![Chart 1](image-url)

**Chart 1.** Inspector of anatomy reports. Totals and proportions of bodies supplied for dissection in London from various institutions, 1832–1857. TNA, MH74/16. See Appendix for a full breakdown of numbers.
A lack of public sympathy towards convicts set them apart; while the media spoke out against the abuse of pauper bodies, they were far slower in calling for the similarly appropriate treatment of convicts. In the early 1840s, for example, London surgeon William Roberts, who was a constant critic of the Anatomy Act, actively campaigned for the bodies of convicts dying in custody to be used rather than the 'honest poor'. He argued that the bodies of convicts taken from the hulks were most prized at anatomy schools, 'on account of their being for the most part young subjects and better adapted for the display of human structure than the aged inmates of the workhouses'. As the data in Chart 1 shows, the number of bodies supplied by workhouses and hospitals far exceeded those in hulks and prisons, efficiency which may have stemmed from constant scrutiny in parliament and the press after the passing of the New Poor Law. Conversely, debates around convict dissection in the late eighteenth-century had not led to decisive legislation on the topic. The legacy of those early legislative errors spanned across the decades, complicated by negative public feelings around anatomy. Surgeon Roberts' comments were socially informed; rich and poor alike loathed and feared the idea of being dissected, and using the criminal corpse seemed an ideal solution. His claim that their bodies were more interesting than those of elderly paupers might have been practical; these were more likely to be bodies struck down in their prime, and thus more suitable for the study of anatomy. However, Roberts' belief can also be accused of aligning itself with popular views that convict corpses were simply more interesting by virtue of their criminality.

Chart 2 shows the Inspector of Anatomy's returns for prisons and hulks in isolation, revealing that the latter supplied more bodies to anatomy schools. The highpoints of the data are for some years before the Inquiry, 1834 and 1840. In his reports to the Home Office in those years Superintendent Capper reported that convicts had been healthy during 1834. Across that year, of the 3,060 prisoners who were held on board the hulks in England, 142 had died. Capper added that prisoners who were being sent to the hulks were generally 'in a very infirm and decrepit (sic.) condition from old age, and frequently in a diseased state'.

Chart 2. Inspector of anatomy reports. Total number of subjects supplied for dissection in London from prisons and hulks, 1832–1857. TNA, MH74/16.
Capper’s report of in the early months of 1841 stated that there had been 2,859 prisoners on board the several hulks in England in 1840, and that 144 had died in custody.\textsuperscript{77} Here, he stated that the number of deaths during the latter part of the year had been larger than usual. Capper went so far as to request a report from the medical officers on board to explain the deaths. Bossey contributed, commenting that the ventilation and cleanliness of the Warrior had improved in recent years. With respect to the death rate, he stated, ‘I can only conclude that the natural and constant depression of strength and spirits which is ever experienced by those who are subjected to the hard labour and rigorous discipline of the Hulks, was in these men so much heightened by the severity of the weather’.\textsuperscript{78} All three months of the winter of 1840 were severe, with the mean temperature considerably below average.\textsuperscript{79} From these two dates, Capper’s report tells us that 142 and 144 convicts died respectively. However, Chart 2 reveals that only seventy-three bodies were reported as sent to anatomists in London during 1834–5, and seventy-six during 1840–1. The hulks did begin to house sick, old and infirm convicts; in May 1846, the most recurrent illnesses were recorded as phthisis, or tuberculosis, and scrofula, another form of tuberculosis.\textsuperscript{80} However, anatomy schools’ continued calls for bodies during this period suggests problems with the supply chain.

