

Sydney's maritime pubs in the age of sail



John W. Ross

Cover photograph:

Whalers' Arms Hotel, Gloucester Street and Cumberland Place, 1901
(City of Sydney Archives)



The *Cutty Sark* in full sail (Painting by the maritime artist John Stobart)

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Foreword

Australia was settled by Europeans during the great age of eleven sailing ships. This era was largely enabled by technological advances in navigation: magnetic compasses, sextants to determine latitude and chronometers to determine longitude. With accurate directional and positional information, navigators could confidently travel vast distances in large ships, often following favourable trade winds, transporting the produce of empires back to Europe and carrying emigrants to the expanding economies of these empires.

Thus, Sydney was settled in 1788 by a flotilla of ships containing convicts and the people looking after them, followed in the next decades by dozens more ships and thousands of convicts and free settlers. For a long time, Sydneysiders remained dependent on ships, both to import supplies and to export the products of their labour, as well as to transport them between the settlements along the waterways of the growing colony.

Whaling and sealing were the first profitable industries in the Australian colonies, and during their heyday a wide range of maritime professions sprang up on the foreshores of Sydney Harbour: shipwrights, ropemakers, blacksmiths, carpenters, coopers, chandlers and others essential to the building, maintenance and fitting out of ships of all sizes, from skiffs and small whale boats to the largest clippers.

By the middle of the nineteenth century, steam power was beginning to challenge sail and iron-hulled ships were competing with wooden vessels for dominance of the seas. Eventually, greater speed and the ability to operate efficiently in all weather conditions gave steamships an unbeatable advantage. Very soon, a wide range of maritime professions were made obsolete, as steamships at the end of the nineteenth century contained hardly any wood, no masts or sails, and very little rope. In their place arose the new professions of coal trimmers, stokers and maritime engineers.

One notable and problematic feature of early Sydney was the proliferation of pubs, some of them licensed but others selling home-made alcohol from unlicensed premises. Formal publican's licences were issued from 1830, which heralded the decade of peak alcohol consumption (and the rise of the temperance movement), prompting the colonial government to cancel dozens of pub licences by the end of the decade.

An enterprising publican who watched the workers coming out of the workshops, the shipbuilding yards and off the wharves after work each day would have seen potential customers who needed to be attracted to their pub. A popular way of doing this was to name the pub after the main target market for its wares. In time there were dozens of pubs named after most of the maritime trades, the shipping companies, the ferry services, and even the nearby wharves. On the other hand, no pubs were found that commemorated the steamship trades, possibly because they were much less visible on shore than those from the age of sail.

Research into this topic showed that many of the publicans running the harbourside pubs were not entirely opportunistic but were closely involved in the maritime life of Sydney. Among them were former (or current) shipwrights, watermen, lightermen, ropemakers, rowers, whalers and other professions. This survey of over forty pubs traverses the highs and lows of the economic life of

colonial Sydney: the economic boost from whaling as the first successful industry, the economic downturns of the 1840s, 1890s and 1930s, the gold rush of the 1850s, the reconstruction of The Rocks after the bubonic plague outbreak in 1900, the wool boom, and the finally the efforts by temperance groups and governments to manage the excessive number of pubs.

Possibly the best illustration of the significance of maritime pubs in early Sydney is that in the 1830s there were five pubs named the Shipwrights' Arms in Millers Point alone.

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Navigating the world in ships

The Age of Sail

The Age of Sail is the period in European history from the mid-fifteenth or sixteenth century¹ to the mid-nineteenth century, culminating in the dominance of sailing ships in global trade and warfare. Portuguese explorers took the lead in long-distance ocean navigation², followed by the Spanish, British and French. From the beginning of the sixteenth century, they opened a network of ocean routes covering the Atlantic, Indian and western Pacific oceans, from the North Atlantic to South America, Japan and Southeast Asia.

The Age of Sail was largely enabled by technological advances in navigation. Magnetic compasses to determine direction at sea were first recorded in Chinese texts from the twelfth century and were steadily improved from this time³. Sextants were in use from the 1700s to estimate latitude by measuring the angle between the sun at noon (or Polaris at night in the Northern Hemisphere) and the horizon.

From the sixteenth century, a ship's speed was measured by throwing overboard a weighted wooden board attached to a knotted rope. The board was designed to sit vertically in the water to resist movement, and sailors counted how many knots passed through their fingers in a set time, typically thirty seconds, as measured by a sandglass. The number of knots counted determined the ship's speed in nautical miles per hour. All ships, including the *Cutty Sark*, used this method until more advanced methods were introduced in the twentieth century⁴.



Figure 1 Navigation aids (Almas Hafeez)

However, the estimate of a ship's longitude remained a challenge for a long time because it required accurate timekeeping at sea. The pendulum clock, patented by Christiaan Huygens in 1657⁵ was the most accurate timepiece to date, at least on land. At sea, a pendulum clock didn't work well when rocking and rolling in a big swell.

The chronometers developed by the English clockmaker John Harrison in the early 1700s finally solved the problem of reliable timekeeping at sea. Longitude could then be estimated with some accuracy by the difference between Greenwich Mean Time on the chronometer and noon at the

ship's current location. The period between the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when sailing ships reached their peak in size and complexity (exemplified by clippers and windjammers) is sometimes called the Golden Age of Sail⁶.

The decline in the Age of Sail commenced slowly when the first steamships were built in the early nineteenth century⁷. As the century wore on, more and more steam-powered ships came to challenge the sailing ships for freight, passenger and military purposes. The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 was a further blow for sail, because the canal was more practical for steamships, and allowed a much shorter Europe-Asia sea route.

Sailing ships continued to be economical for bulk cargo into the 1920s and 1930s, although steamships soon pushed them out of those trades as well. Sailing ships did not require fuel or complex engines for propulsion and so did not need sophisticated support bases on land. But steamships had a crucial speed advantage and were rarely hindered by adverse winds, freeing them from the necessity of following trade winds. As a result, cargo could reach a foreign port in a fraction of the time it took sailing ships, which gradually disappeared from commercial trade.

Occupations in the Age of Sail

The occupations of the crew on board sailing ships included cook, surgeon, master gunner, boatswain (in charge of the sails), carpenter and quartermaster (responsible for navigation on board). Other crew members would carry out all duties such as keeping watch, handling sails and cleaning decks⁸.

Until the development of complex non-maritime technologies during the Industrial Revolution, a ship was often the most advanced structure that the society building it could produce⁹. The construction, repair and maintenance of such a complex entity required the services of a wide range of skilled tradesmen. Some of these were on board the ships, while others were on shore in the shipbuilding yards or the slipways where vessels were repaired. The most prominent of these were:

- Shipwrights (who built and repaired ships).
- Ship's carpenters.
- Ropemakers.
- Sailmakers.
- Riggers.
- Ship chandlers (who supplied vessels with their many requirements).
- Mast makers.
- Coopers.
- Metal workers.
- Specialist instrument makers (who made the sextants, compasses and chronometers that kept the ships on course)¹⁰.

The age of steam

The first steamboat arrived in Sydney in March 1831. Known as the *Sophia Jane*, the vessel sailed a regular route between Sydney and Newcastle carrying a variety of goods and around eighty passengers. It was a dual-powered vessel which could harness both steam and wind to hasten her route, ensuring efficiency in all conditions. The second ship, the *William the Fourth*, arrived in

Australia as a sailing ship before being retrofitted with an engine and paddles to provide steam power.

These ships, and many more like them, primarily ran mail, goods and people between various locations in colonial Australia. Then with technological advancements, the steam engine was adapted to ocean-going vessels. The practicality and speed of such ships expanded the world of transportation by enabling people to easily traverse the globe more quickly and cheaply.

In the age of sail, travelling to Australia was a long and arduous journey of four to six months, even without unfavourable winds and perilous weather. While a clipper, a ship designed for speed, could complete the journey in about half the time it took a regular ship, it still relied on favourable winds, or any winds at all.

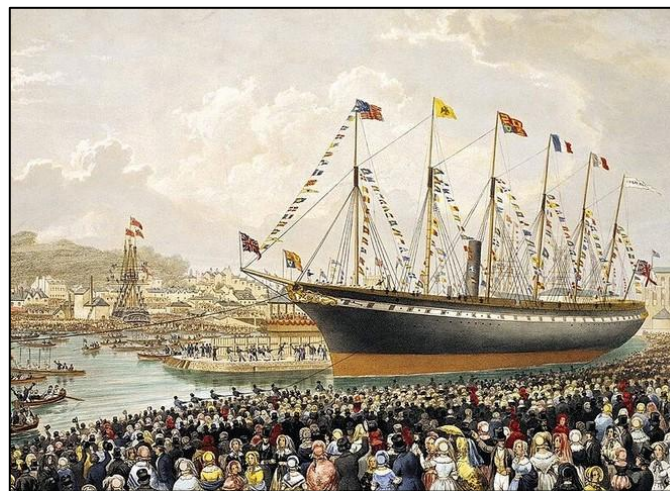


Figure 2 *SS Great Britain* 1843 (Thomas Ashbrton Picken)

The first steamship in Australia, the *SS Great Britain*, arrived in 1852, although wind power would continue to dominate the international travel industry until the 1870s¹¹. Like most early steamships, she also carried sail in case the engines failed at sea and for more speed. Designed by Isambard Brunel, it was the first steamship powered by a propeller. The *Great Britain* carried 15,000 passengers to Australia over the next twenty years, including the first English cricket team to tour Australia (in 1861) and the author Anthony Trollope (in 1871)¹².

New types of steam engines and improvements in steamships emerged in the 1860s, and the profitability of steam power accelerated in 1869 with the opening of the Suez Canal, which provided steamships in particular with a shorter route to Australia¹³.

In time, steam-powered ships replaced sailing ships, but the transition from sail to steam was a long one, extending over fifty years. Until the twentieth century, sailing ships could be seen moored alongside steamships in Australian ports¹⁴.

Occupations in the age of steam

When engines were first installed on ships two centuries ago, the ship owners had little appreciation of the impact the new technology would have on the manning of ships. Iron-hulled steamships had little timber, no mast or sails, no rigging and far fewer ropes. A new era of skills appeared on board ships which at a stroke rivalled and then outclassed such longstanding shipboard crafts as

seamanship, sailmaking, cooperage, blacksmithing, shipwrighting and even to some extent navigation¹⁵. The trades that emerged were coal trimmers, stokers (or firemen) and marine engineers.

A coal trimmer ensured that the coal on a steamship was evenly distributed within the ship so that it remained trim (so that it did not list to starboard or port) throughout the voyage. It involved constantly shoveling the coal to keep it evenly distributed within the coal bunkers and ensuring a consistent delivery of fuel to the stokers or firemen working the ship's boilers. It was a difficult job in dark and dangerous conditions.

A stoker or fireman tended the fire for the running of a boiler to power the steam engine on the ship. The job required physical strength and endurance, and stokers often worked in hot, cramped and dark conditions to maintain the necessary temperature for steam production. These workers have been called the unsung heroes of the industrial age, ensuring the engines of progress ran smoothly¹⁶.

A marine engineer had to keep the ship's engines going and repair them if they failed during a voyage. He also had to be able to estimate with some accuracy the quantity of coal needed for a journey. Without sails, steamships were completely dependent on their engines, and the engineers had to improvise repairs with whatever materials were available. Over the years, crude propellers have been fashioned, fractured shafts repaired, pistons replaced and bearings repaired¹⁷.



Figure 3 Stoker at work (Suddeutsche Zeitung)

By the middle of the nineteenth century, ships' engineers were licensed in the same way that ships' mates and masters had been licensed a generation earlier. By 1900, steamship engine rooms occupied by engineers, firemen and trimmers on ordinary merchant ships matched in numbers the sailing ship decks occupied by master, mates and seamen, and on powerful ocean liners greatly exceeded them¹⁸.

Research into the Sydney pubs that celebrated the maritime trades did not reveal any pubs that commemorated occupations from the age of steam. Possibly this was because these trades were only practised at sea, so did not have a presence on shore to raise their profile to the level of naming any watering holes after them. Ironically, the workers in steamship engine rooms must have been the thirstiest of all, due to the intense heat of their working environment.

European settlement of Australia

Convict transportation

Confronted by the closure of North America as a destination of Britain's convicts following the War of Independence (1775-1783), the British Government decided to redirect their growing number of convicted criminals to a land hitherto unsettled by Europeans in the South Pacific, known at the time as New Holland. The east coast of this largely unmapped land had been explored and mapped by Captain James Cook in 1770 and was recommended by botanist Joseph Banks and midshipman James Matra from the same expedition as a suitable place for a new penal settlement.

In January 1788, the First Fleet of eleven ships arrived at Botany Bay, the site recommended by Banks. But Governor Arthur Phillip quickly realised that Botany Bay was not at all suitable for a settlement: it had no deep anchorage, no water supply, and only infertile sandy soil. Phillip set out in a small boat to investigate a harbour identified on Cook's map further north, and on arrival realised that the waterway that he called Port Jackson (later known as Sydney Harbour) was a much better place for a settlement.

Convict transportation then lasted eighty years more until the *Hougoumont* arrived in Western Australia with the last shipload of convicts in 1868. During that time, 608 convict ships transported more than 162,000 convicts to Australia¹⁹. The convict ships were ordinary British merchant ships, as seen around the world at that time. No ship was ever built specifically as a convict ship²⁰.

All the ships for carrying convicts were also used for general cargo of passenger transport at various times. The vessels chartered for convict transport were mainly square-rigged ships or barques, mostly small to moderate tonnage. The fees paid to the ship owners were so low that only the most decrepit ships were used²¹.

Dependence on ships

The British Government knew there would probably be no food immediately available in New South Wales, so when the First Fleet made its final stop at Cape Town, Arthur Phillip purchased additional supplies for the future, including plants, grain and farm animals. Phillip had requested before departure that the fleet of 1,300-1,400 people²² be supplied with enough food to last them all for two years²³.

But for many years, the British colonists in Australia relied absolutely on sea-borne supplies. Sydney residents would watch the ocean from South Head for the first sign of a ship. When the signal came to the town from the flagstaff, the entire town erupted in joy. The settlement relied on the frequent arrival of convicts (and increasingly of free settlers) to replenish the supplies of food, building and other materials to sustain life in the expanding colony.

The early residents of Sydney were water-bound and waterborne, and everyone got around in boats in the early 1800s. Most of the early explorations were by water, travelling up the Parramatta River, Pittwater, Broken Bay and the Hawkesbury River. Sydney grew around the long headlands and bays as wharves, slipways and stores began to dot the shoreline. The waterside industries sprouted whole suburbs, such as Balmain and Pyrmont in the inner west and Mortlake further west. Right up to the 1880s, about 80% of Sydney's population lived within walking distance of the Harbour²⁴.

Economic development and overseas trade

A major impediment to the economic development of the colony was that it fell within the domain of the large East India Company. This was an English enterprise formed in 1600 for trade with east and south-east Asia and India. The company exercised considerable power over much of Asia and the Indian subcontinent, monopolising trade and enforcing restrictions on shipbuilding throughout the Indian and Pacific Oceans.

It was not until 1813 that the British Government took away the company's absolute powers (only trade with China remained until 1933), thus allowing overseas trade and shipbuilding to develop in Sydney Town. As a port city, it was inevitable that Sydney's economic development would include several maritime industries, and both coastal and international shipping emerged in time.

Cheap water transport allowed industries to develop around the harbour and along the rivers. The construction of the town stimulated a number of industries: timber cutting in the forests around Sydney, and lime burning in the bays of the harbour and ocean beaches where natural shell banks provided a source of lime for use in mortar.

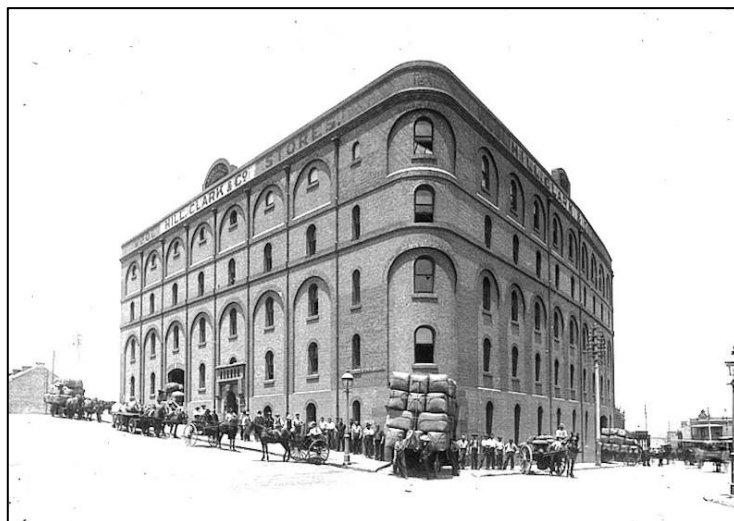


Figure 4 Hill, Clarke & Co wool store, Pyrmont 1930s (SLNSW)

Brick making emerged early, and George Street south of Bathurst Street was commonly called Brickfield Hill. Windmills were constructed to grind wheat into flour. Other local industries appeared, such as clothing, shoe and boot makers, and the entertainment industries, such as pubs, theatre and the arts.

After the East India Company's monopolistic powers were removed in 1813, the maritime industries flourished in Sydney. The early governors were aware of potential maritime industries, and Arthur Phillip refitted one of the Third Fleet transport ships to explore the southern seas. The crew reported an abundance of whales, seals and fish in the area.

Whaling and sealing were the first industries that dominated the export trade and led to major economic development in the colony, although the products were relatively unprocessed. A chain of skilled trades grew from this industry, such as ship building and maintenance, chandlery and cooperage.

By the 1820s, the growth of the fine wool industry allowed for much greater export-driven economic growth. As the pastoral industry expanded in the interior of New South Wales, the wool which was in increasing demand from the factories and mills of Britain and western Europe passed through the port of Sydney. Increasingly the colony's economic development was based on the production and export of wool.

By 1826, there were 22 shipping agents in Sydney, four Sydney-based whaling vessels, six sealing vessels, and foreign ships transporting cargo from India, Brazil and China. On the manufacturing side, rope was being manufactured from New Zealand flax²⁵. Following the economic boom triggered by gold discoveries in the early 1850s, giant wool stores around Sydney Cove and Darling Harbour were evidence of the continuing role of wool in the city's growth²⁶.

Maritime trades and their pubs

Most of the occupations from the age of sail were commemorated in the names of Sydney pubs. Many of these operated in the early days of hotel licensing and the pubs have since disappeared or were renamed. To provide a fairly complete picture of the range of maritime-related pubs since European settlement in Sydney, those that are well documented will be described in detail, but those that came and went many years ago will only be listed with whatever information can be obtained about them.

Harbour pilots and fishermen were only commemorated by long-extinct pubs, but as these occupations were important features of the maritime life of Sydney Harbour, the pubs associated with these activities are included. Early public houses in Sydney did not have to have the word Hotel in their title and were very different from what we expect of a pub today. From 1796, a licence to sell wine or spirits could be obtained if you were deemed to be of good repute, had the required connections and could offer the issuing body a cash surety of around £20 as a bond.

But because there was no regulatory body to enforce licences, there was little problem in selling alcohol without one. From 1825, a more sustained effort was made to regulate and police the sale of alcohol in the city, and some pubs were often issued different trading hours. Trading hours were usually announced in the *Sydney Gazette* as a means of keeping the public informed about new restrictions that were put in place, or when a pub had its hours extended.

A big change to the colonial hotel industry came in 1830 with the *Licensed Publicans Act*. The Act defined what we still think of today as the basic rules of governance for a public house, albeit slightly relaxed. Under the Act, all licensed houses must have “at least two sitting rooms and two sleeping rooms for public accommodation”²⁷.

Shipwrights

Shipwrights, also called shipbuilders, are engaged in the construction and repair of ships and other floating vessels. After Governor Lachlan Macquarie lifted the ban on shipbuilding in 1813, deep water sites around Darling Island and Johnston’s Bay soon attracted shipbuilders²⁸.



Figure 5 Modern shipwrights (Mystic Seaport)

But the European carpenters were not familiar with the hardness of the local timber, and their tools were not suitable for working the dense wood. Local timber was heavier than oak and other more

familiar European timber and it did not have a natural buoyancy (it sank rather than floated). It changed its shape when seasoned and bending to shape was more difficult than more traditional timber.

Nevertheless, the small *Rose Hill Packet*, built of local timber and propelled by sail, oars or poles was launched in September 1789. It was used to support development along the Parramatta River, ferrying passengers, cargo and mail between Sydney Cove and Rose Hill (Parramatta). Shipbuilders later discovered more suitable timber, and it became easier to craft the wooden boats needed in the colony.

King's Dockyard

Sydney's first shipyard was the King's Dockyard, built on the western side of Circular Quay between 1797 and 1802. A thriving centre of activity was created, and official reports in subsequent years mentioned tradesmen related to the dockyard's key business: shipwrights, caulkers, boatbuilders, labourers and watchmen²⁹.

The first ship built in the colony was a three-masted schooner the *King George*, which was built by James Underwood and his business partners Messrs. Kable & Co. at his Sydney Cove yard in 1805. One difficulty was a proclamation by Governor Philip Gidley King that no ship could compete with the East India Company's trade in Asian waters. However, King probably realised the colony's need to have a substantial and fast ship, so the *King George* was fitted out as a whaling ship and expected to work off the Eastern Australian coast³⁰.

