

# What's in a name? The history of Sydney's sporting pubs

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**John W. Ross**

**Cover photograph:**

Bat and Ball Hotel, Redfern, 1949 (Tooth & Co yellow cards, Noel Butlin Archives)

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## Foreword

Sports and pubs seemed to grow up together in colonial New South Wales. The first notable sports activity was horse racing in Hyde Park from 1810, followed by cricket in the park after the racing moved away in the 1820s. As the colony's population expanded, so did the need for more sporting venues. Before long, pubs were being built near cricket fields, football ovals, racecourses, a rifle range and an athletic field.

Many publicans who had an eye on the commercial opportunities of sports players and supporters tried to target them by naming their establishments after their sport of choice. Up to the 1860s, this was mostly horse racing or cricket, plus a number that simply hedged their bets as Sportsman's Arms Hotels. But by 1880, competitive sport had become more organised into competitions with teams in all parts of Sydney, and pubs were being named after a greater number of sports.

However, facilities at the grounds were still lacking, such as changing rooms, meeting rooms, and entertainment places. Pubs were the natural magnets for sports teams during this time, as they could provide all of these necessities. Many publicans involved themselves very closely with the local sports by sponsoring and presenting trophies, hosting club meetings and annual dinners, and forming their own teams representing the pub. Some sports, such as running and cycling, even used a local pub as a base for their races.

An analysis of pubs listed in *Sands' Directories* from 1860 to 1930 shows that several were named or renamed after a sport that started up in their neighbourhood and then switched to another name when the players went elsewhere. But reports and advertisements in the press of club meetings and other events showed that giving a pub a sporting name did not always have the desired effect of attracting sportspeople. For example, the various licensees of the Cricketers' Arms Hotel in King Street Newtown must have scratched their heads in dismay when the local cricket teams patronised pubs all over the suburb except their own.

Attracting players and fans to the door may have been more successful if pub builders simply chose the right location, as two featured pubs on the edge of Moore Park demonstrated. The involvement of pubs in organised sports fluctuated with great world events, and it was notable that World War I decimated the number of young men in sporting teams, resulting in a drop in teams using the pubs. The Great Depressions of the 1890s and 1930s had a similar effect on organised sports, when economic survival was more important.

In the modern era, most sports clubs now have well-developed facilities, so pubs no longer fill their original role of providing changing and meeting facilities. However, enterprising pubs near sports grounds keep the patrons coming through the door with promotions in club colours when teams are playing at home, and large television sets in the bars to keep the fans involved in the action.

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## Early sports in Sydney Town

### Hyde Park – the colony’s first sports ground

An area of undeveloped land on elevated and relatively level ground to the east of Elizabeth Street was set aside by Governor Arthur Phillip in 1792 for public use. It was used as a common for gathering firewood and grazing animals<sup>1</sup>. When Governor Lachlan Macquarie arrived in 1810, he named it Hyde Park and proclaimed that it would be used in the future for the recreation and amusement of the inhabitants of the town and as a field of exercise for the troops.

However, the area was being encroached upon by brick makers, so Macquarie directed the Acting Surveyor-General to mark out a boundary line, dividing Hyde Park from the Brickfields to the south. In addition, horses and cattle were being grazed in or near the park by the inhabitants of the town, so the Governor announced his intention to mark out a large common area just outside the town for this purpose. This was called Sydney Common, and encompassed modern-day Moore Park, Centennial Park, Queens Park and the area occupied by Victoria Barracks<sup>2</sup>.



Figure 1 First horse race, 1810 (Harold Freedman)

In 1810, the officers of Macquarie’s 73<sup>rd</sup> Regiment began to organise horse races among themselves in Hyde Park, and it became known as the Sydney Race Course. In addition, several foot races were held in the park: in October 1810 Dicky Dowling won 20 guineas by running (or staggering) 50 yards while carrying 14 stone on his back to beat an active young man who ran backwards and forwards over the same ground, running 100 yards. Dowling won by less than a foot, which the spectators, many of whom had bet heavily on the unencumbered runner, grumbled that their favourite gave up more than this when he turned around at the 50 yard mark. Meanwhile, cock fighting was conducted at a house near the park<sup>3</sup>.

In August 1826, a famous cricket match was played on the old Sydney Race Course. It was famous because it led to the formation of the first cricket club in the colony, known as the Australian Cricket Club<sup>4</sup>. Members of this club were next reported playing a match on New Year’s Day 1827 at Hyde

Park<sup>5</sup>. Other clubs in the outer parts of the colony were soon springing up, such as at Windsor<sup>6</sup> and Campbelltown<sup>7</sup>.

Hyde Park remained without grass or trees until the Hyde Park Improvement Committee was established in 1854 to advise the City Council on improving the amenity. Horse racing had already moved to Grose Farm (where Sydney University now stands) in 1826<sup>8</sup>, and the cricketers were moved to the Domain. The park was then formalised with paths and plantings<sup>9</sup>.

## **Pubs and sport**

The early colony of New South Wales was populated by British settlers who brought with them a tradition of playing sports and games, but who found no organised facilities for these activities here. Pubs stepped into the void, providing playing areas and equipment for both indoor and outdoor pursuits. In time, sporting groups developed into self-sufficient organisations with their own facilities, and the pubs responded by changing the type of entertainment they offered.

Entertainment and hotels have always gone hand in hand, and it was often the drawcard for patrons. Games, sports and any number of live acts were included: nineteenth century pub games included climbing a greasy pole, catching greased pigs and bobbing for apples. More sedate games included cards, bagatelle (a game that evolved into pinball), darts and billiards. Few pubs were without a billiard room. Boxing matches were popular, either staged or impromptu fisticuffs. Skittles were also popular, and many pubs had a bowling alley. These activities mainly involved men, who were the bulk of the customers<sup>10</sup>.

Pub entertainments diminished by the late nineteenth century as Mechanics Institutes, church halls, concert and dance halls were built and operated as more respectable establishments than hotels. From this time, the distinction between high and popular culture was more pronounced. Also, the rise of organised sport, such as football, tennis and lawn bowls at purpose-built venues reduced the importance of pubs as places to watch and play sport. All the same, pub entertainment continued, and free music or theatre and a congenial atmosphere were still drawcards for the poor.

## **Attracting the players and fans**

By the second half of the nineteenth century, a wide range of summer and winter sports were being played in Sydney. The most popular summer sport was cricket, and the main winter sports were the various football codes, initially rugby union, followed by Australian Rules and rugby league. Other popular sports which were not as seasonally-based were horse racing, athletics, rifle shooting and cycling. These sports (apart from cycling) either prompted new pubs to be built near the playing fields and named after a sport, or prompted existing pubs to be renamed after a sport. This was a response by enterprising publicans to the commercial possibilities of the large number of thirsty and hungry players within reach of their establishments.

Some publicans were former (or occasionally current) sportsmen who traded on their fame to bring in the sports fans. Others took an active part in the sporting life of their neighbourhood by sponsoring local teams, donating trophies, hosting team meetings and club events and even providing changing rooms in the days before facilities were available at the grounds. A few suburban pubs organised sports events centred on themselves, such as running or cycling races that started and finished at the pub, or competitive sports that could be played next to the pub, such as quoits (very popular in the nineteenth century).

A snapshot of the *Sands' Directories* every ten years from 1860 to 1930 showed that the two most common sporting pub names were the Cricketers' Arms Hotel and the Sportsman's Arms Hotel. There were horse racing pubs near the early racecourses, four pubs named for the Paddington Rifle Range, but only a couple of pubs named after rugby union. Australian Rules had no pubs named after it, presumably because it struggled for widespread acceptance until the modern era. None were named after rugby league, probably because that game was professional and the clubs had the funds to build their own entertainment facilities.

This history looks at how successful the sports-oriented pubs were at attracting followers of their eponymous sport (or other sports), based largely on how frequently the teams held meetings and functions at each pub. There were other hotels, such as the Moore Park View Hotel that did not have to tout for business with a sporting name, as its proximity to the playing fields in Moore Park guaranteed its popularity with cricketers and footballers.

Most long-lasting pubs had more than one name over time, but the pubs documented in this history are referred to by the sports-related name, even though it may not be the original or the current name. A timeline is given for each pub, which can be used to find the current name, if the pub exists today.



## Cricketers

### Early cricket in Sydney

Cricket in the early amateur days was very different from today – flannels were unknown and people played in their ordinary clothes, hardly anyone had his own bat, there were no shelter sheds or places to change and no rollers for the pitch. Grounds were hard and uncared for, which meant that wickets were suited to fast bowlers and scores were low<sup>11</sup>.

Originally, Hyde Park was the main sporting and racing ground in the colony, and the cricketers used part of the former racecourse after it fell into disuse in the mid-1820s. But when the park was dedicated for public gardens in the 1850s, the city's cricketers and footballers had to find somewhere else to whack or kick a ball around, and cricket moved to the Domain, next to the city.

In 1851, part of Sydney Common to the south of Victoria Barracks was granted to the British Army for use as a garden and cricket ground for the soldiers. The incumbent troops from 11<sup>th</sup> North Devonshire Regiment established a rifle range adjacent to the barracks, and then flattened and graded the area to the south of the range to develop a cricket field. Over the next couple of years, the teams from Victoria Barracks combined into a more permanent organisation and called themselves the Garrison Club. When the ground was opened for the first recorded match in 1854 against the Royal Victoria Club, it was known as the Garrison Ground<sup>12</sup>.

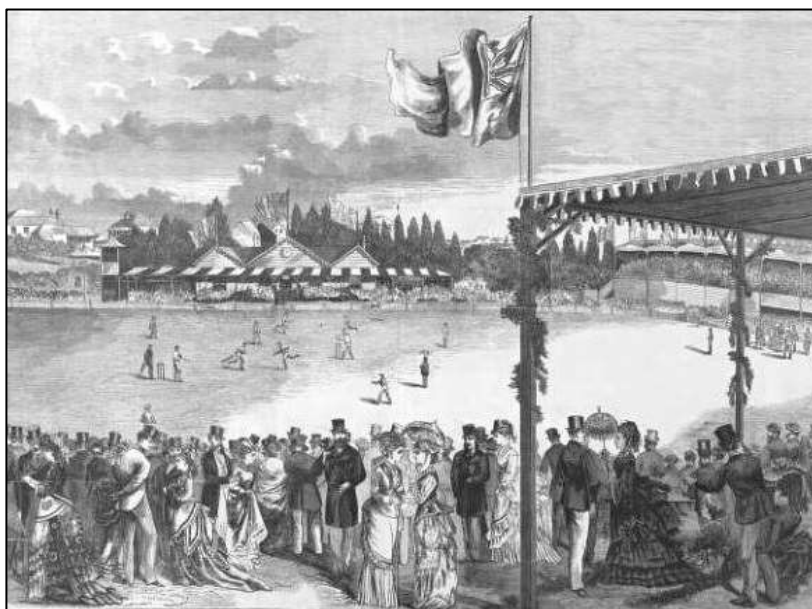


Figure 2 Albert Cricket Ground, 1876 (National Library of Australia)

Cricket was also played on the Cleveland Paddock (the present-day Prince Alfred Park) from October 1829 when Lieutenant Thomas de la Condamine, press secretary to Governor Sir Ralph Darling, wrote to the fledgling Australian Cricket Club informing them they could no longer play cricket on the Government Paddocks on Parramatta Road<sup>13</sup>. Despite this inauspicious start, cricket was being played regularly there from October 1850, after the formation of the Royal Victoria Club<sup>14</sup>. Vice-Regal patronage was bestowed by the attendance of Governor Sir Charles Fitzroy at a game between teams of officers from the Army and Navy at the ground in December that year<sup>15</sup>.

Despite its regular use as a cricket ground for almost fifteen years, the Cleveland Paddock was not popular with players because of its unevenness, and in October 1864 the Albert Cricket Ground was opened in Redfern by the Governor Sir John Young<sup>16</sup>. The new ground featured good facilities for both spectators and players, with a grandstand on the north-west corner and a pavilion running around three sides of the ground.

The Albert Ground pitch was of matted couch grass, and was very soft and spongy, making it a slow pitch that favoured the bowlers. The ground was home to the Albert Club, which could boast three teams of eleven players, including the greatest bowler of the day, Fred "The Demon" Spofforth. The Albert Ground was established as a money-making business, and fees were charged to anyone who wanted to use it, including the New South Wales Cricket Association. But the cost of staging cricket matches there was so high that until the early 1870s the Association preferred to use the Domain whenever possible. The Albert Ground closed in the late 1870s when the Garrison Ground at Moore Park came into use (the Garrison Ground was later renamed the Association Ground, and is now the Sydney Cricket Ground).

### **Pubs with good involvement with the local cricketers**

As cricket was by far the most popular sport that pubs associated themselves with, they will be categorised by how well they seemed to be involved with their local cricketing community, in order of the pub's age.

### **Cricketers' Hotel, Pitt and Market Streets**

**Address:** 231 Pitt Street, on the south-east corner of Market Street.

#### **Timeline:**

1832: The Cricketers' Hotel was opened by the licensee Richard Tress.

1836: It was called the Cricketers' Tavern, then the Cricketers' Tavern Arms.

1866: Licensee Charles Lamy renamed it to the Frankfort Hotel.

1869: Robert Smart renamed it to Smart's Hotel.

1919: Charles James Roberts purchased it and renamed it to the Roberts Hotel.

1963: Purchased by W. Dalamal who demolished the pub and built Dalamal House.

1987: Dalamal House was demolished and the City Centre complex built.

The first licence for the Cricketers' Hotel was granted to Richard Tress in June 1832<sup>17</sup>. The publican was an active cricketer, and in October played for the Amateur (aka Mary-le-Bone) Cricket Club against the Australian Cricket Club in Hyde Park. Later that month, he played in another match against the same opponents. In a losing team, he scored a respectable 12 out of a total of 56 then 7 in the second innings out of 42. The following month, Tress's hotel was advertised as the contact point for a challenge match between the same two teams on New Year's Day at £30 a side<sup>18</sup>.

The licence was transferred to Henry Stredwick Green (1794-1846) in April 1833<sup>19</sup>. He continued the pub's involvement in cricket by hosting meeting of the Amateur Cricket Club to arrange play for the upcoming season<sup>20</sup>. Green was a veteran of the Battle of Waterloo in 1815 who celebrated its 26<sup>th</sup>

anniversary in June 1841 with a dinner at the Cricketers' Arms Tavern to a large circle of friends. The band of the 28<sup>th</sup> Regiment played during the evening<sup>21</sup>.

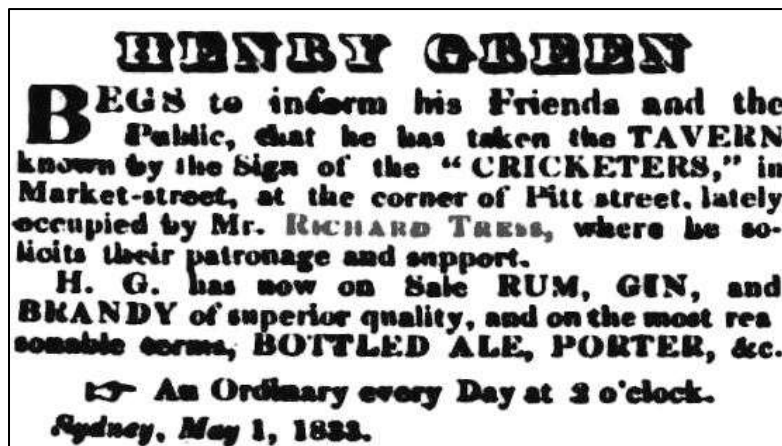


Figure 3 Cricketer's Hotel advert, 1833 (*The Australian*, 5 May 1833)

By June 1842, the Victoria Cricket Club was using the pub as its clubrooms<sup>22</sup>, and in November the members of the Club played the first match of the season among themselves in Hyde Park, and afterwards dined at the Cricketers' Hotel<sup>23</sup>. The enterprising Henry Green installed a new billiard table the same year, and advertised it frequently in the press<sup>24</sup>. The following February, he advertised for a marker for his billiard room. The rather strict requirements were for "a person of gentlemanly habits with a character for honesty, sobriety, cleanliness and activity that can bear the clearest investigation"<sup>25</sup>.



Figure 4 Smart's Hotel, 1901 (City of Sydney Archives)

The war veteran licensee illuminated his hotel on the 29<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo in Jun 1844. *The Australian* noted that he was one of the few Waterloo veterans in the colony<sup>26</sup>. Green died in September 1846 at the age of 52<sup>27</sup>, and his widow Mary took over the licence, which was formalised in April 1847<sup>28</sup>. In January 1849, Edward Borton moved from the Blue Bell Hotel on the

corner of Erskine and Sussex Streets to take over the licence of the Cricketers' Hotel, and immediately began to promote the "splendid Billiard Room"<sup>29</sup>. Borton remained the licensee until October 1865 when he advertised the sale of the lease and licence of the Cricketers' Arms, saying that "in consequence of the advance of old age he is selling in order to enjoy the fruits of an active life in quiet repose"<sup>30</sup>. He experienced two years of quiet repose before passing away in December 1867 at the age of 72<sup>31</sup>. The licence was transferred to Charles Lamy in 1866, who renamed it the Frankfort Hotel<sup>32</sup>.

Robert Smart became the licensee in March 1869, renaming the pub to Smart's Family Hotel, and promoting it in regional newspapers to visitors staying in Sydney<sup>33</sup>. By this time, sports were long gone from Hyde Park, and publicans looked for new customers among the many people travelling to central Sydney for work or holidays. Robert Smart died in 1875<sup>34</sup> and other members of the family took over the hotel for many years: Joseph Smart by 1880<sup>35</sup>, Mrs Mary A. Smart by 1885<sup>36</sup> and Joseph Hobbes Smart by 1895<sup>37</sup>.



**Figure 5 Roberts' Hotel, 1936 (Noel Butlin Archives)**

The original two-storey hotel<sup>38</sup> was demolished in about 1914 and replaced by a grander three-storey building<sup>39</sup>. Charles James Roberts (1846-1925) was the owner and licensee of the luxurious five-storey Roberts Hotel on the corner of George and Market Streets when the building was badly damaged by a large fire next door in 1918<sup>40</sup>.

He sold the pub to Farmer and Coy (who operated a large store adjacent to the pub) and purchased Smart's Hotel from the Smart family in 1919. He renamed his new acquisition the Roberts Hotel. Charles Roberts was genial and even-tempered, enjoyed cricket, sailing and rowing and was the patron of several sporting clubs. He and his wife entertained on a grand scale at their home Chatsworth, Potts Point<sup>41</sup>. His only son Charles Warman Roberts (1874-1948) took over the licence from Joseph Smart<sup>42</sup>. Charles Roberts died in 1935, and in 1933 Richardson and Wrench sold the building to Business and Property Pty Ltd<sup>43</sup> for more than £70,000<sup>44</sup>.

The Roberts Hotel was back in the news in August 1952 when two reporters from the *Sunday Telegraph*, a man and a woman, decided to visit sixteen city pubs to test the willingness of hotel

keepers to serve women at the front bar. The background to this event was that while it was not illegal for women to drink in front bars, it was the widespread custom to refuse them service. The legality changed during World War II when a draft order under the *National Security Act* in August 1942 restricted people's activities, including a ban on women drinking in public bars<sup>45</sup>. This ban was lifted in New South Wales in September 1946<sup>46</sup>.

The two intrepid journalists found that four hotels served them without question, three served them and then asked them to drink somewhere else in the hotel, and nine refused to serve the woman in either the front bar or saloon bar. Reactions from bar staff varied from courteous, apologetic, deadpan to blunt. In all the bars where the woman was refused service, all the male drinkers said they didn't object to it. At the Roberts Hotel, the female reporter was met with a gruff "we don't serve women in the bar. Go and see the manager if you want to complain about it"<sup>47</sup>.

In 1962, W. Dalamal Investments Pty Ltd purchased the building, demolished it and erected a commercial building called Dalamal House in 1963<sup>48</sup>. Then in 1987, Dalamal House was replaced by the City Centre complex<sup>49</sup>.

### **Cricketers' Arms Hotel, Elizabeth Street**

**Address:** 185 Elizabeth Street, between Market and Park Streets.

#### **Timeline:**

1853: The owner and first licensee was Thomas Douglass.

1854: The licence was transferred to William Baxter.

1875: The hotel burned down and the licence was transferred to another city hotel.

