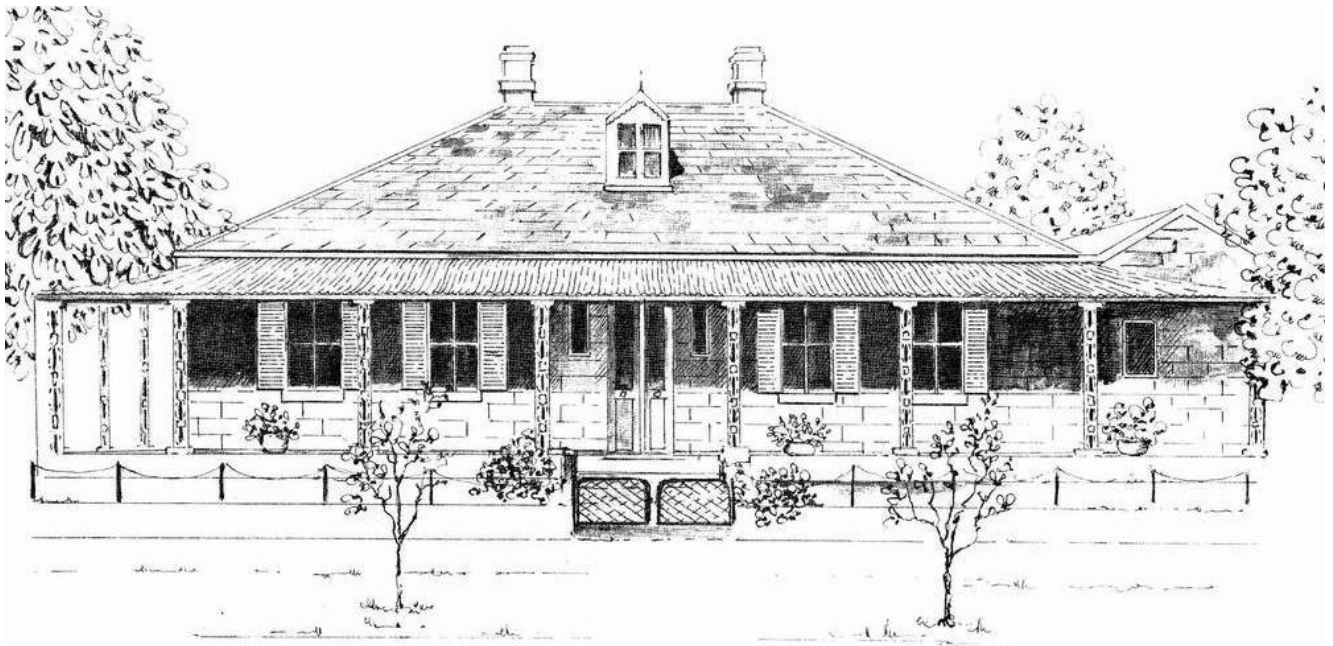


St. George Historical Society Inc. Bulletin

PROUDLY SPONSORED BY ROCKDALE CITY COUNCIL

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2003 EDITION



32nd Anniversary of Lydham Halls Opening to the Public

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Meetings are held 8:00 PM the second Tuesday of the month (except January) in the Meeting Room 1st Floor, Rockdale Town Hall, Princes Highway, Rockdale. Members, please bring a plate. Visitors are welcome.

VALE

It is with great sadness that we have to inform of the passing of our dear friend and society member, Mrs. Stella Ericsson. We the St. George Historical Society, extend our deepest sympathy to her sons Godfrey and Michael and their families and friends.

Stella would have been 92 years young, on April 21st, 2003.

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JANUARY – FEBRUARY EVENTS AGENDA

EVENTS

Many thanks to all our members who supported our outings during the past year and we apologise for having to cancel our last Bus Tour to the Northern Beaches due to lack of attendance. We would like to thank all members for their generous donations. It is greatly appreciated as we are trying to keep our society ongoing.

Hope everyone enjoyed the Festive Season and best wishes to all our members who are not feeling well.

Dora Lenane

Feb 23rd

32nd Anniversary of Lydham Hall being opened to the public

12pm – 4pm, Light refreshments served. Adults \$4, Concessions \$3, Children \$2
Lydham Hall, 18 Lydham Avenue, Bexley Phone: (02) 9567-4259

A room in Lydham Hall is to be dedicated to Gifford and Eileen Eardley

Mar 26th

Outing to Lucy Osburn Museum

Nightingale Building – Sydney Hospital – Macquarie Street, Sydney
You are to meet at the main gates of the Hospital at 10:30 am

COMMUNITY BUS OUTINGS FOR 2003

Please make a note in your diary of the following dates for Organised Bus Tours

- * **Friday** **May 5th, 2003**
- * **Monday** **July 28th, 2003**
- * **Wednesday** **August 13th, 2003**
- * **Friday** **October 17th, 2003**

SKERRICKS

We are glad to hear that our member Mrs. Betty Williams is now feeling better after her long illness.