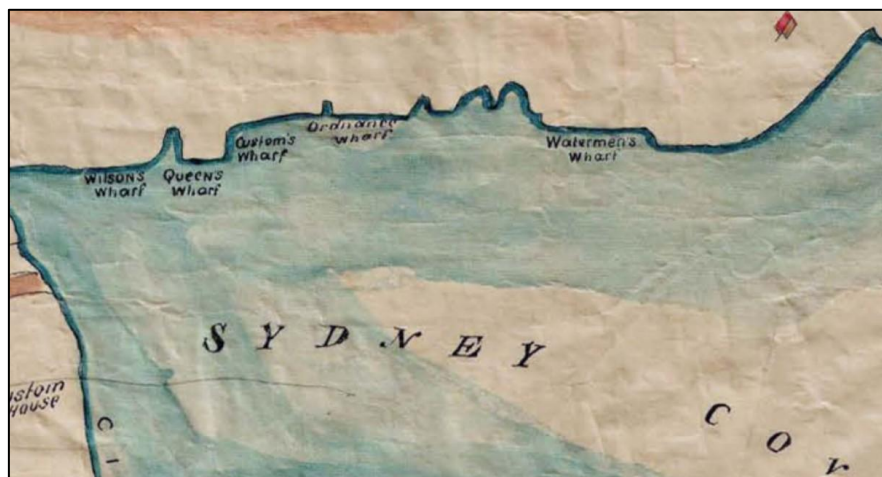


Figure 6 Sydney Cove wharves 1845 (Sheild's map)

More facilities gradually emerged, such as a workshop, a storehouse for the joiners, a joiner's shop, a blacksmith's shop and a steamer to manipulate the timber. A boom in boatbuilding occurred in Sydney from 1803 to 1807 when several vessels were built. Then in 1833, after 36 years of operation and as the era of wooden ships was coming to an end, the King's Dockyard closed down³¹.

Darling Island

The small rocky island at the mouth of Darling Harbour was an ideal place for ship repair and building. It was briefly known as Macarthur's Island, but Governor Sir Ralph Darling thought Darling Island sounded better (to him, anyway) so he renamed it Darling Island. It was surrounded by deep water ship moorings and conveniently shallow mud flats at low tide, enabling large vessels to be

dragged into land. Shipbuilders occupied Darling Island as early as 1851 when Thomas Chowne's shipyard built the first Manly ferry, called *The Brothers*.

With the change from sail to steam propulsion early in the nineteenth century, the need for heavy machinery and modern metal engineering facilities became essential to support the overseas shipping industry, which in turn supported the development of the colony. Besides steam-powered engines, the industrialised nineteenth century saw the introduction of iron-hulled ships rather than timber-hulled.

The need for metal workers attracted other industries such as iron founders. Fyfe's Iron Works were established in 1855 and the City Iron Works in 1865³². Thomas Chowne acquired the Darling Island site in 1840, conveniently located next door to Goodlet and Smith's timber yard, and built thirteen vessels over the next twenty years. He later sold this site to Colonial Sugar Refinery Limited (CSR). These shipbuilding companies were soon overshadowed by large companies, firstly the Australasian Steam Navigation Company (ASN) then by CSR.

Johnston's Bay

In the second half of the nineteenth century, Johnston's Bay (between the Pyrmont and Balmain peninsulas) became the centre of a bustling maritime trade, prompting timber yards and iron works to set up and provide the raw material for shipbuilding and repairs. Many shipwrights lived and worked here. When CSR built the sugar refinery, they had immediate access to both deep water and to engineers and shipwrights to service their ships.



Figure 7 Johnston's Bay 1855 (City of Sydney Archives)

Many families owned and raced 18-footer sailing boats in the heyday of shipbuilding, so that the shipwrights' skills were handed down to later generations. Large regattas were held every year until industrialisation made Balmain and other harbour sites safer and more attractive.

CSR took over the Johnston's Bay foreshore in the 1870s and 1880s, displacing the shipbuilders. The Government bought Darling Island in 1899 so that the Sydney Harbour Trust could reclaim and redevelop the poorly controlled private wharves. Soon Johnston's Bay was alive with CSR's fleet and Darling Island was in continuous use by overseas ships, squeezing shipbuilding out³³.

Cockatoo Island

Cockatoo Island is the largest of the several islands in Sydney Harbour that were once heavily timbered sandstone knolls. Between 1839 and 1869, the island was used as a penal establishment, primarily as a place of secondary punishment for convicts who reoffended in the colony³⁴.

It was also the site of one of Australia's biggest shipyards, operating between 1857 and 1992. In the 1840s, Governor Sir George Gipps persuaded the British Government that the island's convicts should be employed constructing a dry dock. Construction of the dock began in 1848 but was plagued with problems and did not open until December 1857. It was named Fitzroy Dock after Governor Sir Charles FitzRoy, who had succeeded Gipps during its construction.



Figure 8 Fitzroy Dock 1927 (National Library of Australia)

Until the 1860s, the dock was used exclusively to service Royal Navy ships, and from 1870 shipbuilding was undertaken on the island. It is the earliest graving dock (the traditional dry dock with a narrow concrete basin into which a vessel is floated, the gates are shut and the water is pumped out) and the only surviving example in Australia of a dry dock built by convicts.

In 1882, construction began on a second dock to enable the island to accommodate larger naval and merchant ships. Called the Sutherland Dock, it was completed in 1889, and shipbuilding and repair works were carried out steadily on Cockatoo Island from that time. By 1913, the island had become the official dockyard for the Royal Australian Navy, increasing its activity during the two World Wars.

Shipbuilding continued on Cockatoo Island after World War II, but the 1960s saw an increase in international competition so that by the 1970s shipbuilding had sharply declined. The last ship constructed on the island was launched in 1984, and the last project was the refit of the submarine *HMAS Orion*, after which the dockyard was officially shut down in 1992³⁵.

Mort's Dockyard

Mort's Dock is a former dry dock, slipway and shipyard in Balmain. It was the first dry dock in Australia, opening in 1855 and eventually closing in 1958. Mort Bay was originally known as Waterview Bay. Former steamship captain Thomas Rowntree purchased the land in 1853 and recognised the site as an ideal location for a patent slip. This is an inclined plane leading from the

shoreline along which a ship (after being attached to a cradle) is hauled out of the water onto a slipway for repairs.

Rowntree met auctioneer Thomas Sutcliffe Mort, who also realised the necessity for Sydney to have docking facilities for ship repairs in the colony, as there were none south of Bombay at the time. Mort had a flair for making money and built a dry dock there, creating a building boom and large-scale development. He had arrived in Sydney in 1838, worked as a clerk and rapidly rose to organising wool auctions and was one of the first exporters and wool brokers.



Figure 9 Mort's Dock (Australian National Maritime Museum)

Mort and Rowntree's Waterview Bay Dry Dock Company built a dock and patent slip, which opened ahead of the Government's Fitzroy Dock on Cockatoo Island. Mort had previously bought large tracts of land and progressively sold these to extend the dock in 1866 and 1875. Despite being the only commercial repair facility for steamships, the dock was not as profitable as expected, and by 1881 Mort and Rowntree had leased most of the surrounding land for cargo storage and an iron and brass foundry.

In 1867, Mort's Dock became mainly an engineering workshop including the construction of steam locomotives, ship machinery and mining equipment. Ship construction and ship repairs continued at the dry dock and surroundings. The company became the largest private employer in the colony, a cornerstone of the union movement and birthplace of the Australian Labor Party, founded at this dock by the Balmain Unionists.

By 1901 Mort's company opened a second dry dock, the Woolwich Dock and slipway, to cater for increased demand. By 1917 the Dock had built 39 steamships, seven Manly ferries and pumping machinery for the Crown Street reservoir. In the interwar period, it expanded its activities to have a virtual monopoly over the local industry³⁶.

World War II was a boom time for Mort's Dock when fourteen Bathurst-class corvettes were built there, and four River-class frigates³⁷. But shipbuilding declined in the post-war period and the death knell was the introduction of container shipping in the 1960s. Mort's Dock closed in 1958, and the company ceased trading completely in 1968.

Shipwrights' pubs

The early shipbuilding activity around Sydney Cove and Darling Harbour prompted a number of pubs to open and attract the workers from the dockyards. By the late 1830s, there were five pubs called the Shipwrights' Arms in Millers Point and The Rocks. Three of these were only licensed for a short time:

- In Cumberland and Cambridge Streets, which was advertised for sale in October 1827, "commanding a most healthful and delightful view of the lighthouse, Sydney Cove and the Government Domain"³⁸.
- In Kent Street, where a publican's licence was granted to Richard Phillips in August 1831³⁹.
- In Princes Street, where the Woodman Hotel was renamed the Shipwrights' Arms with a renewed license in October 1833⁴⁰, run by the shipwright John Bell⁴¹. Licensing continued until 1839⁴². A pub of this name on the corner of Princes and Essex Streets was relicensed by William Amner in April 1840⁴³ and this may be the same place.

The other two Shipwrights' Arms Hotels in Millers Point are surviving buildings, and much more is known about them.

Shipwrights' Arms, 75 Windmill Street, Millers Point.

Timeline: 1832 – mid-1880s.

Newly arrived immigrant John Clarke purchased a parcel of land in Millers Point. Situated on a high natural terrace overlooking the harbour, the site commanded attention from anyone on the water, so he saw it as a good location for a hotel.

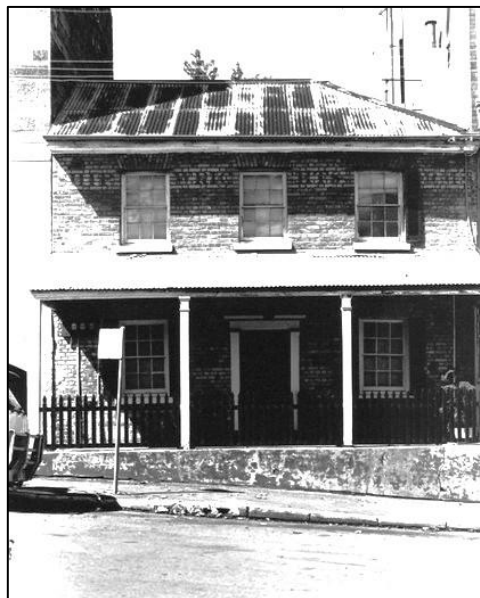


Figure 10 Shipwright's Arms Windmill St, 1989 (City of Sydney Archives)

Clarke constructed a building on the site and was granted a publican's licence in June 1833. The name Shipwrights' Arms was still faintly visible on the façade in 1989⁴⁴. John Clarke died in 1838, and the hotel remained in the ownership of his sons until 1853 when it was sold to Charles Quail. By the mid-1880s, the area around Millers Point changed significantly, and the hotel became a boarding house.

The property was resumed by the Government in 1901 along with most of The Rocks following the bubonic plague outbreak in 1900 and the establishment of the Sydney Harbour Trust to regulate the harbour and its foreshores. The property was largely used as a private residence into the 1930s. Ownership was transferred to the Department of Housing in 1980, and it was used as a doctor's surgery in the 1980s⁴⁵. The building, which is a private residence today, is adjacent to the Hero of Waterloo Hotel, constructed in 1843 on land purchased from John Clarke in 1842⁴⁶.

Shipwrights' Arms, 109 George Street, The Rocks.

Timeline: 1861 – 1907.

The site of this pub was part of the first hospital grounds from 1788 until the Sydney Hospital opened on Macquarie Street in 1816, at which time the original hospital was demolished, and the site became a government stone quarry. In 1854, Patrick Freehill purchased the present 109 and 107 George Street and erected a three-storey sandstone store in front of his bakehouse. The store also contained ovens and stables.



Figure 11 Shipwrights' Arms 109 George Street (Wikimedia)

The southern half of the building was called a Public House in the 1863 *Council Rate Assessment Books*, constructed of stone walls and a slate roof. The public house was known as the Shipwrights' Arms and was sold to the Reverend P. Young in 1868⁴⁷. In 1900 the hotel was renamed the Chicago Hotel⁴⁸. The building was resumed by the Government in 1901 and survived the demolitions around the area because of its substantial nature and relatively young age.

In March 1907, the publican's licence issued to Annie Garrett was cancelled by the Metropolitan Licensing Court⁴⁹. Two months later, she was fined 10 shillings for contravention of the *Beer Excise Act 1901* (omission to cut beer duty stamp)⁵⁰. The offence referred to the duty stamps that were affixed to beer barrels to show that duty had been paid. When the barrel was tapped or opened, the stamp was to be torn off so it could not be reused on another untaxed barrel.

Around 1910, the hotel became a fish shop and later a café. Number 109 became a restaurant known as The Rocks Push. The building underwent extensive remodelling in the second half of the twentieth century. In 1978, the Rocks Push Restaurant extended into number 107 George Street.

The two buildings (107 and 109) were once again remodelled on the ground floor in 1988 for Neil Perry, who opened the Rockpool Restaurant in February 1989⁵¹.

Shipwrights' Arms, 10 Darling Street, Balmain.

Timeline: 1848 - 1965.

In August 1840, the ship owner John Bell purchased two lots on surgeon William Balmain's original grant that took up much of the present-day suburb of Balmain. By the end of 1841, Bell constructed a stone wharf and house at the intersection of Darling and Weston Streets. In 1844, this house was leased to William Walker who obtained a publican's licence and opened the Dolphin Hotel in the building. In 1848, Bell took over the licence and renamed it the Shipwrights Arms.



Figure 12 Shipwright's Arms Balmain c1941 (Gday Pubs website)

The Bell family finally sold the property in 1883, including the adjacent shipyard, to tugboat builder/operator John Fenwick. The hotel business continued to operate until it was closed by Tooth & Company in 1965. It was delicensed in 1966 and converted into five flats in 1967. It was later converted to professional offices and private residence⁵². The pub was reputedly a favourite haunt of watermen and surreptitious late-night drinkers⁵³.

Patent Slip Hotel, Sussex and King Streets, Darling Harbour

Timeline: 1837 – present (now the Slip Inn).

James Edrop was granted land fronting Darling Harbour in 1837, and the Patent Slip Wharf was constructed by 1843. The Patent Slip Hotel was located on the north-west corner of Sussex and King Streets. The area around the Patent Slip was used in the repair of small vessels and became Cuthbert's Patent Slip in 1868.

John Cuthbert, who operated the largest shipbuilding business in the colony, did not live to see the demise of the enterprise he had created. He died in December 1874, and Cuthbert's Patent Slip was sold to John Dibbs in 1876. Dibbs redeveloped the wharf and associated slipways and yards, with jetties and warehouses being constructed as the base for the British-owned Netherlands India Steam Navigation Co⁵⁴.

The hotel's name changed to the New Wharf Hotel in 1882, then to the Royal George Hotel in 1885. In 1897, the new licensee Andrew Cochrane renamed it Cochrane's Hotel. The hotel and the

surrounding land were resumed by the Government after the bubonic plague scare in 1900 and passed to the Sydney Harbour Trust.

The brewer Edmund Resch leased the hotel in 1903 and rebuilt it in the Federation Free style⁵⁵, incorporating the adjacent Cuthbert's Patent Slip Building. The pub was a major focus for the Sydney Push from the late 1940s to the early 1970s, with Germaine Greer, Robert Hughes and Clive James frequenting the venue. It was also popular with the Australian Labor Party, and the former Premier Neville Wran frequently drank there.



Figure 13 Royal George Hotel 1980s (City of Sydney Archives)

The Royal George Hotel operated until going into receivership in 1991⁵⁶, after which its licence was transferred to another city hotel in 1993⁵⁷ and the building was vacant for a few years. In 1996, the prominent hotel and fashion figures John and Merivale Hemmes purchased the disused hotel, which reopened as the Slip Inn in 1997⁵⁸. The pub achieved international fame after the future King Frederick and Queen Mary of Denmark first met there while Frederick was competing in sailing events at the Sydney 2000 Olympics.

This pub is an example of one that began life catering directly to the workers in the nearby shipbuilding yards, later losing its original name as the Royal George after the shipbuilding industry moved away from the area. In recent times, its original identity was restored by new owners who wanted to honour the history and traditions of Darling Harbour in its heyday as a major shipbuilding centre.

Patent Slip Hotel, Globe and George Streets, The Rocks

Timeline: 1836 - 1887 (now the Russell Boutique Hotel).

A pub called the Sheer Hulk at 30 Cambridge Street (on the corner of Essex Lane) was advertised for sale in May 1830, of five rooms and boasting that it was “surrounded by a large population of Mechanics, from which there can be no doubt an excellent livelihood may be secured”⁵⁹. In July 1830, a licence for the pub was granted to Joseph Le Burn⁶⁰. A sheer hulk (or shear hulk) was a type of floating crane used in shipbuilding during the era of sailing ships to place the lower masts of a ship under construction or repair.



Figure 14 Russell Boutique Hotel (therussell.com.au)

The pub was advertised for sale again in April 1831, this time expanding its surrounding range of dependable drinkers to “Mechanics and Mariners”⁶¹. In August, William Charles was granted a licence for the Cambridge Street/Essex Lane pub, while Joseph Le Burn took the Sheer Hulk Hotel name to George Street at Kings Wharf and was granted a licence there⁶². Gwyneth Dow’s biography of the landowner Samuel Terry mentions that the Sheer Hulk Hotel was an earlier name for the Patent Slip Hotel⁶³.

Edward Brady was granted a licence to the pub on the corner of Globe and George Streets in 1836⁶⁴ and renamed the Sheer Hulk Hotel to the Patent Slip Hotel. The name Patent Slip evidently referred to the longstanding Government dock located to the north of the Commissariat Store and showed an affiliation with the maritime activities of the port⁶⁵.

In 1839 the licence was transferred to Thomas Jones⁶⁶ then in March 1840, Isaac Moore took over the licence⁶⁷. The Publicans’ Licences Index shows that Isaac Moore allowed the licence to expire in May 1845, when he was refused an application for a new licence⁶⁸. He appealed against the decision in the Licensing Court, at which hearing the Licensing Inspector’s main complaint was that the hotel’s rooms were too small. In the end, the licence was granted⁶⁹. Moore continued to run the Patent Slip Hotel until March 1854 when the licence was transferred to William McMillan⁷⁰.

Thomas Brennan purchased the building in 1880, and in 1887 he erected a new building on the site in the Federation Queen Anne style which he called the Port Jackson Hotel. The change of name may have reflected the demise of Circular Quay as a focus of shipping activity from the 1880s in favour of Darling Harbour⁷¹.

The pub continued operating until the Licences Reduction Board cancelled its licence in about 1923. The lessees Tooth & Co. subsequently built a new Port Jackson Hotel further south in George Street. The delicensed hotel was converted into café use by 1927, leased from the Sydney Harbour Trust. From 1933, the upper floors of the building were used to provide hotel accommodation, trading as the Russell Private Hotel at 143A George Street. The origin of the name Russell is not clear.

A consortium bought the premises in 1985 with the intention of combining the operations of the Russell Hotel and the Fortune of War Hotel (2 doors north at 137 George Street), which was achieved in 1987⁷². The Russell Boutique Hotel operates on the site today.

Dry Dock Hotel, 22 Cameron Street, Balmain

Timeline: 1856 – present.

In 1836, James Curtis purchased ten acres in what is now Mort Bay and John Lamb purchased the adjoining eleven acres in the same year. In 1854, the two lots were purchased by Captain Rowntree and Thomas Holt for a slipway and dry dock. Thomas Mort joined their venture and purchased more land in the area. Mort was publicly credited with the whole of the dry dock enterprise when it opened in February 1856, and it became known as Mort's Dock. The bay was later renamed Mort Bay.



Figure 15 Dry Dock Hotel Balmain (Brett Andrew Wood)

The company became the major developer on the slopes above the docks to develop housing for the workforce. For a century, the Dock was the largest industrial operation in Australia and the major influence on the

development of the suburb of Balmain. The workers lived in comfortable timber houses on the slopes above the dock and the executives lived in grander houses in more elevated positions. In this context, the hotel was constructed.

In 1856, Thomas Rowntree was granted the licence for a hotel on the corner of Cameron, College and Mort Streets that he called the Dry Dock Hotel⁷³. The *Sydney Morning Herald* called it the Waterview Hotel in 1857⁷⁴. The other pubs around the dock area were the Forth and Clyde Hotel (opened in 1858⁷⁵), the Star Hotel (opened about 1867⁷⁶) and the William Wallace Hotel.

Tooth and Co. purchased the hotel in 1897. The company substantially rebuilt the hotel in 1921 and extended the building along Cameron Street. Since that time, major renovations were carried out in 1988⁷⁷.

Whalers

Saving the colony's economy

The *Britannia*, which brought convicts and supplies to Sydney as part of the Third Fleet, was the first ship to harpoon a sperm whale off the Australian coast in October 1791. The whaling industry helped the new colony to survive. The industry flourished until a downturn in the 1850s and the eventual overharvesting of many species. The last whaling station in Australia closed in 1978 in Albany, Western Australia⁷⁸.

Whaling had a number of advantages over the wool industry that developed at the same time. Wool production only became important after years of careful breeding and a slow natural increase in the flocks, but whale numbers were at their peak from the start of settlement. The wool clip was taken annually, but whales could be caught by deep-sea whalers all year⁷⁹.



Figure 16 South Sea whalers boiling blubber 1876 (State Library of NSW)

Until the development of petroleum in the 1850s, whale oil was the primary machine lubricant and preferred lamp oil in Europe and North America. The *Sydney Gazette* reported in March 1830 that much of the capital that had been spent on the import trade was gradually being diverted into the safer and much more productive channel of whale oil fisheries⁸⁰.