In May 1853, a publican's licence was granted to the owner Thomas Douglass for the Cricketers Arms Hotel in Elizabeth Street, a one-storey brick building located between Market and Park Streets, opposite the cricket ground in Hyde Park. William Baxter took over the licence the following year<sup>50</sup> and was soon helping to organise athletic events in the park. A hurdle race in front of 3,000 spectators in August 1854 was a success, with the winner collecting a subscription purse of twenty sovereigns, and the runner-up five sovereigns<sup>51</sup>.



**Figure 6 Hyde Park Cricket Ground (City of Sydney 1855 map)**

Baxter also involved himself in cricket, and in February 1855 advertised a challenge match between the Pandora Cricket Club and juniors from the Mary-le-bone Cricket Club or any other club in the colony (except the Australian Cricket Club, for some reason)<sup>52</sup>. Baxter also advertised his pub and its complete view of the Hyde Park Cricket Ground, where the “manly and scientific game” (cricket, that is) and other sports were continually played<sup>53</sup>. In September 1855, the licence was transferred to John Cartwright Pardoe<sup>54</sup> who continued the pub’s active involvement with cricket. In June 1857, the Australian Cricket Club held their general meeting at the pub<sup>55</sup>, and in September the Union Cricket Club also met there<sup>56</sup>.

In December 1857, entries were being received by the Treasurer at the Cricketers’ Arms for the horse races at the Ashfield Racecourse<sup>57</sup>. This was a suburban course that reportedly only operated in 1856<sup>58</sup> and 1857. The pub continued to organise cricket matches into the 1860s, even though the Hyde Park Cricket Ground had closed by then. A meeting was held in February 1862 to arrange matches at the Garrison Ground between the Warwick Cricket Club and the Albion Cricket Club<sup>59</sup>. Thomas Douglass retained ownership of the Cricketers’ Arms until his death in March 1862<sup>60</sup>.

Disaster struck in February 1875 when an overnight fire burned down most of the pub, leaving only a kitchen at the rear of the building. The owner William Long told the *Sydney Morning Herald* that the building was uninsured, but the stock owned by the licensee Frederick Grossman was insured<sup>61</sup>. The pub was not rebuilt, and the licence was transferred to a hotel on Hunter Street<sup>62</sup>.

This pub was closely associated with sports in its short life, especially those in nearby Hyde Park. But even after sporting activities left the park for other places to play, the pub maintained its involvement with a variety of sports, including racing at the ephemeral Ashfield Racecourse.

## **Cricketer’s Rest Hotel, Redfern**

**Address:** 90 Pitt Street, Redfern.

### **Timeline:**

1864: The Albert Ground opened for cricket matches.

1867: The Welcome Inn was renamed the Cricketer’s Rest Hotel by John Louis Kettle, the first licensee.

1874: John Kettle left the pub and established the Australian Eleven Hotel next to the Albert Ground.

1920s: The Cricketer’s Rest was substantially renovated in the Tudor Revival style.

1980s: After another renovation, it was renamed the Tudor Hall Hotel.

2015: purchased by the W. Short Hotelier Group.

2022: Purchased by Universal Hotels.

It was not unusual for famous sportsmen to take advantage of their fame by becoming publicans to earn a living behind the bar. The Australian cricketer John Louis Kettle (1830-1891) established two pubs in Redfern during the 1860s and 1870s. He played three first-class matches for New South Wales between 1859 and 1862, including making the highest score against the visiting Englishmen during their Australian tour in 1862<sup>63</sup>. He played professional cricket for the Warwick Cricket Club for ten years and played in many intercolonial matches.

After retiring from the game he took over a hotel on the corner of Pitt and Redfern Streets which he renamed the Cricketers’ Rest Hotel in late 1867<sup>64</sup>. The pub was previously the Welcome Inn, run by

John Eustace<sup>65</sup>. While there is no newspaper record of the change of name and licensee, the Welcome Inn was the only pub in Redfern on Pitt Street or Redfern Street listed in *Sands' Sydney Directories* during the 1860s, so it must be the same place. Eustace was keen to attract sports people, as shown when the first general meeting of the Redfern Cricket Club was held at his pub in July 1863<sup>66</sup>.



Figure 7 Cricketer's Rest advert, 1867 (*Bells Life in Sydney*, 21 December 1867)

Publicans like Kettle were the principal patrons of sport in early Sydney, and many of them would jockey to secure their hotels as the bases for clubs such as cricket clubs, where meetings would be held and many people would gather to drink after matches<sup>67</sup>. To locate a pub near a major sporting venue offered publicans plenty of thirsty customers, as well as improving their chance of winning temporary licences for beer booths at the venues during fixtures<sup>68</sup>. The pub was within walking distance from the Albert Ground.



Figure 8 Cricketer's Rest Hotel, 1949 (Time Gents website)

The energetic John Kettle wasted no time in enticing thirsty sports people and others to his establishment, highlighting its proximity to the Albert Cricket Ground and promoting his luncheons,

dinners and accommodation<sup>69</sup>. In May 1869, he advertised that buses departed from his hotel every five minutes to the Agricultural Exhibition in Prince Alfred Park, Surry Hills<sup>70</sup>. In another advert he claimed to be the nearest pub to the gates of the exhibition. Pony racing was conducted at the Albert Ground, and in 1869 Kettle offered stalls for ponies that were racing at the ground<sup>71</sup>. His special deal on game day was “a glass of good ale and a sandwich, 4d” for those on their way to the sports at the Albert Ground<sup>72</sup>.

Determined to leave no sport unexploited, John Kettle accommodated the All-England pedestrian (athletics) team at the Cricketer’s Rest in April 1870, prior to the Easter Monday sports carnival at the Albert Ground<sup>73</sup>. The following year, a social club he initiated, called the Kettle Club, travelled from the pub to the Sir Joseph Banks Hotel at Botany for a day’s picnic at which cricket, quoits and football were played by the junior members of the Club<sup>74</sup>.

In April 1872, yet another commercial opportunity fell into his lap when the Royal Australian Circus performed on the vacant land opposite the pub for two nights<sup>75</sup>. But Kettle’s main interest in summer was the cricket at the Albert Ground, during which he either operated the pavilion bar<sup>76</sup> or sold drinks and snacks at a booth at the ground<sup>77</sup>. In 1874, John Kettle decided to retire from the Cricketers’ Rest, and advertised the pub to let<sup>78</sup>. A few years later he established the Australian Eleven Hotel across the road from the Albert Cricket Ground.



**Figure 9 Tudor Hotel, Redfern (Instagram user)**

In the 1920s, the building was substantially renovated in the Tudor Revival style, which was popular at that time. After another renovation in the 1980s, it was renamed the Tudor Hall Hotel. The pub was purchased by the W. Short hotelier group in 2015<sup>79</sup>. In 2022 it was sold to Universal Hotel group<sup>80</sup> and is now called the Tudor Hotel.

## **Cricketer's Arms Hotel, Fitzroy Street, Surry Hills**

**Address:** 106-108 Fitzroy Street, Surry Hills.

### **Timeline:**

1876: The Association Cricket ground was established in Moore Park.

1876: Cricketers' Arms Hotel was opened.

1886: The City Football Club (Australian Rules) used the pub as its changing room.

1921: Remodelled by Tooth and Co.

1941: The famous boxing referee Joe Wallis became the licensee.

Fitzroy Street in Surry Hills was a main thoroughfare linking the eastern suburbs to the city of Sydney. Buildings were constructed between Bourke and South Dowling Streets as early as the 1840s (The Pineapple Inn on the corner of Nichols Street in 1845, the Hopetoun Hotel in 1846 and the group of buildings at 96-104 in the 1840s). By the 1870s, there were still vacant lots in the street, and in 1876 the Cricketers' Arms Hotel<sup>81</sup> appeared on the Hutchison Street corner with a grocer's shop next door<sup>82</sup>.

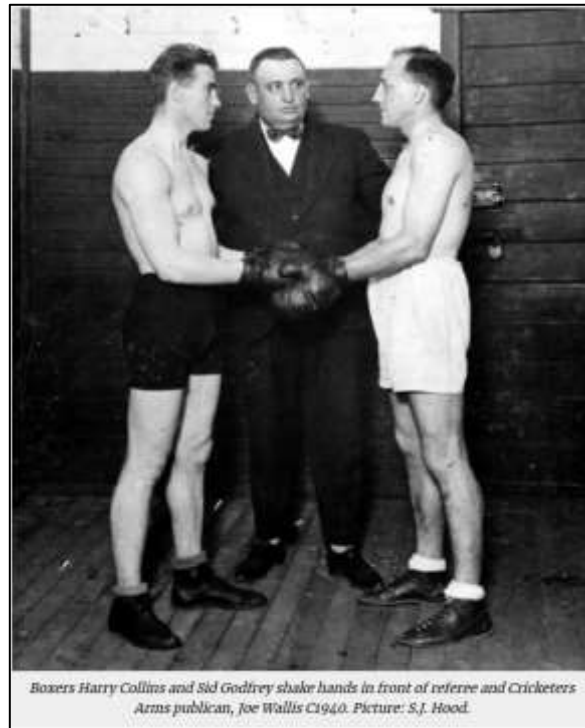


**Figure 10** Cricketer's Arms Hotel, 1949 (Noel Butlin Archives)

The early publicans at the Cricketers' Arms involved themselves in sports from the start, as a quoits championship was held there in March 1877<sup>83</sup>. In May 1886, the City Football Club (Australian rules) played its first match of the season against the Sydney Football Club at Moore Park, using the Cricketers' Arms as its changing rooms<sup>84</sup>. In 1921, the pub was remodelled by the owners Tooth and Co<sup>85</sup>, to bring it up to the standard required to survive the culling of dodgy pubs by the Licences Reduction Board in the early 1920s<sup>86</sup>.

In October 1941, the boxing referee known professionally as Joe Wallis (1888-1952) took over the licence of the pub under his real name Joseph John Newton<sup>87</sup>. He boxed as a youth, and assumed the name of a friend of his named Wallis who had given up boxing, apparently to hide Joe's boxing activities from his disapproving father. From 1914, he refereed boxing matches at the Olympia Athletic Club (to 1916), the Hippodrome and from 1919 at the Stadium in Rushcutters Bay<sup>88</sup>.

He continued his refereeing career while running the Cricketers' Arms, and by the end of 1942 had officiated at over 42,000 fights<sup>89</sup>. He also ran a gymnasium, and never forgot his working-class upbringing, giving away bottles of milk to poor children outside his pub<sup>90</sup>. He continued to referee boxing until 1949, including Australian title fights. In the end, ill health and some controversial decisions hastened his retirement. He died of cancer in October 1952 at Camperdown and was buried in Woronora cemetery. He was generally regarded as the world's best boxing referee<sup>91</sup>.



**Figure 11 Joe Wallis and boxers (Sam Hood Collection)**

Today the Cricketers' Arms has a laid-back atmosphere and plenty of character. The walls are decorated with decades of historic paraphernalia of the type that more trendy pubs are only just discovering. The pub continues its original role of quenching the thirst of many sports fans on their way to and from the playing fields in Moore Park.

## The Australian Eleven Hotel, Elizabeth and Kettle Streets, Redfern

**Address:** 157 Elizabeth Street, Redfern.

### Timeline:

1864-1877: The Albert Ground was in operation for cricket matches.

1878: The Australian Eleven Hotel opened as a weatherboard building with John Louis Kettle as the first licensee.

1885: Redfern Park opened with an oval for cricket and rugby union.

1887: John Louis Kettle took over the licence again from Laura Creamer.

1893: John Cody took over the licence.

1902: John Cody rebuilt the pub as a two-storey brick building as part of a lease agreement with Fred Kettle.

1950: The New South Wales Government resumed the land east of Redfern Oval.

1955: The pub closed.

1960s: The Harry Noble Court Housing Commission Flats were constructed on the site.

In 1867, John Louis Kettle (1830-1891) took over the licence of the Cricketers' Rest Hotel on the corner of Pitt and Redfern Streets. He was the licensee until leaving in 1874 to establish the Australian Eleven Hotel<sup>92</sup>. The new hotel was right across the road from the Albert Ground, but the timing was not the best because it opened a year after the ground closed in 1877.

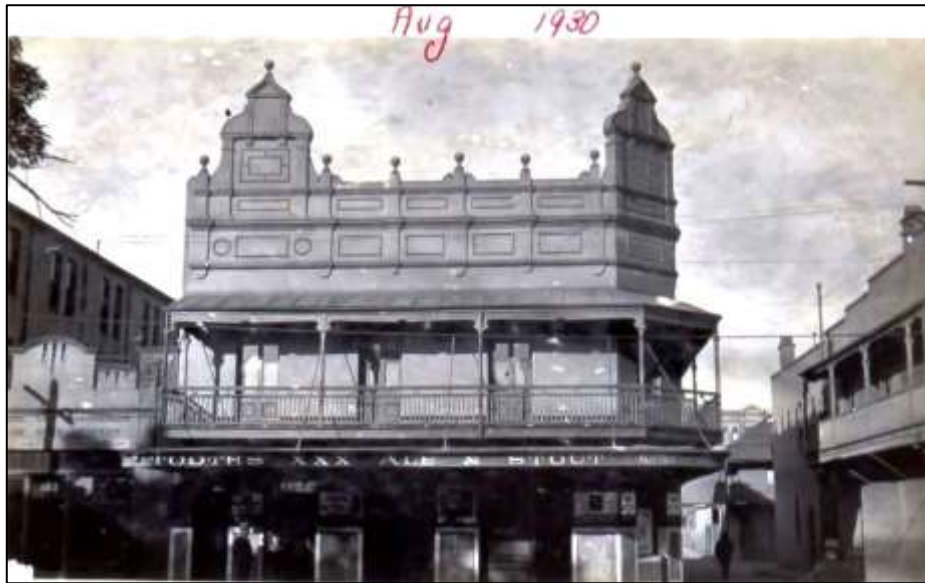


**Figure 12 Australian Eleven Hotel Redfern, c1887 (NSW State Archives)**

In 1886, Laura Creamer took over the licence<sup>93</sup>. Business for the hotel must have picked up by this time as Redfern Park had opened the previous year after Redfern Council resumed 12 acres in 1885 and gazetted it as a park. When work on Redfern Park commenced, the Council was inundated with requests by community groups to use the new oval on the southern half of the park for cricket and rugby union. The swamp which occupied much of the area was drained and the area was transformed into a typical Victorian pleasure ground. A bowling green and pavilion were added in 1890, along with a bandstand and ornamental fountain donated by John Baptist<sup>94</sup>.

John Louis Kettle regained the licence from Laura Creamer in 1887<sup>95</sup> and retained it until just before his death in 1891<sup>96</sup>. In 1893, John Cody took over the licence from John Kettle's brother Fred. In a court case, Cody was given an ultimatum to rebuild the old pub or lose his licence. As part of the

lease agreement, Cody demolished the old weatherboard pub and replaced with a large two-storey brick hotel in 1902. Cody transferred to licence in 1912 to Don McDonald, a well-known boxing referee.



**Figure 13 Australian Eleven Hotel Redfern, 1930 (Noel Butlin Archives)**

Business picked up at the Australian Eleven Hotel in 1946 when South Sydney Rugby League Club made Redfern Oval its home ground. At this time, the bar manager of the pub was the former welterweight and middleweight boxing champion Alan Westbury, who held the titles in 1942. The end of the Australian Eleven Hotel came when all the property east of Elizabeth Street opposite Redfern Oval was resumed by the New South Wales Government for public housing in May 1950. The pub closed in December 1955<sup>97</sup>. Today the site of the former pub is part of the Harry Noble Court Housing Commission Flats<sup>98</sup>.



**Figure 14 Harry Noble Court Flats, 1968 (City of Sydney Archives)**

## Bat and Ball Hotel, Cleveland Street, Redfern

**Address:** 495 Cleveland Street, Redfern.

### Timeline:

1876: Opened by Samuel Furness as the Duke of Cleveland Hotel.

1902: Hotel purchased by Tooth and Coy.

1930: The hotel was demolished and rebuilt.

1937: The name was changed to the Bat and Ball Hotel.

1939: A clock was erected on the roof for the cricket umpires in Moore Park.

In May 1876, Samuel Furness announced the opening of the Duke of Cleveland Hotel on the corner of Cleveland Street and Dowling Street, facing Moore Park<sup>99</sup>. In the early nineteenth century, the undeveloped area that ran between Devonshire and Cleveland Streets to Chippendale was gazetted as the Government Paddock. But it soon became known as the Cleveland Paddock after Governor Lachlan Macquarie's friend, Captain Thomas Sadlier Cleveland<sup>100</sup>.

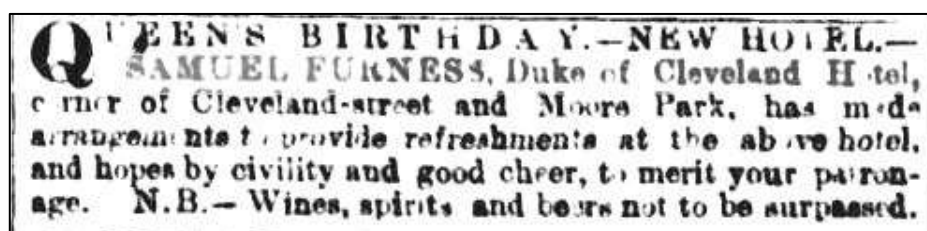


Figure 15 Duke of Cleveland Hotel advert, 1876 (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 24 May 1876)

Cleveland was an officer in Macquarie's 73<sup>rd</sup> Regiment whose name was invariably spelt "Cleaveland" by Macquarie and in the press. On his arrival in New South Wales in January 1810, he was appointed Brigade Major of the regiment<sup>101</sup> and was responsible for issuing the Governor's many proclamations, especially the flurry of activity in the first year when Macquarie was energetic in getting the fledgling colony back on track after the interregnum following the deposition of Governor William Bligh in 1808. Cleveland's first public duty was to issue a proclamation to restore to their previous positions four of Bligh's supporters who were dismissed during the Rum Rebellion of 1808, including Commissary John Palmer and Provost Marshall William Gore<sup>102</sup>.

The army officers soon utilised Hyde Park to race their horses against each other, and Captain Cleaveland was a keen competitor in these events where officers and gentlemen competed for cash prizes<sup>103</sup>. He sailed from New South Wales on leave on 20 October 1811 in the *Providence*, changed passage mid-voyage to the *Worley* but died at sea before reaching England. Macquarie was reportedly shocked to hear of the death of "dear Major Cleaveland"<sup>104</sup>.

The other places in Sydney named Cleveland also have their origin in Captain Cleveland's short stay in the colony: both the major street that separates Surry Hills from Redfern as well as Cleveland House, which was constructed by Daniel Cooper in 1824 on part of the Cleveland Paddocks that he purchased in 1819 from the original grant to the market gardener Charles Smith (who called his land Cleaveland Gardens)<sup>105</sup>. So the Duke of Cleveland that Samuel Furness chose was just made up, although he must have thought it was a good name for his new pub.

Cricket was played nearby in Moore Park from about 1854, when the British Army established the Garrison Ground on the site of the present-day Sydney Cricket Ground. After the Army left in 1870, the New South Wales Cricket Association began to use the ground, then took over its administration in 1875 and upgraded it in 1876<sup>106</sup>. From this time, it has been the principal cricket ground in New South Wales, and Samuel Furness located his pub on one of the main approach roads for cricket fans to maximise the commercial opportunities from passing trade on game days. He was the president of the Croydon Cricket Club when it held its tenth annual meeting and dinner at the Duke of Cleveland Hotel, and was re-elected president at the meeting<sup>107</sup>.



Figure 16 Royal visit near the Bat and Ball, 1954 (City of Sydney Archives)

An article in *The Sun* on the thirtieth anniversary of rugby league in 1938 mentioned that the South Sydney Rugby League footballers used to train in Moore Park next to the pub in the opening two years of the code when they won the premiership twice (in 1908 and 1909). The licensee at the time was Alf Pick<sup>108</sup>. The large brewer Tooth and Company purchased the hotel in 1902<sup>109</sup>. In 1926, Tooth and Co submitted plans to the Sydney Municipal Council for a new hotel on the site<sup>110</sup>. The old building was demolished in 1930 and rebuilt in the Inter-War Free Classical style<sup>111</sup>.

In January 1937, the name was changed to the Bat and Ball<sup>112</sup> in a more direct appeal to cricketers and their supporters. The pub had its own cricket team by this time, which was reported playing a team from the neighbouring Cleveland Inn in Moore Park<sup>113</sup>. In 1939 a large clock was erected on the eastern roof for the benefit of the cricket umpires in Moore Park. The clock was still visible in a 1960 photo in the Tooth and Co yellow cards<sup>114</sup>, but has since been removed.

