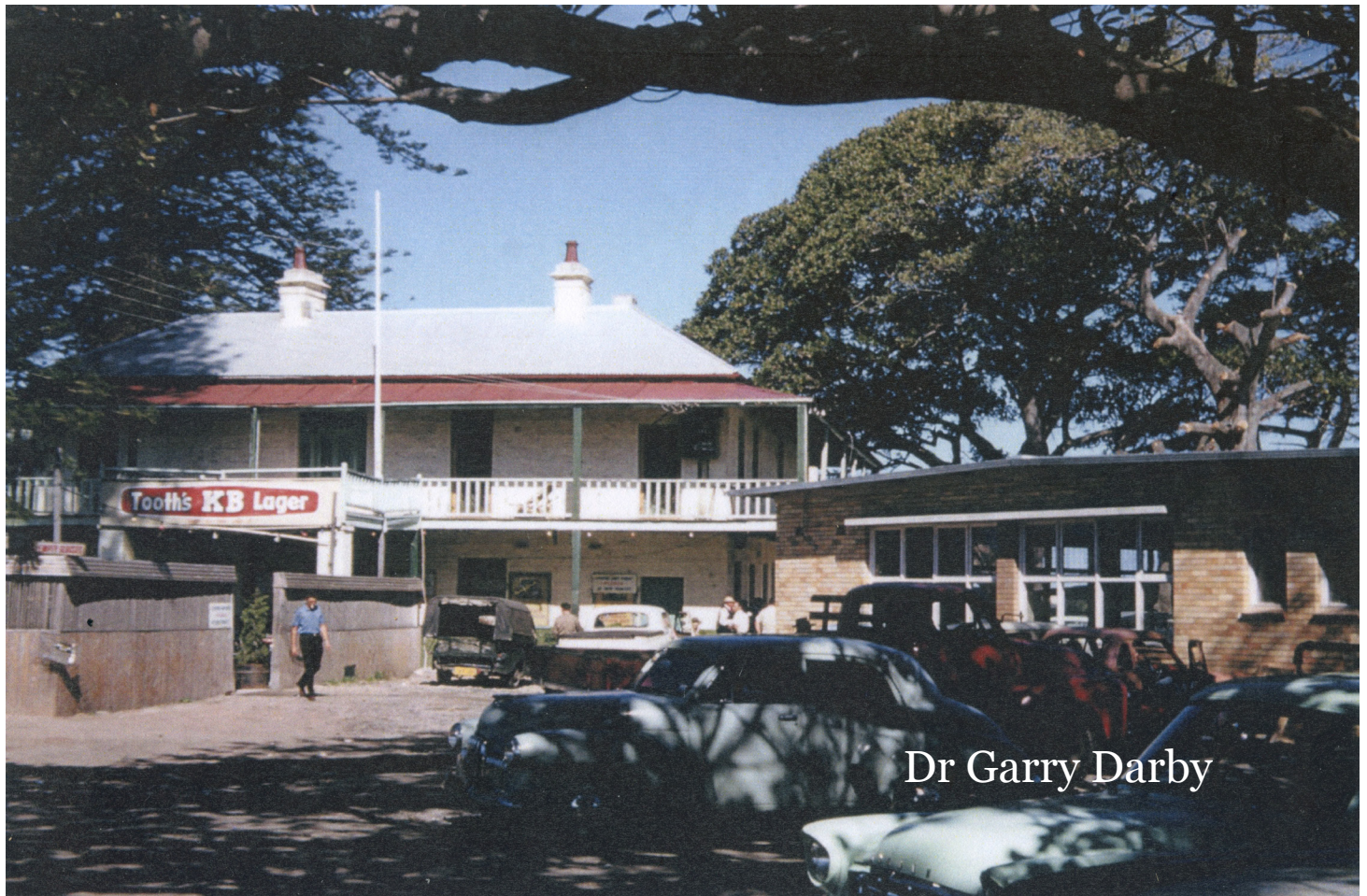


MICK MOYLAN'S PUB



Dr Garry Darby



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Other Publications by the Author

Baths & Boatsheds: The Waterfront
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Three Essays on Sans Souci History.

Primrose House: A History.

Rocky Point Road - The First 50 Years,
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Publication details:

Published by Dr Garry Darby
July 2018

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ISBN 978-1-925742-08-4



A catalogue record for this
book is available from the
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Front Cover Photograph:
Courtesy of Bayside Local History Library,
Rockdale.
Inside Front Cover: Aerial photograph of
Sandringham & Hotel : Courtesy of Rea
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Foreword

Rea Moylan Hewitt

As Mick and Mavis's daughter, I am very proud of this book that Garry has written. The "Pub" was my childhood and teenage years growing up.

Little did I realise the emotional connection the book has given me again to my father who died when I was 17 but also my mother and those integral years of my life.

I am extremely proud of my parents who in 1952 bought a 100 year plus dilapidated hotel and developed it into a 'community hub' where everyone (Mick's focus was very much family orientated) was welcomed and entertained. I'm sure a lot of you will relate to your own youth and early family years.

Many thanks to my Uncle, Keith Locke and my cousin, Colin Moylan for their contribution without which some of the stories 'only known to those who were part of them' would be missing!

Who could forget "Cracker Night"?...the enormous bonfire created on the beachfront in the car park adjoining Riverside Drive.

The braziers where we all, locals and staff kids included, whirled sparklers furiously to the delight of the fireworks display that Dad provided...plus kegs of 'refreshments for the grownups' !!!

Enjoy as much as I have thank you Garry!

Rea Moylan Hewitt

Dedication

This book is dedicated to all the good people of Sans Souci, Sandringham and Dolls Point, many of whom contributed to the legend that was Mick Moylan's.

When discussing local history in our area one of the names always mentioned is the legendary hotelier.

Consequently, I believe that Mick lives on in the minds of our local people.

*

My special thanks go to Rea Moylan Hewitt, without whom this book would not have been possible.

Garry Darby

1. Mick buys the 'Prince of Wales' Hotel at Sandringham

Down Sans Souci way Mick Moylan's pub is legendary. Generations of locals still refer to it - it was demolished in the 1980s - as "Mick's" and the stories that originate from that place are limitless and many seem to test the bounds of truth more than somewhat. Indeed the entire area of Sandringham Point on the Georges River is still referred to as "Mick's". Mick and Mavis were there from 1952 to 1966.



The Governor Bourke Hotel, Camperdown, where Mick and Mavis learned their trade.



The Welcome Hotel at Rozelle in 1930 - the Moylans were at this hotel in December 1951-November 1952.

These were the 'golden years' for suburban hotels. There were 1,800 new pubs licensed in NSW during those two decades and this was far and away the greatest increase between 1905 and 2014. Mick was astute enough to know that the 'boom' was on. ¹

*

Mick and Mavis - married at North Sydney on 3 July 1943, Mavis' 23rd birthday - learned the hotel trade when they became licensees for the first time at the Governor Bourke Hotel, Camperdown. (above) Mick's father, M E Moylan Sr., had passed away just

Mick Moylan's Pub - Chapter One



The idyllic setting for the pub is evident here. Passing boating groups could glide into the beach for a cold beer and kids could play on the sand. Lunch, a swim and a drink, on a hot summers day was not a bad proposition !

Photograph: courtesy of Rea Moylan Hewitt

one month after they began there in February, 1950.

The Moylan family was not a wealthy one and it is likely that business finance and deposits for loans from the brewery and others originated with Mavis. Furthermore she was the thrifty one of the partnership and it has been suggested that she saved Michael's pay from his war service to give them a great new start.

Prior to operating hotels Mick had had a milk run at Neutral Bay in the 1930s and later he and Mavis had a newsagency at Glebe. Mick was ambitious to do well in business and for a time had studied accountancy of a night to prepare himself for the career he envisaged for himself.

They were, however, ambitious, quick learners, and by November 1951, just 17 months later, they had moved on to busier premises at the Welcome Hotel Rozelle.



When Mick took over from Les Ritchie in 1952 the grand old Prince of Wales Hotel was not looking at its elegant best. This photograph is clearly of an unused section of the hotel, but is representative of the interior, exterior and the surrounds.

Photograph: courtesy of Rea Moylan Hewitt

From the beginning the Moylans had what it took to be successful hoteliers and beer sales escalated at Rozelle.

Mick Moylan's dream, however, was to own a suburban pub and he purchased the historic Prince of Wales at Sandringham from the occupying publican, Les Ritchie, in 1952 for £56,000. Ritchie was, himself, something of a household name in the area and was known by one and all as "Lousy

Les". Before coming to Sandringham Ritchie had been licensee at the Lewisham Hotel, Lewisham.

*

There were two distinct periods for Mick's hotels on the site. The 'old' pub, formerly 'The Prince of Wales', was his from 1952 to 1963 when he demolished it to make way for the cream coloured brick building which he named the 'Sans Souci Hotel'. However,



The Prince of Wales hotel at Sandringham in 1950, when Les Ritchie was still in charge. Two years later it was purchased by Mick and Mavis Moylan and the rise to fame began. In the early years of the Moylan's ownership the place was still referred to as "Lousy Les' " and right up in 2018 at the time of writing some still call it by that name. However, Mick with a dominant personality and a will to succeed soon stamped his name on the pub and it became "Mick Moylan's" - or simply "Mick's" The building here is clearly showing signs of neglect and this exterior and interior was in desperate need of care and attention.

Mick Moylan's Pub - Chapter One



By 1960, when this great photograph was taken, the Moylans had been in charge for more than seven years and many improvements and structural alterations had been made. There were however, many more changes to come because at this time Mick realised that if he was to compete into the future he needed to expand and modernise. During 1963 this historic old building was demolished and the 'new' Mick's stood in its place. On this section of the property Mick built the new 'Beach Lounge' fronting on to the white sands of Sandringham beach.



Michael Eugene "Mick" Moylan, of Irish heritage, became the legendary publican at Sandringham between 1952 and 1966. He died at Sans Souci in 1969.

Photograph: courtesy of Rea Moylan Hewitt

before that came to pass there were some rip roaring days, and nights, at this outstanding, local watering hole.

*

Moylan's fame and huge success as a publican rested on his wonderful ability as a promoter, and his continuous flow of ideas and projects which were all aimed at improving his lot. He enjoyed the limelight but was not self-indulgent.



Mavis Moylan (nee Wesley) - looked after the rooms, staff and administration aspects of the hotel. Mavis passed away in May 2012.

Photograph: courtesy of Rea Moylan Hewitt

Some preceding publicans there such as "Aussie" Billy Longton had continuously publicised their own name and profiles in press advertising, but Mick and Mavis relied more on simply providing great experiences for their patrons.

Interviewed in 2012, Rea Moylan Hewitt, his daughter said,

Dad was the ideas man and Mum was the backstop. She looked after



Stealing beer glasses was one of Mick's pet hates and he went to great lengths to prevent this nefarious practice. The sign at left centre of this photograph says it all.

Photograph: courtesy of Rea Moylan Hewitt

the rooms, staff and the administration side. She was known for her boisterous laugh. ²

Mick Moylan certainly was an 'ideas man' - a term that was later made famous in the Australian movie 'The Castle'.

The Moylans turned the pub into an entertainment destination for thousands of people.

Many older residents of St George and Sutherland Shire would remember the entertainment provided by the Moylans in the pub's beer garden that overlooked the water at Sandringham Point. It featured a

Mick Moylan's Pub - Chapter One



The famous “Rush” at the Prince of Wales in October 1957 - Mick Moylan was such a great promoter and eager to entertain his clients, that people would line up outside the lattice-work barriers waiting for the pub to open. When the entrance was cleared the charge began. The entertainers in the old beer garden were often headline acts from around Sydney and the ‘rush’ would be to secure the best seats, nearest the stage and settle there for the night. This photograph gives a clear idea of the primitive nature of the ‘furniture’ and ‘furnishings’ that had survived there - some from the 1930s and 1940s.

Photograph: courtesy of Rea Moylan Hewitt



Nellie Hurst behind the bar at the 'old' pub. This place and its equipment and fittings lacked refinement but many lamented the demise of the 'old' pub in the early 1960s. One imagines that 'health & safety' was at a minimum, but the Sandringham crowd cared little for such niceties. Mick provided a good cold beer and plenty of entertainment. Mick 'inherited' poorly conditioned bar equipment from Les Ritchie but was loath to invest in something new when he had plans to either transfer the licence elsewhere or rebuild. Of course he chose the latter in the early 1960s, and the 'new' hotel equipment was first class.

Mick treated his staff well and, for them, there was a great sense of family in the air.

Photo Courtesy of Corrine Hurst

dirt floor and very basic furniture. During the colder months patrons would huddle around steel braziers in which logs were burning. These were dotted strategically throughout the open areas of the pub. Come what may, all this was set in a

situation facing Botany Bay and George's River that few other hotels in Sydney could match.

Car parking was more than ample and it was later noted that one could park there

without the aid of a proliferation of, modern day, white lines.

Rea Moylan Hewitt recalled just how promotionally minded her father was, saying; There were talent quests, beauty contests and all the latest rock'n'roll bands. Dad really made the entertainment the attraction because he didn't have poker machines or Sunday trading. In those days, Dad owned the point and he was very generous, letting fishermen access the water. Dad was a showman. We had circuses for the kids and he imported big American cars from Detroit that were always on show in the car park. We would have huge bonfires on cracker night. ³

*

Beer Glasses:

In November, 1955, the Sydney press announced,

A notice in a Sans Souci hotel says that last month 1,648 schooner glasses, 2,213 middies and 210 ponies were stolen. The value is given at £357/7/3. A 6d deposit reduced the loss to £255/19/-. ⁴

One of Mick's greatest concerns at the old Prince of Wales Hotel was the practice of patrons stealing his beer glasses. As seen above (page 7) he was even prepared to fine his customers who left with them in their pockets and purses.

However, the local drinkers were very inventive and persistent. When Mick had



Service behind the bar at the 'old' pub. The equipment was 'rough & ready' and well overdue for replacement.

Photograph: courtesy of Rea Moylan Hewitt

his beer glasses engraved "Stolen from Mick Moylan's" they immediately became collectors items and beer glass losses rapidly multiplied.

Then Mick placed a 6d (5c) deposit on all beer glasses. This was very unpopular with most drinkers there, but before long they were able to turn it to their advantage. The hotel down the road at Brighton did not charge any deposit on their glasses and many from there found their way to Mick's hotel where the 6d deposit was claimed back !!

For more on the question of beer glasses see the photograph on p17.

*



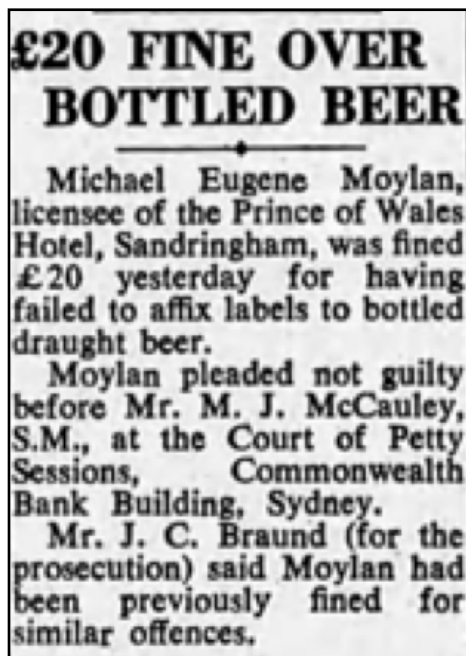
This remarkable photograph, from March, 1958, shows the old beer garden, roaring along as a wonderful entertainment venue for thousands of locals.