The whale hunting and processing capacity developed by Britain in the seventeenth century moved to the American colonies of Massachusetts and New York in the eighteenth century. But England lost these colonies after the American Revolution of 1776, and an embargo was placed on all American exports to Britain, including whale oil.

The embargo prompted Samuel Enderby, who owned a fleet of whaling ships in the British-American whale trade, to investigate whaling in the untried waters of the Indian Ocean. Many sperm whales were sighted, but the British East India Company had a monopoly on all trade in those areas. Enderby and his business partners spent years petitioning the British Government for the right to harvest whales in the Pacific and Indian Oceans, and this was finally granted in 1789.

The first whale harpooned in the Pacific Ocean was from the ship *Emilia* off the coast of South America in March 1789. The ship returned to London with a lucrative cargo of fourteen tonnes of sperm whale oil. The success of this venture led Enderby to petition British Prime Minister William Pitt to remove all restrictions imposed by the East India Company in the Pacific.

Australian whaling industry

Samuel Enderby saw another commercial opportunity when convict transportation to Australia began in 1788. He was aware that whaling ships were travelling from England to the Pacific with no cargo before returning with a load of whale oil. He thought that transporting convicts and supplies to the Australian colonies would provide his ships with a profitable cargo for the outward voyage. Enderby lobbied the British Government to award contracts for transporting convicts to the whaling industry and then let the whalers hunt whales in the South Pacific before returning home.

The First Fleet was arranged and financed through government channels. But private contractors provided the ships, rations and crew for the Second Fleet. The Third Fleet, departing for Sydney early in 1791, consisted of eleven ships, five of them whaling ships including Enderby's own ship the *Britannia*. The others were the *William and Ann*, *Mary Ann*, *Matilda* and the *Salamander*. The success of this venture heralded the start of the Australian whaling industry. Eber Bunker, captain of the *William and Mary*, eventually became a leading figure in the early colony

Whaling was an essential part of the early economy in New South Wales, and whalers were the most frequent visitors in the first decade. Whaling was Australia's first major industry with thousands of men and hundreds of ships eventually involved in the trade⁸¹. The early governors did much to encourage the industry here, especially Governor Arthur Phillip, who began his career on a British northern whaler in 1753⁸².

The British and American whalers that called at Sydney provided regular communication with the outside world and occasionally sold provisions to the settlers who were on the verge of starvation. In time, the colonists were able to feed themselves and to give the whalers more help than they received. They provided the visitors with provisions, wood and water and a place to rest and conduct repairs before continuing their long journeys⁸³.

Whale oil and bone products (mainly baleen, the keratin ribs in a whale's upper jaw that were used in corsets, skirts and collars) were ideal commodities for the new colony as they were of high value and could survive months at sea. When war was declared between Spain and Britain in 1797, British

ships were unable to buy provisions in the Spanish colonies of South America, and as a result Sydney became a major whaling port.

Sydney was well placed to enter the whaling industry: the Pacific sperm whaling grounds were relatively close and other whale species closer still, migrating along the coast seasonally each year. But fully outfitting a suitable ship for whaling was an expensive business, and many businessmen were more inclined to invest in the cheaper sealing industry. The first Sydney-owned whaler, the *King George*, was launched in June 1805. Small-boat shore-based whaling grew rapidly around Tasmania and the south-eastern mainland. John Macarthur launched the first ocean-going sperm whaler, the *Argo*, which sailed out of Sydney in 1806⁸⁴.



Figure 17 Whale flensing, Twofold Bay c1900 (National Museum)

Considerable preparation was required for a whaling voyage, which provided work for the maritime tradesmen involved. The hull had to be well caulked and the rigging in good order. If the ship was new to the trade, it would have to be fitted with davits (small cranes) to hold the whaleboats. The deck would have to be strengthened to hold the metal cauldrons in which blubber was boiled. Barrels of salted meat and empty wooden casks to store the whale oil were loaded on board. Whaleboats, harpoons and lances as well as coils of whale line were essential equipment.

Another benefit from having a growing and active whaling fleet in Sydney Harbour was the construction of new wharves, slipways, dry docks and warehouses. Land was reclaimed in Darling Harbour in the 1830s to provide more infrastructure for the expanding whaling fleet⁸⁵. Shipbuilding also benefited from the local whaling industry. The shipyards of Darling Harbour and Johnstons Bay could build and repair the ocean-going barques, brigs, ships and schooners used in the trade. They also made whaleboats, four or five of which were carried on each whaling ship.

The large crews carried on whaling ships made the industry a major employer of maritime labour. By 1837 there were 42 deep-sea whaling ships based in Sydney, employing around 1,300 seamen⁸⁶. Seamen were not paid a set wage but were given a share of the profits (in a lump sum at the end of the voyage), making it an attractive trade for sailors.

Other tradesmen who found work in the whaling industry were coopers, sailmakers, dockyard caulkers, anchor smiths, shipwrights, ship chandlers, mast makers, clothing outfitters, wharfingers (owners of wharves), and warehouse owners. Local rope walks made whale lines and rigging for

ships. Indirectly involved were customs house officers, pilots, publicans, harbour watermen and wharf labourers⁸⁷.

The decline of whaling

The peak of Australian whaling activity was 1830 to 1855, with up to 1,300 men working in the industry each year. However, with the discovery of gold in 1851, sailors deserted their ships in droves to try their luck at the goldfields. Then the advent of petroleum to replace whale oil continued the decline of the whaling industry. The industry had provided Sydney with 52% of its exports in 1832 but this fell to less than 1% by 1855.

During its heyday, whaling generated a great deal of wealth for Sydney and provided a major export commodity for the colony. The profits earned by ship owners and the wages earned by crewmen flowed to the rest of the community and provided an additional strand to an economy that was otherwise dependent on the growing wool industry⁸⁸.

Despite the downturn from the 1850s, whaling continued until well into the twentieth century with technological changes improving the productivity of the whaling fleets. This led to a catastrophic overharvesting of many whale species and a public outcry to stop the industry. The last whaling station in Australia closed in July 1978 and Australia is today a leading member of the International Whaling Commission and is engaged in the fight against whaling⁸⁹.

Whaling pubs

Because whaling was such a major industry employing a large number of people at sea and on shore, many pubs sprang up in The Rocks and Millers Point to attract the thirsty workers. Some, like the Sperm Whale Hotel on the corner of George and Bridge Streets were licensed for only a couple of years in the 1830s⁹⁰, but others survived the end of the whaling boom in the middle of the nineteenth century and included among the licensees were some of the prominent Sydneysiders of the day.

Whalers' Arms, 79 Lower Fort Street, Millers Point.

Timeline: 1847 - 1870.

The building was constructed in about 1840 and was called The Whalers' Arms by 1847. The pub was a handsome and commodious structure, as shown in John Rae's painting of 1842. But its rival across the road, the Hero of Waterloo Hotel, was larger and better equipped. Two other Whalers' Arms operated in Millers Point, and the rivalry was intense.

The building's usage fluctuated between a shop in 1855 followed by the Whalers' Arms once again from 1861 to 1868. In 1867, the building was called Brown's Family Hotel and was apparently a residential annex to the Hero of Waterloo until 1870, when it became a grocery shop, and remained so until the end of its commercial life.



Figure 18 Whaler's Arms 79 Lower Fort St (SLNSW)

In 1901, the building was taken over by the Sydney Harbour Trust after its formation, but otherwise it continued as before. Eventually, the building passed into the hands of the New South Wales Land and Housing Corporation. The building was unoccupied from the 1990s until a long lease was purchased in 2005⁹¹.

Whaler's Arms, 95 Gloucester Street, the Rocks

Timeline: 1851 - 1893.

The butcher George Cribb (aged 30) was convicted in June 1807 at Wiltshire Assizes of forgery and sentenced to 14 years transportation. He arrived at Sydney in the *Admiral Gambier* in December 1808. Six months later, and while still under sentence, he was already advertising fresh meat for sale to the meat-loving population⁹². From 1809 to the late 1820s, he lived on a block of land he purchased in Gloucester Street in The Rocks, building a handsome two-storied Georgian house on the southeast side of Cribbs Lane.

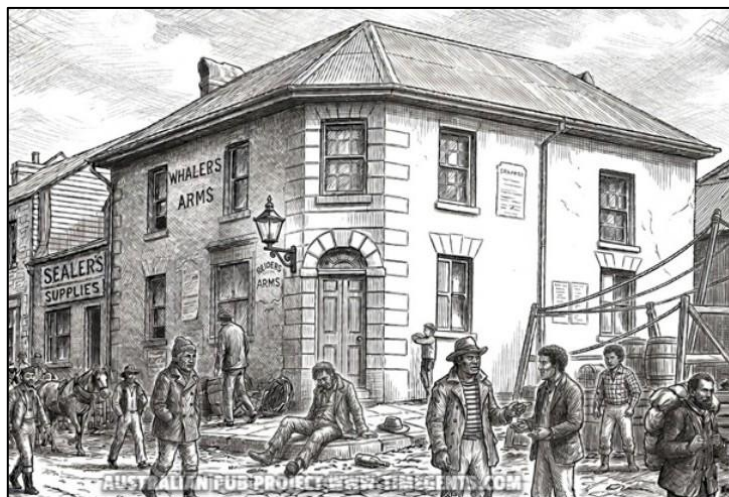


Figure 19 Whaler's Arms Gloucester Street (Time Gents website)

Cribb was typical of many early convicts who prospered from the opportunities in the new colony, especially those with a useful trade. While still serving a 14-year sentence, he ran his own butchering business, slaughtering cattle, sheep and pigs to sell meat to the colonists and to the ships leaving Sydney.

A 1994 excavation of an area in The Rocks that included George Cribb's land revealed an old water well where Cribb buried the bones of the animals he slaughtered to sell the meat. Also hidden in the well was a small still for distilling illegal spirits. Cribb had been under surveillance on suspicion of dealing in illegally produced alcohol. He was arrested, but no evidence was found to convict him (until archaeologists uncovered his illegal still about 180 years later!)⁹³.

In January 1824, the publican James Flinn advertised that the St Patrick's Hotel (called "the house under the Sign of St Patrick") in Gloucester Street was then in full trade⁹⁴. This hotel was in the house constructed by George Cribb on the corner of Cambridge Street. By the late 1820s, Cribb was in financial difficulties and was declared bankrupt⁹⁵.

In 1830, the hotel was purchased by James and Sarah Byrne and redeveloped into a larger building with seven rooms, a coach house and stables behind. James died in 1838 and Sarah ran the pub by herself⁹⁶. Sarah Byrne sold the building in 1842 when it was still called the St Patrick's Hotel and being leased to William Amner⁹⁷. He was the licensee in 1843⁹⁸. According to the Index of Publicans' Licences (1830-1861), the building did not operate as a pub after this until John Sims applied for a licence for the Whaler's Arms in March 1851⁹⁹.

The Whaler's Arms Hotel operated until 1893¹⁰⁰ when it was delicensed and converted into a boarding house¹⁰¹. The building was taken over in the Rocks Resumption by the Sydney Harbour Trust in 1901 and demolished soon afterwards¹⁰².

Whaler's Arms, 4 Argyle Street, Millers Point

Timeline: c1850 - 1893.

This pub was opened by James Merriman in about 1850 on the corner of Argyle and Windmill Streets¹⁰³. It is shown in Dove's 1880 Plans of Sydney when E. Swadling was the licensee¹⁰⁴. The pub operated until the severe economic depression of 1893, when it closed and became a grocery shop¹⁰⁵.

James Merriman, whaler, Alderman and publican

James Merriman was born at Parramatta in 1816, the son of two convicts. Orphaned at an early age, he lodged with Joseph Raphael, who was an emancipist, hotel owner, City Alderman and Member of the Legislative Assembly. Merriman was indentured as a cooper and practised his trade while serving for four years on a whaling ship.

Returning to Sydney in about 1850, he became the licensee of the Whaler's Arms at Millers Point, the Grafton Hotel and the Gladstone Hotel. He opened up regular shipping services between Sydney and New Zealand from 1852 and was the founder of beche-de-mer (sea cucumber) and pearl shell industries in Torres Strait.

By 1869, Merriman was the owner of three ships and built the steamship *Pearl* in 1875 and in 1879 was a Commissioner of the Sydney International Exhibition. He was an Alderman of the Sydney City Council from 1867 until 1883, and Mayor in 1873, 1877 and 1878. He was also elected to the Legislative Assembly in 1877-80¹⁰⁶. Quietly energetic, sensible and persevering, James Merriman was credited with bringing stability to Sydney's mercantile life. At his death in 1883, his estate was valued at over £51,000¹⁰⁷.

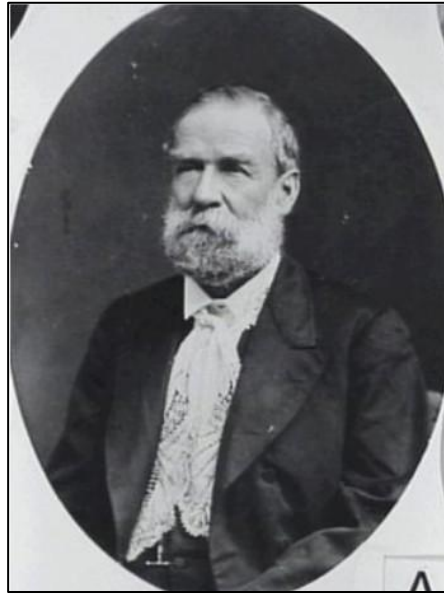


Figure 20 James Merriman (Sydney's Aldermen)

HMS Woodlark – the life of a whaling ship

HMS Woodlark was commissioned by the Royal Navy and launched at Newcastle upon Tyne in 1808. The Navy sold her in 1818, after which she became a merchantman with the same name. In September 1821, the *Woodlark* under Captain Joshua Moore sailed for New South Wales¹⁰⁸. The ship was then based at Port Jackson, sailing from there as a whaler.

Captain Moore sailed the *Woodlark* between 1820 and 1825, then Captain George Grimes for a number of years from 1830. In 1832, Grimes discovered an island that became known as Woodlark Island in the Milne Bay area of New Guinea and recorded the discovery in the ship's log¹⁰⁹.

In March 1837, the *Woodlark* stopped at Walpole Island near New Caledonia where Grimes discovered the skeletons of seven men. They were believed to be six or seven years old and some artefacts with them suggested they were convicts who had escaped from Norfolk Island in a boat. Grimes took the skulls back to Port Jackson and handed them over to authorities. By this time, the ship had been at sea for fifteen months, and among those on board was the captain's wife. It was thought to be the longest voyage ever undertaken by a female on record¹¹⁰.

In 1838, the *Woodlark* sprang a leak after five months at sea. Grimes put in at Port Stephens where the leak was repaired. However, eight seamen claimed that the ship was not seaworthy and the repairs had not solved the problem of the leak, based on the amount of water they still had to pump out. They demanded to be taken to Port Jackson and refused to work. Grimes confined the mutinous group below deck and fed them only bread and water. He took them to Port Jackson where he had

them charged with mutinous behaviour¹¹¹. The *Woodlark* then unloaded 250 barrels of whale oil and undertook further repairs.

In March 1839, a fire at sea destroyed the barque *Despatch*. All 29 people on board abandoned ship in two boats, one of which rowed to Lord Howe Island, where the *Woodlark* rescued them¹¹² and took them to Newcastle¹¹³. The *Woodlark* went through a number of owners and ship's masters until the 1850s. She made a total of 27 whaling voyages between 1820 and 1854¹¹⁴, but it is not clear how much longer she sailed after this.

The story of the *Woodlark* is a good example of the life of a whaling vessel and its crew during the heyday of whaling in the South Seas. They were away from home for over a year at a time, and during their travels dealt with a leaky ship, a tragic discovery, a rescue and a mutinous crew. Life on a South Seas whaler was never dull for long.

Woodlark Whaler Hotel, Kent Street, The Rocks.

Timeline: 1832 - 1840.

The Sydney whaling ship *HMS Woodlark* was commemorated in the name of a pub in Kent Street. It was first licensed by Thomas Spencer West in July 1832 as the Barque Woodlark Hotel. William Redford took over the licence in 1835¹¹⁵. In July 1833, Thomas West was charged with allowing four persons to "tipple and play a game of chance" at his pub, reported as the Sign of the Sperm Fishery, after 9 o'clock at night. He said he thought it was legal as the parties involved were his lodgers. The Magistrate pointed out there were no exceptions to the Act of Council and fined him £2¹¹⁶.

The 1830s was probably the decade of peak alcohol consumption in Australia. Successive New South Wales governors from Arthur Phillip tried and failed to control the booming trade in smuggled rum. Licensed pubs had strict conditions on their licences from 1830, including orders to close at the nightly curfew of 9pm. But drinking continued in the many sly grog shops and alcohol was widely available.

By the late 1830s, pubs were open until midnight¹¹⁷. When the Bench of Magistrates convened at the Water Police Court in July 1838 to decide on applications for licences to sell spirits, the *Sydney Gazette* remarked on the "already superfluous number of public houses existing in Sydney". In May 1840, the licence application for the Woodlark Whaler was refused, one of 88 hotel licence renewals were similarly refused that day¹¹⁸.

Soon afterwards, the *Sydney Monitor* published an article commenting on the unusually large number of pubs that were denied their renewed licences. The paper thought the decision was not so much to reduce the number of public houses as to weed out improper characters from the trade. Pubs of the number refused would in future be granted to applicants of proper character, whose premises were "such as required by the *Licensed Publicans Act*"¹¹⁹.

This was the end of the short life of the Woodlark Whaler Hotel, as it was never reported again, and William Redford was not reported taking over another pub.

Whalers Arms, Windmill Street, The Rocks.

Timeline: 1833 – 1864.

Another pub known as the Whalers Arms in Windmill Street was first licensed by Joseph Ferris in 1833¹²⁰. By 1840, Patrick Byrne was the licensee¹²¹. From March 1843, the Sydney Ferry Company's North Shore ferries were advertised as landing at the wharf near the Whalers Arms¹²². This was the North Shore Wharf at the eastern end of the street, as shown in the 1854 City of Sydney map¹²³. The pub was advertised as being near the steam ferry wharf for several years afterwards¹²⁴.

NORTH SHORE FERRY.



THE Sydney Ferry
Company's Steamer.
PRINCESS,
is NOW PLYING constantly,
from dawn to dusk, every day.

The place of landing and embarkation on the Sydney side, is near the Whalers' arms Tavern, Windmill street.

The Fares are as follows:—

	s.	d.
For each four-wheeled carriage.....	2	6
" Dray.....	2	0
" Gig or cart.....	1	6
" Horse, mare, gelding, ass, mule, or head of horned cattle, drawing or not.....	0	6
" Sheep, lamb, pig, or goat.....	0	2
" Foot passenger.....	0	3
CHILDREN HALF PRICE.		
Rowls and ducks, unless forming part of a load, per couple.....	0	1
Turkeys and geese, unless forming part of a load, per head.....	0	1
Goods and produce, according to bulk and weight.		

Figure 21 North Shore Ferry 1843 (*Colonial Observer* 1 March 1843)

From 1849, it was usually called the Old Whalers Arms¹²⁵. In May 1861, Thomas Dodd became the licensee¹²⁶. He must have decided to give the pub up, as it was advertised for lease as the Old Whalers Arms in June 1864, on the corner of Windmill and Fort (now Lower Fort) Streets¹²⁷.

However, less than two weeks later, Thomas Dodd was charged in the Water Police Court with abandoning his licensed house, the Old Whalers Arms in Windmill Street. This was an offence under the *Publicans Licensing Acts Consolidation Act 1830*¹²⁸. He pleaded guilty and the licence was cancelled. That was the last mention of this pub.



Figure 22 Whaler's Arms Windmill Street (NSW State Records)

Watermen

Watermen were an essential part of early London. Using small boats in the time before bridges spanned the Thames River, they would ferry passengers along and across the river in skiffs. London's lack of bridges and rolling marshy landscape to the south and east were perfect for access by boat, making the Thames the main thoroughfare for all kinds of traffic.

Water transport in Sydney

The occupation of waterman in colonial Australia began shortly after first British settlement, driven by the necessity of water-based transport in Sydney Harbour and surrounding waterways where roads were rudimentary. The harbour served as the primary artery for passengers and goods. Early settlers, including convicts and officials, relied on rowed boats ferrying them across the harbour from Sydney Town to points like Parramatta, because land travel was limited by the terrain and flooding¹²⁹.

The first regulations for boatmen in Sydney were issued in July 1803. Writing in 1931 about the early days of water transport in Sydney, the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported that:

- "From the irregularities practised by the passage boatmen that ply between Sydney and Parramatta, the magistrates are directed to offer the continuance of their licences under the following terms:
- Boats are to be kept light, with at least four oars (in case a passenger may wish to assist in rowing), and with one mast and sail. The boat will leave Sydney at the first low water and Parramatta at the first high water between sunrise and sunset.
- Unlicensed persons plying the passage between Parramatta and Sydney will on conviction forfeit £2 to the Orphan Fund.
- Passengers will be charged 1 shilling each (children 6d), as are sheep, goats, fowls or ducks (per dozen). Hire of whole boat 1 guinea"¹³⁰.

Licensing expanded to meet the growing demand in the 1820s and 1830s caused by population and trade increases. Several licensed watermen were recorded in Sydney by 1820-21, most residing in the Rocks area, including veterans like William Sibley, a survivor of the infamous 1799 *Hillsborough* voyage¹³¹, during which 95 of the 300 convicts on board died of typhoid¹³².

