

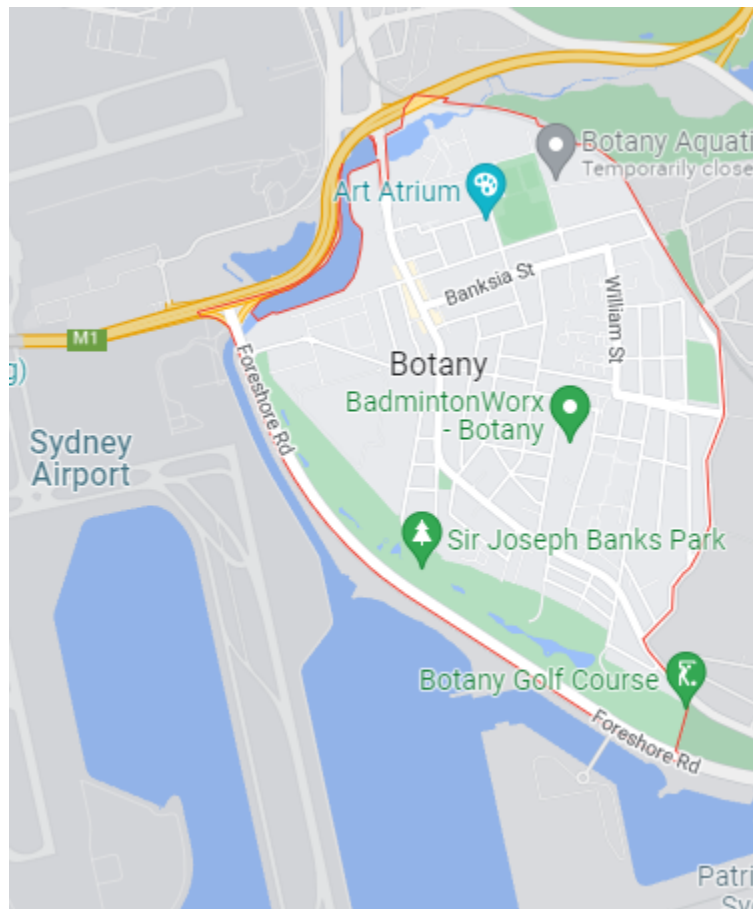
Sebastian Gatt

# 2022 RON RATHBONE LOCAL HISTORY COMPETITION

## Sir Joseph's Banks Park

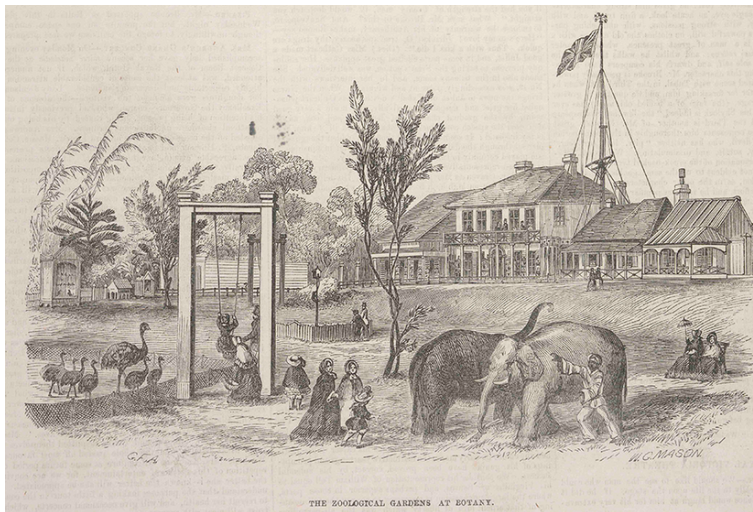
---

For the Ron Rathbone 2022 local history competition, I have chosen to write about Sir Joseph's Banks Park in Botany. It is also known as Sir Joseph Banks Pleasure Gardens. What I found most interesting about this site is that it was the place where the first collection of animals was together and history has said to call it one of Australia's first zoos.



---

It was in the 1950s that the animals were brought to Sir Joseph's Banks Pleasure Gardens from Hyde Park Zoo. Some of the animals included an elephant, a Bengal tiger, a gorilla, male and female Himalayan bears, black Bengal sheep and a pair of Manilla red deers. Next to the pleasure grounds was the Sir Joseph Banks Hotel and this joint site became popular for visitors because it soon became the place where families met to have large picnics, and people had public functions and events.



My family and I only discovered the park during the 2021 COVID-19 pandemic during lockdown when we were only allowed to travel within the 5kms from our home. We were looking at different places to explore on weekends and new bike trails.

While exploring the park I saw that people could use it for sporting events, weddings, picnicking, ball games, bike riding, BBQs and children playing in the playground.





The Council have made a number of large sculptures of elephants and life-like concrete animals around the playground which look like those you would have seen in the 1950s.



Sir Joseph Banks Park is unique and its important for many reasons including:

1. The bushland provides the community with a natural environment experience
2. The Pleasure Garden provides a place for formal occasions such as weddings
3. Provides habitat for wildlife
4. The historical significance

I hope that the community will look after this significant nature reserve to keep it an incredible place to be for many more families like mine to visit and enjoy.