Photograph: courtesy of Rea Moylan Hewitt

Beer glasses were of a minor concern compared to some of Mick's other problems at the Prince of Wales.

During his first years at Sandringham Mick tested the licensing authorities to the limit, and brewery records show that he was frequently reprimanded.

Between 1953 and 1957 he was fined no less than eight times for offences ranging from 'delivering liquor on a Sunday' to 'not keeping correct records' and 'selling liquor during prohibited hours'. ⁵



During the late 1950s Mick was enjoying a boom in bottled beer sales. He was frequently in trouble with the law and licensing authorities. Many of the offences were never 'recorded'. The fines, however, were minimal and there have been suggestions that Mick knew they may be coming in his direction anyway.

Sydney Morning Herald, 22 March, 1955

Fights & Pub Brawls:

Fights at hotels in the 1950s were, more or less, an expected part of the proceedings. The Prince of Wales was no different.

There are many scrimmages that might be described, however, one particular one will serve as an example here. After Mick took over in December 1952, less than three months had passed before a classic pub fight took place.

Les Harold Brander, from Mortdale, was having a drink at the bar on a Saturday afternoon.

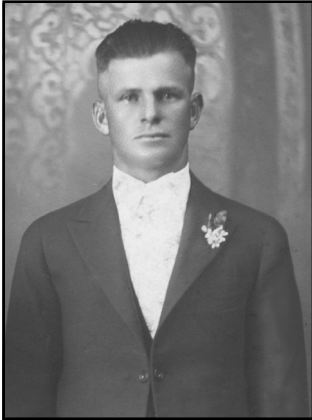
Giving court evidence, Mick said,

He was not drunk ... I asked him to stop. He went to the front yard and commenced to argue with another man ... a fight being the outcome ... as words were not convincing enough evidently ... I stopped that scuffle. The defendant then went and started fighting with another man. This was offensive to me. ⁶

This newspaper report was couched in amused terms and concluded by saying,

The Bench Magistrate, Mr. Raschke, when he fined the defendant just one pound & ten shillings, gave a gentle reminder that he felt somewhat hurt by not having received a ringside invitation. ⁷

In Mick's time the "Prince of Wales" had a picket fence around it. There have been reports that the genial publican had to occasionally replace pickets which had been



Jim Douglas, was a professional boxer and Sandringham local. He was also a regular patron at the "Prince of Wales". Photographed in 1930 when his boxing career flourished.

utilised in the rambling brawls which took place there.

One family in particular were regularly involved across the years when Les Ritchie was in control. Their presence continued after Mick Moylan took over in 1952. Jim Douglas (1907-1987), a talented, professional boxer was a member of this family. During the years between 1924

and 1932 he fought at Sydney Stadium, Carlton Stadium, Leichhardt Stadium and many smaller venues. One of his earliest fights was in September 1924 when he fought Mick McDonald at Coronation Theatre, Leichhardt in a tournament for novice professionals.

It was not unknown for Jim, in later years, to practice his fighting skills in the grounds of the hotel on a Saturday afternoon.

*

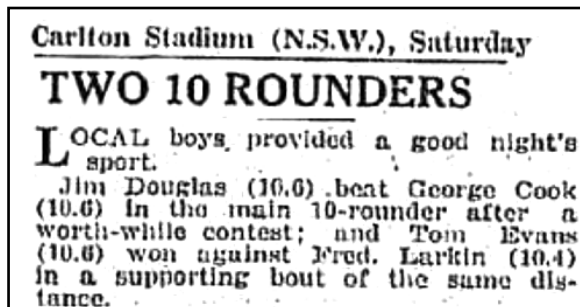
The previous publican, Les Ritchie, had been involved in a much more serious affair way back in 1931. In fact, Ritchie nearly lost his life.

A man in a wheelchair had called for a beer at 5.50pm, just 10 minutes before closing. When he was asked to drink up he threw his beer on the floor of the hotel. Shortly after Ritchie was threatened by this man who was brandishing a pen knife. He lurched at Ritchie and then stabbed him in the chest. The publican was severely wounded and spent two weeks in St George District Hospital recovering. His attacker was later arrested as he was washing his hands at a nearby boatshed (ed. 'Pilgrim's')⁸

This incident was referred to in the local press as "the "Sandringham Stabbing Affair"

Mick's Beer Sales Success - family involvement - Mick's generosity - staff drinks and picnics.

Clearly enough, one major concern for all Sydney suburban hotels in the 1950s was to sell as much beer as possible.



Boxing and wrestling at nearby Carlton Stadium frequently featured local athletes. Jim Douglas was prominent there in the early 1930s.

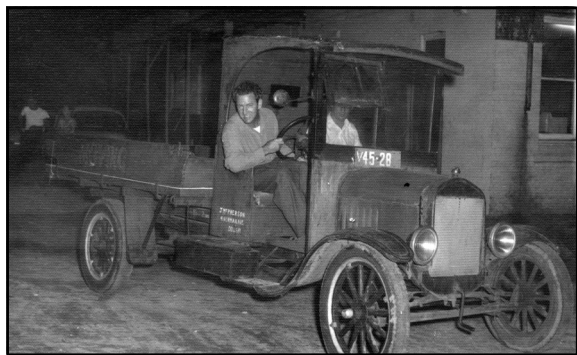
⁸'Referee' Wednesday 28 October, 1931, p22

Mick Moylan's Pub - Chapter One

That Mick was a very successful and popular publican has never been in dispute. Indeed, in the language of 2018 he was 'awesome'. His entertainment policies struck a chord with locals prior to the emergence of super sized clubs in the district. Mick's was a place where one would go alone, with the family, with a group of mates or with the girlfriend.

This success was clearly reflected in his sales of beer. It is fortunate indeed that brewery records have been preserved at the Butlin Archives at the the Australian National University. They make remarkable reading. Recorded and graphed they present a clear picture of Mick's astonishing success.

Prior to his taking over the Prince of Wales, that hotel was receiving around 350 barrels of beer each quarter from Tooth's Brewery. Mick took over from Les Ritchie on 17 November 1952. Over the next six weeks until the end on the December quarter of



Mick behind the wheel of a special 'delivery' truck - bottle sales were delivered throughout the peninsula.

Photograph: courtesy of Rea Moylan Hewitt



Rush hour at Mick's bar in the old hotel - drinkers would jostle for position and shout their orders.

Photograph: courtesy of Rea Moylan Hewitt

1952 beer sales had shot up by 80 barrels to 430 - an increase of almost 23%.

The increases simply continued to soar. By the end of the March quarter 1953 an increase of 140% on sales at the time of takeover was recorded and by the December quarter of 1958, when the old hotel was at its absolute peak, an increase of 860% on sales at the time of takeover in 1952 was recorded.

Just as an aside, the 'Wild One' by Johnny O'Keefe, was released on 5 July 1958. While it did not reach higher than 20 in the charts, Sydney-born O'Keefe became the first homegrown rocker to achieve a place in the national charts. At the same time Australia was singing along with Slim Dusty after he had released his hugely popular 'Pub With No Beer'. There are no first-hand reports



The public bar at Mick's was not a very glamorous place - indeed 'rough and ready' might be one fitting description. Nevertheless, beer sales increased dramatically under Moylan's guidance and promotion. The clock on the wall says 5.25pm - just 35 minutes before closing time and the 'six o'clock swill'.

Photograph: courtesy of Rea Moylan Hewitt

but one imagines that both of those songs were performed at Sandringham.

Another revealing figure recorded by Tooths was the sales of bottled beer. At the time of takeover Les Ritchie was selling around 1,400 dozen bottles per quarter. Over the next six weeks until the end on the December quarter of 1952 bottled beer sales had increased to 1543 dozen bottles per quarter - a modest increase of around 10%.

However, from then the increases escalated. By the end of the March quarter 1953 an increase of 24.5% on sales at the time of takeover was recorded and by the December quarter of 1958, when the old hotel was at its absolute peak, an increase of 1,600% on sales at the time of takeover in 1952 was recorded.

The great, old, vintage delivery truck pictured opposite was used by Mick to



Illawarra Mercury,
Wednesday, 3 March, 1954,
p3

deliver kegs to customers for their parties on Friday and Saturday nights. Des McPherson, a long-time and popular employee, drove for Mick.

Six O’Clock Closing:

Six o'clock closing for hotels had been introduced in NSW, by *The Early Closing Act* in 1916. This was done partly in an attempt to improve public morality and partly as a wartime austerity measure. Another aim was to reduce consumption of alcohol. Temperance organisations such as The Woman's Christian Temperance Union argued that,

a ban on alcohol would remove temptation from the working classes and encourage them to be more committed and industrious, with the ultimate aim of reducing the number of families living in poverty in NSW. ⁹

Following the outbreak of war in 1914, early closing gained a deal of support when temperance organisations claimed that,

a well-ordered, self-disciplined and morally upright home front was necessary to the success of the war effort. ¹⁰

The conditions and effects that ensued were discussed in an Australian novel published anonymously in 1953. This was titled "Caddie, A Sydney Barmaid", a book which gave a telling view of pub life from behind a Sydney bar in Mick Moylan's time.

In her book which was loosely an autobiography she recalled,

The shouting for service, the crash of falling glasses, the grunting and shoving crowd, and that loud, indistinguishable clamour of conversation found nowhere but in



This photograph shows the Moylan 'family connection' at the Prince of Wales: His sister-in-law, Beth, is at the cash register (left) - Bill, his brother is third from the left and Mick is pictured fifth from the left. There is an interesting sign above the door which announces that: *'owing to the large number of glasses taken away we are forced to charge a deposit of 6d on each glass'*. Compare this with the photograph on page 7.

Photograph: courtesy of Colin Moylan

a crowded bar beat upon my brain until all my actions became mechanical.¹¹

Similar conditions would have applied at Les Ritchie's & Mick's Prince of Wales Hotel prior to 1955.

Interestingly, Caddie was not only a barmaid, but ran bets for an SP bookmaker

and eventually conducted her own SP business.

Prior to the 1917 reform, most hotels and public houses in Australia had closed at 11 or 11:30 pm. During 1947 a referendum sought to change trading hours but was defeated.¹²

Interestingly, at that time, 1946-7, the NSW Police came out strongly in favour of 10 o'clock closing saying that, there would be

theleader.com.au

Link lost with historic family pub

By Jim Gainsford

MAVIS Moylan of Sans Souci, who with her husband Mick ran the famous Moylan's hotel at Sandringham Point, died recently at 91.

Mr and Mrs Moylan married in 1943 and bought their first pub, the Welcome Hotel at Rozelle, soon after.

But Mick Moylan's dream was to own a suburban pub and he purchased the historic Prince of Wales at Sandringham from a man named Les Ritchie in 1952 for 56,000 pounds.

The Moylans turned the pub into an entertainment destination for thousands of people.

Many older residents of St George and Sutherland Shire would remember the entertainment provided by the Moylans in the pub's beer garden that overlooked the water at Sandringham Point.

"There were talent quests, beauty contests and all the latest rock'n'roll bands," said Mick and Mavis's daughter, Rea Hewitt.

"Dad really made the entertainment the attraction because he didn't have poker machines or Sunday trading. "In those days, Dad owned the point and he was very generous, letting fishermen access the water.

"Dad was a showman.

"We had circuses for the kids and he imported big



Remembered for her boisterous laugh: St George identity Mavis Moylan died on March 17, aged 91.

American cars from Detroit that were always on show in the car park.

"We would have huge bonfires on cracker night."

In 1961, Mick and Mavis demolished the Prince of Wales and built Hotel Sans Souci, popularly known as Moylan's, with accommodation, a spacious public bar, dining room and an extensive saloon lounge overlooking the water.

Mick and Mavis hoped the new hotel would attract visitors from all over the world.

"Dad always knew that the surroundings for the new hotel were the most beautiful in Australia," Mrs Hewitt said.

Because women were not allowed in the public bar in those days, the Moylans created the big lounge area



Pub of plenty: Moylan's hotel at Sandringham Point was a destination for people across Sydney.



On show: Many older residents in Sydney's south would remember the entertainment provided by the Moylans in the pub's beer garden.

overlooking the water where husbands could bring their wives and relax while the kids were outside.

"Dad welcomed families and wanted everyone to feel welcome.

"Dad was the ideas man and Mum was the backstop.

"She looked after the accommodation, staff and the administration side.

"She was known for her boisterous laugh."

Mick Moylan died of a heart attack in 1969, aged 49.

Mavis decided to sell the property and settled at Sans Souci with her two daughters, Maria (Rea) and Patricia.

"She loved the area and wanted to stay here," Mrs Hewitt said.

In the 1980s the Moylan's hotel was demolished to make way for an exclusive housing development.

But, to this day Sandringham Point is still known as "Mick Moylan's".

Do you have fond memories of Moylan's hotel?

Have your say

theleader.com.au



Mavis Moylan's death in 2012 was honoured by this excellent piece in our local paper. She played a very important part in the success of this iconic pub.

St George & Sutherland Shire Leader 3 May 2012

'fewer drunks and less crime'. This opinion was later to be shared by Mick Moylan. ¹³

Around the same time, the Supreme Court of NSW ruled that private clubs were exempt from alcohol restrictions, allowing them to trade alcohol legally after 6 pm. ¹⁴

There has been much written about the causes and effects of the 'six o'clock swill.' Vincent Pike, a Sydney lawyer declared, 'Australia is known elsewhere as a nation of swillers.' ¹⁵

This Australian phenomenon was even discussed in London's 'Punch' magazine during October 1954. The 'swill' was derided as being,

When every pub in the land is filled to overflowing with a roaring, struggling mass of men trying to drink the maximum amount of beer in the minimum amount of time.¹⁶

An article in the SMH published in 1985 suggested 'there are no good pubs in Australia'. In justification of this claim journalist Paul Tait wrote,

My guess is the problem dates from the evil days of the six o'clock swill where you stood in a tiled emporium and hurled beer down at the fastest possible rate before the bar closed. The bars of Australia have never recovered from this awful blight.¹⁷

Others observed that it helped to define the Australian male of that period. For example, Donald Horne, the noted social commentator, in his book, 'The Next Australia', offered the notion that, 'the six o'clock swill before the bars closed was one of the continuing tests of masculinity'.¹⁸

Others such as Tanja Luckins tended more to generalise, saying,

'Six o'clock swill' is one of the best known terms in Australian history. It popularly encapsulates the pub drinking practices of a fifty-year period from the Great War until the 1960s, when pubs closed at six

o'clock in most Australian states.

¹⁹

Religious groups were not excluded from the debate and a Sydney Methodist group weighed in. The report below describes their plans.

During 1954 a second referendum was held and was successful. Closing hours were extended to 10 pm in New South Wales in 1955.

It goes without saying that Mick Moylan held considered thoughts on this matter. In 1962 when interviewed for a press article, Mick gave forth on the subject of six o'clock closing and its introduction at a time that made it a huge benefit to his burgeoning hotel. He said,

The day of the Sydney drunk has gone and the Australian drinker is much better behaved than he was six years ago. The reason for the change is the ten o'clock closing.

People today drink more slowly than they did in the old six o'clock swill days. This is the main contribution to the lack of drunkenness.

Six years ago, as everyone knows, you could walk around any hotel in Sydney a few minutes after six and drunks would be all over the place. But if I see a drunk today I ask what's wrong with him or is he having trouble at home.