In the lead-up to the referendum in 1953 on the relaxation of early closing, the licensee J. B. McInerney said that hotel trading after six o'clock would stabilise the business of most hotel keepers and make drinking more dignified<sup>115</sup>. He was referring to the notorious "six o'clock swill" during which patrons indulged in a drinking frenzy each working day between the finish of work at five and closing time of six o'clock ever since early closing was introduced in 1916. The following year it was reported that a radio announcer would be stationed at the pub to provide commentary as Queen Elizabeth II and the Duke of Edinburgh drove past during the Royal visit<sup>116</sup>.

In November 1954, a severe storm struck Moore Park while two cricket matches were in progress near the Bat and Ball Hotel. The players and umpires ran for shelter under trees, but lightning struck a Moreton Bay fig tree and the three umpires sheltering under it were thrown to the ground. One umpire was killed instantly and the others were knocked out and taken to hospital<sup>117</sup>.



**Figure 17 Bat and Ball Hotel with clock, 1949 (Noel Butlin Archives)**

The Bat and Ball Hotel continued to host a cricket team until at least 1986 when it was reported playing Maccabi's B grade cricket team in the Moore Park cricket competition<sup>118</sup>. It maintains a relaxed and casual atmosphere with a classic pub feel and still welcomes many sports fans from the nearby Sydney Football Stadium and the Sydney Cricket Ground. In 2022 the hotel was purchased by the Universal Hotel Group, which owns a stable of popular Sydney hotels, including the Tudor Hotel which is also featured in this history.

## Pubs with some involvement in cricket and other sports

### Cricketer's Arms Hotel, Chalmers Street

**Address:** 382 Castlereagh Street, later 98 Chalmers Street, Surry Hills.

#### Timeline:

December 1857: The Australian Cricketers Hotel licence was granted to Anne Wilks.

1865: The pub was known by this time as the Cricketers' Arms Hotel.

July 1870: Anne Wilks renamed it the Exhibition Hotel when cricket in Prince Alfred Park was replaced by the Intercolonial Exhibition.

October 1882: Renamed to the Albury Hotel.

November 1890: Renamed to the Lord Jersey Hotel.

1969: The Professional Musicians Club opened, operating until about 1984.

1999: The Headquarter of RANZCO moved to the site.

The Australian Cricketers' Hotel was built in 1857 across the road from Prince Alfred Park and opened by Anne Wilks, the owner and first licensee<sup>119</sup>. Cricket was played regularly in the park from 1850 until the Albert Cricket Ground was opened in 1864, and then ceased altogether in 1870 when the park was redeveloped to cover much of the park with tents and buildings for the first Metropolitan Intercolonial Exhibition. By 1865, it was known as the Cricketers' Arms Hotel<sup>120</sup>. Anne Wilks aimed to attract the cricketers while they were playing there, but when they went elsewhere she changed the pub's name to the Exhibition Hotel in July 1870 to attract attendees at the first Exhibition<sup>121</sup>.



Figure 18 Intercolonial Exhibition, 1870 (State Library of NSW)

The month-long Exhibition was a great success, with a total attendance of 185,000, including an estimated 30,000 visitors filling the grounds at one point. There were 130 exhibits of horses and 186 exhibits of cattle, mainly Durhams, Herefords and Devons. Inside the vast purpose-built Exhibition Building were displays of horticultural specimens, including ferns, orchids, palms, cycads and other

choice plants contributed by various amateur and professional gardeners and nurserymen. All the expanding produce of the colony was on display, both commercial and artistic<sup>122</sup>.

Further Exhibitions were held in Prince Alfred Park in 1873 and 1875 before moving to the Garden Palace in the Domain in 1879<sup>123</sup>. The Royal Exhibition Hotel was opened a few doors away on the Devonshire Street corner in November 1870 by Charles Meacher, who moved from the Dowling Street Wharf Hotel, no doubt to take advantage of the crowds attending the many events that were held in the Exhibition Building after the Intercolonial Exhibition closed<sup>124</sup>.

Anne Wilks' daughter Sarah married Stephen Rabone in 1862<sup>125</sup> and was involved in the running of the hotel<sup>126</sup>. After her mother's death in August 1879<sup>127</sup>, the licence, goodwill and lease were put up for sale<sup>128</sup>. For more than twenty years, Anne Wilks was successful as the owner and licensee of an inner city pub with several other competing hotels nearby. Pubs of the time benefited from the long economic boom that began with the gold rushes of the early 1850s and continued until the economic depression of the 1890s. The new licensee renamed the pub the Albury Hotel by 1882<sup>129</sup>, then in November 1890, the licensee George W. Austin changed the name to the Lord Jersey Hotel<sup>130</sup>.

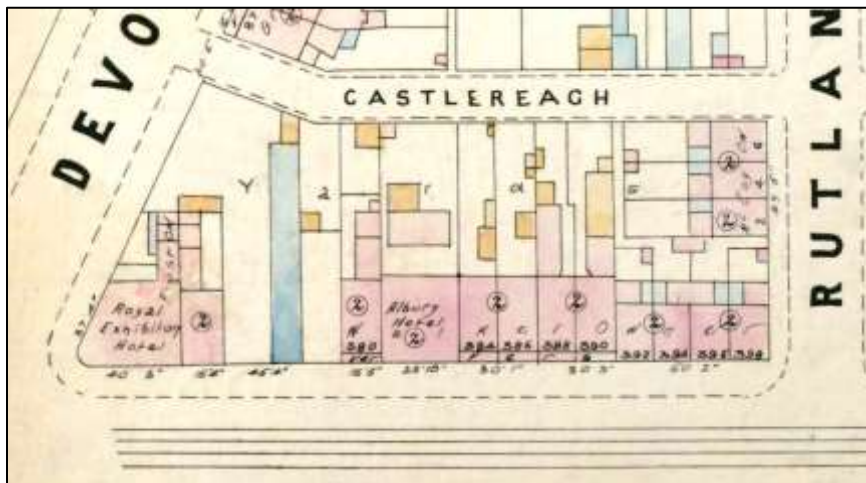


Figure 19 Albury Hotel, 1888 (Rygate & West 1888 maps)

Victor Albert George Child-Villiers, the 7<sup>th</sup> Earl of Jersey, was selected to be the next Governor of New South Wales in July 1890, and arrived in January 1891. He must have been given dire warnings about the state of the colonial water supply, because he arrived with a large quantity of drinking water and a number of bathtubs. But, to the vexation of the Colonial Office, Jersey tendered his resignation prematurely in November 1892. He wrote to the Secretary of State for the Colonies that the duties of a Governor "could hardly be called serious nowadays, being chiefly of a social character". He left Sydney in March 1893, two years into a five-year term<sup>131</sup>. Despite his short stay, he may have been chuffed to learn that a pub was already named in his honour before he set foot in the colony.

The Lord Jersey Hotel operated until May 1953 when the licensee Veronica Gilchrist applied to transfer the licence to Philip Saffron, older brother of Abraham (Abe) Saffron. The Licensing Court refused the application on the grounds that he was not a fit and proper person to hold a licence, due to his evasiveness about his previous hotel dealings (in which he gave false evidence) and the

magistrate's opinion that he would not be the sole owner<sup>132</sup>. An appeal in the Quarter Sessions Appeals Court the following month was dismissed<sup>133</sup>. It seems that the Lord Jersey Hotel closed after this, as a few months later Veronica Gilchrist was granted the licence of the Tourist Hotel in Wagga Wagga<sup>134</sup>.



Figure 20 Lord Jersey Hotel plan, 1919 (City of Sydney Archives)

In 1956, the Professional Musicians Club applied to the Sydney Municipal Council to demolish the old pub and erect a new building to be used as a licensed club<sup>135</sup>. The Club was established in 1906, originally in Rowe Street, then from the 1940s operated as a licensed club in Castlereagh Street, and then in Griff House in Pitt Street. The Club moved to the new building in Chalmers Street in 1969. It ceased trading around 1984, partly because of the decentralisation of the venues where many musicians were employed<sup>136</sup>.

In 1999, the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Ophthalmologists moved its headquarters from Commonwealth Street to 94-98 Chalmers Street. It is the current occupant of the site of the former Cricketers' Arms Hotel<sup>137</sup>.

## Cricketer's Arms Hotel, 285 King St, Newtown

**Address:** 283-285 King St, Newtown.

### Timeline:

1853: Licence granted to Robert Arnold Short for the Cottage of Content Hotel.

1857: The Newtown Cricket Club was first reported.

1871: First reported as the Cricketers Arms Hotel.

Late 1970s: The hotel closed.

1982: Converted to a McDonald's restaurant.

1998: McDonald's closed.

1999: Kelly's on King Hotel opened as an Irish-themed pub.

In May 1853, Robert Arnold Short was granted a licence for a new hotel named the Cottage of Content Hotel in the Newtown Road. The Newtown Cricket Club was first reported in 1857 when they played the Telegraph Cricket Club<sup>138</sup>, and in 1859 played a match in the paddock at the rear of Sydney University. The married men of the Newtown Club played the single men in front of a large crowd of some 500<sup>139</sup>.

By May 1861, the members of the Newtown Cricket Club usually conducted meetings at the Railway Hotel<sup>140</sup> and the following month the married and single members were playing each other again on the Queen's Birthday at the University Ground<sup>141</sup>. By June 1863, club meetings were being held at the Terminus Hotel<sup>142</sup>. The same month, Newtown was reportedly the chief suburban club, but had the drawback of a "wretched ground for practice". The annual dinner was held at the Pelican Hotel<sup>143</sup>. By November 1863, the Newtown Cricket Club had moved to the Erskineville Oval<sup>144</sup>. From 1865, the club was holding committee meetings<sup>145</sup> and annual dinners at the Newtown School of Arts<sup>146</sup>.



Figure 21 Kelly's on King (Flickr user dunedoo)

The pub changed its name to the Cricketers' Arms Hotel in 1871 when Henry Wakeham became the licensee<sup>147</sup>. But he had no more luck enticing the local cricket club to his establishment for meetings or dinners than his predecessors. After patronising many of the other Newtown pubs since the 1850s, the cricket club settled on the Newtown Town Hall. This building was originally constructed in the 1860s as the Newtown School of Arts before being purchased by the Newtown Municipal Council for its own chambers and community use in 1868<sup>148</sup>.

Thirty years later, the Cricketers' Arms finally enticed cricketers to meet in the pub when in August 1902 a meeting was held to form a Newtown District Wednesday Cricket Club, to compete in first and second grades. Delegates were elected for the New South Wales Wednesday Cricket Association, as well as other committee roles<sup>149</sup>. In August 1905, the annual meeting of the Newtown Half-Holiday Cricket Club was held at the Cricketers' Arms<sup>150</sup>.

This was about the sum total of cricket clubs officially patronising the Cricketers' Arms, because in the following few years the Newtown Congregational Cricket Club met at the St George's Hall in King Street<sup>151</sup> and the Newtown Methodist Cricket Club met in the Methodist School Hall in King Street<sup>152</sup>. The Newtown District Cricket Club held their annual meeting in the Erskineville Town Hall in 1908<sup>153</sup> and in the Newtown Town Hall in 1915<sup>154</sup>.

The Cricketers' Arms finally closed in the late 1970s and the owners Tooth and Co sold the building to McDonald's in 1982 to make way for a restaurant that proved to be unwelcome in the district. McDonald's eventually bowed to local pressure and closed in 1998<sup>155</sup>. The Newtown Maccas was operated by the former rugby league player Ron Coote (South Sydney and Easts) and his family<sup>156</sup>.

The Kelly's on King Hotel opened in 1999 with an authentic Irish feel, with loads of paraphernalia shipped over from Ireland for the fit out. However, a significant fire and two decades of wear and tear left the venue run down until a refurbishment in 2020<sup>157</sup>. The pub survives as the original 1850s pub building, one of the oldest buildings in Newtown.

## **No involvement in sports or a very short history**

### **Albert Cricket Ground Hotel, Elizabeth Street, Redfern**

**Address:** 121 Elizabeth Street, corner of Redfern Street, Redfern.

**Timeline:**

1869: Licence issued to Matthew Clark for the Albert Cricket Ground Hotel, Redfern.

1875: Seemed to be renamed to the Albert Hotel.

1940: Still open.

Now: The site of the former pub is part of a public housing block.

The Albert Cricket Ground opened in 1864, and in September 1869, a publican's licence was transferred to the Albert Cricket Ground Hotel, a block from the cricket ground. The publican's aim was to cater for the cricket players and supporters, but there was no sign that while the cricket ground was active (until 1877) the licensees involved themselves in cricket-related activities, nor did any cricket teams meet in the pub. After the closure of the ground, the pub was renamed to the Albert Hotel<sup>158</sup>.



**Figure 22 Albert Cricket Ground, 1875 (Time Gents website)**

The Redfern Wednesday Half-Holiday Cricket Club met at the pub in August 1905, but that was the only reported activity<sup>159</sup>. The last mention of the hotel in the press was in 1940<sup>160</sup>. The site of the former pub is now part of a large public housing block.

### **Cricketer's Arms Hotel, Balmain**

**Address:** 255 Darling Street, corner of Ford Street, Balmain.

#### **Timeline:**

1850s: Large industries were established at White Bay and Mort Bay.

1857: The Balmain Cricket Club was established and played at the Pigeon Ground.

1872: Pub opened, with Charles Armit as the first licensee.

1996: The name was changed to the Monkey Bar.

2015: The name reverted to the Cricketers' Arms Hotel.

The Balmain peninsula is surrounded by deep-water harbours only a few miles from the centre of Sydney, making it an ideal site for water-based industries. From 1854, White Bay was dominated by John Booth's Steam Saw Mills, the first great Sydney timber and joinery works which stretched along the Balmain shoreline. Logs from the forests of New South Wales arrived at the docks and left as milled timber to feed the rapidly expanding construction industry, until the company was wound up in 1902.

Another mammoth local industry was the White Bay Power Station, built by the New South Wales Railway Commissioners in 1912. Freighters docking at the wharf fed the coal loader. The power station operated continuously for about seventy years, generating electricity, primarily for railways, but also powering the Glebe Island and Pyrmont bridges and various pumping stations<sup>161</sup>.

Australian's first dry dock was opened in 1855 by the businessman Thomas S. Mort in what is now Mort's Bay. It initially repaired the new commercial steamers, but later became a large engineering facility. After Mort's death in 1878, the dock expanded its operations and became the largest private employer in the colony, second only to New South Wales railways<sup>162</sup>.

The first Balmain Cricket Club was formed in February 1857 when a meeting was held at the Unity Hall Hotel (next to the Pigeon Ground) for “enrolment of members and consideration of rules”<sup>163</sup>. The following month, the club was playing matches in the Domain and at Balmain<sup>164</sup>. An oval called the Balmain Ground was first mentioned in April 1862 when a team from the Balmain Cricket Club played the Telegraph Cricket Club at Easter<sup>165</sup>. This ground was most likely the Pigeon Ground (now Gladstone Park)<sup>166</sup>.



Figure 23 Pigeon Ground Balmain, 1888 (Higinbotham & Robinson maps)

In 1865, the club was being called the Balmain Surrey Cricket Club<sup>167</sup> and by March 1867 the ground had become the Balmain Cricket Ground<sup>168</sup>. The Cricketers Arms Hotel was established opposite the Pigeon Ground in 1872 during a time of rapid change on the Peninsula that made Balmain one of the premier industrial centres of Sydney. The pub spent many years as host to the wharfies who worked in the Mort Bay and White Bay industrial areas, making it one of the suburb’s more colourful pubs<sup>169</sup>.



Figure 24 Cricketer's Arms Balmain, 1949 (Noel Butlin Archives)

Despite the obvious aim of attracting the local Balmain cricketers to the pub, there were no reports of meetings or other events by the Balmain Cricket Club at the pub. The first sporting event was a general meeting at the pub many years later in April 1913 by the Balmain District Club of Australian Rules football<sup>170</sup>. The pub remained as it was until renovations in 1996 resulted in a change of name to the Monkey Bar. The pub changed hands again in 2015, reverting it to a traditional pub and returning to its original name<sup>171</sup>.

## **Cricketer's Arms Hotel, Botany Rd and Raglan Street, Alexandria**

**Address:** 56-58 Botany Road, corner of Henderson Road, Alexandria.

### **Timeline:**

1875: The hotel opened as the Sycamore Tree Hotel.

1885: Licensee Henry Hughes changed the name to the Cricketers' Arms Hotel after Alexandria Park was opened.

1892: Cricket matches commenced at Alexandria Park.

1917: Name changed to Hannan's Hotel.

1920: Name changed back to the Cricketers' Arms Hotel.

1996: Manson Developments purchased the hotel and converted it to twelve residential units.

The pub opened in 1875 as the Sycamore Tree Hotel, with licensee Bridget McGrath<sup>172</sup>. The area that is Alexandria Park today was occupied by Chinese market gardeners in the nineteenth century, encouraged by a fresh water supply. In 1882, an area of ten acres south of Buckland Street was resumed from the Cooper Estate for a public park. The park was not proclaimed until 1889 due to ongoing disputes between the Cooper estate and the New South Wales Government<sup>173</sup>. In 1885, the licensee Henry Hughes optimistically changed the pub's name to the Cricketers' Arms Hotel<sup>174</sup>. The pub was a block from the new park.



**Figure 25 Cricketer's Arms Alexandria, 1980s (City of Sydney Archives)**

In November 1889, tenders were called to lease three cricket wickets in the park for the current season<sup>175</sup>. In the beginning of 1890, the Alexandria Municipal Councillors were becoming frustrated that no improvements had been made to the park despite the earlier dispute being resolved<sup>176</sup>. In September, tenders were called for a picket fence and gates to be installed<sup>177</sup>.

Meanwhile, a fire at the Cricketers' Arms severely damaged the parlours, while the rest of the house was slightly scorched by heat and smoke. Mr Hannan was the owner at the time<sup>178</sup>. Local cricket matches finally commenced at Alexandria Park in February 1892 when the Young Alexandria team played the Young Devonshire team<sup>179</sup>.

After this, cricket was played regularly in the park for some time<sup>180</sup>. By 1926, both cricket<sup>181</sup> and soccer<sup>182</sup> were reportedly being played there in summer. However, there was no sign that the Alexandria cricketers held meetings or events at the Cricketers Arms, or that the licensees encouraged them by sponsoring teams, trophies or even a chook raffle for their benefit. The hotel's name was changed to Hannan's Hotel from 1917 to 1919, but reverted to its original name in 1920. Tooth and Co purchased the head lease in Jul 1924, and sub-leased it to licensees who were tied to sell Tooth's beer.

A 1926 photograph shows a modestly proportioned two-storey hotel of rendered brick, with a splayed corner on the junction of Henderson and Botany Roads. However, a 1928 photo shows a partial view of a much larger hotel with a first and second storey with alternating brick and rendered panels. Tooth and Co records show that material alterations were made between August 1927 and August 1828 at a cost of £10,500. This coincided with the widening of Henderson Road at the time.

Aerial photos show a rounded northwest corner, probably to facilitate the turning of trams. The new hotel, most likely an entirely new building, was a three storey brick building with rendered external panels in the Federation Free style. The transformation of the hotel provided two floors of accommodation, one of the last hotels to do so on a relatively large scale. From the start of the 1929 Great Depression, new hotels were built on a smaller scale, usually of two stories. Licensee Hugh Edwin Mills purchased the hotel from Tooth and Co in September 1982<sup>183</sup>.

This hotel, along with the Empress Hotel in Redfern and the Clifton Hotel on Botany Road was one of the few that allowed aboriginal people to drink there in the 1960s and 1970s when discrimination made it impossible in most pubs<sup>184</sup>. The licensee Hugh Edwin Mills purchased the hotel from Tooth and Co in September 1982<sup>185</sup>. In 1996, the City of Sydney Council granted approval to the new owner Manson Investments to subdivide and convert the then-derelict hotel to two ground floor shops and fourteen residential units under strata title, but only ten of the approved fourteen units were built<sup>186</sup>.

## **The Australian Eleven Hotel, Oxford Street, Darlinghurst**

**Address:** 126 Oxford Street, Darlinghurst.

### **Timeline:**

1876: John R. Baker operated a pawnbroker's shop at 126 Oxford Street.

1877: Converted to the Volunteer Hotel with licensee William F. Stretton.

May 1878: Renamed to the Australian Eleven Hotel.

1880: The building reverted to a shop.

c1914: The building was demolished when Oxford Street was widened.

