

Halls in Riverstone pre Federation

Winsome Phillis

There were two Halls in Riverstone in the 1880s. The Cosmopolitan Hall (which was later to become the Oddfellows Hall), and the Temperance Hall.

Cosmopolitan Hall – owned by Mr H.J. West – opened on 9 November 1884. This hall was situated on Riverstone Parade, facing the Railway line and what is now the Produce Store.

Hawkesbury Chronicle 1884: A Tea Meeting was held to celebrate the opening of the Riverstone Presbyterian School Church. The gathering took place in the large and comfortable Cosmopolitan Hall and the tables, seven in number were tastefully decorated and plentifully supplied with all that was needful to cheer and strengthen the inner man. Miss Cobcroft presided at the Harmonium.

The Cumberland Mercury, 22 November 1884, reported on the laying of the Foundation Stone of St Paul's Church of England at Riverstone, after which the people adjourned to what is called the Cosmopolitan Hall, a large roomy structure erected by Mr H.J. West, for a lecture Hall, or anything else — though it is to be used as a church on Sundays, ... until St Paul's is finished.

In December 1885 *The Hawkesbury Chronicle* noted that there were three shops on one side of the Hall and on the other a blacksmith and wheelwrights.

The Manchester Unity Independent Order of Oddfellows Lodge was established in Riverstone in 1892. The *Windsor & Richmond Gazette* 13 April 1895 reported: *The Cosmopolitan Hall is now to be called the Oddfellows Hall.*

Windsor & Richmond Gazette 27 August 1898: E. Joseph, proprietor of the Oddfellows Hall, is having renovations to the hall carried out by Mr Pettitt. In July 1899 the hall was being lined.

In June 1899 the townspeople of Riverstone put on a Benefit Concert and Dance in the Oddfellows Hall, which raised £11/8/6 to aid Mr G. Voysey who was recovering from typhoid fever. These functions were common in the days of no government or medical assistance for those in trouble.

The hall continued to be used for meetings and numerous balls were held there. In April 1910, a Skating Rink was opened in the room adjoining the Oddfellows Hall by Miss Wiggins.

11 March 1927 *Windsor & Richmond Gazette* stated *The Oddfellows Hall was under repair by Harry King.*

In the 1930s the Hall was the venue for Concerts, Church parish teas and Bazaars, wedding receptions and other functions. Miss Sylvester gave piano lessons there and in the late 1930s early 1940s, Miss Onslow from Marsden Park used it for Youth Groups.

The *Windsor & Richmond Gazette* of 5 June 1931 describes the hall as it was on the occasion of the annual Catholic Ball: *There were about 150 guests present..... The floor was perfect and the interior of the hall was strikingly decorated in shades of pink. The supper room was decorated in tones of yellow, with gerberas adorning the tables. A blazing log fire and comfortable chairs in the supper room proved a strong attraction to non-dancers, and here many a tale was told as the evening wore on.*

It is not clear just when the Oddfellows Hall closed or when it was demolished.

Temperance Hall - owned by Mr B. Woods.

The hall was situated next door to the Police Station in Railway Terrace, facing the Railway Line.

Windsor & Richmond Gazette 28 May 1892: *Mr Woods is erecting a large room at the back of the Temperance Hall for balls etc. The room is to be 50ft x 30ft.*

In 1896 the *Gazette* reported that P. Haberstroh was the lessee and had secured a new piano.

In 1896 the Church of England was undergoing repairs and services were held in the Hall.

2 April 1898 *Gazette*: *L. Hempe has leased the Temperance Hall and renovated it.* Two weeks later the *Gazette* reported that a piano had been purchased for the hall.

3 September 1898 *Gazette*: Mr B. Woods was making alterations to the Temperance Hall.

A Private School, run by Clem Daly was held there c1898 - 1900.

In the early 1900s motion pictures were shown in the Temperance Hall by Elsie Wiggins and her brothers. Kevin J. Cork describes the Hall in his book *The Flicks: The Hall, which seated about 150, was of weatherboard with an iron roof (walls and ceiling were unlined) and had a brick supper room attached to one side.*

The Temperance Hall was probably demolished in the 1920s.

Sources: *Cumberland Mercury*; *Hawkesbury Chronicle*; *Windsor & Richmond Gazette*; *The Flicks* by Kevin J. Cork.