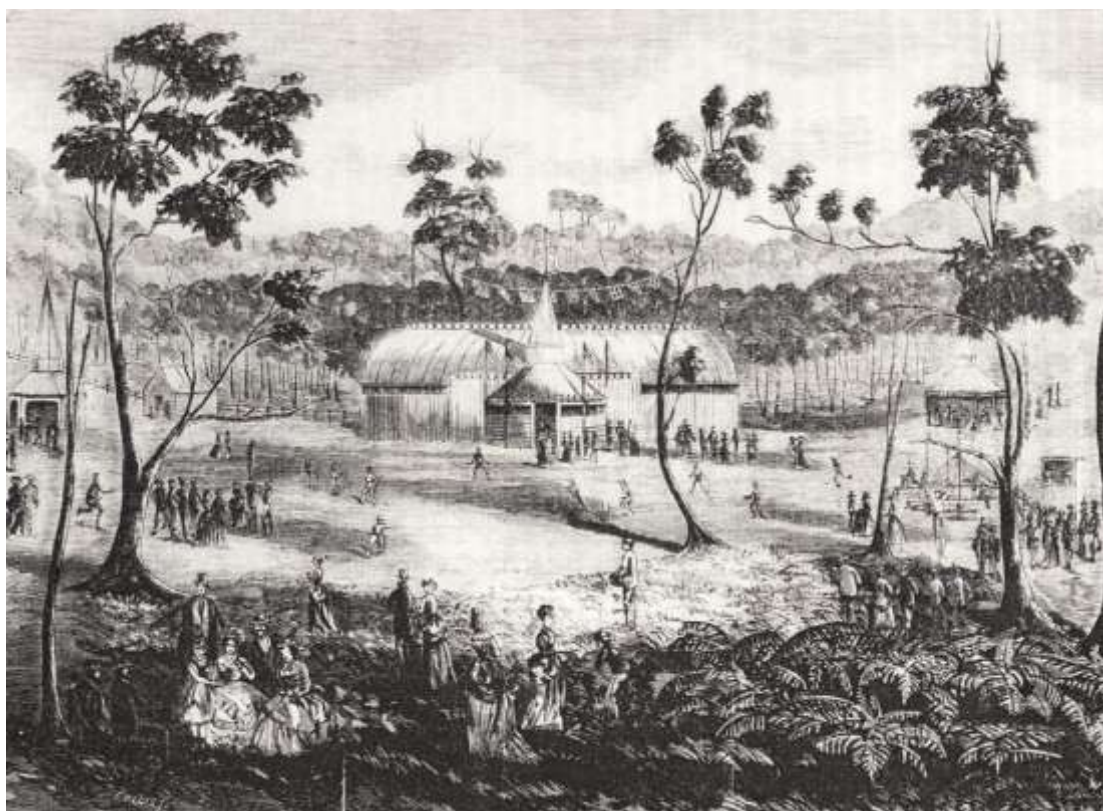


Ivanhoe Park, Manly

By Shelagh Champion OAM and George Champion OAM, April 2007.

There is a widespread misconception that Manly Council purchased Ivanhoe Park in order to provide a public park and sporting facilities for the people of Manly. In fact, Manly Council did not have the necessary money. It was the New South Wales Colonial Government which purchased the Park from private owners and closed the public roads therein. With the addition of the small eastern area already dedicated as a reserve by H G Smith, which now accommodates the tennis courts, the whole area, then known formally as Manly Park, was vested in Manly Council in 1887 under the Public Parks Act 1884.

The following is an account of how it happened.



Ivanhoe Park Pavilion, 1872, from *Illustrated Sydney News*.

Henry Gilbert Smith, the founder of Manly, acquired 100 acres on 9 March 1853 at what was then referred to as Cabbage Tree Bay (now Manly), from John and Anne Mary Thompson for £800.¹

This enabled Henry to proceed with his 1855 plan to develop what he first called Ellensville after his late first wife. However, only a few years later he preferred his estate to be known as Brighton.

Henry realised quickly the necessity of providing several recreation reserves for public use in his subdivision, and he was prepared to donate these free of charge. At first these were sufficient to cope with the small local population and a fairly limited number of excursionists but by late 1860's, with improved ferry services and a much larger influx of visitors, it was found necessary to look further afield for a larger recreation area, suitable particularly for more competitive sports. However no large area was then available as all the desirable land was in private hands.

¹ Land Titles Office Book 25 No 609

Unfortunately Henry suffered another severe loss when his second wife Anne Margaret Smith died at their Fairlight home on 7 April 1866. This resulted in Henry departing for England on 9 February 1867 accompanied by his three young sons. He later died in England on 1 April 1886.

Whilst living in England, Henry still maintained control of what he called his Brighton Estate at Manly Beach and he was able to make sales and transact other business through his attorney.

An Intercolonial Exhibition was held in Prince Alfred Park, Sydney in August 1870. It was a great boon for Manly Beach when two of the refreshment pavilions from the exhibition, one large, and one small, were transferred and re-erected at Manly Beach on land known as Ivanhoe Park, still in the hands of Henry Gilbert Smith, in January 1871. The large pavilion, promoted as being the "largest Pavilion in the colonies", was said to cover 9000 square feet.² Mr H W Wardle was the proprietor of the Park in 1873, and probably earlier.³

The first to take advantage of the big pavilion was John Farrell, of the New Steyne Hotel (not to be confused with the present Steyne Hotel):

"NEW STEYNE HOTEL, MANLY BEACH

I, the undersigned, beg to inform the Public that I have taken the Pavilion, lately erected in Ivanhoe Park, for Anniversary Day [1871], where I intend to have a great variety of sports and amusements. A band engaged for dancing. JOHN FARRELL"⁴

His programme for the day was set out:

"ANNIVERSARY DAY – IVANHOE PARK MANLY BEACH

Programme of Sports

First Race.	– To start at 12 o'clock.	Flat Race, distance 200 yards.	Prize £1.
Second	"	1	" Best Hop, Step and Jump
Third	"	2	" A pig with a greasy tail. " a pig
Fourth	"	3	" Live Wheelbarrow Race Prize £1.
Fifth	"	4	" 3 legged Race, Dist 200 yards " "

Entrances to the above races, 1s. Pig with greasy tail free to all.