In 1876, John R. Baker owned a pawnbroker's shop at 126 Oxford Street<sup>187</sup>. He converted it into the Volunteer Hotel and William F. Stretton was granted its first publican's licence<sup>188</sup>. Baker died in April 1877<sup>189</sup> and the pub was advertised for sale in September that year<sup>190</sup>.

In May 1878, the licensee Louis Peterson was granted permission to change the hotel name to the Australian Eleven Hotel<sup>191</sup>, clearly hoping for passing trade from the cricket supporters who were travelling to and from the cricket grounds in Moore Park. In June 1879, it was announced that the hotel would be sold due to family differences<sup>192</sup>. In December 1879, the publican William Masson was fined for neglecting to keep a lamp burning over the door, which was a requirement of pubs at the time<sup>193</sup>. *Sands' Sydney Directory* still recorded the building as a pub in late 1880<sup>194</sup>, but by the end of the year it reverted to a shop when G. Judkins advertised for clothing makers<sup>195</sup>. In the years following, it was a boot warehouse run by John Kimmins<sup>196</sup> and a fruit shop run by Judah Lyons<sup>197</sup>.

This was a notably short-lived attempt to turn a shop into a small hotel (it was referred to as “snug” in the sale adverts in September 1879<sup>198</sup>), and despite trying to attract cricket fans making their way to Moore Park and back, it lasted just a few years before reverting to a shop. The building was demolished when the whole northern side of Oxford Street from Hyde Park to Taylor Square was resumed by the Sydney Council and demolished to allow the widening of Oxford Street by 1914.



## Rifle shooting

### Defending the colony

In response to the overthrow of Governor William Bligh in 1808 by members of the New South Wales Corps, the British Government sent out army Colonel Lachlan Macquarie at the end of 1809 with his own regiment, the 73<sup>rd</sup> Regiment of Foot, to be the first non-Naval Governor. Thus began a succession of 24 British infantry regiments, as well as a number of smaller artillery and engineering regiments. The regiments typically remained in the Australian colonies for five to seven years, and were then posted to another part of the British Empire as part of their Imperial duties, often to India.

Because of the shortage of security and other administrative personnel, the duties of the regiments were wide-ranging and often burdensome. Apart from activities connected with the convicts, they established a Mounted Police in New South Wales that operated between 1825 and 1850. The soldiers also constructed fortifications, fought fires and attended executions. They assisted police in keeping the peace between rioting sailors, rival political parties and various squabbling sectarians. They guarded anything and everything: shipwrecks, goldfields, colonial treasuries, quarantine stations, major government activities, and provided mounted escorts for gold transport. They manned coastal defences and fired artillery salutes on ceremonial occasions.



Figure 26 Victoria Barracks, c1870 (State Library of NSW)

Victoria Barracks was opened in the late 1840s on South Head Road in Paddington as the headquarters and principal training ground of the British military<sup>199</sup>. In the 1850s, the advent of responsible government in the Australian colonies led to increased responsibility and self-reliance. In 1853, the outbreak of the Crimean War and the French annexation of New Caledonia prompted the Australian colonies to supplement the British regiments with local volunteer forces, as it was feared that the troops would be redeployed to these conflicts, leaving the local colonies underdefended. The Sydney Battalion Volunteer Rifle Corps was formed in 1854 by the *Volunteers Act*<sup>200</sup>.

These volunteers, who were mainly drawn from the upper class, were unpaid and required to provide their own uniforms, although the government supplied them with arms and ammunition. By 1861, several companies of Volunteer Rifles were active in Sydney. Those mentioned in the press were based in Sydney (city), St Leonards (North Sydney), Newtown, Paddington, Surry Hills and Balmain<sup>201</sup>.



Figure 27 Sydney Volunteer Rifles, 1870 (*Illustrated Sydney News*)

### **The Paddington Rifle Range**

In 1851, a grant of land was given to the British Army just south of Victoria Barracks for use as a soldier's cricket ground and a garden. The first cricket match was played in 1854<sup>202</sup>. The Sydney Rifle Club had been holding competitions on an informal range next to the military garden from 1851<sup>203</sup>. In 1852, a rifle range was constructed for musketry practice by the military, adjacent to the Military Cricket Ground and garden. Shooters fired towards the eastern end where there were sandstone formations to place targets safely<sup>204</sup>. The range was not fenced for some years<sup>205</sup>, and passers-by sometimes took their chance to take a short cut across the firing area, timing their dash between tell-tale puffs of smoke from the shooting end<sup>206</sup>.

In May 1862, a new rifle range opened for the Sydney Battalion Volunteer Rifle Corps, running parallel to and south of the military range. The range was 1000 yards long and 100 yards wide, enabling two firing parties to operate simultaneously. It was known locally as the Paddington Butts or Paddington Rifle Butts. In 1866, the New South Wales Rifle Association held its annual prize meeting at the Paddington Rifle Range for the first time<sup>207</sup>.

In time, military and sporting activities competed seriously for space in the area, with the rifle range operating at the same time as cricket and football matches. In 1875, a military spokesman grumbled that "we are driven from Moore Park by football players in winter and cricketers in summer"<sup>208</sup>. On the other hand, rugby players complained of having to play matches to the accompaniment of gunfire next door<sup>209</sup>.

By 1871, the safety limitations of Sydney's main rifle range at Paddington were being exposed by the firing power of the new service rifle, the Martini-Henry breech-loading rifle. In 1886, an order was issued from the Headquarters of the Military Forces that the Paddington Rifle Range be closed, as it was considered that the shooting constituted a danger to the workmen in Centennial Park. But a subsequent deputation gained permission for shooting on Saturday afternoons only, and alteration to the stop-butts enabled shooting to continue there until 1890<sup>210</sup>.



Figure 28 Paddington Rifle Range (Centennial Park website)

In March 1890, a quarryman in Centennial Park was wounded by a stray bullet from the rifle range, and the range was abruptly closed by the Military authorities. This caused widespread complaints from marksmen, as no alternative range had been made available<sup>211</sup>. The annual prize meeting was not held by the Rifle Association that year, and *The Australian Star* helpfully suggested that if the riflemen went without practice for much longer, they might need larger targets when they resumed<sup>212</sup>. The new rifle range at Randwick was eventually opened in October 1892 for the use of the troops<sup>213</sup>.

### **Pubs attracting shooters from the Paddington Rifle Range**

Rifle shooting was popular enough for four hotels in Surry Hills and Paddington to position and name themselves with an eye to attracting competitors from the Paddington Rifle Range during the major pub-building decade of the 1870s. That decade was one of industrial expansion that saw large numbers of tradesmen and other workers move to the inner suburbs of Sydney in search of work in the factories and warehouses that were springing up.

## Rifleman's Arms Hotel, Fitzroy Street, Surry Hills

**Address:** 75 Fitzroy Street, Surry Hills.

### Timeline:

1870: Opened as the Rifleman's Hotel and later called the Rifleman's Arms Hotel.

1923: Closed by the Licences Reduction Board.

1924: Used as a grocery store for some years.

1990: The home of Paddington Blinds and Shutters.

Present day: Closed but is being converted into a restaurant.

A two-storey brick building with five rooms had existed on the south-west corner of Fitzroy Street and Maiden Lane (now Marshall Street) from about 1858<sup>214</sup>, and operated as a grocery shop with a residence on the first floor. John Dimond purchased the shop and the adjoining building in 1870<sup>215</sup>, and converted them into a hotel which was first called the Rifleman's Hotel, but later known as the Rifleman's Arms Hotel. The hotel was one of two in Surry Hills that catered for thirsty shooters after a hard day blazing away on the nearby Paddington Rifle Range.



**Figure 29** Rifleman's Arms Hotel, c1920 (State Records of NSW)

In 1920, the New South Wales Government established a Licences Reduction Board, which was given authority to close down the dodgiest pubs in over-served suburbs like Surry Hills. In October 1922, the licensee George Spiegel was summonsed to appear at a deprivation hearing of the Board. This did not go well: according to the police the pub was "old, obsolete, dilapidated, poorly conducted, and not fit for a hotel at all". The only permanent boarder was the licensee's son. The licensee had been there since February, and had already been fined twice for illegal trading. Women frequented the place (this is a euphemistic reference to prostitution), and the hotel had received extra police supervision. Spiegel tried to put on a brave face by claiming that it was in fact the cleanest hotel in Surry Hills (possibly not a high standard to exceed at the time)<sup>216</sup>.

The Board's decision was to cancel the licence, effective June 1923<sup>217</sup>. The owner was awarded compensation of £1,750 and the licensee £470<sup>218</sup>. The Licences Reduction Board continued cutting a swathe through the area, eventually closing down 24 hotels in Surry Hills by 1923<sup>219</sup>. After the closure of the Rifleman's Arms, the building was used as a grocery shop and residence for some years, and then from 1990 was the home of Paddington Blinds and Shutters. It has been used as office space by various companies since then, and is presently being converted into a restaurant.

## Rifle Butts Hotel, Flinders Street, Surry Hills

**Address:** 63-65 Flinders Street, Surry Hills.

### Timeline:

1870: Opened as the Rifle Butts Hotel.

1890: The Paddington Rifle Range closed.

1900: Renamed to the Flinders Hotel.

1918: Demolished and rebuilt a few metres further back when Flinders Street was widened.

2014: The hotel was inactive for some years after early lockout laws affected its trade.

2020: Reopened for dance parties.

This hotel opened in 1870 as the Rifle Butts Hotel in Flinders Street, Surry Hills<sup>220</sup>. In a sale advertisement in June 1870, Richardson and Wrench promoted it as "the first refreshment house from, and the last to, Randwick Racecourse"<sup>221</sup>. John Sheridan became the licensee in July 1871<sup>222</sup> and remained there until his death in January 1894 at the age of 70. He was originally an Irishman from Doonass in County Clare<sup>223</sup>. The licence was transferred to his wife Annie at the next licence hearing a few months later<sup>224</sup>.



**Figure 30** Flinders Hotel 1916 (City of Sydney Archives)

In August 1900, the new licensee Edward Francis organised general repairs to the hotel, and apparently decided that the pub was no longer attracting rifle shooters following the closure of the rifle range, so he changed the hotel's name to the Flinders Hotel a few months later<sup>225</sup>. When Flinders Street was widened in 1917-1919, the two-storey hotel was demolished and replaced by a

new three-storey building in 1918, retaining the name<sup>226</sup>. It was owned by the brewery Tooth and Company at the time<sup>227</sup>.



Figure 31 Flinders Hotel, 2013

In modern times, the Flinders Hotel was a late-night venue that was adversely affected by the early lockout laws introduced in New South Wales in 2014, and was inactive for some years after that, only opening for special events such as the annual Mardi Gras parade. However, with the relaxing of these laws in the Oxford Street area in January 2020, the Flinders began to resume its place in the local bar and nightclub scene by hosting Saturday night dance parties<sup>228</sup>. It is currently being advertised for sale.

### **Cross Guns Hotel, South Head Road, Paddington**

**Address:** 252 South Head Road, Paddington.

**Timeline:**

1874: Opened as the Cross Guns Hotel.

1889: Renamed to the Imperial Hotel, just before the rifle range closed in 1890.

The gunsmith Henry Challener (c1829-1877) was the son of a gun maker from Birmingham in England, and migrated to Sydney in 1853. In the same year he opened a shop in Pitt Street, advertising himself as a gun and pistol maker and repairer<sup>229</sup>. By 1871, he had built a two-storey house in Paddington called Gunnery Villa<sup>230</sup>, where 8 Underwood Street is now located. He built the Cross Guns Hotel in 1874<sup>231</sup> in Old South Head Road (now Oxford Street) Paddington, on the corner of Sarah Street (now part of Underwood Street).

Challener was the local agent of the influential handgun maker William Tranter (1816-1890), who he knew from his time in Birmingham. Tranter's pistols were widely used by the Confederate States in the American Civil War (1861-1865). He retired in 1875 and died at his then-residence Ormond Hall (now called Juniper Hall) in January 1877<sup>232</sup>.

In 1889, the hotel was renamed the Imperial Hotel<sup>233</sup>. Edmund Resch of Resch's Brewery leased the hotel in 1901, and in 1910 his company purchased it and submitted plans for an impressive three-storey building<sup>234</sup>. This is the prominent structure that now dominates the top of the hill on the way to the Paddington shopping precinct.

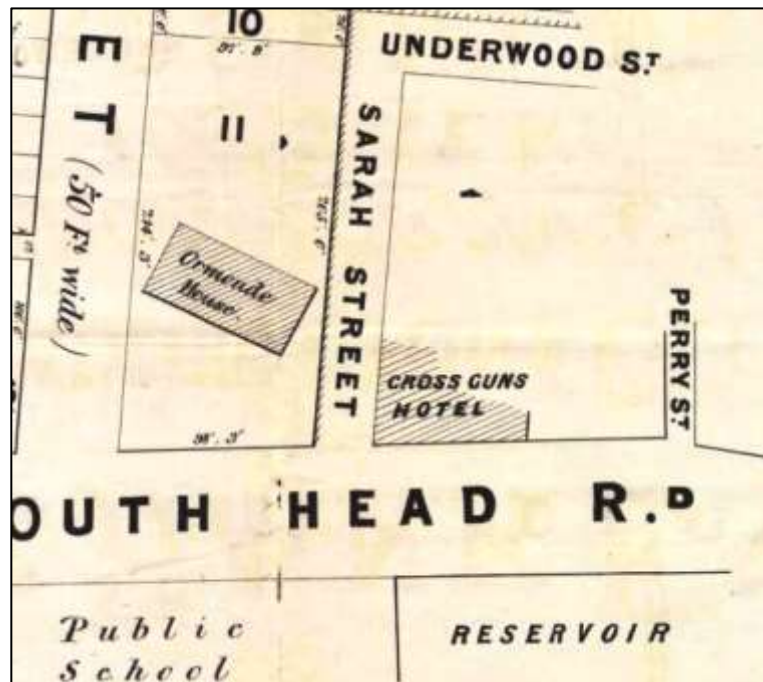


Figure 32 Cross Guns Hotel, c1890 (National Library of Australia)

The pub has been jointly owned by Owen Peters Pty Ltd since Resch's took it over in 1910, and this company still owns the freehold, making it one of the longest-running ownerships of a hotel in the country<sup>235</sup>. After a revamp in 2015, there are now several function rooms and even a barber shop<sup>236</sup>.



Figure 33 Imperial Hotel Paddington, c1893 (Dictionary of Sydney)

## Rifle Butts Hotel, 234 Oxford St, Paddington

**Address:** 234 Oxford Road, Paddington.

### Timeline:

1876: Opened as the Rifle Butts Hotel.

1880: Renamed to the Tramway Hotel.

March 1890: Renamed to the Post Office Hotel.

October 1890: Renamed to the Town Hall Hotel.

1959: Demolished when the Paddington Returned Services League Club was built.

The second Rifle Butts Hotel in the eastern suburbs was opened by Frederick Alchin in 1876<sup>237</sup> in South Head Road opposite Victoria Barracks. The hotel's name was changed to reflect the different services and buildings that opened in the local area. Licensee Edward Baker changed it to the Tramway Hotel in 1880<sup>238</sup> after the trams that rattled past the hotel on their way to North Bondi.



Figure 34 Town Hall Hotel, Paddington (Noel Butlin Archives)

The Paddington Post Office opened on the corner of South Head Road and Ormond Street in 1885, and the hotel was briefly renamed the Post Office Hotel by licensee Charles Bruggmann in March 1890<sup>239</sup>. In October the same year he decided on another name change, to the Town Hall Hotel<sup>240</sup>, after the Paddington Town Hall that was being constructed across the road and which opened in 1891. The last newspaper reference to the hotel was an advertisement for a casual barmaid in November 1954<sup>241</sup>.

The hotel was demolished in 1959 when the site became the eastern end of the Paddington Returned Services League Club<sup>242</sup>. The Rifle Butts Hotel may have tried to attract soldiers from Victoria Barracks and shooters from the rifle range, but the licensees only persevered with the name for four years.

## Athletics

### Pedestrianism – professional running

Professional running and walking (called pedestrianism in the nineteenth century) began in Australia during the gold mining days of the 1850s when miners would race each other for a gift of a gold nugget, offered by the local publican or mine owner. The Stawell Gift is a professional foot race held each year in a former gold-mining town that continues to this day. Various sprinting distances were used, usually with a handicapping system, but the main race was over the traditional Sheffield Handicap distance of 130 yards. From the 1860s, big money began to creep into race meetings, which took on a carnival atmosphere with big crowds flocking to see local champions.

Rich prizemoney and heavy betting attracted talented athletes, but also an array of shady characters. By the early 1890s, professional running was in crisis, with athletes competing under false names, hiding past performances to improve their handicaps, corrupt officials, as well as other controversies. In Victoria, the Victorian Athletic League was formed in 1895 as a controlling body to formulate rules and regulations and clean up the sport<sup>243</sup>. The equivalent body in New South Wales was formed in 1903<sup>244</sup>.

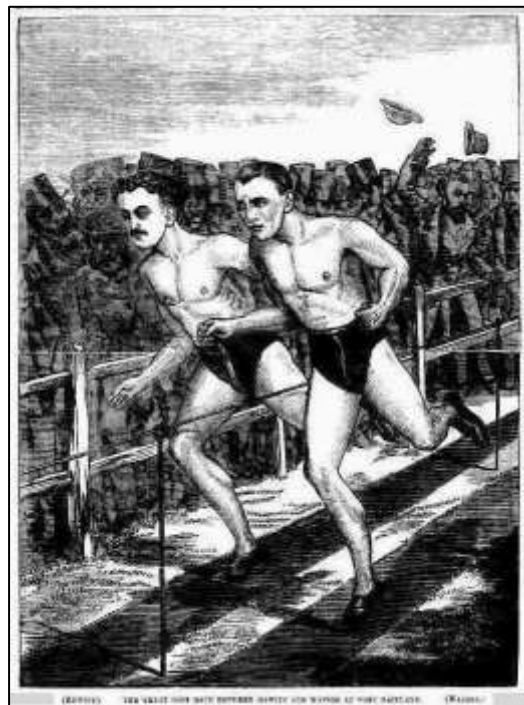


Figure 35 Hewitt vs Watson, 1876 (Evening News, 13 May 1876)

In the late nineteenth century, the main running tracks in Sydney were Lillie Bridge at Forest Lodge (later the Harold Park Raceway), the Sir Joseph Banks Hotel grounds at Botany, The Royal Agricultural Society showgrounds at Moore Park, and Frederick Willich's field next to his Gladstone Hotel at Arncliffe<sup>245</sup>. The enterprising Willich, with fellow promoter Alexander McGrory, was a typical example of a publican who exploited the commercial possibilities of sporting events to attract customers to his pub<sup>246</sup>.

## Carrington Athletic Grounds

In June 1886, a new company was formed in Sydney to conduct professional Sheffield Handicap running events. A suitable piece of land was found in Surry Hills in a vacant block between Bourke and Dowling Streets, bounded by Arthur Street to the north. The land, which was the former lot D27 of the Riley Estate owned by the Burdekin family<sup>247</sup>, had been an undeveloped swamp for years. The publican Nat Thomson had been using part of the Bourke Street end as a quoits ground. At 212 yards long and 53 yards wide, the block was suitable for foot racing, and tenders were called to level the rest of the land and surround it with a ten-foot iron fence. Four cinder tracks were laid, a main gate was constructed on Bourke Street and a grandstand at the Dowling Street end<sup>248</sup>.

The Carrington Athletic Grounds opened six months later with Lord Carrington (Governor of New South Wales, 1885-1890) as patron. The prizes were reportedly the highest in the country at the time<sup>249</sup>. Nat Thomson often presented some of the prizes, for example £25 and a trophy to the second place-getter of the Grand Centenary Handicap in January 1888<sup>250</sup>. The first athletics meeting under lights was held in February 1887, attracting a large crowd to watch sprint running in the evening<sup>251</sup>.

