

Hudson Brothers, Granville.

The Old Scots saying “Its an ull win blows naebody gweed” applies in the coming of Hudson Brothers to Granville. There is no question that the strike of 1874 when P N Russell and Company closed down their works at Darling Harbour for all time had much to do influencing the coming of Hudson Brothers.

The effect of this labour ebullition and the action taken by the firm of P N Russell was to create a vacancy in the manufacturing trade of the colony. The Hudson Brothers gauged the situation as their opportunity and successfully tendered for a five years supply of Government rolling stock in connection with the main railway running from Sydney. This class of work had previously been imported or carried out at the works of P N Russell.

The history of the Hudson family dates back to the 1850’s when the brothers were apprentices to their father a successful builder holding several large building contracts. The brother started a business in a small way in 1862. The beginning may have been small but it became the largest building firm in the colony. Headquarters at the time was Botany Street, Redfern. The eldest brother Henry was the leading mind throughout the firm existence.



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The Illustrated Sydney News records the foundation celebrations at Hudson Brothers' new works site at Granville.

The Cumberland Mercury for July 6th 1881 under the headline of “Granville” “Two of the Hudson Brothers were at Granville last Saturday viewing the site for their future workshops.” The proposed new building will be larger than Redfern. It was reported in the Sydney Morning Herald 21st August 1882, a special train had been organised on Saturday 19th August 1882 to carry 250 ladies and gents to the laying of the Foundation Stone, planting of trees and the naming of Hudson Brothers new works at Granville, it was decided to name the locality Hudson.



Mr Robert Hudson engaged nineteen ironworkers from the valley of the Clyde in Scotland, they arrived in Granville 1882. Some of them could not find houses, so they had to live in Sydney until the Hudson Cottages were finished. Robert Hudson also sailed to Scotland to employ a further twenty-five ironworkers under contract for the new works. A large sum of money from Scotland was

invested in the Company, being handled by Mr J C Alexander who was appointed Works Manager a position he held until the works changed ownership.

In August of 1883 the official opening took place, the ceremony was carried out with a lot of formality and rejoicing in the presence of a large concourse of ladies and gentlemen. The company was well represented, as well as a number of commercial and Parliamentary men present including Sir Henry Parkes and John Robertson. The first railway carriage was turned out for this occasion. The celebration took place on a Wednesday, the following Saturday the employees were entertained at an opening banquet.



Foundry as Clyde Engineering, Battery Factory was where the soccer oval was, notice Hudson Cottages in foreground.

Despite the day to day work of the business that had to carry on, it was necessary to have facilities for the workers to enjoy when they had a break. The Scotsmen and some English men who worked in the foundry needed to carry on some of the activities and skills that they enjoyed back home. Hudson Brothers were employers who believed that a happy workforce is a productive workforce. This can be seen in the many and varied activities available to the people who were employed.

There was also technical education in Hudson Brothers, when James B Brown a pattern maker came to work for Hudson Brothers in 1885, he was asked to start up a class for the young workers in Geometrical and Mechanical drawing, this was eventually recognised by the Sydney Institute and thus it was not long after that the Technical College education was set up by James B Brown in Granville.

Henry Lawson the Australian Poet also worked at Hudson Brothers, in 1883, his parent's marriage ended and Louisa Lawson moved to Sydney to find work. Joining her, Henry took a job as a carriage painter with Hudson Brothers at Clyde, near Granville, studying for his matriculation at night. Again, he found juggling full-time work and group study difficult, and failed his university entrance exams several times.

The comfort of the employees has always been well attended to in this works. There is a large dining room with an attendant, also a foreman's dining and reading room. A sports ground with a pavilion, and a well equipped ambulance room. The Works Ambulance was affiliated with the St John

Ambulance Association. There was also a sick and accident club and by way of recreation a sports and club with cricket and football teams. A rifle club was also formed in connection with the Defence Department.

The Granville Brass Band also had their formation in the Hudson Brothers workplace. In January 1886 the band was formed from workers from the factory, they reached a high standard of proficiency very fast, performing for the community at a number of occasions. Prior to the sale of the Lisgar Estate, the band marched from Granville Railway Station to the Estate playing the March Lisgar composed by the late Charles Huenerbein. Unfortunately the band was dispersed about three years later due to the effect that the economic depression had on the company.

The formation of a football team was a popular decision; reports have it that a young man travelling from Scotland to Hudson Brothers unpacked a brand new football. Football was established at Hudson Brothers shortly after the Company opened, a ground was put aside at the back of the 13acre property for sport.

The players decided to play under the English Rules of the game and formed a team, in the Sydney Morning Herald 21st August 1885 it was reported that "The Granville Football Club playing under British Association rules, competed in the first round of the cup ties on Saturday last (18th August 1885) against the Lambton Thistle Football Club. The match was played at the rear of Hudson Brother's Works, Clyde, and was witnessed by a large number of spectators. The play during the first half was fairly good, but in the last the visitors played in a somewhat loose and disorganised fashion. In justice to them, however, it should be stated that their team was not a representative one, many of their best players being unavailable to leave home. The game ended in a win for Granville by six goals to nil. The goals were kicked by P Adam (2) Hotchkiss (2) and Anderson. The visitors were entertained at a dinner at the Royal Hotel in the evening."

At the Annual Picnic at Cabrita in 1889, the teams were five a side, representing the "Smiths" Picken (Captain), E Mitchell, J Harris, S Fowles, J Neilson (Goal), foundry team A Cheetam ("Captain), Grindrod, W Mackenzie, j Riley, and G Nickerson (Goal), Fitting Shop R Ranier (Captain) a Lusk, F Lusk, J White (Goal) and F W Barlow.

In the Sydney Morning Herald 9 July 1886, Selectors chose a team made up with some players from the Granville Team were selected to represent NSW under the British Association Rules, to play the team from Victoria. They were W Baillie (Captain), J Picken, R Walker. The NSW Scotch Team had W Baillie, J Picken, P Adams, the English Team T Heathcote, R Walker, J Winters. Thus the foundation of Football in Granville was formed from the employees of Hudson Brother, a vibrant firm for fifteen years was liquidated in 1898, property sold and fixtures for £16,000. However the new owners The Clyde Engineering Company, when the principals were listed Henry Hudson was mentioned among the others.

The Clyde oval was moved after the sale to a property on Sydney Road.

June M Bullivant OAM

Granville Historical Society Inc

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Clyde "From the Skies" 1943



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| 1. Whiting/Holland General Store | 8. Milton Foundry | 15. Dupicon's Property (Moored Launch) | 22. US Army Hqs for Negro Soldiers |
| 2. Cooper's Fruit & Vegetable Shop | 9. Waddington's Engineering | 16. Large Shed Wilson & Dryden Bus Company | M Houses owned by Mr Mallinson |
| 3. Hill's Golden Fleece Service Station | 10. Griffin's Corner Shop | 17. Electric Sub-Station | |
| 4. Fryer's Advans Atlantic Service Station | 11. Pearce | 18. M W S & D Board | |
| 5. King's General Store | 12. St Alban's Church of England | 19. Grandstand | |
| 6. Hale's Second Hand Timber Yard | 13. Mission Hall | 20. Weighbridge | |
| 7. Stanley Terrace | 14. Horrie Rowe's Animal Yard | 21. Terrace Houses | |

Information courtesy Mr George Pearce who was born in Kendall Street.