Duncombe was curious to know how many bodies had been sent from the hulks at Woolwich, and to which anatomy schools.\textsuperscript{81} One figure was Professor William Clark at the University of Cambridge, who sent a letter to the Home Office in 1838 requesting the use of bodies for anatomical dissection. Clark stated that his anatomical school was in a ‘destitute state […] as far as regards the means of dissection’.\textsuperscript{82} He wrote of his fear that a shortage of bodies could endanger the study of anatomy at Cambridge and he hoped that the University would be given first refusal of ‘all of the casualties of the hulks’ during term time.\textsuperscript{83} Back in London, assistant surgeon on the hulks Alexander Blyth made use of his proximity to the leading schools by regularly attending lectures on anatomy in the capital.\textsuperscript{84} But as anatomy teaching was ever-expanding, universities faced a shortage of bodies. The data in Chart 2 represents official returns for London only, but the reports do list numbers of corpses taken from the hulks at Woolwich from 1 January 1844 to 18 February 1847.\textsuperscript{85} These returns reveal that bodies were also sent out of the capital, although Chart 3 shows that these numbers were minimal when compared to London.

In 1841, the Inspector of Anatomy wrote to Professor Clark apologising for the lull in supply to the school: ‘I am extremely sorry to find so small, scarcely any supply from the hulks’.\textsuperscript{86} The influx of new students to universities in the autumn months generally led to an increased demand for corpses.\textsuperscript{87} Another recipient from the hulks was Professor Kidd, at the University of Oxford, who also received a letter in 1841 informing him that ‘the mortality rate at the Hulks has been as nothing’.\textsuperscript{88} Of those listed in Chart 3, during the winter session of 1843–4, thirteen bodies overall were sent to Cambridge from Portsmouth and Woolwich hulks.\textsuperscript{89} Between 1 January 1844 and 18 February 1847 four bodies from Woolwich were sent to Cambridge.\textsuperscript{90} The journey of these bodies was by land, river and rail. Taken in a cart or across the river, coffins would generally be loaded on to trains at Liverpool Street Station in London and conveyed to Cambridge.\textsuperscript{91} Bodies from the hulks were part of a large supply chain that moved them out of the metropolis to the provinces, yet the data reveals the discrepancy that more bodies were
available than were being sent. within the larger system of the Anatomy Act’s administration, workhouses and hospitals were leading suppliers thanks to higher numbers and tighter legislation. The matter highlighted the hulk system’s failure to liaise with anatomy schools, but also called attention to the anatomy inspectorate’s own inability to reinforce the legislation it represented.

**Death and burial**

Attitudes towards death and dying were changing in the nineteenth century. Two years after the Inquiry, Tennyson’s ‘In Memoriam’ was completed. Widely considered one of the great poems of the nineteenth century, it captured Victorian grief, viewing the cruelty of nature and mortality against materialist science and faith. Much like ‘In Memoriam’, the medical treatment of convicts on board hulks tapped into public concerns about science and religion, but here there was no consolation. In the hospital bed, convicts were denied the elegiac good deaths of popular literature, of Helen Burns in *Jane Eyre* (1847) and Little Nell in *The Old Curiosity Shop* (1841). Instead, the criminal corpse was seen as fearful and repulsive, culturally powerful as a resonant signifier of a bad death. Duncombe and Captain Williams found that dying on board the hulks was a public affair, lacking in dignity. If a convict died in the night, he was not only denied the last rites by a minister, but also his clothes and bed were ransacked by fellow prisoners. If they died after eight o’clock in the morning, the nurse looking after them was entitled to their rations. When a death occurred at night, convicts in the sick bay shouted up to guards upon deck, and the corpse lay in full view until morning. The body was then carried in the under sheet of the bed to be laid on the floor by the door of the hospital. There, it was scrubbed in warm water with soap, which often attracted a crowd of other patients.
took time for a coffin to be sent for and delivered, and the body would lie under a sheet at the far end of the deck until it was collected.