A first class Brass Band is engaged. Dancing in the New Pavilion, Ivanhoe Park."⁵

A most important use of the new pavilion occurred on 27 February 1871, when the annual picnic of the Eight Hours' League was held there. A procession through Sydney, led by the band of the Naval Brigade, featured flags and banners bearing mottoes such as "May Industry be Rewarded," "Union is Strength," and "Eight Hours' Labor – Eight Hours' Recreation – Eight Hours' Rest." The procession ended at Circular Quay, where a large number of excursionists had gathered:

"Two powerful steamers, the *Goolwa* and *Breadalbane*, were laid on to convey the large concourse to the pleasure scene appointed for their amusement, and before two o'clock no less than three thousand persons had been conveyed to the spot. Ivanhoe Park is a pleasure ground admirably adapted for the enjoyment of visitors. It is spacious, sheltered, and shaded with numerous trees – some of them grotesquely shaped. The dancing pavilion, (a building that did duty as Muscutt's saloon during the late exhibition) affords almost unlimited space for dancers, and is perhaps the most spacious and substantial of its kind, being roofed with corrugated iron, glazed at the sides, and otherwise protected. Adjoining this is an octagonal pavilion of good proportions and highly ornamental appearance, used as a refreshment room; and in addition to these are several ornamental buildings for the shelter of visitors. At two o'clock, a limited number sat down to dinner, provided by Mr Tidswell, and presided over by Mr John Stewart, M.L.A., assisted by Alderman Goold. The usual toasts were vigorously

² SMH 23 Dec 1873

³ Sands' Directory 1873

⁴ SMH 14 Jan 1871

⁵ SMH 25 Jan 1871

responded to, and a good deal of information was ventilated concerning the future intentions and prospects of the League. The great body of the company preferred an *al fresco* luncheon; many of the visitors lighting fires in woodland nooks, and with snowy cloths spread on the sward, and plentifully supplied with temptations to the appetite, they enjoyed themselves literally 'to the full'. Dancing was kept up uninterruptedly throughout the day; some joined in cricket; quoits and skittles divided the attention of others; some looked at the always attractive drama of 'Punch and Judy;' others witnessed the somewhat awkward evolutions of some self-styled 'acrobats;' a wandering band of 'niggers' engaged the attention of more; and the youngsters revelled in the intoxicating Merry-go-round, the breathless swing, and exciting races, for which the committee had thoughtfully provided prizes in the shape of some handsome books. The most admirable order prevailed, and if visitors failed to enjoy themselves it was certainly not owing to want of forethought on the part of the committee, for the gentlemen composing that body for once seemed to succeed in the proverbially difficult tasks of pleasing everybody. Stay! there is no rule without an exception, and the exception on this occasion consisted of several sharp individuals who endeavoured to introduce 'a bit of gambling pleasure' and whose 'little games' were effectually put a stop to by one of the committee aided by the police. 'Old Aunt Sally' (being a lady) was tolerated – but as several 'experts' knocked her about the head most unmercifully, and broke her pipes to an alarming extent, thereby wining many contingent cigars; the proprietor passed the day in a higher state of dudgeon than of profit. By nine o'clock everybody was safely landed at the Circular Quay, and the general order and good feeling displayed throughout the day was a convincing proof that the working-man enjoys himself – as he labors – with a will."⁶

Ivanhoe Park and its pavilion featured again at the end of 1871, when the Manly Beach Cricket Club played a match and held an amateur concert to raise funds.

"MANLY BEACH CRICKET CLUB – A Match will be played between the above Club and the 1st Eleven of Orwell, this day [16 December 1871], at Manly Beach. A steamer will leave Circular Wharf at 1 p.m., and Manly at 7 p.m."⁷

"MANLY BEACH. – A Grand Amateur Concert in aid of the Manly Cricket Club will take place at Manly, on Tuesday, the 30th instant [January 1872], in the Pavilion, Ivanhoe Park. Through the kindness of Captain Heselton, a Special Steamer will leave Queen's Wharf, at 7 o'clock sharp, and return immediately after the Concert. Return ticket, 1s. 6d. Admission to Concert:- Reserved seats, 2s.; back seats, 1s. Doors open at half-past 7, to commence at 8.

Tickets may be obtained by applying to F and E Cole, corner of King and George streets; G M Pitt, Greville's Rooms, George-street; or to the Captain of the Manly Beach steamer."⁸

A great variety of daytime attractions was also advertised:

"MANLY BEACH – IVANHOE PARK – Anniversary Day, January 26, 1872
Kingsley's grand Troupe of Acrobats, Jugglers, Equilibrists [rope walkers], Gymnasts, Tumblers, Vocalists, Jesters, Dancers, &c., will perform in their Model Cirque [arena] every hour, giving grand entertainments. Also Grand Parade, full company, a la Richardson.
PROGRAMME – Principal act by Eugene Magelton. Double Trapeze, by Messrs. W H Verletti and C Welby. Drawing Room Entertainment, Messrs Tourniere and Hanley. Slack Rope, Mr. Charles. Walter Carle the Comique, and his Performing Dogs. French Clowns, or Imps of the Barrel, by Messrs. A and W Kingsley. Bar Horizontal, by Messrs. W H Verletti and C Welby. Ground and Lofty Tumbling, by strength of the Company. Single Trapeze, by Mr. Charles. Spanish Rings, W H Verletti. Dance by Mr G Brown, late of the Marzsellie Troupe. Clown and Jester, J Riley, late of Rowe's Circus. Feats of strength, by W Kingsley. Ladder in the Air or Leap for Life by Messrs W H Verletti and C Welby. Also the old English Drama of Punch and Judy three acts, the chief characters being sustained by these celebrated European artists – Mons. Punch, a shocking man well up to a single stick. Madame Judy, an ill used and anxious wife. M. Punchinella, their hopeful boy, and pride of his pa. Assisted by a large troupe of supernumeries, scenery, and costumes &c, By Mons. Artiste Tayleur. Hart's Merry-go-Round. Steamers *Goolwa*, *Breadalbane*, *Phantom* from

⁶ Illus Sydney News 18 March 1871

⁷ SMH 16 Dec 1871

⁸ SMH 25 Jan 1872

Queen's Wharf at 9.30 calling at Woolloomooloo Bay until 2.30; last steamer from Manly Beach, 6.30.