These operators were referred to as “watermen” in the official records by the 1830s and were granted permission to row ferries across the harbour and to wharves such as Dawes Point. These licences regulated the fares, boat capacity and routes on waterways including Sydney Harbour, Botany Bay and the Georges River, ensuring safe passage while supporting livelihoods often held by ex-convicts skilled in boating¹³³.

For many years, access to Balmain was only possible by water in skiffs rowed by licensed watermen. It was expensive at 1 shilling per person to Balmain East and two shillings to Waterview Bay (now Johnstons Bay). The watermen cut steps in the sandstone shorelines to land passengers¹³⁴.

After Federation in 1901, watermen in Sydney continued to hold licences for operating small boats to transport passengers and light cargo across the harbour, serving as on-demand alternatives to the emerging scheduled ferry services. State records list licensed watermen plying locations such as wharves and bays that were not covered by larger vessels. These individuals typically rowed or powered small craft for short crossings, personal hires, filling gaps in connectivity amid the growing urban population.

The consolidation of ferry operations under companies like Sydney Ferries Limited, incorporated in 1900 and expanded thereafter to absorb competing services, accelerated the marginalisation of independent watermen. This shift reduced the demand for individual operators to the provision of niche water taxi services, recreational outings or cargo assistance in less accessible harbour areas.

The 1932 opening of the Sydney Harbour Bridge bypassed many water crossings entirely and halved ferry patronage within a few years of opening, rendering manual rowing and sailing ferries obsolete for routine crossings.

Lightermen

A lighterman is a worker who operates a lighter, a type of flat-bottomed barge. The occupation is particularly associated with the highly skilled men who operated unpowered lighters moved by oar and water currents in the Port of London. Before the enclosed docks were constructed on the Thames River during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, ships would anchor in the middle of the river or near bridge arches and lightermen would row out to transfer their goods to shore, or load goods for export. Lightermen differed from watermen in that the latter transported passengers and small cargo in small boats, while the former transported heavier goods in barges.

Lightermen rode the river currents to transfer goods to quaysides. They also transferred goods up and down the river quays and riverside factories. This was a highly skilled job, requiring an intimate knowledge of the river’s currents and tides. Also, because the lighters were unpowered, the job required a lot of muscle power, relying on the currents for propulsion and long oars or paddles for steering¹³⁵.

Their work was dangerous and backbreaking. Some of the heaviest goods a lightermen had to move included cases of dried fish exceeding 200 kilograms¹³⁶. Due to the great skill and effort required, lightermen were often held in higher regard and paid more than their peers in other labouring occupations.

Watermen's hotels

Waterman's Arms, 67 George Street North, The Rocks.

Timeline: 1844 - c1901.

The history of the Waterman's Arms at 67 George Street, on the corner of Mill Lane, is closely linked to that of the adjacent Observer Tavern at 69 George Street North. Because the name of the Observer Tavern (now Hotel) has survived and the Waterman's Arms has not, the State Heritage Register's listing is for the Observer hotel, although the history of both buildings is described in detail.

The Observer Hotel is built on land that was part of the grounds of the first Sydney Hospital, built in 1788. A substantial two-storey house was constructed on the site by the 1820s, the town residence of Crown Solicitor Frederick Garling. After changes of ownership of the site, Garling's house was demolished in 1844, shortly before the Waterman's Arms was constructed.



Figure 23 Observer Tavern George Street (State Records of NSW)

The Observer Hotel was built in 1848 for Robert Moore, lessee of the Fortune of War Hotel from 1840 to 1846. Sydney Observatory was opened the same year, and it is presumed the pub was named after it. In the 1840s, the block containing the hotel developed the character it largely retains today. The buildings are predominantly Colonial Georgian commercial buildings, and the pattern of usage remains similar: public houses interspersed with shops, with corner sites being favoured for pubs.

Robert Moore purchased the block of land in 1844, and the adjacent Waterman's Arms was built the same year. The colonial watermen may have gathered at the Waterman's Arms while waiting for a customer. The Waterman's Arms was constructed of sandstone and was a more substantial building than the Observer Tavern next door, built of brick in 1848. The Moore family retained ownership of the Waterman's Arms until the 1901 resumption by the Sydney Harbour Trust, following the 1900 outbreak of bubonic plague in the area. After resumption, the substandard Waterman's Arms building was demolished before the Observer Tavern. The Observer was then used as an unofficial

Coroner's Court, before the Coroner's Court and Morgue were constructed on the other side of George Street in 1906.

Plans for a new hotel to straddle both former hotels were approved in May 1908 after the Observer Tavern was demolished. The Tooth's Yellow Cards record that the site was acquired by Tooth & Co in January 1909, and retained until the building was once again resumed, this time by the Sydney Cove Redevelopment Authority in December 1977¹³⁷. The former Waterman's Arms survives today as a commanding three-storey brick building in the Federation Free Style with Art Nouveau stylings¹³⁸.

Waterman's Arms, 32 Harrington Street, The Rocks

Timeline: 1856 - 1882.

John Stone Lord (c1812-1877) was a lighterman who in 1843 married Catharine Williamson (1824-1877) in Sydney¹³⁹. She was the daughter of the Irish immigrant Michael Williamson (1803-1862), the first Mayor of Redfern (in 1860-61) who for many years ran the Belfast Wine Vault in Regent Street, Redfern¹⁴⁰.

John Lord was first mentioned in the press as a lighterman in March 1849¹⁴¹. Then in 1851, while living in Harrington Street, he advertised a new cutter for sale¹⁴². By 1854, he was tendering to the Sydney City Council for the conveyancing of blue metal stone from Pennant Hills to the city wharves¹⁴³. He continued to correspond with the Council until 1870 in relation to the lighterage (barge transport) of blue metal from Pennant Hills¹⁴⁴.

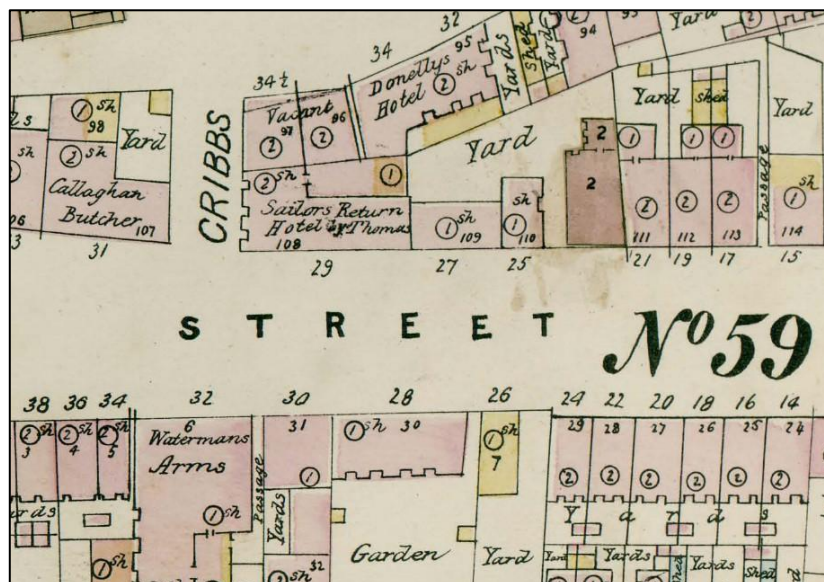


Figure 24 Waterman's Arms 32 Harrington Street 1880 (Dove's Plans)

In December 1856, he was granted a publican's licence for the Waterman's Arms in Harrington Street, The Rocks¹⁴⁵. He kept this pub until about 1873, when the licence was transferred to Richard Stephens¹⁴⁶. The United Watermen's Benefit Society was founded in the 1840s as a friendly society for the relief of sick and aged members, after some years of poor management of the Sydney boatmen. From 1860, meetings were held at the Waterman's Arms, while John Lord served as the Society's treasurer¹⁴⁷.

Catherine Lord died in February 1877¹⁴⁸ and John Lord the following November¹⁴⁹. The Waterman's Arms continued to operate until it was sold in May 1882¹⁵⁰. The pub was demolished in November 1888, and the building materials advertised for sale¹⁵¹. John Lord was probably unusual in that he pursued a demanding career as a lighterman on Sydney Harbour while running pub in The Rocks for several years.

Billy Blue

William (Billy) Blue (c1767-1834) was a pioneering Sydney waterman who was possibly born in Jamaica, New York City (the name is a corruption of the indigenous name Yamecah and is not related to the Caribbean island). He may have been a freed African-American slave from colonial New York, who claimed to have served with the British Army in the American War of Independence.

By 1797, he was living in London, working as a chocolate maker and labourer in ships on the Thames. In October 1796, he was convicted of stealing raw sugar (presumably to make more chocolate) and sentenced to seven years transportation. After four years in convict hulks, he was transported to Sydney in the *Minorca*, arriving in December 1801 with less than two years of his sentence remaining.

By 1804, Billy was working as a waterman and collected and sold oysters and other items. His whimsical personality and banter endeared him to both Government officials and the public. He advertised himself in the *Sydney Gazette* in August 1807¹⁵² as the only waterman licensed to operate a ferry, rowing passengers in a small open boat from Sydney Cove to points on the North Shore and beyond.

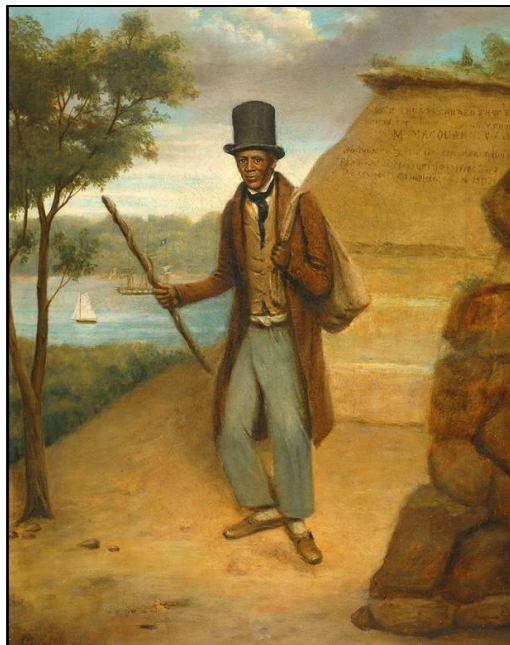


Figure 25 Billy Blue 1834 (J. B. East)

He was appointed harbour watchman and constable by Governor Lachlan Macquarie in 1811, making official his occupation's usefulness in maintaining order and connectivity in the colony. Macquarie was a regular user of Billy's ferry services, recording in his diary that in 1817 he was taken to Parramatta in his boat. In 1817, Billy was granted eighty acres on the North Shore headland that became known as Billy Blue's Point.

Macquarie light-heartedly dubbed Billy the “Commodore” because of the fleet of boats he managed, and he eventually became known around town as “The Old Commodore”. Well-known as an eccentric character, Billy took to donning a caricature of a naval uniform with a top hat and introducing himself to arriving passengers as Commodore. His ferry service endured until his death in 1834, despite arrests over the years for minor infractions. Two streets in North Sydney were named after him, and the site of his North Shore ferry terminus is known today as Blues Point¹⁵³.

The Old Commodore Hotel, 206 Blues Point Road, North Sydney.

Timeline: 1854 - present.

Billy Blue’s son John was granted a licence for a two-storey sandstone inn in March 1854¹⁵⁴ which he constructed on the intersection of Blues Point Road and Lavender Street in the area then called St Leonards. He named it after his father’s popular nickname. John was born at Circular Quay in July 1815 and ran the pub until his death in August 1891¹⁵⁵.

The building was demolished in 1901¹⁵⁶ and a large two-storey Victorian-style hotel with a balcony and square tower was constructed. In the 1930s the balcony was removed and the pub was modernised. After another transformation in the 1970s, the pub was demolished again and rebuilt with a tavern licence¹⁵⁷.



Figure 26 Old Commodore Hotel 1900 (State Library of NSW)

Billy Blue Inn, Blues Point Road, North Sydney

Timeline: 1848 - 1866.

Bille Blue’s daughter Susannah (1805-1861) married George John Lavender (c1785-1851) in January 1834¹⁵⁸. He was the boatswain in charge of the prison hulk *Phoenix*, which was moored in Hulk Bay (later called Lavender Bay)¹⁵⁹. He had previously served with Admiral Horatio Nelson in the Royal Navy¹⁶⁰.

In 1841, Lavendar was working as a licensed waterman¹⁶¹ and in July 1848, he announced that he had opened the Macquarie Inn in the North Shore¹⁶². But tragedy struck one evening in February 1851 when he fatally shot himself in the head with his rifle¹⁶³. This reportedly followed several weeks of depression, during which time he mentioned to his wife that he might end his life¹⁶⁴.

Susannah took over the licence of the Macquarie Inn the following month¹⁶⁵. William Chuter then appeared on the scene, and he and Susannah were married in December 1851¹⁶⁶, at which point he announced that he would pay off all of George Lavender's legal debts¹⁶⁷, on application at the Macquarie Inn.

The pub was renamed to the Billy Blue Inn in about January 1855¹⁶⁸. It is not clear exactly where this pub was located, but in an advertisement to lease it in March 1860, it was situated "five minutes' walk from the ferry at Blues Point"¹⁶⁹. This is present-day Blues Point Road.

Susannah Chuter died at home in February 1861 after a long illness¹⁷⁰. Willaim Chuter advertised the pub for lease in January 1865¹⁷¹ and January 1866, mentioning that it could be easily converted into a grocery shop¹⁷². This was the last mention in the press of the Billy Blue Inn, and there is no sign in *Sands' Sydney Directories* that the pub reopened under a new name in the following couple of years.

An article in the *Australian Star* in October 1908 recounted the story of Billy Blue and his eventful life and (almost as eventful) family. It was mentioned that the Billy Blue Inn was then known as Cranney's Royal Hotel¹⁷³. *Sands' Sydney Directory* of 1908 lists this pub two doors down the road from the Old Commodore Inn on the west side of Blues Point Road, when it was being run by J. G. Cranney¹⁷⁴.

Willie the Boatman, 75 Mary Street, St Peters.

Timeline: 2015 - present.

This is not strictly speaking a pub, but a brewery with a public bar, and is not of historic interest, as it commenced in 2015. However, because it is named after a real boatman from the colonial era, it is included in this history of maritime-related pubs.

Willie the Boatman was William Kerr, a Scottish fisherman who was born in about 1803 in Greenock and arrived in Sydney in August 1827 as a convict in the *Manlius*¹⁷⁵. From 1828, he was employed as a boatman by the wealthy merchant Alexander Brodie Spark of Tempe¹⁷⁶ to row his family and supplies across the Cook's River. Kerr died in 1848, having worked for Brodie for almost twenty years.



Figure 27 Cook's River 1845 (Conrad Martens)

In 2014, the businessman Patrick McInerney, during a self-professed mid-life crisis, thought about a new sports car but decided to start a brewery instead. After investing everything in an old warehouse and filling it with a hodgepodge of furniture and nautical items, the ramshackle brewery was quickly embraced by local drinkers.

When rapid growth meant that by 2019 the location was too small, the brewery moved to a larger site, a stone's throw from the original building, in an old Taubman's paint factory that is part of Precinct 75 in St. Peters¹⁷⁷. The centrepiece of the serving area is an 1850s oak bar from a former saloon in Philadelphia in the United States (observant drinkers may notice a real bullet hole in the bar, from its previous life)¹⁷⁸.

Ropemakers

Knowing the ropes

Knowledge of the types of rope commonly used in sailing ships was essential for seamen, as ropes were vital for their efficiency when sailing, navigating, handling and securing their vessels in restricted waters. This is evident from the sheer quantity of rope needed on board. For example, the *Cutty Sark* carried eleven miles of rope. This was a famous British clipper ship constructed in 1869 at a time when steamships were taking over sailing routes. It was one of the last and fastest of the tea trade clippers to be built. The opening of the Suez Canal the same year gave steamships a shorter route to China, so the *Cutty Sark* turned to the wool trade between Britain and Australia, breaking records for the fastest trip¹⁷⁹.

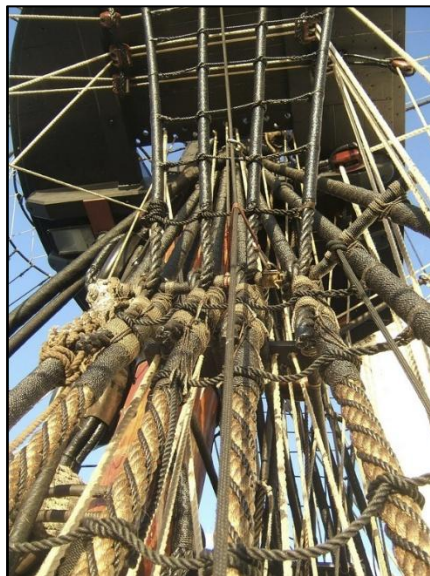


Figure 28 *HMB Endeavour* rigging (National Maritime Museum)

Every rope has a breaking strain and a safe working load, depending on its material and size, so correct usage is essential for the safety of ship and crew. Manila is a high-quality rope used in situations where strength is critical for safety, typically for rigging and cargo hoists. It is made from fibre from the leaf of a wild banana tree that is indigenous to the Philippines. It is flexible and stands up well to weather and wear, so is very useful for ships' mooring lines, towing lines and ships' boat hoists.

Sisal is a popular general-purpose cordage for use where strength is not as critical for safety. It is often considered to have about 80% the strength of Manila rope of the same size but is less expensive. It is made from the leaf of the agave plant, which grows in Mexico, Kenya and Tanzania. Sisal is not as flexible, nor as resistant to wear and weather as Manila rope.

Hemp is obtained from the skin of a nettle-like plant grown in many parts of the world. It is much softer than many other rope fibres and its quality varies greatly with the soil it is grown in. Italian hemp is the strongest fibre known for ropemaking, but Indian hemp is not considered strong enough for reliable cordage. In sailing ships, high quality hemp was frequently used (as was manila) for rigging hoists, ships' mooring lines and ships' boat hoists¹⁸⁰.

Rigging

Rigging comprises the system of ropes, cables and chains which support and control a sailing ship's masts and sails. Rigging is divided into two classes: standing rigging, which supports the masts and running rigging, which controls the orientation and reefing of the sails (the amount of the area of a sail exposed to the wind in different conditions)¹⁸¹.

Standing rigging is cordage which is fixed in position, almost always between a mast and the deck, using tension to hold the mast firmly in place. This rigging is now commonly made of steel cable but historically was made from the same material as running riggings, coated in tar for added strength and protection from the elements¹⁸².

Australian Rope Works

Archibald Forsyth (1826-1908), ropemaker and politician, was born in Morayshire, Scotland, and migrated to Sydney in 1848. He became a cedar-getter, gold miner, sawmiller then in 1862 founded Forsyth & Anthony Co., general merchants. His boyhood friend, the ropemaker James Miller persuaded him to sell his business in 1864 and establish Sydney's first rope and cordage works on four acres in Sydney's Waterloo.

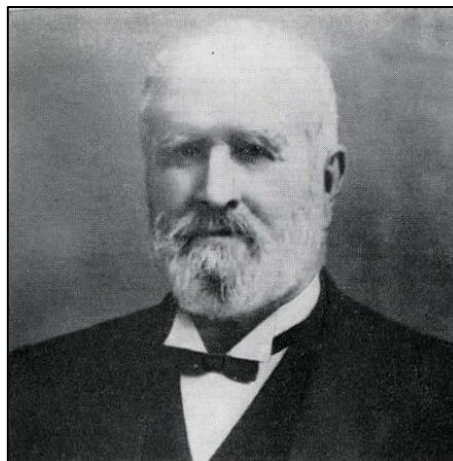


Figure 29 Archibald Forsyth (Clan Forsyth Australia)

Starting business at a time of expansion for maritime enterprises, Forsyth proved that his product was equal in quality and price to imported rope. In 1900, electricity and automatic spinners were installed in his Waterloo factory and production rose to over 1,500 tons of rope and twine a year¹⁸³.

In October 1918, the *Daily Commercial News and Shipping List* of Sydney published a detailed article describing the activities of the rope works:

- The Australian Rope Works was in Waterloo and covered six acres. The site comprised machinery rooms, rope walks and stores, and employed 260 workers. The company manufactured Manila (Abaca fibre), New Zealand flax, coir, Russian hemp/cotton blend and Italian flax. The ropes ranged in circumference from half an inch to 30 inches - the latter was a special hawser (mooring rope) supplied for works in connection with the Hawkesbury River Bridge.
- Twines were also made, and the company recently commenced making oakum (a preparation of tarred fibres used to seal gaps, such as in maritime caulking). 99% of the twine used in New South Wales was made from New Zealand flax, a material pioneered by Archibald Forsyth in Australia.
- When the fibre for making rope has been prepared, it was passed through spinning jennies to be spun into yarn and wound into bobbins. It was then transferred to the outside rope walks, of which there were four, each 900 feet long. The various bobbins of yarn were attached to the ropemaking machine, which ran the length of the walk and converted the yarn into strands which were picked up by the traveller again and twisted into rope.
- This was completed and coiled on a steam reeler (a machine for twisting fibre into finished rope) and sent to the delivery room. Manila rope was mainly used in shipping, and sizes ranged up to 12-inch hawsers, which were used by the local tugs. The flax department turned out cheap lines of lashings, cords and clothes lines. Tarred goods, lanyard ropes and other products wholly used in shipping were manufactured in large quantities.
- In the department where oakum was made, fibre was spun as with twine and rope. It was then soaked in Russian tar and mixed or "teased" so it is ready for use. Nearly all the shipping companies that operated from Sydney and Brisbane used Forsyth's ropes. The Australian Rope Works was one of the country's leading manufacturing establishments¹⁸⁴.