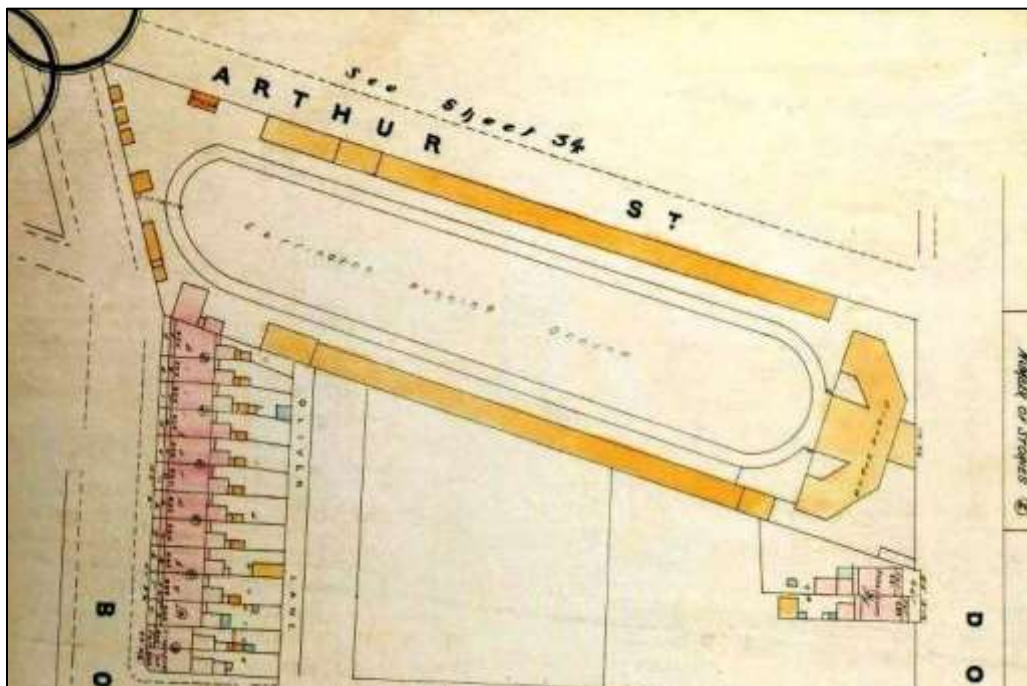


Figure 36 Carrington Athletic Grounds, 1888 (Rygate & West map)

For extra entertainment, the aeronaut Harry Henden took off from the Grounds in a hot air balloon during the same month<sup>252</sup>. Despite its reported popularity, the Carrington Grounds fell into disuse for a few years after November 1891<sup>253</sup>. Fillis's Circus and Menagerie took over the field for a season, opening in November 1892<sup>254</sup>. The owner of the land, Mr N. Burdekin, advertised the grounds for rent in December 1893. Foot racing resumed there in September 1894 after it was leased by the Newcastle promoter Mr M. J. Moroney<sup>255</sup>.

By 1904, athletics had ceased, the ground had been subdivided for residential and commercial use, and terrace houses were erected along the south side of Arthur Street. Wilson's Steam Laundry constructed a new building at the Bourke Street end and moved from the Collins Street location

where they had operated since 1882<sup>256</sup>. The laundry eventually closed in 1947 due to an acute shortage of labour and materials in the post-war period.

### **Athletics in Moore Park**

After the Paddington Rifle Range closed in 1890<sup>257</sup>, the 30 acres of military land in a prime part of Sydney soon attracted the interest of sporting groups and developers. But the military authorities were in no hurry to give it up, and they continued to use it for their purposes. In 1896, the Government decided to set aside about six acres of the old rifle range as a recreation ground for public and high schools during the week, and for rugby union and other sports on weekends and holidays<sup>258</sup>.

Subsequently, in October 1899 an area of about seven acres at the western end of the range was dedicated as the Athletic Sports Ground, while the military retained the remaining 23 acres, bounded on the eastern side by present Cook Road<sup>259</sup>. In 1901, the trustees of the proposed Sydney Sports Ground were appointed by the Government, representing the New South Wales Amateur Athletic Association, the New South Wales Cyclists' Union (amateur cyclists), the New South Wales League of Wheelmen (professional cyclists), and the two school athletic associations<sup>260</sup>.

In April 1904, the New South Wales Athletic League advertised its first sports carnival for professional athletes, to be held at the ground the following month. A prize of £100 was on offer for the League Handicap event, the largest prize ever offered for a foot race in Sydney<sup>261</sup>. The first round of fifteen heats, run over 110 yards, was held on one evening and was illuminated by acetylene gas<sup>262</sup>. The second round and the final were held a week later. The winner was N. Quirk, running off a handicap of seven yards<sup>263</sup>.

### **Carrington Grounds Hotel, Surry Hills**

**Address:** 565 Bourke Street, Surry Hills.

#### **Timeline:**

September 1877: The Criterion Hotel opened with Thomas Whitty as owner and licensee.

July 1884: Licensee Patrick Knowles changed the name to the Athboy Hotel.

March 1885: Former Test cricketer Nat Thomson took over the licence and renamed it Thomson's Family Hotel.

December 1886: The Carrington Athletic Grounds opened across the road from the hotel.

November 1888: The hotel was renamed the Carrington Grounds Hotel.

1903: The hotel was renamed the Carrington Hotel following the closure of the athletic field.

Thomas Whitty (c1836-1929) left Liverpool in the immigrant ship *Vocalist* and arrived in Sydney in October 1856 as a single assisted passenger. He was a 20 year-old farm labourer who was born in County Carlow, Ireland<sup>264</sup>. It is not known what he did for a living in Sydney, but in the 1870s he was able to purchase a large block of vacant land on the corner of Bourke and Arthur Streets, Surry Hills. In May 1877, while living nearby in Marshall Street, he called for tenders by bricklayers<sup>265</sup> to build a hotel on the corner of the block.

In September 1877, Whitty named his pub the Criterion Hotel and became its first licensee<sup>266</sup>. In 1880 he transferred the licence to John Mitchell<sup>267</sup>, but retained ownership for most of his life<sup>268</sup>. In 1882, Mitchell commenced a sporting tradition at the hotel by staging professional wrestling matches in

the yard behind the hotel. The first match in June was between William Hudson, the New Zealand lightweight wrestling champion, and J. Frahar of Sydney for a prize of £10<sup>269</sup>. The next month, the wrestling championship of New South Wales was staged there between William Hudson and J. Hayes of Victoria for a prize of £30<sup>270</sup>.



Figure 37 Carrington Hotel (Carrington Hotel website)

In March 1885, the former New South Wales and Australian Test cricketer Nat Thomson took over the licence, and renamed the pub to Thomson's Family Hotel<sup>271</sup>. He was born in Surry Hills with the exotic name Nathaniel Frampton Davis Thomson in May 1839<sup>272</sup>. He began his long cricketing career with New South Wales in the 1857-1858 season, playing until the 1879-1880 season. At his peak, he was good at everything: batting, bowling, fielding and wicket-keeping. Many of the successes of the New South Wales team in the early intercolonial matches were due in part to Nat Thomson who, with the brothers Dave and Ned Gregory, formed a trio that were dreaded by their Victorian opponents<sup>273</sup>.

Thomson made use of his fame as a cricketer to attract the local sportspeople to his pub, and the Surry Cricket Club regularly held meetings<sup>274</sup> and social events there<sup>275</sup>. In November 1888, he transferred the licence to John Ahearn<sup>276</sup>, who renamed it soon afterwards to the Carrington Grounds Hotel. Ahearn was apparently more interested in attracting the athletics fans across the road than the cricketers in Moore Park. He presented a medal to the winner of the fifth Carrington Handicap at the athletic grounds the following February<sup>277</sup>.

Dougal McDougall, licensee of the Carrington Grounds Hotel from 1894<sup>278</sup>, continued the pub's tradition of presenting the prize money and a gold medal to the winner of the Carrington Handicap that year<sup>279</sup>. But no more athletics meetings were held there after August 1895<sup>280</sup>. By 1903, the

Carrington Athletic Grounds had finally ceased operating, so McDougall renamed the hotel to its present name of the Carrington Hotel<sup>281</sup>.



Figure 38 Nat Thomson (Australian Town & Country Jrnl, 13 August 1887)

In 1924, Thomas Whitty sold the Carrington Hotel to Tooth & Company, the giant brewery established by John Tooth in 1835 as the Kent Brewery on Broadway. The original Victorian tiles were replaced<sup>282</sup>, but no significant changes were made to the exterior above the awning. The building must have been in good condition, as it was very unusual for the brewery to take over a hotel that was nearly fifty years old and not have to remodel the exterior. Tooth & Co undertook major renovations to many other pubs in the neighbourhood, such as the Dolphin, The Courthouse and the Hopetoun Hotels, which now look very different from their original Victorian architectural style (or Georgian in the case of the much older Hopetoun, built in 1846).

A two-storey addition was built in the rear yard in the 1980s, which became Annie's Bar and nightclub, featuring drag shows in the late 1990s<sup>283</sup>. Annie's Bar was converted to the Encore Bistro in the early 2000s. After gambling machines were installed in the inside bar, most of the outside windows were enclosed, to screen the machines from the view of passers-by. This resulted in the bar being very dark, restricting daytime trade<sup>284</sup>.

The hotel was purchased by Greg Magree and John Ibrahim in 2011<sup>285</sup>. Extensive renovations were undertaken to create the Spanish-themed Beba y Cene tapas restaurant, operated by the Drink 'n' Dine Group. It was very successful, and in a few months expanded to the first floor to cater for the demand<sup>286</sup>. A dog-friendly policy was introduced, winning the Carrington the *Time Out* magazine's Most Dog Friendly Pub award in 2017<sup>287</sup>. The menu has two dishes in bowls for the furry patrons to enjoy while their human companions partake on the table above, and a set of doggy behavioural rules is displayed for canine perusal and observance.

The Carrington continues to cater enthusiastically for sports fans travelling to and from the sports grounds in Moore Park by decking the place out in the club colours of the local teams for the different football codes. Big-screen television sets in every bar keep the sports fans who didn't make it to the games up to date with the action on the field.

## Athletic Club Hotel, Surry Hills

**Address:** corner Arthur and Alexander Streets, Surry Hills.

### Timeline:

1863-65: Constructed as the Pembroke Castle Hotel by Thomas Phelps.

October 1886: New licensee James O'Donnell renamed it to the Athletic Club Hotel, after the Carrington Grounds which opened nearby on Bourke Street the same year.

1904: The Carrington Ground was closed and subdivided for residential development.

1923: The pub was closed down by the Licences Reduction Board.

Today: The building is a three-storey apartment block.

This hotel was built in 1863-65 by Thomas Phelps<sup>288</sup>, who named it the Pembroke Castle Hotel after the most famous castle in his home county of Pembrokeshire in Wales. In October 1886, the licence was transferred from Rosena McGregor to James O'Donnell<sup>289</sup>, who renamed it the Athletic Club Hotel<sup>290</sup>, to attract patrons from the Carrington Grounds Athletic Field, which had just opened a block away on Bourke Street<sup>291</sup>.

Earlier that year, the first general meeting of the Gordon Football Club was held at Milthorpe's Hotel, King Street. A large attendance of members was present and licensee James O'Donnell occupied the chair. The secretary said that a playing ground had been secured on the western side of Moore Park and that a large room had been made available at Victoria Barracks for dressing purposes. The club would play under the Southern Rugby Union banner, with the first match fixed as the first Saturday in May. As the club had some of the best players from this colony and New Zealand, they were expected to give a good account during the season<sup>292</sup>. In fact, the team won the Challenge Cup at the end of the season and were declared premiers<sup>293</sup>.



Figure 39 James O'Donnell (stats.allblacks.com website)

James O'Donnell (1860-1942) was born in Kilkenny in Ireland in a family of Irish insurgents and racehorse breeders and trainers. He served in the Irish Constabulary for two years before becoming a teacher and then migrating to New Zealand<sup>294</sup>. While in New Zealand, he won the Otago Amateur Athletic Championship in 1883, competing across eight events. The same year he started the Southland Amateur Athletic Association and was secretary until he left New Zealand<sup>295</sup>.

He was selected to play in a New Zealand rugby team to tour New South Wales in 1884, but en route by train to join the team in Wellington, he was arrested on a fugitive warrant and returned to Invercargill, as he owed money to local tradespeople who took out the warrant on hearing he was unlikely to return from Australia. But at the court hearing, much to his surprise none of the creditors showed up, so he was allowed to join the team in Wellington. On tour he played in seven of the nine matches, including all three against New South Wales. Remaining in New South Wales after the tour (as his creditors had feared), he represented the colony from 1884 to 1888<sup>296</sup>.

O'Donnell wasted no time in promoting sports around his hotel, and laid down a couple of quoits pitches near the hotel (a very popular competitive sport at the time), and planned to lay a short cinder track down for the benefit of those pedestrians (athletes) who wished to exercise close to the Carrington Grounds<sup>297</sup>.

In March 1887, the Gordon Football Club held a special meeting in O'Donnell's pub to make arrangements for the coming season<sup>298</sup>. By this time, his organising ability and experience were such that he was elected Secretary of the Carrington Athletic Grounds and was taking entries for races at the pub, such as the Fourth Electric Light Handicap in July 1887<sup>299</sup>. James O'Donnell gave up the licence of the Athletic Club Hotel in December 1887, which resulted in a legal fight over who should take it over: either John G. Phelps (one of the pub's owners) or Henry Hannigan (the preference of Toohey's Ltd, who had legal possession). The Licensing Court opted for Phelps<sup>300</sup>.

The new licensee continued the pub's involvement with local sports by presenting the winner of the Grand Central Handicap at the Carrington Athletic Grounds with a prize of £200 and a "splendid gold Chronograph watch and appendages costing £75" (a watch with an extra fitting to act as a stopwatch)<sup>301</sup>. The following year, the pub was advertised for sale by the estate of the late Mary Phelps<sup>302</sup>.

But in an early warning of trouble ahead, the licence renewal application by licensee James Kelly in June 1892 was refused after Licensing Inspector Fullerton opposed the application, on the ground that "the premises were not in a fit state of repair and were utterly unfitted for a public house". The owner stated that he was willing to put the place under repair<sup>303</sup>. A few months later, a brace of newspapers adverts for brickwork<sup>304</sup>, plastering, cementing and plumbing works at the pub<sup>305</sup> indicated that a flurry of activity was in progress to bring the place up to standard. The pub was painted the following year<sup>306</sup>.

Ellen Kelly became the licensee after the death of her husband James, and was given permission to run the hotel for only three months in January 1894<sup>307</sup>. Then in June 1895, the application to transfer the licence from William Keetley to Edward Donohue was refused as Donohue was a persistent illegal Sunday trader when he previously held a licence<sup>308</sup>. The licence was transferred the next month to John Cotter, who must have passed the pub test (as it were)<sup>309</sup>.

But the problems for the Athletic Club Hotel were relatively minor until 1921, when the Licensing Court magistrate told the licensee that because of the old and dilapidated state of the building, his licence would only be renewed if the hotel was completely rebuilt. But before the rebuilding project commenced, Licensing Inspector George Mitchell warned the licensee that if he was called before the Licences Reduction Board, the inspector would testify that the hotel was not wanted, due to the

number of other nearby licences and its back-street location. He advised the licensee to get some advice before embarking on a rebuilding project.



**Figure 40 Athletic Club Hotel (Time Gents website)**

The owner, Victoria Allen, decided to ignore this prescient warning and to undertake the great expense of demolishing and rebuilding the hotel. The project was approved and work began in early 1922<sup>310</sup>. After experiencing a number of delays, construction was finished in July 1922<sup>311</sup>. In October 1922, due to a licensing violation against them in 1921, the Licences Reduction Board called the main parties from the hotel to show cause why they should not lose their licence. Despite the brand new building and furniture, the Board's decision in December 1922 was to delicense the hotel<sup>312</sup>.

The closure of a brand new hotel can be seen as quite a sad story after the owner thought she did everything necessary to retain the licence. It was mentioned during the deprivation hearing that the Cricketers Arms Hotel in Fitzroy Street was in a similar situation, but Tooth & Co renovated the hotel extensively in early 1922 and managed to save it from deregistration. But the Cricketer's Arms was on a main thoroughfare to the sports grounds in Moore Park, and its competition was reduced by the delicensing of two other hotels on the same street (the Austral Hotel and the Rifleman's Arms). The Athletic Club Hotel is now known by locals as "the pub that never opened". Today the building is a set of apartments. The corner apartment (which includes the former public bar) contains the stairway down to the cellar.

Despite its abrupt and unfortunate end as licensed premises in 1923, the early licensees of Athletic Club Hotel were some of the most energetic in seeking to take advantage of a nearby sports facility, while providing a benefit to those sports through sponsorship and promotion.

## Football

### Rugby union gets its own ground

When the British Army withdrew from Victoria Barracks in 1870, the Garrison Ground became known as the Military and Civil Ground (and is now the Sydney Cricket Ground). Club rugby union was first played at the ground that year. However, the New South Wales Rugby Union (NSWRU) began to lobby the Government for an area they could dedicate to football, as they felt their best interests weren't being served at the Sydney Cricket Ground<sup>313</sup>. In May 1895, a deputation of officials met with Joseph Carruthers, the Minister for Lands, to request a grant of land to establish a new football ground.

Rugby had become very popular, but the local teams were playing at the Sydney Cricket Ground and the Agricultural Showground, which were large ovals that were not ideal for rugby, a game that is played on a smaller rectangular field. The NSWRU suggested a portion of the disused Paddington Rifle Range be set aside for their use. The Minister was sympathetic to the idea, and he agreed that as rugby football was the national winter pastime, it should be given the same consideration as cricket<sup>314</sup>.



Figure 41 Rugby scrum (historyextra.com)

The next year, the Government decided to set aside part of the old rifle range as a recreation ground for public and high schools during the week, and for rugby union and other sports on weekends and holidays<sup>315</sup>. Subsequently, in October 1899 an area of about seven acres at the western end of the range was dedicated as a sports ground, while the military retained the remaining 23 acres, bounded on the eastern side by present Cook Road<sup>316</sup>.

In 1901, the trustees of the proposed Sydney Sports Ground were appointed by the Government, representing the New South Wales Amateur Athletic Association, the New South Wales Cyclists' Union (amateur cyclists), the New South Wales League of Wheelmen (professional cyclists), and the two school athletic associations<sup>317</sup>. Rugby union matches were being played by April 1903<sup>318</sup>, and in May it was announced that the Metropolitan Rugby Football Union had secured the use of the new sports ground for the winter season<sup>319</sup>.

## Australian Rules football kicks off

A few years after a rugby union competition commenced in Sydney, dissatisfaction with the rules of the game had grown, mainly around injuries caused by unregulated scrimmages and hard colonial grounds. In June 1880, representatives of most of the Sydney rugby clubs held a large and enthusiastic meeting to form a new competition based on the Victorian Australian Football rules, to be called the New South Wales Football Association. The main difference was that there was no off-side, resulting in fewer scrimmages<sup>320</sup>.

The high level of interest in breaking away from the established rules can be seen by the formation of an association when there were not yet any clubs. Two months later, the Sydney Football Club<sup>321</sup> and the East Sydney Football Club<sup>322</sup> were established, followed by the Balmain and Woollahra Clubs. While other clubs came and went, there were never more than about five clubs. The Football Association lasted until the end of 1895, when it folded during the severe economic depression of the 1890s.



Figure 42 East Sydney Football Club (nswfootballhistory.com.au)

Some football enthusiasts reignited the organisation in 1903. With the help of the Victorian Football League, the New South Wales Australian Football League was formed with eleven senior clubs, nine of which had a reserve grade. The League flourished until the start of World War I. From then it had a chequered history in Sydney, having to compete not only with rugby union but also with the rapidly growing popularity of professional rugby league<sup>323</sup>.

## Show us the money – professional rugby league begins

In New Zealand, a groundswell of discontent in the world of rugby union led to the formation of a professional football team in 1907. Players in New South Wales were similarly unhappy with the Metropolitan Rugby Union, which had amassed large bank balances while the players were often out of pocket, especially after travelling to matches or off work due to playing injuries. When the New Zealand professional team offered to play matches in New South Wales, several first-class players risked disqualification and volunteered to represent the State. This move made the formation of a professional league almost a certainty (especially when the breakaway players were thrown out of the Rugby Union soon afterwards). By then, many professional players in England earned their living from the game, but the New South Wales players only asked for their expenses to be met, including insurance for injury time lost from work<sup>324</sup>.

In August 1907, the New Zealand professional rugby team visited Sydney on their way to a tour of Great Britain, and played three matches at the Agricultural Showgrounds over five days against a New South Wales team featuring the great Herbert “Dally” Messenger. The Kiwis were so impressed with Messenger’s ability that they recruited him on the spot and took him on their British tour<sup>325</sup>. The secretary of the New South Wales Rugby Football League, Mr. J. J. Giltinan, announced during the program of matches that local district clubs would be formed, to begin a competition the next season. He conceded that as the league was in its infancy, many details of player payments and conditions were yet to be worked out, but the professional rugby movement would not be allowed to end with the last match against the New Zealanders<sup>326</sup>.