The Inspector of Anatomy generally sent an order down to the overseer of the hulks when a school was in need of bodies. Following this request, a cart was sent to Woolwich with a coffin and took the corpse away.\textsuperscript{96} Captain Williams felt that the filthy state in which the coffins were returned to the anatomy schools spoke of an enormous disregard of common decency on the part of the hulk officers. It also showed a lack of compliance with the anatomy inspectorate, as Clause XIII of the Anatomy Act stated that every body taken to the schools should ‘be placed in a decent coffin or shell’.\textsuperscript{97} In 1841, the Inspector of Anatomy had written to Superintendent Capper to complain that the coffins laid out for convicts on the hulks in Portsmouth had disappeared, slowing down the transferral process.\textsuperscript{98} It is likely that they were broken up in the dockyard and used as building materials or firewood. As Captain Williams stated, when a coffin was despatched, the corpse was not always in a decent condition. Bad bodies that were sent to anatomy schools could be in a dirty, decayed and damaged condition, contaminated by disease or lice. The whole manner in which bodies were treated by officials moved Captain Williams to state, ‘I cannot but consider the conduct of the officers as very reprehensible, and fully accounting for the existing feeling among the convicts.’\textsuperscript{99} Once more, Williams understood convicts’ objections; his words no doubt carried a warning to the establishment, as bad feeling could lead to unrest.

The final resting place of many deceased convicts – the burial ground – was often denied them. Respecting the fate of criminal corpses after dissection, the Anatomy Act stated that the body should be ‘decently interred in consecrated ground’.\textsuperscript{100} A burial ground did exist in the marshes near the hulks at Woolwich but it was not consecrated.\textsuperscript{101} In 1841 the Inspector of Anatomy wrote to the Undersecretary of the Home Office, advising that interring dissected bodies of convicts in any parochial burial ground in London was a controversial topic; firstly, a double fee was required, as the body came from outside the parish.\textsuperscript{102} Secondly, the fact that these were bodies of convicted men had led to an outright refusal from the directors. The Inspector concluded, ‘it appears that to bury them elsewhere would be attended with considerable additional expense to the schools’.\textsuperscript{103} The letter reveals that there was a lack of awareness respecting responsibility in administering the Anatomy Act; once a convict had been removed from the hulks, it was uncertain whether the obligation and cost of decently interring the body lay with the Home Office, the anatomy inspectorate, or the anatomy schools themselves. The burial itself was in stark contrast to emergent Victorian ideals, in which kinship groups walked together to the grave, a procession which performed a sense of belonging for the living and the dead.\textsuperscript{104} Convicts who died on the hulks were denied of ritual, both physically and symbolically removed from familial circles of mourning. Superintendent Capper stated, ‘the burial service is performed by the chaplain, in the presence of an officer and six prisoners, and the prisoner’s friends are written to, apprising them of his death’.\textsuperscript{105} In a quarter of a mile stretch close to the marshes, their corpses were buried along the bank in shallow, sandy, unmarked graves. In many cases, the families of the deceased lived too far away to collect the bodies of family members. Coupled with this, these were the bodies of offenders who may not have been permitted burial in graveyards closer to home. Poor families were left to apply to dig up and rebury the bodies of relatives who were placed in communal graves.\textsuperscript{106} While more work needs to be carried out on the internment of
convict corpses, Duncombe and Williams were able to confirm that the body of Henry Driver was taken away by two female relatives for burial.\textsuperscript{107}

**Conclusion**

Convict Brown’s letter to MP Duncombe set off a chain of events that exposed medical treatment in the convict hulk establishment as negligent, and those who oversaw that treatment as corrupt. Furthermore, it highlighted flaws in the administration of the Anatomy Act. The Inquiry took place during a time when the attitudes of society towards convicts, medical men, dissection and death were changing. The Home Secretary, Sir George Grey, feared that the commissioning of an inquiry might upset the discipline on board the hulks by ‘disrupting and exciting public feeling, without the best grounds for so doing’.\textsuperscript{108} The government was right to fear public condemnation, as negative feeling and news media coverage of the Andover Scandal in workhouses undoubtedly contributed to the demise of the Poor Law Commissioners in 1847. Similarly, the 1847 Inquiry put the hulks under parliamentary scrutiny, while press coverage increased the reading public’s awareness of the system’s faults. Captain Williams and Duncombe concluded that most of the claims against the surgeon Peter Bossey were unfounded. However, Williams did suggest that Bossey’s surgery in Woolwich was ‘incompatible with the satisfactory performance of public duties’.\textsuperscript{109} The Inquiry prompted a much-needed restructuring of the hulk system; Bossey quit his post and the ageing Superintendent Capper retired on a pension. The system which had remained outside the jurisdiction of central government for over seventy years moved under the control of the Prison Inspectorate. It appears that this change had an immediate effect upon anatomy schools; in 1848, the Inspector of Anatomy remarked that the schools were in great distress due to an ‘almost total stoppage of our supplies’.\textsuperscript{110} Numbers dropped to significantly lower than those received the previous year, and it was remarked that ‘Woolwich gives us nothing’.\textsuperscript{111} Those now in charge reported that the hulks were irredeemable as a system of punishment, and that they must close.\textsuperscript{112} More convicts were transferred to barracks on land, and so the supply of bodies decreased.