Drunkenness is no longer tolerated as much as it was in the six o'clock days. A man now has time to drink a few beers. The

urgency to get a certain amount down his throat in 20 minutes has gone, and consequently, the Australian has become a civilised drinker. ²⁰

Regardless of the above Mick still held the view that the hotel laws could be improved. He reasoned rather prophetically,

I believe that no harm would be done if the law allowed hotels to open until midnight on Saturday and, perhaps, Friday nights.

The people have finished their work on those nights and are in the mood for entertainment.

They go to the hotel with their wives on Friday and Saturday nights to relax. But as the law stands, the night's relaxation ends at 10pm when the hotels shut. No one wants to go home at that hour.

It would be a better plan if the hotels were allowed to remain open until midnight, even if they had to open later in the day so that the hours of trading remained the same. ²¹

The increases in trade that Mick had enjoyed were, of course, due in part to the change in trading hours and obviously he was a great supporter of that decision. Nevertheless, he made some telling points about changes in society and forecast, in that interview, changes that would be adopted in the future.

Enjoying greater sales and longer trading hours, Mick looked at the future, and when

he began considering his 'new' hotel in 1961-2 he simply could not wait to design, build and open up his flash new premises accomodation and drive-through bottle shop. When Mick opened his 'new' hotel, sales, as a matter of course improved again, and these will be discussed in the following chapters.

Towards the end of the 1950s Mick was enjoying a wave of success and the hotel was ripping along.

The country was enjoying a flood of sporting success in the decade of the 1950s. Australia won the Davis Cup in 8 of those years and players such as Frank Sedgman, Ken McGregor, Lew Hoad, Ken Rosewall, Mal Anderson and Ashley Cooper represented their country with outstanding success. Of course the great sporting highlight of the 1950s was the Melbourne Olympic Games staged in Melbourne. Two wonderful competitors, Betty Cuthbert and Murray Rose won six gold medals between them and Australians from far and wide were in sporting heaven. On the local scene, St George Rugby League Club set a world sporting record by winning eleven successive premierships between 1956 and 1966. Raper, Gasnier, Provan and Langlands were just a few of the names that became enshrined in local legend. There was a lot to celebrate and discuss over a few beers after work during the 1950s at Mick's pub.

Family Employment:

Mick had a well established policy of employing family where possible and this

led to a familiar and warm atmosphere. Mick's generosity was well known and such things as staff drinks and on a grander scale, staff picnics, were highlights of their time at the pub.

The photograph published here, on page 17, shows Mick's brother, Bill, and sister-in-law, Beth, both of whom worked behind the bar at Sandringham. Other family members that helped out were Violet and Eileen, both sisters in the Moylan family of nine children. Of course Mavis had a central role in the running of the hotel.

Violet married Keith Locke and they both worked at the hotel in the mid-1950s. Indeed they lived for a time at the hotel. Mick's other sister, Noreen, was working there at the same time. Keith particularly remembers times at the 'old pub' with its corrugated iron roof on the beer garden and the tan bark floors. He was an accomplished sailor at the nearby Georges River Sailing Club racing both VJs and crewing in the 16' skiffs.

Mick's brother, Bill (seen in the photograph on p17) was also a constant worker in the 1950s. Consequently, it may be seen that for the Moylans the pub was a 'family affair'.

The Christmas season was always a very special time for Mick, Mavis and the family group that was centred around the hotel. Mick was noted for his generosity and moreover he had a great sense of family and teamwork. This, of course spilled over to the staff and the Moylan's arranged an annual Christmas party for them all at the Royal National Park. These were fun times and they live clearly in the mind of Mick's



A young, Colin Patrick Moylan, Mick's nephew, receives his Christmas gift from the hands of Santa at the Moylan Hotel Christmas Party held at Audley in the Royal National Park, Loftus. This was a very popular venue for such large group events.

Photograph: courtesy of Rea Moylan Hewitt

daughter Rea and also Colin Moylan, Mick's nephew. Indeed Colin treasures the photograph above which records one of the



Christmas at Moylan's hotel was always a very special time of the year. All who passed through the front door were greeted with a sign wishing them "Merry Christmas from Mick Moylan".

Photograph: courtesy of Rea Moylan Hewitt

Moylan family Christmas events where, as a young lad, he receives his Christmas gift.

The Royal National Park, then as now, was an ideal venue for such a gathering and the back of the hotel's delivery truck was used as a platform for Santa to distribute gifts to all the employees and members of the extended family.

The hotel itself was decorated appropriately each December and generated a welcoming atmosphere during the festive season.



Tooth's-famous for pub art

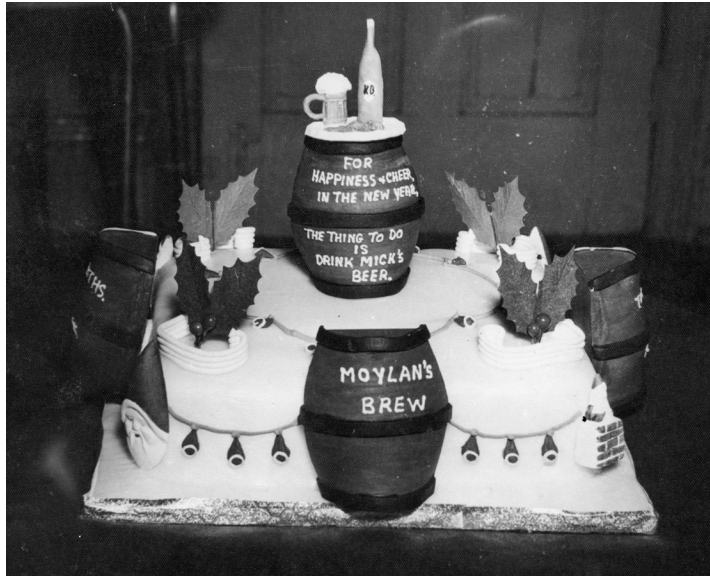
Closer examination of the photograph (p22) is revealing. We see the words, "Prince of Wales Hotel - Michael E Moylan" painted above the entrance door, while on the balcony in the upper left corner stands Santa, played by Bill the Barman doing his annual duty. Tooth's who were the major beer supplier to the hotel took the opportunity to promote their 'Sheaf Stout' with the promise that it would 'keep you fit'. Their wonderful 'pub art' mirrors and signs frequently carried a sporting theme. These have become collectible pieces. Between 1930 and 1969 Tooth & Co commissioned almost 6000 glass pub paintings, all of which served to enhance the brewer's image.

In Ritchie's and Moylan's times Tooth & Co presided over the brewing and hotel industries of NSW and tied down over 600 pubs to sell only their products.²²

'Sheaf Stout' was their 'flagship' product and had been brewed at the Kent Brewery, Broadway since 1850. Perhaps the most significant endorsement for this beverage came from a famous aviator who wrote to the brewery saying;

Dear Sirs,

I find that a moderate daily consumption of your stout has been definitely agreeing with my health and I would like to place an order



The Christmas/New Year period was always a happy time for Mick. Hotels sales were great and the family were all around.

Photograph: courtesy of Rea Moylan Hewitt

for one case of small bottles of your Sheaf Stout per week,

Yours truly

C Kingsford Smith

Sporting patronage:

Like most hoteliers, Mick was frequently approached to sponsor local sporting events. Some of these events happened in his own 'back yard'. Indeed in April 1956, The Prince of Wales Hotel was responsible for donating a 'beautiful and expensive shield' to be competed for by the fledgling



It's 1958 in Clareville Avenue, Sandringham. The marching girls arrive at the Prince of Wales, promoting the surf carnival to be held on Sandringham Beach adjacent to the hotel.
Photograph by Jim Goodwin Snr., courtesy of Jim Goodwin Jnr

Sandringham Moth Club. Several of these boats, which were some six years later, accepted as national class, were brought down to Sandringham by Sydney Harbour clubs for the day.²³

On Sunday 15th April, 1956, a large crowd witnessed racing which was a first for this class on Botany Bay. A fleet of some 50

boats took part. Unfortunately several of the boats had bad luck. "Wimpy" Atwell broke a mast, John Clingan was stuck in the mud and Roly Sayers had rudder trouble.²⁴ Sayers, in later years, graduated to the 16 foot skiffs at the Georges River and St George Clubs. That class became the most prominent on the river and bay and



On Sandringham Beach between Mick Moylan's and the Botany Bay boat shed to the north. This was the site of a rather spectacular surf carnival in 1958. A good crowd is in attendance and the flags make a fine sight. Some of the club names can be made out and include Ramsgate, Carss Park, Woronora and Brighton. Mick Moylan supported this particular event amongst a number of other sports event in the nearby area.

Photograph by Jim Goodwin Snr., courtesy of Jim Goodwin Jnr

produced champion sailors such as Ken Minter and Pat Collis.

Accordingly, in a small way, Mick encouraged the local sportsmen in the area and, quite appropriately, sailing was

amongst the most prominent of those sports.

Mick Moylan also donated a handsome trophy cabinet for the Ramsgate Life-Saving Club. In replying to the favour, the club, which had a very successful march past



Mick Moylan was a very generous man and when approached by sporting organisations for support he rarely said no. Shown here is a surf carnival in progress at Sandringham near the hotel. Mick was a benefactor of the Ramsgate club situated at the foot of Ramsgate Road. The standard bearer with the white flag, in the foreground, leads the Ramsgate march-past team.

Photograph: courtesy of Rea Moylan Hewitt

team, would from time to time compete in surf events at Sandringham beach. No doubt the thirsty surfers and officials would patronise Mick's pub during and after the events.²⁵

Surf Life-saving clubs flourished at Brighton, Ramsgate and Sandringham beaches in the mid-1930s. The boat shed and baths proprietor Alex Pilgrim was the principal supporter of the Sandringham

club at that time. Mick Moylan carried on with this tradition into the 1950s.

The photographs above (pp 24-25-26) show the Ramsgate Club's march-past team, and a range of others on Sandringham beach. It may come as a surprise to some that surf life-saving activities were so strong at Sandringham and surrounding areas.



Well after Mick's death in 1969 locals still referred to this area as simply "Mick's". To many the old hotel, pictured here in 1956, was "Mick's". Some have never come to terms with the 'new Mick's' that was constructed six years after this photograph was taken. Moylan was very slow to demolish this building and had to be threatened with the loss of his licence if he did not adhere to promises made to the Rockdale Council. Perhaps he too was not able to face up to the loss of this historic and beloved old building. Perhaps he did not want to be the executioner. Although Moylan inherited a 'shambles' from Les Ritchie, he was able to turn it into a place which was a favourite patch for many Sans Soucians

Photograph: courtesy of Rea Moylan Hewitt



Throughout the 1950s the “Prince of Wales” retained a rural atmosphere and the surroundings remained in an undeveloped and natural state. This made for a pleasant and unique ‘feel’ which became part of the ‘Moylan’ legend. Nevertheless ‘progress’ demanded attention and soon after this time (1956) Mick realised that he would need to keep pace with the opposition by providing modern and updated facilities. Sandringham beach may be just seen in this photograph and Mick needed no reminding that his proximity and access to bay and river was one of his greatest assets. Right from the time of William Rust, the original, 1872, publican, this had been the case and patrons never stopped reminding successive publicans that this was indeed, the case. The trees, Norfolk Pines, and Moreton Bay figs were a much loved aspect of the hotel surrounds, and even up into 2018 a few of these remain.

Photograph: courtesy, Bayside Library, Rockdale

The "Market Atmosphere":

The hotel grounds had always been a place which, at times, were akin to a local Saturday afternoon market. That atmosphere carried over to create noisy nights at the pub. Indeed neighbours complained about the volume in the months leading up to early February, 1956. At that time Mick was ordered by the Licensing Court to 'stop using outside amplifiers for entertaining'. Mick gave a solemn undertaking that the noise would stop forthwith. This seemingly unimportant announcement was tucked away under a page that was largely taken up by long list of University and Federal Scholarships. Hardly front page news in Sydney. ²⁶

Nevertheless, Mick's pub was not lacking in colour, atmosphere and excitement, even if the volume in widespread grounds had been turned off.

There were fruit trucks, clothing stalls, pony rides for the kids, motor cars for sale, entertainment and, best of all, fresh-caught fish from the bay, for sale. This was not your ordinary pub.

The Douglas family and others sold a lot of fish to local residents and over many years became something of an 'institution' at Sandringham. In colonial times the Douglas family were shell gatherers like the Selmon family. Later they became fishermen and oyster farmers.



Fresh fish were always available at Mick's hotel. Locals like "Black Bill" Douglas worked their boats and nets on a daily basis from 'Douglas Flats' at the foot of Napoleon Street, adjacent to the beach in front of Mick's. Locals came to rely on the quality and price.

They were prominent at the "Prince of Wales Hotel" bringing their fresh-caught fish direct to hotel patrons. This practice lasted for some sixty years until October, 1973 when the Rockdale Council Health Inspector placed a ban on them. By 1973 Jim Douglas, the ex-boxer, had retired from full time work and fish sales supplemented his old age pension.

Jim could claim that he had been selling fish with his father (William "Ginty" Douglas 1879-1959) and Grandfather (John Douglas 1854-1919) since he was six years old. As far back as he could remember his family had made their living from the water. Before and after school he had sold fish under the expansive Moreton Bay fig tree in

the hotel grounds and until the Council order came along he had never experienced a complaint.

Professional fisherman selling fish under the giant tree remained a celebrated Sans Souci tradition and many residents could not remember a time when this did not happen. In spite of this 1973 ban, sales of fish continued and in later years Bob Martin and others were to be seen there.

The rather poignant photograph (right) shows the drama. Jim Douglas, 66, ex-hard man, looking, quite deliberately, forlorn. Jim Douglas was well aware of his family heritage and their long history in this country claiming that, 'I think the first one beat Captain Cook here !!'

Jim's brother was 'Black Bill' - a professional fisherman all of his life - whose Great Grandfather, John Douglas, (1821-1887) had moved to the peninsula in the 1850s to become a shell gatherer and fisherman.

Another of the Douglas family, who chose to remain anonymous, marketed cars from the hotel and his advertisements were to be seen frequently in the Saturday Sydney Morning Herald columns. There were 29 advertisements placed in 1947-1948 which suggests that he had chosen a good site for his 'car yard'.

Typically he wrote,

Chev. 1936 2-door Sedan. as
new PN130. PP £158, radio,
£20, trade car or sell 178.
Douglas, Prince of Wales
Sandringham

One advertisement - just before Mick's time
- takes the eye,

Pedigree Jersey cow,
springing 2nd calf, Prince of
Wales Hotel Sandringham,
LW6282

Drowning 1955:

Despite the great times at Mick's, life around that area was not always fun and games. On a calm Saturday night in March, 1955 two elderly fishermen interrupted their fishing to have a quiet beer or two.

They had hired a 14 foot rowboat that afternoon and about 7pm they had extended the hire time. Mrs Pilgrim from the Sandringham Boatshed saw the men leave the "Prince of Wales" about 9.30pm. She remembered that it was a dark night but the water was calm. She saw the two men walk down to the nearby beach and get into the boat.

Only fifteen minutes passed before a southerly buster blew up and the bay became very rough. Botany Bay is comparatively shallow and is notorious for its dangerous southerly winds. The alarm was raised after the men failed to return but their empty boat was not found until the following morning. Police, lifesavers and civilians searched the bay and river without success. This was, of course, a tragedy, but drinkers at Mick's could tell many tales of wild weather interrupting their leisure. ²⁷



Jim Douglas sits under the famous Moreton Bay fig at the entrance to the hotel in 1973. His sign points out the amazing association his family had had with the place over much of its lifetime.