Fare – return ticket 1s. 6d.

Dancing in the Ivanhoe Park Pavilion. Brass Band engaged.”⁹

Ivanhoe Park was in full use at the end of 1873:

“IVANHOE PARK, MANLY BEACH.

On BOXING DAY, 26th December and SATURDAY 27th December

Dancing in the largest pavilion in the colonies, covering 9000 square feet, for which a Full Brass Band is engaged. Conductor, Mr J Pearson. Also Rifle Gallery, Skittles, Quoits, Swings, and every description of Amusement. W H Wardle, Proprietor. No hawkers allowed on the grounds.”¹⁰

It was also on 27 December 1873 that the new Congregational minister, Rev. John Alexander Dowie, was welcomed to Manly Beach with a tea at 4.30 p.m. followed by a public meeting at 6.30 p.m. in Ivanhoe Park.¹¹

A publican's licence for the Ivanhoe Park Hotel was issued to Thomas Adrian in October 1875 and on 3 December 1875 “a large concourse of Manly Beach residents attended at the Pavilion, in response to invitation cards from the enterprising proprietors of the new hotel at Ivanhoe Park, Messrs. Adrian and Turner.” The tastefully decorated and illuminated Pavilion was the scene of entertainment in the form of magic, ventriloquism, comic and character songs, and a farce. “It may not be generally known that Messrs. Adrian and Turner have recently become proprietors of the pavilion and cricket ground at Ivanhoe Park, Manly Beach, and that not only have they erected a very extensive and well-appointed hotel, but they are endeavouring to make the grounds a popular place of resort to all holiday-seekers.” **It must be emphasized however that at this time all of Ivanhoe Park was still owned by Henry Gilbert Smith.**¹²

Charles R Austin, Secretary *pro tem* of the Committee for the incorporation of the Municipality of Brighton, called a public meeting, to be held at the Pavilion, Ivanhoe Park, at 8 p.m. on Monday 27 November 1876, for the purpose of recommending to the Government a person to act as Returning Officer for the first election of alderman and auditors for the Municipality of Brighton, and to consider any other matters in connection with the Municipality that may be brought before the meeting.¹³

Over the years, many such public meetings were held in the Pavilion of Ivanhoe Park. The Pavilion's uses were many and varied.

Thomas Adrian and Thomas Turner were shown as the proprietors of Ivanhoe Park in the advertisements for New Year's Day 1877:

“NEW YEAR'S DAY – IVANHOE PARK – MANLY BEACH – Unrivalled Attractions

Football, Swings, Quoits &c. Free.

Dancing to W Miller's string band, in the grand Pavilion. Admission 1s.

RACES, and PRIZES – To start at 1 o'clock. Gentlemen's prizes, ladies' prizes, and children's prizes. 1st prize, meerschaum pipe. 2nd lady's workbox. 3rd 1 Cobbett's cricket bat. 4th lady's bag. 5th silver cruet set. 6th silver jam holder. 7th handsome notebook. 8th children's dressed dolls. Prizes on view in Rotunda of Pavilion.

At 4.30, a pig with greasy tail will be let loose. Prize, the pig.

During the afternoon, weather permitting, Balloons will ascend from the Park.

First class refreshments at Sydney prices at the Ivanhoe Park Hotel. First class Tea and Temperance Drinks in the Pavilion. ADRIAN AND TURNER, Proprietors.”¹⁴

⁹ SMH 25 Jan. 1872

¹⁰ SMH 23 Dec 1873

¹¹ SMH 27 Dec 1873

¹² Evening News 6 Dec 1875

¹³ SMH 27 Nov 1876

¹⁴ SMH 30 Dec 1876

An important meeting which took place in the Pavilion was the first election of office bearers for the first fire brigade at Manly Beach:

“MANLY FIRE BRIGADE. – A meeting was held Thursday evening [21 June 1877] at the Pavilion to elect the officers of the brigade. Mr Willis, the hon. Secretary, read the proceedings of last meeting, by which it appeared that some forty-five working members paying an annual subscription of 1s, had subscribed the roll, and eighteen honorary members paying one guinea annual subscription. The Mayor, Mr Rowe, was appointed superintendent; Mr Adrian, assist superintendent; Mr Woods, foreman; Mr T Willis, honorary secretary, and Mr John Woods, treasurer. On completion of this business, the Mayor suggested that, as all the necessary appliances were now at hand, it would be well to try the merits of the engine, and the signal having been given a rush was made by the brigade, and within five minutes from the alarm being given the engine had been run to a waterhole some 500 yards off, the hose connected, and a stream of water of really great power was issuing from the nozzle thereof. The engine was then run to where a larger supply of water could be obtained and again tried, and with 150 feet of hose a fine powerful jet of water was thrown to a height of fully 40 feet. These particulars are worthy of note, as proving that these small and most handy ‘swan neck’ manual engines are really valuable aids in such isolated places as Manly and other suburbs. The moonlight concert in aid of the funds of the Manly Brigade fixed for Tuesday night next, and should the weather prove fine, it is anticipated that it will be a great success, many tickets having been sold, and we believe that the committee have spared no exertion to make the entertainment an attractive one.”¹⁵

The Pavilion was used as a polling place for elections:

“A Poll will be taken for the election of two Aldermen at the Pavilion, Ivanhoe Park, Manly, and Bridge-street Chambers, Bridge-street, Sydney, on Friday 8th [February 1878], commencing at 8 a.m. and closing at 3 p.m.