I HAVE LEARNED

That one should keep
Their words both soft
And tender
For tomorrow
They may have to eat
Them.

YESTERDAY TODAY AND TOMORROW

There are two days in every week about which we should not worry.

Two days which should be kept free from fear and apprehension.

One of these days is YESTERDAY

With its mistakes and cares, its faults and blunders, its aches and pains.

YESTERDAY has passed forever and all the money in the world cannot bring back yesterday.

We cannot undo a single act we performed, we cannot erase a single word said.

The other day we should not worry about is TOMORROW

With its possible adversaries, its burdens, its large promise and poor performance.

TOMORROW is also beyond our immediate control.

TOMORROW's sun will rise, either in splendour or behind a mask of clouds but it will rise.

Until it does, we have no stake in TOMORROW for it is as yet unknown.

This leaves only one day - TODAY.

Any man can fight the battle of just one day.

Let us therefore live but one day at a time.

The Gannons of Tempe

Anne Carolan Part I: Frederick Gannon Senior

The name Gannon is familiar even to newer residents of the St Peters/Tempe area because it features as the name of a street. Long-time residents still call the now dilapidated old home in Union Street, 'Gannon's place'. Those interested in local history will know that the road to Hurstville was once called 'Gannon's Forest Road' and that Hurstville itself was known as 'Gannon's Forest' until a century ago. There are also a number of older residents who can just remember the kindly old man with a neat white beard pottering about the garden he loved at 'Hurlingham', the family home. Beyond the home were Gannon's paddocks, the Sts Peter and Paul's Catholic Church in Station Street (1858) and the family vault. One resident remembers his job collecting milk money which included calling at 'Hurlingham' from Unwin's Bridge Road. On one occasion he was grateful to old Mr. Gannon who found and returned 10/- which he had lost--a small fortune in the 1920s.

The Gannon who, in 1850, bought 1903 acres of the Townson grant and, at a toll gate charged the woolgatherers of Sydney Town to enter his forest, was Michael Gannon - convict, carpenter/builder, innkeeper and land speculator. Frederick Garmon Snr., solicitor, of 'Hurlingham', Union Street, Tempe, who died, aged 87, on 10 October 1923 was the fifth of Michael Gannon's seven sons.

The family of Michael and Mary Gannon included: John b. 30.4.1825 (m. Eliza Laurance or Lawrence); Mary b. 29.4.1827 (d. infancy); Robert b. 22.6.1829 (m. Agnes Conley) ; William b. 13.8.1831 (m. 1 Rose Edmunds or Edwards; 2. Helena Parry; James b. 11.12.1833 (m. Jane Chadburn); Frederick b. 21.3.1836 (m. Clarissa Rebecca Murray); Joseph b. 5.7.1838 (m. Susanah Jane Andrews); Alfred b. 21.6.1840 (m. Elizabeth Hunt); Alicia b. 21.6.1842 (m. W.H.D. Mitchell) ; Maria b. 6.8.1845 (m. C.H. Lenahan).

Michael Gannon, who was transported from Ireland under a life sentence, arrived with his brother James in Sydney on the 'Almorah' in 1820. In 1824 Michael married Mary Parsonage acquiring as his in-laws Thomas Parsonage ('Hillsborough', 1798) and Mary Jones ('Earl Cornwallis', 1801). The Gannon brothers came as convicts but appear to have established themselves and stable homes through marriage. Michael Gannon also rapidly established himself in business as a builder and auctioneer in Cambridge and Argyle streets, Sydney.

Next time you visit the Rocks, glance over the back wall of 45 Argyle Street and imagine little Fred. Gannon running about the garden with his brothers 145 years ago. For Michael Gannon, the builder, had moved his family into this gentlemen's residence around 1839. It can be assumed that he was skilled at his trade as the house still stands, protected by the Sydney Cove Development Authority which states that 'this house contains more original joinery than any other building in the period in the Rocks. For example, the 200 mm. floorboards are unique to the Rocks and are a rare commodity in historic buildings generally.'

Frederick Gannon was about seven years old when the family moved to Cook's River around 1842. They lived on Cook's River Road (now Prince's Highway) before he moved to 'Hurlingham' in the 1870s. Frederick was educated at Sydney College and was admitted as a solicitor in 1864. In 1861 Frederick married Clarissa Rebecca Murray, daughter of Robert Murray of the Farrier's Arms, George Street, Sydney and 'Yarrum', Lyons Road, Fivedock. Her mother was Rebecca Miller or Bennett and now Frederick, too, had in-laws with convict origins dating from the very early years of the colony. Robert Murray had a half-brother, Thomas Smidmore - a family also well known in Marrickville and surrounding areas.

The family of Frederick Gannon Snr. included: Clara b. 4.5.1861 (m. William Edward Carter); Edith b. 2.6.1862 (d. infancy); Frederick S. b. 4.2.1864 (m. Elizabeth Toomey); Leslie b. 24.11.1865 (m. Kathleen Marie Sexton); Ada b. 23.5.1867 (m. Charles McDonell); Walter b. 23.11.1868 (m. Patience Longfield); Arthur b. 6.1.1871 (m. Lottie Farr); Archibald b. 16.6.1872 (m. Nellie Jones); Percy b. 28.10.1873; Stanley b. 16.7.1875 (m. Ethel Raynor); Claude b. 30.12.1876 (m. Elsie Dibley); Henry b. 10.4.1879.

