

ON THE STREETS WHERE YOU LIVE



Mann Street

One pioneer of our area who has left his mark on street and place names in Greenwich is Gother Kerr Mann. Born in Ireland in 1809, he attained the rank of Captain in the Royal East India Company. Ill health caused him to leave India and travel to New Zealand and Australia. In his spare time he also designed weapons and prisons and sketched Maori chiefs.

By 1836 he had settled in Sydney and set up practice as an engineer. After a number of failed business ventures during the 1840s depression, Mann was appointed Engineer-in-Chief of Cockatoo Island and was requested to prepare plans and estimates for the construction of a dry dock on the Parramatta River. During construction large quantities of rock needed to be excavated and Mann used large charges of powder fired by electricity. It was said to be the first time such a process had been used in the colony of New South Wales. The Fitzroy Dock was completed eight years later in 1854 and named for the then Governor, Sir Charles Fitzroy. Gother Kerr Mann was then appointed Chief Commissioner for Railways in New South Wales from 1855 - 1857 and in 1859 Mann was appointed Superintendent of the Penal Establishment of Cockatoo Island, making him responsible for every aspect of life on the island. He remained in this position until his retirement in 1870.

Gother married Mary Hely in 1838 began a large family, initially they lived in Sydney before moving to St. Leonards, where he could commute to his office at Circular Quay or Cockatoo Island by boat. In December 1853, Mann purchased the large stone mansion on the Greenwich peninsular from George Green for £1250. He named the house *Willoughby* after a friend and brother officer, but later changed it to *Greenwich House*, because of confusion with the adjoining district also named Willoughby. The property had its own wharf and was minutes away by boat from Cockatoo Island. Thus began Gother's and the Mann family's long connection with the suburb of Greenwich.

Gother Kerr Mann died in his 90th year on 1 January 1899. Gother and Mary's marriage lasted sixty-one years. In 1898 they celebrated their diamond wedding with twelve children, nineteen grandchildren and four great grand children and

were described as well-known residents of Sydney. Greenwich House was occupied by members of the Mann family for nearly 100 years. He is buried in St. Thomas' Cemetery, North Sydney.

Mann's memory is honoured in Greenwich with **Manns Point, Manns Park, Gother** and **Manns Avenue** named after him.

A street named Mann Street first appeared in Lane Cove rates books from 1895 it was later renamed Albert Street and both Manns Avenue and Gother Avenue were created by the subdivision of Mann's estate between 1903-1906.



Guests at the Diamond Wedding celebrations of Gother and Mary Mann, Greenwich House, January 1898. Gother is the gentleman wearing a fob watch and seated in the middle of the photograph. (Courtesy of Lane Cove Library and the Mann Family)