The Edens :

One local family that had a close connection with Mick Moylan's pub was the Eden family. The author, Felicia Starr, (born

Phyllis Eden) wrote "The Road Back Home", 'a true story of one woman's journey through life' which was published in 2003. In it she discusses aspects of her childhood which was spent in the family home at Primrose Avenue Sandringham, just 500 metres along the beachfront from Mick Moylan's pub. The home was situated on



At the 'old' pub, throughout the 1950s, Mick Moylan proved himself to be a real showman. He provided for his patrons a huge range of entertainment which was simply lapped up by locals and visitors alike. The smile on the waiter's face (lower left) says it all. Here, the young lady acrobat has the audience enthralled.

Photograph: courtesy of Rea Moylan Hewitt

the Sandringham beachfront which became the playground for the Eden children.

The Eden family was a large one, comprised of sixteen children. Phyllis was number 13 and she followed her brother Harry Lindsay Eden (1943-2006).

As a young man Harry was prominent in and around Sandringham. Harry began a

rugby league career in 1969 with Eastern Suburbs. He transferred to St George and played there with success between 1971 and 1973. His final Sydney rugby league club was South Sydney (1974-1975). He was always a fine physical specimen who played well above his weight.

Mick Moylan's Pub - Chapter One



The 'old' pub (1952-1961) was 'rough and ready' with none of the refinements that came with the 'new' pub in 1962-3. Nevertheless, those with long memories still pine for the setup that we see above.

Photograph: courtesy of Rea Moylan Hewitt

Phyllis and Harry were just 15 months apart in age and consequently were good, young 'playmates'. Phyllis reminisces about playing in Peter Depena Park, opposite Primrose House, with its tall, fragrant pine trees and the way that the park was central to their childhood.

When the pair were 10 and 11 years of age, helping the fishermen on Sandringham beach was one of their favourite occupations. Some of those fishermen were from the Douglas family.

Around this time her father, Harold Percy Leonard Lindsay Eden (1901-1966) formerly a soldier in the British army, was working as

a nurse at Sydney Hospital. Be that as it may, he was also a fisherman on Botany Bay. He owned a small rowing boat named 'Starbelle' and, like the Douglas family and others, would sell some of his catch on the beach or under the giant trees around Mick Moylan's hotel. This coterie of fishermen were hard workers and would gather, late afternoons to enjoy a drink or two and discuss the day's catch.

Phyllis relates that, one summer, Harry was given a horse by the local milkman. The elderly animal was named "Knocker" and Harry and his horse became infamous around the district as the rider traversed the seashore and sand hills of Sandringham.

Pilgrim's baths and boatshed, beside Mick Moylan's, was the focal point of their activities. Mick's hotel at that time, was still known to some as Lousy Les', honouring the memory of Les Ritchie, even though Mick had been in charge for 5 years or more. Old habits die hard.

Whenever and wherever characters around Mick's pub are discussed, two surnames are ever present; Douglas and Eden.

Carl Williams

Long-time Sans Souci resident, Carl Williams worked with Mick in the 1960s. Carl's brief was security at the pub and this presented plenty of exciting moments for staff and patrons as well.

Carl recalled that his aim was the safety, satisfaction and security of Mick's patrons and to that end he worked very hard to



Harry Eden played with the famous St George Rugby League Club between 1971 and 1973. He was a well-known character around Mick's hotel in later years.

remain polite but firm with any troublemakers.

The problems that did arise most often came from people outside the area - some who had ridden their motor bikes there or others who got a little boisterous when celebrating their success (or failure) in University exams.

There was an occasion when security had to deal with an errant patron who was reluctant to leave when asked. This gentleman found himself being run across the beach by the scruff of the neck and taking an unexpected swim in Botany Bay. He had arrived at the pub by bicycle and that vehicle ended in the bay with its owner as well.

If there was one thing Mick really detested it was having any of his hotel liquor stock or equipment stolen. We have already seen

that Mick took drastic steps to control people stealing beer glasses. So, it is not hard to imagine his reaction when somebody tried to short change him on the delivery of a box of whiskey or a keg or two of beer. Some tried this but, according to Carl Williams, they only tried it once.

Mick and Mavis' personal safety was taken care of by a pair of German Shepherd dogs, and later Dobermans, that mostly lived with them, upstairs, in the new hotel.

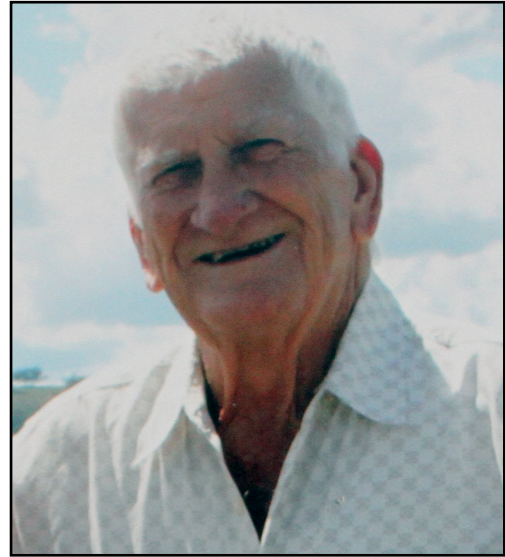
Carl was at the hotel through the transition time from the old to the new operation, either as a patron or employee. Accordingly, he knew Mick well and regarded him as a good 'boss' who had plenty of time for all the staff.

*

So life was grand at the 'old' hotel as Mick and Mavis worked hard to realise their plans. Their third pub was more than paying its way but the day would come, they agreed, when a new and 'modern' building would house their hotel operations. They owned property in Ramsgate and consequently knew of the traffic flow in that area and the possibilities of building a spectacular new pub.

The 'Prince of Wales' was situated in a truly beautiful location with limitless parking but the old building had seen better days and the upkeep came at a prohibitive price.

The Rockdale Council had always had its eye on the property surrounding the hotel. They would have liked to turn it over to public use and allow wonderful access to the park and beach.



Carl Williams who worked with Mick Moylan in the 1960s as his Security Officer. Carl had many a story to tell about his days and nights there.

Photograph: courtesy of Carl Williams

By 1956-7 the Moylans were negotiating a brewery loan which would allow them to consolidate the move to Ramsgate.

*

The spacious park surroundings at the 'Prince of Wales' had attracted patrons to Sandringham and the hotel in all of its iterations since 1872.

Mick used the grounds well and promoted the occasional circus there. Before his time Gypsies camped in those same open spaces.



The spacious grounds around the old 'Prince of Wales' were a great feature of the hotel and were much appreciated by patrons over many decades. However they created their own problems with security, maintenance and cleaning. Had the pub ever relocated to Ramsgate this open space, trees and beach access would have been sorely missed. Mick, of course would successfully integrate these surrounds with the new building in 1962-3.

Photograph: courtesy of Rea Moylan Hewitt

The Ramsgate Transfer:

As early as October 1941, there were strong suggestions that the old "Prince of Wales" should be moved.

The Mayor of Rockdale (G.J.McGuire) believed that it would be preferable for the hotel which had occupied the Sandringham site for seventy years to eventually be relocated at Ramsgate. The Council discussion was held in the context of new proposals to resume the old pleasure grounds which surrounded the hotel. Furthermore, there were also changes mooted for Clareville Park which was situated nearly opposite the hotel on the western side of Clareville Avenue.

Alderman Scott proposed that the hotel pleasure grounds and the Clareville Park grounds be exchanged. He reasoned that the beautiful waterfront there should be conserved for the general public. His proposal, however, was not pursued.

Progress was very slow on these ideas but in 1948 Les Ritchie sought permission to transfer his licence to Ramsgate.

On 16 July, 1948, this was approved and the move to the corner of Rocky Point Road and Ramsgate Road, Ramsgate seemed imminent.²⁸ A hotel stands there now - 'The Intersection' - but it was never built or owned by Les Ritchie.

The fact that Ritchie never proceeded with this scheme meant that when Mick Moylan took over the Prince of Wales in November 1952 he was already mindful of the fact that



This popular Ramsgate milk bar was owned by Mick and Mavis Moylan. It stood on the south-east corner of Rocky Point Road and Ramsgate Road. The Moylans sold this business in 1957 when they were negotiating a loan to re-build the Sandringham hotel. The milk bar stood on the corner opposite where the "Intersection" hotel now stands.

the hotel was 'on its last legs' and talk of demolition and transfer of the licence was well founded.

Indeed, Mick was to go through protracted and difficult negotiations until some years later, he finally gained full control and complete proprietorship of of "The Prince of Wales".²⁹

Indeed, it was way back in mid 1926 when the first attempts to establish a hotel at Ramsgate were made. At that time Mr Edmund St. Clair Hawthorne of Frederick Street, Ramsgate and others made an application for permission to erect a hotel on the corner of Rocky Point Road and Ramsgate Road, Ramsgate.

His plans met with some fierce opposition headed by the 'Women's Christian Temperance Union'. By October 1927 the application had been denied and an appeal dismissed.

Twenty one years went by before another attempt to build a hotel in Ramsgate surfaced. This was initiated by Les Ritchie and, as noted above, was successful. Nevertheless Ritchie did not proceed with his plans. Rather, in November 1952, he sold his Sandringham hotel to one Michael Eugene Moylan.

What Mick purchased was the subject of a private, lengthy, hand-written report which, presumably, was not available to him. Dated 20 March 1951, this report is reproduced here because it gives a very clear picture of the state of the hotel at that time. It was headed;

Prince of Wales Hotel Sandringham

Building is of stone with corrugated iron roof. So far as could be seen, the whole is in a state of disrepair. Bar and bar floor area are in a very poor state. Bar fittings sinks, ice boxes etc. are antiquated and in very poor condition and state of repair.

Garden is overgrown, drive-in is dotted with large puddles and fences have mostly disappeared.

Purchase of the property would in my opinion be worthwhile only with a view to removal of licence.

Surrounding district is only partly built upon and there is no

reason to expect any increase in trade for many years to come.³⁰

Mick Moylan pressed ahead with his intended purchase of the beach-side hotel, taking over the reins on 17 November 1952. However, from the very start it seems clear that he was aware that he would be required to re-build the old hotel. However, Mick had other plans.

Aware of the benefits of a move to Ramsgate he adopted that approach and employed Mr. Warden, Architect, to draw up plans for new premises at Ramsgate.

Then in mid-March, 1954, Smithers, Warren and Lyons, Solicitors, acting for Tooth & Co., Ltd., Sydney, notified that company that the Licensing Court had approved the plans.

Unfortunately for the Moylans they did not sway the local Rockdale Council which had last say. They refused the building application in mid-January, 1955, on the grounds that it would be 'a traffic hazard'.

While all of this transpired Mick steadily continued to build the trade of the old Sandringham hotel while simultaneously plotting his business future. Furthermore, he had an alternative plan. The alternative, of course, was to re-build at Sandringham which was never completely off the agenda.

After almost three years Tooth's were seemingly convinced that there was indeed a future for the old hotel and agreed, in October 1957, to loan the Moylans £140,000. From this amount Mick would purchase the hotel site which still belonged to Les Ritchie, and then re-build the hotel at an approximate cost of

£95,000. Repayments on this loan were to be at the rate of £7000 per year.

The Demise of the POW:

By the late 1950's with Mick at the helm, the 1870s building known as the "Prince of Wales" had terminal faults. These were not all to do with the structure of the building.

A local politician and historian who witnessed that era wrote on the subject of the hotel. In his book, *The Sans Souci Peninsula*, Ron Rathbone recalled,

Not only had the old hotel begun to attract an unruly element that was a problem both to the police and nearby residents but a building built in the 1870s could not provide the amenities patrons expected nearly a century later. Nor could it meet the requirements of the Licensing Court which determined whether it was to continue to trade or not. ³¹

It seems that, to some extent at least, Mick's hand was being forced by organisations that controlled such matters.

Indeed, the old building did have its faults - they were well and truly there in Les Ritchie's time - 8 or 9 years before. Now, the boy who been brought up on a dairy farm at Denman, was faced with a series of very important decisions about his future.

The idea that the licence could be transferred to a new building in the centre

of Ramsgate had faded and Rockdale Council would not shift from that position.

Mick realised the limitations of the old pub and, as outlined above, he had made overtures to the Rockdale Council and the Licensing Board to have the hotel transferred. This left him with only one alternative - build a new hotel on the existing site.

He began serious planning in 1960 and by 1961 the work was underway. Council had approved plans for the new hotel building and Mick had given undertakings that the old building would be demolished by an agreed deadline.

The building that Mick was about to demolish had had a magnificent career in the district. Many publicans, events, disasters and successes had come and gone. Many lives had been played out in the old "Prince of Wales" - now it was to go.

The decision was made. However, there was much to be done before any signs of the new pub would be seen. A tolerance of bureaucracy was not one of Mick's strong points. Rather he was one that liked to get on with things and usually he did it entirely in his own way.

Accordingly, he bought himself quite a few headaches as he began working towards the new premises.

The difficulties of meeting the demolition deadline, Council requirements and the toll these took on Moylan will be discussed in Chapter Seven.

Mick Moylan's Pub - Chapter Two



This was the reality of Mick's 1950s pub and his dream was something quite different. The conversion was long and difficult.

3. Some history of the building and its significance in the area.

The eminent St George historian, Gifford Eardley wrote a delightful piece about the hotel, its situation and attitude to entertainment. This is reproduced here, in part, and highlights the latter years in the life of a hotel which had been established there by William Rust in 1873.

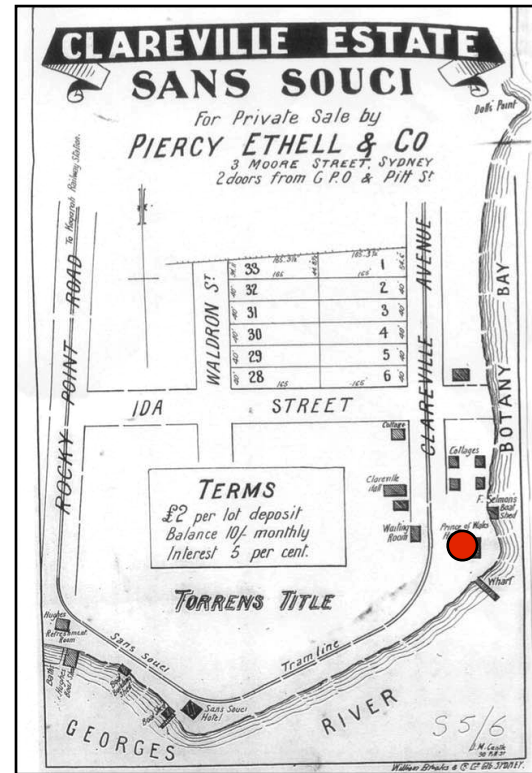
Writing of the early days, Eardley set the scene for the fall and rise of this iconic hotel. It had been an integral part of the 'playground of the south' since 1876. Eardley's essay on the Prince of Wales Hotel was first published in the Bulletin of the St George Historical Society in February, 1969.

Prince Of Wales Hotel Gifford Eardley

The hotel continued to function over the years and although its reputation was restored the pleasure grounds were neglected and the dance hall abandoned. The remnant of the Serpentine Lagoon was filled with rubbish and a general air of decay descended on the scene.

A great loss of trade was encountered when the Sans Souci Steam Tramway was closed on Sunday July 4th, 1937, as the superseding trolley bus avoided the precincts of the hotel by passing along Napoleon Street.