Prior to the twentieth century, vessels used wooden masts with hemp-fibre standing riggings. As rigs became taller by the end of the nineteenth century, masts were constructed of successive spars, stepped one on top of the other and bolted together to form the whole mast. For support, this construction relied heavily on a complex array of stays (keeping the mast from falling forward or backwards) and shrouds (holding the mast up from side to side).

Materials for the running riggings have evolved from the use of Manila rope to synthetic fibres such as nylon and kevlar¹⁸⁵.

Ropemakers' hotels

Ropemaker's Arms, Market and York Streets

Timeline: 1828 - 1838.

Jacob Wyer (c1777-1847), a ropemaker from Wiltshire, was convicted in 1814 and transported to New South Wales for seven years, arriving in the *Baring* in September 1815¹⁸⁶. By June 1821, he had established a ropemaking business at 9 Upper Pitt Street and advertised to ships' captains and the general public that he had obtained the machinery to manufacture patent cordage and invited customer orders¹⁸⁷.

However, in May 1822, he and his wife Mary (nee Black) were convicted of being in possession of stolen goods and transported for four years¹⁸⁸. They served this colonial sentence in Port Macquarie¹⁸⁹. After his second sentence was completed in May 1826, Jacob Wyer obtained a Certificate of Freedom¹⁹⁰ and returned to Sydney where he resumed his ropemaking business. By November 1828, he was living at the Ropemakers' Arms in Market Street and advertising patent whale lines made from New Zealand flax, which were on display at the Rope Walk on the racecourse (then in Hyde Park)¹⁹¹.

By February 1829, he was selling his range of ropes from the Ropemakers' Arms on the corner of Market and York Streets¹⁹². When the licensing of publicans commenced in July 1830, he was granted a licence for the hotel¹⁹³ and again in 1831 and 1832¹⁹⁴. In July 1833, his son Jacob Wyer Junior took over the licence of the pub, while Jacob Senior was granted the licence of the Queen Catherine Hotel in Castlereagh Street¹⁹⁵. Jacob Senior then advertised his ropes from the new hotel¹⁹⁶.

In October 1833, Jacob Junior transferred the licence of the Ropemakers' Arms to Michael Naphthali, who moved there from the Captain Piper Hotel in George Street¹⁹⁷. He renewed the licence for the Ropemakers' Arms until 1835¹⁹⁸. Michael Naphthali (1789-1847) was born in the East End of London and arrived in Sydney as a convict on the *Glory* in September 1818. He owned a general store in York Street from 1826¹⁹⁹, and in 1830 he was the licensee of the Bunch of Grapes Hotel in King and Pitt Streets²⁰⁰.

Jacob Wyer Senior died in November 1835 at the Queen Catherine Hotel in Castlereagh Street²⁰¹, and the following February his widow Mary Wyer advertised that the pub was trading again and was available for lease. The license was reportedly still in Jacob Wyer's name²⁰². In April 1836 Michael Naphthali transferred the licence of the Ropemakers' Arms in Market Street to Mr. Fletcher²⁰³. It is not clear what happened to the Ropemakers' Arms name after this, but in the same month an inquest was held in a pub of that name in Castlereagh Street²⁰⁴.

There were newspaper references for this pub until June 1838, when the licensee David Walsh was refused a renewal of the licence. It was reported that 70 of the 262 licence applications were refused that day, which was a reaction by licensing magistrates to the excessive number of pubs in the inner city in the late 1830s (refer above to the Woodlark Whaler Hotel, in Kent Street, which was similarly delicensed in a crackdown in 1840)²⁰⁵.

There is no sign in the press of the continued operation of the Ropemakers' Arms in Market Street after Michael Naphthali gave up the licence in April 1836, and it seems that after Jacob Wyer died,

Mary decided to change the name of the Queen Catherine Hotel to the Ropemakers Arms. In June 1838, Michael Naphthali moved on to the Bald-Faced Stag in George Street²⁰⁶. Then in March 1839, David Walsh announced that he had moved on from the delicensed Ropemakers' Arms and opened the Erin Go Bragh ("Ireland Forever") Eating House in Castlereagh Street²⁰⁷.

Jacob Wyer was a good example of an early colonial entrepreneur who leveraged his ropemaking business through a trade-based pub. Workers in the shipping industry would be attracted to his pub, where they could not only quench their thirst, but inspect samples of his ropes and place orders for whatever they needed. The pub's name was an advertisement for his business which in turn brought customers and drinkers to his pub.

Ropemakers' Arms, 174 George Street, Sydney

Timeline: 1886 – 1893.

The Golden Age Hotel in Lower George Street was first mentioned in the press in September 1874²⁰⁸. In September 1886, the licence was transferred to John Laird Morrison²⁰⁹. He was born in Scotland in 1851 and arrived in Wellington New Zealand in about 1872. He had learned the ropemaking business from his father and became involved in the flax industry as well as ropemaking²¹⁰.

Morrison moved to Sydney and in September 1886 he took over the licence of the Golden Age Hotel²¹¹. The following month, he received approval from the Licensing Court to change the pub's name to the Ropemakers' Arms²¹². The pub's business must have suffered during the long drought and economic downturn of the 1880s because John Morrison was declared bankrupt in June 1888²¹³ and the Ropemakers' Arms was put up for sale the following month²¹⁴. Morrison suffered bankruptcy again in 1893 while he was working as a flax broker²¹⁵.



Figure 30 North Queensland Hotel 1902 (City of Sydney Archives)

Meanwhile the licence of the pub was transferred to Thomas Carvill in November 1891²¹⁶ and by 1893 he changed the pub's name to the North Queensland Hotel²¹⁷. The place became run down and eventually closed its doors in 1906²¹⁸. The following year, the large hotel building was divided into three commercial premises, with a provision merchant and restaurant in 174, a fish shop in 174a and a pastry cook working in 174b²¹⁹. The site seemed to retain a series of alcohol licences, as the

McWilliams Wine Saloon was operating at 174a in 1933²²⁰ and it was called the New Tavern Hotel in 1974²²¹. In recent years it was the site of the well-known Jackson's on George Hotel, which was redeveloped in 2018.

This was another pub named by a ropemaker in honour of his profession. But John Laird Morrison had the bad luck to arrive in Sydney during an economic downturn in the 1880s. This turned into a full-blown depression in the 1890s, and he suffered bankruptcy twice during this decade. He eventually returned to New Zealand where had more success in the flax industry, owning flax mills in Blenheim and elsewhere in the country. He died in 1934 at Lower Hutt, near Wellington²²².

Sailors

Life at sea in the age of sail was filled with hardship. Sailors endured cramped quarters, disease, poor pay and even worse food, and the inevitable bad weather. Men working at sea were cut off from normal life on shore for months or even years and faced the daily dangers of the sea and the weather.

A seaman had to be tough to survive at sea, and strict discipline was maintained on board. Ships' officers hoped that this would keep morale high and prevent mutiny. Flogging was the most common punishment, with the whole ship's crew often made to watch. The end of a rope or the infamous cat-o-nine-tails was used. A seaman found guilty of murder or mutiny would be hanged from the yard arm.

The main rations at sea were salt beef or pork, cheese, fish, ale and ship's biscuit. The quality of the food deteriorated during the voyage due to storage problems or poor drainage. Rats and other vermin were often a problem²²³.

A day in the life of a sailor

Life aboard a ship in the nineteenth century began early. Sailors were typically roused before dawn by the boatswain's whistle. The first duties of the day often included scrubbing the decks with holystone (a stone about the size of a Bible, hence the name) to keep the ship clean and reduce the risk of disease.

Breakfast consisted of hardtack (ship's biscuit), salted meat or fish and possibly some porridge if grains were available. Coffee and tea were brewed from meagre supplies. Fresh food was a rarity, as voyages often lasted weeks or months, making food preservation essential.

The crew then began the first "watch" of the day, a system dividing the day into shifts, ensuring the ship was constantly manned and operational. The duties included:

- Helmsmen steering the ship to maintain the course set by the captain or navigator,
- Lookouts stationed in the crow's nest scanning the horizon looking for land, hazards, or other ships,
- Deckhands who performed maintenance tasks such as repairing sails, tightening rigging and tending to the cargo.

By noon, temperatures in warm climates could soar, and sailors drank rationed water or grog, a mixture of water and rum. Alcohol was a potential source of conflict or accidents if drunk to excess.

A midday meal was similar to breakfast, although occasionally the cook may prepare a stew using limited ingredients to add variety.



Figure 31 Sailors' meal at sea (Arthur Tanner)

Despite the demands of shipboard life, sailors often found time to relax and bond. These breaks were often spent mending clothing, carving scrimshaw (etched designs in bone or ivory) or telling stories or singing songs. Sea shanties, rhythmic work songs, played an important role in fostering teamwork and lifting morale during arduous tasks.

As the sun sank toward the horizon, the crew prepared the ship for nighttime navigation. Lanterns were lit and the lookout's vigilance increased, as hazards became harder to spot. Dinner was also much like the previous meals in its simplicity. The night watch was a time of heightened responsibility, requiring keen attention to the stars, wind and waves. The vast star-studded sky served as a constant reminder of both the majesty and peril of their vocation²²⁴.

Sailors' pubs

With so many seamen either visiting or living in Sydney in the nineteenth century, it was inevitable that there would be numerous pubs catering directly to them in The Rocks and Darling Harbour areas. Several of them lasted only a few years, and not much is known about them, such as:

- The Three Jolly Sailors Hotel, Harrington Street, which was licensed from 1830 to 1839²²⁵.
- The Sailors' Return Hotel, Cumberland Street, which was licensed from 1829²²⁶ to 1839²²⁷. In May 1840, the pub was one of 88 hotels in The Rocks area whose licence renewals were refused by the Licensing Court due to the excessive number of pubs at the time²²⁸.
- The Sailor's Return or Quarryman's Home Hotel, Kent and Argyle Streets was first licensed in 1828²²⁹ until 1839²³⁰.
- The Sailor's Return Hotel, Pitt Street and Brougham Place. This pub was first licensed in May 1845²³¹, but after the licence was transferred in March 1846²³², it was not mentioned in the press again.
- The Sailor's Delight Hotel, Essex Lane. This pub also had a short life, being first licensed in July 1833²³³ until it was sold by Thomas Jones in 1836²³⁴.

- The Sailor's Home Hotel, 81 George Street, The Rocks. The first newspaper mention of this pub was in June 1870²³⁵ and it seemed to operate only until the lease, licence and fittings were sold two years later²³⁶.

British Seamen's Hotel, 39-43 Argyle Street, The Rocks

Timeline: 1868 – 1899.

The site of this hotel formed part of the first Sydney Hospital garden between 1795 and 1816, behind Dr. William Redfern's house. In 1830, Frederick Unwin bought the corner block, on Harrington and Argyle Streets. He leased the house on the site to Caleb Salter who received a publicans' licence to operate the King's Head Hotel in 1830 until at least 1837.

From 1846 until at least 1861 (the end of the recorded publicans' licences index) it was called the Rose and Crown. By 1865, *Sands' Directory* called the building the Argyle Hotel and from 1868 it was the British Seamen's Hotel, managed by Mary Wormleighten²³⁷.

The graziers John and William Gill bought the building in about 1885 and in 1886 erected the existing building in the Federation Free Classical Style. In 1899, the name was changed to Hugh's Family Hotel, then to McCarthy's Hotel in the 1920s. The Crown took over the property in 1903 as part of the general resumption of The Rocks at that time after the recent bubonic plague scare.



Figure 32 British Seamen's Hotel, Argyle Street (City of Sydney Archives)

In 1928, the property's usage was changed to a boarding house, which remained until 1955, when it was converted into an office for Thomas Playfair Pty Ltd, a large meat export company. The Sydney Cove Redevelopment Authority took over the property in 1970. Major conservation work was undertaken in 1995, and a range of tenants came and went since then. Today it is the Endeavour Brewery and Tap Rooms²³⁸.

Mariners' Hotel, 22 Lime Street, Darling Harbour

Timeline: 1879 – 1905.

This pub was located near the A.S.N. Company's wharf in Darling Harbour, and began operation in 1878²³⁹. There were several other wharves in that part of the harbour, bringing in dozens of ships with goods that required customs duty to be paid before they could be sold in Sydney. The proximity to all this produce led to an underworld trade in contraband goods arriving on ships.

In September 1895, the police raided the Mariner's Hotel and found ten bags of cigars and several cases of tobacco, on which the police alleged the duty had not been paid. The goods were taken to the Queen's warehouse, and legal proceedings were instigated against the licensee, Charles Lawrence Smith²⁴⁰.

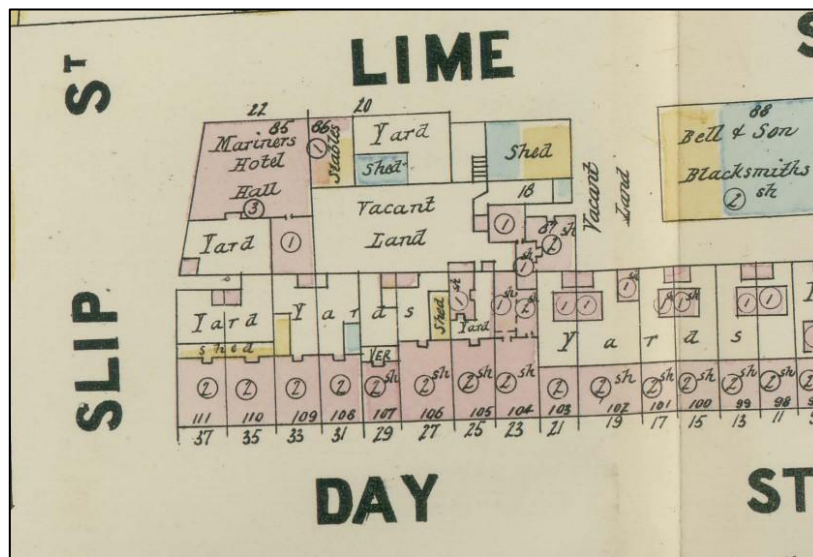


Figure 33 Mariners' Hotel Lime Street 1880 (Dove's Plans)

After a court case in which Smith claimed that the goods were left by two men whom he did not know²⁴¹, and who checked in as residents while he was out, the judge fined him £100 or 3 months jail for concealing 10,050 cigars and 273lb of tobacco in order to avoid payment of duty. The goods were reportedly worth about £60²⁴².

The pub continued to operate, changing publicans a couple of times until March 1905, when its licence was cancelled by the Licensing Court²⁴³. By the following year, the A.S.N. Company's stores and workshop, which had been constructed next to the pub in about 1900²⁴⁴, expanded to take over almost the whole block on Lime Street²⁴⁵.

Sailor's Return Hotel, 33 Harrington Street, The Rocks

Timeline: 1854 – 1869.

In March 1854, William Harrison was granted a licence for the Sailor's Return Hotel in Harrington Street²⁴⁶. The pub's connection to seafaring was highlighted the following year when the whale boat *Bream* was advertised for sale through the pub, complete with oars and sails²⁴⁷.

In May 1857, John Madden became the licensee²⁴⁸. Madden (along with John Lord of the Waterman's Arms down the road) was fined five shillings for failing to keep the lamp near his door

burning all night²⁴⁹. Back in the days before widespread street lighting, the streets and laneways of Sydney were dark and possibly dangerous places, and publicans were required under the *Licensed Publicans Act* to secure a lamp above their front door and keep it going all night. Pubs were generally exempt if a public gas lamp was located nearby.

John Madden died in November 1858 at the age of 67²⁵⁰ and his son John Junior took over the licence²⁵¹ until May 1861 when his mother Bridget then took over the pub's licence²⁵². Bridget must have decided to give it away in 1869, because she advertised the licence and all fittings for sale²⁵³. She died in Woolloomooloo in March 1870, aged 69²⁵⁴.

In November 1893, John Sillick, licensee of the Sailor's Return Hotel, was declared bankrupt²⁵⁵, a fairly common outcome during the severe economic depression of the time. That was the end of the Sailor's Return as a pub, and it was converted into a boarding house in 1894 with eleven rooms for rent²⁵⁶.

Pilots

Sydney Harbour services a busy port with large-scale shipping movements, and for safety reasons pilotage is a necessary feature. Pilotage is the use of trained navigators to guide ships to berths within the port and out again. It is one of the oldest and least known of Sydney's professions, tracing its history back to the earliest settlement. Watsons Bay has for a long time been the home to Sydney's pilots, named after Robert Watson, a former quartermaster on the *Sirius*, who gave his name to the suburb. He was formally appointed as pilot of Port Jackson in 1811.

With the development of whaling, sealing and other import and export trades, the volume of ships entering the harbour jumped from 155 in 1831 to 1,327 in 1861. While charts of the harbour warned of its dangers, oversight was still required, and from 1833 legislation required almost all vessels to use a pilot to enter or leave Port Jackson. The permanent pilot station at Watsons Bay was constructed in 1860.

There are no recommended safe anchorages off the coast for vessels entering Sydney Harbour, and high seas are hazardous. The early pilots used open whaling boats to reach arriving ships, and by 1875 there was a dedicated pilot vessel, the *Thetis*, for the five pilots. With a well-organised system of pilotage, there have been relatively few large-scale disasters, the last major one being a collision between the ferry *Greycliffe* and the steamer *Tahiti* in 1927. Pilotage is compulsory in the ports of Sydney Harbour and Botany Bay for all commercial shipping without special exemptions.

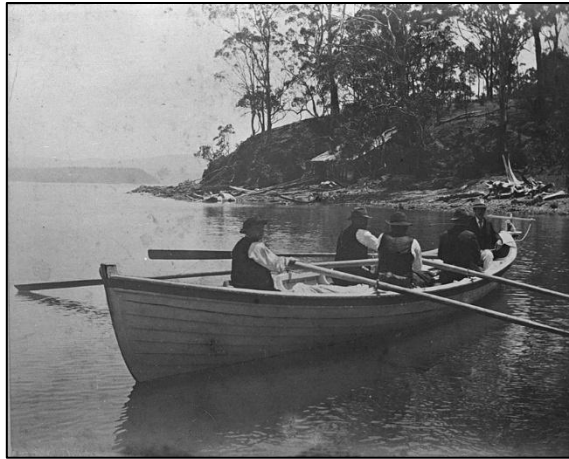


Figure 34 Pilot boat Sydney Harbour 1860s (SLNSW)

While the captain remains in legal command of the ship, the pilot acts as a senior adviser only. Pilots are employed locally and bring to the ship expertise in handling large vessels in confined waterways and expert local knowledge. With the shift of container shipping and car carriers to Botany Bay and Port Kembla, cruise ships will be the main vessels requiring Sydney Harbour's pilotage in the future²⁵⁷.

Pilots' pubs

The Pilot Inn, Lower George Street, then Parramatta Street

Timeline: 1845 – 1852.

In May 1845, John Dalley was granted a new publican's licence for the Pilot Inn, in Lower George Street in The Rocks²⁵⁸. The pub was located opposite the Commissariat Stores²⁵⁹, where the Museum of Contemporary Art stands today. Two months later, Dalley transferred the licence to Michael Fitzpatrick²⁶⁰ who moved the licence and name to a pub in Parramatta Street (later George Street West, and now Broadway)²⁶¹, on the corner of Harris Street²⁶². The George Street pub was then advertised for sale²⁶³.

In September 1845, Fitzpatrick transferred the licence to Peter Henry Valentine²⁶⁴. Valentine was an emancipated convict who became very wealthy acquiring property all over Sydney and Parramatta. In the 1850s, he ventured to the goldfields at Hill End, where Valentine's Mine is probably named after him.

Valentine Street in Ultimo is probably also named after him as he previously operated a quarry near the location in 1839²⁶⁵. In August 1846, the Officers and Brethren of the Royal Order of Foresters were requested to attend the Pilot Inn in Parramatta Street, for the purpose of opening a Court of the Royal Foresters at his hotel²⁶⁶.

Valentine was declared insolvent a few months after this, during the severe economic depression during that decade²⁶⁷. The pub's licence was transferred to Honora Simes in July 1847²⁶⁸. She had previously run the William the Fourth Hotel in Pitt Street before handing the licence over to Daniel Rogers in December 1846²⁶⁹ following the death of her husband, the comedian Thomas Simes, in October 1846²⁷⁰.

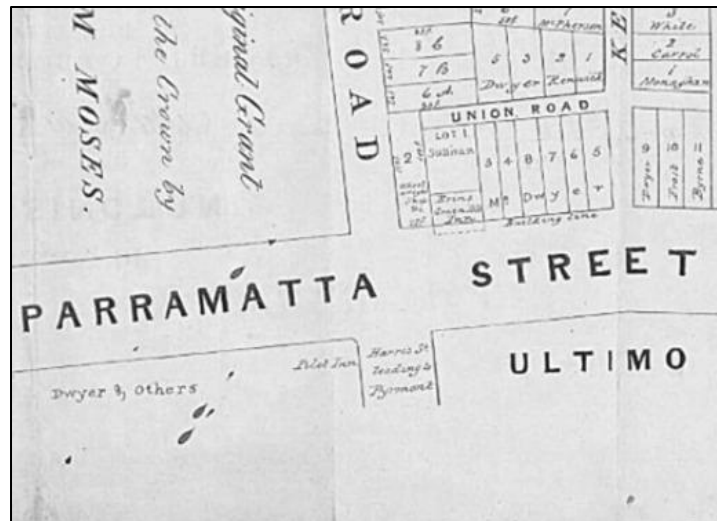


Figure 35 Pilot Inn 1850 (National Library of Australia)

Honora Simes operated the Pilot Inn until 1851, when she advertised the pub for lease, on account of ill health²⁷¹. William Howard took over the licence in early 1852²⁷², but he must have left the pub in April when he was granted the licence of the nearby Bull's Head Inn in George Street²⁷³. The Pilot Inn was not mentioned in the Publicans' Licences Index or the press after this.