THOMAS ROWE, Mayor. Returning officer.”¹⁶

The residents of Manly wanted the reserves owned by Henry Gilbert Smith to be under Council control. However, this did not include the privately owned Ivanhoe Park:

“TO HIS WORSHIP THE MAYOR OF MANLY

We the undersigned, property holders within the Borough of Manly, request you will be pleased to call a public meeting to consider the following proposition:- ‘That the time has arrived when the Public Reserves, situated within the Borough of Manly, should be formally dedicated and vested in the Borough Council for the use of the inhabitants.’

Locrin Tiddy, W H Rolfe, J T Smith, Elisha Hayes, Alfred Hilder, J C Peters, Robert M Pitt, G F Barnett, Philip Jenkins, William Lambourn, Adam Russell, Edward Badmington.

In compliance with the above requisition a public meeting will be held in Ivanhoe Park Pavilion, this (Monday) evening, the 18th [February 1878], at 8 o’clock.

THOMAS ROWE, Mayor.”¹⁷

“At a public meeting held at Manly last week a deputation, consisting of the Mayor, with Messrs. John Woods and G.W. Barker, was appointed to consult with Mr J R Street, the agent for Mr. Gilbert Smith, owner of extensive property at Manly, to see if some of the reserves on the Smith Estate could be placed under the control of the Corporation there. It had become almost a necessity for these reserves to be made either useful or ornamental; and it would be well, seeing that they were set apart for the use of the residents during the disposal of the estate, that they should be placed in the hands of trustees for the use of the people. Mr Street promised to consult his solicitor on the matter, and if possible the making over of the lands should be effected afterwards; but if it could not be done in that fashion, he would at once communicate with Mr. Smith in England, and elicit from that gentleman what should be done in the matter.”¹⁸

When the Oddfellows’ Hall was opened in Raglan Street on Saturday 8 March 1879, some of the pressure on the Pavilion in Ivanhoe Park as a venue for public

¹⁵ SMH 23 June 1877

¹⁶ SMH 6 Feb 1878

¹⁷ SMH 18 Feb 1878

¹⁸ SMH 27 Feb 1878

meetings, concerts, various forms of entertainment and social gatherings, was eased.¹⁹

The search for a public park for Manly's residents and visitors began in earnest in August 1879, when Alfred Hilder was Mayor of Manly:

“PROPOSED PARK FOR MANLY

Mr A Hilder, Mayor of Manly, Aldermen G W Barker, C Hayes, and T Rowe, and Messrs J Woods, and J B Duff formed a deputation to the Colonial Secretary yesterday [14 August 1879] to request that the Government would purchase a piece of land at Manly as a park or recreation reserve. The deputation was introduced to the Premier by the Hon. J S Farnell MLA, who said it was unnecessary to use any argument in favour of the necessity for having public parks in centres of population, as it had been made a matter of public policy that wherever land suitable for that purpose was to be had the Government should obtain it. He pointed out that Manly had a special claim for consideration in this matter, as it was the resort of thousands of visitors. There was no Government land there now, but there was some very suitable land in the hands of private individuals, and the Government could purchase it at a reasonable rate.

Mr A Hilder and one or two other gentlemen also addressed the premier.

Sir Henry Parkes said he thought Manly had a fair claim to consideration with other suburbs of Sydney, and it was easy to see that a park would be a great addition to the convenience, comfort, and health of the inhabitants. He had already intimated to other deputations that applications of this character had become so numerous that those from the suburbs of Sydney must be considered at the same time, one in view of another, and he would see that the claim of Manly was duly considered when the whole subject came before the Government for decision. He would of course, be very glad to get any information which those interested in the subject might be able to lay before the Government as to the most eligible site, combined with a reasonable cost.²⁰

There had long been a problem of low-lying land, frequently flooded, on part of Ivanhoe Park, and at the beginning of present Pittwater Road. Manly Council determined to drain this area and fill it up to a proper level. This was the beginning of a primitive drainage system, sometimes misleadingly referred to as a sewerage system. Tenders were called for the laying of 18-inch earthenware pipes from Ivanhoe Park by Raglan Street to Ocean Beach on 25 September 1879.²¹ Mr T S Parrott, the Civil Engineer engaged by Manly Council, called tenders for the supply of about 1250 feet of 18-inch earthenware glazed drain pipes of the best quality, delivered at Manly.²²

Mr Surveyor Parrott reported in favour of the acceptance of Patrick McNamara's tender for the drainage works in Raglan Street, and this was agreed to by Manly Council. Owners of property could apply for permission to connect with the drain. The Mayor was requested to write to the Minister for Works to ask if he would cause a survey to be made, under an officer of his department, for drainage purposes generally.