This article has used the 1847 Inquiry to understand more about the ways in which convict corpses from the hulks were used, mistreated and trafficked in the years after the passing of the Anatomy Act. It has brought attention to weaknesses in the administration of two government departments – the hulks and the anatomy inspectorate – and revealed more about their clashes over the supply of bodies. Penal surgeons committed abuses of power, ignored legislation and held onto the belief that they had a right to perform dissections where necessary. Anatomy schools still lobbied for the acquisition of convict corpses, despite a steady supply from larger contributors in workhouses and hospitals. Within the larger system, demands for convict corpses indicated their continued socio-cultural significance by virtue of their perceived criminality.\textsuperscript{113} This article has highlighted the importance of including the bodies of men who died in confinement within historiographies of the criminal corpse; those who died in confinement were at the mercy of the state as much as those who faced execution. Central government anatomy returns cannot be seen as reliable indicators of the body supply trade any more than Poor Law statistics, or indeed hulk returns.\textsuperscript{114} Nevertheless, the Inquiry of 1847 made it clear that
both the anatomy inspectorate and the hulk establishment lacked cohesion and reliable systems of management. Most significantly, it confirmed that convicts who died on prison hulks were bodies denied of power. This was a system lacking in empathy; Captain Williams concluded that the careless treatment of convicts’ bodies had led to a ‘very considerable dissatisfaction and irritation [that prevailed] among the prisoners on this painful subject’. ¹¹⁵ For inmates, their bodies were at the mercy of the state, powerless to resist the narratives into which they were brought. Duncombe’s calls for an inquiry and subsequent media coverage in *The Times* reflected a gradual shift towards public sympathy, but for the most part, convict corpses were bodies who, in the words of Tennyson, had ‘no language but a cry’.¹¹⁶