**Figure 43 Sydney Sports Ground, 1937 (Wikipedia)**

The following year, the New Zealand rugby league team, returning from another tour of England, played a New South Wales team, this time at the Sydney Sports Ground<sup>327</sup>. This began the long history of rugby league at the ground, which continues to this day. In the 1911 season, the Eastern Suburbs District Rugby League Club (now known by the much simpler Sydney Roosters) adopted the Sports Ground as their home ground, and played there for the first time against Northern Suburbs<sup>328</sup>.

Rugby league was first played at the Sydney Cricket Ground in 1911, between New South Wales and New Zealand (the Kiwis were defeated 35-10 in front of 46,000 people). In 1982, the struggling and heavily indebted Victorian Football League club the South Melbourne Football Club made the Sydney Cricket Ground its home and became the Sydney Swans, heralding a national Australian Rules football competition<sup>329</sup>.

## **Soccer in Sydney**

The first recorded soccer match in Sydney was played at Parramatta Common in August 1880, organised by John Fletcher, who had been elected to form an Association Rules football club. His team was called the Wanderers, and they played a team made up of students from the King’s School rugby club. In 1912, Sydney led the world when all the clubs adopted the numbering of players. Plans for an Australian Soccer Association were halted by World War I.

Tours by international teams were popular in the 1920s, and a Chinese team played at the Sydney Cricket Ground in front of 47,500 people in 1923, then 49,500 people watched an English team play Australia at the Agricultural Showground in 1925. Soccer really took off after World War II when

immigrants made their mark on a number of sports, and ethnically-based soccer clubs emerged in the 1950s, such as APIA (Italian), Hakoah (Jewish) and Prague (Czech)<sup>330</sup>.

Despite the popularity of soccer in Britain and the strong British heritage of early colonial Australians, the game that has become overwhelmingly popular in New South Wales is rugby league, a code that did not exist at all until after Federation. Australian Rules remains the dominant game in the southern and western States, but has always struggled for widespread support in rugby league-mad New South Wales and Queensland. However, all four football codes are still played at the top level at the Sydney Cricket Ground and the Sydney Football Stadium, as they have for over a hundred years.

## **Rugby Arms Hotel, Surry Hills**

**Address:** 107 Botany St (now Flinders Street).

### **Timeline:**

1869: A sandstone building was constructed and used as a store and residence.

December 1877: Converted into the Rugby Arms Hotel.

July 1880: A new form of women's cricket called frisquette was promoted at the hotel.

1882: The building was subdivided into a house at 107A and a shop at 107B.

c1920: The building was demolished to widen Flinders Street.

In 1869, a large sandstone house at 107 Botany Street (on the corner of the former Little Hutchinson Street) was constructed by the stonemason George Carter<sup>331</sup> and his wife Jane and operated as a store in the 1870s. Jane Carter was recorded as the owner in the Council Rate Assessment Books until 1880<sup>332</sup>.



**Figure 44** 107 Flinders Street, 1916 (City of Sydney Archives)

At the Water Police Court in November 1877, William Carty was refused a publican's licence for the Rugby Arms Hotel in Botany Street<sup>333</sup>, but was granted it the following month<sup>334</sup>. Meanwhile George and Jane Carter had a stormy marriage, and a warrant was issued for his arrest in February 1878 for threatening her life<sup>335</sup>. Jane Carter advertised the pub for sale for £450 in October 1878<sup>336</sup>, and

issued a notice that George Carter had no (financial) interest whatever in the hotel and the property was not involved in litigation<sup>337</sup>.

The following month, the Water Police Court refused to transfer the licence to Jane Carter after the police objected on moral grounds<sup>338</sup>. Jane's brother Horatio Richard Marshall took over the licence, but died suddenly in October 1879. He suffered for many years from rheumatism and habitually took chlorodyne (a highly addictive patent medicine containing opium, cannabis and chloroform), sometimes as many as three or four half-ounce bottles at a time. One Saturday afternoon he purchased some strychnine from a chemist and about 6 o'clock called out to his sister that he had poisoned himself and hastily wrote a note saying "poisoned – strychnine"<sup>339</sup>. Strychnine is a traditional medicine when used in a very diluted mixture for the treatment of rheumatism, and the unfortunate Marshall apparently did not know how to dilute it correctly and died from an accidental overdose.

On a different topic altogether, in July 1880 a meeting was held at the Rugby Arms of those interested in forming a club in Surry Hills for a new style of women's cricket called frisquette. The game was invented in 1878 by avid cricket supporter Fred Ironside, who lived down the road in Botany Street<sup>340</sup>. The game was likened to a cross between croquet and cricket<sup>341</sup>.



**Figure 45 Fred Ironsides (*Bird O'Freedom*, 1 December 1894)**

It was first played in Moore Park in August 1878 between the members of the Alpha Frisquette Club<sup>342</sup>. A second club called the Oxford Frisquette Club began in September and played against the Alphas for the rest of the season<sup>343</sup>. The matches were played in the part of Moore Park between the Randwick Road (now Anzac Parade) and the Rifle Range (next to Moore Park Road)<sup>344</sup>. By October 1978, Frisquette equipment ("spoonbill" bats, hoops and soft balls) were frequently being advertised in Sydney by Cohen Harris and Co, the largest cricketing depot in the colonies<sup>345</sup>, and in Queensland<sup>346</sup>.

The game became a very popular picnic entertainment, and equipment was usually hired for the day<sup>347</sup>. It was not played competitively during 1879, but was revived in the winter of 1880 with the re-establishment of the Alpha Frisquette Club on a more formal basis with office bearers, an annual subscription, and the Lord Mayor's patronage<sup>348</sup>. Due to a shortage of interested women, only men played in the 1880 season, but it was hoped women would play in future seasons. The first match in

the new style took place in July 1880<sup>349</sup>. The game's inventor, Mr Ironside, would explain the rules to interested spectators, and it was expected (optimistically as it turned out) to become one of the most popular winter games of the day<sup>350</sup>.

The 1880 season ended in December<sup>351</sup>, and the Alpha Frisquette Club moved from the Rugby Arms to the Captain Cook Hotel for its meetings<sup>352</sup>. The 1881 season commenced in May with matches at Moore Park<sup>353</sup>. But several matches that year were played in the grounds of Lindesay, the large house in Darling Point, where upper class ladies and gentlemen played by invitation until the end of the season in September<sup>354</sup>.

Frisquette was played at Lindsay until July 1882<sup>355</sup>, but seemed to fade away after that. Years later, the game appeared in the press following a revival, usually by picnickers, notably in 1918<sup>356</sup> and 1947<sup>357</sup>. A more successful form of women's cricket was vigoro, an Edwardian cross between cricket and tennis that was widely played after World War I, but which is probably only played in Queensland now<sup>358</sup>.



**Figure 46 Vigoro (vigoro.com.au)**

In May 1881, Mr T. Wakefield, the licensee of the Rugby Arms, advertised to footballs clubs that he had large rooms to hire for meetings or use as dressing rooms for the players<sup>359</sup>. But the pub did not operate much longer after that, because in 1882 the building was subdivided into a house at 107A and a shop at 107B<sup>360</sup>. In about 1920, the former pub was demolished as part of the project to widen Flinders Street.

The Rugby Arms Hotel only lasted for about five years before reverting to a corner store, but in that time it tried to take advantage of its proximity to the playing fields of Moore Park to attract players and supporters, even if its biggest success was in helping to stimulate the brief but lively interest in a new game aimed at providing sporting opportunities for women.

## Rugby Hotel, Newtown

**Address:** 174 King Street, corner Watkin Street, Newtown.

### Timeline:

1885: Opened as the Club Hotel.

1886: Called the Club House Hotel.

1894: Renamed the Rugby Hotel.

1903: The Newtown Football Club (Australian Rules) was founded.

1977: Renamed the Newtown Colonial Hotel.

C1989: Renamed the Newtown Hotel.

A three-storey Victorian Free Classical style brick hotel was opened in 1885 on the corner of King and Watkin Streets, Newtown. It was called the Club Hotel<sup>361</sup>, and sometimes the Club House Hotel<sup>362</sup>. In April 1894, a name change from the Club House to the Rugby Hotel was approved at a licensing hearing<sup>363</sup> when the licensee was Arthur W. Fox<sup>364</sup>.



**Figure 47** Newtown Hotel (City of Sydney Archives)

From this time, the pub actively involved itself in the sporting life of the suburb, starting with the annual meeting of the Newtown Cambridge Football Club (rugby) in March 1895<sup>365</sup>. In November that year, a race organised by the Newtown and Suburban Homing Pigeon Society was flown from Albury to Sydney (283 airline miles). The winner was W. Worsley's Silver King, flying at 929 yards per minute (a sprightly 54 kph). A trophy was presented by Mr R. Hickling of the Rugby Hotel.

The pub became something of a magnet for rugby teams: the Royal Oak Football Club held a meeting there in March 1896<sup>366</sup> and the Newtown District Wednesday Half-Holiday Football Club held a meeting there in May 1909 to form a second team<sup>367</sup>.

Athletes were also catered for: in August 1909, prizes (for the fastest runners and the neatest costumes) in the Newtown road race were presented at the Rugby Hotel. The club officials said they hoped to form an athletic association in Newtown, although there was already a harriers club and a "pastime club" (presumably non-competitive runners) in the district<sup>368</sup>. In May 1910, the Newtown

Harriers eight mile handicap road race started and finished at the pub<sup>369</sup>, and was held again two years later<sup>370</sup>.



Figure 48 Erskineville Oval (NSW/ACT AFL website)

Following the resurgence of Australian Rules football after Federation, the Newtown Football Club became the powerhouse team in Sydney from its foundation in 1903. Known as the Blood-Stained Angels for their red and white jerseys, Newtown won nineteen premierships, fifteen of them between 1928 and 1950, and six in a row from 1945 to 1950. Erskineville Oval hosted fifty Australian Rules grand finals in the Sydney competition between 1908 and 1990, and during this time was the major venue for local and interstate fixtures<sup>371</sup>.

The Newtown Australian Rules Club was first reported at the Rugby Hotel in February 1912 when they held a meeting there to elect office bearers for the coming season<sup>372</sup>. At the time of the following year's meeting at the pub, the *Sydney Morning Herald* commented on the competition between the football codes for playing grounds. It was pointed out that Sydney was unique in that the four football codes played in Australia were more in evidence than the other capital cities, but that rugby league predominated<sup>373</sup>.

The club continued to hold their annual meetings in the pub until World War I put a brake on most sporting activity (due to the teams being decimated when many players enlisted for the war). The last meeting was held in March 1915, when it was mentioned that one-third of last year's players in both the first and second team have enlisted in the Expeditionary Forces, and the gaps would have to be filled by new players<sup>374</sup>.

A highly contentious issue during World War I was the proposal by the Government to hold referendums in 1916 and 1917 to gain approval for conscription, in order to replenish the dwindling ranks of the forces in the Western Front. In October 1916, a No-Conscription meeting was held at the Rugby Hotel in the lead-up to the first referendum<sup>375</sup> and another in November 1917 ahead of the second referendum<sup>376</sup>.

There were no newspaper references to sports meetings at the Rugby Hotel after World War I. In 1977, the pub was called the Newtown Colonial Hotel in a Sydney Council Planning Street Card entry for alterations, and by 1989 it was called the Newtown Hotel<sup>377</sup>.



## Horse racing

### Early racing in Sydney

The first approved race meeting in Sydney was held in Hyde Park in October 1810. Governor Lachlan Macquarie sanctioned the meeting in which members of the 73<sup>rd</sup> Regiment raced their horses. The course was marked out as 1.25 miles and a grandstand for ladies was positioned between Park and Market Streets<sup>378</sup>. The topography of the land in the park determined that the horses would race clockwise, which then became the standard in New South Wales, unlike in Victoria, where racing is conducted anti-clockwise.

For the first three-day race meeting, the Governor decreed that no stalls could be set up around the course, and nor would there be any “Gaming, Drunkenness, Swearing and Fighting”. The race meeting was a great success, despite the lack of alcohol (and the other aforementioned banned entertainments)<sup>379</sup>. In March 1825, a group of colonists, including military officers, government officials and free settlers met to form the colony’s first turf club, which was called the Sydney Turf Club. In their first year they held two race meetings, one at Bellevue Hill and the other at Hyde Park. But politics got in the way and the group folded in 1827.

While organised racing was still in its infancy, match races and training took place at the Sandy Course at Randwick from the early 1830s. 202 acres of land were surveyed and Governor Sir Richard Bourke sanctioned the reserve of land for a racecourse. Annual races were held until 1838, by which time the track had deteriorated so badly that it was dangerous for the horses. Racing moved out to Homebush until the formation of the Australian Jockey Club (AJC) and their return to Randwick in 1860.



Figure 49 Homebush Racecourse (Parish map, Department of Lands)

When the AJC began regular racing in the 1840s, they used the course built in about 1825 by D’Arcy Wentworth at Homebush<sup>380</sup>. It was a superior track to Randwick and was close to the railway line, which opened in 1855<sup>381</sup>. However, issues with track conditions and a steep rise in rent caused the AJC to look for somewhere else. In 1858, Randwick was again chosen, but this time the track was fixed and a grandstand built. The first race meeting was held there in May 1860.

The land where the Randwick racecourse was located was Crown land controlled by the New South Wales Government. The problem with Homebush, apart from the state of the track, was the yearly negotiation about rent and use of the privately-owned track. At Randwick, the AJC had much more security. In 1863, the Government granted the AJC trustees an annual rent of “one black peppercorn payable on demand”, and so far this payment has never been collected.

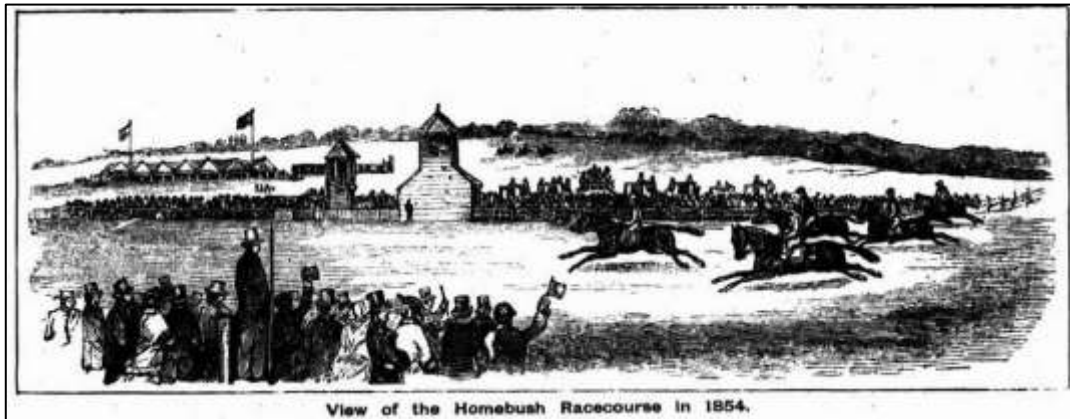


Figure 50 Racing at Homebush 1854 (Australian Town & Country Jnl, 21 Sep 1895)

Racing began at Canterbury Racecourse in 1871, although the first meeting of the Canterbury Park Race Club was not until 1884. There was also a zoo on the course, containing mainly Australian animals and birds, which was maintained until World War I<sup>382</sup>.

Racing has been conducted at Rosehill Gardens since the 1880s when John Bennett purchased the site to construct a racecourse and recreation area. The first race meeting was held in 1885<sup>383</sup>. In 1901, the American escapologist Harry Houdini visited Rosehill Racecourse, took off in his biplane and rose to a height of 150 feet. He circled the course before his engine cut out, but landed safely. Phar Lap had his first Group 1 win in the Rosehill Guineas in April 1929. Racecourses continued to be locations suited to early aviation.

**THE ROSEHILL RACING CLUB.**  
(Registered).

**OPENING MEETING.**

**SATURDAY, APRIL 18, 1885, SATURDAY.**

The Rosehill Racecourse is situated close to Parramatta and Granville.

Committee:

Henry Austin, Esq.	Hon. John Lackey
William Cooper, Esq.	Edward Lee, Esq.
Frank W. Hill, Esq.	John A. Scarr, Esq.
Walter R. Hall, Esq.	S. A. Stephen, Esq.
Andrew Town, Esq.	

Judge: Andrew Town, Esq.

Handicapper: J. A. Scarr, Esq.

Secretary: Geo. W. S. Rowa.

Figure 51 Rosehill opening, 1885 (Australian Town & Country Jnl)

A race meeting was first held at Warwick Farm in 1889. It developed as a proprietary club. But the course's location on the fringe of Sydney meant that crowds were hard to attract. In 1922, the AJC purchased the course and after several years of renovations held its first meeting there in April 1925 in front of a crowd of 25,000<sup>384</sup>.

All of the early racecourses, with the exception of Randwick, saw appropriately-named pubs spring up nearby to cater for thirsty racegoers. But Randwick was not entirely forgotten when the Rifle Butts Hotel in Surry Hills claimed in 1870 to be "the first refreshment house from, and the last to, Randwick racecourse"<sup>385</sup>.

Numerous pubs named the Horse and Jockey Hotel were opened in central Sydney when Hyde Park included a racecourse: in Macquarie Street run by James Wild in 1817<sup>386</sup>, in Phillip Street owned by J. Williams in 1825<sup>387</sup>, in Liverpool Street in 1830 run by William Flower<sup>388</sup>, in Pitt Street in 1836<sup>389</sup> and finally in 1850 on the corner of Hunter and O'Connell Streets<sup>390</sup>. But these early pubs are generally not well documented, so only those catering for the racecourses that were established after Hyde Park are described in this history.

Pony racing (also called proprietary racing) is also not considered here. This was a popular and exciting form of racing involving small or very young horses racing around short tracks, catering to working-class punters from the late nineteenth century until the sport was closed down during World War II. While pony racing followers were no doubt as thirsty as those of thoroughbred racing, *Sands' Directories* did not list any pubs with racing-oriented names near the main pony courses such as in Rosebery, Zetland, Glebe or Kensington.

## **Horse and Jockey Hotel, Homebush**

**Address:** 70 Parramatta Road, Homebush.

### **Timeline:**

c1834: The Horse and Jockey Hotel was opened and James Kerwin became the first licensee.

1881: The Saleyards were subdivided and sold as allotments, including the Horse and Jockey Hotel. The hotel was evidently demolished when its allotment was sold.

C1883: A new Horse and Jockey Hotel was constructed near the old one.

1892: Purchased by Tooheys.

1941: The hotel was demolished and rebuilt.

The exact opening date of this pub is hard to determine, because there is conflicting information in the newspapers of the 1830s. The earliest implied date is about 1829 or 1830, when James Kerwin's obituary in December 1855 wrote that he was the licensee of the Horse and Jockey for 26 years<sup>391</sup>. However, in August 1832 James Kerwin was recorded as the licensee of the Hit or Miss Hotel in Church Street Parramatta<sup>392</sup>. Then in September 1834, he advertised a found horse that could be claimed at the Horse and Jockey in Church Street, Parramatta<sup>393</sup>.

It is not clear if this is the same place as the Horse and Jockey Hotel in Parramatta Road (sometimes called Sydney Road in the press – presumably depending on which end you start at), but from May 1839, the pub was always called the Horse and Jockey, Parramatta Road<sup>394</sup> and James Kerwin was the long-time licensee.

James Kerwin was a former jockey and remained actively involved in the racing industry through his pub. In 1853, he was entrusted with £50 a side stakes ahead of a match race in three months' time between two horses at the Homebush course<sup>395</sup>.

James Kerwin died at home in his pub in December 1855<sup>396</sup>. Then in April 1856, his widow Mary Ann took over the licence<sup>397</sup>. The following month, she married John McDermott of Glebe<sup>398</sup> and in September she transferred the licence of the Horse and Jockey to James Mills<sup>399</sup>.

In 1870, saleyards for cattle and sheep were constructed near the Homebush Railway Station, which opened in 1855. This made Homebush attractive to local industry because it was accessible from both city and country areas<sup>400</sup>. These yards were just behind the Horse and Jockey Hotel and operated for twelve years, but were considered quite primitive. After agitation for better facilities, Sydney Municipal Council decided to resume 29 acres of land from the Underwood Estate and purchase an additional 11 acres of land adjacent to it. Construction commenced in 1881 and the new saleyards opened in November 1882<sup>401</sup>.

The old saleyards were subdivided into allotments and advertised for sale, along with the Horse and Jockey Hotel, in February 1881<sup>402</sup>. After being sold for redevelopment, a new Horse and Jockey Hotel was constructed nearby in 1883, and Frank Howe was granted the first license at the new pub<sup>403</sup>. He also owned the hotel until 1892, after which ownership went to the brewers Toohey Bros.