This pub began its short life in The Rocks, close to where the harbour pilots lived and worked. But soon afterwards the licensee Michael Fitzpatrick moved the licence and name to the other end of town (although it was not too far from Blackwattle Bay and Cockle Bay). It may have simply been the convenience of keeping his current licence that prompted this, rather than the expectation that the maritime trade would follow him.

Customs and excise workers

The Collector of Customs oversaw the increasingly complex administration of shipping, trade and immigration in Sydney. Customs clerks worked all around the harbour: in Customs House, on every ship, on the wharves and in the bonded warehouses. Detection of smuggling and contraband goods was part of a day's work for diligent Customs officials. Incoming ship manifests had to accurately describe their cargo for the payment of duties. Scrutineers would search every nook and cranny of a ship.

For over a century, the collection of excise and duty on goods was the chief form of government revenue and it bankrolled the development of the nation. Customs regulations also controlled medicinal and illicit drugs, passports, patents, trademarks, copyright, and plant and animal quarantine²⁷⁴. Customs duties were first collected in New South Wales in 1799. Excise duty is a tax on goods that are produced domestically (for example, alcohol, tobacco and fuel) while customs duty is a tax imposed on goods imported or exported internationally²⁷⁵.

Custom House, Argyle Street, The Rocks

The first Custom House constructed in Sydney was at 12-20 Argyle Street in The Rocks. European usage of this site commenced with the planting of herb and vegetable gardens for Sydney's first hospital. The first building was a house commenced by Captain John Piper in 1826, who sold it

before completion to Mary Reibey in 1828. Frederick Unwin then bought the building and completed it in about 1829. It was a three-level building with a dressed sandstone elevation to Argyle Street.

Construction of the East Wing of the house was begun in 1826 by Captain Piper, and from 1830 it was called the “Custom House”. Frederick Unwin purchased the property and construction resumed in 1839. From around 1844, goods such as brandy, wine, tea, cheese, tobacco, flour and sugar were stored there.



Figure 36 Argyle Stores 1915 (Rocks Discovery Museum)

In 1845, the Sydney City Council *Rate Assessments Book* listed the Custom House as “two floors in bad repair”²⁷⁶. It was about this time that customs activities were transferred to a new building at Circular Quay. After this, the Argyle Street building was used as a bonded and free store. Today, the Argyle Stores are used for offices, a bar, a function room and a restaurant²⁷⁷.

Customs House, Circular Quay

The first Customs House building at Circular Quay was completed in 1845, a simple two-storey building in the Greek Revival Style and primarily used as offices for customs staff and a clearing house for port transactions. Bonded goods were stored at the Queen’s Warehouse in a corner of the Customs House grounds, although as trade grew most of this storage was contracted out to bond storage companies.

The building was cold and damp because it was built on reclaimed land, and by the early 1880s had outgrown its usefulness. Under direction of Colonial Architect James Barnet, the building was extended horizontally, and a third storey added. After 1901, the new Commonwealth Customs Department occupied the building until 1990. The customs function of the building ceased at that time when the federal government leased the building to the City of Sydney Council, who refurbished it for use as a public building containing a library, shops, restaurants and galleries²⁷⁸.



Figure 37 Customs House Circular Quay (Dictionary of Sydney)

Metcalfe Bond Stores

A bond store is a building in which imported but dutiable goods may be stored or may undergo manufacturing operations without payment of duty. They may then be exported again without payment of duty or withdrawn for consumption upon payment of duty at the applicable rate. Bonded warehouses provide specialised storage services such as deep freeze or bulk liquid storage and coordination with transportation. They are an integral part of the global supply chain.

The Metcalfe Bond Stores is a heritage-listed former bond store and warehouse at 68-84 George Street in The Rocks. The building stands on the site of the former garden or orchard for Robert Campbell's Wharf House (1800-1883)²⁷⁹. The present building was constructed in two sections in 1912 and 1916²⁸⁰.

Customs and excise pubs

Custom House Hotel, Argyle Street.

Timeline: 1832 - 1881.

The first licence for the Custom House Inn in Argyle Street was granted to Francis Green in 1832²⁸¹, two years after the opening of the Custom House across the road in 1830. By the early 1850s, it was called the Old Custom House Inn in the press (following the opening of another Custom House Hotel in Circular Quay in 1845)²⁸². The pub did a brisk trade with mariners and wharf labourers during the 1850s and 1860s²⁸³.

In March 1854, Isaac Moore took over the licence²⁸⁴. His family had purchased sixty acres at Clontarf on the north side of Middle Harbour in 1834. They operated the Clontarf Pleasure Grounds from the end of 1863, when the first advertisement appeared for a Grand Steam Excursion by the St Benedict's and St Patrick's Young Men's Societies²⁸⁵. Tickets for excursions from Sydney were sold in the Custom House Hotel.

By the time Isaac Moore died in November 1866²⁸⁶, the Pleasure Grounds were being run by his sons Edmund, William and Thomas. The most sensational incident there was the attempted assassination

in March 1868 of Prince Alfred, the Duke of Edinburgh, by the Irish Fenian supporter James O'Farrell²⁸⁷.

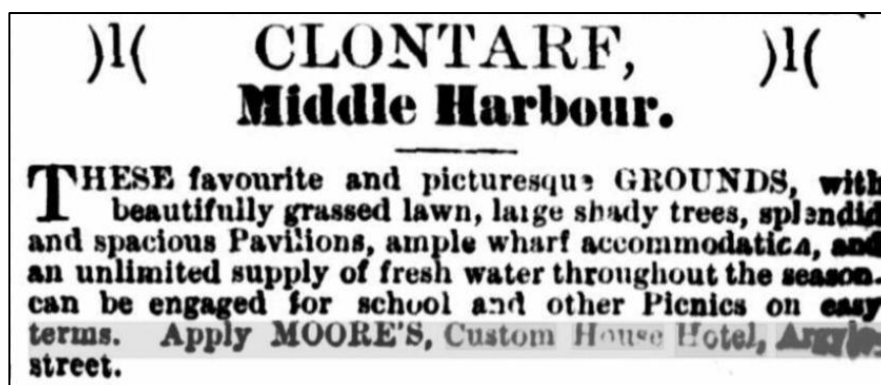


Figure 38 Clontarf Pleasure Grounds (*Protestant Standard* 10 June 1871)

But the building was showing its age by January 1881 when James Power applied to have his licence transferred from the Hibernian Hotel in Cumberland Street to the old Custom House Hotel in Argyle Street. At the Licensing Court hearing, police Inspector Johnson deposed that he had recently visited the Custom House Hotel, and it was in an old, dilapidated building, now in a ruinous state, and utterly unfit for habitation. The ceilings were falling in, the floors had sunk several inches, and the staircase was tumbling down. There was not a single room in the house that was fit to go into and the place was altogether in bad condition.

The building itself encroached several feet on the pavement, leaving barely three feet for pedestrians. Its drunken and disorderly patrons had been complained about for many years. In his defence, James Power said he purchased the place about seven months ago with the intention of keeping it as a hotel. If he got a licence, he intended to repair the building. His lawyer Mr. Merriman argued for his client to be allowed to repair the place, saying there were many houses in Sydney worse than this one. Furthermore, his client would be ruined if he was not granted a licence.

But Inspector Johnson insisted that nothing short of pulling the place down and rebuilding would make it fit for a hotel, saying that it was a disgrace to the city. The Bench of Magistrates refused the application by a majority of seven to three, so the pub closed²⁸⁸. In July 1881, the publican Caroline Cameron took over the licence of the Civil Service Hotel in Elizabeth Street, which was transferred from Arthur W. Laws²⁸⁹.

Having moved to Elizabeth Street, Caroline Cameron then took over the licence of the Custom House Hotel from Charles Jennings²⁹⁰. It is not clear what all this maneuvering of licences was about, but Ms. Cameron continued to run the Civil Service Hotel using the licence from the defunct Custom House Hotel until at least 1885²⁹¹. *Sands' Sydney Directory* listed 51 Argyle Street as vacant in 1882, then from 1883 Sargeant and Company, providores, wine and spirit merchants, operated from the site²⁹².

Customs House Hotel, Macquarie Place

Timeline: 1845 - 1985.

Customs House Hotel in Macquarie Place opened at the of 1845²⁹³, the same year a new Customs House building was constructed at Circular Quay (to replace the older one in Argyle Street). In September 1848, the pub's licensee Robert Woodriff published an advertisement that spelled out his target market by writing: "Merchants, Captains and others are respectfully informed they will find every accommodation at the above hotel, with the best of dinners, spirits, ales, etc." ²⁹⁴.

In January 1852, the pub was selling entrance tickets to competitors in an anniversary regatta, with sailing boats up to 17 feet, watermen in licensed boats pulling a pair of oars and rowed whale boats²⁹⁵. The regatta was in celebration of the 64th anniversary of the colony²⁹⁶. In October 1895, real estate agents Richardson and Wrench advertised that the pub was for sale²⁹⁷. After being sold, the old building was demolished and a new three-storey building constructed in the Victorian Italianate style²⁹⁸.

John Cantor, the licensee in the 1920s, was closely involved in automobile racing. In 1926 he competed in a Brookfields Austin Seven at the Maroubra Motor Speedway²⁹⁹. *Smith's Weekly* reported that drinks were on the house at the Customs House Hotel when Cantor had a win at the speedway³⁰⁰.



Figure 39 Charles Kingsford-Smith & Charles Ulm 1929 (National Library)

John Cantor was an old friend and business associate of the pioneer aviator Sir Charles Kingsford-Smith³⁰¹. In June 1928, Kingsford-Smith entertained the crowd at the Customs House Hotel with an evening of pre-war recitations and stories, after the publican invited him and several of their pre-war friends to an informal gathering at the pub³⁰².

It was rumoured that Kingsford-Smith and his co-pilot Charles Ulm planned their first transpacific flight while they were in the pub in 1928³⁰³. When Kingsford-Smith and Ulm were forced to land in a remote part of north-west Australia on the first leg of a flight to England in March 1929, John Cantor organised a donation of £500 to defray the cost of a search³⁰⁴.

Sir Charles Edward Kingsford-Smith (1897-1935), pioneering aviator, was born in Brisbane. He served in World War I in the Signal Corps and later in the Australian Flying Corps. Back in Australia in 1921, he worked for a joy-flying organisation then as a salaried pilot. Realising the great potential for air

transport in Australia, Kingsford-Smith went into partnership with fellow pilot Keith Anderson and flew with Charles Ulm. They launched a series of demonstration flights, starting with a round-Australia circuit in ten days, a notable achievement with minimal navigation skills.



Figure 40 Customs House Bar 2009 (Dunedoo, Flickr)

In 1928, Kingsford-Smith and Ulm secured funding for a transpacific flight, from California to Brisbane, via Honolulu and Fiji, which was completed in 1928. The aborted flight to England was resumed in June 1929 and completed in the record time of 12 days 18 hours. After many more record-breaking long-distance flights, in November 1935 Kingsford-Smith and J.T. Pethybridge took off for England to attempt one more speed record, but the plane disappeared off the coast of Burma.

Charles Kingsford-Smith dedicated much of his life to promoting and demonstrating his belief that the future of world transport was in aviation. His contribution to civil aviation was the faith and determination driven by this belief that placed him among the world's notable pioneers³⁰⁵.

In June 1954, the "Down Memory Lane" column in *The Land* newspaper recalled that there used to be three white goats that belonged to the Custom House Hotel and frolicked around the old anchor in the park in Macquarie Place (from *HMS Sirius*, the First Fleet ship that sank at Norfolk Island in 1790). Punctually at 5:30pm they returned to the hotel for food and bedding. The goats were quartered in the vacant area behind the pub that eventually became the back bar. They provided early morning milk for the rum drinkers to mix with their drinks, at a time when the bar was open from 6am to 11pm³⁰⁶.

The present building continued in use as a pub until 1985, during the construction of the Ramada Renaissance Hotel Development which incorporated it and a number of other sites in Macquarie Place. Most of the hotel was demolished with only the façade and marble bar remaining from the original building³⁰⁷. Today, the Customs House Bar operates on the ground floor.

Fishermen

The Sydney City Council built the first Sydney fish market in 1872 in Forbes Street, Woolloomooloo. Prior to this, fishermen hawked their catch around the streets or sold fish directly from their boats in Sydney Cove or Woolloomooloo Bay. The original fish market building was soon too small to serve the growing city, and it was expanded in 1888 and again in 1893.

Meanwhile a private fish market opened in Redfern in 1891. This was not a big hit with the nearby residents, who were woken at 4am by the rumbling fish carts and the “rude raillery of the hawkers”³⁰⁸. However, the Redfern fish market continued until 1923 when the Sydney Council took over all fish marketing, and the private markets were closed³⁰⁹. The Woolloomooloo fish market was closed in 1914 and fish sales moved to the Municipal Markets in Haymarket. In 1945, the State Government assumed control over fish marketing under the *Fisheries and Oyster Farms Act* and began to regulate sales.



Figure 41 Woolloomooloo Fish Market 1872 (State Library of NSW)

In 1966, the fish market was moved to a new site in Blackwattle Bay, Pyrmont. The Sydney Fish Market became the biggest in the southern hemisphere, handling 14,500 tonnes of seafood each year. It offered cooking classes, restaurants and tours. Wholesale market auctions were conducted via a modern computer system, a far cry from the chaos of the first fish market where baskets of fish were tipped in heaps on the floor and sold by a voice auction system³¹⁰.

Fishermen’s pubs

Three Jolly Fishermen, Lower George Street, The Rocks

Timeline 1836-40.

A pub called the Three Jolly Fisherman was first mentioned in the press in January 1827 when it was operating in Castlereagh Street³¹¹, although the licensee is not known. John Walton (1801-1871) was born in London and he and his wife migrated to Sydney in 1827³¹². He became the licensee of the Captain Piper Hotel in George Street in 1834 and 1835³¹³.

Then in 1836, Walton was granted a licence for the Three Jolly Fishermen Hotel in Lower George Street in The Rocks³¹⁴. He was described as a fellmonger (a dealer in hides and skins) when he moved

to Glebe in about 1844³¹⁵. John Miller took over the licence of the pub in June 1837³¹⁶. He was granted licence renewals to April 1839³¹⁷, but the following year was refused the renewal of his licence, along with 87 other pubs in the inner city that were delicensed in a crackdown on the excessive number of pubs³¹⁸.

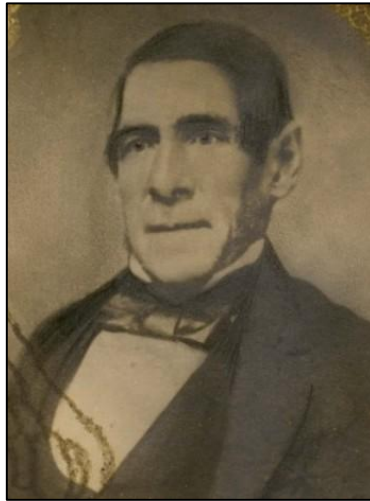


Figure 42 John Walton (City of Sydney Archives)

Being unable to operate his pub, John Miller was forced to sell the stock in trade soon afterwards. He told a reporter that Captain Innes, the Superintendent of Police, had informed him that there was no objection to his character or his hotel, but that there were too many public houses operating in that neighbourhood³¹⁹.

The original licensee John Walton, having been out of the pub business for some years, decided to build an imposing hotel on the corner of Glebe Point Road and Broadway in 1856. He named it the University Hotel and installed his son Robert as the first licensee³²⁰. John used the pub's long room as a platform for launching a political campaign for a seat on Sydney Council, where he served in 1859 and 1860³²¹.

It is not clear exactly where the Three Jolly Fishermen Hotel was located, but it was referred to as near the King's Wharf in 1837³²², and then opposite the Dock Yard in 1838³²³. So, it must have been near the corner of Argyle Street.

The Fisherman's Rest, Dowling Street, Woolloomooloo

Timeline: 1858 - 1862.

William Heaton (1813-1862) was born in England and arrived in Sydney in January 1844 as an assisted immigrant in the *Elizabeth*³²⁴. In 1856, he was working as a boatman and living in Dowling Street, Woolloomooloo³²⁵. Then in May 1858, he was granted a licence for the Fisherman's Rest Hotel in Dowling Street³²⁶. The 1861 *Sands' Sydney Directory* shows that it was located on the eastern side of Dowling Street at number 20, to the south of the Dowling Street Hotel (now the Frisco Hotel), with a block of vacant land between³²⁷.

William Heaton died in March 1862, aged 49³²⁸, and the pub was sold a few months later³²⁹. By 1864, it was called the New Wharf Hotel³³⁰, commemorating the construction of the Cowper Wharf, which

was completed in 1866³³¹. The New Wharf Inn did not last long, however. The licensee Peter Mutchy was declared insolvent in November 1865 and then worked as a coal and timber dealer³³².

The building was sold in 1867³³³, and by 1868 had become a grocer's shop operated by James Hammond³³⁴. In 1905, an article in the *Evening News* that reminisced about Woolloomooloo Bay thirty years earlier wrote that the Fisherman's Rest was a "favourite old hotel, kept by Mr. Heaton near the Bay, where those interested in fishing matters gathered on Sunday mornings and on evenings, and where the yarn-spinner found scope for his marvellous inventive powers in recording phenomenal catches"³³⁵.

Other maritime activities

Wharves

Darling Harbour wharves

The history of Darling Harbour is that of the ships that used it, the shipyards and wharves along its shores and the many factories and warehouses that sprang up in the surrounding streets. The Market Wharf (where Sydney Aquarium now stands) was built in the 1820s to service the Sydney Markets (on the site of the Queen Victoria Building today) and is the only remaining wharf from this era.

In the nineteenth century, Darling Harbour was the centre for the introduction of Industrial Revolution technology. The first steam engine in Australia started operation there in 1815, the first iron-hulled ship was assembled, the colony's first foundries were established along its shores, and the first steamship was launched there. For much of the nineteenth century wheat, wool, coal and timber left from the wharves but from the 1870s wool was the main commodity. After the railway line was extended from the old Central Station, a major railway goods yard was established on the Ultimo side of the harbour in the 1870s.

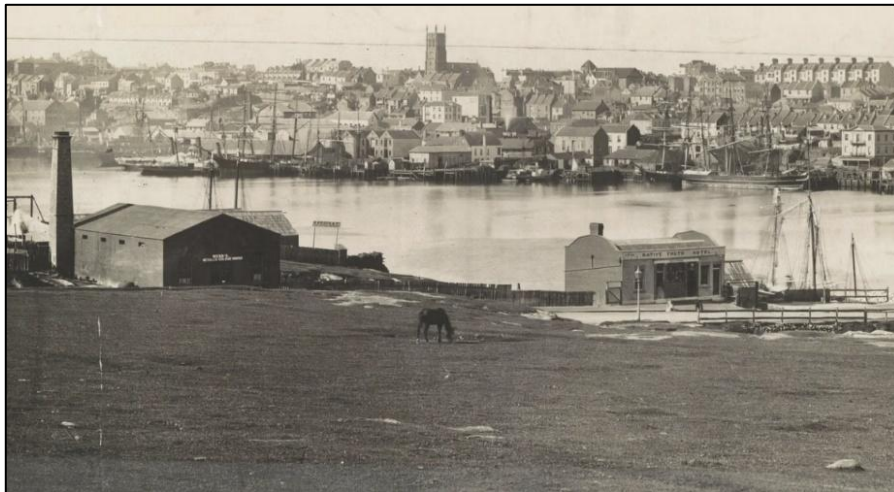


Figure 43 Darling Harbour 1870 (Museums of History NSW)

In 1874, the world's first fully iron wharf was built at present-day Tumbalong Park. The Iron Wharf was considered one of the great engineering feats of the time and the largest iron structure in the world until the Eiffel Tower was built. In 1861, the world's first freezing works were built by Thomas Mort at Darling Harbour, after the process of refrigeration was developed by the engineer E. D. Nicolle. By the 1890s, there was a shift from small-scale industry to warehouses and wool stores and dozens of wharves had been built around the harbour by 1900. The rail yards continued to grow and by 1891 were handling most of the country's exports³³⁶.

Construction of the wharves in Jones Bay, on the western side of Darling Harbour, was authorised by the Sydney Harbour Trust to cope with the unprecedented volumes of wool, wheat and other produce destined for export, as Circular Quay was already too crowded to handle these new demands. The jetties and wharves were built between 1911 and 1919. The rail network brought trains directly onto the wharf and the most modern technology was utilised, such as electric

capstans, electric lighting, lifts, cranes and mobile gantries. This allowed goods to be loaded to and from upper and lower levels.