Typical of public meetings held in the Pavilion was one to discuss the need for a new Manly Public School:

“MEETING AT MANLY IN FAVOUR OF A NEW PUBLIC SCHOOL

A large influential public meeting was held in the pavilion, Ivanhoe Park, on Tuesday evening last [25 November 1879], pursuant to advertisement, to take steps to have a new Public school erected at Manly. The Mayor (Mr Alfred Hilder, J.P.) took the chair, and after reading the advertisement said they were assembled for the purpose of initiating the necessary measures for the attainment of a school more adequate to the requirements of the place, and to the importance of the district. The local Board, he thought, were entitled to the thanks of

¹⁹ EN 11 Mar 1879

²⁰ SMH 15 Aug 1879

²¹ SMH 27 Sept 1879

²² SMH 25 Oct 1879

the residents for their efforts hitherto in furtherance of the erection of a more suitable building. He also thought that to Mr. John Woods their thanks were due in no less degree for the active part he had taken in initiating the movement in the manner in which it was now brought before them, and he would call upon that gentleman to move the first resolution. ...”²³

At this time inquests into deaths were often held in local hotels. The body of Jane Whaley, née Chadwick, one of the first European residents of the Peninsula and a local identity, was found floating near Manly wharf on Tuesday morning, 4 May 1880. The following day the City Coroner held an inquest into her death at the Ivanhoe Park Hotel, Manly.²⁴

Through his attorney, Henry Gilbert Smith, who lived in England, sold the eastern portion of present Ivanhoe Park, amounting to about five acres, to Thomas Adrian, on 17 June 1880. On this land were the buildings known as the Pavilion, and the Ivanhoe Hotel, for which Adrian had been granted a publican’s licence in October 1875. The total purchase price was £1500.²⁵

In July 1880 Mr T S Parrott reported to Manly Council on the work in progress of laying 18-inch pipes along Raglan Street to the ocean, **for the purpose of draining the low-lying land in Ivanhoe Park.** Mr George Kilminster complained of the obstruction of the Steyne and Raglan Street in front of his premises (Clarendon Hotel) by the excavation. The contractor was to be instructed to leave a clear passage for pedestrians while the road was closed for traffic.²⁶

Council and local residents sought as a matter of urgency from the Government, the provision of a much needed suitable public park and recreation ground for Manly. At the Council meeting on 10 January 1881 the Mayor (Mr Alfred Hilder, J.P.) stated that he had convened a public meeting for Wednesday evening, 12 January, to give expression to the views of the ratepayers generally on the question. The site at Fairy Bower, proposed by the Government, did not prove to be a popular choice as far as Manly residents were concerned:

“PUBLIC PARK AND RECREATION GROUND FOR MANLY

A large and very influential meeting was held at the Pavilion, Manly, on Wednesday night [12 Jan 1881], for the purpose of considering the question of the most eligible and desirable site for a public park at Manly. The Mayor occupied the chair, and briefly explained that the meeting had been convened for the purpose of enabling the people of Manly to express their opinion as to this most important matter; and he reviewed the steps taken by the Council in bringing the question of the proposed sites before the Premier, Sir Henry Parkes, and spoke warmly of the favourable manner in which it had been entertained by that gentleman. The Mayor also read correspondence which had been received by the Council of Manly upon the subject, and from which it appeared that, in lieu of the site recommended by the Council being favourable reported upon by the surveyor delegated by the Government, Sir Henry Parkes informed the Mayor that the report recommended the selection of another site, situated at ‘Fairy Bower’; and the Mayor thereupon intimated his intention of calling a public meeting in order that Sir Henry Parkes might be put in possession of the real merits of the question at issue. The Mayor then called upon the mover of the first resolution; and the Hon. George Thornton, MLC, said that he felt that it was a duty to the people of the colony generally, as much even as to the residents of Manly, to obtain both the inestimable boon of a public recreation ground at this, the premier water-place of the colony, and also to make quite sure that the most suitable place was selected for such a purpose. From his many years’ intimate knowledge of the locality, he had no hesitation in saying that the site recommended by the Council – viz., the land lying at the base of Kangaroo Hill and extending northwards towards the lagoon and eastwards to the ocean beach – was the most thoroughly suitable for the purpose, being almost level, very accessible, and obtainable at a reasonable cost; whereas the site recommended by the Government surveyor at the ‘Fairy Bower’ possessed none of

²³ SMH 27 Nov 1879

²⁴ SMH 6 May 1880

²⁵ LTO Bk.204 No.17

²⁶ Daily Telegraph 17 July 1880

these advantages, but a host of insuperable disadvantages. He contended that the selection of the site was eminently a matter for the residents of Manly to be consulted upon in preference to the opinion of the ablest surveyor in the Government service and he felt sure the Government would respect the properly represented view of this meeting. (Cheers.) Mr Thornton then read the first resolution (which was seconded by Rev. H S King), affirming the desirableness of a suitable piece of ground for recreative purposes being selected, and the resolution was carried unanimously.

The Mayor then read the second resolution, which was moved by Mr G A Murray, JP, and seconded by Mr Cohen, to the effect that, in the opinion of the meeting, a piece of land, containing about 18 acres, and situated at the base of the Kangaroo Hill, as above described, is the most suitable for the purposes of a public park and recreation ground. Mr Murray spoke warmly in favour of the resolution.

Mr Cohen said that the alternative site recommended by the surveyor at the so-called 'Fairy Bower' was utterly and preposterously unsuitable, and he denounced the proposal to purchase that site at a cost of some £8000 as a 'monstrous job.' (Applause).

An amendment in favour of a third site was moved by Mr Moore; and, in reply to Mr Thornton, Mr Moore admitted that he was interested in a portion of the land he recommended. The amendment was put and lost, no one voting for it, and the second resolution was carried unanimously. The Mayor thereupon being voted out of the chair, the Hon. George Thornton proposed that the thanks of the meeting and of the public at large were due to Mr Hilder for the admirable manner in which he had endeavoured to secure that the public interest should be regarded and maintained in this important question, and he considered that the enthusiastic meeting was the best proof that the action of the Council and of the Mayor met with the approval of the public of Manly. A vote of thanks was then given to the Mayor with much enthusiasm, and the meeting terminated."²⁷

At the Manly Council meeting held on 20 January 1881 Mayor Hilder read a press copy of his letter to the Colonial Secretary, enclosing copies of resolutions passed at the public meeting on Wednesday 12 January as to the most suitable locality for a public park.