**Figure 52 Horse and Jockey Hotel today (Google maps)**

The pub resumed its earlier involvement in sports, starting in September 1894 when a group of local cricketers held a meeting in the pub to form a cricket club<sup>404</sup>. Then in 1898, members of the Sydney Hunt Club met at the pub for a run with the hounds<sup>405</sup>. From 1901, several road cycling races were run from the Horse and Jockey, in an era before velodromes were constructed. In July 1901, the New South Wales Cyclists Union (representing amateur cyclists) held a championship race, starting and finishing at the pub<sup>406</sup>. The following year, a twenty-mile Dunlop inter-club road race was conducted from the pub<sup>407</sup>.

In February 1903, the pub's owner donated the prizes for the annual so-called "horse and jockey" road races organised by the Cyclists Union<sup>408</sup> and held at the pub. The following month, the Newtown Bicycle Club kicked off their season with a five-mile race starting and finished at the pub<sup>409</sup>. The pub was clearly becoming a major cycling hub, and in September that year the New

South Wales amateur road cycling championship of ten miles out and ten miles back was run from the pub<sup>410</sup>.

From the summer of 1905-1906, several Sydney cycling clubs were running their cycling races from the pub, including the Balmain Cycling Club<sup>411</sup>, the Sydney Bicycle Club<sup>412</sup>, the Eastern Suburbs Bicycle Club<sup>413</sup>, the Marrickville Cycling Club<sup>414</sup> and the Peerless and Homebush clubs. Bicycle racing continued at the pub until World War I started in 1914, after which the bicycle clubs must have been short of members, very much like other sports clubs.

After the war, motorcycle racing took off, and a number of races were reported at Homebush, including a two-day program of races held by the Sydney Motorcycle Club, meeting at the Horse and Jockey Hotel<sup>415</sup>. An article in the sports newspaper *The Arrow* in October 1926 mentioned that twenty years earlier the first motorcycle road race in the country was held over ten miles from the pub, racing from Homebush to the Granville railway gates and back<sup>416</sup>.

The second Horse and Jockey Hotel was demolished in 1940 and the current building constructed in 1941 by Tooheys in the Inter-War Functionalist style. Tooheys remained the owners until selling the pub in the 1990s<sup>417</sup>.

## **Warwick Farm Racecourse Hotel, Liverpool**

**Address:** 214 Macquarie Street, corner of Moore Street, Liverpool.

### **Timeline:**

c1882: The Forresters Arms Hotel opened, with George Arundel the licensee.

1884: The Liverpool Jockey Club held its first meeting at a new course on the Cabramatta Park estate.

1889: Warwick Farm Racecourse opened.

1889: The hotel name was changed to the Warwick Farm Racecourse Hotel.

1936: The hotel was demolished and rebuilt nearby as the Liverpool Hotel.

Now: The hotel is called the Corner Pub at 214 Macquarie Street, on the corner of Moore Street.

In the early 1880s, William Long purchased J. H. Stroud's Warwick Park grant north of Liverpool. In 1882, he sold the Warwick Park estate to William Forrester, who changed the name to Warwick Farm Estate to match his initials. He became one of the most successful trainers of the day, and in 1889 he was one of the founders of the Warwick Farm Racing Club. The Forresters Arms Hotel in Liverpool was opened in about 1882<sup>418</sup>. In March 1885, the licensee George Arundel of the Forresters Arms advertised his new stables to racehorse owners<sup>419</sup>, and the following year he was granted a license to operate a booth selling alcohol at race meetings in Liverpool<sup>420</sup>.

The Liverpool Jockey Club was formed in November 1882, and included William Forrester as a member. The club planned to use a new racecourse constructed on the Cabramatta Park estate of Nathaniel George Bull, about one mile from the Liverpool Post Office<sup>421</sup>. The first race meeting was held in December 1883 after a special train brought hundreds of racegoers from Sydney. The course was plagued by dust and heat, although five races were completed<sup>422</sup>. The Liverpool course was in use to 1912<sup>423</sup>, but was not reported in the news after this time.

Soon after the Warwick Farm Racecourse opened in 1889, the hotel was renamed to the Warwick Farm Racecourse Hotel<sup>424</sup>. While Liverpool was a major centre in the metropolitan area by this time,

the racecourse struggled to attract the big crowds that attended the tracks closer to the town, such as Randwick and Canterbury. So from 1898, the licensee W. Brooks tried to broaden his trade by advertising his pub to cyclists and travellers<sup>425</sup>. The following year, a meeting of interested cyclists met in the Liverpool Council Chambers to form a cycling club<sup>426</sup>. In September 1911, a five-mile handicap road race for cyclists was held, starting and finishing from (licensee) Hey's Warwick Farm Racecourse Hotel<sup>427</sup>. But cycling in the Liverpool area probably died away with the outbreak of World War I, as it did elsewhere.



Figure 53 Warwick Farm Racecourse Hotel, 1890s (Time Gents website)

The Warwick Farm Racecourse Hotel was in the news in February 1916 when rioting soldiers from the Liverpool barracks attempted to break into the pub, but were frustrated by police after a battle with the rioters. During the riots, thousands of soldiers made raids on hotels and refreshment rooms in Liverpool and central Sydney before being quelled by police<sup>428</sup>. This infamous incident was a major catalyst for the temperance movement to persuade the New South Wales Government to hold a referendum on early closing of pubs in June 1916, which resulted in six o'clock closing until 1955<sup>429</sup>.

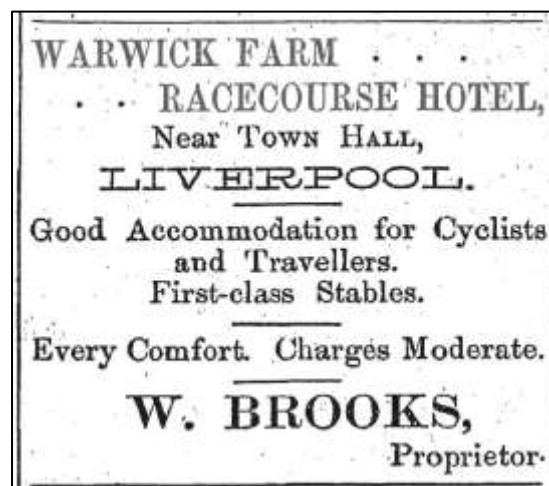


Figure 54 Hotel advert, 1898 (Herald, 10 December 1898)

In 1935, the pub was demolished and rebuilt as the Liverpool Hotel on the corner of George and Moore Streets, opposite the Post Office. Charlie Fearn, the licensee for the previous seven years, transferred the licence to the new building<sup>430</sup>. When the new Art Deco-style pub opened in January 1936, 95-year old William Orr, who was given the privilege of having the last drink at the Warwick Farm Racecourse Hotel before it closed, was served the first drink at the replacement Liverpool Hotel<sup>431</sup>.

During World War II, the Warwick Farm racecourse was used as a camp by Australian, American and British armed forces. Warwick Farm Raceway was built inside the horse racing facility and opened in 1960. It became a major motor racing track in the 1960s, hosting the Australian Grand Prix four times between 1963 and 1971 and the Australian Touring Car Championship. The last major race was in 1973, after which the circuit was closed.



**Figure 55 The Corner Pub, Liverpool (Wikimedia)**

The pub is now called The Corner Pub, at 214 Macquarie Street, on the corner of Moore Street. The New South Wales Heritage Register lists The Corner Pub as the former Art Deco Liverpool Hotel, so there must have been some street names changed after 1936<sup>432</sup>.

This outer suburban pub has had a long and varied life and aimed for the patronage of racegoers when the Warwick Farm Racecourse opened. But the Warwick Farm and Liverpool courses were not as popular as hoped, due to the long train ride from Sydney and the primitive state of the track and facilities. After some years, the pub's licensees tried to broaden its appeal beyond the limited number of Liverpool punters to visitors and road cyclists, who often based their road racing around a local pub.

## Racecourse Hotel, Granville

**Address:** 50 Eleanor Street, corner of Alfred Street, Granville

### Timeline:

1885: Rosehill Racecourse held its first race meeting.

October 1885: The Racecourse Hotel opened two blocks from the racecourse.

1929: Tooth and Coy transferred the licence to another pub in Campsie and closed it.

1930s: The hotel was used as a Depression-era soup kitchen for the unemployed and later a hostel for the homeless.

1934: The hotel was condemned by the Granville council and demolished.

Today: the site contains a convenience store.

Rosehill Racecourse held its first race meeting in April 1885<sup>433</sup>, and six months later Patrick F. Garvan was granted the first licence at the Racecourse Hotel in Granville, located two blocks from the track<sup>434</sup>. The suburb was also called Elizabeth Farm in the newspapers because the growing town of Granville was part of the Elizabeth Farm Estate, the family home of John and Elizabeth Macarthur<sup>435</sup>.

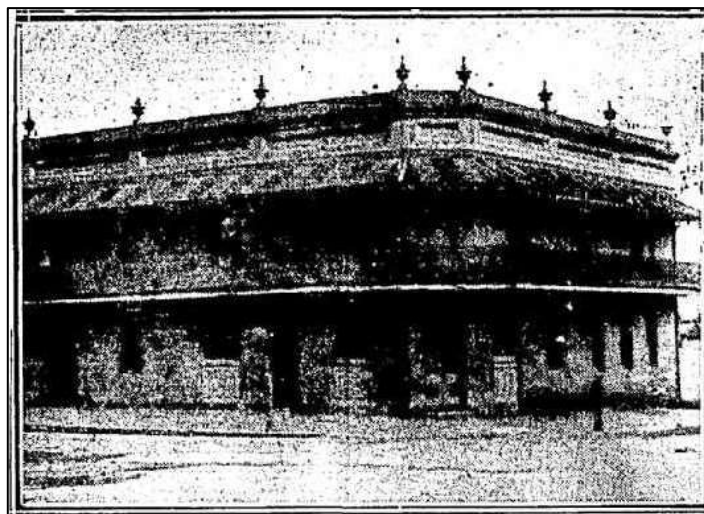


Figure 56 Racecourse Hotel, 1935 (*Cumberland Argus*, 7 February 1935)

Alfred Harvey became the long-term licensee by 1891 and began by advertising “loose boxes” (for horse stabling) at the pub<sup>436</sup>. He was also interested in promoting local soccer, and in May 1893 donated a trophy for the winning Southern British Association Football Club of the Central Cumberland district<sup>437</sup>. Two years later, the annual meeting of the Granville Football Club (British Association football) was held at his pub<sup>438</sup>.

From 1894, Alfred Harvey frequently advertised that he was catering luncheons at Rosehill Racecourse meetings<sup>439</sup>. He also operated up to three booths at the races selling his pub’s wares, although a magistrate at the Parramatta Licensing Court in 1895 thought three booths were too many and only granted a licence for one booth<sup>440</sup>. Later magistrates were more lenient and in 1903 he was granted all three booth licences<sup>441</sup>.

In March 1899, a banquet was put on in the Racecourse Hotel to farewell the licensee’s young son Henry, who was embarking to England with a squadron of the New South Wales Lancers. This group was formed in 1895 as the Sydney Light Horse and in 1898 they were quartered in the Lancer

Barracks in Parramatta. The Government decided they would do six months intensive training in England and then return to Australia to train others at home.

A squad of 100 lancers departed on the *S.S. Nineveh* in March 1899. Their training in England was hard, involving swords, lances and riding drills. The *Nineveh* sailed for home in October. On their arrival in Cape Town, many of the lancers remained there to join the New South Wales Contingent during the Boer War. However, most of the under-20 year olds (29 of the original 100) continued the return trip on the ship<sup>442</sup>. Henry Harvey was one of those who returned in December 1899, as his father said he was not yet seventeen<sup>443</sup>.

Alfred Harvey died in August 1909 after almost twenty years at the Racecourse Hotel<sup>444</sup>. His widow Grace Amelia Harvey was granted the pub's licence soon afterwards<sup>445</sup>. She continued the pub's custom of operating booths at the Rosehill Racecourse<sup>446</sup>. The Racecourse Hotel suffered from neglect from this time, and at the end of 1928 the licensee Michael Gleeson attempted to transfer the licence to a pub to be erected in Majors Bay Road at Concord<sup>447</sup> as did the next licensee Patrick Gaskin<sup>448</sup>. Then in February 1929, the license was transferred to a hotel being built in Beamish Street, Campsie<sup>449</sup>.

Once the hotel closed, the Granville Municipal Council decided that since the owners, Tooth and Coy, had allowed the building to fall into "a shocking state of disrepair", they declared the building unfit for human habitation or occupation and ordered the brewery to carry out urgent repairs<sup>450</sup>. After sufficient repair work, the local New South Wales Member of Parliament, William Ely, established a community restaurant at the old Rosehill Racecourse Hotel in order to relieve local distress during the Great Depression. Hot meals are served at lunchtime every day in cooperation with the local council<sup>451</sup>.

The *Cumberland Argus* then reported that a soup kitchen was operating, and that over than two hundred soup plates, spoons and cooking utensils had been obtained from the Defence Department, while bread was donated by the Rosehill horse trainers, and other food was donated by local businessmen<sup>452</sup>. By 1931, the former hotel was also accommodating more than thirty destitute people<sup>453</sup>.

The building was put up for sale in September 1934<sup>454</sup>, and the North Granville Progress Association suggested that the owners of the old Racecourse Hotel should demolish the building. All the windows were broken and the structure was in a dangerous condition<sup>455</sup>. The following month, the Granville Council voted to serve a closing order on Tooth and Coy.

The council had delayed its action until now, as the building was serving a useful purpose as a soup kitchen and then as a hostel, but was no longer in use in 1934<sup>456</sup>. The old pub was demolished in November 1934<sup>457</sup>. The site today contains a convenience store called the Rosehill Supermarket<sup>458</sup>.

The Racecourse Hotel in Granville was a good example of a pub that closely associated itself with the nearby racecourse, while also encouraging the local soccer competition. It then had a second useful life for five years during the 1930s Depression, serving as a community centre for food and accommodation.



## Other sports

Many other sports were played in Sydney in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, but none of them had pubs named in their honour, from an analysis of those listed in the *Sands' Directories* from 1860 to 1930. Some sports were very popular, such as rugby league, Australian Rules football, cycling and boxing. But others, such as Association Football (soccer), quoits, pigeon shooting and pigeon racing, all had a smaller or a more localised following.



Figure 57 Goulburn to Sydney road race, 1932 (State Library of NSW)

All of these sports had a connection with hotels at some point, mainly during their relatively brief periods of popularity. The glaring exception is rugby league, which after its introduction in 1908 quickly became the dominant winter sport and remains so today. It is surprising that up to 1930 no pubs in Sydney were ever named in honour of rugby league (and only a couple for rugby union). It may be that because it was a professional sport there were enough funds available for the clubs to build their own entertainment and meeting places without needing to utilise the pubs. The huge entertainment complexes of the modern rugby league clubs (Panthers, Souths Juniors, etc.) certainly dwarf those of cricket, the dominant summer sport.



Figure 58 Quoits, late 1800s (National Maritime Museum)

Before cricket and rugby football became established sports, the most popular name for a hotel wishing to attract sports followers was the Sportsman's Arms Hotel. The 1870 *Sands' Directory* lists five Sportsman's Arms Hotels, compared to four Cricketers' Arms (or other cricket-related name) Hotels<sup>459</sup>. By 1880, many sports were widely played and the range of sports hotels had diversified: four were named for rifle shooting, four for cricket, one for rugby, one for racing and only two with the generic Sportsman's Arms<sup>460</sup>.

The hotels named Sportsman's Arms Hotels, and two that were not but were in the right place at the right time (the Moore Park View Hotel and the Olympic Hotel), are described in this section. Note that there were other hotels named Sportsman's Arms (at some time in their lives), but which had no reported association with any sports during this time. These were:

- The Hopetoun Hotel, Surry Hills (called the Sportsman's Arms in 1861-1873).
- Sportsmen's Arms, 256 Pitt Street (1860s – it is hard to distinguish this one from the other pub of the same name on the corner of Goulburn Street).
- Army and Navy Hotel, 144a Woolloomooloo Street (called the Sportsman's Arms in 1889-1924).

### **Sportsman's Arms Hotel, Parramatta St, Ultimo**

**Address:** 149 Parramatta Street, Ultimo.

#### **Timeline:**

1833: The Sportsman's Arms Hotel opened in Parramatta Street with Thomas May as the licensee.

1903: The name was changed to the King Hotel.

1907: Converted to an artificial flower and feather manufacturer, while still owned by Toohey and Co Ltd.

Aug 1909: The former pub was demolished during the Athlone Place Resumption.

Thomas May was granted the first publican's licence for the Sportsman Hotel in Parramatta Street (now Broadway) in 1833<sup>461</sup>. It was called the Sportsman's Arms Hotel the following year in an advert for the sale of tickets for a pigeon shooting match, to be held at Robert Cooper's Distillery in the Parramatta Road<sup>462</sup>. Pigeon shooting remained a popular sport, being advertised twice at the pub in 1837<sup>463</sup> and in 1844<sup>464</sup>.

In 1856, the licensee Christopher Somerville was granted a licence to sell liquor and food items at the Homebush Races<sup>465</sup>. After his death in 1857<sup>466</sup>, his wife Margaret took over the licence<sup>467</sup>. In about 1882, Parramatta Street was renamed to George Street West<sup>468</sup>. In 1894, the pub's address was on the corner of George and May Streets<sup>469</sup>.

The pub received bad news in February 1902 when a staff member was struck down by the plague<sup>470</sup>. A pandemic of bubonic plague that started in China reached Hong Kong in 1894. From there it spread to India and New Caledonia, and Australian authorities knew it was a just matter of time before it arrived here. The first case in Sydney was reported in January 1900 at the wharf in Walsh Bay, and about 100 people died that year. Cases reappeared in Sydney until 1910, but the coordinated approach to plague eradication (including killing over 100,000 rats) meant that Australia fared better than many other parts of the world<sup>471</sup>.

In 1903, the licensee Ralph Stennett renamed the pub to the King Hotel<sup>472</sup>. In June 1906, the Sydney Council objected to the renewal of the licence for the hotel, due to the resumption of the building in July 1906 as part of the Athlone Place Resumption<sup>473</sup>. The pub's owners Toohey & Coy leased the building to the Flora Millinery Studios and Flower Factory in January 1907<sup>474</sup> and this business remained there until selling their stock in February 1908<sup>475</sup> and moving to 379 George Street<sup>476</sup>.

**PIGEON MATCH.**

**T**HE LOVERS OF SPORTING are respectfully informed that the Quarterly **Pigeon Shooting Match** will take place **THIS DAY**, at Ten o'Clock, near Mr. Cooper's Distillery, Parramatta Road.

**Prize,—A handsome Percussion Gun, by Robinson.**

**Conditions.—**Ten Members, at Eleven Shillings each—including **FOUR BIRDS** to be boxed for each shot. If any ties take place, the extra Pigeons to be paid for.

**Tickets may be had on application to Mr. H. S. Green, Cricketers' Arms, Market-street; or, at the Sportsman's Arms, Parramatta Road.**

**June 9, 1834.**

Figure 59 Sportsman's Arms advert (Sydney Herald, 9 June 1834)

In 1905, the Sydney Council acquired from the State Government the powers to compulsorily resume land for slum clearances. The first place in its sights was the low-lying area adjoining Wentworth Park along the line of the old Blackwattle Creek. Called the Athlone Place Resumption, it took out over 400 houses and displaced 1,779 people, according to the official count by the Council<sup>477</sup>.

The Athlone Place Resumption also removed a maze of tiny lanes which had developed around the original mid-nineteenth century Athlone Place, May Street and Brisbane Street, all running off Parramatta Street in Ultimo<sup>478</sup>. The planning at the time was that houses should be replaced with factories, and that people were better off in the suburbs<sup>479</sup>. By 1909, the Council was advertising allotments in the resumed area for sale, including 163 to 171 George Street West<sup>480</sup>.

The Sportsman's Arms in Ultimo was not really close to any sports facilities, but the early licensees made an effort to involve the pub in pigeon shooting competitions, which were very popular in the early to mid-nineteenth century, when many people owned a gun.

## Sportsman's Arms Hotel, 481 Pitt Street

**Address:** 481 Pitt Street, south-west corner of Goulburn Street.

### Timeline:

1844: The pub opened as the Sportsman's Arms Hotel with James Oatley the first licensee.

c1869: The name was changed to the Sydney and Goulburn Hotel.

1878: The name was changed to the Kent Hotel.

1907: The pub was demolished and replaced by a larger building.