**Notes**

1. House of Commons Parliamentary Papers, (hereafter HCPP), Thomas Slingsby Duncombe, Treatment of Convicts in the Hulks at Woolwich, Commons Sitting, 28 January 1847, p. 514.
2. HCPP, Inquiry into General Treatment and Condition of Convicts in Hulks at Woolwich, interview with William Tidy, Minute 2321–2341, 65. Subsequent references to interviews from the Inquiry of 1847 will be referenced thus: HCPP, Inquiry, William Tidy, Minute 2321–2341, p. 65.
3. An Act for regulating Schools of Anatomy, 1 August 1832, (William 2 & 3, c.75).
4. HCPP, Duncombe, Commons Sitting of Thursday, 28 January 1847, p. 516.
5. Ibid, p. 512.
6. HCPP, Millbank Prison, Commons Sitting, 10 August 1846, vol. 88 cc.548–56.
7. House divided: Ayes 44, Noes 121, Majority 77. As reported in ‘Parliamentary Division’, *Morning Post*, 30 January 1847.
8. ‘Treatment of Convicts at Woolwich’, *The Times*, 19 February 1847.
9. Criminal Law Act (16 Geo.3 c.43). For more work on the British prison system during this time, see J. M. Beattie, *Crime and the Courts in England 1660–1800* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986); Wilfrid Oldham, Britain’s Convicts to the Colonies, (Sydney: Library of Australian History, 1990); Simon Devereaux, ‘The Making of the Penitentiary Act, 1775–1779’, *The Historical Journal*, 42, no.2 (1999), pp.405–433; Michael Ignatieff, *A Just Measure of Pain: The Penitentiary in the Industrial Revolution, 1750–1850* (London: Macmillan, 1978); Sean McConville, *A History of English Prison Administration, Vol. 1* 1750–1877 (London: Routledge, 1981).
10. Tim Hitchcock and Robert Shoemaker, *London Lives: Poverty, Crime and the Making of a Modern City, 1690–1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).
11. See Heather Shore, *Artful Dodgers: Youth and Crime in Early Nineteenth-Century London* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1999).
12. Mismanagement was an issue that spanned across multiple government departments during a period of change and reorganisation. See Jill Pellew, *The Home Office 1848–1875: from Clerks to Bureaucrats* (London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1982) and Gillian Sutherland (ed.), *Studies in the Growth of Nineteenth-Century Government* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972).
13. HCPP, Duncombe, Treatment of Convicts in the Hulks at Woolwich, p. 516.
14. Sean Burrell and Geoffrey K. Gill, ‘The Liverpool cholera epidemic of 1832 and anatomical dissection—medical mistrust and civil unrest.’ *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 60 (2005), pp. 478–498, p. 478.
15. Peter King, *Punishing the Criminal Corpse, 1700–1840: Aggravated Forms of the Death Penalty in England* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2017), p. 30.
16. Richard Ward, ‘The Criminal Corpse, Anatomists and the Criminal Law: Parliamentary Attempts to Extend the Dissection of Offenders in Late Eighteenth-Century England.’ *Journal of British Studies* 54 (2015), pp. 63–87, 64.
17. Elizabeth T. Hurren, *Dissecting the Criminal Corpse: Staging Post-Execution Punishment in Early Modern England* (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2016), xxix.
18. See Palgrave Historical Studies in the Criminal Corpse and its Afterlife, including Sarah S. Tarlow and Emma Battell Lowman, *Harnessing the Power of the Criminal Corpse* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018); Hurren, *Dissecting the Criminal Corpse*; Richard Ward, *A Global History of Execution and the Criminal Corpse* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015); Rachel E. Bennett, *Capital Punishment and the Criminal Corpse in Scotland, 1740–1834* (Springer International Publishing, 2018); King, *Punishing the Criminal Corpse*.
19. See Hitchcock and Shoemaker, *London Lives*, pp. 335–7. Also Charles Campbell, *The Intolerable Hulks: British Shipboard Confinement, 1776–1837* (Cirencester: Heritage Books: 1994), p. 37.
20. James A. Sharpe, *Judicial Punishment in England* (London: Faber & Faber, 1990), quote at p. 53.
21. The National Archives, Kew (henceforth TNA), MH 74/16, ‘Return of corpses of which notice of removal for anatomical examination has been received by the Inspector of Anatomy from the hulks at Woolwich from 1 January 1844 to the present time’, Office of Inspectors of Anatomy, 18 February 1847, p. 224.