The public meeting held on 12 January 1881 brought forth this response:

"To the Editor of the *Evening News* Manly Beach Reserve

Sir, As one who formerly resided at Manly and had many opportunities of observing the beautiful spots around it, and still having a lively interest in its future progress, I must say I felt great surprise in reading in your paper the result of a meeting held to determine on a [site] for a public park. Who ever would have thought that the [site] decided upon would have been thought of except by those particularly interested. I would ask, are the great mass of visitors who may wish to visit this beautiful watering place to be debarred the pleasure of having a reserve in which they might have the grandest panoramic view that could be witnessed in all New South Wales or Australia, and have to put up with one in which little view can be obtained of the surrounding country.

For the sake of the general public I must enter my protest against the site chosen, and hope the Government of the day will look to their interest, and only have public money granted upon the purchase of a park that would become the admiration of the present and future generations.

Yours, etc. A Lover of Manly."²⁸

Another letter concerning a public park was published in February 1881:

"To the Editor of the *Evening News* Public Park, Manly Council

Sir, So much has been already said about this and the little jobs which were attempted to surround it, that to rake it up again would "stink in your nostrils." However, when we see "Fairy Bower", which is all rocks and sand, hills and dales, without a level spot on it, bought at a few hundreds too, and so generously placed at the Government disposal at many thousands, something is up. Happily this is declined though. When next we see Little Manly, which adjoins hundreds of acres of Government land, whose cost and selling price will keep pace with the Bower, but whose beauty and adaptability of course far surpassed it, is placed at the Government service, at a great sacrifice for the public good, something is in the wind.

²⁷ SMH 14 Jan 1881

²⁸ EN 20 Jan 1881

Unfortunately this is still kept dangling.

It is an old saying, where the carcass is, the eagle will be, so with the undertaker. When you see him hanging about a corner, there's a dead 'un near at hand; but where we see "Jack of both sides" entertaining men with influence, keep your eye on him, watch your public path and wharf.

I offer this warning through you, sir, to the inhabitants of Manly, look for where these public benefactors have already moved your school under the cloak [of] being more central, but only to sell some of their own land and increase the value of the rest. It is well known that for 20 years the old school suited all, for the town of Manly will never extend towards the quarantine, our greatest drawback (where this park is wanted to be forced on us), but must push in the direction of the sport so unanimously and wisely chosen by the inhabitants at the public meeting for that purpose, viz. adjoining the old school, which, if the Government act wisely, will retain, rebuild, and scout these land jobbers. Yours, etc. Boz."²⁹

In view of the lack of suitable recreation area in Manly, the announcement in September 1881 that Ivanhoe Park, which was owned by Thomas Adrian, was to be subdivided into building sites and sold was of obvious interest to those who recognised the value of the site for public use. The Park was described as "the most retired and level estate in all Manly", "only three minutes walk from the pier." It was divided into 62 allotments, with frontages to main streets ranging from 25 feet to 44 feet. "The subdivision is so arranged that purchasers by taking adjoining lots can secure large or small areas as they desire." Richardson and Wrench received instructions to sell the land by public auction at their Pitt Street room on Friday, 14 October 1881.³⁰ However, no sale eventuated at this time.

The first Wild Flower Show was held in Ivanhoe Park Pavilion in September 1881, and many more were to be held there in future years. Most were fairly successful financially but at a great cost to the preservation of native flora.³¹

On 29 August 1882 Henry Gilbert Smith sold the western part of present Ivanhoe Park, measuring 5 acres 2 roods 33 perches, to Thomas Rowe, an ex-Mayor of Manly, for £285 6s 3d.³²

Although Henry Gilbert Smith had made provision for reserves on his Brighton Estate, the most suitable site for a recreation ground, Ivanhoe Park, was in private hands:

"A public meeting was held in the Council chambers Manly Beach on Monday night, 9 April 1883, for the purpose of urging upon the Government the claims of Manly to a recreation reserve. The Mayor (Mr Charles Hadley Hayes) presided. It was unanimously decided that the most suitable site was that known as the Ivanhoe Park, with the adjoining block of land belonging to Mr Rowe. It was moved and carried unanimously, 'That a deputation, consisting of the members for the district, the municipal council, and Mr John Woods, wait upon the Government to urge upon them the desirability of purchasing the above mentioned site as a recreation reserve,' which, it was pointed out, would prove a boon not only to the residents of Manly, but also to the people of Sydney and the suburbs who daily visited Manly in large numbers. The meeting closed with a vote of thanks to the Mayor."³³

The deputation duly waited upon the Colonial Secretary, Alexander Stuart, requesting that the Government would purchase the property known as Ivanhoe Park for a recreation ground for the people of Manly, the metropolis, and visitors from all parts of the country. **It was impossible for Manly Council to find the money, some £5000 to £6000.** Mr Stuart asked the deputation to put their request in writing, when he would give it serious consideration.³⁴

²⁹ EN 23 Feb 1881

³⁰ SMH 21 Sept, 8 Oct 1881

³¹ SMH 3 Oct 1881

³² LTO Bk. 262 No.374

³³ SMH 10 April 1883

³⁴ SMH 21 April 1883

At a Manly Council meeting held on 26 April 1883 the Mayor (Alderman Hayes) reported in relation to acquiring Ivanhoe Park for public recreation that the Colonial Secretary in reply to the deputation he received said, "If they [Manly Council] could obtain the Ivanhoe Park for a reasonable sum, the Government would consider the matter." Negotiations had been opened up, but no satisfactory arrangement had yet been arrived at.³⁵

On 10 May the Mayor revealed to a meeting of Manly Council that Thomas Adrian was asking £7000 for the ground [Ivanhoe Park], not including the buildings. This was exorbitant, and it was suggested that the Government resume the land.³⁶

On 18 May 1883 the same Manly Council deputation waited upon Mr Stuart the Colonial Secretary regarding the attempt to obtain a recreation ground for Manly, and told him that they had made enquiries and that the owner [Adrian] was asking an exorbitant price. The deputation suggested that Government should resume the land. Mr Stuart said he did not altogether approve of the principle of resuming land. He was going to Manly in a week to stay for a few weeks and he would inquire into the matter.³⁷