Such was the pace of social change that Frederick Gannon, a convict's son, was able to model his Hurlingham Estate at Tempe upon the exclusive Hurlingham Sporting Club of London which is still in existence. Tempe, then, was considered an attractive area with grand homes dotting the hills. Holt's 'Warren' and Spark's 'Tempe' were two of these. 'Hurlingham', too, was on a hill with splendid views down to the river and out to Botany Heads. It had its own pigeon shoot and became a centre of music, sport and entertainment. In its prime it was graciously furnished and decorated. As time went by some of the rooms became lined with sporting trophies. For Frederick Snr. loved all sport--he was a noted athlete in his youth and was a cricketer on the old Albert Ground when 'it was not considered playing the game to bowl overhand'. He was a member of the Australian Jockey Club and, even in his last years, his sons were expected to row him about Botany Bay to his favourite fishing haunts.

The third public golf course established in Sydney was at Marrickville. It came into being on 20 September 1897 on land donated by Fred. Gannon who remained its Patron for many years. The links were close to the station at Tempe and the P.G.A. Monthly of May 1952 stated that 'some of the hazards, notably a cliff on the banks of the Cook's River, were of a decidedly sporting character... the face of the Cliff Hole was somewhere between 30 and 40 feet high. If a player failed to get height with his iron shot he often found the ball back behind a tee from which he hit. Another unusual hole was at the back of a hotel. If a player pushed his shot out he had to play his second over the back fence of the hotel to get to the green. Some inebriated gentlemen must have sobered up smartly when a 'screamer' sailed over their heads!'

Frederick Gannon Snr. sent six of his sons to Newington College and later two joined him in the firm, Fred. Gannon & Sons, said to be the largest criminal law practice in the city at the time. Gannon practiced law until the age of 85 by which time he was the oldest solicitor on the roll. Following in his father's footsteps, Frederick continued to buy and sell land in the area. He acquired 'Tempe House' in 1884, something his father had failed to achieve when he bid for his neighbour Brodie Spark's property on 27 December 1853. Within a year 'Tempe House' and its grounds had been sold to the Sisters of the Good Samaritan.

Clarissa Gannon died, aged 85, on 12 November 1922, 11 months before her husband. They were buried at South Head Cemetery. Subsequently 'Hurlingham' and its remaining grounds were auctioned. Some members of the Gannon family still reside in and around the Marrickville area. Clare Gannon B.A., a grand daughter of Frederick, taught for many years at St George Girls' High School before retirement.

Michael Gannon was my great-great-grandfather; Fred. Gannon Snr. was my great-grandfather; Leslie Ernest Gannon was my grandfather; Biela Gannon, who grew up in 'Hurlingham' was my mother. I would be pleased to hear from any other descendants of the Gannons' of Tempe who would like to share their reminiscences.

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Anne Carolan is researching the history of the Gannon family and is a great-great-granddaughter of Michael Gannon, early resident of Tempe. Her mother used to live at 'Hurlingham' Tempe.

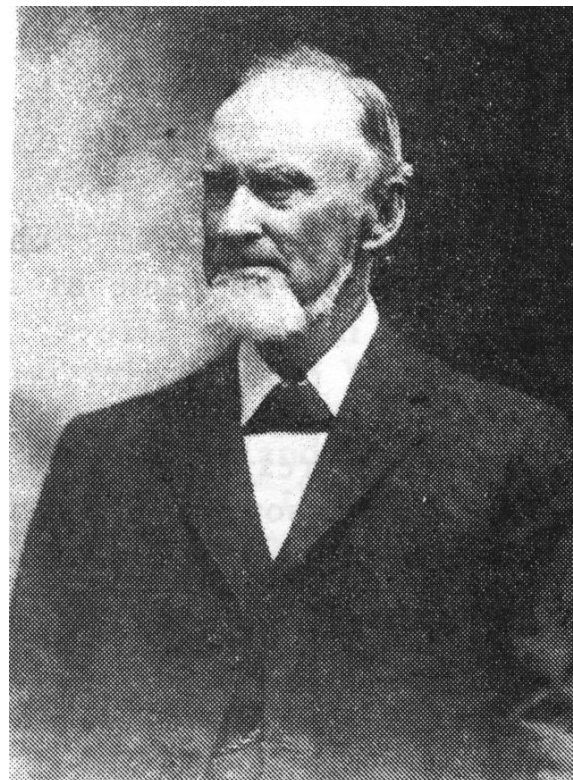
Source: Heritage – Journal of the Marrickville Heritage Society (1984)
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'Hurlingham' c 1920 with Frederick Gannon Senior on the verandah



**Michael Gannon
(Mitchell Library)**



Frederick Gannon Senior