22. Anatomy Act, Clause V.
23. Helen MacDonald, ‘Procuring corpses: the English anatomy inspectorate, 1842 to 1858.’ *Medical History*, 53:3 (2009), pp. 379–396.
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25. For more work that links the workhouse and the prison, see Jonathan Reinarz and Leonard Shwarz, eds, *Introduction, Medicine and the Workhouse*, (New York: University of Rochester Press, 2013), p. 13; Anne Hardy, ‘Development of the Prison Medical Service’ and Anthony J. Standley, ‘Medical Treatment and Prisoners’ Health in Stafford Gaol during the Eighteenth Century’, both in Richard Creese, W.F. Bynum, and J. Bearn, eds, *The Health of Prisoners: Historical Essays* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1995), pp. 59–82 and pp. 27–43.
26. See Kim Price, *Medical Negligence in Victorian Britain: the crisis of care under the English Poor Law, c. 1834–1900* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015).
27. Ibid., p. 56.
28. ‘Some charges of a very serious nature were’, *The Times*, 30 January 1847.
29. Lucy Frost and Hamish Maxwell-Stewart have addressed the difficulty of piecing together fragmentary evidence: see Frost and Maxwell-Stewart, (eds.), *Chain Letters: Narrating Convict Lives* (Carlton South: Melbourne University Press, 2001); see also Ann Laura Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009).
30. There is an extensive literature on the criminal class and its relationship to physical anthropology, phrenology, eugenics etc. See Randall McGowen, ‘Getting to know the criminal class in nineteenth century England.’ *Nineteenth-Century Contexts*, 14 (1) (1990), pp. 33–54; Sharrona Pearl, *About Faces: Physiognomy in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Cambridge, Mass./London: Harvard University Press, 2010), pp. 38–41; Marie-Christine Leps, *Apprehending the Criminal: The Production of Deviance in Nineteenth-Century Discourse* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1992); David Garland, ‘The Criminal and His Science-A Critical Account of the Formation of Criminology at the End of the Nineteenth Century.’ *British Journal of Criminology*, 25:2 (1985), pp. 109–137.
31. HCPP, Duncombe, Treatment of Convicts in the Hulks at Woolwich, p. 516.
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33. Peter Bossey (1807–1862), *Plarr’s Lives of the Fellows Online*, Royal College of Surgeons. Online: <https://livesonline.rcseng.ac.uk/blogs/E000917b.htm> Date Accessed 16.5.2018.
34. HCPP, Inquiry, Alexander Blyth, Minute 3966, p. 109.
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36. HCPP, Inquiry, Alexander Blyth, Minute 2677–9, 73.
37. Ibid.
38. Price, *Medical Negligence in Victorian Britain*, p. 27.
39. HCPP, Inquiry, Report of Captain William John Williams addressed to Sir George Grey, p. 30.
40. 'Some charges of a very serious nature were', *The Times*, 30 January 1847.
41. 'It will be remembered by our readers that we', *The Times*, 20 February 1847.
42. Ibid.
43. 'We foresaw the dissatisfaction that would ensue', *The Times*, 26 February 1847.
44. 'The Hulks at Woolwich- Mr Duncombe’s charges against Mr Bossey', *The Medical Times*, Vol. 16, 1847, pp. 598–9.
45. Ibid.
46. HCPP, Duncombe, Treatment of Convicts in the Hulks at Woolwich, p. 516.
47. Anatomy Act, Clause IX.
48. HCPP, Inquiry, Alexander Blyth, Minute 3007–3008, p. 79.
49. HCPP, Inquiry, Report of Captain Williams, Case of Henry Driver, xi.
50. HCPP, Inquiry, Report of Captain Williams, xii.
51. HCPP, Inquiry, William Tidy, Minute 2321–2341, p. 65.
52. Helen MacDonald, *Possessing the Dead: The Artful Science of Anatomy* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Publishing, 2010), p. 18.
53. HCPP, Inquiry, Peter Bossey, Minute 12,555, p. 357.
54. Ibid.
55. TNA, MH 74/16, Report of the Metropolitan Inspector of Anatomy for the Quarter ending 31 December 1842, p. 75.
56. TNA, MH 74/14 General (including Scotland), Letter from the Inspector of Anatomy to J.H. Capper, 29 January 1842, p. 92.
57. Hurren, *Dissecting the Criminal Corpse*, pp. 70–71.
58. MacDonald, *Possessing the Dead*, pp. 17–18.