1941: The pub was closed, demolished and the Stonewall Jacksons Store constructed.

c2009: Converted into the Irish-style pub called Maloney's Hotel.

In May 1844, James Oatley was granted a licence for a new hotel called the Sportsman's Arms Hotel on the corner of Pitt and Goulburn Streets<sup>481</sup>. Entries for horse races at the Petersham Metropolitan Races could be made at the pub from August 1847<sup>482</sup>. Petersham was a private racecourse owned by Thomas Shaw, licensee of the Woolpack Inn (now the Bald Faced Stag Hotel) on Parramatta Road, Leichhardt. The course was located on land leased by Shaw immediately opposite the hotel and extending back to the present railway line. Horse racing was regularly held at this course throughout the 1840s<sup>483</sup>.



**Figure 60 Petersham Racecourse, 1845 (State Library of NSW)**

James Oatley retained the licence until 1853 when it was transferred to Timothy Alfred Cowell<sup>484</sup>. In 1869, the pub's name was changed to the Sydney and Goulburn Hotel<sup>485</sup>. Then in 1878, it was renamed to the Kent Hotel<sup>486</sup>. The pub was listed in the 1901 Rate Assessment Books as a two-storey building owned by Samuel Hordern with eleven rooms<sup>487</sup>, but it was demolished in about 1907<sup>488</sup> and replaced by a much grander three-storey building with fourteen rooms<sup>489</sup>.



**Figure 61 Kent Hotel, 1907 (City of Sydney Demolition Books)**

In July 1941, the licence of the Kent Hotel was transferred from Alfred Hastings Dillon to George Graham<sup>490</sup>. This was presumably to move the licence to another hotel, as the building was demolished and the materials, such as Oregon boards, kauri flooring and cedar office partitions were advertised for sale by the administrators of the Estate of the late Samuel Hordern<sup>491</sup>. The storekeeper Joseph Jackson (1874-1961) MLA<sup>492</sup>, constructed a fancy goods and shoe shop on the site, known as the Stonewall Stores, opening in November that year<sup>493</sup>.



**Figure 62 Kent Hotel, 1930 (City of Sydney Archives)**

In 2007, the building contained a series of separate shops<sup>494</sup>, and by December 2009 had been converted to Maloney's Hotel<sup>495</sup>, a lively Irish pub serving traditional comfort food that recreates the atmosphere of a Dublin drinking den<sup>496</sup>. This pub is documented here because it had an association with one of the private racecourses that operated in the early colony (which included the Homebush and Warwick Farm courses), and had a long and varied life that included three different hotel buildings on the site.



Figure 63 Stonewall Jackson Ltd (Sam Hood Collection, SLNSW)

## Sportsman's Arms Hotel, Waterloo

**Address:** 47 Botany Road, Waterloo.

### Timeline:

1857: Sportsman's Arms Hotel opened with licensee Peter Walsh.

1874-5: (Hero of) Waterloo Bathing Club met a few times at the pub.

1875: The Goose Club met at the pub, probably to hold charity raffles.

1906: Licensee George Abbott changed the name to Abbott's Hotel.

1907: Survived the Local Option licence reduction in the Alexandria electorate.

Now: Abbott's Hotel still operates.



Figure 64 Abbott's Hotel, 1930 (Noel Butlin Archives)

In April 1857, Peter Walsh applied for a publican's licence for the Sportsman's Arms Hotel on the corner of Botany Road and Raglan Street, Waterloo<sup>497</sup>. In June 1863, the publican, who was also a Sergeant in the Waterloo Volunteer Rifle Company, held a meeting at the pub to discuss the revival

of the Rifle Company<sup>498</sup>. The *Volunteers Act 1854* authorised the formation of Volunteer Corps in the colony of New South Wales and its regulation<sup>499</sup>. There was widespread enthusiasm for the volunteer movement until the end of the Crimean War in 1856, and many local groups were formed. But after then it became inactive.

There was an upsurge in activity for volunteer army groups in 1860, partly due to the revival of the Maori Wars<sup>500</sup>. The Waterloo Company was formed in September 1860 following a meeting at the Beehive Hotel in Raglan Street<sup>501</sup>. In September 1861, the volunteers were presented with their Company colours and bugle<sup>502</sup>.

But by 1863 the movement to form the Waterloo Volunteer Rifles had dwindled away and the company had almost dissolved. A meeting was held at the Sportsman's Arms in June 1863 to discuss the reasons for this and to take steps to revive the Company. It was not clear what happened to the group, but there was a lack of enthusiasm among some members and others had left the area and joined other Companies. The meeting attracted only forty attendees, most of whom were not members<sup>503</sup>. It was then reported at a poorly attended meeting the following month that the planned revival of the Company would most probably not go ahead. The licensee Sergeant Walsh recommended that the company's colours and bugle be deposited with the Volunteer Brigade Office<sup>504</sup>.

While there were no sports clubs reportedly meeting at the Sportsman's Arms, the licensees managed to attract a variety of other groups to his establishment. In February 1874, when James Marland was the publican, members of the Hero of Waterloo Lodge of the Order of Druids met at the pub<sup>505</sup>. A few months later, members of the Hero of Waterloo Bathing Club celebrated the close of their first bathing season with a supper at the Sportsman's Arms<sup>506</sup>. Then in October the club (called the Waterloo Bathing Club this time) met in the pub to choose club officers and starting times for the upcoming summer season<sup>507</sup>.

It was not clear where the Waterloo Bathing Club practised their aquatic activities, but part of the nearby Waterloo Swamp was dammed by this time to provide a fresh water supply for the wool-washing industry, and the Upper and Lower Dams would have been deep enough for swimming. After the wool washers moved further out to the Botany area at the end of the nineteenth century, the swamp was drained by the entrepreneurial James Joynton Smith in 1904 and converted into the Victoria Park Racecourse, which conducted pony racing until the 1940s<sup>508</sup>.

James Marland's next idea was to instigate a Goose Club, which held its annual New Year's Eve supper at the pub in December 1875<sup>509</sup>. Goose was one of the traditional birds eaten for Christmas dinner in nineteenth-century England. Although too expensive for many people, it was available to all classes of society through the institution of the Goose Club, by which even the lowest paid worker could have goose during Christmas by donating a small portion of his wages throughout the year<sup>510</sup>.

A Victorian-era example in the Australian colonies was the Adelaide poulterer J. Wilson, who advertised in October 1870 that he was opening a Goose Club. Members subscribing 9d per week would receive a "Fat Goose" on Christmas Eve (pass-books issued on request)<sup>511</sup>. The institution of the Goose Club evolved into a charity raffle, for which people meet in a pub or club to take part in a raffle with prizes. A modern example is the Yungaburra Hotel (in the Atherton Tableland), which

hosts a community raffle called a Goose Club. Each week a different club or organisation in the village hosts the club on a rotating basis to raise funds for their charity<sup>512</sup>.

In April 1890, the Sportsman's Arms was involving itself with local boxing. The pub was taking deposits of £5 for the fight between George Mackenzie of Newtown and James Brophy of Waterloo. The bout took place at Mick Walsh's Hall, Waterloo<sup>513</sup>. In 1906, the new licensee George Abbott renamed the pub to its present name of Abbott's Hotel<sup>514</sup>. In November 1907, the pub was one of several in the inner suburbs to be called before a Special Court that was constituted to look into hotel licences, based on the recent Local Option referendum to reduce the number of licences in the Alexandria electorate. Abbott's Hotel was represented at the hearing by a Tooth and Coy solicitor and survived the inquisition<sup>515</sup>.

The former Sportsman's Arms in Waterloo did not seem to have much involvement with the local sporting community, although the members of the Waterloo Volunteer Rifle Company might be called sportsmen because they would have needed shooting practice and other thirst-inducing military training, which the licensee could take advantage of. The pub did attract swimmers and boxers over the years, and the ubiquitous charity raffles (the meat and chook raffles of today's pubs that often support local sporting groups).



Figure 65 Abbott's Hotel dress code (Abbott's Hotel website)

Abbott's Hotel was in the news in 2018 when the licensee Bill Smith decided to instigate a kind of reverse dress-code by actively supporting thongs, singlets and tradies' hi-visibility clothing and ban the hipster symbols of fedoras, handlebar moustaches and man-buns. Promoted as "Sydney's Last Real Pub", the move was reportedly wildly popular with the Waterloo and Alexandria locals. Smith explained that the pub was merely catering to the traditional clientele on which pubs have historically been built<sup>516</sup>.

## Moore Park View Hotel, Surry Hills

**Address:** 547-549 South Dowling Street, Surry Hills.

### Timeline:

1884: The Moore Park View Hotel opened.

1908: A fire and subsequent bankruptcy forced the hotel to close.

1910: The pub was subdivided into numbers 547 and 549. No. 549 was converted into a costume factory run by Lillian Broz until c1921.

1922: 549 Dowling Street was a residence from this time.

1931: The dormant licence transferred to the Moore Park View Hotel on the corner of Dowling and Lachlan Streets, Waterloo.

1961: Sydney Council resumed the buildings at 545-549 Dowling Street from Kavanagh & English Pty Ltd.

1968: The original pub building was demolished and the current building constructed for use as an Activity Centre for the Aged and Meals-on-Wheels kitchen.

c2008: The Trophy Room Gallery opened and operated until c2021.

2024: Approval of an application to construct the Haven House South Dowling apartments.

In April 1884, the auctioneer Wellwood Thompson applied for the licence of the newly-constructed Moore Park View Hotel at 547-549 Dowling Street, Moore Park, on the corner of Phelps Street. The hotel was a large three-storey brick building with thirty rooms<sup>517</sup>. The licensee wasted no time in hosting many of the sports teams playing across the road in Moore Park, where cricket was played in summer and both rugby and rugby league in winter.

The first newspaper reference was in July 1885 when the members of the Sydney Club (rugby) who wished to play in a match in Newcastle were invited to meet at the Moore Park View Hotel to discuss arrangements<sup>518</sup>. The same month, the Mercantile Junior Cricket Club held a meeting at the pub to present club trophies for the previous season<sup>519</sup>. A week later, it was announced that the Waratah (known as the Tulips) versus City football match would be played at Moore Park, and that all local players were requested to meet at the pub before the match<sup>520</sup>.

From this time, the Moore Park View Hotel seemed to be the main meeting point for many cricket and football clubs: the Tramway Cricket Club<sup>521</sup>, the Verona Cricket Club<sup>522</sup>, the McGregor Cup winners (rugby)<sup>523</sup>, the West Sydney Football Club<sup>524</sup>, the East Sydney Football Club<sup>525</sup>, the East Sydney Australian Rules Club<sup>526</sup>, the Waratah Football Club<sup>527</sup> and the South Sydney Junior Football Club (Australian Rules)<sup>528</sup>. In March 1892, the Carlton Cricket Club, whose team had competed for the junior trophy donated by the licensee Adam Jones, held their third annual meeting at the pub<sup>529</sup>. This club was apparently not that well known, because two other newspapers reported the same event as for an Australian Rules Football Club<sup>530</sup>.

In July 1893, the licensee was keen to expand his sporting horizon to athletics when the Post and Telegraph Harriers held a night run from the pub, running around Centennial Park and back to the hotel<sup>531</sup>. The following month, the Sydney Harriers conducted a night run from the pub<sup>532</sup>. This was the last of the frequent sporting club meetings at the pub, possibly because the Great Depression of the 1890s had commenced, and the severe economic conditions meant that recreation and drinking in pubs were secondary to simple survival. The last sports meeting reported at the pub was a medal

presentation to members of the Wallaroo Junior Football Club during a concert evening in August 1899<sup>533</sup>.

Then in July 1908, disaster struck when some children who were playing with fireworks in a second floor bedroom caused a fire that destroyed the room as well as causing smoke damage to four other rooms and a hallway<sup>534</sup>. This seemed to be more than the licensee, Lucy Kent, could afford to repair, because she voluntarily filed for bankruptcy the following month<sup>535</sup>. She then advertised the furniture, stock-in-trade and furnishings of thirty rooms for sale<sup>536</sup>.

After this, while the licence was apparently not transferred elsewhere, the building no longer functioned as a pub, and was divided into two buildings of nine rooms each, called 547 and 549 Dowling Street<sup>537</sup>. From 1910, the corner building at number 549 was converted to a costume factory by the costumiere Madam Lillian Broz<sup>538</sup>, who operated her business until about 1921<sup>539</sup>.

The buildings at 545 to 549 Dowling Street were owned by Thomas J. Copes from about 1921<sup>540</sup> until his death in 1930<sup>541</sup>. In February 1932 the trustees of Thomas Cope's estate advertised 545 to 549 Dowling Street for sale, 545 and 547 having nine rooms and 549 having ten rooms<sup>542</sup>. Then in April 1932, the trustees advertised the dormant lease, licence, furniture, stock and goodwill of the former Moore Park View Hotel for sale<sup>543</sup>.



**Figure 66 549 Dowling Street, 2022 (Google maps)**

The Estate of Thomas Copes did not sell 545-549 Dowling Street in 1932, but retained ownership until about 1945<sup>544</sup>, after which they were sold to the kitchenware company Kavanagh and English Pty Ltd<sup>545</sup>, whose large factory had operated next door at 515-543 Dowling Street since 1935<sup>546</sup>. Meanwhile, 549 Dowling Street was a residence through this period.

By 1957, the Sydney Municipal Council was operating various welfare and accommodation centres in its municipality, and the Councillors were interested in purchasing 545-549 Dowling Street as a space for another one. But the Council could not agree on a price with Kavanagh & English, so the three properties were compulsorily acquired from the company in 1958<sup>547</sup>. At first, the Council planned to erect a nine-storey block of 24 bachelor flats in 1961. But this project fell through by 1964 due to lack of finance, and a Welfare Centre for the Aged was then proposed<sup>548</sup>.

In the end, a building was erected in 1967 as a combination of an Activity Centre for the Aged (replacing one in Cleveland Street) and a Meals-on-Wheels kitchen (replacing one in Sydney Town Hall), which opened in 1968. This is the building on the site today<sup>549</sup>. The building was known as the Moore Park Activity Club<sup>550</sup> and the Roper Welfare Centre<sup>551</sup>. Gilbert Roper was a former Alderman, and the building's name honoured his steadfast pursuit of improved conditions for Sydney's workers and the Surry Hills community<sup>552</sup>.



Figure 67 Roper Welfare Centre, 1981 (City of Sydney Archives)

The Activity Club had ceased operation by 2008 when the Trophy Room Gallery began to use the lower floor as a gallery<sup>553</sup> and the first floor as an office by 2009<sup>554</sup>. The gallery operated until about 2021<sup>555</sup>. In 2023, the Property Industry Foundation submitted an application to Sydney Council to demolish the building and erect a residential flat building that will provide safe living spaces for homeless youth, to be called Haven House South Dowling<sup>556</sup>. The house will be managed by the Salvation Army<sup>557</sup>. The Application was approved by the Council in February 2024<sup>558</sup>.

The Moore Park View Hotel is a good example of a pub that did not try to attract customers with a sporting name, but found itself in the right place at the right time to do so. Cricket clubs, rugby clubs and later Australian Rules clubs flocked to the pub for several years. But this active involvement with the local sportspeople slowed dramatically with advent of the Great Depression in 1893, when mass unemployment forced most people to give up costly entertainments for a few years. The pub was beginning to recover its sports involvement by the late 1890s, but this was cut short by a serious fire in 1908 that bankrupted the licensee and forced the hotel's closure.

## **Olympic Hotel, Paddington**

Address: 308 Moore Park Road, Paddington.

### **Timeline:**

1887: The hotel opened as the Adelaide Hotel, with Anthony Dorn as licensee.

August 1936: The Berlin Olympic Games took place.

August 1936: The name was changed to the Olympic Hotel by the rugby league footballer Viv Thickness when he became the licensee.

The hotel opened in 1887 as the Adelaide Hotel, with Anthony Dorn the first licensee<sup>559</sup>. It was located across the road from the Paddington entrance to the Sydney Cricket Ground, and not far from the other sports fields in Moore Park. Having located his pub in a prime spot, the publican wasted no time in attracting the passing throng of thirsty sportspeople and their supporters. The following month, he hosted the Herald Cricket Club at a dinner following a match in Moore Park<sup>560</sup>.



Figure 68 Olympic Hotel, Paddington (City of Sydney Archives)

In August 1887, meeting of cyclists was held at the Adelaide Hotel to form a cycling club for the eastern suburbs<sup>561</sup>. The pub was licensed to Tooheys in 1899 and extended in 1909. Then in 1936, the building was sold to Tooheys who extended and altered it<sup>562</sup>. In August same year, the licence was taken over by the 25 year-old rugby league footballer Viv Thicknesse. He immediately renamed it the Olympic Hotel, presumably in honour of the Berlin Olympics, which was being held the same month. Tooheys undertook improvements, including special facilities for athletic guests<sup>563</sup>.



Figure 69 Viv Thicknesse, 1933 (nrl.com website)

Vivian Arthur Thicknesse (1910-1986) transferred from representative rugby union in 1931 to join the Eastern Suburbs rugby league club. By the time he retired for business reasons in 1937, he had built a reputation for scrum-half play that has probably never been matched in his club. He became a Kangaroo in 1933-34 and was a key figure in his club's domination of Sydney football in the mid-1930s<sup>564</sup>. In June 1940, the players from the Far North Coast Rugby League team were quartered at the Olympic Hotel while they were in Sydney for a match<sup>565</sup>.

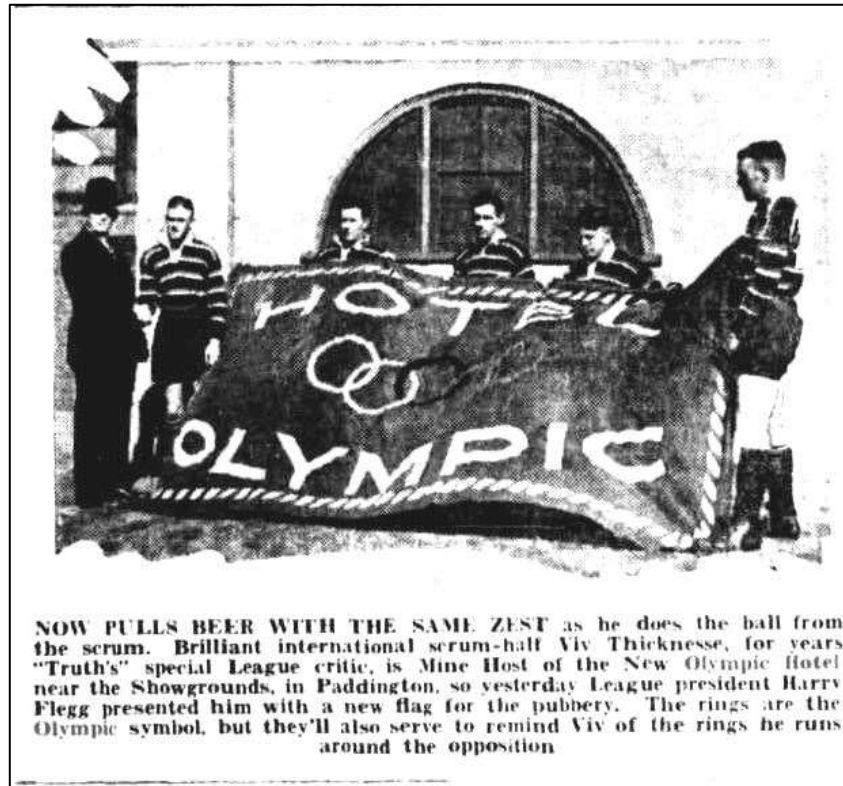


Figure 70 Olympic Hotel, 1936 (*Truth*, 13 September 1936)

While the licensees were keen to attract footballers to the pub, their patronage could be a double-edged sword. The pub was very large, with 29 bedrooms<sup>566</sup>, so it could just about accommodate two visiting rugby teams. In April 1952, Jack Levison Mason, son of the licensee, appeared before the Liquor Royal Commission. He told Gough Whitlam, at the time a young barrister assisting the inquiry, that the reason bottled beer had not been distributed in August 1951 was that the French Rugby League team and two other football teams had been there that month. The footballers and other guests had drunk the whole of the hotel's monthly bottled beer quota from Tooth's and Toohey's<sup>567</sup>.

The Olympic Hotel has made the most of its convenience to sports fans since the 1880s, even accommodating whole visiting teams on occasion. It continues to attract large numbers of pre-and post-game fans attending football or cricket at the Sydney Cricket Ground and the Sydney Football Stadium on the weekend, and tradies after work during the week.



## Notes

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