It became necessary to attract custom, and to this end the licensee at the time, Mr. Mick Moylan, decided to create a beer garden, after, the ancient German fashion,



This map of the area surrounding the pub shows something of the early development of the area c 1925

whereby both men and women could sit together away from the restraints of the public bar and its masculine taboos.

To this end the area immediately to the north of and adjacent to the hotel was set aside. The side enclosures gave protection against inclement weather and an amazing roof of scantlings and galvanised iron covered the garden, said scantlings being nailed to the trunks of the might Norfolk

Island Pine trees which, praise be, survived the effort and provided the stability so necessary to the structure.

The garden part of the ensemble consisted of a few dejected stag and elk-horns nailed here and there to suitable posts. Mother earth formed the floor which was always scrupulously raked and swept clean. A platform was provided at the north eastern end for visiting artists and a first class orchestra was engaged on a nightly basis.

When all aglow with many coloured electric light globes at night the place had a bizarre fascination, with its little tables occupied by patrons sitting on those uncomfortable iron-seated chairs which leave so much to be desired, particularly in cold weather. On winter nights a measure of spectacular (heating was afforded by several iron braziers, placed here and there, filled with glowing coke fires, giving much needed comfort to those sitting nearby.

The local dog population also appreciated this warmth, away from the howling westerlies. White coated drink waiters glided to and fro, bringing middies, schooners, and to one particular person, an occasional pint. To cater for the inner man a booth was set up from which wafted an exhilarating odour of fish and chips, and frying steak for hamburgers.

There was also an atmosphere of prawns in quantity, all of which, combined with cigarette smoke, created a blue haze through the premises which formed a major part of its attraction. The experiment was a great success, and the erst-while deserted grounds became

thronged with the motor cars of the entertained.

The only persons not amused were certain municipal officers who were chagrined because the beer garden, or possibly its unorthodox roof design, did not conform to this or that regulation, but there is no pleasing some people.

The nightly entertainment afforded the patrons of the Beer Garden was always of a high standard, and some fine baritones and tenors appeared from time to time, likewise clever jugglers and trick cyclists. A group of three shapely lasses, known as the "Sophisticates", portrayed chorus dancing at its best and were always enthusiastically received. Then came a young man, a young lady, and a pair of pure white Aylesbury ducks, the principals of a mystifying disappearing act whereby the ducks vanished without trace inside an open box sitting on a table arrangement. One was pleased to see the ducks at ease in a cage ready to go home after the show was over.

The death knell of the old hotel was sounded when Mr. Moylan conceived the idea of establishing modern premises which would cater for the travelling public, particularly those people arriving by air at the Kingsford Smith terminal at Mascot.

Arrangements were made to erect a special pavilion for nightly entertainment, named the "Silver Sands Lounge", replete with stage and orchestra, and a small dancing floor.

When all was complete the old premises were dismantled, together with the attractive Beer Garden. The new hotel became known as Hotel Sans Souci.

Fortunately Mr. Moylan retained the huge ancient trees and these alone remain to mark the site of the once famous Prince of Wales Hotel. It should be mentioned in closing that a move was made by our St. George Historical Society to have the old hotel building set aside as a regional museum, and also that the Rockdale Municipal Council was interested in the project, with a view to re-erecting the building for this purpose on a block of land in the vicinity of the Rockdale Town Hall Unfortunately the National Trust reported against the scheme as in their opinion the building had no historic value, which may be true in one sense, and also that the building structure as such would not stand re-erection.

Certain local builders disagreed and said the building could have been re-erected without difficulty although it would have been an expensive procedure.

Mr. Moylan generously offered the building materials without cost, however, the Rockdale Council vetoed the regional museum project insofar as the ex hotel premises were concerned and the matter lapsed. ³²

*

William Edward Rust had Picnic grounds on what was to become the hotel site as early as 1871. Indeed several years before the "Prince of Wales" was built Rust advertised for the coming New Years Day at the end of 1871,

SANDRINGHAM PICNIC GROUNDS,
GEORGES RIVER

W.E.Rust (late of Sans Souci) begs to inform his friends and the public he has opened the above grounds, where arrangements have been made to supply visitors with Ales, Wines and Spirits, of the best brands; Lemonade and other summer drinks. Luncheons also provided with tea and coffee. Boats kept in readiness for fishing and abouting. Admission free. All letters addressed to W.E. Rust, Sandringham, near Sans Souci, will be attended to. ³³

Soon after the original hotel had been built, the founding owner William Edward Rust advertised in the Sydney newspapers:

"W E Rust begs to intimate to his friends and the public he has opened the above hotel (POW) and extensive grounds where he can accommodate Wedding parties, Families, Picnic parties, Friendly Societies and others etc" ³⁴

Oysters were always on the menu at the "Prince of Wales" right from the very beginning. Mick Moylan in the 1950s and 1960s was to make a special place for them and George's River oysters were famous throughout Australia and the Pacific region. Rust knew the value of promoting this delicacy. He advertised very early on in the history of this iconic hotel.

Anniversary Day:

Prince Of Wales Hotel Sandringham,
near Sans Souci - Hot and cold
luncheons provided - Oysters opened
fresh throughout the day. W E Rust.
35



Joseph Carruthers, the former
Dolls Point resident, who
became Governor of NSW
pictured here with William
Edward Rust, the
owner/builder of the original
"Prince of Wales Hotel



William E Rust the first publican and
original owner of the "Prince of Wales",
was described by Sir Joseph Carruthers
as someone 'who never said an angry or
unkind word to anyone'.

Commencing in April 1875, Rust made
extensive alterations to the basic building.
His consulting architect was Ambrose
Thornley Jnr., of 2 Park St Sydney, an
architect who was very prominent in Sydney
at that time. Thornley designed The
Industrial and Permanent Building Society
building in York street Sydney in 1878 and
two years later his plans for the Town Hall
at Glebe were accepted. Accordingly, Rust's
Prince of Wales Hotel was an accomplished
architectural treasure to grace the shores of
Botany Bay.

**The Tramway Celebration Meeting
- 1887:**

Many significant meetings took place at the
old "Prince of Wales Hotel." None however,

signalled a greater change to the district than the one held there on Friday January 31st., 1887.

At that time Ernest Dysart Tollemache (1856-1910) was the lessee. He had a long history in the Sydney catering trade and was a popular publican at Sandringham. Of course, previous publicans had assured the popularity of the place as a seaside destination of the highest quality for tourists and locals alike.

Tollemache hosted members of the Sandringham and Sans Souci Tramway League, mostly locals, who met there to celebrate the decision to commence building the steam tramway from Kogarah to Sans Souci.

Subsequently, many hotel and picnic ground patrons arrived there by tram and continued to do so for the next 50 years until the trolley buses took over.

Jim Selmon:

The Selmons were the most famous family at Sandringham in the very early days. Patriarch Amos Selmon established the family there in what is now Clareville Avenue, as early as 1856. His son, 'Jim' Selmon (1863-1942) was deeply involved in the development of transport on the peninsula. Initially he ran a horse-drawn bus from Sans Souci to and from Kogarah and then became a conductor on the new steam trams in February, 1889. An interesting letter to the St George Call, published on Friday 18 June 1937, p 6, recalled his importance :



An early, rural image of William Rust's 1876 building. Rust was a passionate lover of flowers and his hotel was beautifully laid out with gardens worth going to see. Rust operated hotels in the area for more than 40 years. The first was the 'Sir Joseph Banks' at Botany, then the 'Sans Souci Hotel' at Rocky Point followed by this hotel at Sandringham which was operated by Mick Moylan from 1952 to 1961. Rust, Moylan and the hotel have a very special place in the history of the Sandringham area.

Prior to the advent of the 'iron horse' Mr. Jim Selmon, at present residing at Princes Highway, Kogarah, inaugurated a coach service between Sans Souci, Sandringham, and Kogarah. It was he who drove the ministerial party per coach from Kogarah station to the Sandringham Hotel, where the cabinet members, including the late Sir Joseph Carruthers, decided that the district should be served by a tramway. As some recompense for being forced out of business Mr. Selmon received an appointment in

the Railway Department and took up duty at Redfern Station on October 5, 1887, three weeks after the official opening of the tramway. The official records of the Railway Department disclose that Mr. Selmon was appointed conductor on the Sans Souci tramway on February 27, 1889, less than eighteen months after the tramway opened. He remained in this position until the Tramway Department took over this line from the Railway Commissioners. Mr. Selmon elected to remain in the Railway Department, and was appointed a guard at Sydney. He retired from the service 11 years ago. (ie 1926 ed.) Unfortunately, the name of the original conductor on the tramway is not known to the writer, but it is certainly none of those mentioned in the metropolitan press. For quite along time, after the opening of the line the tramway was manned by one conductor only, and Mr. Abe Richards, who has been named as the first only transferred to this tramway some time after Mr. Selmon and certainly not prior to the service being augmented. Mr. Selmon was born on the site of the present tramway



A Seaside Home away from Home

"Beside the Seaside, Beside the Sea"

The Prince of Wales Hotel and Pleasure Grounds, SANDRINGHAM

Magnificent Picnic and Recreation Grounds free to Guests.
Luncheons and Dinners Catered for, Large or small Private
Parties, Spacious Dancing Pavilion, Orchestra available by
arrangement. Motor Cars, Launches, and Boats for Hire.
Fishing Parties Arranged.

First Class Accommodation and Service

CUISINE UNEXCELLED.

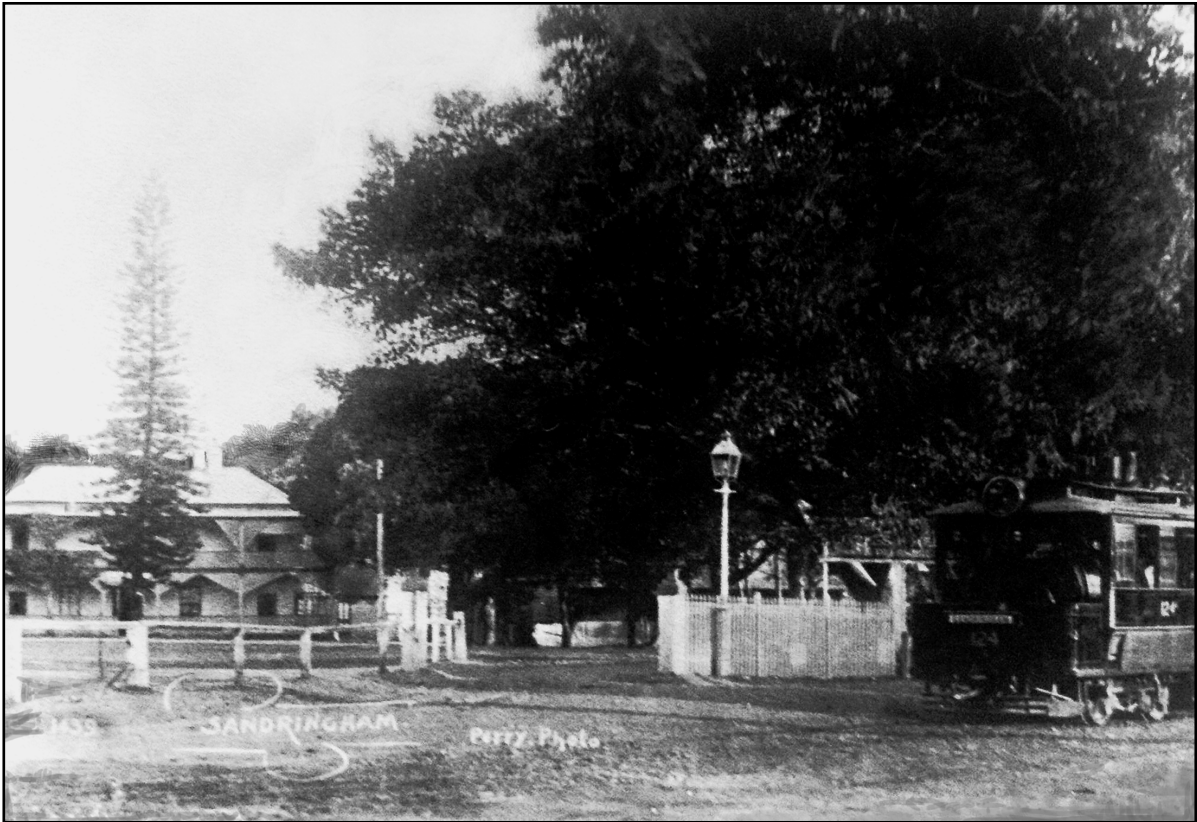
Oysters and Gipsy Toss a Speciality. Beautiful Grounds, Swings and other Novelties
for the Children **Our Motto: Civility, Courtesy, and Attention.**
Under British Management. Everything True to Label. Orders received Daily.
Prompt Motor Delivery.

Tel., Kog. 4. W. LONGTON, Proprietor (Late of Enmore)

PILGRIM'S "Shell Point" Oysters, and Boats to order for same Ring Kog. 166.

The 'Prince of Wales Hotel in May, 1920, when 'Aussie'
Billy Longton, a great promoter, was the licensee.

engine shed at Sandringham, and, in addition to being responsible for the introduction of the first mode of transport between Sandringham and Kogarah, is undoubtedly the only living-individual whose service on this particular tramway dates back to within 18 months after the official opening. It would, therefore, appear that Mr. Selmon,



“The Prince of Wales Hotel” with a steam tram proceeding down Clareville avenue from the right. Trams were introduced in 1887 and gas lighting, prominent in this photograph, was widely available on the peninsula from the early 1890s.

who is still hale and hearty for his 74 years, should be called upon to sound the whistle for the last trip of "Puffing Billy" I am, etc., NATIVE.

Jim Selmon, born within a stone's throw was, therefore, vitally important to the development of the “Prince of Wales” hotel

and the transport of its patrons. His father, Amos (1936-1925), had built and operated the original boatshed which stood adjacent to the old hotel

Gas lighting, evident in the photographs on page 49 & 51, was introduced to the peninsula in the early 1890s. There was a

deal of scepticism about the 'new-fangled' street lights. Indeed, Kogarah's Mayor, Alderman M.McRae, commented on a proposal to extend the use of gas lamps from the village of Kogarah to the surrounding area. At that time houses beyond the central part of Kogarah were scattered few and far between. McRae said,

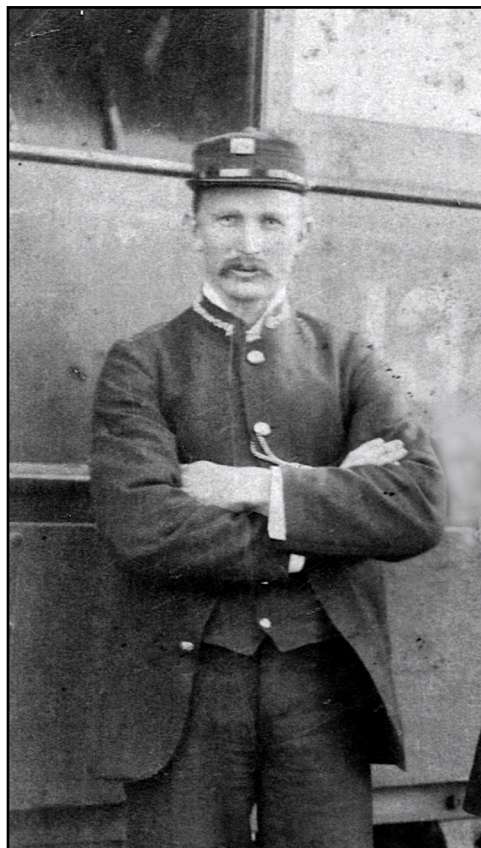
the idea of putting street gas lamps in the bush to light up gum trees was preposterous.³⁶

Some accomplished hoteliers and hosts followed William Rust at this riverside hotel which served local Sans Soucians for ninety years before Mick Moylan arrived. They included, William Edward Rust, James G.W.M McCurdy, Thomas Ridgeway, Edward Jules Whelow, Aristide Cauvarel, Ernest Dysart Tollemache, Charles William Lincke, Charles Hecht, Walter Halifax Watson, J.R. Ferris, R S McNaughton, Billy Longton, Albert Magull and Lesley Howard "Lousy Les" Ritchie.