During World War II, the wharf was adapted to cater for the tens of thousands of troops and civilians travelling to and from the theatres of war. After the war, great numbers of immigrants arrived there, but cargo traffic declined as containers were introduced and moved to other port facilities such as Botany Bay. A new overseas passenger terminal at Circular Quay then took ocean liners away from Pymont Bay.

Jones Bay Wharf was declared excess to the requirements of shipping in 1991. It was renovated for commercial and residential use, retaining much of the heritage value of the site. It is now a precinct for offices, cafes, restaurants and a function centre³³⁷.

Circular Quay

Circular Quay is located around Sydney Cove, the site of the initial landing of the First Fleet at Port Jackson in January 1788. Governor Arthur Phillip's temporary canvas house was erected on the east side of the cove. The detachment of marines camped at the head of the cove near the Tank Stream, and the main body of convicts was placed on the west side of the cove³³⁸.

Many of the 736 convicts who survived the voyage from England in 1788 were suffering from dysentery, smallpox, scurvy and typhoid on arrival. Governor Arthur Phillip and Surgeon-General John White quickly established a tent hospital in what is now George Street in The Rocks to care for the worst cases. A portable hospital that was prefabricated in England from wood and copper arrived with the Second Fleet in 1790. The present-day Nurses Walk cuts across the site of the old hospital.



Figure 44 Queen's Wharf 1873 (State Library of NSW)

A wharf was built on the western side of Circular Quay between 1797 and 1802 near the current site of the Museum of Contemporary Art to provide a landing place for the hospital and later the Commissariat Stores. It was known as the Hospital Wharf until 1816 when Sydney Hospital opened in Macquarie Street. After that it was called the King's Wharf, then renamed the Queen's Wharf after Victoria ascended the English throne in 1837. The wharf was eventually demolished in 1894³³⁹.

In the 1830s, a Semi-Circular Quay was built on the reclaimed tidal flats of the Tank Stream's estuary, supervised by Colonial Engineer George Barney, commencing in 1837 and completed in 1844. This name for the quay remained in popular usage until the 1850s. Port facilities at Sydney Cove were improved by the provision of wharves, the regularisation of the shoreline with sandstone quarried at Bennelong Point, and the construction of a lengthy berth and road on the eastern side.

Wool stores and warehouses began to be constructed east of the Tank Stream from the mid-1860s, with Mort & Co's the most conspicuous, completed in 1869. From the second half of the 1870s and throughout the 1880s, the wool industry grew steadily. By 1890, many of the prominent names in the wool industry had wool stores at East Circular Quay.

However, the expanded trade stimulated construction of major wool stores on the Pyrmont-Ultimo peninsula. Goldsbrough Mort's gigantic wool store was built in 1883. These had the advantage of the Darling Harbour goods railway line, leading to a shift in commercial focus from Sydney Cove to Darling Harbour towards the end of the nineteenth century. By the 1880s, Sydney Cove was becoming a focus for commuter traffic on both ferries and trams³⁴⁰.

Woolloomooloo Bay

Woolloomooloo is a horseshoe-shaped valley immediately east of the original settlement of Sydney Town. It became a desirable place to live after Governor Sir Ralph Darling chose it to create a high-status area. He granted land to his friends and colleagues to build grand houses with approved landscaping.



Figure 45 Woolloomooloo Bay c1904 (Powerhouse Museum)

But by the 1850s, many of the large houses were being turned into boarding houses. The catalyst for the area's social decline was the expansion of the wharfage on the bay. There had been some small-scale maritime activities along the bay since the 1820s, but in the 1850s, the mangrove swamps were drained and in 1866 a new semi-circular wharf called Cowper Wharf was constructed. Over the next few decades, the area became crowded with small houses, pubs and billiard rooms catering to a maritime-focused population. By 1858 the ferry from Circular Quay to Cremorne called in on Sundays. Once the Cowper Wharf was operating, there was a regular ferry service on the Watsons Bay run, operating until 1924.

The wharf was used by small coastal ships, mainly timber traders, so the nearby land was occupied by sawmills, timber yards and small-scale boatbuilding. It was also the centre of Sydney's fishing trade, with the catch coming in from the coastal waters north and south of Sydney. In 1872, the council built a fine fish market on Plunkett and Bourke Streets. After 1911, the fish market operations moved away from Woolloomooloo.

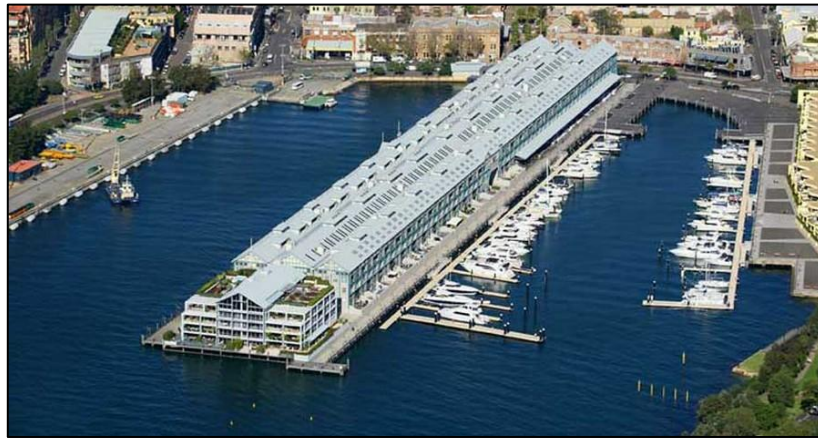


Figure 46 Finger Wharf, Woolloomooloo (PocketOz website)

After the Sydney Harbour Trust was established in 1901 to take over the privately-run properties around Sydney's waterfront and to build modern facilities, it constructed the massive Finger Wharf between 1911 and 1915. This enormous structure bisected the circular shore wharf and was claimed to be both the largest wooden-piled building and the largest finger wharf in the world.

The Finger Wharf took overseas shipping from Europe, America and the Pacific. From 1899 to 1902, soldiers sailed from Woolloomooloo to the Boer War and from that time through two World Wars, troop movements have given the place an air of national importance³⁴¹.

Wharf-related pubs

The many wharves that sprang up in The Rocks and Darling Harbour attracted publicans keen to cater for the drinking requirements of the wharf labourers, sailors and other dock workers. Some of these pubs were short-lived, at least for the time they were named after a nearby wharf. Three of these were:

- The Market Wharf Inn, corner of Market and Sussex Streets, Darling Harbour. This pub was known as the Albion Inn, Market Street, in 1858³⁴² before changing its name to the Market Wharf Inn in May 1859 when Henry Ruff took over the licence³⁴³. The pub was sold in 1863, an advertisement highlighting the expected increase in trade from the Market Wharf 100 yards away³⁴⁴. The new licensee Michael Fennelly renamed the pub the Harbour View Inn³⁴⁵.
- The Queen's Wharf Hotel, 105 George Street, The Rocks. Originally part of the first Sydney Hospital garden, the American Hotel operated from 1870, becoming the Sydney & Newcastle Hotel in 1879, then the Messageries des Maritimes Hotel in 1885, commemorating the large French merchant shipping company³⁴⁶. The pub became the Queen's Wharf Hotel in 1888³⁴⁷ and lasted until 1890 when the fittings and fixtures of the hotel were sold³⁴⁸. The building was then converted into a restaurant in 1891³⁴⁹.

- The Baltic Wharf Hotel, 37 Wharf Street, Darling Harbour. This pub entered a crowded pub market in 1860³⁵⁰ when there were already three pubs in Market Wharf Street standing between its front door and the thirsty wharfies on the docks³⁵¹. The pub survived until 1872³⁵² but had closed before the building was sold in August 1873³⁵³. The Baltic Wharf, next to Pyrmont Bridge, was built by the timber merchant Alexander Burns in the 1850s for his timber imports³⁵⁴.

Cowper Wharf Hotel, Forbes and Bland Streets, Woolloomooloo

Timeline: 1866 – present (now the Tilbury Hotel).

The land at the end of Woolloomooloo Bay was largely alluvial mud flats until 1863 when a seawall was completed, enabling the reclamation of land between present day Griffiths Street (six streets from the Bay) and the waterline. The reclaimed land was subdivided by the Government and offered for sale in 1866³⁵⁵.

The Cowper Wharf Hotel was first listed in *Sands Directory* in 1866, run by James Cain³⁵⁶. In July 1871, a public meeting was held at the pub of those in favour of the establishment of a Fish and Produce Market at Woolloomooloo Bay by the City Council³⁵⁷. At the meeting, it was pointed out that a fish market was one of the greatest requirements for Sydney. All the small towns in England had a fish market, but Sydney had none. It was claimed that the way fish were handled here, thrown on a dusty floor, then washed in water at a sewer outlet, made them almost unfit for human food. Forbes Street in Woolloomooloo was deemed to be the most suitable site for a fish market³⁵⁸.



Figure 47 Cowper Wharf Hotel 1922 (Tooth & Co Collection)

By 1882, Woolloomooloo was one of the most popular districts of the city. The streets were tightly packed with small workers' cottages interspersed with a few of the earlier mansions. The Cowper Wharf underwent a large-scale reorganisation between 1905 and 1912 when the Finger Wharf was completed. At the same time, a number of road widening and upgrading projects were commenced by the City Council, including the construction of Cowper Wharf Road. Maritime and shipping activities intensified, and the pubs of Woolloomooloo played an important role in the social life of the area.

Tooth and Co. purchased the pub in 1920³⁵⁹. Soon after this, the Licences Reduction Board, a group of magistrates whose purpose is clear from its name, held licence deprivation hearings for pubs with recent licence violations, including the Cowper Wharf Hotel³⁶⁰. At the hearing into the hotel, the barrister appearing for Tooth and Co. told the Board that the hotel was being demolished and plans had been prepared for a more up-to-date building³⁶¹.

The promise of a new building in a busy area meant that the Cowper Wharf Hotel survived the Board's cull and kept its licence. The old pub was redeveloped into a two-storey Inter-War Free Classical style rendered brick building³⁶². By the 1920s, the pub had become the first point of call on landing at Woolloomooloo for the many English sailors who had travelled from Tilbury Docks with a cargo of goods for Sydney. The pub gradually became known as the Tilbury Hotel in popular usage³⁶³ and the name was made official in 1927³⁶⁴.

The Port of Tilbury is on the north shore of the River Thames, 40km downstream of London Bridge. It is the principal port for London, with extensive facilities for shipping containers, grain and other bulk cargoes. William Holdsworth, the licensee of the Tilbury Hoel, was an Alderman when the Sydney City Council was dismissed by the State Government in December 1927³⁶⁵, amid allegations of corruption and incompetence. The 26 Aldermen were replaced with Commissioners until 1930. The Council was similarly dismissed in 1967-69 and 1987-88³⁶⁶.



Figure 48 Jazz at Tilbury Hotel, 1972 (*Now Magazine*, 25 July 1972)

Sometime after Louis Jean Ardilley took over the licence in August 1972, the hotel became known as "Louis at the Loo", a popular venue where jazz bands played in the rear courtyard on Sunday afternoons. Prior to this, the hotel had mainly depended on the wharf and shipping trade³⁶⁷.

In the early 1990s, the Tilbury Hotel began to host a series of popular revues, usually featuring Jonathan Biggins, Drew Forsyth and Phillip Scott. The revue in 1990 was called *Three Men and a Baby Grand*³⁶⁸. The revues continued until 1997³⁶⁹.

Dowling Street Wharf Hotel, 46 Dowling Street, Woolloomooloo

Timeline: 1854 – present (now the Frisco Hotel).

There was a hotel on the site as early as 1854, when William Shipman held a licence for the Dowling Street Wharf Hotel. It was a stuccoed two-storey Victorian Regency style building. Around 1890, the hotel changed its name to the Frisco Hotel, reputedly after the ship *Frisco*, launched the same year (no record could be found this ship, but the Frisco Mail shipping service was frequently mentioned in the newspapers of the time).

In 1907, a new building was constructed on the site for Tooheys Limited, who held a long-term lease on the site. The new building was distinctly larger in scale and designed in the fashionable Federation Arts and Crafts style. In 1921, Tooheys leased the land adjacent to the Frisco Hotel and constructed an extension similar in style to the 1907 building³⁷⁰.



Figure 49 Frisco Hotel Woolloomooloo (History Services NSW)

Ferries

Because much of Sydney's early settlement took place on Sydney Harbour and the Parramatta River, the history of ferries goes back to the earliest days of the colony. From 1789, a convict-built ship known as the *Rose Hill Packet* provided a ferry service along the Parramatta River. This was first called the *Prince of Wales*³⁷¹ but later renamed the *Rose Hill Packet* by the convicts³⁷². Her bulky barge-like shape later earned her the nickname "The Lump"³⁷³.

Apart from passengers, the *Rose Hill Packet* brought much-needed produce from the farms of the Parramatta area to the settlement at Sydney Cove. In the following decade, small packets and other boats moved people and goods around the harbour and along the rivers. As the settlement moved further west, the waterways became the major transport arteries because of the poor quality of the roads and the lack of bridges.



Figure 50 *Rose Hill Packet* replica (Di Emme website)

Few people lived north of the harbour, so the entrepreneur who established the North Shore Steam Ferry Company in 1861 took a financial risk, with fewer than 1,000 residents in the area. Manly was being opened up for subdivision from the 1850s, and the ferry helped develop Manly, with its population growing from 500 in 1871 to 8,000 in 1906.

Sydney Ferries Limited

After a series of mergers by 1899, most of the ferry services were absorbed into a large new company called Sydney Ferries Limited. Then the Port Jackson and Manly Steamship Company was formed in 1907. Patronage of the ferry services continued to grow, and by the start of the 1930s Sydney Ferries Limited had become the world's biggest ferry operator, with some 40 million passenger journeys each year.

The busiest route was from Circular Quay to Milson's Point, where passengers would change to trams or trains and travel as far as Hornsby. Trams met ferry services at most wharves, acting as feeders into the suburbs, while from Circular Quay they took commuters into the city. By the late 1950s, more than fifty ferries serviced the inner harbour runs, while eight larger ferries operated the longer Manly run. Ferries used to also run to Clifton Gardens, Balmoral and The Spit.

But when the Sydney Harbour Bridge opened in 1932, ferry patronage fell dramatically. Once the North Shore train line was extended into the city, the busiest ferry services were almost instantaneously obliterated. The vehicular ferries almost vanished from the harbour, although the Mortlake Ferry, also called the Putney punt, continues to run, having begun operations in 1928.

As with other transport modes, ferries have changed as new technologies have appeared. The world's first double-ended propeller driven ferry was ordered by the North Shore Steam Ferry Company in the late nineteenth century. This set the pattern for the design and construction of the classic Sydney ferry, right up to the present. Generations of ferries have included paddle steamers, double-enders with a wheelhouse at each end, engines that were coal-fired, oil-fired and diesel-powered. The present generation includes hydrofoils and double-hulled catamarans.

But rising fuel prices and fluctuating passenger demand made the economics of the ferry industry more problematic. As a result, the State Government has been forced to take ownership of Sydney's main ferry services rather than see the services disappear. The inner ferry services became government-controlled in 1951, and the Manly services in 1974.

Over time, the ferry services have helped to foster and stimulate ship building, maritime repair and maintenance facilities in Sydney. In the twenty-first century, with Sydney's road traffic worsening and the train system overcrowded, there is growing pressure to reopen ferry routes closed in the past, and to make more use of the harbour and rivers as low-cost, low-maintenance platforms for Sydney's most romantic people-movers.

This led to the reopening of the Watsons Bay and Parramatta services. Manly's fast ferries were replaced by a privately run service, and all government ferries may go the same way, meaning that Sydney's most pleasant way to get to work appears to have come full circle³⁷⁴.

Balmain East ferry wharf

In the early colony, the Balmain peninsula was much easier to access by water than by land. The Balmain East ferry wharf has been operating since the 1840s as Balmain's main wharf. Prior to this, watermen offered the first on-demand services in small skiffs or sailing dinghies. The steamer *Waterman* commenced the first public ferry service in 1844 between Balmain and the Australian Gas Light Company wharf at Millers Point³⁷⁵.

Sydney's electric tram system ran down Darling Street to the wharf from the beginning of the twentieth century and connected with the ferries. The tramway operated until 1954³⁷⁶. The Balmain East wharf is today served by Sydney Ferries Pyrmont Bay service running to Circular Quay via Barangaroo.



Figure 51 Balmain East wharf (Wikimedia)

Ferry-related pubs

The Steam Ferry Inn, corner Windmill and Pottinger Streets, Millers Point

Timeline: 1849 – 1855.

In 1845, the first steam-powered ferry service between Sydney and the North Shore was the *Ferry Queen*, which ran between Windmill Street and Blues Point³⁷⁷. The Steam Ferry Inn on the corner of Windmill and Pottinger Streets was granted a licence in April 1849³⁷⁸. The pub operated until 1855 when Robert Bush was refused a licence renewal in the Licensing Court³⁷⁹.

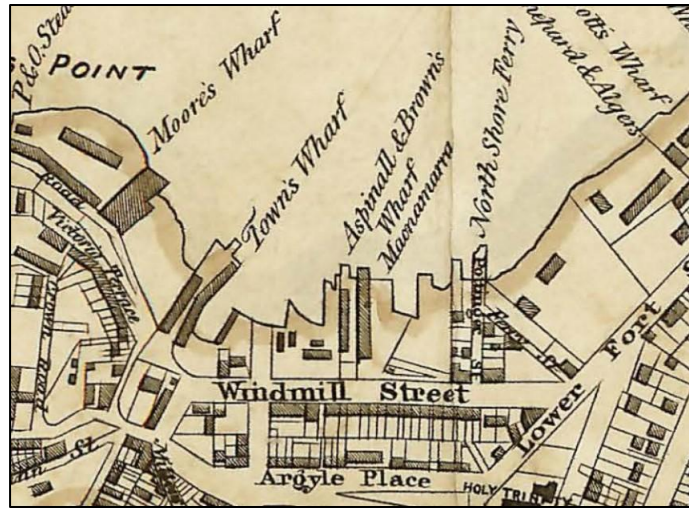


Figure 52 North Shore ferry wharf 1854 (City of Sydney Archives)

The following year, Robert Bush advertised the pub for sale, calling it a substantial house of eight rooms, located close to the North Shore ferry³⁸⁰. After this, John Smith seems to have resurrected the pub, because in September 1858 he transferred the licence to John Farrell. However, this was end of the Steam Ferry Inn in Windmill Street when Farrell moved the licence and the name to a pub in George Street North³⁸¹.

The Steam Ferry Inn in Windmill Street operated for a short time only, but its location near the North Shore Wharf at the time the steam-powered ferry service to Blues Point was established makes it a part of the history of Sydney's ferry services during a time of expansion.

Balmain Ferry Hotel, Erskine and Shelley Streets, Darling Harbour

Timeline: 1894 – 1960.

A regular ferry service from Darling Harbour to Balmain, called the Balmain Ferry Company, was established by Henry Perdriau in 1844³⁸². The Balmain Ferry Wharf was constructed on the Darling Harbour end of Erskine Street soon afterwards.

In September 1852, a publican's licence was granted for the Clarence Hotel on the corner of Erskine and Shelley Streets³⁸³. This was the first of many pubs on this corner, and the name lasted until 1885³⁸⁴. The pub became the Balmain Ferry Hotel in 1894 when John Henry Moyes took over the licence³⁸⁵, but he died the following year, aged 45³⁸⁶.



Figure 53 Balmain Ferry Hotel, Erskine Street c1907 (City of Sydney Archives)

The pub was in the news in January 1933 when the licensee Mr. S. Bullen won the £5,000 first prize in the State Lottery (which is worth over \$600,000 today³⁸⁷). He had previously declared that if he won the lottery he would “turn it on” for his customers when he got the money. Those customers who heard the original promise told their friends and they were waiting in the morning for the pub to open. With the prospect of unlimited free beer on a warm day, the patrons formed a long queue well before the pub opened, and they were still there when closing time finally arrived³⁸⁸. This happened during the Great Depression of the early 1930s when most people had very little money to spend on recreation, so the day of free beer was long remembered by those who were lucky enough to experience it.

In 1952, the *Daily Mirror* reported that Erskine Street may have had more pubs for its size than any street in the country. There were seven pubs in all from the Ferry Wharf to York Street: Balmain Ferry Hotel, Northern Rivers Hotel, Royal Oak Hotel, Queensland Hotel, Wynyard Hotel, Cosmopolitan Hotel and the Occidental Hotel³⁸⁹.

By 1954, the writing was on the wall for the Balmain Ferry Hotel after it was purchased by the Maritime Services Board, who planned to extensively remodel the Darling Harbour wharves in five or ten years’ time. The impending closure became an issue when the Licensing Court convened to consider an order by the Metropolitan Licensing Inspector to repair or rebuild the pub. The magistrate said it seemed unfair to order the owners to rebuild the hotel when it would be demolished in a few years’ time, so the order was postponed indefinitely³⁹⁰.

The pub eventually closed in November 1960, and Tooth & Co. transferred the licence to the Berala Hotel³⁹¹. The area has been modernised and is now part of the King Street wharf restaurant precinct.

Shipping companies

A.S.N. Coy

The Australasian Steam Navigation Company (known as the ASN Co) was an Australian shipping company which operated between 1839 and 1887. It started as the Hunter River Steam Navigation Company in 1839³⁹². In March 1851, the company was reformed as the Australasian Steam Navigation Company³⁹³. In 1887, the company was amalgamated with the Queensland Steam Shipping Company and their respective vessels to form the Australasian United Steam Navigation Company³⁹⁴.