59. HCPP, Inquiry, Joseph Darlington, Minute 7905, 214. Helen MacDonald has written of the similar commodification of aboriginal bodies in Tasmania, where William Lanney’s skull, hands, feet and skin were contested as collector's items in Britain and abroad. See MacDonald, *Human Remains: Dissection and its Histories* (London: Yale University Press, 2006), p. 833.
60. HCPP, Inquiry, Report of Captain Williams, xii.
61. HCPP, Inquiry, William Mawman Brown, Minute 364, p. 12.
62. MacDonald, *Possessing the Dead*, p. 18.
63. Ibid, p. 25.
64. King, *Punishing the Criminal Corpse*, p. 120.
65. TNA, MH 74/16, Statistics of medical schools, students and bodies supplied for dissection; digests of returns in reports of Inspectors, 1832–1849. Respecting Chart 1, numbers for dwelling houses and asylums have been combined: see Appendix for a breakdown of numbers.
66. Ibid, p. 305.
67. TNA, MH 74/16 Analysis of the Supply of Bodies from the Sources during the Winter Session, 1843–4, p. 203.
68. See Burrell and Gill, 'The Liverpool Cholera Epidemic of 1832’, pp. 478–498.
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70. Ibid.
71. TNA, MH 74/14, Account of William Roberts' activities, 13 December 1841, folios 42–51. See also MacDonald, 'Procuring Corpses', p. 385.
72. TNA, MH 74/14, William Roberts' activities, folios 42–51.
73. Ward, ‘Parliamentary Attempts to Extend the Dissection of Offenders’, p. 86.
74. Richardson, *Death, Dissection and the Destitute*, 247. See also See W. Roberts, *Mr Warburton’s Anatomy Bill, London, 1843 and An Address on the Necessity for Investigating the Operation of the Anatomy Act*, (London, 1855).
75. HCPP, John Henry Capper, Reports Relating to Convict Establishments, 29 January 1835, p. 5.
76. Ibid.
77. HCPP, John Henry Capper, Reports Relating to Convict Establishments, 24 February 1841, pp. 6–7.
78. HCPP, Report of Peter Bossey on board the *Warrior*, Reports Relating to Convict Establishments, 16 January 1841, p. 10.
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80. HCPP, John Henry Capper, Reports Relating to Convict Establishments, 1846, p. 1.
81. HCPP, Duncombe, Treatment of Convicts in the Hulks at Woolwich, p. 516.
82. TNA, HO 44/31/178. Professor William Clark, asking for use of bodies of prisoners from the hulks for anatomical dissection at Cambridge University, 24 November 1838, folios 870–871.
83. Ibid.
84. HCPP, Inquiry, Alexander Blyth, Minute 2694, p. 74.
85. TNA, MH 74/16, Return of corpses the hulks at Woolwich, p. 224.
86. TNA, MH 74/14, Letter from the Inspector of Anatomy to Professor Clarke, Cambridge, 16 November 1841, p. 15.
87. TNA, MH 74/15, Inspector of Anatomy to S.M. Phillips, 3 January 1848, p. 224.
88. TNA, MH 74/14, Letter from the Inspector of Anatomy to Professor Kidd, Oxford, 1 December 1841, p. 23.
89. TNA, MH 74/16, Statistics of medical schools, students and bodies supplied for dissection; digests of returns in reports of Inspectors, 1832–1849, p. 200.
90. TNA MH 74/16, Return of Corpses from the Hulks at Woolwich, p. 224.
91. Hurren, *Dying for Victorian Medicine*, p. 189.
92. Hurren examines the anatomy trade relating to Cambridge and Oxford in Chapters 5 and 6 of *Dying for Victorian Medicine*, pp. 175–263. See also, Fiona Hutton ‘The working of the 1832 Anatomy Act in Oxford and Manchester.’ *Family & Community History* 9:2 (2006), pp. 125–139.
93. Tarlow and Battell-Lowman, *Harnessing the Power of the Criminal Corpse*, p.19 and p. 233.
94. HCPP, Inquiry, Report of Captain Williams, xv.
95. HCPP, Inquiry, George Rushworth, Minute 2659, p. 73.
96. HCPP, Inquiry, Alexander Blyth, Minute 5582–7, p. 149.
97. An Act for Regulating Schools of Anatomy, Clause XIII, p. 716.
98. TNA, MH 74/14, Letter from the Inspector of Anatomy to J.H. Capper, 8 December 1841, p. 30.
99. HCPP, Inquiry, Report of Captain Williams, xxxii.
100. Ibid.
101. HCPP, Inquiry, William Hatton, Minute 8564, p. 232.
102. TNA, MH 74/14, Letter from the Inspector of Anatomy to S.M. Phillips, 29 November 1841, p. 43.
103. Ibid.
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106. Julie Marie Strange, “She cried a very little”: Death, Grief and Mourning in Working-Class Culture c. 1880–1914. *Social History* 27 (2002), pp. 143–61.