It cannot be established whether Billy Longton and Mick Moylan ever met. If they did it is expected that Mick would have been full of admiration for this tireless promoter of the Prince of Wales Hotel.

Longton was publican when, on Wednesday evening, 29th May 1920, The birth of the St George Motor Boat Club took place there. At the meeting he was unanimously voted to the chair. Longton was, 'president of many of the clubs around the bays and very conversant with boating matters.'³⁷

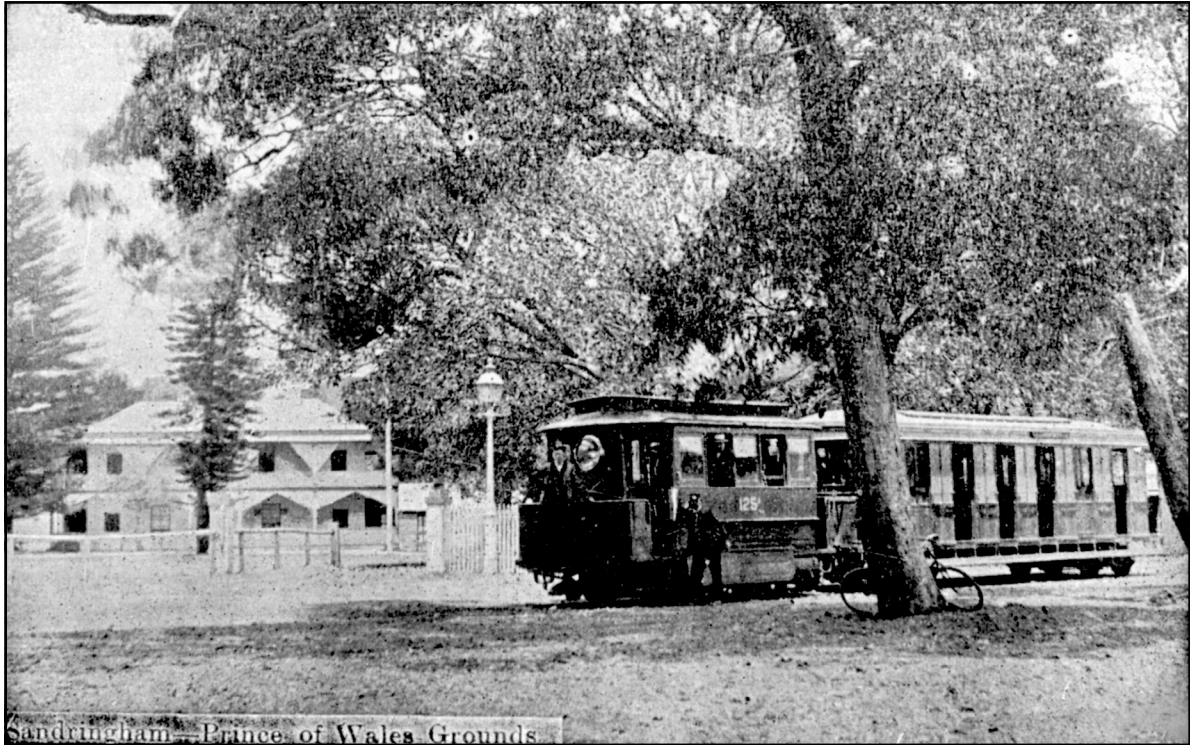
During the meeting Longton told the boating enthusiasts gathered there that he would, 'place at at the disposal of the club



Clarence James "Jim" Selmon (1863-1942) lived his entire life in the Sandringham - Kogarah area and was deeply involved in early transport in the area.

his hall for the meetings or any functions they might hold, and would give them a conscientious and straight go.'³⁸

*



The confluence of the grand old hotel and the new steam transport is abundantly clear in this early postcard. The trams came down Rocky Point Road from Kogarah railway station and followed the Georges River before turning into Clareville Avenue to disgorge happy passengers at this stop. From 1933 it also brought folks to 'Aqua Flora Park' just along the avenue. The trams in this way served "The Playground of the South". Jim Selmon (opposite) - from the pioneer Sandringham family, was prominent in this service. In 1933 Michael Eugene "Mick" Moylan was a schoolboy living at Neutral Bay with his family.

The country publican and businessman, John Robertson Ferris (1884-1963) bought the freehold of the Prince of Wales Hotel from Walter Halifax Watson in April 1826 and installed H W O'Neile as manager and licensee.

Soon after he and his wife and daughter moved to the Sandringham area. It was noted;

Mr & Mrs J R Ferris who were located at the Royal Hotel for a number of years left on Saturday

for Sandringham where they will carry on a similar business.³⁹

Ferris regarded the purchase as an investment but had had a good deal of experience in hotels such as the Royal at Wellington and the Golden Fleece at Scone.

He had also owned land adjoining the hotel and fronting on to Clareville Avenue and Vanston Parade. (see image p89) The press advertisement reproduced below gives the details. We can see that Ferris emphasised the beach and seaside aspect of his holdings.

The name Vanston is particularly interesting. John Ferris and his wife, Rita, had a daughter, Angelina Vanston Ferris, who had been born in 1912 (died 1998). She was known to all as "Lena". Sandringham's local residents will recognise the names of two streets that are immediately adjacent to to the site of the old "Prince of Wales" hotel; Lena Street and Vanston Parade.

Lena Ferris was a brilliant school student who was dux of Osborne Ladies College, Blackheath for three successive years. She later studied optometry and practiced as an optometrist.

John R Ferris, who was only 45 in April 1929, embarked on a family cruise to Hong Kong just one month after the hotel was sold. He had, by that time developed other successful business interests.

Nevertheless during his time of ownership he promoted well and organised a successful sale at the appropriate time.



Billy Longton,
popular publican
and sportsman, was
at the 'Prince of
Wales' in the early
1920s

With his advertising Ferris hoped to attract a country clientele. He relied on his former country connections and their recognition of his name as a known and trusted hotelier. He had also been involved with harness racing and accordingly reached a wide circle of friends.

Ferris lasted only 3 years at Sandringham prior to selling out to Les Ritchie in April, 1929. Ritchie, of course, preceded Mick Moylan.

*

Accordingly, when Mick Moylan took on the Prince of Wales he became the last in a long line of hoteliers to operate under that famous old name.

I am not sure if Mick would have been aware of the fact that in March 1952, just 8

Sandringham Beach Estate

BEING PART OF THE PRINCE OF WALES HOTEL PLEASURE GROUNDS, and practically water frontage, has been Subdivided into 28 SHOP and SEASIDE HOME SITES, fronting Clareville Avenue, and Vanston Parade, and will be offered by

Public Auction, Saturday, 10th March, 1928

Together with PARAGON HALL, fitted all ready for a PICTURE SHOW and licensed to seat 750 people.

ON THE GROUND, AT 3 P.M.

Tram from Kogarah Station, via Ramsgate, Sans Souci, etc., passes along Clareville Avenue, and Sandringham is the Terminus of the line, and within 35 minutes of St. James Station, City, Electric Service to Kogarah.

Torrens Title.

And the Vendor states practically without reserve.

Easy Terms.

Plans and Particulars from—

Peach Bros.,

76 PITT STREET, SYDNEY, and at KOGARAH, ROCKDALE, and BEXLEY.

AND

J. R. FERRIS, Proprietor of Prince of Wales Hotel, and Vendor.

This advertisement from early 1928 gives a nice word picture of the hotel and surrounds at that time. The proprietor of the hotel was John Robertson Ferris (1884-1963) who eventually sold the hotel and grounds to “Lousy” Les Ritchie in 1929.

St George Call, Friday, 24 February, 1928, p5

months before he took over there, the Prince of Wales Hotel was in the sights of the Civill Aviation authorities. The Sydney press announced,

rebuilt at Ramsgate, won world-wide fame as a sportsman's centre in the latter part of the last century. ⁴⁰

Historic Sandringham Hotel at Sandringham, and Scott Park, are to be resumed for constructing the flying-boat base at Sans Souci. One of the oldest hotels in the State, the Sandringham, which is to be

The flying-boat base, of course, was never built at Sans Souci. Nor was the Prince of Wales Hotel ever transferred to Ramsgate.

There were other threats to the area around the old hotel and some of these concerned the weather. Indeed, Mick, it seems, was



John Robertson Ferris promoted the hotel in the Scone area of NSW soon after he took over in July 1926.

The Scone Advocate Tuesday 7 Sep 1926, p1

very lucky to make it into the hotel in the early 1950s.

Sydney press reported in August 1951 that:

One of Sydney's oldest hotels, the Prince of Wales, Sandringham, will soon be demolished. Soil erosion has eaten away the foundations at the rear of the building. ⁴¹

Then during August, 1952, storms again lashed the waterfront at Botany Bay. These went on for several weeks and caused serious erosion.

The Brighton area was badly affected as was Dolls Point and Sandringham. Indeed, 'about 50 feet of waterfront behind the 'Prince of Wales' at Sandringham, has disappeared. Water is lapping within 10 feet of the hotel. Rain at Sans Souci and Sandringham yesterday was so heavy that water surrounded some houses, in some cases up to two feet deep. ⁴²

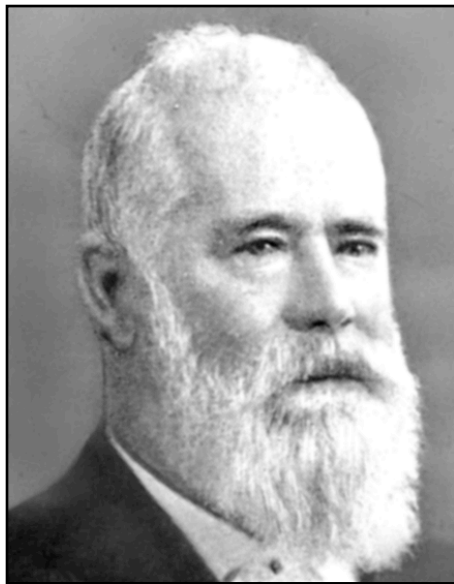
Storms and the consequent erosion of beaches was nothing new to Botany Bay. Many years before, in September 1926, for



A great panorama of Sandringham Beach c 1926 - Alex Pilgrim (white shirt) at right. This wonderful, pristine beach was at Mick Moylan's 'doorstep'.

example, Alderman Baxter reported to Rockdale Council,

There is a great need for a sea-wall from Dolls Point to Sandringham Hotel as owing to sea erosion a



Samuel Cook, planted Norfolk Island Pines along the foreshores of Botany Bay between Brighton and Sans Souci. Cook Park in that area now bears his name.

great part of the land is being washed away. We have an estimate from our Engineer for the construction of this wall at £6,000.

43

The Norfolk Island Pines, some of them 100 feet high and such an outstanding feature of the waterfront from Brighton to Sans Souci, were often threatened. The Council dumped enormous stones around them in a rescue effort.

Those trees had been planted through the efforts of pioneers Samuel Cook (1830-1910) after whom Cook Park is named, and Thomas Saywell who did so much to develop the waterfront area at Brighton. They hoped that the trees would provide a wind break and prevent the inevitable drifting of sand. Norfolk pines are ideal for seaside planting being immune to salt spray and strong winds.

Samuel Cook had arrived in Australia in June 1854, aboard the "Nimroud". He rose to the position of General Manager of the Sydney Morning Herald and was deeply devoted to the preservation of land for public use. His great delight in life was gardening and he made a special study of native trees.



When Aqua Flora park opened in 1933 the “Prince of Wales” hotel nearby, was operated by “Lousy Les” Ritchie. This photograph was taken in October 1933 and shows the delightful ‘rural’ atmosphere that still existed. Nineteen years later Ritchie sold to Michael Eugene “Mick” Moylan. Four years after that takeover “Aqua Flora Park” was closed. The picket fence in evidence here sometimes supplied ‘weapons’ for brawling patrons of this popular watering hole on the banks of famous Botany Bay.

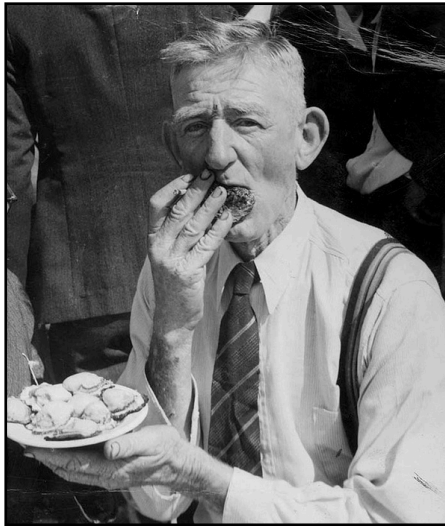
One hundred years after Samuel’s arrival, Mick Moylan and his customers were to benefit from the beauty of, and the protection provided by, some of the Norfolk Pines introduced into waterfront area, much of which bore Samuel Cook’s name.

During March, 1924 it was noted that,

The beautiful seven-mile stretch of beach and foreshore along Botany

Bay in Rockdale was preserved to the public by the foresight of the late Samuel Cook In 1886 he secured the dedication of the land facing the beach as a public park and it was named Cook Park in honour both of Captain Cook, who discovered the beach, and of Mr Samuel Cook. ⁴⁴

*



Fred Selmon, had his birth, in 1869, commemorated by the planting of a Norfolk Island Pine

Fred Selmon's Tree:

The Sandringham pioneer Amos Selmon planted a Norfolk pine directly in front of his Sandringham boatshed in 1869. The planting was made to celebrate the birth of his son, Fred Selmon who was born on 3rd October that year. Some 53 years later a visitor to the hotel pleasure grounds commented on that tree, saying,

It must be good soil at this spot, for the tree has attained a height of over 100 feet with a girth of 14 feet (3 feet from the base) ⁴⁵

The visiting writer understood that the anniversary of the planting was kept up every year. Fred Selmon, an oyster farmer,

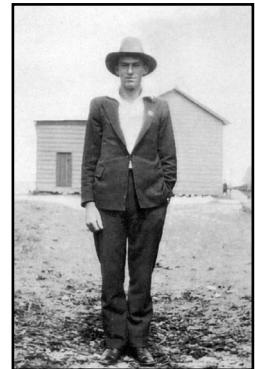
went on to be a champion 16' sailor on the bay and the founding father of the Georges River 16' Sailing club in 1927.

For many years Fred Selmon maintained a private boatshed on Sandringham Beach.

It was from this shed that the George's River Sailing Club originated in 1927. The shed was situated between Pilgrim's boatshed Sandringham and where the Georges River Sailing Club now stands.

Major Malcolm St John Lamb, who owned the Pilgrim boatshed for a very short time during World War One, was an interesting Sandringham character. Born in Armidale in 1873, he married Ethel Ellen Stiff (1885-1954) in 1900. They came to live at 'Coomba', Cook Park, Sandringham and by 1915-1916 he was listed as 'boat proprietor' there. He was actually in business with his father-in-law, James Stiff.