Three Aldermen were chosen by Manly Council on 5 July 1883 to act as trustees of the recreation reserves within the municipality. They were the Mayor Alderman Hayes, and Aldermen Austin and Barker. £150 was received by the trustees from the Department of Lands on 30 July 1883 for the improvement of the reserves. The Mayor said they had been promised more (£300), and protested at the reduced amount received. His protest was later rejected by the Government.³⁸

Thomas Adrian had mortgaged Ivanhoe Park to Abraham Friedman in 1882³⁹ and then defaulted in his payments. **In October 1883 Friedman, the mortgagee, ordered that the whole of the property be sold:**

"Ivanhoe Park Hotel and grounds, a popular resort for private families and the general public by reason of the attractive large dancing pavilion and spacious recreation grounds for cricket, football, quoits, and all other innocent healthy outdoor amusements. This favourite property is patronised by many thousands of people on public holidays, so that from all sources of patronage the place could be worked to greater advantage than at present.

The attention of hotelkeepers; caterers for public amusement; capitalists for investment and speculators and others is directed to this sale by order of the mortgagee.

Ivanhoe Park Hotel is a commodious building, conveniently arranged for the reception of families, so many of whom make their annual visit for health and pleasure to Manly Beach, the premier marine suburb of our colony.

In addition to the bar in the house, and two bars outside, there are about 24 rooms, besides other conveniences.

A feature of the property is the monster pavilion, the late happy scene of the Native Flower Show, and other pleasant gatherings.

The land comprises portions of the original Brighton Estate and has considerable frontages to West Promenade, opposite the Park, Sebastopol Street, Raglan Street, The Avenue, Eustace Street, with an aggregate area of over 4 acres capable of very profitable use, either in connection with this first class family hotel or by subdivision into lots, for the erection of houses, to promote residence in this delightful Brighton of New south Wales.

The Directors of the Port Jackson Steamship Company have announced liberal concessions in reference to the fares. By order of the mortgagee.

Richardson and Wrench to sell by public auction at their rooms, Friday 26th October, 11 a.m. Plan on view. Terms at sale."⁴⁰

³⁵ SMH 9 May 1883

³⁶ Manly Council Minutes

³⁷ DT 19 May 1883

³⁸ Manly Council Minutes 5 July 1883

³⁹ LTO Bk.249 No.766; Bk.255 No.472

⁴⁰ SMH 17 October 1883

Abraham Friedman sold Ivanhoe Park to Her Most Gracious Majesty Queen Victoria on 17 December 1883, for £6000.⁴¹

The Crown Solicitor reported to Manly Council that the Ivanhoe Park property had been vested in the Queen.⁴²

Thomas Rowe sold the western part of present Ivanhoe Park to Her Most Gracious Majesty Queen Victoria for £1300 on 19 February 1884.⁴³

The Trustees of the Oddfellows' Hall permitted the Manly Council, which was then using the premises as a Council Chambers, to remain as weekly tenants, at the expiration of the lease on 31 March 1884.⁴⁴



MAN08828 Ivanhoe Park Hotel. Behind the Hotel appears to be the Pavilion. MAGAM

Adrian's tenancy of Ivanhoe Park was due to expire on 2 April 1884. Manly Council agreed to extend this to 2 May to cover the Easter break. The rent paid by the occupants of the Ivanhoe Park Hotel was to be paid into the State Treasury.⁴⁵

At the Manly Council meeting held on 8 May 1884 Alderman Lough asked when Council was likely to obtain possession of Ivanhoe Park. The Mayor replied that he was not in a position to say until the previous tenants removed.⁴⁶

George Castleden applied to Manly Council on 5 June 1884 for permission to rent the Pavilion in Ivanhoe Park as a skating rink, &c. The matter was left with the Mayor to deal with.⁴⁷

The Mayor submitted plans on 12 June 1884 of proposed alterations required for the conversion of the Ivanhoe Park buildings into a Council Chamber, School of Arts, and Council Clerk's residence. The plans having been slightly amended, were approved, and it was decided that specifications should be prepared and tenders called for the work at once. On the motion of Alderman Pitt, seconded by Alderman

⁴¹ LTO Bk. 281 No.33

⁴² MC Minutes 3 Jan 1884

⁴³ LTO Book 284 No.36

⁴⁴ MC Minutes 20 March 1884

⁴⁵ MC Minutes 20 March, 24 April '84

⁴⁶ MC Minutes 8 May 84

⁴⁷ MC Minutes 5 June 84

Barker, it was also decided that the Mayor should be authorised to have one room cleared and made ready for temporary offices at once.⁴⁸

On 17 June 1884 the Mayor, Alderman C.H. Hayes, gave notice that from that date the business of the Council would be conducted at the new Council Chambers, Sebastapol Street (now Sydney Road).⁴⁹

The first council meeting to be held in the old Ivanhoe Park Hotel, Sebastapol Street (now Sydney Road), which premises were to be the council chambers, was held on Thursday 19 June.