107. HCPP, Inquiry, William Mawman Brown, Minute 362, p. 12.

108. HCPP, Sir George Grey, Treatment of Convicts in the Hulks at Woolwich, p. 520.

109. HCPP, Inquiry, Report of Captain Williams, xxx.

110. TNA, MH 74/15, Letter from the Inspector of Anatomy to Mr Dix, 24 February 1848, p. 231.

111. Ibid.

112. Hilary Carey, *Empire of Hell: Religion and the Campaign to End Convict Transportation in the British Empire, 1788–1875* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), p. 267.

113. See Tarlow and Battell Lowman, *Harnessing the Power of the Criminal Corpse*.

114. Hurren, *Dying for Victorian Medicine*, p. 33.

115. HCPP, Inquiry, Report of Captain Williams, xxxii.

116. Alfred Lord Tennyson, ‘In Memoriam’, Canto 54, 1850 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

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Appendix

Inspector of Anatomy Reports. Table showing total number of bodies supplied for dissection in London from various institutions, 1832–1857. Source: TNA, MH 74/16.

| Year    | Workhouses | Hospitals | Prisons | Dwelling Houses & Asylums | Hulks | Total |
|---------|------------|-----------|---------|---------------------------|-------|-------|
| 1832-3  | 445        | 135       | 15      | 55                        | 8     | 658   |
| 1833-4  | 367        | 142       | 8       | 27                        | 39    | 583   |
| 1834-5  | 293        | 191       | 14      | 36                        | 73    | 607   |
| 1835-6  | 324        | 216       | 13      | 20                        | 30    | 603   |
| 1836-7  | 361        | 186       | 25      | 18                        | 38    | 628   |
| 1837-8  | 328        | 206       | 22      | 17                        | 38    | 611   |
| 1838-9  | 267        | 159       | 14      | 8                         | 35    | 483   |
| 1839-40 | 220        | 171       | 9       | 11                        | 57    | 468   |
| 1840-1  | 260        | 128       | 14      | 6                         | 76    | 484   |
| 1841-2  | 216        | 114       | 4       | 4                         | 48    | 386   |
| 1842-3  | 198        | 152       | 6       | 9                         | 28    | 393   |
| 1843-4  | 194        | 137       | 6       | 11                        | 13    | 361   |
| 1844-5  | 197        | 125       | 2       | 7                         | 36    | 367   |
| 1845-6  | 171        | 98        | 5       | 4                         | 28    | 306   |
| 1846-7  | 175        | 165       | 9       | 8                         | 23    | 380   |
| 1847-8  | 190        | 158       | 11      | 3                         | 6     | 368   |
| 1848-9  | 159        | 124       | 18      | 13                        | 10    | 324   |
| 1849-50 | 177        | 123       | 16      | 2                         | 9     | 327   |
| 1850-1  | 200        | 130       | 10      | 3                         | 3     | 346   |
| 1851-2  | 207        | 105       | 22      | 2                         | 1     | 337   |
| 1852-3  | 203        | 107       | 22      | 1                         | 1     | 334   |
| 1853-4  | 260        | 130       | 19      | 5                         | 1     | 415   |
| 1854-5  | 268        | 142       | 9       | 2                         | 1     | 422   |
| 1855-6  | 300        | 130       | 11      | 2                         | 1     | 444   |
| 1856-7  | 294        | 139       | 16      | 2                         | 5     | 456   |