During World War One, Lamb, formerly a teacher at Kogarah school, was in charge of a machine gun section and was wounded by shrapnel in the right arm during the landing at Gallipoli in 1915. He was returned to Australia, at which time he became involved with the boatshed, but returned soon after to the armed services.



Frank Selmon in front of the Selmon's private boatshed - 1930



About 1888 Amos Selmon built a boatshed on the waterfront adjacent to the “Prince of Wales” Hotel at Sandringham. The boatshed was in the family for about 33 years. Selmon's boatshed was eventually sold to James Stiff & Major & Mrs Lamb and shortly thereafter, in 1917, to Alex Pilgrim, who owned it for 45 years. Picnic parties came to the park in front of the boatshed in large wagons pulled by four or five horses. Summer houses could be rented for 2/6 per day. Sometimes there would be as many as three thousand people there on a Sunday. Pilgrims built up the swimming baths at Sandringham with timber cut at Towra Point on the opposite side of the bay. Stormy weather and high seas, at times, washed them away and they needed to be replaced frequently. This shed, the baths and the refreshment rooms with oysters and summer drinks was a significant part of the “Playground of the South”. Another part of this, of course, was the Prince of Wales Hotel which pre-dated the boatshed by some 14 years. Just to the north of this building, Fred Selmon had a private shed where he stored his work and leisure boats. He was amongst the first oyster farmers at Sans Souci and in 1927 was instrumental in founding the Georges River Sailing Club which was affectionately first known as the Selmon Sailing Club.

On 10 February 1916 he was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel and appointed as the Commanding Officer of the 34th Battalion, an appointment he retained until his discharge in 1918.

Clareville Pleasure Grounds:

From c1890 "The Clareville Pleasure Grounds" had stood on the same land that Aqua Flora Park came to occupy in 1933. One of its major attractions for patrons was its concrete cricket wicket. Another was a long dining hall for sit down meals and dancing.

In October 1896 the Clareville Hall was opened to the general public. Sandringham was 'on the map'. The following year steam trams were



Clareville Pleasure Grounds and Hall, stood diagonally opposite the "Prince of Wales Hotel" on the western side of Clareville Avenue. Most famously this area was the site of Albert Royce's 'Aqua Flora Park' from 1933 to 1956 . The claim here is that Clareville is the 'Largest Seaside Pleasure Grounds out of Sydney'

bringing happy tourists to the area. The initial proprietor was Edward Lazarus, a keen fisherman, cricketer and Sandringham resident. He was an accomplished promoter.

His notice in the city press was aimed at a far-reaching clientele. It gave some great details,



Major Malcom Lamb, in 1915-16 owned the 'Pilgrim's boatshed

Clareville Hall, Sandringham: the premier watering Place out of Sydney. The Hall is now open, and can be engaged by Picnic Parties on most reasonable of terms. Every SATURDAY, commencing from the 31st October, an Afternoon DANCE and SOCIAL, from 3 till 10, will be held in the above Hall. Admission by ticket only, to be had at the Clareville Refreshment Rooms. Good music by the Clareville Hall Special Orchestra of four performers. Ballroom Dancing only permitted. A splendid afternoon's outing. Two M.Cs. engaged.

46

In 1928, Rockdale Municipal Council purchased more adjacent land facing Clareville Avenue from Mr. David Bloomfield. This then became part of as Clareville Pleasure Ground. Later, in 1936,

Council bought a further six lots in Waldron Street from a Mr. Henry Devlin.

A sale advertisement from 1911 for Clareville gave a sound indication that the area was absolutely dedicated to 'leisure and pleasure'. However, more was to come in the shape of a marvellous new private zoo which added another layer of attraction to the Sandringham - Sans Souci area.

Aqua Flora Park

Aqua Flora Park was opened to the public in September, 1933. The area that comprised Aqua Flora Park was bounded on the East by Clareville Park, on the West by Waldron Street, on the South by Norwood Street, and on the North by Ida Street. It was approximately 3 acres and was an outstanding site. It was remarkably level, only 150 yards from Sandringham Beach and the steam trams ran along Clareville Avenue providing transport for visitors. After 1937 electric trolley buses serviced the area.

During the period of the 1870s & 1880s 'pleasure grounds' were a popular feature of Sydney life and the southern area including Sans Souci, Sandringham, Doll's Point, Blakehurst, Parkesvale on the George's River and the Royal National Park (established 1879) all played their part in contributing to that notion.

Accordingly in some sense, Royce, who had commenced work on his 'Aqua Flora Park' in March 1931, was following a strongly established tradition in the area. At that



Young visitors to Aqua Flora Park at Sandringham were delighted with the animal life there.

time Les Ritchie was the publican at the "Prince of Wales" and one imagines that Les would have been delighted with the new and attractive venture 'across the road'.

During its establishment years Albert Royce laboured tirelessly, building much of the park himself. His efforts were supported by the local press which used the nearby hotel as a landmark,

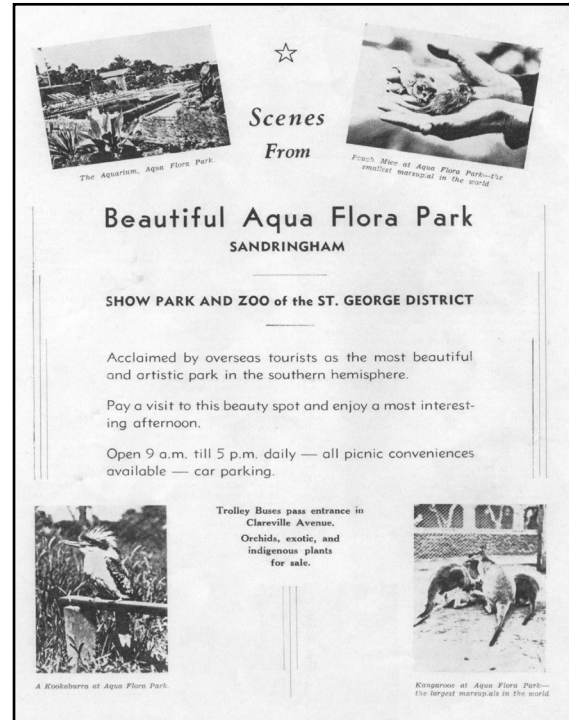
Sandringham, on George's River, has always drawn big holiday crowds, to its beaches, but this year a new attraction in the form of an Australian animal park, with kangaroos, wallabies, emus, numerous birds, lizards, gold-fish, flowers, and dozens of other features, which will delight the children; is to be viewed. Aqua Flora Park, as it is called, is right



Albert Royce (1883-1953) was a close neighbour of Les Ritchie at the Prince of Wales hotel between 1931 and 1953. By 1930 Royce was living at Cook Park, Sandringham when he conceived the idea for a private zoo and garden. He commenced work on 29th March 1931 to realise his dream. Aqua Flora Park was opened to the public in September 1933. Royce made a great contribution to the idea that Sandringham with its beaches, waterways and rustic nature was the "Playground of the South"

opposite the Prince of Wales Hotel. 47

Royce's park, with its orchids in their thousands, huge numbers of goldfish, his private zoo and a wonderful cafe serving



Produced in 1937, this advertisement for "Aqua Flora Park" brought more visitors to the Sandringham area. Many of them took the short stroll to the "Prince of Wales" hotel on the opposite side of Clareville Avenue

legendary scones, jam and cream, was unique and an outstanding attraction for the Sandringham area. His park had something for everybody and in the 1940s Sydney coach companies ran tour buses to his venue.

During 1942 Royce had plans to enhance his park by fencing parts of Clareville Park so that he might lock the premises at night. He

wanted to, 'establish gardens and plantations of trees and enclosures for animals in the park.' ⁴⁸

Importantly, he also wanted to make a more imposing entrance, facing on to the main thoroughfare, Clareville Avenue. The entrance remained unchanged since the early days. The park had once been described as being, 'tucked away behind an unpretentious fence at Sandringham'. ⁴⁹

In August 1942, Rockdale Council paid some serious attention to the entire area. It was revealed that they wanted to 'acquire vacant land facing the waterfront near the 'Prince of Wales Hotel' so that a public park might be developed. This area was formerly known as 'Sandringham Pleasure Grounds'. Council considered Royce's submission in tandem with their own, more extensive, plans for the area.

Alderman Motterhead, in supporting Royce's submission for the Aqua Flora Park extensions,

stressed the benefits to residents and visitors of this and other beauty spots at Sandringham, Ramsgate, Sans Souci and Brighton, which were becoming even more popular owing to restrictions on motor cars and other forms of travel. ⁵⁰

Motterhead's support then, clearly endorsed the fact that the entire area known as Sandringham deserved special consideration as a whole.

Central to that concept was the continued presence of the 'Prince of Wales' hotel

where, in 1952, Mick Moylan was to take up the reins.

After Albert Royce passed away in 1953, his wife, Winifred, continued to operate 'Aqua Flora Park' which was eventually closed in 1956.

Boxers Train at Prince of Wales Hotel:

As peaceful as this beach vista looked, there was a time when this and the nearby "Prince of Wales Hotel" was a training venue for some of the best boxers in the world.

One particular example of this occurred between 1914 and 1917 when the American boxer, the 'Oshkosh Terror', Eddie McGoorty (1889-1829) made Sandringham his training headquarters while in Sydney.

During his first visits the hotel was owned by Wally Watson. Charles Lincke, a popular German restaurateur, was the Licensee.

McGoorty's first fight against Les Darcy ended in a TKO decision to Darcy in round 15. The bout was at Sydney's Ruschcutters Bay Stadium on 31 July 1915.

While McGoorty, who had fought in Australia previously, trained for this fight one city reporter commented,

Eddie McGoorty is located once again at the Prince of Wales, Sandringham where he had quarters on his first visit to Australia. It is a charming spot, and evidently the American prefers to be 'far from the madding crowd' when work is on the program. ⁵¹

The pair met again on 27 December, 1915 and this time Darcy battered McGoorty into submission in 8 rounds.

For the majority of McGoorty's fights he trained at Sandringham and boxing writers here recorded some of the details. It was reported,

Eddie McGoorty is training hard and doing well at Lincke's Prince of Wales Hotel, Sandringham, where he has capital quarters and all facilities for a thorough preparation. The American is lucky to get into that well-kept house so picturesquely situated, and he is also fortunate in having Fritz Holland for a sparring partner. Fritz is killing two birds with one stone by assisting the strong claimant named for the world's middleweight championship and fitting himself for his own coming engagements. The pair boxed three good hard rounds on Wednesday afternoon and acquitted themselves so well that a little knot of critical spectators applauded the display frequently. ⁵²

Another reporter, interested in McGoorty had visited his camp at Sandringham noting that,



Eddie McGoorty (right) pictured with Les Darcy whom he fought at Sydney Stadium in July and December of 1915.

Eddie McGoorty is located at Lincke's Hotel, Sandringham, a picturesque spot on the banks of Botany Bay where he is preparing for his contest with Jimmy Clabby. ⁵³

Then, several years later, a Sydney journalist reflected on the times when the world-rated McGoorty was living and training at the 'Prince of Wales Hotel'. It was not as if the American fighter was unfit because,

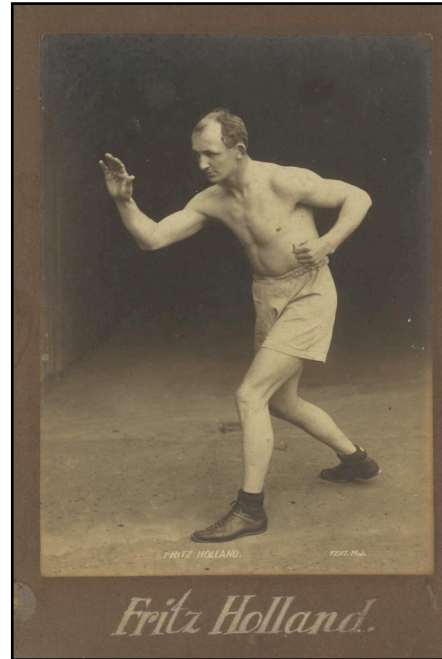
When McGoorty was at the zenith of his fighting fame, he rose every morning with the dawn and ran ten miles along roads that wind through the picturesque surroundings of Brighton-le-Sands, Sandringham and Sans Souci. The rest of the morning was spent in the gymnasium and the afternoon saw him again jogging lightly along the roads. ⁵⁴

Another American boxer who trained at Sandringham was Fritz Holland. He fought Les Darcy four times and beat the young Maitland boxer twice. Holland's training camp was an attraction for boxing fans in Sydney.

Several motor car parties and others have been visitors at Sandringham during the past few days, attracted by the fact that Fritz Holland, the American middleweight, is preparing at Lincke's Prince of Wales Hotel for his match with Les Darcy, the Maitland boy, which takes place at the Stadium next Saturday night. ⁵⁵

And yet another reference to Holland at Sandringham had this to say,

Big Party Watches Holland.



Fritz Holland, trained for his fight with Les Darcy at the Prince of Wales Hotel in July 1914

A big party watched Fritz Holland at work at Lincke's Sandringham Hotel yesterday afternoon. Among the spectators were several clergymen and a large number of ladies. Fritz shaped capitally, and finished a good hour's attuning in fine style. Interest in the Holland-Darcy match, which takes place next Saturday night, is great. ⁵⁶

The St George Regiment:

Many of the St George Regiment's activities took place at the Drill Hall, Arncliffe and they also undertook serious military training such as that reported in March 1932,

The St. George Regiment (45th Batt.) which is described as the crack regiment of the 2nd Brigade, C.M.F., is bivouaced on a fine site at Glenfield, overlooking the George's River. The men, who are volunteers, are undergoing four days' intensive training, including such subjects as battle practice, trench construction, and demonstrations with machine guns, Lewis guns, and rifles. ⁵⁷



Even the military endorsed the "Prince of Wales Hotel" - this great photograph shows the historic St. George Regiment posing in front of the hotel in December 1932 on the occasion of their regimental picnic in the surrounding grounds.