D Frazer was given permission to use carts to remove stone from the quarry at Ivanhoe Park.⁵⁰

A prize of £20 was offered by the Manly Municipal Council for the best design for the improvement of Ivanhoe Park. Designs would be received up to 6 November 1884.⁵¹

The premium of £20 was awarded to Mr Arvid Wilson in February 1885 for his plans for the improvement of the Ivanhoe Park.⁵²

New South Wales – An Act for the better Regulation and Protection of Public Parks or places of Public Recreation and of lands dedicated, purchased or resumed for Public purposes, for bringing certain Lands within the operation of this Act and for other purposes. **“Public Parks Act of 1884.” (Assented to 31st October 1884.)**⁵³

During 1885 continual improvements were made to Ivanhoe Park. These included further drainage, filling the park to a uniform level, laying top dressing and soil on completed parts, and lighting with lamps. To meet the costs incurred funds were raised locally and £200 was received from the Department of Lands for the Park on 23 April 1885.⁵⁴

The press stated on 25 July 1885 that filling in of the low ground on Manly Park was proceeding rapidly, and that it was proposed to form a cricket ground and bicycle track thereon.⁵⁵

At the Manly Council meeting held on 30 July 1885 it was reported that labour was still being employed on Ivanhoe Park sowing grass, filling in, putting up a picket fence, and planting shrubs and trees etc.⁵⁶

On 24 September 1885 the Mayor stated at the Manly Council meeting that “the Park is now so far advanced towards completion that a permanent gardener is required to lay out grounds, etc., and take general charge thereof, and he asked the authority of the Council to employ J C Frazer in that capacity, as from the 21st instant. The Council authorised his employment until the next committee meeting, and it was arranged that Aldermen Weekes, Smithers, and Barker should meet Frazer on the ground to-day at 4 p.m., and discuss plans for laying it out.”⁵⁷

The following important matter regarding alteration to roads connected with Ivanhoe Park was discussed at the Manly Council meeting held on Thursday 3 December 1885:

“Present: Mayor Austin, Aldermen Pitt, Hayes, Barker, Weekes, Laurence, and Evans.
Letter from Under Secretary Dept of Mines, indicating that the Government is willing to take steps to **Close Eustace Street, West Promenade, from Fountain Street to Raglan Street and the Avenue** in order to bring the whole block bounded by James Street, Raglan Street, East Promenade and Fountain Street within Manly Park, under the Public Parks Act 1884, and to appoint the Council trustees of same, if the Council is willing to convey to the

⁴⁸ MC Minutes 12 June 84

⁴⁹ SMH 19 June 1884

⁵⁰ MC Minutes 19 June 84

⁵¹ MC Minutes 23 Oct; SMH 28 Oct 1884

⁵² EN 2 Mar 1885

⁵³ NSW Gov Gaz 7 Nov 1884

⁵⁴ MC Minutes 23 Apr 1885

⁵⁵ North Shore Times & Manly Press 25 July 1885

⁵⁶ MC Minutes 30 July '85

⁵⁷ NST&MP 26 Sept 1885

Government the piece of land to the east of the park conveyed to it by Mr Gilbert Smith. Moved by Alderman Hayes, "That the necessary steps be taken to have all Government reserves conveyed to the Government." Seconded by Alderman Pitt, and carried.

It was moved by Alderman Hayes,

"1. That the portion of the central reserve bounded by Fountain Street, West Promenade, East Promenade and Raglan Street shall hereafter form part of Manly Park.

2. That the Government be requested to close Eustace Street and West Promenade from Fountain Street to Raglan Street and The Avenue, also all other reserves in possession of the Council to be conveyed to the Government." Seconded by Alderman Pitt and carried."

After discussion, it was resolved to first obtain an expression of opinion from members of the trust.⁵⁸

The Foreman of Works reported to a Manly Council meeting held on 25 February 1886 that the day labourers had been employed in general road repairs in the Corso, and Steyne, and in the Manly Park. The water scheme for the Manly Park was characterised as a serious matter, and one which the Council should speedily deal with.⁵⁹

The press gave a clear statement on 6 April 1886 as to how money was raised to cover Park expenses:

"The Manly Park, which by-the-way, will be in a few years one of the grandest domains in the colony, has benefited to the extent of nearly £700 for the past municipal year, by sums raised as follows: Half proceeds of lecture by the Hon. W.B. Dalley, £30; half proceeds of Manly Wild Flower Show, £334; the balance being made up by a grant from the Government of £300, and contributions from visitors."⁶⁰

On the night of Saturday 29 January 1887 our peninsula's local member for nearly ten years, many times Premier of the Colony of NSW and the Father of Federation, **Sir Henry Parkes**, addressed the people of Manly in the Ivanhoe Park pavilion and was very well received.

In the *Government Gazette* of 7 June 1887 it was declared that certain portions of land would be added to the Public Park at Manly namely:-

1ac 2r 16p being the northern extension of present Gilbert Park, later used for tennis courts; 1rd 25p closure part of West Promenade; 1rd 25p closure part of Eustace Street; 2rd 10p closure of The Avenue.

Manly Park [Ivanhoe Park] of 12a 2r 22p was officially proclaimed as such on 30th September 1887, and placed under the Trusteeship of Municipal Council of Manly on 4th November 1887.

It should be noted that **the official name for this Public Park, according to the Geographical Names Board, is now Ivanhoe Park**, not Manly Park.⁶¹

At the Manly Council meeting held on 1 December 1887 a letter was read from the Mines Department intimating that £200 had been lodged in the Mercantile Bank to the credit of the parks maintenance fund, and **that the control of all public reserves at Manly was now vested in the Council.**⁶²

The statement so frequently made that Manly Council purchased Ivanhoe Park is wrong. It did not have the funds to do so and the Land Titles documents connected with the purchase made completely dispel this myth.

Eventually the old Pavilion, which had served the people of Manly so well since 1871, had to come down. It was in the process of being demolished on 14 October 1893. What remained of the building was sold at auction.⁶³

Manly Council remained in the old Ivanhoe Hotel buildings until 1909.

⁵⁸ MC Minutes, & SMH 10 Dec 1885

⁵⁹ NST&MP 27 Feb 1886

⁶⁰ DT 6 April 1886

⁶¹ Manly Daily 16 Apr 2005 notice p 70

⁶² DT 9 December 1887

⁶³ DT 14 Oct 1893.

Manly Library Local Studies

Ever since its inception Ivanhoe Park has provided an essential recreation area for tennis, football, cricket, bowls, athletics, cycling and other sports. It also has an attractive botanical section and appropriate buildings for clubs as well as a fine pavilion. Its regular maintenance is a credit to Manly Council.



Ivanhoe Park from Sydney Road, circa 1890s.