The original ASN Co building in Sydney, opened in 1885 at 1-5 Hickson Road in The Rocks, was a five-storey warehouse with an attached single bay of four stories of office space. The design was a “romantic composition in polychrome brick capped by picturesque Dutch gables”.



Figure 54 ASN Co building, 1-5 Hickson Road (JWC Adam website)

The ASN Co approved free or assisted passage for worthy causes. These included Caroline Chisholm travelling to Moreton Bay to obtain employment for immigrant women and Ludwig Leichhardt going to Moreton Bay for an expedition to Queensland. The company also provided free shipment of plants and specimens to the Botanic Gardens in Melbourne.

The Crown acquired the building in 1887 and the ASN Co moved out two years later. The Commonwealth continued to use the building for different departments until 1991-2 when it was restored to its original 1880s appearance and leased for galleries, retail and commercial uses³⁹⁵.

P&O Company

The Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company (known as P&O) is a British shipping company that started as a regular steamer service between London, Spain and Portugal in 1835 (that is, to the Iberian Peninsula). The Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company was incorporated in 1840 by royal charter.

P&O introduced passenger services in 1844 with a leisure cruise departing Southampton to the Mediterranean. These voyages were the first of their kind and the forerunner of modern cruise

holidays³⁹⁶. The company underwent rapid expansion in the second half of the nineteenth century as its ships became larger and more luxurious³⁹⁷.

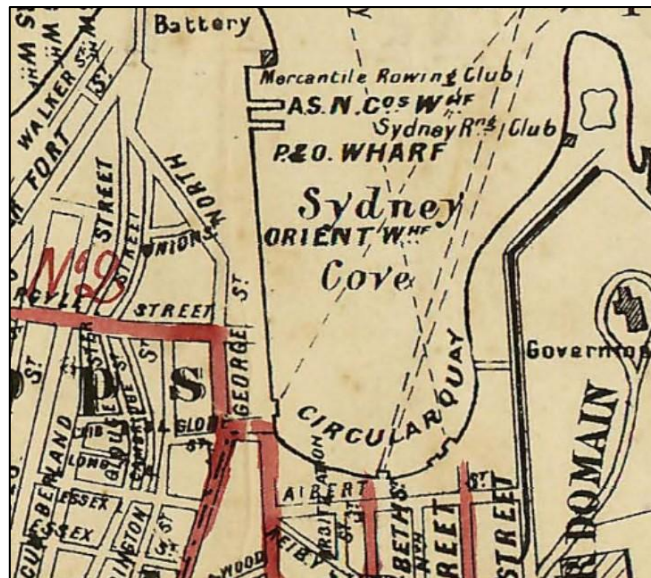


Figure 55 P&O wharf 1887 (City of Sydney Archives)

Mail contracts formed the basis of P&O's prosperity until World War II, but the company continued to be a major commercial shipping line and passenger liner operator. The fleet reached almost 500 ships in the mid-1920s. In 1932, P&O expanded its passenger operations to Australia, introducing a cruise to Brisbane and Norfolk Island³⁹⁸.

85 of the company's ships were sunk in World War I and 179 in World War II. After 1945, business boomed to Australia with the advent of subsidised passages for European immigrants. By 1968, over one million migrants had arrived, many via P&O, after which Australia ended the programme. From then on, P&O concentrated mainly on cargo ships, selling and scrapping many of its cruise ships.

Shipping company pubs

A.S.N. Hotel, 91 George Street, The Rocks

Timeline: 1879 - 1983.

The site of 91 and 93 George Street was originally the Assistant Surgeon's house, constructed shortly after the arrival of the First Fleet in 1788. This is related to the first hospital, located to the south of the site. After a more substantial hospital was constructed in Macquarie Street in 1816, the house was occupied by the architect Francis Greenway.

After his appointment as civil architect ceased in 1822, Greenway claimed he had title to the land, refused to leave, and remained there until 1834. After this, the new owner Frederick Unwin leased the land to the ex-convict carpenter Michael Gannon in 1839 for 21 years, on the condition that he erect along George Street as many substantial three-storied houses as would fill the block.

By 1844, Gannon had constructed a number of buildings on the land, including the New York Hotel at 91 George Street on the corner of Argyle Street, a three-storey building at 93 and the terrace at 95-99 George Street. Gannon was granted a licence for the hotel at 91 George Street in 1840. *Sands*

Directories show that the New York Hotel operated as such until 1861³⁹⁹, after which the building became the warehouse of the shipping brokers Henry Fisher & Son.



Figure 56 ASN Hotel, 91 George Street (Rocks Discovery Museum)

The building reverted to a hotel by 1866, called the Italian Hotel, run by John B. Basetti. The name was changed to the Liverpool Arms in 1869. After a period as the American Hotel in the 1870s, the building became the A.S.N. Co's Hotel in 1879⁴⁰⁰.

In 1890, the City of Sydney Improvement Board reviewed the "ruinous condition and dangerous to the public" building at 93 George Street and resolved that it be condemned forthwith. The pub at 91 was not in good shape either, and the result was that 93 George Street was demolished and rebuilt as a two-storey shop and 91 was substantially rebuilt at the same time, shortly after the Board's order in 1890. Both buildings were leased to Tooth & Co. at the time.

The A.S.N. Hotel reopened in 1892⁴⁰¹ and continued to operate as a hotel tied to Tooth & Co. for most of the twentieth century. Following the outbreak of bubonic plague in Sydney's waterfront areas in 1900, the property was taken over by the Crown as part of the resumption of the entire Rocks area. The Sydney Harbour Trust (called the Maritime Services Board from 1936) administered leases in 91 George Street until 1970, when ownership was taken over by the Sydney Cove Redevelopment Authority.

The solicitor Harvey Taft (1858-1928) took over the licence in 1903 and kept it until 1916. He was born in Sydney to an American father Silas Taft (1825-1865). Through his father, Harvey was a cousin of William Howard Taft, President of the United States from 1909 to 1913. According to family tradition, the A.S.N. Hotel also served as the American Consulate during Harvey's tenure⁴⁰².

In 1955, an internal Tooth & Co. report provided an insight into the character of the hotel and its lodgers at the time: "The Hotel is exceedingly old, the area is on the waterfront, and the lodgers are working men, and it is hard under these conditions to keep the rate of depreciation down. The walls should be oiled in lieu of water-painted or papered, so that they could be washed down".

By the 1970s, the A.S.N. Hotel was trading poorly compared to other hotels in The Rocks under Tooth & Co's supervision. A 1974 report stated that the hotel sold 5 barrels and 20 dozen of

packaged beer per week, whereas Tooth's other hotels in the area (the Fortune of War, Mercantile, Australian and the Glenmore) averaged 30 barrels and 115 dozen of packaged beer on a weekly basis.

The A.S.N. Hotel ceased trading in January 1983, and the NSW Public Works Department commenced substantial renovations to convert the building into a police station. The building was given a Victorian Italianate appearance based on photographs of its earlier appearance. The police station operated on the hotel site until 1989 when it moved across George Street to the former Department of Labour and Industry Building at 132-134 George Street. Today the former pub on the corner is the Belgian Chocolate Café and 93 George Street is the Zia Pina Pizzeria⁴⁰³.

A.S.N. Co's Hotel, John and Mill Streets, Pyrmont

Timeline: 1872 - 1912.

From the early 1870s, the eastern end of John Street in Pyrmont was the site of the John Street ferry wharf, and operating next to the wharf was a large building called the "A.S.N. Coy's Works" in *Sands' Directories*⁴⁰⁴. The A.S.N Hotel opened in 1872⁴⁰⁵ on the corner of Mill Street, a few doors from the works building⁴⁰⁶. The pub was run by the Speight family for the duration of its life, commencing with John Oakley Speight.

In November 1891 he, along with 90 others, was fined £2 by an officer of Her Majesty's Customs, for selling cigars, cigarettes and tobacco without a licence to do so. The Government must have decided this illegal trade was getting out of hand and it needed a crackdown⁴⁰⁷. John Speight died at the hotel in October 1896, aged 53 years⁴⁰⁸. His wife Ann took over the licence and ran the pub until her death in 1909⁴⁰⁹. After this, the licence was transferred to her son Percival⁴¹⁰.



Figure 57 ASN Hotel, Pyrmont c1912 (City of Sydney Archives)

The pub was resumed in 1911 or 1912 by the State Government as part of the widespread resumption of The Rocks at the time⁴¹¹. By 1912, the A.S.N. Co's Works building had been

demolished⁴¹², and the following year all the buildings between Mill Street and the harbour had been pulled down⁴¹³.

This hotel clearly catered for the many workers in the A.S.N. Company's building at the end of John Street. It was an unusual example of a pub that was operated by the same family across two generations for its forty-year life.

P. and O. Hotel, 73 George Street, The Rocks

Timeline: 1885 – 1909.

Pubs have been located at 73 George Street in The Rocks since the King's Head Hotel was first licensed in 1843⁴¹⁴. By the 1880s, P.&O. operated a wharf nearby, close to where the Overseas Passenger Terminal in Circular Quay is located today⁴¹⁵, as well as an office at Circular Quay⁴¹⁶.

In early 1884, William Cook operated the Great Pacific Hotel on the site⁴¹⁷, but he became bankrupt and had to give up the licence⁴¹⁸. In 1884, the pub's name was changed to the P. and O. Hotel by the new licensee Mrs. Mary Ferguson⁴¹⁹, presumably to attract passengers and crew from the P.&O. ships docked nearby.

The hotel continued operating normally until the 1900 bubonic plague outbreak in the dockland area caused the Government to resume the whole of The Rocks and hand it over to the Sydney Harbour Trust, who would decide what to do with each building (the choices were normally to keep, remodel or demolish). The Resumed Properties Branch of the New South Wales Treasury advertised tenders for a five-year lease on the hotel, presumably while its fate was being considered by the Trust Commissioners⁴²⁰.

In the end, the building continued as a hotel until 1909⁴²¹, after which it became a naval and military accommodation centre for servicemen on leave, run by the Salvation Army. It had accommodation for twenty men, a lounge, reading room and dining room. Games and physical drills could be practised in the basement⁴²².



Figure 58 P&O Hotel, 73 George Street (The Rocks website)

The home for servicemen operated until the start of World War I when it moved to a larger centre in Pitt Street. During 1916 and 1917, the building housed the Chinese-language *Tung Wah Times*

newspaper and the Chinese Chamber of Commerce. Other tenants occupied the building until about 1927⁴²³.

In 1927, the building was converted into a branch station of the Central District Ambulance Service, and the façade was altered to allow vehicular access⁴²⁴. The Ken Duncan Gallery operated in the building from about 2008 but has now moved to the Central Coast⁴²⁵.

The City of Sydney Archives referred to this as the oldest identifiable hotel building in The Rocks⁴²⁶. Like the two hotels named after the A.S.N. Company, the P. and O. Hotel made a direct pitch to the hundreds of passengers and crew arriving on the many large cruise liners and cargo ships owned by the company.

Other shipping pubs

Numerous pubs sprang up in colonial Sydney celebrating maritime symbols such as anchors or named after different types of ships. Some were short-lived, but others survived into the twentieth century. This is a summary of the more ephemeral shipping pubs that were recorded in the Publicans' Licences Index and *Sands' Sydney Directories*:

- Clipper's Arms Hotel, 243 Bourke Street, Darlinghurst. Opened in about 1871 on the corner of O'Brien's Lane⁴²⁷ and continued operating until the Licences Reduction Board delicensed it in December 1922⁴²⁸. The pub is likely to be named after famous clipper ships such as the *Cutty Sark*, which plied the wool trade between Australia and Britain at record speeds from the early 1870s.
- Blue Anchor Hotel, George Street and Brown Bear Lane. Licensed from 1838 to 1845⁴²⁹. A blue anchor is a symbol of strength, courage and adventure on the high seas, and was a popular logo for the Royal Navy⁴³⁰.
- Steam Packet Hotel, Sussex and Market Streets, licensed 1831-37⁴³¹. Steam packet shipping services regularly ran up and down the eastern coast carrying passengers, mail and freight.
- Golden Anchor Tavern, Bridge Street, licensed 1834-37⁴³².
- Golden Anchor Hotel, Castlereagh Street, licensed 1832⁴³³.
- Hope and Anchor Hotel, George Street, licensed 1834-36⁴³⁴. The "anchor" in the name symbolises the sea, while "hope" appears to symbolise the wish for a safe return from the perils of a seafaring life.
- Hope and Anchor Hotel, Sussex and Druitt Streets, licensed 1834-46⁴³⁵.
- Hope and Anchor Hotel, Parramatta Street. Licensed 1838-45⁴³⁶.

Ship Inn, corner of Pitt and Alfred Streets, Circular Quay

Timeline: 1868 – present.

The Galatea Hotel opened on the site in 1867⁴³⁷, a few metres closer to the harbour than the present Ship Inn⁴³⁸. It was most probably named ahead the visit of Prince Alfred the Duke of Edinburgh, who arrived in Sydney Harbour aboard the *HMS Galatea* in January 1868 during his tour of the Australian colonies⁴³⁹. The hotel was renamed to the more generic Ship Inn in 1869⁴⁴⁰, possibly after the excitement of the royal visit had died down.



Figure 59 Ship Inn, Circular Quay (City of Sydney Archives)

The hotel was resumed by the New South Wales Railway Commissioners in 1901⁴⁴¹ to make way for the Belmore Park to Fort Macquarie (Bennelong Point) tramway⁴⁴². It was not demolished for a few years, and when it was rebuilt over the marshy mouth of the former Tank Stream, the Master Builder Finlay Munro reported that he had to undertake the difficult task⁴⁴³ of driving several blackbutt piles some 30 metres into the Harbour mud to secure a solid base for the concrete foundations⁴⁴⁴.

A new three-storey hotel was constructed a few metres further back from the original in the Federation Free Classical style⁴⁴⁵. Tooth and Co. purchased the freehold of the building. Elizabeth Lynch remained the licensee and changed the name to Lynch's Hotel, although the newspapers often called it Lynch's Ship Hotel for several years⁴⁴⁶. In July 1927, Robert William Plasto took over the licence from William Lynch⁴⁴⁷ and renamed the hotel back to the Ship Inn Hotel⁴⁴⁸.

The hotel ceased trading and closed in July 1985. The hotel's name reflected its environment facing Circular Quay, and it is likely that for most of its history wharf labourers and seamen were its regular patrons⁴⁴⁹. Then in 2024 the Ship Inn reopened after a makeover as a bar and bistro catering for visitors to Circular Quay.

The Bells Hotel, 1 Bourke Street, Woolloomooloo

Timeline: 1870 – present.

The first newspaper mention of a hotel on this site was for Edward Samuel's Park Lodge Hotel in September 1869⁴⁵⁰. Samuel promoted the pub's proximity to the Botanical Gardens, the Domain and the Baths (now the site of the Andrew "Boy" Charlton Pool), appealing to visitors to Sydney⁴⁵¹. By 1876, Stephen Punch had become the licensee⁴⁵².

In December 1881, John George Deeble took over the licence⁴⁵³ and began a tradition of publicans promoting aquatic activities in the nearby Woolloomooloo Bay. He frequently sold tickets from the pub for snapper fishing trips in his steamer *Promise*⁴⁵⁴. Deeble became the sponsor of Bill Beach (1850-1935), who was unbeaten as the World Sculling Champion from 1884 to 1887. Deeble also claimed credit for discovering him⁴⁵⁵.

Sculling is a sport in which a rower propels a boat through the water with oars on both sides. Professional sculling became popular in England in the mid-nineteenth century but by the 1870s, the big money was in Australia and North America. Professional sculling was reputedly the biggest sport in Australia from the 1850s until World War I. The need for water transport and professional watermen meant that the sport was centred in Sydney, where sculling races drew huge crowds that would stop the city. A race in 1884 between the Canadian Edward Harlan and the local champion Bill Beach drew a crowd of 100,000, half of Sydney's population at the time⁴⁵⁶.



Figure 60 Bells Hotel advert 1884 (*Freeman's Journal*, 20 December 1884)

In November 1883, John Deeble transferred the licence to Elias Laycock⁴⁵⁷. Laycock (1845-1938) was an Australian competitive rower who became a successful sculler and waterman's skiff racer in the 1870s and early 1880s. He renamed the hotel to the Bells Hotel by 1884⁴⁵⁸. The name is presumed to refer to the ship's bell that indicated the time of day: each day was divided into watches of four hours (apart from two two-hour watches in the evening) and the ship's bell was rung every thirty minutes, once for the first half hour up to eight times for end of the watch.

By the end of 1884, the "bustling and good-hearted" Irishman Christopher Moore had taken over the licence and campaigned to revive aquatic sports in the harbour. He began by presenting a handsome cup for a series of handicapped skiff races, by which he hoped to encourage young scullers into the sport⁴⁵⁹. A few months later he was promoting and receiving entrants for the Kirby Rowing Trophy for amateur handicap races⁴⁶⁰.

Woolloomooloo saw many changes in the early decades of the twentieth century: the massive Finger Wharf was constructed by 1915, and at the same time several road widening projects were undertaken by the City Council, including the construction of Cowper Wharf Road. A tramline was also constructed along this new road, terminating at Brown's Wharf on the eastern side of the bay. It was upgraded in 1918 to cater for the large number of returning Anzacs arriving by ship from the Western Front.



Figure 61 Bells Hotel, Woolloomooloo, 1922 (Tooth & Co collection)

In January 1921, the *Construction and Local Government Journal* reported that plans had been approved for the demolition and re-erection of a new Bells Hotel⁴⁶¹. Six months later, the City Council released plans to resume two properties adjacent to the Bells Hotel, saying that Tooth and Co. have agreed to construct a new hotel that was set back a few metres. This was to allow for a curve in the road at that corner to facilitate the tramway from the city along Cowper Wharf Road⁴⁶².

After the tramway was in operation, contracts were awarded for the re-erection of the hotel in March 1922⁴⁶³. This must have been completed later that year, as the pub was listed in the 1922 *Sands' Directory*⁴⁶⁴. The current pub is a two-storey Inter-War Free Classical Style building⁴⁶⁵.

In July 1954, the former world champion boxer Jimmy Carruthers took over the licence⁴⁶⁶. Carruthers, a quick-moving left-hander, represented Australia at the 1948 London Olympic Games. After turning professional in 1950, he won fourteen straight fights before winning the world championship in 1952. He held the title until he retired in May 1954 after winning his last fight. This was the third defence of his world title and was held outdoors during a monsoonal downpour in Thailand⁴⁶⁷. Between fights, he worked as a wharf labourer on the Sydney docks in the 1950s.

The Bells Hotel has had a colourful past and has made an important contribution to the aquatic life of its part of Sydney Harbour during the heyday of nineteenth century water sports. Nowadays, the pub promotes itself as “A Country Pub in the City”⁴⁶⁸.

Golden Anchor Hotel, Parramatta Street (later 60 George Street West)

Timeline: 1853 – 1980s.

The Golden Anchor Hotel was built in Parramatta Street, Chippendale in 1853 (which was called George Street West from 1877⁴⁶⁹, then Broadway from 1934) on the corner of Carlton Street, which at the time was a block east of Abercrombie Street, not just to the west of Kensington Street where a street of that name is now⁴⁷⁰.

The anchor in the pub’s name symbolises stability, safety and strength, derived from its role in keeping a ship secure in the harbour. The golden anchor may derive from the Golden Anchor Award, traditionally given by the United States Navy for excellence in retention (long service)⁴⁷¹. The pub

was only a few blocks from the maritime activities of Darling Harbour and Blackwattle Bay. In 1916, the new publican Henry W. Watson changed its name to the Great Western Hotel⁴⁷².

After the opening of Central Railway Station and Railway Square in 1906, George Street West gradually became congested and in need of widening. The Sydney City Council gazetted properties for resumption on the Chippendale (south) side in 1924⁴⁷³. While work began in 1926, it was held up by City Commissioners in 1928 (after the State Government dismissed the Council for alleged corruption and incompetence until 1930) and by the economic Depression a few years later⁴⁷⁴.



Figure 62 Great Western Hotel, Broadway, 1991 (City of Sydney Archives)

The Great Western Hotel operated throughout the 1930s with the threat of demolition hanging over it. It is not clear when it was pulled down and rebuilt, but in August 1939 the pub was declared a common gaming house by the police⁴⁷⁵, which would normally mean the loss of its licence. Presumably this presented a good opportunity for the Council to call in the wreckers.

The pub, originally at 80-82 Broadway, was rebuilt on the western corner of Balfour Street and became 64-68 Broadway. The new building was very different from the 1853 building, as it featured a very modern curved front wall⁴⁷⁶. It was still operating in 1984, according to documents in the City of Sydney Archives⁴⁷⁷, but by 1991 it had closed and the building was being used by the Cycling Federation of Australia⁴⁷⁸.

The rebuilt pub building was eventually demolished as part of the large Central Park development which saw the rejuvenation of the whole Carlton and United Brewery and nearby buildings. The maritime connection with this pub is not clear, but it is a good example of how businesses can be caught up in the massive changes that are sometimes forced on residents and businesses in a growing city to keep traffic moving efficiently.

The need to improve traffic flow resulted in several major thoroughfares being widened in the decades after the opening of Central Railway Station: the most significant were William Street, Oxford Street, Flinders Street, and George Street West. The forced acquisition of properties by the City Council was always traumatic for those involved: the (often years-long) wait for demolition to occur, the struggle to carry on the business between demolition and new premises, then frequent disputes about the amount of compensation, sometimes for years afterwards.

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