Photograph Courtesy Bayside Library, Rockdale

The Paragon Hall - Sandringham:

When J E Ferris offered his Sandringham Beach Estate for auction in March 1928 he included, as a separate parcel, the 'Paragon Hall' which stood in the hotel grounds but was a separate building (see map p64)

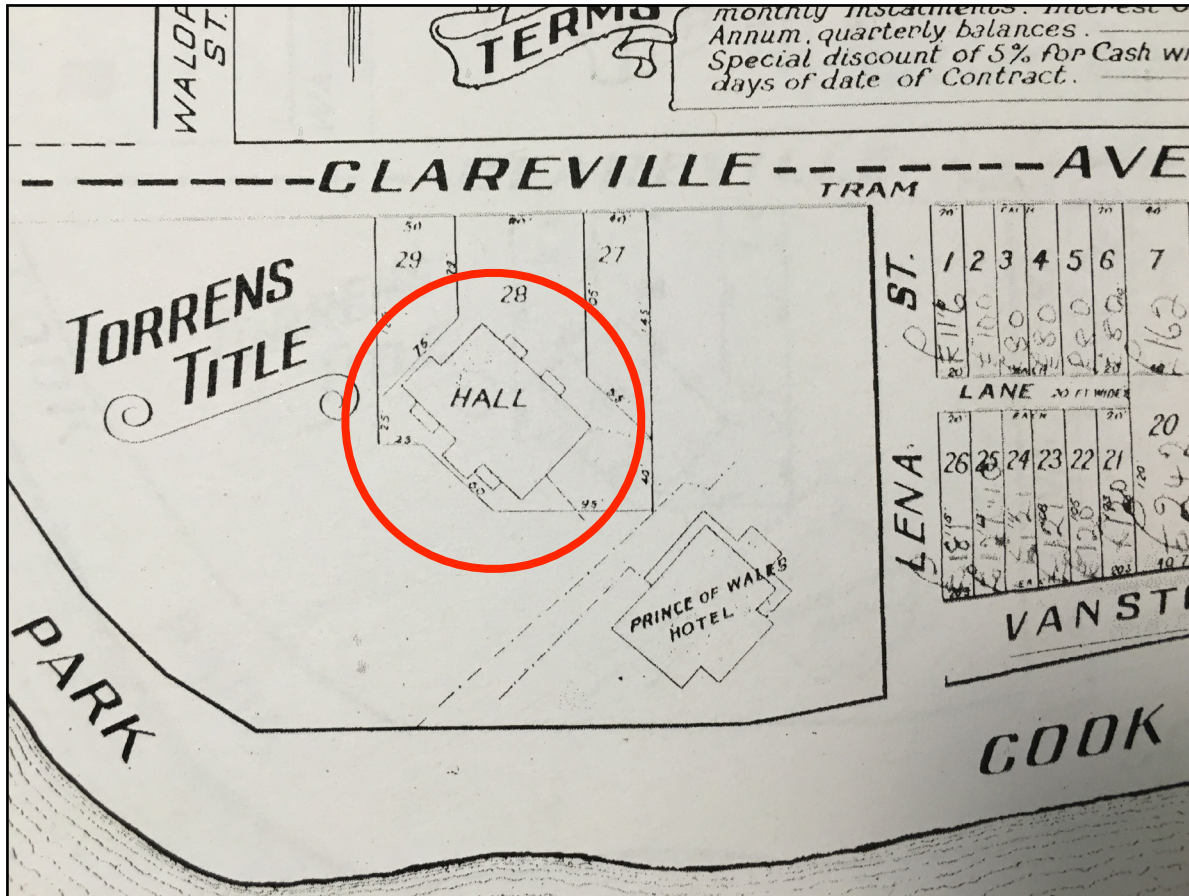
The hall was originally built by publican and owner Walter Halifax Watson in 1904. German hotelier Charles W Lincke was Licensee and manager at this time and it was Lincke who suggested that the hall should be built as a double bowling alley. After the opening in November 1904, It was 'generally admitted to be', said the Sunday Times, *'the finest bowling hall in Australia'*.

The hall was 120 ft long by 30 feet wide and the flooring was laid on 60 brick piers. ⁵⁸

The bowling alley was redeveloped in 1923 when Mr Colin Campbell was Licensee and thereafter this larger, new building was used for many purposes such as socials, meetings charity functions and dances in the decades after 1923.

It has also been alleged that occasional games of 'two-up' took place there.

Les Ritchie ran popular, public dances there in 1931 and 1932. In earlier years variety evenings were held.



Paragon Hall Sale - 1928. This hall, a substantial part of the picnic grounds surrounding the 'Prince of Wales Hotel' since its initial form in 1904, was described as a '*substantially built pavilion which can be used as a concert or dance hall, picture show etc.*' The hall was offered for sale in 1928 by J E Ferris but a buyer was not found.

The history of entertainment at Sandringham goes way back and most publicans there made use of the local newspaper the "St George Call". A typical

and interesting entry for the 'Paragon Pavilion' appeared in October, 1917.

VARIETY ENTERTAINMENT - 1917

A variety entertainment of magic, mirth and mystery, will be held at the Paragon Pavilion, Prince of Wales Hotel, Sandringham. The programme includes the famous H. Benson Lees, the Pioneer Australian Wizard. The evening will wind up with a dance. Admission will be 1/- and 6d. A good orchestra will be present. About 600 people were present at the hall last Saturday evening, who, thoroughly enjoyed themselves, and Mr. Longton expresses the opinion that the above entertainment will be just as successful. ⁵⁹

Henry George Benson-Lees (1842-1919), lived locally at Banksia and, in his time was one of the best-known magicians in Australia. He was one of the founders of the Australian Magician's Club. Henry died at Banksia in June 1919, aged 77.

FREE—For all Children

To-day (Saturday) Jan. 5

Merry-go-round, Helter Skelter, Razzle Dazzle, Punch and Judy, High wire walker, Swings etc., at
THE PLEASURE GROUNDS

Prince of Wales Hotel Sandringham

This is the only show in this 'ere Pair,
We've made a dozen fortunes I declare;
The first part of the programme, is reckoned to be the part preceded by the second.
The Second part is more wonderful still.
His name is LONGTON, we call him "Bill."
We have appointing Professor Tom Langley, the high wire walker, late of White City.
And the charge is nil.

The night's programme at the Paragon Hall

Will include such Artists as

**Professor Benson Lees, Magician,
Tod Callaway, Tivoli Comedian,
Young Tom Benson Lee, Conjuror,
Madame Repraha, Comedienne.**

Prices 9d. and 6d. Grand Dance to follow

Tel. Kog. 4. WILLIAM LONGTON, Proprietor.

A Seaside Home Away from Home
"Beside the Seaside, Beyond the Sea."

The Prince of Wales Hotel
and Pleasure Grounds Sandringham.

Magnificent Picnic and Recreation Grounds free to Guests
Luncheons and Dinners Catered for, Large or Small Private
Parties, Spacious Dancing Pavilion, Orchestra available by
arrangement. Motor Cars, Launches, and Boats for Hire.
Fishing Parties arranged.
FIRST CLASS ACCOMMODATION AND SERVICE
CUISINE UNEQUALLED
OYSTERS AND GIPSY TEAS A SPECIALITY.
Beautiful Grounds, Swings and other Novelties for the Children
Our Motto: Civility, Courtesy, and Attention.
Under British Management : Everything True To Label.
WILLIAM LONGTON, Proprietor
Tel. Kog. 4. (Late of Enmore)

For many years the "Prince of Wales" was a centre of entertainment for local kids. This advertisement from September 1917, when Billy Longton was publican, says it all.
St George Call 29 September 1919 p5



Sandringham Beach - 1929 - looking across to the newly-completed Georges River Sailing Club

Photograph by Jim Goodwin Snr., courtesy of Jim Goodwin Jnr

4. The Question of SP Betting

There is a mountain of evidence to show that Mick Moylan's hotel at Sandringham attracted the interest of nearby illegal, off course, starting price bookmakers during his time with both the 'old' and 'new' hotels.

SP bookmaking, as it was termed, was not peculiar to Mick's. Indeed with the advance of radio and telephone here in the 1930s, such betting activity had flourished throughout Australia.

By the early 1950s when Mick began at Sandringham, SP, or illegal off-course betting, was well established in the district. Punters, on a Saturday afternoon, were able to enjoy a few bets and a few beers, in what were very agreeable circumstances. It mattered little to them that they could not get a fixed price on their bet until after the race was run. The bookie would only be told, via a network, or runner, the average odds of each horse from a range of on course bookies, only after the event was completed.

Mick Moylan, it seems, did not encourage SP bookmaking on his premises, but dwellings in Lena St., Vanston Parade and Clareville Avenue, Sandringham, are all reputed to have been sites of betting activities during his 14 years at the hotel. During that time illegal betting flourished in New South Wales.

It was anticipated that such activity would cease when the State Government introduced their own system of off-course betting - the TAB - in 1964. Their move followed a Royal Commission headed by Justice Edward

Kinsela who reported that SP bookmakers had an annual turnover of \$550 million, an amount that some thought was a 'modest' assessment. Did this figure include the many many operators, large and small? Some operated in suburban streets arranging bets for local residents nearby.

One Sandringham operation, in laneway premises opposite Mick's hotel, however, has been described by a local as 'very comfortable indeed' and 'better than any TAB'. Further, these premises were occasionally raided by local police, but incredibly, the operators mostly seemed to be well prepared for the 'raid' when it happened.

Any examination of the local press of the times will reveal that virtually every week there were reports of fines being issued for SP betting in our suburbs. For example in January 1965, it was reported that 5 men had taken bets, ranging from 2/- to 2 pounds at premises in Forest Rd Bexley. Combined they were fined 345 pounds at Kogarah Court. ⁶⁰

More to the point here, in March 1965, a plasterer from Pennant Hills was fined 60 pounds, at the Kogarah Court for taking bets in Lena St., Sans Souci on 6 March. He held 22 bets that ranged from 10/- to 3 pounds. ⁶¹

The two examples quoted above show that although the TAB had been launched in early December of the previous year, for some SP bookies, including those adjacent to Mick's hotel, it remained 'business as usual'.

5. Demolition of the famous Prince of Wales Hotel - 1963

As early as August 1960, it was announced that, 'the most unusual hotel in the St George district - The Prince of Wales - will be pulled down after Christmas and

replaced by a £170,000 building'.⁶² In early March, 1962, however, the old hotel was still standing despite the fact that parts of the brand new Sans Souci Hotel had been built on the land that was immediately adjacent.

Mick had declared in 1960 his hope that,

HISTORIC HOTELS TO GO

1872 inn will be replaced

The most unusual hotel in St. George District — the Prince of Wales, Sandringham — will be pulled down after Christmas and replaced by a new £170,000 building.

The original Prince of Wales was opened in 1856, when two old cottages were acquired as premises.

Mr. Mick Moylan, present licensee of the hotel, said he believed a Mr. Rust was the original "mine host."

In 1872 the cottages were replaced by the present two-storey building.

Mr. Moylan said he hoped the new hotel would attract visitors from all over the world.

"I think the surroundings for the new hotel are the most beautiful in the district," he said.



As early as August, 1960 there was a realisation that the old hotel would be demolished. Sections of the building were still standing however in February 1963. Mick Moylan did have a sense of history in regards to the building and all the publicans that had gone before him. He reasoned though that 'one must move with the times.' He spoke of making 'modern' facilities to suit the 'modern' surroundings in a time when the world valued 'modernism' more than tradition.

St George & Sutherland Shire Leader 17 August, 1960, p5



It was a sad time for many when “Mick’s Pub” was demolished, beginning in January 1963, to make way for part of his dream hotel. With it went ninety years of history on the site but by then the hotel and the beach and the surrounding area was known as “Mick’s”.

Photograph: courtesy of Rea Moylan Hewitt

the new hotel would will attract visitors from all over the world. I think the surroundings for the new hotel are the most beautiful in Australia. However, I do believe that a facelift is necessary to keep pace with the changing times. ⁶³

Then, interestingly, Mick made a surprising nod in the direction of the history of the

place, showing that he was conversant with some of those, at least, who had gone before him. After acknowledging Rust, Lincke, Watson, Campbell, Magull and Les Ritchie, Mick pointed out,

When the steam trams ran through Sandringham there were very few cars and the hotel was in keeping with the rest of the scenery. Now I



The final chapter for the 'Prince of Wales Hotel' (1871- 1963) The hotel had stood on this site since 1872 and had passed through a succession of owners and licensees in that time. When Mick Moylan made a significant and difficult decision to upgrade the site following bureaucratic insistence in 1961, the old building simply had to go. The local builder, R J Miller was employed for the demolition and soon just the bare bones of the hotel were exposed and finally carted away. The ubiquitous Norfolk pines continued to stand proud and the stacks of beer kegs in the foreground had their own story to tell. This photograph January, 1963.

Photograph: courtesy of Rea Moylan Hewitt



History and modernity stand shoulder to shoulder. Here new building stands in front of the old and slightly towards the south-west. The architectural styles and what they represented could not have been further apart. However, for all of his understanding, Mick was a businessman and accordingly he ploughed ahead.

plan to do the same thing again, and provide Sandringham with a hotel that is ultra-modern even in today's modern surroundings. ⁶⁴

Mick also discussed the fact that 'this was an 1872 building', acknowledging that he fully understood the ramifications of demolishing this architectural and social icon of the district. So much history was about to turn to dust at his direction.

That history involved many personal memories like those discussed by Jim Douglas, fisherman and former boxer who had, 'been a patron of the hotel for more than 40 years'. ⁶⁵

Jim recalled the former, famous publican, Bill Longton, saying,

When Bill Longton had the hotel there was a big lake in front of it. Bill used to swim his ducks there. When duck was on the menu, Bill would lean out of a top-storey window, shoot one or two with his rifle and send his dogs down to fetch them in.

Mick Moylan had been convinced early in the piece that the 'old' hotel had to go. We have seen that soon after he arrived

at Sandringham he was plotting to move the licence and build at Ramsgate, as was Les Ritchie before him.

Regardless of that inevitable move it seems that Mick had some misgivings when the time came for action and in July 1960. In an interview at that time he revealed that,

I am like lots of others around here and I've become attached to the old place. ⁶⁶

In that same interview, Moylan said, 'some of the best entertainment artists in Australia would appear at the new hotel.'

*



This wonderful shot from 1963 shows again the great contrast between the new and the old at Sandringham. The grand old hotel stands proudly in the background while the new building encroaches on the hallowed grounds.

Photograph : Bayside Library, Local Studies, Rockdale

Then in March 1962 there were moves to save and preserve the grand old, historic lady of Sandringham, but not on the existing site and not as a hotel. If the old building had a future it may have been as a museum.

Surprisingly this glimmer of support came from the 'enemy'. Well, let's say the 'opposition'. An Alderman from Rockdale

Council - that organisation which had caused Mick so much anguish - put forward a 'rescue' plan for the 'Prince of Wales' building.

Spearheaded by Alderman Ron Rathbone, Secretary of the Rockdale Historical Society, the plan was to delay demolition of the hotel until a suggestion by that Society was considered. The Rockdale Council intervened

on behalf of the Society and demolition was halted.

Alderman Rathbone was, of course, wearing two hats in this matter. He was instrumental in forming the Historical Society in 1961. Initially it was known as the Rockdale Historical Society. The name was changed to the 'St George Historical Society' at the first Annual General Meeting on 17 August 1962.

Pursuing his passion for local history, Rathbone had told his fellow Aldermen that his Society wanted to move the old building elsewhere and utilise it as a museum. It was thought that a collection of historical material could be housed in the proposed museum.

It must be said here that The St George Historical Society pursued other properties for their museum project. These included the former 'Rosevale Villa', at Banksia, which proved far too expensive and the one they finally settled on - 'Lydham Hall' at Bexley.

Society members, who believed that the building was a fine example of late 19th century architecture, also suggested that a branch library for the Ramsgate - Sans Souci area could be established in the new museum. ⁶⁷

Rathbone time and again urged the Council to take steps to preserve the building. Furthermore, Mick Moylan had generously offered the Society the building materials free of charge. Sadly, however, the overtures to Rockdale Council failed. A brief piece in the local paper announced,

Rockdale Council will take no further action to preserve the old Prince of

Wales Hotel at Sandringham. The Council decided a proposal by the Rockdale Historical Society to re-erect the hotel on another site was too costly. However the Council wants the historical society to prepare a list of old and historic buildings which the society feels should be preserved. ⁶⁸

In May 1962, Ron Rathbone, pursuing this proposed idea, suggested that a Council site be set aside for the transfer of historical building threatened by demolition. This did not eventuate and even if it had it would have been too late to save the Prince of Wales at Sandringham. What a wonderful and entirely appropriate museum for our local history this would have been.

Many years later Rathbone recalled,

After a brief attempt by the newly formed St George Historical Society to have it preserved as a local history museum, the old hotel was demolished and a modern structure erected in its place. ⁶⁹

Its demolition, however, afforded the energetic Mick the opportunity to propose a huge, 700 person beer garden on the ancient site.